

The Members Walk on 7th May 2016

Once the mist rising from the reservoir had burnt off; we enjoyed a sunny, warm and still morning. Some 20 members were guided first through the study area from the car park along the south bank and then around Whillet's Meadows and ponds. As we walked through the woods we were surrounded by drifts of Bluebells with splashes of Ramsons, Wood-sorrel, Wood Anemone, Marsh Valerian and Marsh Marigold. The fresh spring leaves and blossom on the trees were lovely. We were accompanied by a range of birdsong and saw several species. Watching and smelling at close quarters a female Mandarin being ringed was something that will remain with us for a while. Views into Stock Dove and Jackdaw nests in tree boxes were a privilege. The stars of the day were the three young Tawny Owls that were being ringed. They gave us rare close views with a strong aaaah factor. Running a close second in the star stakes were the two adult Barn Owls that flew out of a box in the meadows. They both surprised and impressed us. The members enjoyed the walk greatly and we are very grateful to Bob for leading and to Phil, Shaun and Alan for an insight into their work in ringing and running the nest box programme. A list of some of the wildlife we saw and photos from the day follow.

Sightings

West End:- seen or heard from the car park and in the study area along the south bank - at least 2 singing male Garden Warblers (there are more than 2 pairs in the area), Blackcap, Chiffchaff, Wren, Song Thrush, Tree Creeper, Nuthatch, pair of Marsh Tits, Mandarin pair (and a female being ringed), Goldcrest, Blue & Great Tits, Robin, Dunnock, Stock Dove, Chaffinch, Mallard, Pheasant, Canada Geese, Cormorant, Carrion Crow, Jackdaw, Woodpigeon, Greater Spotted Woodpecker, 3 Tawny Owl chicks being ringed, adult and young Grey Herons in the heronry, 3+ Common Terns, Great Crested Grebes displaying. Butterflies:- Red Admiral, Orange Tip pair, Peacock. Mammals:- Wood Mice and Water Shrew,

Whillet's Meadows:- Reed Warblers & Whitethroat heard, pair of Barn Owls and Buzzard seen.

Others:- Short-tailed Field Vole, Toads, 2 Large Red Damselflies at Whillet's Pool with Pond Skaters & Whirligigs.



Members gathering for the start of the walk.



Ringling the female Mandarin Duck.



Looking into a Jackdaw's nest.



Beautiful Bluebells in the sun.



Ramsons - Wild Garlic.



Ringling the Tawny Owl chicks.



Cute chick.



Cuter chick.