



Skylarks



A Message from the Committee

Welcome to the latest edition of the Skylarks newsletter. We hope you have been enjoying the lovely summer, a little too hot at times but sunshine is always very welcome.

It was unfortunate that we had to cancel the Bird Song Walk in April, the next walk round the park will be the Autumn Walk with Apple Theme Refreshments on Sunday 30th October. The event last year was very popular so we will look forward to seeing you again this year.

The Picnic in the Park event in June was very enjoyable, followed in July by the interesting Moth and Stargazing evening, reports of both written by Martin Singleton are featured in this issue. A comprehensive report of the ever popular monthly Wildlife Walks led by Martin in July is also included.

The Wick Country Park Photographic Competition is underway so everyone please get camera clicking of all the many wonderful features and wildlife in the park.

There will be prizes awarded to the winner and the runner up in each of two classes - adults and children under the age of 16. The winning photo will be the one that in the opinion of the judges best promotes the features of the Wick Country Park. A copy of the competition rules is included in the newsletter.



**Friends of the
Wick Country
Park -
Photographic
Competition
Launch**

The competition will run throughout 2022 and will conclude with the prize-giving at the AGM in January 2023. Please see the website for further details

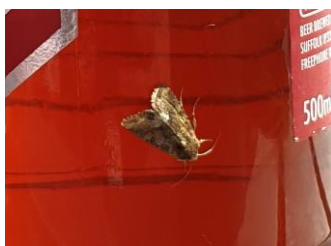
www.friendsofthewickcountrypark.co.uk

Wick Country Park – Picnic in the Park

Our first wildlife picnic took place on Saturday 11th June. Weather was fine and sunny but very windy at times. The large windbreak seemed a good idea in theory but proved hard to set up and fell down pretty quickly - a lesson for next year, work out how to set it up before bringing it along! Anyway, once settled we had a very pleasant afternoon watching the wildlife of the lake and listening to the birds singing, which included Lesser Whitethroat and Reed Warbler. We also had a moth land on my beer bottle, which was later identified as a probable Marbled Minor. Highlight of the day was a Common Tern fishing the lake and successfully catching a few small ones. A very pleasant day and certainly something we will repeat next year



Common Tern



Marbled Minor



Lesser Whitethroat



Reed Warbler

During the afternoon 18 species of birds were spotted - Barn Swallow, Black-headed Gull, Canada Goose, Carrion Crow, Common Chiffchaff, Common Moorhen, Common Tern, Common Wood Pigeon, Dunnock, Eurasian Coot, Eurasian Magpie, Eurasian Reed Warbler, European Herring Gull, Feral Pigeon (Feral Rock Dove), Grey Heron, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Lesser Whitethroat, Mallard.

(Written by Martin Singleton)

Wick Country Park - Moth and Stargazing Evening

The Moth Night took place on Friday 1st July. As with all things nature related the weather plays a big part in what you see, and sadly we had a cool, breezy, and fairly clear night, which is not normally good for attracting moths. However, we did attract some moths to the light and all of us had an enjoyable evening trying to identify what we caught in the jars. At the end of the night, we had a total of 11 species – 10 of which are new for the park list.



As for star gazing, we did not see any planets this time around but had some good views of some nice crescent moon craters before it disappeared behind the trees. Let's hope for better weather next year! Full sighting details are below:

Common Name	Scientific Name	Total Count
Anania crocealis	Anania crocealis	1
Bright-line Brown-eye	Lacanobia oleracea	1
Buff Ermine	Spilosoma luteum	1
Common Emerald	Hemithea aestivaria	1
Common Footman	Eilema lurideola	2
Common Rustic	Mesapamea secalis	1
Common Wainscot	Mythimna pallens	2

Heart And Dart	Agrotis exclamationis	1
Lunar-spotted Pinion	Cosmia pyralina	1
The Magpie	Abraxas grossulariata	1
The Spectacle	Abrostola tripartite	1

(Written by Martin Singleton)

Wick Country Park - Wildlife Sightings

The July wildlife walk in the park took place on Wednesday 20th July. Thankfully, temperatures had dropped from the near 40oC of the previous days but it was still sunny and warm but a bit breezy. The day got off to a good start for us when on the way to the park, Marie spotted a Slow Worm (*Anguis fragilis*), slithering along the path. Sadly, despite its name, it was still too fast for me to get the camera out in time!

In the park itself, it was soon apparent that after 2 days of record temperatures, it would be a good day for butterflies with several Gatekeepers and various whites seen on the car park road. And this continued along the park hedgerows, especially those with plenty of brambles, all containing lots of butterflies of various species but dominated by Gatekeepers. In the grasses we found plenty of Meadow Browns and my particular favourite the Marbled White. We also managed to identify at least one, probably two Small Skippers but another skipper later evaded identification. Another small butterfly we found was the Common Blue with a few beautiful specimens seen. You only really appreciate these with a good view via binoculars.



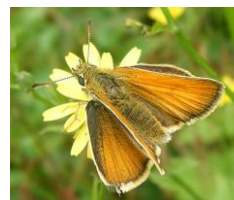
Gatekeeper



Meadow Brown



Marbled White



Small Skipper



Common Blue

I think I zoned out on birds as there were so many interesting insects to see but at the lake, as well as the usual water birds, there was a family of Green Woodpeckers. These eventually flew to the trees on the large mound where we saw another two, making a total of 5 – great to see. Also at the lake, we saw several Black Tailed Skimmers and Blue Tailed Damselflies, including two mating. As we left the lake, in the hedges we found a web of the Labyrinth Spider (*Agelena labyrinthica*) which had captured a bumble bee. The web is like a funnel but further down the funnel is a labyrinth of tunnels which gives this spider its name. Finally, I would like to thank Barbara & Richard Chapman for compiling a list of flowering plants they found on the day, the number of which really surprised me. We have never really recorded plants before, so here for the first time, we have a list of what can be seen at this time of year.

Full sighting details can be found on the Friends of the Wick Country Park website.

(Written by Martin Singleton)

Wick Country Park - Bat Watch & Night Walk



On the evening of Saturday 6th August, we were met by Ella of the Essex Bat Group at the gates of the Wick Country Park who gave us an overview of the bats in the UK along with the work the Bat Group carry out. Ella then went on to explain about the bats we would probably expect to find around the park, the Pipistrelle, either Common or Soprano. Ella explained part of the work the Essex Bat Group do is to take in injured bats and attempt to nurse them back to good health, three injured bats in a box were brought so that we could see up close as to how tiny they are. Having been given plenty of information we set off around the park with electronic bat detectors in hand, every now and then picking up the quick clicking sound to inform us that bats were nearby, stopping to try to see them flying above - both Common and Soprano Pipistrelles were identified. An interesting and informative evening was enjoyed by all, many thanks to Ella for her time in leading the walk and improving our knowledge about bats.



Friends of the Wick Country Park Photographic Competition Rules 2022



1. The competition is administered by the Friends of the Wick Country Park and aims to promote the park to the local community and is open to residents living in Wickford and surrounding area.
2. The competition closes at midnight on 31/12/2022. The picture must be taken during 2022 and the prize winners will be announced at the AGM in January 2023.
3. There are two classes for entry: adults and juniors (under 16 years).
4. Entrants may submit up to 3 photos as digital photos only. All entries must be taken of the Wick Country Park during 2022.
5. Entries may be taken on any photographic device, including cameras or phones and feature any picture taken within the Wick Country Park that might encourage more visitors. This includes landscapes, weather events, sunrise / sunset, people having fun, nature and wildlife shots.
6. Images must not be digitally enhanced. The judges reserve the right to exclude any image they may believe to have been excessively treated so as to alter its authenticity.
7. Entrants must not be professional photographers, nor will they have offered any of their entries for sale or have been paid for publication of their entries.
8. There is no entrance fee for the competition. The digital entries should be sent to the email address photocomp@friendsofthewickcountrypark.co.uk. The email should include your full name, postcode, contact number and, if under 16, the age and permission from the parent or Guardian. All entries will receive an automated 'your entry has been received' message
9. All entries will be judged in the opinion of the judging panel to be the best that promote the features of the Wick Country Park. The decision of the judges is final.
10. There will be 2 prizes in each class:
Adult Class Winner - £50
Adult Class Runner Up - £25
Junior Class Winner - £30
Junior Class Runner Up - £15
11. All entries must be the original work of the entrant and must not infringe the rights of any other party. Additionally, permission must be obtained from any people featured in their photographs and no laws, including park bylaws, must have been breached.
12. Entrants will retain copyright of the photographs they submit, by entering the competition they grant The Friends of the Wick Country Park the rights to publish and exhibit on the website, "Skylarks" newsletter and Facebook page with no fees payable. Entrants whose photographs are one of the finalists also agree to take part in post-competition publicity.
13. By entering the competition, entrants will be deemed to have agreed to be bound by these rules and the judges reserves the right to exclude any entry from the competition at any time.
14. If the Friends of the Wick Country Park committee is unable to contact a winner they reserve the right to offer the prize to a runner up.
15. The Friends of the Wick Country Park reserves the right to cancel the competition or alter any of the rules at any stage if deemed necessary or if circumstances arise outside of their control.



WICK COUNTRY PARK EVENTS 2022



The following events for 2022 have been organised by the Friends of the Wick Country Park.

*All these events start at or near to the **Wick Country Park Pavilion** and for most events booking is not required, please see the particular event for details. Toilets, car-parking, cycle racks, and refreshments are available at all events.*

EVENT Please click on the link for full details	DATE	DETAILS
Wick-ed Gardeners	Next date: please see the Latest News page .	Great news! The new Wick Gardening Group - the Wick-ed Gardeners - is now meeting regularly in its new guise. For the next date, please see the Latest News page . Meet outside the Pavilion. Please bring your own gardening gloves. Tools will be provided, but if you have your own favourite gardening tool/s please feel free to bring your own. Refreshments will be provided.
Annual Photographic Competition	Throughout 2022	Please check out the <i>Latest News</i> page via the link to the left for confirmation of the details. But meanwhile, start taking, and saving, your photos in and around the Park!
Monthly Nature Walks	Dates for 2022: February 16th March 16th April 20th May 18th June 15th July 20th, August 17 th September 21st October 19th November 16th December 14 th	Starting at 10.30a.m. Enjoy a sociable and leisurely walk of approx 1 - 1.5 hours around the Park, led by Martin Singleton, and assisted by other experts from the Wickford Wildlife Society to watch and listen to the varied wildlife in the Park. If you come throughout the year you may be amazed at the changing patterns of sightings throughout the seasons. For further details and to confirm the next date, please contact Martin Singleton
Autumn Walk with Apple Theme Refreshments	30/10/2022	Time 10am - Autumn Walk with apple theme refreshments




Come along to the Wick Country Park and enjoy a walk and see the wildlife. If you do make any good wildlife sightings, please share them by sending an email to contact_us@friendsofthewickcountrypark.co.uk and we will add them to the 'Nature Notes' on the website. If you could manage a picture or two that would be even better!

Friends of the Wick Country Park Committee:

Christine Lee - Acting Chairperson, Hazel Broomfield - Treasurer, Marie Singleton - Secretary,
Hannah Cooper - Membership Secretary, Alaric Cundy - Webmaster
Peter Bates – Skylarks 3K Race Events

 Friends of the Wick Country Park

 Wickford Wombles

Neighbourhood Policing Team: Telephone 0300 333 4444 or 07875 003503