

## **Friends of Weir Wood Society**

### **Members Spring Walk**

**Saturday 28 April 2018**

The weather was grey and chilly. But we were lucky and dodged the showers. Twenty friends gathered in the car park and checked out the birds we could see and hear from there. Common Terns have returned and are exploring the rafts. A group of Swallows were hawking over the reservoir and resting on one of the rafts. There were both House and Sand Martins among them. A pair of Great Crested Grebes have started nesting under the overhanging trees off to the West of the hide and another under the heronry. The heronry is still bustling with many young Grey Herons yet to leave their nests. The number of Cormorants nesting alongside the heronry has been growing too; now 10 nests and 3 last year. A Reed Warbler was singing from Reedmace at the edge of the water in front of the viewing area.

We walked directly to the far end of the Study Area and worked our way back more slowly spending time on the nest boxes, flowers and birds.

Phil showed us an adult Stock Dove that had been sitting on two young chicks. He weighed, measured and ringed it while we watched. The youngsters had been ringed earlier in the week. Next he showed us some Jackdaw eggs which are surprisingly colourful. Finally we peeped in on a Mandarin Duck sitting on a clutch of eggs.

The drifts of Bluebells were impressive. There were some white ones too. The swathes of Wild Garlic flowers along with Wood Anemones were an attractive contrast. Bob showed us: Marsh Valerian; Garlic Mustard; Wood Sorrel; Yellow Archangel and Adder's Tongue Fern. The fresh new leaves on the trees were lovely and created a great backdrop to all the flowers.

When we worked our way back to the car park we had a short coffee break before setting off to Whillet's Meadows.

After all the rain the meadows were very wet. Nevertheless, we enjoyed the anticipation of lifting some of the refuge tins. Mostly they were unoccupied. But in total we saw: a Grass Snake; a Slow Worm; several voles and lots of Common Toads. There were different warblers singing in the wooded areas, including: Blackcap; Whitethroat; Garden Warbler; Willow Warbler and Chiffchaff. A deer ran off across the end meadow.

There were a number of members who had not visited the closed areas of the reserve before. They were surprised to see how big it is and were impressed by the work done by the Friends. The new bridges in particular drew admiring comments.

The walk was very enjoyable and we would like to thank Bob, Phil and Mike for all their efforts.



Carpets of beautiful Bluebells



Ringling a Stock Dove



Jackdaw Eggs



Slow Worm



Marsh Valerian



Garlic Mustard



Marsh Marigold



Blue (and White) Bells



Wild Garlic



Yellow Archangel



Cowslips

### **Birds Seen or Heard**

Common Tern, Great Crested Grebe, Canada Goose, Mallard with 5 ducklings, Mandarin, Grey Herons at heronry, Cormorants at nests, Moorhen, Barn Swallow, House martin, Sand Martin, Reed Warbler (H), Blackcap, Willow Warbler (H), Chiffchaff, Garden Warbler (H), Blue Tit, Great Tit, Marsh Tit, Pheasant, Blackbird, Jackdaw, Stock Dove, Woodpigeon, Crow, Magpie, Pied Wagtail, Nuthatch, Whitethroat.

### **Found under Refuges**

Grass Snakes , Slow worm, several Short-tailed Field Voles, several Common Toads.

### **Noted Plants and Flowers**

Bluebells (blue and white), Wood Anemones, Marsh Valerian, Marsh Marigold (Kingcup), Wild Garlic (Ramsoms), Garlic Mustard, Wood Sorrel, Yellow Archangel, Adder's Tongue Fern, Greater Stitchwort, Common Spotted Orchids but not yet in flower, Red Campion, Wild Redcurrant & Raspberry, Cuckoo flower, Dogs Mercury, Common Dog Violet, Lesser Celandine, Bugle, Primrose, Cowslip, Lords & Ladies, Ground Ivy, Herb Robert, Opposite Leaved Golden Saxifrage.

### **Box Contents Seen**

Adult **Stock Dove** (being ringed and weighed), **Jackdaw** eggs, **Mandarin** duck sitting on nest.