



Skylarks



A Message from the Committee

Welcome to the latest edition of the Skylarks newsletter. Firstly a belated Happy New Year from the Committee to you all and we send you our very best wishes for 2023.

The Events Calendar is included in this edition, the committee hopes again to see you at the Wick Country Park enjoying the events.

Our next event will be the Birdsong Walk on Sunday 14th May followed by Bring Your Own Picnic on Saturday 24th June. Last year was our first wildlife picnic, the weather being fine and sunny and it was a very pleasant afternoon watching the wildlife around the park.

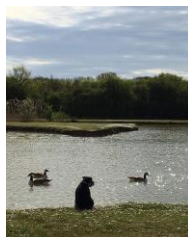
On Friday 30th June it is the Moth Night and Stargazing which is an enjoyable evening identifying the moths and stargazing through the telescope. This year hopefully it will be a fine sky to enable seeing some planets!

In addition to these nature events there are the Monthly Wildlife Walks led by Martin Singleton and other experts from the Wickford Wildlife Society. This is a leisurely walk looking out for the birds and other wildlife that are in the park.

The committee are looking for any opportunities to hold further events, however these will be announced nearer the date.



Have you seen our friendly Robins on your visits to Wick Country Park, they often meet and greet you when entering the park. Especially friendly when the Wick-ed Gardeners are working in the pavilion garden following you around. If you see them and any other wildlife and you have a camera to hand please send your photos to the website [contact us@friendsofthewickcountrypark.co.uk](mailto:contact_us@friendsofthewickcountrypark.co.uk). We look forward to seeing you soon.



'The January Jaunt & AGM 2023'

It was a fine day for this year's January Jaunt and a group of walkers strolled around the country park to enjoy the scenery and wildlife at this time of the year. It was then back to the pavilion for some welcome hot mulled wine and mince pies before settling down for the AGM. Thank you to Martin Singleton for leading the walk.



At the AGM the committee reported that it was unfortunate that we had to cancel the first event of 2022, this was the Bird Song Walk in April, however other events did take place. The Picnic in the Park event in June was very enjoyable. A group sat by the lake watching the wildlife there whilst enjoying a picnic, a pleasant way to spend a Saturday afternoon. This was followed in July by the Moth and Stargazing evening. The Wickford Wildlife Society organised the second Moth & Stargazing night held in the Wick Country Park, a joint event with the Friends of the Wick Country Park. Another one is scheduled for June this year and will involve setting out lights to attract the moths and have telescopes available if we get a clear sky.

The Bat Watch and Night Walk took place in August. Ella of the Essex Bat Group gave us an overview of the bats in the UK along with the work that the Bat Group carry out. We then set off around the park with electronic bat detectors in hand, every now and then picking up the quick clicking sound to inform us that bats were nearby. An interesting and informative evening was enjoyed by all. Additionally the Autumn Walk with Apple Theme Refreshments took place in October.

The monthly wildlife walks again expertly organised by Martin Singleton have proved popular. Each month a comprehensive report is produced and also an annual summary which are downloaded onto the FOWCP website. Many thanks to Martin for his continued and welcome support.

The new Wick Gardening Group - the Wick-ed Gardeners - is now meeting regularly, thank you to Marie for organising these. We would also like to say a big thank you to Ali Riley for her management of our Facebook page and also to the Wickford Wombles for their litter picks in the Wick Country Park. A thank you too to Alaric for all his work maintaining the website.

We are appealing for more volunteers, especially to join the committee to help us arrange and give new ideas for this year's events.

Finally, free membership will be continued for another year.

'Wick-ed Gardeners'



The Wick-ed Gardeners have been busy throughout 2022 working to maintain the Pavilion garden. If you would like to join the valued team of volunteer gardeners please come along, all are welcome, tools are available but bring your own if you prefer along with your pair of gardening gloves. There are no set times now so please keep an eye on the Friends of the Wick Country Park website under Latest News for the date of the next session and meeting arrangements.



Wick Country Park – Wildlife Sightings 2022

Birds were recorded on 13 visits during 2022 and 56 bird species were identified, this is an increase of 3 compared to 2021 and our highest annual total so far. It was also a good year for new birds added to the overall “park list”, with 10 new species added! These were: **Common Buzzard**, **Common Kingfisher**, **Common Snipe**, **Common Tern**, **Eurasian Bullfinch**, **Eurasian Siskin**, **Northern Lapwing**, **Peregrine Falcon**, **Spotted Flycatcher** and **Yellowhammer**.



Common Buzzard



Common Kingfisher



Common Snipe



Common Tern



Eurasian Bullfinch



Eurasian Siskin



Northern Lapwing



Peregrine Falcon



Spotted Flycatcher



Yellowhammer

During 2022 19 species of butterfly were recorded compared to 22 in 2021. Just one new species was added this year, a **Painted Lady** seen very early in the year, this had somehow over-wintered in the UK. We missed a few species this year that we have seen in the past and sadly this included the **Brown Argus**. This is a very small butterfly and could easily be missed. We also did not identify an **Essex Skipper**, although we probably saw a few of them – a tricky species unless you get a good look at their antennae. **Ringlet** and **Small Copper** are two others we missed, the latter for the last 2 years. Finally, we did not go looking for the **White-letter Hairstreak** this year but surely, we will catch up with this in the park someday.



Painted Lady



Brown Argus



Essex Skipper



Ringlet



Small Copper



White-letter Hairstreak

In respect of numbers, **Gatekeeper** were present in very large numbers this year, while **Meadow Brown** numbers were down in 2021. These are the most abundant butterflies in the park and great to see in the summer months. **Speckled Wood** is the butterfly you are most likely to see in the park, especially in shaded areas behind the lake, where it is present for more than half of the year.

Only 6 species of Dragonflies and Damselflies were recorded in 2022 but this included 2 new species for the park list, both damselflies. **Azure Damselfly** will be breeding here but is tricky to separate from Common Blue so has remained off the list until this year. The **Willow Emerald** is a recent colonist from Europe and is rapidly expanding in the UK. Having seen several in the area, it was great to finally catch up with this one.

We now have a total of 10 species seen in the park, but I think we are still missing a few that breed in the park/area, e.g., **Banded Demoiselle** and **Large Red Damselfly**, and hopefully we will add some more new species in 2023.

We identified 11 moth species during our moth night, despite the cold weather on the night. Our total list now stands at 33 species. There will be many more species present in the park – if we get the right weather for the moth night in 2023 the results could be spectacular.

No new mammals were added to the list during 2022. The highlight was the Bat Night in early August where we identified a very large number of Common Pipistrelle feeding over the lake and along the hedgerows. I am sure other bats are present in the park and we could identify these someday.

(Written by Martin Singleton)

Martin's full report on the Wildlife Sightings in 2022 can be found on the Friends of the Wick Country Park website www.friendsofthewickcountrypark.co.uk



WICK COUNTRY PARK EVENTS 2023



The following events for 2023 have been organised by the Friends of the Wick Country Park.

*All these events start at or near to the **Wick Country Park Pavilion** and for most events booking is not required, please see the particular event for details. Toilets, car-parking, cycle racks, and refreshments are available at most events.*

EVENT Please click on the link for full details	DATE	DETAILS
Wick-ed Gardeners	Next date: please see the News Headlines page	Great news! The new Wick Gardening Group - the Wick-ed Gardeners - is now meeting regularly in its new guise. For the next date, please see the News Headlines page. Meet outside the Pavilion. Please bring your own gardening gloves. Tools will be provided, but if you have your own favourite gardening tool/s please feel free to bring your own.
Monthly Nature Walks	Dates for 2023: March 15th April 12th May 17th June 21st July 26th August 16th September 13th October 18th November 15th December 13th	Starting at 10.30a.m. Enjoy a sociable and leisurely walk of approx 1 - 1.5 hours around the Park, led by Martin Singleton, and assisted by other experts from the Wickford Wildlife Society to watch and listen to the varied wildlife in the Park. If you come throughout the year you may be amazed at the changing patterns of sightings throughout the seasons. For further details and to confirm the next date, please contact Martin Singleton
Birdsong Walk	Sunday 14 th May	Start time: 09.00 - note the earlier start compared with previous years. Martin Singleton will be the lead. Refreshments will be provided.
Bring Your Own Picnic by the Lake	Saturday 24 th June	Time 2pm to approx 5pm. Sit by the lake and see what birds and wildlife there is about whilst enjoying a picnic.
Moth Night and Stargazing	Friday 30 th June	Time 9pm till late - Moth Night and Stargazing. This is a joint event with the Wickford Wildlife Society. There will be a booking system to be opened nearer the time as numbers will be limited.
Autumn Walk with Apple Theme Refreshments	Sunday 1st October	Time 10am - Autumn Walk round the park then back to the pavilion for apple theme refreshments.



Come along to the Wick Country Park and enjoy a walk and see the wildlife.

If you do make any good wildlife sightings, please share them by sending an email to [contact us@friendsofthewickcountrypark.co.uk](mailto:contact_us@friendsofthewickcountrypark.co.uk) and we will add them to the 'Nature Notes' on the website. If you could manage a picture or two that would be even better!

Friends of the Wick Country Park Committee:

Christine Lee - Acting Chairperson, Hazel Broomfield - Treasurer, Marie Singleton - Secretary,
Eileen Cattell - Membership Secretary, Alaric Cundy - Webmaster
Peter Bates - Committee Member

 Friends of the Wick Country Park

Wickford Wildlife Society website: www.wickfordwildlife.co.uk

 Wickford Wildlife Society

Wickford Wombles

 Wickford Wombles

Neighbourhood Policing Team: Telephone 0300 333 4444 or 07875 003503

