

Birds and other wildlife recorded in December 2022

A Grey Heron was seen in flight over the woods on the 17th. Three birds of prey were recorded: Red Kite (pretty regularly), Buzzard and Kestrel. The occasional nocturnal call of a Tawny Owl was detected – their notes carry quite a distance. A flock of 10 Lapwings flew over on the 15th. Perhaps the most exciting record was that of a Woodcock seen flying into the wood from nearby rough grassland; these birds are not rare but very under-recorded as they are crepuscular (dusk time) in habit and are often only detected by their call. There is a Woodcock Survey being run by the BTO this season – check it out! Another flyover was herring Gull. Woodpigeons were around but nobody recorded Stock Dove. Both the common woodpeckers – Great-spotted and Green were about as were the usual corvids: Magpie, Jay, Jackdaw, Rook, and Carrion Crow. Check the trees for Rooks – their nesting preferences have been very mobile in recent years; they are early nesters so there should be activity in January. In complete size contrast Goldcrests have been seen – look out for these tiny but colourful birds, especially near the larches and other conifers. The regular tits have been around: Blue Tit, Great Tit, Coal Tit (often overlooked and very speedy), and their distant relative the Long-tailed Tit. Nuthatch and Treecreeper also recorded. Blackbirds are common and now the “Scandinavian thrushes”, Redwing and Fieldfare have also been found – but no record of Song Thrush! Robins and Dunnocks and House Sparrows were also encountered. Finally, to the finches: on the 15th of the month there were 5 Chaffinches, 3 Greenfinches, 2 Bullfinches and 7 Goldies – a very pleasing sight for the observer. All in all, 31 species of birds recorded this month.

Several **mammals** were seen: Muntjac, Red Fox, 2 Roe Deer on 2 separate occasions, and one sighting of 3 (not a common species here). Finally, of course – Grey Squirrel

Birds and other wildlife recorded in November 2022

Rather a short list this month – come on, everyone – keep looking and telling us what you see! This is the sort of information that can be very useful when dealing with nearby development threats. Last time I checked there was no further news on the ridiculous proposal to build houses and “artisan” workshops (whatever that may mean) on the pony field that slopes down to the railway cutting. Hopefully our objections will have some weight.

Anyway, the list: Pheasant was heard calling, and Red Kites were overhead as were occasional Common Buzzards. Another overhead sighting to look out for is of course – gulls; a Black-headed Gull was seen flying over. We also had Woodpigeons – but no Stock Dove – and both Green and Great-spotted Woodpeckers, often noticed first by their distinctive calls. All the common corvids were about. On the 13th there was a mass of chattering Magpies – something had disturbed them, and it felt like a scene from the Hitchcock movie! Jays, Jackdaw, Rooks and Carrion Crows were also recorded. Among the smaller species – there were sightings of Blue Tits, Great Tits and Long-tailed Tits. Nuthatch and Wren were also recorded. Blackbirds were quite common – do look out now for their relatives, the Redwings and Fieldfares. Robins and Dunnocks were recorded as were House Sparrows which usually favour the areas near to human habitation. Finally, three finch species: Chaffinch, Bullfinch and Goldfinch.

The only non-avian record of wildlife this month was – unsurprisingly – a Grey Squirrel.

Birds and other wildlife recorded in October 2022

Rather a short list this month! Come on, you walkers, nature lovers – record what you see and hear. If we don't have a good idea of what is in our wood, then we can't protect it when developments nearby threaten to encroach.

A Sparrowhawk was heard calling plaintively. Black-headed Gulls flew overhead. Woodpigeons were seen of course but nobody recorded Stock Dove. Both common woodpeckers were around – Green and Great-spotted – and all the common corvids: Magpie, Jay, Jackdaw, Rook and Carrion Crow. One of Britain's smallest birds – the Goldcrest - was seen, the first the recorder had encountered for three years! Tiny and beautiful, they have a crest which can be raised to attract a mate in the breeding season. Blue Tits and Great Tits were fairly regular, and a few flocks of Long-tailed Tits were also seen and heard. Nuthatches were about, as were the common Wrens, Blackbirds and Robins. Only one record of a finch – a Chaffinch.

Now is the time to look for Redwings and Fieldfares, close relatives of Blackbirds. There will also be migrant Blackbirds from colder countries, sometimes distinguishable from the natives by darker bills. Look out also for Bramblings, northern relations of the Chaffinch. Enjoy your walks in the woods and keep looking!

Birds and other wildlife recorded in September 2022

Red Kites were observed on their uplifting flights over the woods and nearby. Woodpigeons and Stock Dove were regularly recorded. Green Woodpecker was recorded but strangely, no Great-spotted Woodpecker. All the usual corvids were around: Magpie, Jay, Jackdaw, Rook and Carrion Crow – do listen out for Ravens – they breed nearby.... Blue Tit, Great Tit and Coal Tit were about as were their distant relation the Long-tailed Tit, now often together in flocks calling to one another.

A Chiffchaff was still around – and one was actually singing on the 15th. Nuthatches were recorded, as were – of course – Wren, Blackbird and Robin. Now is the time to start looking out for Redwings the northern cousins of the Blackbird and Song Thrush (and why no Song Thrush this month?). House Sparrows are quite vocal in the areas of the wood near human habitation. It was good to see a Bullfinch – they don't seem to have been recorded much recently.

Do look out for birds, mammals, insects and record what you see – it is really important to see what is around, question why some species are missing, and, if needed, tell developers what is in our precious woodlands.

Mammals: both Muntjac and Fox were recorded

Butterflies: The only records are of Speckled Woods, Large and Small Whites – but certainly there were more!

Birds and other wildlife recorded in August 2022

Rather a brief list for this month – the wildlife and the recorders were all rather exhausted by the overpowering heat! It is also the time of year when many birds have bred and gone into moult; feeding the youngsters and the bodily tiring task of re-growing new feathers are exhausting and leave the adult birds vulnerable – so they tend to keep a low profile. However, it was good to hear a juvenile Sparrowhawk calling on a couple of occasions; no other raptors were actually recorded, though it would be unusual if some Red Kites did not glide overhead. Stock Dove and Woodpigeon were about, and there were several records of both the common woodpeckers: Green and Great-spotted.

Of the corvids only Magpie, Rook and Carrion Crow were noted. Blue and Great Tits were about, and Chiffchaffs were still making their call (much less distinctive than their two-syllable song). Nuthatches called and whistled, and Wrens were heard, usually making alarm calls from the shrubs and low branches. Blackbirds – often one of the most obvious species – were noted in small numbers, and Robins are now beginning to make their slightly mournful autumnal song. Dunnock was recorded - but no finches!

Of the other wildlife there were notes of Large White, Small White and Gatekeeper butterflies. And the mammals? None recorded apart from humans and dogs! – except for some fresh rabbit droppings.

Please keep an eye out for wildlife – of any description – when you go for a walk in the woods – we need the records!

Birds and other wildlife recorded in July 2022

Very few bird species recorded this month; infact there were 17 bird species – and 11 butterfly species! And about five humans recording them....

Red Kites continue to glide overhead – but no other birds of prey were noted. Stock Dove and Woodpigeon of course, and both common woodpeckers – Great-spotted and Green. Magpie, Jay and Carrion Crow were fairly regular. Blue Tit and Great Tit were seen in small numbers. Two warblers were about: Chiffchaff and Blackcap. Nuthatches called and whistled, and Wrens uttered some alarm calls. Blackbirds were still fairly common as were Robins – and finally there were occasional Greenfinches, a species that may be making a slight come-back after many years of decline due to disease.

Now to the butterflies: in roughly systematic order: Large Skipper, Large White, Small White, White-letter Hairstreak-(an unexpected near-rarity), Common Blue, Peacock, Comma, Speckled Wood, Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown, and Ringlet. Of course, there were others, but nobody sent in a record of them!

Birds and other wildlife recorded in June 2022

The only birds of prey recorded this month were Red Kite and Common Buzzard. Both Woodpigeon and their more discreet cousin, the Stock Dove, were recorded. Great-spotted Woodpecker was about, as were the corvid family: Magpie, Jay, Jackdaw and Carrion Crow (no Rooks?). The tiny Goldcrest was noted, as were Blue and Great Tits. Three summer migrants: Chiffchaff, Blackcap and Garden Warbler. Listen out for the scratchy burst of song from Whitethroat in the hedgerows! Nuthatches called and Wrens were fairly abundant. A Swift was seen overhead – listen out for screaming parties of these speedy birds as they whizz past nearby houses.

There were also of course; Blackbirds, Song Thrushes, Robins and Dunnocks. House Sparrows were recorded near “civilisation”. Greenfinches and Goldfinches were heard but nobody recorded a Chaffinch – though we know they are there!

A few insects: Meadow Browns, Large Skipper, plenty of “Whites” – look out for the attractive Marbled White – though it actually belongs to the Brown rather than the White family! Many bumblebees were recorded, and – most exciting – there was a (relatively small) swarm of Honey Bees on a Silver Birch tree on the 10th!

And finally, a plea to everyone to send in records of what you see on your walks in the wood!

Birds and other wildlife recorded in May 2022

The only raptor recorded this month was Red Kite, now a common local species, but not yet known to breed in the wood. Stock Doves and Woodpigeons were frequently seen – one of the latter was seen being carried away in the jaws of a Fox. Both Green and Great-spotted Woodpeckers were recorded as were all the common corvids: Magpie, Jay, Jackdaw, Carrion Crow and Rook; the number of Rook nests diminished as the spring continued, down to about 6 by early May, but young were seen a few weeks later. Goldcrests were heard in the larches. Blue Tits and Great Tits were recorded, two pairs of the latter seen feeding young by the boxes. Long-tailed Tits were also seen – as individuals, no longer in flocking mode. Several warblers were observed: at least 8 Chiffchaffs and at least 10 Blackcaps on the 7th. Garden Warbler and Common Whitethroat were also heard. Nuthatches, Robins and Wrens were recorded fairly regularly, as well as an occasional Starling. Blackbirds and Song Thrushes were often heard as were the Skylarks singing from neighbouring fields and don't forget the Dunnock and House Sparrows.

A number of butterflies were recorded: Peacock, Orange-tip, Speckled Wood, Red Admiral, Large White and Green-veined White. On our walk on the 7th, some other insects were also recorded: Common Cardinal beetle, Green Longhorn (the moth *Adela reaumurella*), not the beetle), and plenty of St Mark's Flies – the one that emerges around April 25th, St Mark's Day, with long dangling legs that look slightly alarming, but they are actually useful pollinators of fruit trees.

The tadpoles in the pond are doing well – let's hope we get enough rain to keep the pond topped up. And those Common Spotted-orchids; several are now out and a number were in bloom in May.

Birds and other wildlife recorded in April 2022

A number of Pheasants were heard nearby. Red Kite, Sparrowhawk and Buzzards were all encountered as were the expected Stock Dove and Woodpigeon. Both common woodpeckers were recorded: Green and Great-spotted. The usual corvids were about: Magpie, jay, Jackdaw (over 20 on the 22nd), Rook and carrion crow. The number of nests in the rookery has varied considerably – strong winds affected them, and now it is quite difficult to count them as leaf burst means they are more difficult to see – at some point early in the month there were about 19 and this number then reduced – and by now many of the youngsters will have fledged. A Goldcrest – one of Britain's tiniest birds, the other being Firecrest – was heard in the larches. Blue Tits and Great Tits were very vocal this month, and there were occasional Long-tailed Tits, no longer flocking but pairing up. The summer migrant Chiffchaffs and Blackcaps (many on the 17th) were very easy to hear – but nobody has recorded Willow Warbler or Garden Warbler yet!

Nuthatches were seen and heard, and Wren and Blackbird were common, often emitting alarm calls before being seen. Song Thrushes have also been singing a lot this month – a varied but repeated song. Robins and Chaffinches were also abundant.

Plants: There were good shows of Wood Anemone, Lesser Celandine and Dog's Mercury, and – of course – Bluebells. These were quite early this year and provided a magnificent show. The Common-spotted orchid leaf rosettes are abundant.

Butterflies: Many sightings were recorded of Brimstone, Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell, Holly Blue, and Orange-tip. Look out for the rest!

Other wildlife: Plenty of Dark-edged Beeflies and bumblebees, and hoverflies. And of course – in the pond – tadpoles and water-boatmen.

More people have sent in their sightings this month – Thank you -please continue to do so!

Birds and other wildlife recorded in March 2022

More raptor species than usual were recorded this month: Red Kite fairly regularly, a Sparrowhawk, Buzzards, and 2 Kestrels on the 9th. Gulls frequently fly over and this month, Lesser Black-backs, Black-headed and a Herring Gull were included. The usual Woodpigeons and Stock Doves were seen. On the 8th two Green Woodpeckers were yaffling, and two Great-spotted Woodpeckers were both drumming – spring is definitely coming! All the usual corvids were about, generally making a noise! Magpie, jay, jackdaw, carrion Crow and – of course – Rooks. By the 14th there were 9 nests being built or occupied and by the end of the month the number had risen to 19. The Rookery has moved a little further into the wood – maybe more will be occupied by next month's list, but they become harder to count as leaf burst progresses. Plenty of Blue tits and Great Tits and a flock of about 20 Long-tailed Tits was observed; the flocking behaviour ceases as the breeding season arrives and they break into pairs.

There has been a lot of song – Skylarks abound in the nearby fields, and now you can expect to hear Chiffchaffs singing in the wood (2 on the 16th, and 7 later in the month); 2 Blackcaps were also heard on the 16th. A Treecreeper was recorded, as were Nuthatches usually whistling and chipping. The usual Wren, Blackbird, an occasional Song Thrush, Robins, and Dunnocks were found. House Sparrows were chirping near the houses. Now to the finches. There were many records of Chaffinch – about 15 on the 9th of the month. Their northern relation, the Brambling, was seen in a flock of about 20 on the 8th – a great surprise and treat! Another finch, the Siskin, was also spotted on the 9th. Bullfinches – which are not common everywhere – were usually encountered – 5 on the 30th, including an obvious pair. Goldfinches were also seen.

There are plenty of spring flowers blooming: Dog's Mercury, a little Coltsfoot, Lesser celandine, Wood Anemones, and, as I write in early April, there are some early Bluebells showing. Peacock and Red Admiral and Brimstone butterflies were recorded in March – there will be plenty more. The only mammal recorded was (unsurprisingly) a Grey Squirrel.

Birds and other wildlife recorded in February 2022

Two Red Kites were seen together on the 22nd; surely one day soon they will breed in the wood! A Buzzard was also seen, but no Sparrowhawk recorded this month. Black-headed gulls are frequent flyovers on their way to the canal and adjoining fields. Stock Doves and plenty of Woodpigeons were noted. Green Woodpeckers were around, and Great-spotted Woodpeckers were heard drumming early in the month – a sure sign that their thoughts are turning to finding a mate!

The usual corvids were about: Magpie, Jay, Jackdaw, Rook and Carrion Crow – though the Rooks were in very short supply, and so far, there has been no activity in the area which has been a traditional Rookery. There is still time...Blue Tits were frequently recorded, and on a few days there was near-constant singing from Great Tits. Coal Tit was heard in the conifers and there were also Long-Tailed Tits – their flocks will soon break up as individual pairs start to come together. Nuthatches whistled and tapped away, and Wrens - small but very vocal – were recorded on most visits. Blackbirds and Song Thrushes were heard and seen -

but no records so far this year of Redwings or field Fares, their northern relatives. Robins and Dunnocks were plentiful, and House Sparrows were recorded near human habitation.

Finally – finches: Chaffinches were regulars, and on the 8th of the month two pairs of Bullfinches were observed. We are fortunate in being able to encounter these stunning finches so frequently – they are in decline.

The only mammal recorded – and this was not a sighting of the animal, but of its leavings – was a probably Red Fox!

Birds and other wildlife recorded in January 2022

Red Kites were seen on several occasions, and Buzzards were also observed flying around, especially in the old wood. Black-headed Gulls also flew across the area. Woodpigeons were seen or heard on almost every visit – but no record this month of Stock Dove! Great-spotted woodpeckers were seen – they will soon be doing some territorial drumming, so listen out! As usual, all the common corvids were spotted – magpie, Jay, Jackdaw, Rook and Carrion Crow - though there seems to be no nest activity by the Rooks – yet!

Blue tits and Great Tits were frequently recorded – the Great Tits are beginning to sing – spring is approaching! A small flock of Long-tailed tits was seen – the flocks will soon begin to split up as birds begin to pair up for the breeding season. Nuthatches were commonly recorded, as were Wrens, which can make large alarm calls out of proportion to their small size!

Blackbirds were regularly seen, and Song Thrushes were also beginning to be more obvious. Listen out for the slightly melancholy song of the Mistle Thrush, an early breeder. No Redwings or Fieldfares were recorded – thrush species from northern Europe that tend winter in milder areas. Robins and Dunnocks were heard very frequently – Robin song is very distinctive and quite far-carrying. There have also been several instances of several noisily chirping House Sparrows near the roads. Finally, the finches – Chaffinch and Bullfinch were heard quite regularly and there have also been a few small flocks of Goldfinch.

The only mammal recorded – apart from human and canine was – Grey squirrel!