

the Dorset Birding and Wildlife experience



## Illustrated Wildlife Talks

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Bateleur: South Africa  
Guillemot: Dorset  
Hoopoe: Spain

## Illustrated Wildlife Talks

### The Talk:

My talks are designed to last a 'standard' meeting of two halves, each half takes around 35-40 minutes to deliver. This should be taken as a guide only - I am able to adjust the talk timings to suit your requirements. *I can also offer most of my talks on 'zoom'.*

### Distance & Times:

I will normally travel within a 100-mile radius of Wareham, in Dorset, but would consider travelling further afield. I am available to attend morning, afternoon or evening meetings and can take bookings in advance to allow you to draw up your programme.

### Fee:

My fee for the talk depends on a number of variables so each booking will be individually quoted and will be inclusive of my travel and time. No deposit is required on confirmation of a booking but payment should be made on the day either by cash or a cheque made out to N. Gartshore. I can also accept a bank transfer, especially for zoom talks.

As part of my fee, I would bring along some publicity material to promote my birding and wildlife guiding service and a small selection of natural history books that I sell through my other business, Calluna Books.

### Equipment:

Most of my talks are in a power point format but two are slide presentations. I have my own equipment but, if possible, I would prefer to use equipment available at the venue (especially a screen and a projector table). Equipment requirements will be discussed on confirmation of your booking.

### Short Notice:

I am happy to stand in at short notice if one of your speakers pulls out (subject to being available).

### Confirmation:

When you confirm a booking please send me details of how to get to the venue (if I am unfamiliar with it). I will contact you a week or so before the talk to make sure that the final arrangements are okay. For zoom meetings a 'dry run' would be appreciated.



**Calluna Books**  
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*Specialists in out-of-print* NATURAL HISTORY BOOKS  
*Publisher of* THE BIRDWATCHER'S YEARBOOK

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## THE TALKS

### **Dorset's Best Birdwatching Sites [power point]**

Books on 'where to watch birds' have been available since the 1960's helping birdwatchers find birds around the UK (and overseas). In 2002 Buckingham Press published Norfolk, the first title in its 'Best Birdwatching Sites' series. The publisher's aim was to produce a guide that was more user-friendly compared to others on the market at the time. Six titles down the line it was Dorset's turn to get the BBS treatment and I was asked to write it. The talk starts by looking at the design and layout of the series and what was involved in writing the Dorset book before taking a trip around some of the sites and looking at the birds that make them the 'best' sites.

### **Poole Harbour and its Birds [power point]**

Poole Harbour is the largest natural harbour in the UK and is one of the largest in the world. Its international importance is recognised by the designations afforded it. From the rivers Frome and Piddle to the open sea, the harbour and its adjacent shores has a variety of habitats including reed beds, salt marsh, heathland and grassland providing for a wide range of bird species (many of which reach internationally important numbers). Human activity in the Harbour can often be in conflict with the bird interest - the talk looks at some of these issues, the birds and the beauty of this outstanding area.

### **Japan: Birding in the Land of the Rising Sun [power point]#**

Japan sits in the Palearctic region, the same as the UK, and so provides both familiar and unfamiliar species for the visiting UK bird watcher... these include magnificent eagles and graceful cranes. Together with a very different culture, any trip to the country will be an experience. The talk is a compilation of a number of visits made over a period of 15 years and shares the experiences of Japanese culture and the country's interesting birdlife.

[#For non-natural history groups I have a slightly modified version of this talk using the title 'A Birdwatcher in Japan']

### **Birding in Spain: Marshes, Mountain and Migration [power point]**

Ornithological interest in Spain dates back to the Victorian days and today the country is a popular birding destination amongst British birdwatchers. Over many years now I have been taking groups to the Coto Donana and Extremadura areas of the country and, more recently, to Tarifa, on the Strait of Gibraltar. With an interesting mixture of wetlands, open grasslands, mountains and forests, spring and autumn trips do not disappoint with an array of colourful birds and an abundance of birds of prey and wetland birds - many of the birds we consider 'rare' in the UK are common place here. The talk gives a taste of what to expect.

### **Lesvos: Jewel in the Aegean [power point]**

The Greek island of Lesvos has been on the birding map now for many years and has a reputation for seeing species that are scarce in Europe and for its spring bird migration. There is a narrow window of opportunity in late April/early May to experience, at times, large falls of birds. The talk visits a number of sites around the island to look at the variety of birds that may be expected: from the island specialities - to the likely migrants - to the unexpected. No two birding years on Lesvos are ever the same! Neil has led a number of spring tours to the island since 2010 – the talk is drawn from the experience of these visits.

### **A Sub-Antarctic Experience: The Prince Edward Islands [power point]**

Between Antarctica and the African continent are the Prince Edward Islands, one of a number of Sub-Antarctic island groups found around the southern hemisphere. In 1986/1987, I was employed by the Percy Fitzpatrick Institute for African Ornithology, through the University of Cape Town, as a field research assistant on this South African possession to collect data on giant petrels, Sub-Antarctic skua and a variety of albatross species. The talk looks at the island's history, its wildlife and the work I was involved with.

### **Wildlife Wanderings in South Africa [slides]**

My first experience of a 'big trip' abroad was to South Africa in 1984/85. South Africa is often described as 'a world in one country' with the game parks of Kwa-zulu/Natal & the Transvaal; the Cape coast; the Drakensberg mountains; the arid Karoo; and the unique Fynbos playing host to a wonderful variety of birds and mammals. South Africa was so much of an experience that I have revisited many times since 1984/85. The talk is a compilation of these trips looking at some of the country's landscapes, birds and mammals.

### **The Farne Islands: Northumberland's Seabird City [slides]**

A visit to a seabird colony is a wonderful experience for the bird watcher, particularly for the first time. The Farne Islands, owned by the National Trust, is one of the best seabird sites in the UK. With fourteen species of breeding seabirds and a further 150 species of birds recorded during the year there is always something to see. A large colony of grey seals breed on the islands from late-October through to early December and the islands have a historical interest dating back over 1500 years. The talk combines my experiences of four seasons working as a warden on the islands back in the 1980's.

### **PUBLICITY FOR THE TALKS**

I can provide some information and a few photos for you to use to promote the talk to your group.

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### **Dorset Birding & Wildlife Guides**

I am able to offer a birding and wildlife guiding service to individuals or groups visiting Dorset in search of birds and other natural history. Bookings can be taken for half-days or full days. Please ask for details.

*Updated: June 2022*