

Bexley RSPB Group – Walk Lamorbey Park Thursday 7th February 2019

Previous visits to Lamorbey Park have been in April (2016) and October (2017) so it would be interesting to see what winter would produce. A magnificent turnout of 19 with about a third making a first visit to this local gem were prepared for any weather – very strong overnight winds had abated a little and sunshine, blue sky and threatening rain clouds prevailed during the morning visit but fortunately no actual rain.

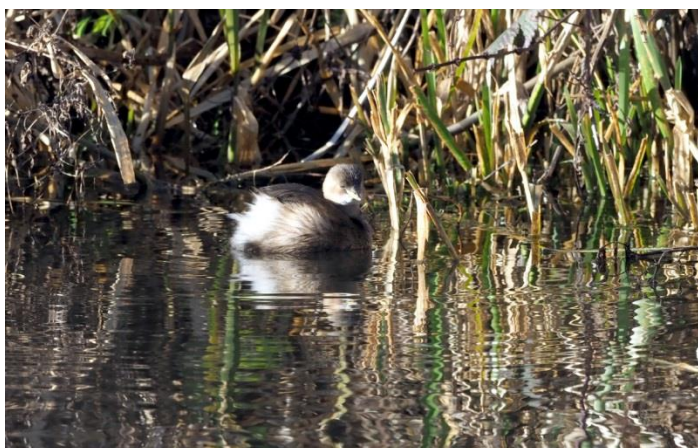
Assembling in the Sidcup Leisure Centre car park gave us an opportunity to scan Marlow House for the peregrine falcon – great telescope views of the box before Gary located a sitting bird on an office window sill two floors lower down. What a great start.

Moving into the park and trying to hear bird-song over the animated shouts and squeals of the local school children was a little challenging but fortunately it wasn't long before the shout of nuthatch went up (from one of our observant members – not the school children). Eventually two birds (a pair?) gave good views in and around two large conifers. Of course, standing still following these birds one, possibly two, goldcrests, blue and coal tits were also seen. In the knowledge that a firecrest had been seen we spent some time in the favoured location but to no avail only more blue tits, robin and great tit.

Continuing the walk between Chis & Sid School and the lake, magpies, crows, woodpigeons, parakeets and robins, blue and great tits were noted and on the “choppy” water of the lake, plenty of mallard, moorhen, coot and Canada geese were attracted to some bread being thrown. A single Egyptian goose also muscled its way in. At the golf course end 20+ black-headed gulls of varying plumages and two little grebes were very active.



Some of 19 members on the lookout



Little grebe

Moving across the paved track, viewing the golf course lake didn't produce anything different – this is often the place to look for teal, egrets and heron – nothing today. Walking with the golf course on our right and Rose Bruford grounds to our left we did find a stock dove and grey heron in the same tree. Stock dove is a much under rated and located species – good to see this one through the telescope in good light.



Stock dove



Redwing

As we wandered back into the park a feeding flock of 11 redwing and two mistle thrushes and two blackbirds were seen well on the Chis & Sid rugby pitch. At this point we were approached by a local resident who excitedly informed us of calling tawny owls over the past couple of weeks in the trees under which we stood – most members declined his invitation to join him at midnight to confirm this. He also informed us of the regular sightings of both great spotted and green woodpeckers – both amongst some surprising omissions for our list for this walk. Although great spotted woodpecker was heard drumming.

We made one last attempt to locate the firecrest, still no luck so we returned to the car park at 12.10 having seen/heard (H) 26 species but also having enjoyed a lovely walk and wonderful company.

In this the 40th Anniversary of the group we reflected that back in 1979, Egyptian geese were only found as a feral species in North Norfolk, parakeets were still mostly found in small numbers only in Foots Cray Meadows and little egrets were a very rare vagrant. Peregrine falcons were just beginning to recover from near extinction but were still many years away from being an urban bird. Today we saw no starlings, house sparrows or song thrushes – all much reduced in numbers.

Species seen/heard: Canada geese, Egyptian geese, little grebe, grey heron, mallard, peregrine falcon, moorhen, coot, black-headed gull, stock dove, woodpigeon, ring-necked parakeet, great spotted woodpecker (H), wren (H), robin, blackbird, redwing, mistle thrush, goldcrest, coal tit, blue tit, great tit, nuthatch, magpie, carrion crow, chaffinch, (26)

Ralph and Brenda Todd

(all images Ralph and Brenda Todd)

Next walk will to Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve on Thursday 21st March.