

FIVE YEARS OF KOS FIELD TRIPS-----AN OVERVIEW

Back in 2010 I was coerced into providing a Field Trip programme for the Society, which at that point was in danger of omission from the Society's calendar. In Summer 2011 in KOS News, I flippantly, and somewhat pessimistically, penned a short note headed `Niche; Negate or Necessity?` The background to that note was as a result of the 2010 membership survey, which showed that 6% of the then Society membership had participated in Field Meetings, and I was personally questioning the validity of that support.

The comment I made in 2011 was--` that in today's birdwatching scene, it is impossible to replicate the social dynamism of the early years; insomuch as `the rare bird` scenario will now bring the masses together at the drop-of-a-hat through instant IT to create that dynamism, and also, that everyone is now a rare bird photographer (good or bad!) , and that furthers I believe the individuality, as opposed to the requirement for group activity`

Having said that, I confess to a partial step back from those comments, and sincerely thank all those in the Society who have really made a significant contribution in bringing their expertise and knowledge to the programme, which has benefited the less knowledgeable, and enhanced the scope of understanding of others. I would certainly withdraw the use of `Negate`

from the future of Field Trips. Doubtful too, that `Necessity's an over-riding factor, but certainly provision for social interaction with the prospect of some decent birding, will continue to be an agreeable day's journeying for many--- particularly for those who do travel some considerable distances to support the Society.

A few highlights are worth recalling. I purposely avoid the names to go with those highlights! The 2010 programme included some obscure under-recorded Tetrads for both the BTO and Kent Atlas---these introduced some new members keen on recording, and provided a worthwhile programme entry. The Medway Pelagic proved a great day out on the `X-Pilot.` Whilst I confess to `heart-missing-a-beat` at the flashback to the vertical, seaweed encrusted ladder, to scan the surrounds for one missing sailor; all was forgiven for the white knuckles and no further mishaps. We added good records of Mediterranean Gull and Sandwich Tern colonies, and late significant numbers of Brent Geese, as well as a sun-drenched lunch holed up in Medway backwaters.

As a Society we can derive benefit from the occasional link-up with other Societies, and a joint Odonata meeting in 2011 with the Kent Field Club was very worthwhile.



KOS Field Trip - Dungeness

Dungeness needs little to persuade birders from their slumbers, and Glaucous; Yellow-legged; and Caspian Gulls have featured regularly, as have auk and grebe sps with winter ducks; but for me, the significant highlight of diver sps movement of c 3000 birds/hour in Jan 2013 was memorable.

Sheppey; whether it's an historical / avian tour or a seven- raptor day, is a winter must; but so is Cliffe with its numerous surprises and as with winter 2015, a 90 sps day!

There have been some very regular attendees to the meetings, and it is always a great moment when there is admission to a new bird; whether Skua sps overhead at Oare; Hoopoe; Bee-eaters; Montague`s at Sandwich; or best of all (for me and others) Goshawk at Northward Hill----or was it the squadron`s evening flight of 13 Bittern bombers at Stodmarsh ----extraordinary!!



If one can eliminate the prospect of missing a rarity, the Kent Wildlife Conference in mid- October is a first-class yearly addition to the calendar, with the KOS regularly participating.

So, Field Trips remain a positive `Niche` on our calendar; the dynamics of birding continue to change; birding is a broad church; but for the KOS membership there is that niche providing social interaction which whilst not demanded by all; remains a positive for that 6% of the KOS membership!!

Please remain supportive as a new enthusiastic organiser with different ideas and venues, takes the Field Trip meetings forward.

Mike Roser

We are all very grateful to Mike for the work he has put in to Field meetings in the past five years and wish his successor, Ray O`Reilly well in the future.