

Filey Bird Observatory and Group



Newsletter – Spring 2020

Chairmans Review.

A new year with new achievements but now we have some challenging times. Thanks to all those who have renewed your membership, we rely heavily on these to maintain the standards of the report and some of the improvements to our own sites and reserves. Speaking of reports the 2019 one is well underway and if anyone has any anecdotes, articles or images they would like to be considered for inclusion please can you contact Ian Robinson or George Watola.

Below in italics, is my original review but as you all know covid-19 has put paid to all of that, as the May weekend is cancelled, and we do not know what is happening as far as October. All I will say is, if we abide by the guidelines, stay at home, apart from our one-a-day exercise then maybe we can start again, and the ringing and work parties can resume. We are all in this together and we need to be grateful to all those who are trying to make a difference from our great NHS, supermarkets and retail workers, utilities and police & armed forces plus all the other volunteers who are fighting this pandemic. On behalf of FBOG, I applaud you all. Please read the covid-19 statement which appears on our website, Facebook and this newsletter.

“The flood alleviation scheme, which seemed to have faltered now looks to be ready to start this year with some of it going across FBOG land at the tip. During the construction, the access will be fenced off between Parish Wood and The Tip to allow the contractors to work and to comply with health and safety. We wait in hope!”

The new Dams hide has been targeted again this year by ‘drinking groups’ and has been left in a terrible mess. Please be vigilant and report any of this type of activity to the Police on 101. The hide is a public resource for visitors to the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust reserve and it would be a pity to have to lock it (This has now been done under the guidelines)

Some dates for your diary with more information later. A spring weekend of ringing at the Top Scrub, 8 – 10 May and the Ringing and Migration week this year will be 10 – 18 October.”

The new website is finished (www.fbog.org.uk) and it will have up to date bird news from Filey via its’ Twitter feed and events notification once we can all get out there again. Keep those garden records and fly-overs coming in!

It just leaves me to say thank you again for your support and help and let’s hope this year will bring some positive memories after these dark times and great wildlife sightings for us all to enjoy once again. Stay safe and healthy

Peter J Dunn (FBOG Chairman).

Filey Dams – Steering Group Meeting

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (YWT) have requested a second 'Stakeholders meeting' . The initial meeting was held last year at the EVRON centre in Filey with the stakeholders in attendance being Scarborough Borough Council (SBC - the owners of Filey Dams), YWT (the leasee of Filey Dams) and FBOG. The meeting was helpful and productive in allowing all present to put forward their plans and wishes for the on going management of the Dams.

The 2020 stakeholders meeting has been booked once again at the EVRON centre:-

FILEY DAMS STEERING GROUP MEETING with YORKSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST

WEDNESDAY 20 MAY 2020 at 10.30; FILEY EVRON CENTRE

All members welcome to attend.

PLEASE NOTE

At the time of writing this the government has banned gatherings so it is possible that this meeting may be postponed. If this happens we will inform you all of any change.

Mark Moore FBOG (Hon Sec)

Filey Dams/East Lea Volunteers – Winter work

Filey Dams - Despite the cold and wet weather the work of the volunteers has continued. Path clearing, hide cleaning, willow trimming have continued. Bad weather and time had ravaged many of the bird boxes around the Dams and also in the Top Scrub area (at the top of the country park). John Wilkinson, one of our trusty volunteers, has constructed a substantial number of replacement and additional boxes for us and these were all installed.

With the very wet winter we found that the board walk to the new hide was becoming rather slippy, to address this Peter (YWT) sourced abrasive strips to attach to the board walk, they were jointly purchased by YWT & FBOG. Visitors have found this most helpful during the recent wet conditions.



Board Walk Grip



Unfortunately we have suffered some recent vandalism such as the damage to the board walk shown left. YWT and the police were informed and YWT were prompt in dispatching their local officer to repair the damage. The local police are aware and are increasing their monitoring.

The owl box has been refurbished and installed on a new donated stand (a telegraph post).



Nearly there



East Lea owl box post

East Lea – The owl box here has been down for some time now so it was decided that it was time to reinstate it. As it was knocked down by the cattle using it as a rubbing post, bless em, it was decide to fit a much stronger base. The base thickness was therefore doubled to 9 x 6 inch and will be wrapped in barbed wire to deter the cattle. As you can see the base has been installed and concreted in. We had to leave the base to set thoroughly for a week before adding the box and support but events have overtaken us and groups are out for the moment. Digging the 5 foot deep hole was hard work but if the box is occupied by a pair of Barn Owls it will have been worth it.



Finished Owl Box



East Lea's hedge trimming

There is a new post just the other side of the first kissing gate boasting a new sign for East Lea, this post also allows us to latch the gate into the Dams and the gate from East Lea meadow together. This will allow the cattle that graze the Dams to move backward and forward from the Dams to the farmland. There is a simple latch to open the gate to access East Lea if they are in the close position. This system will prevent the cattle from getting into the path up to the hide.



Dams gate closed



Both gates closed

There is a simple latch to open the gate to access East Lea if they are in the closed position. This system will prevent the cattle from getting into the path up to the hide.



As you can see the latch can easily be lifted to open the metal gate. Please close the gate and replace the latch when you have passed through.

The hedge in the hide enclosure was beginning to encroach on the path so this was cut back to prevent it snagging on visitors. An experimental wild flower area is being developed next to the path to East Lea, just above the reed bed. TF has put in an immense amount of work to clear the land of the couch grass so hopes are high that the wild flower seed will take. When successful the area will be expanded. A Dragonfly pond has been added to East Lea meadow and so far is holding water without a liner, work proceeds.

Please Note

YWT have announced that all volunteer groups have been suspended until May 2020 (at least) due to the pandemic. FBOG will also follow the government advice about organised groups.

Notable Sightings – January to March 2020

Only a few weeks ago we were looking forward to spring and getting out and about after a long winter. Now our birding is restricted to how far we can walk from home (“a walk of up to an hour” according to Michael Gove <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-51506729>). But all is not lost, as you can still see many good birds close to home (and keep a record of them). I have my own rural walk now in Haxby, York, and have already seen Peregrine, Grey Partridge and Corn Bunting this week (spring hasn’t quite arrived, just Chiffchaffs so far). For those lucky enough to live in Filey, I am sure we will have many good sightings, it’s just the rest of us won’t be able to see them! So, keep recording on Birdtrack and posting on WhatsApp.

Below are some of the more interesting Filey sightings for the last three months:

Our wintering Firecrests and Yellow-browed Warbler were still present on New Year’s Day. The Yellow-browed was last seen on 5th February. The Firecrests remained until the end of January, and another was seen at Crescent Gardens on 14th March. 1000 Guillemot were seen off Hunmanby Gap, also on 1st, and two Red-legged Partridges. A small flock of White-fronted Geese (nine, rising to 14 birds) stayed throughout mid-January. Twenty Grey Partridge were seen on 10th, and then a quiet period until 31st, when a Bonxie went past Hunmanby Gap.



Firecrest, John Harwood



Short-eared Owl, Nigel Webster

One, sometimes two, Short-eared Owls were present in the northern area during January through to March. A Greenshank at the Dams on 2nd February was an unusual winter record. A Black-throated Diver appeared on 4th and hung around for a few days. A Glaucous Gull was at the Brigg on 5th. A huge flock of 230 Red-throated Divers was in Filey Bay on 6th. Flocks of loons (the American term) are called an asylum, a cry, a loomery, a raft, or a water dance, which are perhaps more evocative. Goosanders were at the Dams on 11th (a male) and 29th (a male and 2 females). A Moorhen in-off on 21st was unexpected, and perhaps indicative of a bird on migration. Mather (1985) mentions ringed Moorhens from Denmark and Holland being found in Yorkshire, and vice-versa.

Pink-footed Geese were abundant on 3rd March, with 1805 being recorded as large flocks headed north back to their breeding grounds. An adult Mediterranean Gull was also at the Dams. The year’s first butterfly, a Comma, appeared on 6th. Bottle-nosed Dolphins were often seen during the month. An Iceland Gull was off Hunmanby Gap on 10th. Two Cranes went south on 11th, pursued by cries of “where are they??” A Hooded Crow was at Reighton Sands on 16th. Twite appeared on 18th at Carr Naze and the Top Fields, the same day as the year’s first White Wagtail.

A Woodlark flew over Reighton Sands on 19th. A Red Kite was seen on this date and again on 25th. The spring's first Wheatear turned up on 21st at North Cliff. A Black Redstart lingered around Short Hedge from 22nd. A Marsh Harrier went south at Hunmanby Gap on 23rd, a busy day for the counters there as 4549 Starlings also flew over. A Yellow-legged Gull rounded off a productive day there. Two Sandwich Terns went past Hunmanby Gap on 24th, with a Lapland Bunting there on 25th. A Sand Martin was seen at Muston Sands the same day. An unusual record was a Jay on 26th at Glen Gardens, usually an autumn rarity at Filey.

George Watola



Unfortunately it saddens me to say this but to maintain the new government directions and in consultation with the YWT we will be locking the hides at Filey Dams, the gate to East Lea and the seawatch hide. Please do not use any of these until the rules are relaxed. Other walks will be open but please abide by the new rules of no larger groups of two and only of people from the same residence. We will reopen them as soon as we can. In the meantime can I encourage those who live in Filey to still let us know what you see flying over or using your garden or on your 'one walk a day' exercise. But above all stay safe and healthy. (Peter Dunn, Chair 24/3/20)

Statement from The Recorder (24/3/20)

The Prime Minister has stated that we are now allowed to leave home for only one of four reasons. One of the reasons is one form of exercise a day, such as walking, running or cycling. Birdwatching can be included, as this can be done whilst walking. This can only be done once a day. However, you cannot meet friends, and you must maintain a distance of at least 2m from anyone you come across. We would still like to receive your records to maintain our recording across the observatory, which has been continuous since 1977. As always anything interesting can be posted on twitter or Whatsapp. I think that twitchables sadly need to be suppressed at this time, as we cannot be seen to be encouraging people to go out to look for them (unless it's a flyover). I look forward to receiving your records on your local house sparrows, woodpigeons and birds of prey going over your house, at the end of the year. All the best and stay safe. George

A reminder/request to all members who pay membership by Standing Order: please update your order by the £2 increase as previously notified (Juniors excluded).

Short-eared Owl photo Nigel Webster.

Scarborough and Filey
Covid-19 Community Response

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 19

What we are doing

- Co-ordinating local trusted groups and volunteers to support people in their community
- Pooling the existing volunteer and staff workforce to support vulnerable people with tasks such as delivering prescriptions, running urgent errands, collecting shopping
- Offering information and advice on services available and local businesses offering delivery and collection of essentials
- Providing weekly emotional and social support via telephone or skype
- Providing regular updates via social media and local media on changes to services and accessing urgent help

If you need help, information or would like to volunteer, please get in touch with us via

Telephone: 01723 379058
Email: scarbcomsupp2020@gmail.com
Facebook: <https://fb.me/sfcr2020>
Online form: <https://bit.ly/2Uswzch>

In Partnership With



FBOG Merchandise

New design Baseball Caps are now available in two colours, dark grey / dark green, both featuring an embroidered FBOG logo. Price £12.00 each + £2 p&p. Please contact Janet Robinson, email: treasurer@fbog.org.uk for further details.

Chair: Peter Dunn
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