

## Wader Walk 17<sup>th</sup> Sept.

Following in the footsteps of the proverbial bird, eight intrepid enthusiasts braved the damp weather to make a 7 am start at the Yacht Club car park. Our punctuality was rewarded with close views of a host of birds in search of the proverbial worm. There were dunlins and sanderlings aplenty as well as ringed plovers, a couple of knots, a turnstone and a few oystercatchers.

When you consult the bird books it doesn't look that difficult to tell a sanderling from a dunlin. But when you see them in their varied intermediate autumn plumage in the flesh, and they're all rushing to and fro in a feeding frenzy, it can present quite a challenge; so it was very helpful of them to be so confiding. Perhaps someone had told them that, because of the wind, we'd all left our telescopes behind!

Apart from waders there was not a lot on offer on this, our first birdwalk of the autumn: just a few little grebes on the lagoon, some passing swallows and a bright white egret floating elegantly by. Not to mention gulls. They are of course so common that they seldom get a mention. Particularly worthy of mention is the 'common gull' itself which, at this time of year round here is not common at all. On the ground they are not that easy to distinguish from the much commoner black-headed gulls (yes, that's it – the ones without black heads!), but one or two of them were picked out amongst a flock resting on the golf course.

What with their inappropriate names and constantly changing plumage, it's no wonder we birders are often seen wandering around with our head in the clouds!

Ray Hume  
17th September 2016

