

A Bluethroat (*Luscinia svecica*) in the Medina Valley

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On the 20th November 2003 at 11.15 Derek Hale observed an elusive bird near the estuary foreshore between West Medina Mills and Werrar (G.R. SZ506921). When disturbed it flew out of sight either into long grass or into the nearby bushes. Early in the afternoon the writer managed to obtain a brief but clear view of the bird through his telescope, sufficient time to observe the bird having a blue throat, a distinct eyestripe and as it flew into cover the classic tail pattern of a Bluethroat (*Luscinia svecica*). This male was viewed by a number of people until dusk.

Interestingly, a male was recorded not 600 metres to the north of this current sighting by the writer on September 14th, 1969. It was in reeds by the edge of a pool but unlike the latest sighting it showed very well.

The Bluethroat is a secretive robin-like bird that has two forms. The red-spotted form (*Luscinia svecica*) breeds in the damp birch forests of Scandinavia and Northern Russia and the white-spotted form (*Luscinia cyanecula*) breeds on dry stony slopes with bushes in central and southern Europe. A few individuals of the red-spotted form are observed on passage along the south coast and east coast of England in May/June and again in August/September favouring scrub and grassy areas.

In the last 60 years there have been only eight records from the Island, excluding this current sighting. The previous four were in the last decade in 1990, 1994, 1995 and 1999.

References

H. Heinzel et al, (1972). *Birds of Britain and Europe* Harper Collins
www.rspb.org.uk (accessed November, 2003).



A Kingfisher at MVC

One of a pair of Kingfishers recovering at the Medina Valley Centre after flying into a window on 11th November 2003

