

Bird-watching at Thorpe Park on Tuesday 21st January 2025

A group of fourteen of us met at Thorpe Park on a chilly, but dry, morning for one of our favourite walks in the new year. We were pleased to welcome two new members – Alan and Marion.

As the group was spread out along the path, I probably missed seeing many of the birds and relied on reports from others of sightings.

The first bird spotted on the lake was a Mute Swan giving a wonderful display caught on camera by Ellis. We moved along the path and several minutes were spent watching a Carrion Crow enjoying a grisly meal of the intestines of some unfortunate creature. A Magpie flew across our path and the very loud call of a Cetti's Warbler was heard. Bluetits were flitting around in the trees at the side of the path. A Coot was swimming in the reeds.

On the large lake itself there was a large variety of waterfowl and gulls. We saw Gadwall, Tufted Ducks, Wigeon, Pochard and Great-crested Grebes all swimming around together. The female Wigeon had beautiful light plumage. There did not seem to be any Mallards on the lake, but three were seen flying overhead later. There were Black-headed, Common and Herring Gulls in a large flock at the far side of the lake. With the advantage of Ron's telescope, we were able to get a lovely view of some Shovelers resting together on the bank. They use their spoon-shaped beaks to filter small particles of food from the water – presumably how they received their name.

Greylag geese were also seen on the far bank.

Two cormorants flew over. One landed on a pole in the lake.

A group of Long-tailed Tits appeared in the trees at the edge of the lake, initially high up in the trees and then moving closer to the branches hanging over the edge of the water. While we were looking at these birds someone spotted a fox walking across the path in front of us.

The excitement of the morning was watching a couple of Goldcrests moving quickly from tree to tree making it difficult to keep up with them in our binoculars. Sadly, the light made it difficult to distinguish the colour of their plumage, and to see their crests. It was possible that a Siskin was observed but not confirmed.

The call of a Great Spotted Woodpecker was heard but it was not seen.

Then two Grey Heron flew across while we were walking along. Sadly I missed the Nuthatch which had also been seen. The last bird seen was a Dunnock like a little mouse moving in the undergrowth.

Lawrence took a photo of this tree with distinctive diamond shapes on its bark. It proved to be a white poplar.

All Ellis's lovely photos and Lawrence's tree photo will be on the report on the website.

A very enjoyable morning. Barbara



Mute swan flapping wings



Carrion crow and lunch



Male pochard



Coot



Female wigeon



Male wigeon



Male gadwall



Great crested grebe



Cormorant in breeding plumage



Group returning to car park.

Above images by Ellis.



Silver birch by Lawrence.

