



Warwick Natural History Society

Snippets



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Only 8.3 degrees and bees at the Anisodonta and cyclamen and flies hovering up the sugared spray shrub. I have named those I know.

A note on the Blow-flies, Calliphoridae bottom left. There are 37 species of Blow-flies but only two Calliphora species, the orange-cheeked Calliphora vicina and ginger-bearded Calliphora vomitoria.

1st December SG



I was just arriving home from the paper shop at 10.30 on 3rd December when overhead I was astounded to see a Red Kite, its colours fully lit by the winter sunshine. It was gliding quite low over the rooftops, ignoring the attentions of a local crow which was following at a safe distance.

I know Kites can be seen quite regularly in the local countryside, but I have never seen one in the local urban areas. The only large raptors I have seen over my house in Cubbington are Buzzards which occasionally drift in from farmland which is about 200m away. Was this sighting unusual and can we expect to see more Kites above our streets in the future? Incidentally, my only other sighting of a Red Kite this year was on 12th November, high over Ryton Pools.

I must remember to have my camera with me whenever I leave the house, this brief sighting would have made a good picture.

3rd December TF

December 4. Gloomy day cheered by male goosander (with pink tinged underparts) on Church Pool, Chesterton.

5th December LS

Kenilworth, December 6th and first sighting of a male and female Blackcap at the feeders.

7th December SG



December 5th, clearing leaves in the garden and spotted a Rounded Earthstar, *Geastrum fimbriatum*.

7th December SG



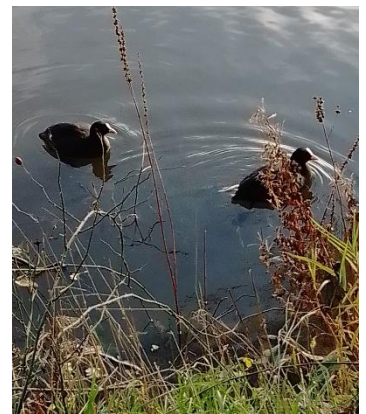
December 8 Radford Road opposite the Leam Valley reserve.

Male winter blackcap made first appearance this fine frosty morning in the bushes where I usually put half apples. During the next two days, it proved an aggressive survivor, seeing two blue tits off its apple, holding ground in a feeding tray against a lowering wood pigeon, fluttering to grab peanut crumbs from the feeder and from the tray, lunging with open bill at an approaching blue tit. 9th December LS

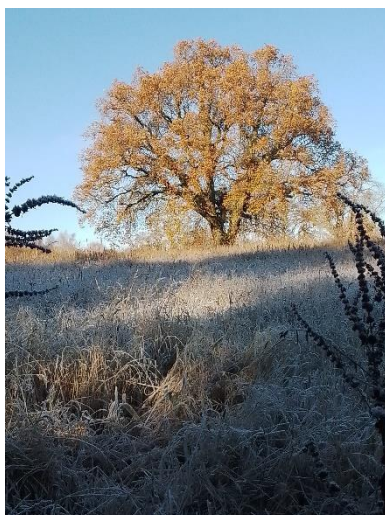


A beautiful morning's stroll around Earlswood Lakes and Clowes Wood on the 7th December.

Coots were merrily scooting around with plenty of action on the islands.



11th December RW



Trees and seedheads in our local fields in Little Shrewley took on a new dimension in the heavy frost with the sunlight streaming through.

11th December LW



I hear a robin singing most mornings before light even in the recent cold snap. Robins will sing all year round except in late summer when they are moulting. A vocal robin in winter is a good sign according to scientists, as it indicates the bird has built up sufficient fat reserves to survive cold nights and has enough energy left to defend its territory. The sign of a future strong mate?

13th December LD

We made our annual pilgrimage to Donna Nook, Lincolnshire, to visit the grey seals at their favourite pupping site. This year we saw our first ever live birth - it only took a matter of a minute before it was all over. We also witnessed a black seal - apparently there are 1 to every 400 or so regular white skinned seals. The count for seals started at the end of October this year with 13 bulls, 11 cows and 1 pup by week ending 29th October. By 19th November there were 362 bulls, 1169 cows and 914 pups. By 3rd December there were 497 bulls, 1498 cows and 2039 pups. Last year the last pup was born on Boxing Day.

It is a real privilege to be able to get so close to wild mammals in a site which is fenced and patrolled by wardens, though many of the pups chose to move right against the fencing so views are as close as they could possibly be. The sights along with the sounds they all make and the smell is something special.

On the same trip we witnessed a buzzard bothering and flushing out 5 or 6 ring necked parakeets out of a tree by a churchyard. I had previously thought I heard the peculiar sound of them calling which is very common in London. I have never come across them outside of the capital though believe they are to be found in other cities like Birmingham.

13th December BC

A colourful spectacle in the midst of the cold weather, All Saints' Parish Church in Leamington held its first Christmas Tree Festival (a friendly rival to St Mary's in Warwick!). Some 47 trees were decorated by local schools, businesses and groups.

I liked the Bee Friendly tree, very apt for our Society.

13th December LD



Snippets to Linda please at: wesandlinda@btinternet.com

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