

Wildlife Walk – November 2021

The latest wildlife walk in the Park took place on Wednesday 10th November at the new time of 10.30am. It was another mild late autumn day but had been drizzling earlier and was cloudy. We got off to a good start with a Great Spotted Woodpecker flying around the park gates area and landing in one of the trees to give good views. Birds were quite active along the road to the car park and this continued into the park itself. In particular, Blackbirds and Robins were singing and showing in the hedgerows. Whether these are residents or visitors from Europe we will never know but we can assume that some of them will be winter migrants. Another bird seen was the Chaffinch, which we have hardly seen this year, again these could be birds arriving here from Europe for the winter. We had a double surprise at the lake, firstly the geese have disappeared again and secondly, we added a new bird to the list for the second month in a row – a Little Grebe, “fishing” at the island and then later along the far reed bed. A nice addition to the park list. My favourite part of the day came as we approached the large mound. In the hedges at the base of the mound, a very large mixed flock of Blue and Long Tailed Tits were moving along through the branches. It was great seeing these little birds moving along in such big numbers, although they were difficult to count. At the same time, we had a Kestrel fly overhead to give us some good views.

Other than birds, along the boardwalk, Colin spotted a very nice specimen of “Woody Nightshade” and a couple of photographs are attached. Despite being a member of the nightshade family, 'Woody Nightshade' (also known as Bittersweet) is one of the less toxic plants in this group, although its berries are still poisonous. Found in hedgerows, gardens and even on shingle beaches, its purple flowers appear from May to September, and are followed by clusters of bright red berries. You can see this at the end of the first stretch of the boardwalk where it turns right but I suspect the berries won't last too long.

Being mild, a few insects were still active and we saw a Bee, a wasp and I also managed to get a couple of photos of a Harlequin Ladybird, which was on the windowsill of the pavilion. You can identify this as a Harlequin as its spots do not match any of our native species and if you look closely there is a small whitish triangle on its head, which our similar native species do not have. (Thanks to google for this info....)

Another interesting walk in the park and even though we are all very familiar with the park and its wildlife, there are always surprises like the Little Grebe to find. Sighting details are below, on page 2:



'Woody Nightshade' (also known as Bittersweet)



Harlequin Ladybird

Birds – 24 Species

Common Name	Scientific Name	Date	Total Count	Comments
Black-headed Gull	Chroicocephalus ridibundus	10/11/2021	15	A few flying around the park, possibly the start of the build up of the large flocks we saw last winter.
Carrion Crow	Corvus corone	10/11/2021	5	Usual birds around the park.
Cetti's Warbler	Cettia cetti	10/11/2021	1	One only singing in the reed beds around the lake.
Common Blackbird	Turdus merula	10/11/2021	10	A good number active in the park. Some may be winter migrants from Europe.
Common Chaffinch	Fringilla coelebs	10/11/2021	3	At least 2 males and 1 female seen/heard. Again could be winter migrants.
Common Kestrel	Falco tinnunculus	10/11/2021	1	Nice sighting near the mound where it gave a good hovering display.
Common Moorhen	Gallinula chloropus	10/11/2021	3	At the lake.
Common Starling	Sturnus vulgaris	10/11/2021	42	A couple of flocks flying around the park. Another bird where numbers are boosted by winter migrants.
Common Wood Pigeon	Columba palumbus	10/11/2021	40	Good numbers in the park but hard to accurately count as they are so active.
Dunnock	Prunella modularis	10/11/2021	1	Just one heard singing near the bridge.
Eurasian Blue Tit	Cyanistes caeruleus	10/11/2021	35	A few in the hedgerows but a large flock at the mound.
Eurasian Collared Dove	Streptopelia decaocto	10/11/2021	1	Just one with Wood Pigeons near the car park.
Eurasian Coot	Fulica atra	10/11/2021	2	At the lake.
Eurasian Magpie	Pica pica	10/11/2021	9	Usual birds around the park.
Eurasian Wren	Troglodytes troglodytes	10/11/2021	1	One heard singing at the bridge.
European Goldfinch	Carduelis carduelis	10/11/2021	12	Lots of these this month, some feeding on the alders, which is probably the best place to see this lovely bird at the moment.
European Robin	Erithacus rubecula	10/11/2021	18	Lots of Robins active in the hedgerows this month.
Great Cormorant	Phalacrocorax carbo	10/11/2021	3	A single bird then 2 together flying overhead.
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Dendrocopos major	10/11/2021	1	Near the entrance gates. Flew across the road then landed in a tree for good views.
Great Tit	Parus major	10/11/2021	1	A solitary bird with the large mixed flock near the mound.
Grey Heron	Ardea cinerea	10/11/2021	1	Flying over the field to the left of the stream.
Little Grebe	Tachybaptus ruficollis	10/11/2021	1	A good sighting of this nice little bird at the lake. A first for our walk list.
Long-tailed Tit	Aegithalos caudatus	10/11/2021	15	At least this number at the mound in the mixed flock. Very nice to see so many.
Mallard	Anas platyrhynchos	10/11/2021	2	Surprisingly not at the lake. Both seen flying overhead.

Mammals – 1 Species

Common Name	Scientific Name	Date	Total Count	Comments
Eastern Grey Squirrel	Sciurus carolinensis	10/11/2021	2	One in the large oak behind the lake and another further around the path. More or less in the same place we saw them last time.

The next and final walk for 2021 will take place on **Wednesday 15th December at 10.30am**. There is a rumour that festive refreshments may be available but that's not my department of course! I will be in touch nearer the time with full details.

Martin Singleton