

## Friends of Crossness Walk – Crossness Nature Reserve and Thames Foreshore

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2021 – 9.30 – 12.30.

Leaders Ralph and Brenda Todd, Karen Sutton.

The second Friends walk this autumn, or, given the drop in temperature and clear blue sunny skies, should that be the first walk of the winter?



Great to see 16 Friends turning out to enjoy the reserve in such good weather. Some new Friends for the walks but no one new to the reserve so little need for too much introduction but what there was, was soon interrupted by a peregrine whizzing overhead toward the Cory RRRF where it briefly circled then was lost to view, probably settling on the other side. This autumn has seen a mixed bag of passage migration with seemingly fewer small birds being reported from many locations. Not deterred we headed off along the access road, passing the West Paddock (where a single snipe proved too well camouflaged for most to see). A nicely posing kestrel was much admired but little else apart from magpies and woodpigeons were seen. It was good to have long-term reserve volunteer, Roger Taylor, with us to expand on some of the recent management work and also how water flows around the ditches.



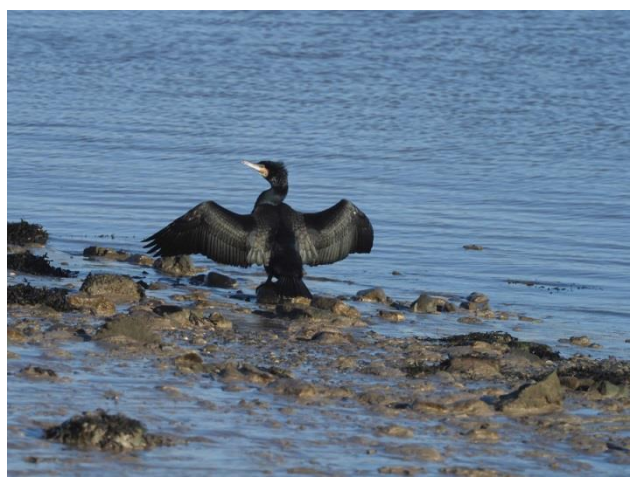
The Great Breach Lagoon, seemed initially devoid of wildfowl but a little patience was rewarded with two little grebe, pairs of gadwall, teal and mallard plus a male Shoveler. Making our way back, a look down the footpath showed some activity of blackbirds, a song thrush and dunno. The Protected Area was fairly quiet until a couple of grey heron (one missing some primary feathers) squabbled overhead. Chiffchaff was heard and seen by some and a bundle of feathers were evidence a great spotted woodpecker had recently been present, now sadly departed, probably at the mercy of a sparrowhawk.



A fifteen minute comfort stop coincided with a visit to the hide from which we hoped to see the jack snipe seen the day before. Sadly no luck, just the ever present coots and moorhen to a backdrop of Cetti's warbler calling.



With nearly four hours to go before high tide the Thames Foreshore provided some excellent viewing of waders, wildfowl and gulls (all black-headed except one lesser black-backed). With the sun behind us and a relatively calm river the colour of the teal, wigeon, shoveler, mallard, gadwall and shelduck could be much appreciated. A single curlew showed really well, a few black-tailed godwit stayed mostly in the shade, a common sandpiper mostly amongst the rocks but the lapwing and dunlin stood out beautifully on the water's edge, bathed in bright sunshine and watched over by a group of resting cormorants. The Thames Water outfall is such a great place to stand and watch on an incoming tide.



All too quickly our three hours had passed and it was time to leave the river and head back.

Some 49 species seen (or heard). Whilst finding small birds on the reserve had been something of a challenge (at least to get everyone on them) the river certainly provided plenty to enjoy. That, along with such good company, made for a very pleasant Friends walk once again. Thank you to Karen for organising the event and for all who turned out to participate.

**Birds Seen:** Great crested grebe, little grebe, cormorant, grey heron, greylag goose, Canada goose, shelduck, wigeon, gadwall, teal, mallard, shoveler, kestrel, peregrine falcon, water rail (h), moorhen, coot, lapwing, dunlin, snipe, black-tailed godwit, curlew, redshank, common sandpiper, black-headed gull, lesser black-backed gull, herring gull, woodpigeon, meadow pipit, grey wagtail, pied wagtail, wren (h), dunnoek, robin, blackbird, song thrush, Cetti's warbler (h), chiffchaff, blue tit, great tit, magpie, carrion crow, starling, house sparrow, chaffinch, greenfinch, goldfinch, linnet, reed bunting. (**49 species**).

Ralph and Brenda Todd November 2021

(All photos Ralph Todd apart from the group photo taken by Karen Sutton)