

REPORT ON FIELD TRIP TO PADLEY

14 MAY 2016

Saturday 14th May dawned fine, but distinctly chilly for the middle of May, with woolly hats and gloves much in evidence as fourteen members and temporary members assembled at 8.30 by the "Ice Cream Van" on the B6521 Fox House to Grindleford road for our annual visit to look for summer migrants.

A stop near the old quarry at the top of the gorge produced little, but on climbing onto the path bordering Padley and Lawrence Field, we found our first **PIED FLYCATCHER**, a female, which hedge-hopped some distance with us.

Crossing Lawrence Field, the sun finally came out and, as if by magic, birds began to appear and sing.

Most obliging of all was a singing **TREE PIPIT** which spectacularly performed its characteristic song fight from the scattered trees, allowing everyone excellent views. Whilst watching the pipit, a male **REDSTART**, a bird we have struggled to get decent views of in recent years, flew across the field of view, allowing everyone to see what is one of our most stunning summer visitors. Finally, at this "hot spot", two **STONECHATS**, one a very bright male, were seen perched on a newly erected fence, allowing good views of a bird which is, hopefully, building up its numbers again following the severe winter of 2010/11.

Just before descending back into the woods, another male Redstart was located by its characteristic song, allowing everyone to tune into the bird, as well as getting even better views.

The simple, but distinctive, song of Pied Flycatcher had started to be heard, and as soon as we entered the woodland again it was evident that this species was present in good numbers this year. Multiple sightings of both males and females were made, both around the nest boxes and elsewhere.

Martin Hodgson had found **SPOTTED FLYCATCHER**, a species which is becoming scarce throughout the area and one we have struggled to catch up with in recent years, on an earlier "recce" of this area and, right on cue, a calling bird was located, again allowing everyone good views, and showing what an aerobat it is.

Another member had seen and heard Wood Warbler earlier in the week lower down the valley, just before the path reaches Grindleford Station but, despite an extensive search, we were unable to locate this species. As a ground nesting bird, this summer visitor undoubtedly suffers from dogs not being on leads in popular walking areas such as this.

The group then followed the main path back up the gorge, with more views of Pied Flycatcher and Redstart to add to the good views of "resident" species such as **TREE CREEPER**, **GOLDCREST**, **NUTHATCH** and territorial **GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER**. The cool spring seemed to help us this year; although mid-May, the trees were not fully "in leaf", making it easier than usual to follow birds in the canopy.

To round off the trip, two ice cream vans had appeared at our parking spot for any members wishing to celebrate an excellent morning. Thanks to all who attended for making this such a pleasant walk.

Ron Blagden