

Wick Country Park – Wildlife Sightings – 2024

Introduction

Starting in 2020, it was decided to carry out a monthly wildlife walk at the Wick County Park, generally on the 3rd Wednesday of each month, depending on weather, holidays etc. The aims of the walk are:

1. To enjoy the park, it's wildlife and get some fresh air.
2. To record and count the wildlife we see/hear, namely: birds, butterflies, dragonflies, mammals, and anything else of note, e.g. moths, reptiles and insects.
3. To gain a greater understanding of what wildlife lives in and/or uses the park and monitor any changes in their populations.
4. To promote the wildlife of the park to the Friends group and general public via the Website and Facebook etc.
5. To share our wildlife recordings with all relevant groups and organisations e.g. Basildon Council, Essex County Recorders, and the Essex Amphibian and Reptile Group.

Methodology

We walk roughly the same route each month, covering the most likely wildlife friendly habitats of the park. The number of each individual species seen or heard is recorded to gain some idea of abundance/population. We also attempt to record whether any of our bird species are breeding in the park.

It would be impossible to record 100% of the wildlife that lives in or uses the park but over time; by carrying out a regular count, we will be able to record the vast majority of the wildlife that exists in the park and get a rough estimate of their numbers. However, for some species, e.g. nocturnal species, a more targeted approach may be needed, i.e. specific nighttime walks or events. One such event is the annual "moth night", which began in 2021 and as a result we now have started to build records of the moth species in the park. In addition, we have also held evening bat watches and wildlife picnics during the summer.

Reporting

Each month, an email report will be issued, recording the wildlife identified that month. At the end of the year, an annual report will be issued. This report will compare year to year, highlighting any noticeable differences between the years.

All bird records will be sent to the Essex Bird Recorder, as part of the wider monitoring of UK bird populations. Similarly, all butterfly, moth and dragonfly records will be sent to the various Essex recorders for these orders of insects. Amphibians and reptiles will be recorded via an online recording site for such animals called "The Record Pool". Mammals have not been included in this wider recording process at the moment, mainly because we see so few, but this may be something to consider in the future, especially in respect of bat species.

In 2024 we started recording "others" mainly insects and other invertebrates, and I will investigate who in Essex is responsible for collating such records. The Essex Field Club will be a good starting point for this.

Species Recorded in 2024

Below are the detailed lists of all the wildlife seen/heard during 2024, compared to the 2023 details set alongside. In addition, the overall summary of all years data is also shown for each class of wildlife recorded.

Birds 2024 – 63 Species

Summary of Birds recorded in WCP - 2024							
Number of Species	63	Visits	13				
		2024			2023		
Common Name	Scientific Name	Max Day Count	No of Sightings	% of Visits	Max Day Count	No of Sightings	% of Visits
Barn Swallow	Hirundo rustica	12	5	38%	8	5	38%
Black-headed Gull	Chroicocephalus ridibundus	33	11	85%	112	10	77%
Canada Goose	Branta canadensis	55	9	69%	9	8	62%
Canada-Greylag Goose Hybrid	Branta canadensis anser anser	1	1	8%	0	0	0%
Carrion Crow	Corvus corone	8	12	92%	7	13	100%
Cetti's Warbler	Cettia cetti	1	1	8%	2	1	8%
Common Blackbird	Turdus merula	9	10	77%	7	10	77%
Common Buzzard	Buteo buteo	1	3	23%	2	8	62%
Common Chaffinch	Fringilla coelebs	4	4	31%	2	2	15%
Common Chiffchaff	Phylloscopus collybita	8	7	54%	10	5	38%
Common Gull (Mew Gull)	Larus canus	2	1	8%	0	0	0%
Common House Martin	Delichon urbicum	2	1	8%	8	3	23%
Common Kestrel	Falco tinnunculus	2	1	8%	1	3	23%
Common Kingfisher	Alcedo atthis	1	3	23%	1	1	8%
Common Linnet	Linaria cannabina	4	1	8%	0	0	0%
Common Moorhen	Gallinula chloropus	5	11	85%	7	11	85%
Common Reed Bunting	Emberiza schoeniclus	2	1	8%	0	0	0%
Common Reed Warbler	Acrocephalus scirpaceus	6	4	31%	5	5	38%
Common Snipe	Gallinago gallinago	6	1	8%	0	0	0%
Common Starling	Sturnus vulgaris	29	8	62%	80	6	46%
Common Swift	Apus apus	4	2	15%	5	5	38%
Common Whitethroat	Sylvia communis	3	6	46%	3	4	31%
Common Wood Pigeon	Columba palumbus	31	13	100%	70	13	100%
Duncock	Prunella modularis	3	7	54%	4	5	38%
Eurasian Blackcap	Sylvia atricapilla	6	6	46%	11	7	54%
Eurasian Blue Tit	Cyanistes caeruleus	25	12	92%	18	12	92%
Eurasian Collared Dove	Streptopelia decaocto	4	7	54%	6	9	69%
Eurasian Coot	Fulica atra	5	7	54%	3	10	77%
Eurasian Hobby	Falco subbuteo	1	1	8%	0	0	0%
Eurasian Jay	Garrulus glandarius	3	5	38%	3	4	31%
Eurasian Magpie	Pica pica	13	13	100%	14	12	92%
Eurasian Siskin	Spinus spinus	0	0	0%	12	1	8%
Eurasian Skylark	Alauda arvensis	3	5	38%	1	1	8%

Eurasian Sparrowhawk	Accipiter nisus	1	1	8%	1	3	23%
Eurasian Wren (British)	Troglodytes troglodytes indigenus	9	9	69%	7	6	46%
European Goldfinch	Carduelis carduelis	16	12	92%	18	12	92%
European Green Woodpecker	Picus viridis	1	7	54%	2	7	54%
European Greenfinch	Chloris chloris	6	11	85%	5	7	54%
European Herring Gull	Larus argentatus	5	8	62%	2	6	46%
European Robin	Erithacus rubecula	18	12	92%	17	12	92%
Fieldfare	Turdus pilaris	8	1	8%	60	3	23%
Goldcrest	Regulus regulus	1	1	8%	0	0	0%
Great Cormorant	Phalacrocorax carbo	3	5	38%	3	2	15%
Great Crested Grebe	Podiceps cristatus	1	1	8%	2	3	23%
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Dendrocopos major	1	4	31%	1	4	31%
Great Tit	Parus major	7	11	85%	5	10	77%
Grey Heron	Ardea cinerea	1	1	8%	0	0	0%
Greylag Goose	Anser anser	1	1	8%	4	1	8%
House Sparrow	Passer domesticus	16	13	100%	13	10	77%
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Larus fuscus	1	2	15%	2	4	31%
Lesser Whitethroat	Sylvia curruca	5	3	23%	1	1	8%
Little Egret	Egretta garzetta	1	1	8%	0	0	0%
Long-tailed Tit	Aegithalos caudatus	13	11	85%	12	11	85%
Mallard	Anas platyrhynchos	14	13	100%	12	13	100%
Mute Swan	Cygnus olor	2	1	8%	0	0	0%
Northern Lapwing	Vanellus vanellus	9	1	8%	9	1	8%
Red Kite	Milvus milvus	1	2	15%	1	2	15%
Redwing	Turdus iliacus	17	4	31%	67	4	31%
Rock Dove (Feral)	Columba livia 'feral'	4	1	8%	2	1	8%
Song Thrush	Turdus philomelos	3	6	46%	2	5	38%
Stock Dove	Columba oenas	2	3	23%	1	1	8%
Tufted Duck	Aythya fuligula	0	0	0%	3	2	15%
Western Jackdaw	Coloeus monedula	12	1	8%	3	1	8%
White Wagtail (Pied)	Motacilla alba yarrellii	3	1	8%	2	2	15%
Willow Warbler	Phylloscopus trochilus	1	1	8%	0	0	0%

As in 2022 and 2023, we recorded birds on 13 visits during 2024 (12 monthly visits plus the wildlife picnic,) and identified 63 bird species, which is a new record for the park: (2022 – 56; 2023 – 54; 2022 – 56; 2021 – 53; 2020 - 53.) Two factors to consider that may have contributed to this record count; as the park matures it will attract more bird species, plus we are perhaps also getting a bit better at identifying them and where the common ones are in the park!

Three new species were added to our bird list in 2024: **Common Linnet**, **Eurasian Hobby** and **Willow Warbler**. It's surprising that it has taken so long to add the first two to our list, but **Willow Warbler** is a bonus, having declined by approximately 50% in England over the past 25 years, and is now largely restricted to the North and West of the UK. This was almost certainly a bird on spring passage North, one of a few heard around Wickford at this time.

An unusual bird seen at the lake in 2024 has been recorded but is not a separate species. This was a **Canada Goose x Greylag Goose hybrid** sometimes called a "Canlag" Goose. Quite an usual sighting but has never been seen again in the park.

In respect of population changes, most of our resident bird populations appear to be stable, with no noticeable increases or reductions apparent. However, a few changes are worth mentioning:

Common Chaffinch shows a slight increase this year and perhaps at long last they are recovering from the effects of trichomonosis disease.

This may also be true for **Greenfinch** where we had one of the best years for recording this bird, also badly affected by the same disease.

Sadly, records of **Common Swift** continue to reduce, and this is matched in the rest of the UK. One of my favourite birds and it will be a very sad day indeed if we no longer hear their screeching around the skies in summer.

A small increase in **Skylark** sightings is good news, although sadly some of these sightings were on land marked for housing development! Perhaps the new flower meadow might help here?

Nice to see **Goldcrest** once again. We last saw one on our very first visit in 2020. They are probably in the park most of the winter but are so small and agile we probably miss them most years.

At one stage there were as many as five **Lesser Whitethroat** in the park, a very good number for Wickford and a record for our list. This is a bird increasing its range due to climate change and is now well established as a summer visitor to the park.

Finally, a favourite of all of us, **Common Kingfisher**, was seen/heard on 3 occasions in 2024. It seems a pair were present at the lake in the latter months of the year. However, the icy weather which froze the lake, looks to have moved them on to running water or the coast.

Birds - 2020 to 2025 Summary:

We now have 5 years data of bird numbers in the park and here is the total summary of our sightings:

Total Summary of Birds recorded in WCP - All Years				
Number of Species	73 + 1 hybrid	Visits	62	
Common Name	Scientific Name	Max Day Count	No of Sightings	% of Visits
Barn Swallow	Hirundo rustica	15	23	37%
Black-headed Gull	Chroicocephalus ridibundus	300	51	82%
Canada Goose	Branta canadensis	55	45	73%
Canada-Greylag Goose Hybrid	Branta canadensis anser anser	1	1	2%
Carrion Crow	Corvus corone	16	61	98%
Cetti's Warbler	Cettia cetti	2	5	8%
Common Blackbird	Turdus merula	10	48	77%
Common Buzzard	Buteo buteo	2	12	19%
Common Chaffinch	Fringilla coelebs	4	15	24%
Common Chiffchaff	Phylloscopus collybita	10	28	45%
Common Gull (Mew Gull)	Larus canus	10	6	10%
Common House Martin	Delichon urbicum	30	11	18%
Common Kestrel	Falco tinnunculus	2	7	11%
Common Kingfisher	Alcedo atthis	1	5	8%
Common Linnet	Linaria cannabina	4	1	2%
Common Moorhen	Gallinula chloropus	8	57	92%
Common Pheasant	Phasianus colchicus	1	1	2%
Common Reed Bunting	Emberiza schoeniclus	2	2	3%
Common Reed Warbler	Acrocephalus scirpaceus	6	22	35%
Common Snipe	Gallinago gallinago	6	2	3%
Common Starling	Sturnus vulgaris	80	40	65%
Common Swift	Apus apus	11	13	21%
Common Tern	Sterna hirundo	1	2	3%

Common Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	5	19	31%
Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	70	62	100%
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	5	30	48%
Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	11	27	44%
Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	35	59	95%
Eurasian Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	1	1	2%
Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	8	32	52%
Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	5	48	77%
Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	1	1	2%
Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	4	23	37%
Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	16	61	98%
Eurasian Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>	12	2	3%
Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	3	8	13%
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	1	9	15%
Eurasian Wren (British)	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes indigenus</i>	10	40	65%
European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	27	57	92%
European Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>	5	31	50%
European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	7	30	48%
European Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	20	29	47%
European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	23	59	95%
Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	60	7	11%
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	1	2	3%
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	6	13	21%
Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	2	4	6%
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	3	15	24%
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	9	42	68%
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	3	5	8%
Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	4	6	10%
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	16	36	58%
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	6	15	24%
Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>	5	10	16%
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	1	2	3%
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	1	1	2%
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	22	44	71%
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	14	57	92%
Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	2	2	3%
Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	9	3	5%
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	2	1	2%
Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	1	4	6%
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	67	14	23%
Rock Dove (Feral)	<i>Columba livia 'feral'</i>	15	8	13%
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	20	3	5%
Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	1	1	2%
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	3	23	37%
Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	1	1	2%
Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>	3	12	19%

Tufted Duck	Aythya fuligula	3	4	6%
Western Jackdaw	Coloeus monedula	21	5	8%
White Wagtail (Pied)	Motacilla alba yarrellii	3	6	10%
Willow Warbler	Phylloscopus trochilus	1	1	2%
Yellowhammer	Emberiza citrinella	2	1	2%

Our bird list has now reached 73 and continues to surprise me. I thought 50 would be a great total but it just shows what is all around us when we start to look.

The list above shows the largest daily count of birds seen of all visits, and the number of times that species has been seen. The percentages shown, can be viewed as the likelihood of seeing that species on a visit to the park, although the seasons need to be taken into consideration here, as many of the birds will only be seen at certain times of year e.g., Common Whitethroat has been seen on 31% of our walks but in winter the likelihood of seeing this bird will be nil as it's a summer migrant!

Only one bird has been seen on every visit and that is **Common Wood Pigeon**, although you can add **Carrion Crow**, **Common Moorhen**, **Eurasian Blue Tit**, **Eurasian Magpie**, **European Goldfinch**, **European Robin**, and **Mallard** to this list as the most common birds in the park and the ones you are most likely to see on any visit.

Butterflies 2024 – 18 Species

Summary of Butterflies recorded in WCP - 2024					
Number of Species	18	2024		2023	
Common Name	Scientific Name	Max Day Count	No of Sightings	Max Day Count	No of Sightings
Brimstone	Gonepteryx rhamni	2	2	1	1
Brown Argus	Aricia agestis	0	0	0	0
Comma Butterfly	Polygonia c-album	3	1	1	2
Common Blue	Polyommatus icarus	0	0	0	0
Essex Skipper	Thymelicus lineola	7	1	1	1
Gatekeeper	Pyronia tithonus	17	1	240	2
Green-veined White	Artogeia napi	6	3	4	1
Holly Blue	Celastrina argiolus	2	3	20	3
Large Skipper	Ochlodes venatus	0	0	2	1
Large White	Pieris brassicae	7	4	15	4
Marbled White	Melanargia galathea	29	1	6	2
Meadow Brown	Maniola jurtina	78	3	50	5
Orange Tip	Anthocharis cardamines	3	1	2	1
Painted Lady	Vanessa cardui	0	0	0	0
Peacock Butterfly	Inachis io	14	2	11	4
Red Admiral	Vanessa atalanta	4	4	8	4
Ringlet	Aphantopus hyperantus	2	1	1	1
Small Copper	Lycaena phlaeas	0	0	1	1
Small Heath	Coenonympha pamphilus	0	0	0	0
Small Skipper	Thymelicus sylvestris	7	1	0	0
Small Tortoiseshell	Aglais urticae	6	1	1	1
Small White	Artogeia rapae	18	6	24	4
Speckled Wood	Pararge aegeria	10	6	4	5
Wall Brown	Lasiommata megera	1	1	0	0
White-letter Hairstreak	Strymonidia w-album	0	0	0	0

In 2024, we saw 18 butterfly species which was the same number as in 2023 (2023 – 18; 2022 – 19; 2021 – 22; 2020 – 21.) We added one new species this year – the **Wall** or **Wall Brown** as my software calls it. This is a butterfly normally found in coastal areas of Essex, resting in the sun on sea walls as its name suggests. There were at least two records in the park this year, one being seen during a Wicked Gardeners session in the spring. Perhaps we have a colony nearer than we think, although it is documented that they are found in open grasslands, so there could indeed be a small breeding population in the park or nearby.

It was a poor year in the park for **Gatekeeper** compared to 2023 but there were plenty of these elsewhere in Essex so hopefully this is just a one-off.

Marbled White were present in record numbers this year, the most I have ever seen in the park, but sadly an early cut of much of the grass seemed to put an end to sightings. Hopefully, the grass is not cut until later in the year during 2025. Sadly, for two years in a row now, we have not seen **Brown Argus**, **Common Blue** or **Small Heath**. These are all small butterflies that can easily be missed but **Common Blue** is a real worry as these were regularly seen in past years. They do not seem to have recovered from the hot weather of summer 2022.

It was pleasing to see both **Essex** and **Small Skipper** this year in good numbers, having also been badly affected by the heat in 2022. Perhaps we can see a real recovery of these two species in 2025.

Speckled Wood and **Small White** are the butterflies you are most likely to see in the park, both being seen on 6 visits, so you can see these for half of the year!

Meadow Brown was the most numerous butterfly seen, with 78 recorded during our July walk. I suspect at least 3 times this number were present in the park at this time.

Finally, our visit to the **White-letter Hairstreak** colony drew a blank yet again. We will try again in 2025, but this is a tricky butterfly to see at the best of times.

Butterflies - 2020 to 2025 Summary:

Our total list now stands at 25 species:

Total Summary of Butterflies recorded in WCP - All Years			
Number of Species	25		
Common Name	Scientific Name	Max Day Count	No of Sightings
Brimstone	<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>	2	6
Brown Argus	<i>Aricia agestis</i>	3	2
Comma Butterfly	<i>Polygonia c-album</i>	5	9
Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>	6	7
Essex Skipper	<i>Thymelicus lineola</i>	7	5
Gatekeeper	<i>Pyronia tithonus</i>	240	9
Green-veined White	<i>Artogeia napi</i>	6	10
Holly Blue	<i>Celastrina argiolus</i>	20	12
Large Skipper	<i>Ochlodes venatus</i>	3	4
Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>	23	19
Marbled White	<i>Melanargia galathea</i>	29	7
Meadow Brown	<i>Maniola jurtina</i>	135	18
Orange Tip	<i>Anthocharis cardamines</i>	3	5
Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>	1	1
Peacock Butterfly	<i>Inachis io</i>	14	13
Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>	8	14
Ringlet	<i>Aphantopus hyperantus</i>	6	4
Small Copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>	2	2
Small Heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>	2	2
Small Skipper	<i>Thymelicus sylvestris</i>	7	6

Small Tortoiseshell	<i>Aglais urticae</i>	6	8
Small White	<i>Artogeia rapae</i>	25	20
Speckled Wood	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>	10	28
Wall Brown	<i>Lasiommata megera</i>	1	1
White-letter Hairstreak	<i>Strymonidia w-album</i>	2	1

While the total of 25 is very good for the park, many of these are not regular annual sightings and some butterflies we used to see, seem to have worryingly disappeared – at least for now. All we can do is continue to record what we see and submit our records to the County Recorders and then into overall UK figures.

As for new butterflies, you never know what we might get as migrants from the continent are becoming more regular but with the oak trees maturing in the park, we may get a colony of Purple Hairstreak here. Perhaps in 2025!

Dragonflies & Damselflies – 6 Species

Summary of Dragonflies/Damselflies recorded in WCP - 2024					
Number of Species	6	2024		2023	
Common Name	Scientific Name	Max Day Count	No of Sightings	Max Day Count	No of Sightings
Azure Damselfly	<i>Coenagrion puella</i>	0	0	0	0
Black-tailed Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum cancellatum</i>	1	1	0	0
Blue-tailed Damselfly	<i>Ischnura elegans</i>	4	2	5	2
Brown Hawker	<i>Aeshna grandis</i>	0	0	2	1
Common Blue Damselfly	<i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i>	0	0	2	1
Common Darter	<i>Sympetrum striolatum</i>	1	3	2	1
Emperor (Blue) Dragonfly	<i>Anax imperator</i>	0	0	0	0
Large Red-eyed Damselfly	<i>Erythromma najas</i>	0	0	1	1
Migrant Hawker	<i>Aeshna mixta</i>	10	3	9	3
Southern Migrant Hawker	<i>Aeshna affinis</i>	2	1	0	0
Willow Emerald	<i>Chalcolestes viridis</i>	1	1	0	0

6 species were recorded in 2024, the same number as in the past 2 years (2023 – 6; 2022 – 6; 2021 – 8; 2020 – 3.)

One new species was added to the list – **Southern Migrant Hawker**, with a male and female seen “hawking” around the field near the “willow tunnel”. This is a European species expanding its range due to climate change and is now a common species in many parts of Essex. The male is a vivid blue dragonfly with noticeable bright blue eyes and this species is a very good sighting for the park.

What is apparent from our sightings, is that dragonfly and damselfly numbers vary greatly each year, and we are never guaranteed to see any species. It is difficult to draw any conclusions from the figures above and perhaps we need to re-think on how we look for dragonflies and damselflies with a more targeted approach.

Dragonflies & Damselflies - 2020 to 2025 Summary:

Our overall list is now 11 species:

Total Summary of Dragonflies/Damselflies recorded in WCP - All Years			
Number of Species	11		
Common Name	Scientific Name	Max Day Count	No of Sightings
Azure Damselfly	Coenagrion puella	1	2
Black-tailed Skimmer	Orthetrum cancellatum	7	5
Blue-tailed Damselfly	Ischnura elegans	7	9
Brown Hawker	Aeshna grandis	2	4
Common Blue Damselfly	Enallagma cyathigerum	10	3
Common Darter	Sympetrum striolatum	5	7
Emperor (Blue) Dragonfly	Anax imperator	1	1
Large Red-eyed Damselfly	Erythromma najas	3	2
Migrant Hawker	Aeshna mixta	13	12
Southern Migrant Hawker	Aeshna affinis	2	1
Willow Emerald	Chalcolestes viridis	2	3

A reasonable count for the park with some recent additions to the UK list now included, these being **Southern Migrant Hawker** and **Willow Emerald**.

Others to look for on future visits are the **Large Red Damselfly**, which I have seen here in the past, and surely one day we will see **Banded Demoiselle**, which is common along the River Crouch in Wickford. Others common in our area are **Four Spot Chaser** and **Broad Bodied Chaser** which we may possibly see at the lake one day.

Mammals – 2 Species

Summary of Mammals recorded in WCP - 2024					
Number of Species	2	2024		2023	
Common Name	Scientific Name	Max Day Count	No of Sightings	Max Day Count	No of Sightings
Eastern Grey Squirrel	Sciurus carolinensis	2	3	3	7
Red Fox	Vulpes vulpes	1	1	1	2

We only saw mammals on four visits to the park and these mainly consisted of **Grey Squirrel**. The only other mammal seen was a single sighting of **Red Fox**.

I am surprised we have not yet seen a Muntjac Deer, but they are becoming more common in the area and I predict that we will see them one day.

Mammals - 2020 to 2025 Summary:

Total Summary of Mammals recorded in WCP - All Years			
Number of Species	4		
Common Name	Scientific Name	Max Day Count	No of Sightings
Common Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pipistrellus	27	3
Eastern Grey Squirrel	Sciurus carolinensis	3	19
Red Fox	Vulpes vulpes	3	4
Soprano Pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pygmaeus	5	2

Our mammal list remains at 4 and we are probably due another Bat Night in 2025 to see if any new species can be recorded. Otherwise, unless we lay out traps or are very lucky, we are not likely to add any small mammals to the list.

Moths – 4 Species

Summary of Moths recorded in WCP - 2024						
Number of Species	4					
Common Name	Scientific Name	Last Sighting	Count	Sighting	Status	New
Green Longhorn Moth	Adela reaumurella	17/04/2024	8	1	Adult	1
The Lackey	Malacosoma neustria	25/05/2024	2	1	Caterpillar	1
Emperor Moth	Saturnia pavonia	25/05/2024	6	1	Caterpillar	
The Vapourer	Orgyia antiqua	20/08/2024	1	1	Adult Male	1
						3

As our moth night was cancelled due to bad weather, we only added 3 new moths to the list in 2024. It was interesting to find at least 6 **Emperor Moth** caterpillars this spring. The adult is a very impressive moth and are on the wing in April and May. We know they are in the park and are worth looking for during these months.

Hopefully, our annual moth night will go ahead in 2025, but the mere mention of this event seems to guarantee poor weather! One year I am hopeful that we will be lucky.

Moths - 2020 to 2025 Summary:

Total Summary of Moths recorded in WCP - All Years					
Number of Species	44				
Common Name	Scientific Name	Last Sighting	Total Count	No of Sightings	Status
Agapeta hamana	Agapeta hamana	30/06/2023	1	1	Adult
Anania crocealis	Anania crocealis	01/07/2022	1	1	Adult
Box Tree Moth	Cydalima perspectalis	13/09/2023	1	1	Adult
Bramble Shoot Moth	Notocelia uddmanniana	30/06/2023	1	1	Adult
Bright-line Brown-eye	Lacanobia oleracea	01/07/2022	1	1	Adult
Brimstone Moth	Opisthagraptis luteolata	30/06/2023	5	4	Adult
Buff Ermine	Spilosoma luteum	01/07/2022	1	1	Adult
Cloaked Minor	Mesoligia furuncula	30/06/2023	2	2	Adult
Common Emerald	Hemithea aestivaria	01/07/2022	1	1	Adult
Common Footman	Eilema lurideola	01/07/2022	2	1	Adult
Common Rustic	Mesapamea secalis	01/07/2022	1	1	Adult
Common Wainscot	Mythimna pallens	30/06/2023	5	2	Adult
Diamond-back Moth	Plutella xylostella	30/06/2023	1	1	Adult
Dingy Footman	Eilema griseola	21/08/2021	1	1	Adult
Emperor Moth	Saturnia pavonia	25/05/2024	7	2	Caterpillar
Flame Shoulder	Ochropleura plecta	21/08/2021	1	1	Adult
Fox Moth	Macrothylacia rubi	08/09/2021	1	1	Caterpillar
Green Longhorn Moth	Adela reaumurella	17/04/2024	8	1	Adult
Gypsy Moth	Lymantria dispar	21/08/2021	1	1	Adult
Heart And Dart	Agrotis exclamationis	30/06/2023	3	2	Adult
Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing	Noctua janthe	21/08/2021	1	1	Adult
Light Arches	Apamea lithoxylaea	30/06/2023	1	1	Adult
Lime-speck Pug	Eupithecia centaureata	21/08/2021	1	1	Adult
Lunar-spotted Pinion	Cosmia pyralina	01/07/2022	1	1	Adult
Marbled Minor	Oligia strigilis	11/06/2022	1	1	Adult

Oak Eggar	Lasiocampa quercus	23/06/2021	1	1	Caterpillar
Oak Processionary	Thaumetopoea processionea	21/08/2021	1	1	Adult
Old Lady	Mormo maura	21/08/2021	1	1	Adult
Orange Swift	Hepialus sylvina	21/08/2021	1	1	Adult
Pale-shouldered Brocade	Lacanobia thalassina	30/06/2023	1	1	Adult
Ruby Tiger	Phragmatobia fuliginosa	21/08/2021	1	1	Adult
Setaceous Hebrew Character	Xestia c-nigrum	30/06/2023	1	1	Adult
Silver Y	Autographa gamma	30/06/2023	6	4	Adult
Small Magpie	Anania hortulata	30/06/2023	1	1	Adult
Straw Dot	Rivula sericealis	21/08/2021	1	1	Adult
Straw Underwing	Thalpophila matura	21/08/2021	2	1	Adult
The Lackey	Malacosoma neustria	25/05/2024	2	1	Caterpillar
The Magpie	Abraxas grossulariata	30/06/2023	2	2	Adult
The Spectacle	Abrostola tripartita	01/07/2022	1	1	Adult
The Vapourer	Orgyia antiqua	20/08/2024	1	1	Adult Male
Water Veneer	Acentria ephemerella	30/06/2023	3	2	Adult
White-point	Mythimna albipuncta	21/08/2021	1	1	Adult
Willow Beauty	Peribatodes rhomboidaria	21/08/2021	1	1	Adult
Yellow Shell	Campptogramma bilineata	21/08/2021	1	1	Adult

Our overall list now stands at 44 due to the 3 new additions this year. I do think we have barely scratched the surface here and there are many more moths to add to this list. As mentioned above, we will get decent weather for a moth night one year!

Amphibians & Reptiles – 4 Species – all years.

Record date	Species	Lifestage	Sex	Count	Site name
21/09/2022	Adder	Adult	male	1	Wick Country Park
27/07/2023	Unknown terrapin	Adult	unknown	1	Wick Country Park
01/10/2023	Common lizard	Adult	unknown	1	Wick Country Park
14/04/2024	Adder	Adult	male	1	Wick Country Park
12/06/2024	Adder	Adult	female	1	Wick Country Park

Two **Adder** were seen in 2024, and this species is the most common reptile sighting in the park. Overall, we have now seen 4 amphibian and reptile species in the park. We know of plans to “re-house” some of these creatures in the park, from a nearby development and perhaps our sightings may increase in future years due to this.

Others – 27 Species

Other Species Total Summary				
Number of Species	27			
Common Name	Scientific Name	Date Last Sighted	No of Sightings	Highest Count
14 Spot Ladybird	Propylea quattuordecimpunctata	20/08/2024	1	1
7 Spot Ladybird	Coccinella septempunctata	25/05/2024	1	1
Buff Tailed Bumblebee	Bombus terrestris	12/06/2024	4	26
Common Carder Bee	Bombus pascuorum	20/08/2024	2	1
Cucumber spider	Araniella cucurbitina	12/06/2024	1	1
Dark Edged Bee Fly	Bombylius major	17/04/2024	3	3
Dock Bug	Coreus marginatus	20/08/2024	1	1

Early Bumblebee	Bombus pratorum	12/06/2024	2	4
Flower Crab spider	Misumena vatia	12/06/2024	2	1
Footballer Hoverfly (Sun Fly)	Helophilus pendulus	25/08/2021	1	1
Green Bottle Fly	Lucilia sericata	22/07/2020	1	1
Hairy Footed Flower Bee	Anthophora plumipes	20/03/2024	1	1
Harlequin Ladybird	Harmonia axyridis	12/06/2024	3	4
Honey Bee	Apis mellifera	25/05/2024	1	1
Hornet Mimic Hoverfly	Volucella zonaria	26/07/2023	1	1
Labyrinth Spider	Agelena labyrinthica	20/07/2022	1	1
Meadow Grasshopper	Chorthippus parallelus	26/07/2023	1	1
Pellucid Fly	Volucella pellucens	12/06/2024	1	1
Red Tailed Bumblebee	Bombus lapidarius	12/06/2024	2	2
Roesel's Bush Cricket	Metrioptera roeselii	20/08/2024	1	1
Soldier Fly	Chloromyia formosa	12/06/2024	1	1
Southern (Vestal) Cuckoo Bee	Bombus vestalis	12/06/2024	1	3
Speckled Bush Cricket	Leptophyes punctatissima	26/07/2023	2	1
Spring Epistrophe Hoverfly	Epistrophe eligans	17/04/2024	1	6
Tapered Drone Fly	Eristalis pertinax	12/06/2024	1	1
Tree Bumble Bee	Bombus hypnorum	25/05/2024	1	1
White Tailed Bumble Bee	Bombus lucorum	25/05/2024	1	2

In 2024 we decided to record “other species” i.e. insects and other invertebrates. In addition to species recorded during 2024, I have also populated this list with a few earlier sightings, identified from photographs taken on past visits.

We now have a total of 27 species identified and there will be many more to add over future years.

Additional Visits 2025:

In addition to the monthly walks, the following will take place in 2025:

1. **Moth Night.** This has become a successful and entertaining event and will continue in 2025 – **Friday 4th July** is in the diary. Hopefully, we will involve someone from the Essex Moth Group this year.
2. **Bat Watch/Night Walk.** We are overdue a Bat Night and I will look to get a date in the diary in the next few weeks.
3. **Late Spring Picnic.** This was a very pleasant day in 2024 despite the weather. A similar event will be held in 2025, date to be agreed.
4. **January Jaunt, Spring Birdsong Walk, Autumn Ramble.** These are annual events in the park and wildlife is recorded on each visit. For some reason I have never included the data from these events in our figures. From 2025 however, I will start including data from these events in the records. It obviously makes sense to do so, and I wonder why it has taken so long to do this. Whether I can now be bothered going back to 2020 and re-populating all of the historical data remains to be seen.....perhaps! Dates proposed for these events are currently being agreed and will be confirmed by the FOWCP and detailed on the website.

Recap 2024

Another successful year of wildlife walks and we now have 5 years of data to look at. Our knowledge and understanding of the park and its wildlife has greatly increased and it continues to surprise us year after year. The walks are as popular as ever and are becoming well known with other wildlife organisations in the County. Here's to the next 5 years!

My highlights of the year were:

1. Managing to get some decent photos of a female adder.
2. The most Bee Orchids I have seen in the park.
3. A Flower Crab Spider on a Lesser Celandine.
4. A gorgeous little Wren singing in a tree full of blossom.

I am sure you all have your own 2024 wildlife highlights that you will remember, and I am looking forward to more in 2025.

I have photos of all my highlights above and some of these are shown below.

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