

Bird Survey Results

January 28th 2022

Henleaze Lake Nature Group

The Nature Group has conducted a bird survey at the lake on January 28th. This was an enjoyable and educational event that will help serve as a baseline to any interventions to improve bird life. The event also co-ordinated with the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch, so that the information gathered has been fed back into the national data collection.

Thank you to member Richard and bird expert Dave who suggested putting on this event, and whose enthusiasm and knowledge was invaluable. I hope to work with more Nature Group members over the year, so if you have any ideas or expertise do get in touch.

Over the course of the morning, we had 3-hour long sessions, with around 60 people participating in 14 small groups. Some people were very skilled in identifying the birds they saw, and by listening to the bird song. Those less confident (myself included!) hopefully felt more informed by the end of the session. A leaflet was provided with pictures of birds that are known to reside on site.

Results

Rarer Birds

The small birds that were seen by only one or two groups include the Chaffinch, Coal tit, Greenfinch, and House sparrow. One group saw a Blackcap which usually migrate but have started overwintering in the UK due to the mild weather.

A Jay and a Raven both part of the crow family were recorded. And one group identified a Nightingale by its beautiful song.

Over the water the Black Headed Gull was spotted, and two lucky groups saw the Kingfisher. In the reeds a Grebe was darting about, but it was hard to identify the species as it currently has a winter plumage.

| | Number of groups that spotted the bird | Highest number of birds seen at once. |
|--------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Black Headed Gull | 2 | 1 |
| Blackcap | 1 | 1 |
| Chaffinch | 2 | 2 |
| Coal Tit | 1 | 1 |
| Grebe | 1 | 1 |
| Greenfinch | 1 | 1 |
| House Sparrow | 2 | 4 |
| Jay | 1 | 1 |
| Kingfisher | 2 | 1 |
| Nightingale (song) | 1 | song |
| Raven | 2 | 1 |

| | Number of groups that spotted the bird | Highest number of birds seen at once. |
|--------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Collard Dove | 4 | 3 |
| Dunnock | 5 | 1 |
| Goldfinch | 6 | 10 |
| Jackdaw | 3 | 1 |
| Wren | 4 | 1 |
| Woodpecker | 6 | 1 |

Less Commonly Spotted Birds

Less commonly spotted birds included the Collard Doves and the Jackdaw. The shy Dunnock and Wren were also harder to spot. Goldfinches were seen in ones and twos by several observers, and one group recorded seeing a flock of 10 birds. The Woodpecker was seen by a few groups but heard by several more.

Commonly Spotted Birds

The solitary Herring Gull was seen by most people, the Robin and Blackbird were also most often seen solo, but occasionally in small family groups of 3.

Everyone noticed the Moorhens, Mallards, Wood Pigeons and Feral Pigeons in groups of up to 6/7. The most Crows seen at once was 8, while the Magpies were spotted in a gang of 9.

Blue Tits and Great Tits form flocks in the winter and were seen together in groups of up to 11/12. But by far the biggest flock spotted was the Starlings with one group counting 38 perched in the trees at the north end of the lake.

| | Number of groups that spotted the bird | Highest number of birds seen at once. |
|--------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Blackbird | 12 | 3 |
| Blue Tit | 12 | 11 |
| Crow | 12 | 8 |
| Feral Pigeon | 7 | 7 |
| Great Tit | 14 | 11 |
| Herring Gull | 9 | 1 |
| Moorhen | 13 | 6 |
| Mallard | 11 | 7 |
| Magpie | 14 | 9 |
| Robin | 11 | 3 |
| Starling | 11 | 38 |
| Wood Pigeon | 14 | 6 |

Conclusion

We are lucky to have such diversity of birds at the lake. Keep your eyes peeled and your ears open! If you see something of interest do let me know or share it directly on the Nature Group facebook for others to see.

I would like to put up more bird boxes, introduce winter bird feeders and continue to protect the bird's habitat by maintaining the hedges and choosing native trees that benefit birds. If you would like to help in this work do come along to a Nature Group session to get involved.

It would also be beneficial to have another bird survey in the summer to see what migratory birds are visiting, and to repeat on an annual basis.