

Members Spring Walk - Saturday 13 May 2017.

The first part our walk was enjoyed by 16 people and 3 more joined for the second half. The drizzle had stopped by the time we started and it remained warm with sunny spells throughout.

We explored the woods, streams and reservoir shores of the study area first. Then we walked to Whillet's meadows to see the open grassy areas, the ponds and the reed bed.

Phil and Alan went ahead to show us nesting birds, including: Mandarin Duck; young Stock Dove; young Jackdaws; Blue Tits and Great Tits. Many other birds were seen and heard.

From time to time, we gathered expectantly to see what was under some of the refuge tins, highlights included: grass snakes; field mice; short-tailed field voles and toads.

Plants seen included: Adder's-tongue Fern; Opposite-Leaved Golden Saxifrage; Common Spotted Orchids (not yet in flower); Black Poplar trees and wild Redcurrant. The woodland flowers included: large areas of Bluebell with Ransoms (Wild Garlic); Dogs Mercury; Red Campion and Yellow Archangel.

On Pintail bank there were some small moths which Bob later identified from photographs as Brown Silver-Line Moths which, it turns out, are common and were seen on their food plant which is Bracken. In the meadows there were Red Admiral and Peacock butterflies.

The improvement and maintenance work was appreciated by all the visitors - many of whom had not previously realised the size of the reserve and the scale of the work carried out by the friends. Special thanks to Bob for leading the walk so well and to Phil and Alan for showing us the nesting birds so expertly.

This is the list of birds seen and heard.

Mandarin Duck, Canada Goose, Cormorant, Great Crested Grebe, Tufted Duck, Grey Heron, Common Tern, Barn Swallow, Kingfisher, Carrion Crow, Jackdaw, Red-legged Partridge, Pheasant, Common Buzzard, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Mallard, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Coal Tit, Garden Warbler, Blackcap, Whitethroat, Nuthatch, Treecreeper, Woodpigeon, Stock Dove, Blackbird, Pied Wagtail, Reed Warbler, Chiffchaff.



Gathering to start the walk.



Weighing and checking a female Mandarin Duck which had been ringed previously.



female Mandarin Duck



Although they had been out for some weeks, the Bluebells put on a pretty show.



Ringling a young Stock Dove



Checking on a Great Tit nest



Anticipating what might be under the refuge sheet.



Adder's-tongue Fern