

REPORT ON THE CREEKS & SALTMARSH TRIP (51)

Thursday 15th February 2024

Trip organiser Keith Metcalf welcomed everyone and thanked Jason Crane for skippering the dory (a flat-bottomed boat that allows us into fairly shallow creeks). He introduced Julie Sims who has just joined the RSPB as Senior Conservation Officer having just left Bird Aware Solent. Keith said that Julie knows Hurst Spit and the local saltmarsh area extremely well and would be helping identify the birds we see.

Wind – light SW and brisk when travelling into the wind **Sea State** – calm in sheltered waters with small waves as we went into the open Solent waters to get to Stivers Lake.

Weather – cloudy, with no sunny periods but dry. Temp. 12 degrees C

Visibility – fair. **General Observations** – plenty of exposed mud for waders to feed.

The large *Dunlin* flocks were unsettled and flighty, allowing us good views as small flocks flew across our bow.



Dunlin in flight courtesy of John Anderson ©

Brent Goose - 400

Wigeon - 17

Long-tailed Duck - (M)

Great Crested Grebe - 3

Curlew - 10

Mute Swan - 2

Teal - 20

Red-breasted Merganser - 14

Oystercatcher - 18

Turnstone - 12

Shelduck - 25

Cormorant - 3

Little Egret - 8

Grey Plover - 20

Redshank - 8

Dunlin - 500

Black-headed Gull - 20

Lapwing -100

Buzzard - 2

Carrion Crow - 3

Herring Gull - 5

Great Black-backed Gull - 4

Mallard - 2

Marsh Harrier - 1

Canada Goose - 25

Pipit spp - 2

Spoonbill - 1

Avocet (1 flying over)

Number of species – 28

Bird of the Day: Avocet *

* First ever *Avocet* recorded on our Creeks & Saltmarsh Birding Trips



Photo courtesy of Chris Barrass ©



Atlantic Grey Seal seen hauling itself out of the water onto the mud bank

BIRD OBSERVATORY BIRDS

Several trippers joined Keith at the Keyhaven Bird Observatory where the following birds were also seen.

<i>Gadwall</i>	(40)	<i>Coot</i>	(40)	<i>Kingfisher</i>	(1 F)
<i>Little Grebe</i>	(20)	<i>Teal</i>	(20)	<i>Blue Tit</i>	(6)
<i>Dunnock</i>	(1)	<i>Great Tit</i>	(2)	<i>Chaffinch</i>	(1)
<i>House Sparrow</i>	(1)	<i>Long-tailed Tit</i>	(1)		



Male & Female Gadwall on The Pans at Keyhaven Bird Observatory by KM ©

**Male Gadwall
'up-ending' in
shallow water at
The Pans**





Redshank feeding in shallow water (KM) ©



Grey Plover in flight showing its black 'wing-pit' (Steve Laycock) and a wintering Grey Plover standing on mud-bank in typical stance (Note short black bill)

All photographs have copyright © We thank our photographers; Chris Barrass, John Anderson, Steve Laycock and Keith Metcalf for providing their superb photographs