

## Wildlife Walk – April 2022

This month's walk took place on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> April, which was a bright and sunny day but with a cool breeze. I guessed that it might be good day when we heard/saw not one but two Lesser Whitethroats on the way to the park and we were not disappointed. Many of our summer migrant birds are here already and can be heard singing from many areas of the park. In fact, on several occasions it was quite difficult picking out individual songs with so many birds singing at the same time. It was very pleasing to find another Lesser Whitethroat along the car park road together with its cousin the Common Whitethroat. The "Lesser" flew off towards the park and I assumed that the bird we heard singing near the boardwalk was this bird and not a second bird. We did though hear a second bird singing in the teasel field hedges. Having had no records last year, it looks like Wickford and the park have a good number of these birds this year and they are certainly seem to be increasing in the UK. A surprising early find were two singing Reed Warblers in the lake reedbeds – more good news that they are back already. We also managed to get good views of Chiffchaff at the bridge and a very nice male Blackcap from the boardwalk. As well as all the bird activity we saw plenty of butterflies with some very nice specimens on the wing. A big surprise was a very worn and tatty Painted Lady that had certainly been in the wars but was a very early find for this migratory species. Normally we get these later in the year as they migrate through Europe from their wintering grounds in the Atlas mountains of Morocco but discussing this with an expert later, he advised that the one we saw will have migrated here from Italy or France where some do overwinter. For many of us however, the highlight of the day were the first chicks of the year. 4 very cute Moorhen chicks were spotted from the boardwalk – although we did not see any adults with them. We then saw two lots of Mallard chicks at the lake, one brood of five and another of twelve! That mother has her work cut out. Overall, a very good day and it is certainly a very good time of year to be out walking in the park. Details below:

### ***Just a reminder of the remaining dates for the walks this year:***

May – 25<sup>th</sup> **NOTE change of date. Please be alert for updates – check emails or WCP Website.**

June – 15<sup>th</sup>

July – 20<sup>th</sup>

August – 17<sup>th</sup>

September – 21<sup>st</sup>

October – 19<sup>th</sup>

November – 16<sup>th</sup>

December – 14<sup>th</sup>

**All starting at 10.30am from the Pavilion car park.** Please note these dates in your diaries but as usual I will confirm by email / WhatsApp whether the walks will go ahead depending on weather etc.

The dates are also available on the [Friends of the Wick Country Park Website](#).

**Martin Singleton**

**Birds: 24 species**

Common Name	Scientific Name	Date	Total Count	Notes
Black-headed Gull	Chroicocephalus ridibundus	20/04/2022	2	One at the lake and one overhead
Canada Goose	Branta canadensis	20/04/2022	3	At the lake
Carrion Crow	Corvus corone	20/04/2022	3	A few around the park
Common Chiffchaff	Phylloscopus collybita	20/04/2022	2	One singing and showing well at the bridge and one behind the lake
Common Moorhen	Gallinula chloropus	20/04/2022	2	First chicks of the year from the boardwalk (4). Two adults at the lake
Common Starling	Sturnus vulgaris	20/04/2022	15	Eight birds along the car park road and seven at the back of the lake
Common Whitethroat	Curruca communis	20/04/2022	3	Two birds along the car park road and one singing behind the large mound
Common Wood Pigeon	Columba palumbus	20/04/2022	5	A quiet day for these, just a few dotted around the park
Dunnock	Prunella modularis	20/04/2022	4	A few singing and fairly active in the hedgerows
Eurasian Blackcap	Sylvia atricapilla	20/04/2022	8	Nice to hear this many singing with one showing very well from the boardwalk
Eurasian Blue Tit	Cyanistes caeruleus	20/04/2022	8	A few seen and heard - probably a substantial undercount
Eurasian Collared Dove	Streptopelia decaocto	20/04/2022	1	From the boardwalk
Eurasian Coot	Fulica atra	20/04/2022	2	At the lake
Eurasian Magpie	Pica pica	20/04/2022	5	Mainly in the grass searching for food
Eurasian Reed Warbler	Acrocephalus scirpaceus	20/04/2022	2	Good to hear these in the lake reedbeds - an early record.
Eurasian Wren (British)	Troglodytes troglodytes indigenus	20/04/2022	6	Several singing from various locations - often the loudest singer.
European Goldfinch	Carduelis carduelis	20/04/2022	6	A few pairs mainly fly overs
European Herring Gull	Larus argentatus	20/04/2022	1	Just one overhead
European Robin	Erithacus rubecula	20/04/2022	16	Lots singing and active in the park - suspect another undercount.
Great Tit	Parus major	20/04/2022	3	Heard calling in the hedgerows
House Sparrow	Passer domesticus	20/04/2022	6	Two birds along the car park road and others active behind the large mound
Lesser Whitethroat	Curruca curruca	20/04/2022	2	Nice to have them back this year - one singing near the picnic area and another in the teasel field.
Long-tailed Tit	Aegithalos caudatus	20/04/2022	2	One from the bridge and another behind the large mound
Mallard	Anas platyrhynchos	20/04/2022	9	Eight males and 2 females at the lake with no less than 17 very cute chicks

## Mammals – 1 Species

Common Name	Scientific Name	Date	Total Count	Notes
Eastern Grey Squirrel	Sciurus carolinensis	20/04/2022	1	Just one from the boardwalk

## Butterflies – 7 Species

Common Name	Scientific Name	Date	Total Count	Notes
Brimstone	Gonepteryx rhamni	20/04/2022	2	One after the bridge and one at the lake
Comma Butterfly	Polygonia c-album	20/04/2022	1	One near the teasel field
Large White	Pieris brassicae	20/04/2022	2	One from the bridge and another near the lake
Orange Tip	Anthocharis cardamines	20/04/2022	3	Some very nice males mainly behind the lake
Painted Lady	Vanessa cardui	20/04/2022	1	A very tatty individual but a really early record for this species
Peacock Butterfly	Inachis io	20/04/2022	6	Several sunbathing on the paths - a fabulous butterfly
Speckled Wood	Pararge aegeria	20/04/2022	6	Several in their usual place in the shaded parts behind the lake