

Bird Survey as of 16 October 2020 and a Grey Wagtail

We have been conducting a bird survey, mostly weekly, since 19th April 2018. We have been counting the number of birds of the species that we have seen. Three areas have been surveyed – Darrick Wood and Meadow, Newstead Wood and Meadow and Darrick Wood Hornbeam area/Broadwater Wood.

It should be noted that this is not a scientific survey and bird numbers cannot be accurate as birds are very mobile. We have only recorded species which we can positively identify by sight. But in the case of the Tawny Owl we are identifying it by the sound of its call.

We have been continuing monthly surveys this year. We thought that we had exhausted our list of species, but I was surprised to see a Grey Wagtail when I went for a walk with my wife through Darrick Wood on the 3rd of October 2020. This bird cannot be recorded on the official survey as it was not on our standard route.

2020 has been one of the warmest years in official records and some of the months were our driest. By early August, the large pond near Lovibonds Avenue had completely dried out.



Darrick and Newstead Woods in general had also completely dried out. During the hot summer months, we were counting a reduced number of birds on the survey, especially the smaller species. In early October, the drought was really starting to be relieved. My wife and I took a walk through the woods before the deluge started. The large pond was beginning to fill up again and to our surprise we saw the grey wagtail searching for food alongside the edge of the new pond. Grey Wagtails can be confused with Yellow Wagtails, but they have longer tails and black feathers on their chin and throat. Yellow Wagtails migrate in October; Grey Wagtails are resident.

Our bird flew off the pond onto to the path alongside the Marsh and we got a better view to positively identify it. We got a very pleasant surprise and we have identified a new species that can survive in our reserve despite the unfavourable drought, as the Grey Wagtail needs water to survive. Perhaps the Marsh had not completely dried.



The Grey Wagtail is on the edge of the recovering pond - on the 3rd October- but you cannot see it. I wish I had had a telephoto lens with me.

A list of bird species seen or heard and recorded on the official monthly survey is shown below (40+ Species):

Carrion Crow

Magpie

Jackdaw

Jay

Wood pigeon

Great Spotted Woodpecker

Song thrush

Blackbird

Robin

Great Tit

Blue Tit

Long Tailed Tit

Marsh Tit

Starling

House/ Tree Sparrow (difficult to distinguish between the two species from a distance)

Swift

Wren

Ring Necked Parakeet

Stock Dove

Treecreeper

Nuthatch

Dunnock

Common Redstart (06 November)

A Warbler species not a Blackcap (06 November) possibly a Chiffchaff

Goldcrest (20 November 2018)

Collared Dove (20 November 2018)

Common Gull (26 November 2018)

Domestic Pigeon (26 November 2018) pure white): this is the same species as the feral pigeon.

Feral Pigeon (same species as the domestic pigeon)

Chaffinch (26 November 2018)

Greenfinch

Green Woodpecker

Black Headed Gull

Redwing

Pied Wagtail

Fieldfare

Tawny Owl (heard only)

Goldfinch (15 Feb 2019)

Coal Tit (20 Feb 2019)

Garden Warbler

Grey heron

Birds heard on survey but not positively identified by sight (2)

Black caps – can easily be confused by song with the garden warbler.

Chiffchaff – warbler family

Other birds reported as seen or heard by members but not recorded on survey (7 Species).

NB, some members are better at identifying birds by call rather than sight. Also, some bird species such as starlings and jackdaws are capable of mimicking other bird species to the confusion of humans and the mimicked species.

Sparrow Hawk

Buzzard – Photo Member's article in News Letter

Black Caps – heard

Possible sighting of Black Cap on Darrick Wood meadow during survey – too fast for positive identification.

Bull Finch

Mallard

Mandarin Duck

Grey Wagtail - 03October 2020

Not seen on Bird Survey but expected (3 species)

Mistle Thrush

Pheasant,

Coot