

Saturday 07/11/09 0800-1115 Woolston EyesBright Sunny and Fresh after Rain

The learning curve was still being climbed by some of Team 'Thursday' for they had forgotten that they could have broken free of me on the 5<sup>th</sup> but instead alarm clocks had been set for some ridiculously early hour by four of the team and before they could understand what was happening to them they were being whisked onto a section of this 600 acre nature reserve which lies three miles short of Warrington!

The aim was to view the bird ringing that is carried out on behalf of The British Trust for Ornithology by several of the Woolston voluntary wardens but there were many checks on our progress into No3 bed (basically the reserve is divided into four dredging 'beds' with No1 being to the east of the M6 Thelwall Viaduct through to No4 in the West which is adjacent to an aluminium recycling plant) due to the variety of birds that were presented to us along our route.

A phone call to Kieran (the warden who has taken No3 bed as his second wife!) confirmed not only was he on site but he and his team had a few birds ready for ringing.

Hence we moved relatively swiftly to the ringing station and held our breath as each bird was carefully removed from its safe and secure storage bag. *(The birds fly into fine mist nets and sit within deep pockets- the ringer carefully extracts the bird- this is placed in a storage bag-then back at the station the bird is ringed, weighed, measured, noted in a logbook, admired and finally released totally unfazed by its experience!).*

Thus seen at close hand (and at this point the adage 'a bird in the hand' came to mind) the early risers saw Dunnock, Great Tit, Blue Tit, Chaffinch, Redwing and Moorhen!

A careful demonstration by Kieran of how the birds are extracted from the mist net then followed adding Willow Tit to our tally of closely inspected birds. At this point we decided upon a bit of R and R away from all this ringing activity and retired to the New John Morgan Hide.

The ringers soon disturbed our peace by *making* us view Firecrest and Water Rail that they had just caught—it was at this point we made a dash round No3 bed and off the site before they could *foister* any more birds onto our jaded retinas! Thus a dry eyed parting was made on Weir Lane with a threat of another course starting on the 15<sup>th</sup> of April next! Dave