

## Friends of Weir Wood Society

### Autumn Walk - 14:00 Saturday 6th November 2021

The weather was kind to us. The rain held off and the wind stayed light enough for the nets to be put up.

We held this walk to make up for not being able to hold our spring walks. It proved to be very popular. Some 30 people took part.

We started by walking through the Study Area all the way out to Pintail Point. As we set off two Egyptian Geese flew onto one of the tern rafts and a Kingfisher flew past low over the water. On our way through the Study Area some Redwings were in the trees and a Woodcock was flushed and seen by some of us.

We were looking for fungi while enjoying the autumn wildlife and colours.

We talked about the Grey Alder that we are working to control and about the Black Poplar specimen trees that we are nurturing. People asked about the many designs of nest boxes and some were surprised to learn about tree-nesting ducks. At the Point a Snipe was flushed. We looked at the scrapes that our work parties dug a while ago. Vegetation is colonising them and they are attracting birds.

We retraced our path then walked to Whillet's meadows. En route there were over 300 Starlings on the wires in the field opposite the lay-by in Legsheath Lane. They flew off to gather over the meadows. There were also many Jackdaws feeding in the field. The meadows were very wet. But we made it to the Meadow Pond where we were shown scars on willow branches where the eggs of Willow Emerald damselflies had been laid under the bark.

By now it was dusk and the sunset was impressive with banks of pink-bellied clouds.

We watched a small murmuration of the Starlings displaying before they dived into the reedbed. Groups of Redwings were flying over and heading into the trees to roost (but not into the net unfortunately).

The ringers showed us a Blue Tit and a female Reed Bunting in the hand. It was lovely to see these tiny birds so close. They talked to us about the birds and their records.

We ended the walk looking over the reed-bed where we could hear the chatter of the roosting Starlings. It was nice to hear a pair of Tawny Owls calling. The males are starting to become territorial.

By the time we left it was dark.

Some people had not seen the view from Pintail Bank before and some had not appreciated how big the meadows area of the reserve is. The walk was very much enjoyed and appreciated. We should consider including an autumn walk in our future plans.

It was good to see familiar faces once again and to meet new friends.

A big "thank you" to Bob, John, Phil and Darren for leading the walk, doing the ringing and making the event so enjoyable.

**FUNGI:-** Honey Fungus, Candle Snuff, Birch Polypore, Buttercap, Sulphur Tuft, Deceiver, Amethyst Deceiver and several types of Bracket fungus.

**BIRDS:-** Kingfisher, Snipe, Starling, Redwing, Blue Tit, Reed Bunting, Egyptian Geese, Kingfisher, Little Grebe, Gadwall, Jackdaw, Cormorant, Great Crested Grebe, Canada Geese, Greylag Geese, Woodcock, Nuthatch, Wren, Sparrowhawk, Pheasant, Tawny Owls (heard), Fieldfare, Marsh Tit, Buzzard, Blackbird, Jay.

*Tom Howard-Jones*  
*08-11-21*



Honey Fungus in Study Area



Emerald Willow damselfly eggs  
under willow bark



Scrapes on Pintail Bank



Scrapes on Pintail Bank



Female Reed Bunting



Some of the group