

Bird Watching walk around Papercourt Sailing Lake

Tuesday 15th July 2025

This was a cooler, fresher morning than we have experienced recently so a much more enjoyable temperature for a bird watching walk.

While waiting for the others to arrive Ron had spotted some Common Terns amongst Black-headed Gulls on a raft out on the lake. Three Egyptian Geese flew over and one was walking along the edge of the lake. There were also House Martins flying overhead. Geoff explained that Martins and Swallows belong to the same family, but, although Swifts have similar features and habits, they are not related – more closely related to Humming birds. The technical term was “convergent evolution”!

As we started our walk we noticed two adult Egyptian Geese with 5 virtually fully grown babies. One of the adults was making a racket but it was difficult to say whether it was the male or the female!

We spent several minutes watching a Great-crested Grebe feeding its two babies with fish. The striped heads of the juvenile birds were clearly visible. Several Mallards were swimming amongst them along with Coots. On the far bank near the reeds Ron identified 3 Pochards with the aid of his telescope. After breeding, male ducks lose their colourful plumage – called “eclipse” so it is very difficult to identify ducks as they all look a dull brown colour. There were also Tufted Ducks – again rather difficult to identify. Two swans were swimming along with their 7 cygnets, and again lots of Mallards with them.

A Cormorant was spotted on the lower arm of a pylon. It looked very small in the distance.

On the other side of the lake a Reed Warbler was heard singing but it was hiding in amongst the reeds so could not be seen. The call of a Jay was also heard in the foliage. Another bird which was heard but not seen was a very tuneful Blackcap. While trying to spot it a Robin was seen on the fence nearby.

We saw quite a few butterflies on a buddleia including Red Admiral, Comma and Large White. In the wood on the other side of the lake we saw the bright orange colour of a Tiger Moth but it did not stay still enough to have a closer look.

At the end of the walk there were 3 Dunnocks on the path, a Great Tit and a Wren were heard.

The only raptor we saw this morning was a Red Kite flying above the trees.

We did have to shelter under the trees for a couple of heavy showers but they were very short lived.

Another pleasant walk with some interesting birds and insects.