

## **Birds and other wildlife recorded in November & December 2019**

It's been pretty quiet in the woods for the last couple of months, so here is a joint report for both November and December. Most of the species occurred in both months. Red Kites were seen on many occasions and are seen almost daily over the nearby estate. Woodpigeons and the more subdued Stock Doves were also around. Both of the common woodpeckers – Great-spotted and Green were heard, if not seen, on many visits. All the common corvids were also active: Magpies, Jackdaws (9 pairs were spotted investigating nests in the rookery area in early December) Rooks, Jays (often screaming at each other), and Carrion Crows. At the opposite end of the size scale, it was good to have records of Goldcrest, the smallest British bird. All of the common tits were recorded: Blue Tit, Great Tit and Coal Tit, and so were there distant cousins the Long-tailed Tits (usually still in small parties, calling to each other). Nuthatches were seen or heard on most visits, as were Wren, Blackbird and Robin. Listen out now for Mistle Thrush – they are early breeders and you may well hear one singing from a high perch in January. Finally, three finches were recorded – Chaffinch, Goldfinch and Bullfinch. Look out for winter finches – Siskins and Bramblings (or Ramblings as my spell-checker suggested!).

The only mammal recorded was Grey Squirrel, but we have reason to believe that the Badgers may be around.

Please send in your records. Let's start 2020 with a lot of observations! Happy new Nature Year.

## **Birds and other wildlife recorded in October 2019**

Another fairly quiet month – but as we edge into chilly November there should be more species about, and birds in greater abundance. This month's species were: Common Buzzard, Woodpigeon (no Stock Dove around?). Both common woodpeckers were recorded – Green and Greater-spotted. Also, all the common corvids: Magpie, Jackdaw, Rook (a flock of about 10 on the 17th), Jay and Carrion Crow. Blue and Great Tits were met with on most visits – no Coal Tits observed (though I can boast a regular in my garden!). Long-tailed Tits were encountered in small flocks, making their rather delightful contact calls. Nuthatches were about as were Wren and Blackbird and Robin. (No Dunnocks?) Finally, there were small groups of Goldfinch, which is now a very successful species, Chaffinch and Bullfinch.

Grey Squirrel was the only mammal recorded, though there are signs of fresh Badger activity. A Common Darter was also seen early in the month.

Eyes and ears open now for winter thrushes and other interesting winter visitors!

## **Birds and other wildlife recorded in September 2019**

Another quiet month – the birds are in post breeding moult and vulnerability – and there haven't been many records sent in! Please don't leave the recording to just 2 or 3 people; it doesn't matter if it's something regarded as common – that doesn't mean anyone else has recorded it! Common birds have a habit of suddenly not being common anymore – witness the House Sparrow demise in cities.

So, this month – Woodpigeons, all the common corvids: Magpie, Jackdaw, Rook (not many), Jays (quite a number on several occasions) and Carrion Crow. Small flocks of Blue and Great Tits were seen, as well as several Long-tailed Tit flocks, Nuthatches, a Chiffchaff – they occasionally overwinter in Britain, so look out for them, Wren, Blackbird, Robin and Greenfinch. A disappointingly short list!

A few Grey Squirrels were chattering about, and several early autumn butterflies were recorded including Large White, Speckled Wood and Meadow Brown

## **Birds and other wildlife recorded in August 2019**

August is always a quiet month; the breeding season is over, and many birds are undergoing their annual moult which takes a lot of energy and makes them more vulnerable. However, there were still numerous birds to be enjoyed in the woods, including overflying Common Buzzards. Stock Dove and Woodpigeon were recorded regularly as were both the common woodpeckers – Green and Great-spotted. Also, the

common members of the crow family were seen and heard: Magpie, Jackdaw, Jay and Carrion Crow – but no Rooks? They are probably feeding up in nearby fields, getting themselves ready for winter and the start of the next breeding season; we hope they will do well next spring. Blue Tit, Great Tit and the often overlooked, Coal Tit were recorded, and Nuthatches were heard on most visits. Chiffchaffs were heard calling – and some may remain over winter. Finally, Wrens, Blackbirds and Robins were also recorded. Only two or three people send in their records – please send in what you see, even if it is something you think is very common that other people will have seen! Several butterfly species were recorded: Large White, Small White, Speckled Wood, Painted Lady and Red Admiral – but again there are far more than these around – and some will be still flying in September, so do look out for them!

### **Birds and other wildlife recorded in July 2019**

The summer months are usually quiet for birds; breeding is largely over – though some species will continue to breed while there is food available – and many are in their post-breeding moult which leaves them vulnerable. However, in July there were still many species to be seen in and over Linslade Woods. Common Buzzards were about as were the occasional Stock Dove and frequent Woodpigeons. A few Swifts were seen – possibly the final sightings for the year as they are only here for a few short months before heading back to Africa. Green Woodpeckers were seen on a few occasions, but no Great-Spotted Woodpeckers were recorded (though they were certainly around!). All the common corvids were seen: Magpie, Jackdaw, Rook, Jay and Carrion Crow. The diminutive Goldcrest was heard on several occasions, and Tits were regularly observed: Great, Blue, Coal and the very distantly related Long-tailed Tit. Nuthatches were about. Only two warblers were noted: Chiffchaff and Whitethroat. Those all-year round regulars, Wren, Blackbird, Robin and Dunnock were about as were House Sparrows. Finally, three finches: Chaffinch, Goldfinch and Bullfinch. Sun and warmth brings out the butterflies, and several species were recorded, including Marbled White, Meadow Brown, Ringlet, Large and Small White, Comma and Red Admiral.

### **Birds and other wildlife recorded in June 2019**

All the summer migrants have arrived, the breeding season is well underway, and even over for some species. June has proved to be a quiet month in Linslade Woods; many people are on holiday and so fewer records of birds and other wildlife are sent! Red Kites and Buzzards were seen and heard over the woodland canopy. Woodpigeons and Stock Doves called from the trees. Overhead Swifts were observed – they are here for only a few months, May to August – and Leighton Buzzard is still a good stronghold of these aerial masters who spend virtually all their lives on the wing except when actually breeding. Great-spotted and Green Woodpeckers were fairly frequently encountered as were the corvids: Magpie, Jackdaw, Jay and Carrion Crow. But nobody recorded a Rook!

There are plenty of Great and Blue Tits around, many of them nesting in the boxes dotted around the new wood. Skylarks sang from the nearby fields, and Long-tailed Tits were heard, their contact calls not so common during the actual breeding season. Nuthatches and Treecreepers were heard (many older people are no longer able to hear the high-pitched calls of the latter). Three summer migrant warblers were found: Blackcap, Garden Warbler and Chiffchaff, and the resident Wren, Blackbird, Robin, Dunnock were also around in good numbers. House Sparrows were near the urban fringes of the wood. Both Bullfinches and Greenfinches were heard but nobody recorded a Chaffinch or a Goldfinch normally the most common of the finches!

Many butterflies of high summer have now been seen: Meadow Brown, Ringlet, Marbled White, Large White, Green-veined White, Small Skipper – and there are plenty more species to be found, so - Please send in your records

### **Birds and other wildlife recorded in May 2019**

As usual there were occasional glimpses of a Red Kite, and several views of Buzzards, once of a single Buzzard being harried by three Crows, and on another occasion three Buzzards circling in the sky together. All the common members of the pigeon family were seen: Collared Dove, Woodpigeon and Stock Dove. The first Swifts were sighted on the 19th – they seem to be late this year, but, listen and watch out for their screaming parties over the houses. Great-spotted Woodpeckers were sighted but no Greens recorded this month. Of the corvids there were plenty of records – Magpies, breeding Jackdaws, Jays, Carrion Crows and of course, Rooks – seen with fledged young by the 19th. The smaller birds were plentiful: a few records

of Goldcrest, and many of Blue, Great and Long-tailed Tits (no Coal Tits, however). Skylarks sang in nearby fields – though not in the former biofuel field which seems to have been ploughed in and covered with stinking slurry.

Nuthatches called frequently, and there were many records of warblers: Blackcap, Garden Warbler, Chiffchaff and Whitethroat. Wrens, Blackbirds and Song Thrushes were encountered regularly as were Robin and Dunnock. House Sparrows chirped away near the edge of the wood, and two finches were listed: Chaffinch and Goldfinch.

Other interesting wildlife: The Common-spotted Orchids are now blooming; there is plenty of Common Vetch about, and many flowering spikes of Grass Vetchling. The bridleway from Soulbury Road is really quite rich in wildflowers including Cow Parsley, Green Alkanet, Herb Robert, Wintercress, Wood Avens and Greater Stitchwort. And some Great Burnet was found at the triangle near the Knaves Hill entrance – a good find! There are plenty of insects to record – Rory would be glad to receive your records, especially of dragonflies and damselflies.

### **Birds and other wildlife recorded in April 2019**

A Common Buzzard was seen more than once – when are they going to nest in the wood? The three common members of the pigeon family were around: Stock Dove, Woodpigeon, and Collared Dove, as were the two woodpecker species: Green and Great-spotted. All the expected corvids were seen, often calling and squabbling noisily from the trees: Magpie, Jay, Jackdaw, Carrion Crow and Rook. The Rooks seem to have had 10 active nests this year, though there are others which have not been used. Blue Tits, Great Tits and Long-tailed Tits were recorded but nobody registered a Coal Tit; they are best looked for in the coniferous trees, with calls and songs higher and lighter than the vociferous Great Tits. Nuthatches were regularly seen.

Many summer migrants were recorded; Blackcap (2 on the 11th), Willow Warbler (the first on the 17th), Garden Warbler (on the 27th) and at least four Chiffchaffs on the 11th. Humbling to think that these small birds have travelled from Africa to Linslade. Wrens and Blackbirds were commonly observed, and Song Thrushes were heard in full song; Robins and Dunnocks were also regulars. Finally, the finches: Chaffinch, Goldfinch and Bullfinch (three of the latter on the 11th)

Please keep those records coming in – any wildlife of interest to you will be of interest to other users of our woods!

### **Birds and other wildlife recorded in March 2019**

2 Common Buzzards were seen on the 26th; no other birds of prey were reported this month, though Red Kites are seen almost daily over the nearby houses. Stock Doves and Woodpigeons both seen. Green Woodpeckers were seen and heard and there were several sightings of Great-spotted Woodpeckers; two were drumming - a territorial action - on the 24th. Magpies were sighted on most visits. The numbers of Jackdaws seem to be on the increase - 20 were encountered on the 17th, and a few days later one was seen investigating a likely nest hole. The Rookery appears to have around 10 active nests, though it is quite difficult to be accurate with increasing activity, and leaf burst. Jays and Carrion Crows were seen on most visits. It is certainly the breeding season now - on more than one occasion a Blue Tit was observed entering a nest box; last year virtually all the boxes were used. Great Tit, Coal Tit and Long-tailed Tits were also seen. Skylarks sang from nearby fields.

On 26th three Nuthatches called from different areas of the wood, and the first Blackcap was heard singing on 26th. Two days earlier the first Chiffchaff was heard in song – and now there are many of them “chiff-chaffing” away! Wren, Blackbird and Song Thrush (not very common now) were heard, as were Robin and Dunnock. Finally, a trio of finches: Chaffinch, Goldfinch and Bullfinch.

Look out for flowering Primroses, Dog's Mercury and Lesser Celandines, and patches of delicate Wood Anemones. There is even a little patch of flowering Gorse, and the Bluebells are just beginning to come into flower in one or two places.

Check for insects too – Brimstones, an Orange-tip and lots of 7-spot Ladybirds have been seen.

## **Birds and other wildlife recorded in February 2019**

Two Red Kites were seen on the 25th, and a single Buzzard were recorded – no Sparrowhawk this month. There were also Black-headed Gulls flying over. This month we had not only Woodpigeon and their modest cousin the Stock Dove, but also Collared Doves. Green Woodpeckers were around, and there is quite a lot of activity from the Great-spotted Woodpeckers, sometimes drumming against a rival, to try to establish a territory. All the common corvids were recorded: Magpie, Jackdaw, Crow and Jay and there were 12 Rooks on the 11th, but alas only 2 nests so far. A Goldcrest was heard and eventually seen, and there were of course plenty of Blue and Great Tits, and some Long-tailed Tits in low numbers. Skylarks sang – not in the wood but in the nearby farmland, and their song can be heard from a great distance. Nuthatch calls were also recorded, as were the calls and song of the diminutive Wren – a lot of volume from a small bird! It is always a pleasure to hear Song Thrushes and two were giving forth on the 21st. Song is a sure sign that birds are getting ready for breeding – safeguarding a territory and attracting a mate. Dunnocks, whose breeding habits are far too irregular to describe on our website, and Robins, made themselves heard; and finally, three of the finch species were reported: Chaffinch, Goldfinch and Bullfinch. No Greenfinches this month?

In the unexpected warm – hot – weather butterflies were recorded certainly a Brimstone in the woods and probably many more unreported. Please record all your sightings!

The Snowdrops in the old wood seem to have diminished this year – only a couple of flowering spikes. But as I write (early March) there are plenty of Primroses showing, and Ground Ivy flowering, and the Bluebell shoots are doing very well, spreading themselves slowly but surely into the more recently wooded areas.

## **Birds and other wildlife Recorded in January 2019**

This month a Red Kite was the only reported raptor. Wood pigeon of course but no Stock Dove (though we're sure they are there). A Tawny Owl was heard – hopefully a pair will breed again this year. Green Woodpeckers were around as were Great-spotted Woodpeckers; in fact, three were heard drumming on the 26th – and caused each other some consternation. Drumming is the woodpecker's equivalent of song and there was no doubt a territorial dispute going on. The usual corvids were around: Magpie, Jay, Jackdaw (15 on the 20th), Rook and Carrion Crow. Rooks are early nesters so keep an eye out! A Goldcrest was observed, and so were Blue Tit, Great Tit and Long-tailed Tits. Several Nuthatches have been heard and seen, and a Treecreeper (always there but hard to see). Blackbird and Song Thrush, and one winter thrush, a Redwing. And of course, Robin and Dunnock were also found. Finally, to the finch family – Chaffinch, Goldfinch and Bullfinch. No mammals or insects were recorded this month – please keep looking and listening; there's a lot about if you look hard enough!