

# Wyre Forest Local Group

Spring 2021 News



Worcestershire  
Wildlife Trust

## Local Bird Life During the Latest Lockdown

With a lockdown in effect due to the second wave of the Coronavirus pandemic, our green spaces have become a lifeline to local communities, giving people a place where they can walk, exercise and improve mental wellbeing. If, like myself, you are interested in local wildlife they are also places to catch up with and observe some of our local species. Even in the winter months there is still much to see locally and, hopefully, this article will highlight some of the birds that you can look for when you're out for a walk.

The biggest highlight this winter has been the huge number of linnets that have flocked together to feed in the fields on the edge of Kidderminster that lie between Spennells and Stanklyn. This huge flock at times numbers c.1200 linnets that swirled around in an almost starling-like murmuration over the fields.

Linnets are one of our commonest breeding arable birds but numbers are swelled each winter with many birds moving down from their upland breeding sites to flock together and feed amongst lowland fields.

In normal winter the linnet flock in this area is usually between 200-400 birds but this year has been exceptional.



© Jason Kernohan

Also present in these fields have been c.300 chaffinches with a handful of bramblings alongside them.

It is no surprise, then, that these huge flocks have drawn the attention of a wintering merlin (which I have seen on three separate occasions).

Merlin is Britain's smallest bird of prey and is about the size of a mistle thrush. In fact, they sometimes mimic the latter's undulating flight to approach the flocks of their prey relatively unnoticed. It is truly fascinating behaviour.



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The winter period can also be a good time to see goosander as some move away from the rivers and flock together (in varying numbers) on our local ponds and reservoirs.

This winter they have been seen at a number of locations including Captain's Pool, Stack Pool and Trimpley Reservoir.

The males are cream coloured with a black back and a very dark green head and the females are grey with a rufous coloured head. Both sexes have a wine-red coloured bill.

These diving birds are not actually ducks but belong to a group of birds known as sawbills. They are so named because of their serrated bills, which are perfectly adapted for catching fish underwater.

Jason Kernohan

## Linnet Murmurations

A lucky chance encounter with photographer Steve Webb led to him kindly sending us these super photographs of the spectacular linnet flock.

*Thank you Steve*



## Thank you

Thanks to all those members who sent us their contact details; we have had a good response. This will enable us to contact members with details of when we can start both indoor and outdoor meetings again. It may well be that we are able to start the walks before the indoor meetings.

If you haven't done so and would like us to stay in touch, we are happy to add anyone else to our contact list. Please be assured that your details will be kept securely and only used by us to contact you when necessary. Please let us have your details (phone or email). You can call or email us:

**Phone** 01562 741891 **email** [djhowell70@gmail.com](mailto:djhowell70@gmail.com)

A big thank you also to the staff at the Trust who have continued to work hard from home to keep everything running.

Particular thanks to Wendy Carter, Communications Lead, Anne Williams, Mer Officer and Mike Perry, Head of Resources, for arranging with local groups the excellent talks via Zoom.

There are two online talks in April and we're just in the process of booking speakers for monthly talks throughout the summer to help keep us all connected with nature and with each other. Please visit [www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/whats-on](http://www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/whats-on) for more information and how to book.

18<sup>th</sup> March – Wildlife Gardening, a talk by Joel Ashton

1<sup>st</sup> April – The Tricks that Nature Plays, a talk by Gary Farmer

15<sup>th</sup> April – Piper's Hill: ancients, elfcups and deadwood dwellers, a talk by Eleanor Reast

### Point of Interest!

**Do you know where the world's first nature reserve was reputed to be?  
It was created in 1826 by Charles Waterton and was near Wakefield.**

**Editors: David and Ruth Howell**

For further information about the group please contact David Howell: 01562 741891