

Report of Field Trip to Derwentdale Saturday 12 March 2016

After the postponement of the trip the previous Saturday because of snow, Saturday 12 March was fine, although a little misty "on the tops", with the odd pocket of snow. By around 8.30am, about a dozen members were gathered at Windy Corner, overlooking Howden Res, for our regular spring trip to Derwentdale in search of raptors.

The first ninety minutes or so were very quiet; one kestrel and one common buzzard, a couple of curlew flying north and a few siskins in reservoir-side trees being the highlights.

A few members started to drift away around 10.00am, possibly lured by the earlier report of 44 whooper swans on Agden Res. Roy Twigg however remained optimistic; "something is going to happen" he said and, as if by magic, it did.

Andy Deighton had earlier walked further up the road towards West End. He returned to tell us he had seen at least one goshawk (and, as usual, had an excellent photo to prove it). Almost immediately, he picked up a bird further up the valley flying towards Windy Corner, which proved to be a goshawk. This bird was joined by another "gos", and we were treated to a prolonged fly past by an adult female and immature. They were then conveniently joined by a sparrowhawk, with the huge size difference between the two species immediately obvious.

In the next forty-five minutes or so a further three common buzzards were seen, together with distant views of a peregrine further up the valley. Tellingly, no ravens were either seen or heard.

Thanks to all the members who attended, and in particular to Roy Twigg and Andy Deighton for helping those present to get on to, and identify, the various raptors.