

## **REPORT OF THIRD CONSERVATORS NIGHTJAR SUNSET BIRD WALK 6 JULY 2017-LONG CAR PARK**

Weather conditions were perfect for this evening walk at 22 deg. cels., with no wind. We had come to listen for and hopefully see a Nightjar and a Woodcock-both unusual and rarely seen crepuscular/nocturnal birds highly dependent on the open heathland of Ashdown Forest.

We set off at 21.10 hrs six minutes before sunset. Walking along a sandy track between gorse we stopped to watch a handsome buck Roe Deer stationary in front of us, watching us before bounding off. Less bold were a doe Roe deer and her fawn, which bounded off to our right soon after, through bracken.

Wending our way along the sandy/grassy track we turned sharply downhill, and ended up waiting together near a spaced-out-copse of mature Scots pines. As we waited, Richard Perry noticed a large bird of prey flapping silently through the pines -a Common Buzzard flying home to roost. It was now 21.50hrs.

Very soon after our first Nightjar made its squeaking flight call behind us from above the bracken so we were hopeful of some action! As we watched through the pines a second Nightjar started its strange song, called "churring", with notes at the rate of 200 per minute, sounding like a builder's drill. We cupped hands over ears and were captivated. We soon established there were 2 males churring from different trees-to our left and right. By 21.55 a Nightjar could again be heard, calling "goo-ik" on the move. It was not long before the entertainment started, with 3 or 4 separate sorties by Nightjar, with flypasts quite close to our party on stiff long wings, beaten then paused, giving time to see the long tail and fluttering flight. (we had now seen or heard at least 3 Nightjars)

Not to be outdone, a whistle above the pines alerted us to an oncoming male Woodcock, a barrel-chested wading bird resting in the daytime in woods of the Forest, which literally flew over our heads. 22.10 and time to go home.

Clive Poole (Voluntary Ranger)

Ably assisted by Roger Gray, Tom Neeves (Voluntary Rangers) and Richard Perry (A.F.Bird Group)

### **THIRD NIGHTJAR BIRD WALK 6 JULY 2017-LONG CAR PARK—LIST OF SPECIES**

#### **BIRD SPECIES-SEEN/HEARD**

WREN

CARRION CROW

BLACKBIRD

ROBIN

DUNNOCK

WOODPIGEON

SKYLARK

LINNET

COMMON BUZZARD

**NIGHTJAR (*Caprimulgus europaeus*)—3**

**WOODCOCK (*Scolopax rusticola*)**

#### **MAMMAL SPECIES**

RABBIT

ROE DEER (*Capreolus capreolus*)-buck, doe & fawn