

Papercourt Tuesday 20th February 2024

As we got out of the car we could hear a Song Thrush over the traffic! A good start!

Four of us made our way to the sailing club lake, stopping to look at the blossom on the trees- there are photos attached if anyone can identify it. In the hedgerow we saw and heard Magpie, Dunnock and two Robins.

Various birds seemed to accompany us around the lake, as we heard the constant song of Wren, Song Thrush, Great tit and Long-tailed Tit.

There were many pairs of birds. We saw pairs of Blackbird and Robin and stopped to watch a pair of Long-tailed Tits who were busy building or lining a nest- one of them had a feather in its beak. There was also a fair bit of activity in the air as we watched Swan, Goldfinch, Mallard, Red Kite, Ring-necked Parakeet and possibly Fieldfare fly over.

Turning our attention to the lake, we saw more than twenty coots, with the rare sight of one in flight, and a large number of gulls, some identified as Black-headed.

As we passed a garden next to the Gin Distillery(!) we could hear sparrows chirping away but couldn't see them.

There were plenty of signs of spring- snowdrops, daffodils, celandine and gorse as well as blossom. We also stopped to look at the various trees with catkins and buds and Diane shared her knowledge about this:

Alders have purple catkins. Hazels have golden catkins which release their pollen destined for the tiny female flowers that are just clusters of carmine stigmas protruding from a red bud.

We saw evidence of both catkins and red buds as well as galls on oak trees.

We were treated to a solitary Goldcrest flitting around in a tree,

followed by a brief glimpse of a Treecreeper. As we made our way back, we spotted six or more Redwing flying off and managed to spot them in a tree at the end of the walk.

As we were doing a spot of litter picking in the lay-by, we saw a mixed flock of thrushes - Song Thrush, Redwing and Fieldfare - in a nearby tree. They suddenly took off and as we turned around a Sparrowhawk flashed past- a very nice end to the trip!

Gaynor Friston