

REPORT OF THIRD EARLY MORNING BIRD WALK

LONG CAR PARK THURSDAY 18 MAY 2017

After a night of heavy rain, we assembled at Long Car Park at 6.30am dry, bright and expectant.

A good start in the car park was a **Garden Warbler** chortling from birch saplings.

As we started south down the airstrip we had a distant view of a **Willow Warbler** singing from the top of a birch tree. Moving on into the open heath, a small male **Stonechat** sat on the top of a lone tree, showing off his black head and white collar and buffy orange breast. Later we saw a second Stonechat male on gorse and, as he flew off, he showed the extensive white patches on his dark wings.

While we watched a **Tree Pipit** singing from the top of a dead pine in the heath, he suddenly decided to attempt a display flight, singing as he parachuted down into the heather, tail cocked up as he sang.

Overhead we heard the yodelling song of a male **Woodlark**, a specially protected bird, and were then entertained by the antics of two duelling male Woodlarks, jostling for ascendancy in the sky not high above our heads, singing as they struggled.

Several male **Whitethroats** also gave views perched on gorse, singing their scratchy songs, some performing display/territorial flights just above their gorse territories.

Walking south towards Chelwood Vachery cattle enclosure, we listened for the truncated song of a male **Redstart**. He was singing from the top of a very tall Scots Pine where the pines are thinned out, and flew off briefly for us to see him.

Walking back uphill onto the heath, we heard the three note pathetic song of a male **Reed Bunting** sitting on a bare tree.

No Dartford Warblers spotted yet, so we retraced our steps around the areas of gorse for a last chance. We were not disappointed. A male **Dartford Warbler**, tiny and dark with a very long tail, popped up repeatedly from gorse, cocking his tail, and one of us spied him pecking for food. An elusive species, rarely seen.

Finally a **Lesser Redpoll**, after alerting us with his buzzing flight call, landed on the top of an aspen tree and gave us a chance to view this tiny finch, dependant on the seeds of birch for food. Ashdown Forest is a hot spot for this species in Sussex – as it is for so many of the birds we had been lucky enough to see in these two hours.

CLIVE POOLE, Voluntary Ranger

18.5.2017

Ably assisted by Volunteers Jane Withey, Andy Butler and Rob Bright

NOTES: DARTFORD WARBLER & WOODLARK HAVE SPECIAL PROTECTED LEGAL STATUS

LIST OF BIRD SPECIES SEEN/HEARD IN ORDER
THIRD EARLY MORNING BIRD WALK STARTING FROM LONG
CAR PARK
06.40am 18 MAY 2017

- 1 GARDEN WARBLER
- 2 WREN
- 3 BLACKCAP
- 4 WILLOW WARBLER
- 5 WOODPIGEON
- 6 CARRION CROW
- 7 CHIFFCHAFF
- 8 SONG THRUSH
- 9 STONECHAT
- 10 WHITETHROAT
- 11 TREE PIPIT
- 12 LINNET
- 13 SKYLARK
- 14 WOODLARK
- 15 ROBIN
- 16 CHAFFINCH
- 17 GREAT TIT
- 18 REDSTART
- 19 BLACKBIRD
- 20 GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER
- 21 REED BUNTING
- 22 STOCK DOVE
- 23 PHEASANT
- 24 HERRING GULL
- 25 DUNNOCK
- 26 DARTFORD WARBLER
- 27 LESSER REDPOLL

Total: 27 SPECIES SEEN OR HEARD