

MCV Creeks & Saltmarsh Trip (49)

Thursday 4 January 2024, 9-10.50am

Keith Metcalf (MCV) welcomed everyone on board and thanked Isaac Hobby for skipping the trip.

The 'go-ahead' for the trip was in the balance for several days before we eventually decided that we had a short dry weather window between 9 and 11am before the heavens were likely to open, which is exactly what it did at about 11.50am.

After awaiting the last of our arrivals for 10 minutes, we decided that we had better not delay any further because of the predicted rain between 11am and noon.

Keith mentioned that he had seen a *Bar-headed Goose* feeding on stubble with Canada Geese close to Keyhaven Road and suggested to trippers that they may wish to depart towards Milford village at the end of the birding boat trip. Bar-headed Geese are usually escapes from duck pond collections, although this particular bird has been around with the Canada's all the way through winter between Pennington and New Lane (Milford-on-Sea).



Bar-headed Goose (escapee) feeding in Keyhaven Road 'stubble field' (Photo by Keith ©)

**Exploring the rivers, creeks and lakes at Keyhaven Marshes
in a flat-bottomed dory on a rising tide from Keyhaven Harbour**

Wind – light SW **Sea State** – calm with small wavelets when in more exposed water

Weather – cloudy, with no sunny periods but dry. Temp. 9 degrees C

Visibility – a little hazy mist in distance

General Observation – plenty of exposed mud for waders to feed. The large Dunlin flocks were unsettled and flighty.

Trip Leader: Keith Metcalf (MCV Trip organiser) and local birder for 36 years and author of several local wildlife and bird books.

Species recorded: Approximate numbers given for each species for whole trip, birds mostly spread across site and not recorded in the order birds were seen.

The first bird encountered from the boat as we left the pontoon was a *Kingfisher* and although it darted away, it conveniently landed on two or three boats as it kept just ahead.

Brent Goose – 500

Mute Swan – 2

Shelduck – 8

Wigeon – 80 (in two flights)

Little Grebe – 2

Teal – 2

Cormorant – 4

Long-tailed Duck – 1 female in Keyhaven River

Red-breasted Merganser – 14

Great Crested Grebe – 7

Little Egret – 8

Oystercatcher – 10

Golden Plover – flock c 300 flying over at height

typical of this species, with flocks generally moving east towards Pennington. Sometimes splitting into groups and on occasions forming random 'V'-shaped formations as they got higher in the sky.

Grey Plover – 12

Curlew – 7

Bar-tailed Godwit – 2

Turnstone – 5

Redshank – 2

Dunlin – 950 (flighty - in flocks, sometimes separate, sometimes together – largest gathering was in the region on 400-500 birds)

Pied Wagtail – 1

Herring Gull – 10

Black-headed Gull – 20

Great Black-backed Gull – 5

Oystercatcher – 10

Rock Pipit – 1 (flew up to Spit)

Canada Goose – 4

Raven – 2 (Castle)

Greenshank – 1

Lapwing – 70 in two groups

Knot – 20

Wigeon – 30

Number of species – 32

Bird of the Day: Long-tailed Duck



Long-tailed Duck



Great Crested Grebe



Bar-tailed Godwit – slightly upturned long bill



Dunlin



Grey Plover



Grey Plover in flight (black 'wing-pits')



Red-breasted Merganser in flight (male)



Cormorant



Raven



Brent Goose



Oystercatcher in flight

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