

Did you know that it is 'Feed the Birds Day' today?

It's estimated that nearly half of UK households feed birds – however in many cases their feeders and tables have been neglected for ages and are empty or dirty. Does this ring a bell with you? If so please take this gentle reminder to clean your feeders, stock up on nuts and seed and put out some food for your feathered neighbours.

As the days become shorter colder and wetter, birds really benefit from a bit of supplementary food being provided. Although there is currently plenty of natural food available, this won't last for ever and an easily obtainable source of nourishment is very welcome. Gardens are an increasingly important habitat for lots of bird species and your feeders could literally be the difference between life and death for birds this winter.

Another benefit of feeding birds is that you can attract and observe birds up close, which is a very rewarding experience. I quite often get big burly colleagues excitedly pulling me aside to tell me about their latest garden visitor (though I won't name and shame them here).

Cleanliness is vital when feeding birds. Don't put out too much food as it will soon go mouldy if uneaten, and disinfect tables and feeders regularly (I use a mild bleach solution).

Most people buy seed, nuts and fatballs to feed birds but you don't have to put your hand into your pocket. Birds will just as happily tuck into kitchen leftovers such as lard, biscuits, cake etc.

If you want more information there are plenty of online sources. A good starting point is [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)

## **Barrage Bombed**

I for one was really pleased to hear that plans for the Severn Barrage have been shelved. I'm all for renewable energy, but this scheme was far too environmentally destructive. I'm sure that

this is a topic that will rear it's head again when the economic climate is a little warmer. In the meantime I hope the decision makers learn to fully appreciate the environmental importance of the estuary and make safeguarding it their paramount concern.

## **Birdwatching Talks**

Don't forget that there is an illustrated talk tonight, Saturday 30th October. The speaker is Paul Bowden who will present 'Birds of the USA, West of The Rockies'. Paul's talk focusses on the birds found in Washington and Oregon and should be extremely interesting.

The talk is being held at Goytre Village Hall (just off the A4042 Newport to Abergavenny road) and starts at 7.30pm. Entry, including tea and biscuits is £1.50. No need to book, just turn up.

On Saturday 13th November there is another talk (same time, venue and details as above). This time the speaker is local birder Steve Roberts and the subject is 'The Life of the Honey Buzzard'. This talk promises to be something very special – honey buzzard are rare summer migrants with a taste for wasp grubs. The whereabouts of their nest sites are closely held secrets among a handful of birders - and Steve is a man in the know!... Make sure you come along for a real treat.

New faces are always welcome at GOS events, for more information visit [www.gwentbirds.org.uk](http://www.gwentbirds.org.uk) or give me a call on the number below. Likewise, if you want me to send you a copy of Gwent Ornithological Society's programme of walks and talks, just let me know.

Keep in Touch

Thank you to all readers that have taken the time to get in touch.

I always enjoy hearing from you and can be contacted at [m.stevens@webster.uk.net](mailto:m.stevens@webster.uk.net) or on 01633 866470.

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