

RSPB Bexley Group walk – Danson Park Thursday 27th October 2016

Well, the colour of the leaves on the trees suggested it was autumn and eventually the sun broke through to help make this another enjoyable local event, attended by 20 members/guests including a few new faces which is always a great pleasure- especially when two are on holiday from Australia. It was nice to show off one of Bexley's jewels in the crown.

The event began with Ralph showing everyone the recently recovered long-tailed tits nest, a most brilliant piece of house building and enjoyed by all.

The formal garden was our first stop, great spotted woodpecker flying over and landing in a tree, robin the ever present songster at any time of year whilst blue and great tit fed high amongst the leaf covered higher canopies.



Walking along the edge of the woodland didn't produce as much as might be expected at this time of year but corvids were well represented with crows (angry call), jackdaw, magpies and jays: the latter being a master acorn collector/hoarder which we learnt a little about.

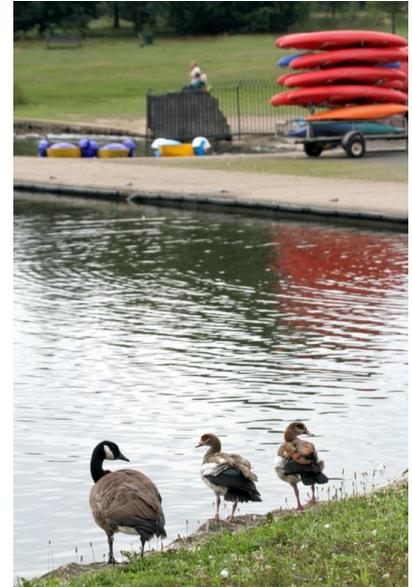
As we reached the stream running into Danson Lake, some had a brief view of grey wagtail, but later, in the small, muddy pool another fed busily giving much better views. The feeder lake by the Rock garden was covered in duck weed, a result of more light being let in with the chopping down of some trees. Only mallard and moorhen were feeding here.



Once alongside the main lake there was much more to see: five cygnets continued to rely on parents for protection and company, coots and mallard squabbled, over 20 cormorants were gathered, many with wings outstretched drying in the sun. Black-headed gulls were the dominant feature although without wishing everyone to peel away in boredom we did spend a little time sorting the adults from juveniles. A few common gulls, a few herring gull and two lesser-black backed were also seen. Such a shame that the single

yellow-legged gull, perched nicely on one of the moored sailing dinghies decided to flop into the water as soon as everyone's attention was drawn to it. Only John Turner saw the flash of turquoise as a kingfisher flew to the other side. Three great crested grebe were noted and as we walked along the eastern causeway. two little grebe (dabchick) were actively feeding.

Wandering along the north side of the lake we had closer encounters with the Egyptian geese (seen earlier from the other side) along with plenty of Canada geese and more gulls. Our attention was diverted skywards as three crows mobbed a sparrowhawk (flap, flap glide) sending it higher and higher away from us.



At the edge of the Bog Garden two drake and a female teal sheltered close to cover and another great crested grebe was seen whilst goldfinches chatted away in the nearby wooded area.

Quite surprisingly, three hours had almost passed, lots of interesting chat shared and autumn colours enjoyed. Thanks to John Turner, a Danson Park regular, for his input as he turned to leave the rest of us to return to the car park and a well deserved lunch.

Birds seen: Great crested grebe, little grebe, cormorant, grey heron, mute swan, Canada geese, Egyptian geese, teal, mallard, sparrowhawk, moorhen, coot, black-headed gull, common gull, lesser black-bacaked gull, herring gull, yellow-legged gull, woodpigeon, ring-necked parakeet, kingfisher, great spotted woodpecker, grey wagtail, robin, blue tit, great tit, long-tailed tit, jay, magpie, jackdaw, carrion crow, chaffinch, goldfinch. (32)

Ralph and Brenda Todd

October 28th 2016