

Visit to Kempton Nature Reserve on Tuesday 17th October 2023

There were several of us for this enjoyable visit to the Kempton Nature Reserve near Hanworth on a dry but chilly morning. We were met by Kristine Boudreau, the site manager, who enthusiastically showed us around the site.

The nature reserve is a Site of Special Scientific interest managed by Thames Water. The 50-acre wetland was formed from a decommissioned reservoir. There are deep water areas with reed fringes and three hides.

While we were waiting in the car park at the beginning of our visit, a Ring-necked Parakeet was heard noisily flying overhead. We ambled along the footpaths through woodland and gathered in the West hide overlooking the lake. It was comfortably provided with cushions on the benches! We spent several minutes in this hide just looking. Kristine said one of the joys of this site was that you were never sure what you would see. Sadly, the Snipe and Kingfisher, which had been seen recently, did not show up for us this morning!

In the corner of the lake were two Swans. A Grey Heron was seen on the far bank and one flew in and stood at the edge of the lake. A male Shoveler was seen at the corner of the lake and several females with their distinctive spade-like bills. There were lots of Coots, Tufted ducks, Moorhens and Gadwalls. A male Pochard was seen swimming amongst the Tufted ducks. Two Cormorants were standing on the beach at the edge of the lake. There were several Carrion Crows on the field next to the lake and Magpies flew across frequently.

Sadly, it proved to be a Pigeon mobbing a Black-headed Gull, rather than a Marsh Harrier!

We then moved on to the South hide which was overlooking some scrubby land without any birds of note this morning. Geoff and Ron heard the loud call of a Cetti's Warbler as they were standing outside the hide.

As we were walking round Kristine told us that a rare dragonfly called a Norfolk Hawker had been seen flying amongst the reeds for about a week in the summer. She thought that, unfortunately, a Hobby had made a meal of it!

The next hide was opposite the first one so we had a different viewpoint. There now seemed to be three Cormorants on the beach. One was a juvenile bird with a whitish breast. There were similar wildfowl on the lake with a row of female Gadwall swimming along close to the reeds. There were Herring Gulls and a Lesser Black-backed Gull.

We noticed a Grey Heron standing on the bank and Françoise suddenly spotted a fox running across the beach. It stood looking at us for several minutes.

We walked back to the car park across a board walk. A Green Woodpecker and a Great Spotted Woodpecker were heard called in the woods. Ron had picked up a piece of badger fur, which he thought would make a nice addition to his beard!

A lovely morning spent in a place which none of us had realised was there, nor so close to London and traffic.



Norfolk Hawker (Google)



The inquisitive fox, a Pochard & Tufted Ducks (LW)...



Another Pochard & Tufted Ducks (LW)...



The happy band (KB)...

Photos from Ellis:



Male Shoveler



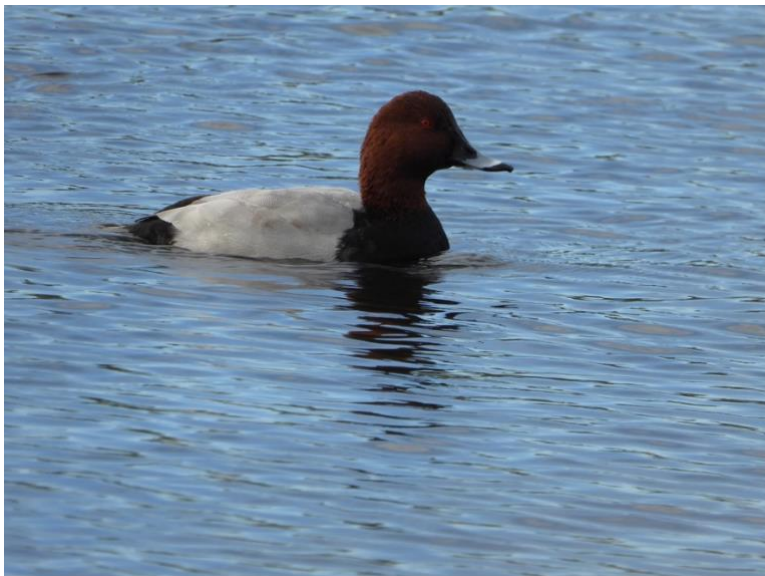
Female Shoveler



Gadwalls



Male Tufted Duck, just finishing its moult from eclipse plumage to breeding plumage.



Male Pochard



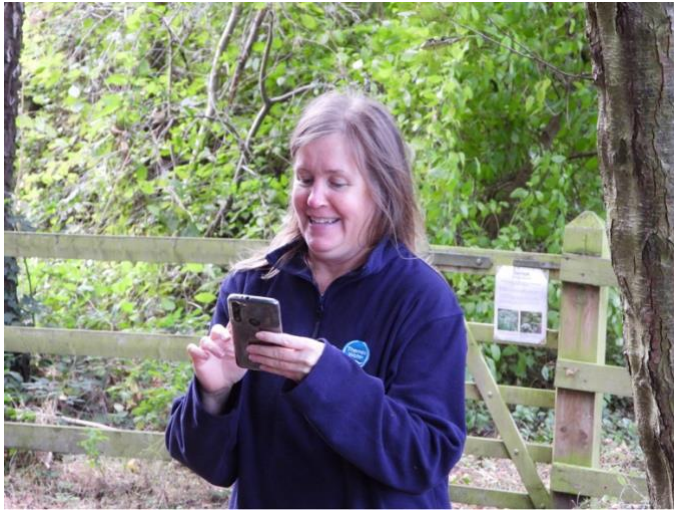
Grey Heron



Badger fur.



Group with Ron comparing the badger fur to his beard.



Kristine Boudreau - the site manager, who enthusiastically showed us around the site.