

## Wildlife Report – March 2021

Marie and I carried out the wildlife count last Friday (19<sup>th</sup> March) and what an interesting day it turned out to be.

Before we got to the park, we saw quite a few birds in the sky over Shotgate Industrial Estate, obviously disturbed by something, and the something turned out to be a Peregrine Falcon! The first we have seen in Wickford, sadly not in the park but a good spot for the town. At the park, we heard the usual flock of Starlings in the bushes to the right of the gates and saw quite a few other birds along the track to the car park, adding Blue Tit, Robin, Magpie, Crow and Wood Pigeon to the list. A good sighting here were 3 Stock Doves flying across the track. Finally, a female Kestrel appeared hunting in the rough grass, very nice to see. In the park itself birds were very active in the hedgerows with lots of Blue Tits, Robins, Wrens and Great Tits all singing and flitting around. At the picnic tables we saw our first butterfly of the year in the park, a very nice looking Brimstone, which is usually the first one to be on the wing in spring. In the fields we spotted the usual Magpies, Crows and Wood Pigeons but also had a small flock of Jackdaws flying around. At the lake, the Canada Goose flock was again 7 and we also saw Mallard, Coot and Moorhen. Moving around the back of the lake we added Long Tailed Tits to the list and a couple of Squirrels in the trees. We stopped to look at the teasel fields and then something disturbed the birds in the park and surrounding fields and the sky over the park was completely filled with gulls. Trying to count all of these was impossible but we estimated at least 300 Black Headed Gulls, 20 Herring Gulls and 6 Lesser Black Backed Gulls! We also counted 11 Rooks in there too. What disturbed them all remained a mystery but this was a very spectacular sight. The walk back to the pavilion added a couple of Blackbirds to the total with a lone Song Thrush singing in the trees. Another interesting visit and with spring on the way, next month should be even better.

### Birds – 23 Species

Common Name	Scientific Name	Date	Total Count
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	19/03/2021	300
Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	19/03/2021	7
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	19/03/2021	10
Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	19/03/2021	2
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	19/03/2021	1
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	19/03/2021	1
Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	19/03/2021	4
Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	19/03/2021	17
Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	19/03/2021	11
Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	19/03/2021	2
Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	19/03/2021	12
Eurasian Wren (British)	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes indigenus</i>	19/03/2021	5
European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	19/03/2021	2
European Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	19/03/2021	20
European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	19/03/2021	23
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	19/03/2021	9
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	19/03/2021	6
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	19/03/2021	8
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	19/03/2021	4
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	19/03/2021	11
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	19/03/2021	1
Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>	19/03/2021	3
Western Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	19/03/2021	6

### Butterflies – 1 Species

Common Name	Scientific Name	Date	Total Count
Brimstone	<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>	19/03/2021	1

### Mammals – 1 Species

Common Name	Scientific Name	Date	Total Count
Eastern Grey Squirrel	<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>	19/03/2021	2

If all goes to plan, April should be the first month when we can all meet up for the wildlife walk – fingers crossed.

### Martin