

November 2015 News

I just signed up to Hugh's #WasteNot pledge to stop perfectly good food from going to waste – join me by signing up here – <http://bit.ly/1Pjcluc>. As we spend a fair time in collecting and recycling waste on the Flower Bank [and at home and on the allotment] it seems a logical step to support this campaign. If you've not seen the programme you can find under www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b06nz15q

Another way people have been supporting Flower Bank is with our monthly walks programme [more on flowerbank.wordpress.com].

During the winter we will be including a Starling Safari Special, as we did last year. Instead of the walk starting at 10 am and ending with lunch, we meet at a pub, have a brief walk on the Avalon Marshes before looking for the Starling roost towards dusk. Numbers are building with at least 200,000 birds roosting in the reedbeds, with many more expected when it gets colder on the Continent. This is a tremendous spectacle – whether or not they make those fantastic shapes. Like all wildlife watching nothing is guaranteed but it's worth taking a chance to see.

A much more predictable outing is to watch the birds lift off in the morning – no aerial displays but a huge explosion which absolutely fill the sky. I went onto the Reserve on Saturday to find the roost and went back the next morning. It was a phenomenal display with the birds flying right over the top of where I was standing for minutes on end! There is one drawback to the morning visit is that you need to be on site at least half an hour before sunrise, and it's very nearly an hour's drive from here! The good news is that in winter the sunrise is about 0800.

For the morning lift-off I won't decide until a few days before when good conditions are forecast – I don't like getting up early to stand around in the wet.

For independent trips you can ring the Starling Hotline 07866554142 – the carpark is BA6 9SX

The one difference, particularly for the mornings, is that I will be using local knowledge as to where best to find the roost.

The normal walk will be Wednesday 27th January 2016. [this could be re-arranged at short notice in the event of very bad weather].

If you might be interested in either trip let me know. We ask for a donation of £3 towards RSPB.