

Birdwalk 19th March 2017

Barely half a dozen of us met on this blustery but mild spring morning, in the area known to all in these parts as The Fitties.

Years ago this would have been a huge expanse of saltmarsh; but now, like so many once-wild places it has become tamed: forced to conform to the needs of Man. The scores of chalets and hundreds of static caravans are testament to the Modern Mindset: wildlife is all very well so long as it doesn't spoil our fun!

So it's somewhat ironic to realise that, despite the numerous holiday homesteads, this whole area has quite a lot going for it as far as wildlife is concerned. Saltmarsh, unkempt grassland, sand and mud and sea; not to mention reed-fringed watercourses and pools, plus a network of native trees of many species, which were planted a couple of decades or so ago to screen the caravans.

Late March is a time when we nature-lovers get excited, what with garden birds coming into song and gathering nesting material, emerging bumble bee queens and – best of all – the first spring migrants. We were not disappointed. The unmistakable song of the chiffchaff was heard in several places and we managed to get some really clear views of a couple of them.

On the brackish lagoon adjacent to the Tetney Marsh RSPB reserve there were, apart from the usual little grebes and mallards, several wigeon and shoveler ducks, while in a nearby tree we were treated to close views of a female kestrel who was hunting by sitting calmly in a tree before periodically pouncing down on some unsuspecting invertebrate.

The soundtrack of the day was provided mainly by twittering finches, chirruping sparrows and the unmissably loud song of the tiny wren.

All in all, a most rewarding ramble through a surprising variety of habitats

Ray Hume
19th March 2017

