

Wildlife Walk – July 2022

This month's wildlife walk in the park took place on Wednesday 20th July. Thankfully, temperatures had dropped from the near 40oC of the previous days but it was still sunny and warm but a bit breezy. The day got off to a good start for us when on the way to the park, Marie spotted a Slow Worm (*Anguis fragilis*), slithering along the path. Sadly, despite its name, it was still too fast for me to get the camera out in time! In the park itself, it was soon apparent that after 2 days of record temperatures, it would be a good day for butterflies with several Gatekeepers and various whites seen on the car park road. And this continued along the park hedgerows, especially those with plenty of brambles, all containing lots of butterflies of various species but dominated by Gatekeepers. In the grasses we found plenty of Meadow Browns and my particular favourite the Marbled White. We also managed to identify at least one, probably two Small Skippers but another skipper later evaded identification. Another small butterfly we found was the Common Blue with a few beautiful specimens seen. You only really appreciate these with a good view via binoculars – fabulous. I think I zoned out on birds as there were so many interesting insects to see but at the lake, as well as the usual water birds, there was a family of Green Woodpeckers. These eventually flew to the trees on the large mound where we saw another two, making a total of 5 – great to see. Also at the lake, we saw several Black Tailed Skimmers and Blue Tailed Damselflies, including two mating. As we left the lake, in the hedges we found a web of the Labyrinth Spider (*Agelena labyrinthica*) which had captured a bumble bee. The web is like a funnel but further down the funnel is a labyrinth of tunnels which gives this spider its name. Finally, I would like to thank Barbara & Richard for compiling a list of flowering plants they found on the day, the number of which really surprised me. We have never really recorded plants before, so here for the first time, we have a list of what can be seen at this time of year.

Details of the sightings have been tabulated below. Some photos from the day can be seen here – surprisingly none of Gatekeepers!

<https://1drv.ms/u/s!AhWEUz33xHiNheAY7vPJhDWe21XkiA?e=cZOXOJ>

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

August – 17th

September – 21st

October – 19th

November – 16th

December – 14th

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 – 23 Species

Common Name	Scientific Name	Date	Total Count	Notes
Barn Swallow	Hirundo rustica	20/07/2022	7	Nice to see a flock overhead near the bridge
Canada Goose	Branta canadensis	20/07/2022	19	At the lake
Carrion Crow	Corvus corone	20/07/2022	6	Usual numbers around the park
Common Blackbird	Turdus merula	20/07/2022	1	A panicked bird flying through the trees
Common Chiffchaff	Phylloscopus collybita	20/07/2022	2	A couple heard in the hedgerows
Common Moorhen	Gallinula chloropus	20/07/2022	1	Just one at the lake
Common Swift	Apus apus	20/07/2022	2	Two seen over the treetops
Common Wood Pigeon	Columba palumbus	20/07/2022	6	Only a few seen today
Eurasian Blackcap	Sylvia atricapilla	20/07/2022	1	Just one heard
Eurasian Blue Tit	Cyanistes caeruleus	20/07/2022	4	A couple heard and two more seen
Eurasian Coot	Fulica atra	20/07/2022	1	At the lake
Eurasian Jay	Garrulus glandarius	20/07/2022	2	Two responsible for the panicking Blackbird
Eurasian Magpie	Pica pica	20/07/2022	8	Quite active and noisy in the park
Eurasian Wren (British)	Troglodytes troglodytes indigenus	20/07/2022	1	Only one heard
European Goldfinch	Carduelis carduelis	20/07/2022	5	Several heard - mainly in flight
European Green Woodpecker	Picus viridis	20/07/2022	5	At least 5 birds in the park - all very active and noisy. Great to see.
European Greenfinch	Chloris chloris	20/07/2022	2	One heard on the car park road and one near the lake
European Robin	Erithacus rubecula	20/07/2022	1	A rest day today for these - only one heard!
House Sparrow	Passer domesticus	20/07/2022	1	One seen near the pavilion
Long-tailed Tit	Aegithalos caudatus	20/07/2022	3	Seen behind the large mound
Mallard	Anas platyrhynchos	20/07/2022	12	At the lake
Stock Dove	Columba oenas	20/07/2022	1	On the grass from the pavilion
White Wagtail (Pied)	Motacilla alba yarrellii	20/07/2022	2	At the lake - quite active

Dragonflies – 2 Species

Common Name	Scientific Name	Date	Total Count	Notes
Black-tailed Skimmer	Orthetrum cancellatum	20/07/2022	4	Several buzzing around the lake edges
Blue-tailed Damselfly	Ischnura elegans	20/07/2022	7	One near the lake but several in bushes nearby including 2 mating

Butterflies – 12 Species

Common Name	Scientific Name	Date	Total Count	Notes
Comma Butterfly	<i>Polygonia c-album</i>	20/07/2022	5	Some very nice specimens, mainly on brambles
Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>	20/07/2022	3	A couple near the lake and one near the large mound - gorgeous
Gatekeeper	<i>Pyronia tithonus</i>	20/07/2022	122	Loads in the park at the moment - a lovely little orange and brown butterfly
Holly Blue	<i>Celastrina argiolus</i>	20/07/2022	1	Just one seen on brambles
Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>	20/07/2022	5	A few seen - again mainly around the bramble flowers
Marbled White	<i>Melanargia galathea</i>	20/07/2022	8	Some great specimens to be seen in the park at the moment - mainly in the grasses
Meadow Brown	<i>Maniola jurtina</i>	20/07/2022	55	Lots in the grasses and also in the hedgerows
Peacock Butterfly	<i>Inachis io</i>	20/07/2022	1	One at the death in the pavilion car park
Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>	20/07/2022	1	Even more of a last minute spot at the car park gate!
Small Skipper	<i>Thymelicus sylvestris</i>	20/07/2022	2	One at the lake positively identified from a photo, another nearby assumed to be this species.
Small White	<i>Artogeia rapae</i>	20/07/2022	7	Mainly seen on brambles
Speckled Wood	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>	20/07/2022	6	In their usual place - the shaded areas behind the lake

Plants in Flower – 34 Species

Common Name	Scientific Name	Date
Autumn Hawkbit	Scorzoneroides autumnalis	20/07/22
Black Horehound	Ballota nigra	20/07/22
Bramble	Rubus fruticosus (agg.)	20/07/22
Bristly Ox-tongue	Helminthotheca echioides	20/07/22
Common Centaury	Centaureum erythraea	20/07/22
Common Fleabane	Pulicaria dysenterica	20/07/22
Common Mallow	Malva sylvestris	20/07/22
Common Ragwort	Senecio jacobaea	20/07/22
Creeping Buttercup	Ranunculus repens	20/07/22
Creeping Thistle	Cirsium arvense	20/07/22
Daisy	Bellis perennis	20/07/22
Fennel	Foeniculum vulgare	20/07/22
Field Bindweed	Convolvulus arvensis	20/07/22
Goat's Rue	Galega officinalis	20/07/22
Great Willowherb	Epilobium hirsutum	20/07/22
Greater Plantain	Plantago major	20/07/22
Hawkweed Ox-tongue	Picris hieracioides	20/07/22
Hedge Bindweed	Calystegia silvatica	20/07/22
Hedge Parsley	Torilus japonica	20/07/22
Hoary Ragwort	Senecio erucifolius	20/07/22
Knapweed	Centaurea nemoralis	20/07/22
Meadow Buttercup	Ranunculus acris	20/07/22
Meadow Vetchling	Lathyrus pratensis	20/07/22
Mugwort	Artemisia vulgaris	20/07/22
Pineappleweed	Matricaria discoidea	20/07/22
Red Bartsia	Odontites vernus	20/07/22
Red Clover	Trifolium pratense	20/07/22
Ribwort Plantain	Plantago lanceolata	20/07/22
Spear Thistle	Cirsium vulgare	20/07/22
Tall Melilot	Melilotus altissimus	20/07/22
Teasel	Dipsacus fullonum	20/07/22
White Clover	Trifolium repens	20/07/22
Wild Carrot	Daucus carota	20/07/22
Yarrow	Achillea millefolium	20/07/22