



SUBSCRIPTIONS - *D. Beeden*

For those of you who have yet to pay your 2017 subscription there is a note to that effect either in the covering email to which this newsletter was attached or on your address label on the envelope it came in. Can you please not delay payment any longer. This is the last reminder for those of you who have not paid for a couple of years and so if those people do not respond to this reminder we will assume they no longer wish to be a member and take them off our circulation list.



WORK ON THE RESERVE

Work Party Sunday 5th February-*Nigel Daley*

The weather was overcast as we set to work thinning out the trees outside Stocker's House. We then removed some of the weeds that were strangling the young saplings.

Our thanks to the workers Tony and Sheila Lee, Dawn Goodair, Markus Kang and Nigel Daley

Work Party Sunday 5th March - *Ian Watson*

Prospects didn't look good for the last Sunday work party of the season. It was cold, rainy, and overcast. I didn't expect anyone to turn up, but went to the meeting place, just in case.



To my surprise, Jack Westbrook arrived though the weather was still miserable. Then Dawn Goodair turned up and miraculously the weather changed. The sun came out and the sky turned blue. Clearly it was the 'Dawn Effect', so we decided to repair the field gate in the fishermen's car park, give the flooded kissing gate entrance a firmer footing and use old corrugated iron to inhibit growth around the alder saplings we had previously planted in the Margaret Partridge plot (they will be useful as refuges for snakes, small animals and who knows what!)

But we were shocked to see that the bank protection installed by our country management company had been deliberately destroyed. We are pretty certain we know who did this and I will be taking this up with the parties concerned. Finally, we have now managed to get Hillingdon Council to take away the large pile of asbestos which we collected when we

removed the remains of the old hen and pig houses from the plot.

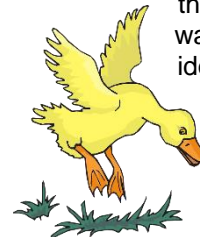
Emma Brading a new member was also one of our party.

EVENTS ON THE RESERVE

Wildfowl Walk Sunday 15th January 2017

D. Beeden

It rained throughout our walk this year so we limited the walk to the canal side. The light was poor which made spotting and identifying the birds tricky but it has to be said it was several degrees above freezing so not too cold. That meant that while there were good numbers of birds on the lake, there were very few to be seen in the trees. And so, the six of us set off. We saw all but one of the species we heard and ended with a tally of 28 species (10 down on last year) so better than we feared. The full list was:



Great-crested grebe; cormorant; grey heron (four or so already in the trees making nests); **mute swan; wigeon; gadwall; mallard; shoveler** (in large numbers displaying); **tufted duck; goldeneye;** (males and females with plenty of courtship behaviour); **smew** (female only); **moorhen; coot; black-headed gull** (lots); **lesser black-backed gull;** (excellent view on the feeder by Kingfisher Hide); **wren; dunnock; robin; blackbird; long-tailed tit; blue tit; great tit; chaffinch; magpie and ring-necked parakeet** (heard).

Wildfowl Walk Sunday 21st February

D Beeden

Like last year the weather was cool damp and grey with mist and very fine drizzle thrown in. The party this year numbered just 4. Clearly the weather had put people off. Again, without some really cold weather bird numbers were fairly low.

So what did we see? On the lake: The dabbling ducks were represented by some **wigeon, mallard, gadwall, and shoveler**. The diving duck representatives were **tufted, pochard, 4 red crested pochard** at the Springwell Lane end, several **goldeneye** both male and female all into mating display. No sawbills (smew, goosander or mergansers) or kingfisher this time. The lake also produced **coot, moorhen, great crested grebe** (also thinking about nesting and mating), **canada**

geese, cormorant, lapwing, numerous **black-headed gulls** (some gaining their black heads as they come into breeding plumage), a few **herring, and lesser black backed gull and mute swan** (about which more later), Finally we must mention the **little grebe**; the first I have personally ever seen on the lake and not a common bird for us.

So much for the lake what about in the trees? **blue and great tits, woodpigeon and crows** were seen in the trees along with **ring-necked parakeets,** and **maggie.** We also saw **blackbirds, starling, robin, chaffinch, and nuthatch.** A few **grey herons** were sitting on nests in the trees in the usual area (some visible from Kingfisher hide), and a **red kite** over the trees towards the motorway.

All in all, not too bad a morning given how quiet it was ornithologically among the trees with a tally of 32 species by the end of the morning.

Back to the mute swan. We were fortunate that it was standing out of the water on Ark Royal which meant we could see its ring and read its number. This was reported and it turns out ours was the 64th record of this swan since the Darvic ring was put on it at Stockers on 28th September, 2009. Those records suggest that It has only travelled between the Aquadrome and Stockers in all that time. Mike Reed welcomes any swan ring numbers, the black on orange numbers are easily read with binoculars and often seen well when the swan is out of the water. He just needs the date, place and ring number and will send the swan's history to the observer. His email is:

mike-reed.daniells@hotmail.co.uk

Heron and Egret Watch Sunday 9th April

Ian Watson

Anna Marret and I spent our afternoon on the canal side of the reserve armed with Anna's telescope trained on the heron and egret nests on the islands on the opposite side of the lake.

It was a nice day for walking so plenty of people were interested in looking at the nests. Many were surprised that there were **egrets** as well as **herons.**

We will have probably recruited a few new members.

A bonus was a **Cetti's warbler** which was very active in the bulrushes and reeds in front of us.

Warbler Walk Sunday 7th May 2017

D Beeden

Three of us this year gathered on the causeway at half past eight for a walk round the lake. The weather was cold and gloomy, far from ideal for our task and about as different from last year as you can get. The recent cool weather had again slowed leaf growth making



seeing the birds a bit easier than in some years. We saw most of the expected birds. There were **swallows, house martins and swifts** in quite good numbers over Stockers and Bury lakes No woodpeckers, reed bunting or house sparrows though.

Several Cetti's warbler called from various points round the lake and were seen on two occasions. **Warblers** were however in short supply but we did manage **reed** from the causeway, **sedge and chiff chaff** along the river, **whitethroat** along the Fort Drew meadow, **blackcap** near Stocker's House and possibly **garden** at various points around the lake. Otherwise **blackbirds, wrens, robins chaffinches, greenfinch and song thrushes** serenaded us as we passed along.

We saw just two **common terns** patrolling between Stockers and Bury lakes but the tern rafts seem to have been taken over completely by black headed gulls. No raptors again this year which was a little surprising as red kites are now quite frequently seen over the lake.

There are still numerous nests in the heronry with both *young heron* and young **egrets** in them. Good view of three young herons from the riverside path near the signpost. Not many cormorants this year. There were a few **pochards** plus just one **red headed pochard.** Also, **tufted ducks, coots and a few moorhens.** Otherwise **great, long-tailed and blue tits** flitted about. Including the other common species like **swan, woodpigeon, crow, magpie** and so on, Given the dull cool weather no butterflies this year.

We spotted and or heard about 44 species altogether, the same as last year, (see list below). All in all, not a bad morning.

Great crested grebe	House martin
Great cormorant	Wren
Grey heron	Dunnock
Little egret	Robin
Mute swan	Blackbird
Greylag goose	Song thrush
Canada goose	Cetti's warbler
Egyptian goose	Sedge warbler
Mallard	Reed warbler
Pochard	Garden warbler
Red-crested pochard	Common whitethroat
Tufted duck	Blackcap
Moorhen	Chiffchaff
Common coot	Long-tailed tit
Black-headed gull	Blue tit
Lesser black-backed gull	Great tit
Herring gull	Common magpie
Common tern	Carrion crow
Woodpigeon	Common starling
Ring-necked parakeet	Chaffinch
Swift	Greenfinch
Swallow	Goldfinch

A.G.M.

Rickmansworth School, Scotts Hill, Rickmansworth WD3 3AG

7.30pm. Thursday 6th April 2017

1. Apologies for Absence

Simon Jones, Jane Archer, Rob Hopkins, Sue Page, Sheila Denham, Tricia and Colin Parkes, and H el ene Corrie.

2. Treasurer's Report: Slight  564 increase in membership income and in number of members.

Expenditure down by  1,332, which leaves us with record reserves of  31, 200. Your committee is not proud of this because we believe that members' subscriptions should be spent on enhancing the lake and nature reserve, not sitting in the bank. But there is a reason for this: in the last 4 years we have, with the support of our members and the fishing clubs, been pushing to get signs at all entrances to the reserve. We also want cattle on the 3 meadows between the lake and the River Colne. For these reasons, we have been building our reserves because good strong signs and cattle fencing are not cheap.

We've written and basically designed the signs and have found a local farmer who is more than willing and able to supply and look after the cattle. All we now need is the approval of the Trust and Affinity water. We hope this will be forthcoming this year and sooner than later, as the Trust has at long last been granted some security of tenure by Affinity Water. (A paltry 5 years as compared to the 21 years granted in the 1970s.) The Trust is now trying to arrange a meeting date with Affinity so that they can present their 5-year plan. The Trust says that they would like our involvement which we are most willing to give. After all, apart from Rob Hopkins, who knows Stocker's Lake better than us? Fingers crossed!

Accountant: Ian Mead our accountant who every year goes through our books and prepares our financial report is retiring at the end of the year. He has prepared our report every year since 1997 and free of charges! We are truly grateful to him and wish him a long and happy retirement. We will be appointing a new accountant soon.

3. Business

- a. The 2016 accounts were approved unanimously. Proposed by: Peter Jenkins; seconded by: Petra Hedges.
- b. The minutes of the 2016 AGM were approved unanimously. Proposed by: Steve Carter; seconded by: Mrs. Watson.
- c. Committee members Rob Mitchell, Andrew Moon and Bill Sylvester have resigned from the committee (see January newsletter, No. 74 which gratefully acknowledged their splendid work for FoSL over many years.)
 - Ian Watson has now resigned as chairman, but will continue to work on the reserve.
 - Nigel Daley has agreed to become chairman. (again, see newsletter No. 74). Proposed by: Ian Watson; seconded by Joan Thompson. Approved unanimously.
 - We have found Andrew Moon's successor! He is Steve Carter who is a very keen expert bird watcher/ornithologist; a local man who has known Stocker's Lake longer than FoSL has been in existence. We are lucky to get him. He will write our annual, and very important bird report, amongst other things. Proposed by: Joan Thompson; seconded by: Steve Cohen. Agreed unanimously.
- d. The remainder of the committee offered themselves for re-election.
Proposed by: Peter Jenkins; seconded by: Anna Marrett. Agreed unanimously

4. Thank yous: To Dick Beeden out treasurer and out leader, who has underpinned the work of the outgoing chairman (who is most grateful); Sue Sanderson our secretary; Sarah Coombs who 'calls out' our work party volunteers; 'Mitch' for his work on the reserve; Simon Jones for creating and maintaining a website of which we can be very proud; Trish Jeneid for her very skilled editing and compiling of 3 newsletters every year; Barbara James for organising our annual butterfly survey, April to September; Rob Hopkins for his skill and infectious enthusiasm in organising the Trust's work on the reserve; to 3 of our work party volunteers, Tony and Sheila Lee who have hardly ever missed a work party, and Dawn Goodair, another 'regular' who has become very expert at layering the eight hedges (over 1,000 plants) we have planted at Stocker's; finally Anna Marrett, Peter Jenkins, Jane Archer, Sue Sanderson, Dick Beeden, our lake tour leaders, covering Winter Fowl, Warblers, Butterflies, Dragonflies, Heron watch and Wild flowers.

5. Chairman's Review: As he is the last original (1990) committee member to still be serving on the committee, Ian Watson reviewed FoSL's achievements in the time he has been chairman – since 2003. Ian has decided to expand this review into an outline history of FoSL since it began in 1990. This will be sent to members in due course.

6. Tramp: Dick Beeden reported that the alcoholic tramp, who had taken up residence in 2 of our hides, and made an awful mess has now moved (to a more desirable residence?). We reported his presence to 3 Rivers DC, the Trust and Water Co. who seemed, like us, unable to do anything about it. 3 Rivers' main concern seemed to be that he should be warm and well fed. So helpful! At a work party, we did feed him and give him a hot drink. He was very pitiable. We also cleared up his mess on 3 occasions, filling 3 sacks in so doing. Let's hope he does not return, poor fellow.

7. A New Island: Time to report a very generous offer from two of our members: Mr and Mrs Vaughan Ryall. Their home in Ricky has a long garden which borders the River Colne, near the iron bridge crossing the river from the Uxbridge Road. Here they own two thirds of an island which they have maintained beautifully for many years. They would like to pass it onto the

ownership of FoSL, either when and if they sell their house or when they feel that they can no longer look after it. We have gratefully accepted their offer because, like them, we would not like it to fall into the wrong hands.

8. AOB: There were questions regarding the need for a boat and tools which, Ian Watson explained, were essential for scraping and maintaining the tern rafts.

The appearance of life belts around the Lake was also raised, which we now know to be the work of Affinity Water.

Following refreshments Lesley Davies, The Chief Executive of HMWT, gave an illustrated presentation regarding the work of the Trust locally and nationally. Then Louise Sleeman, People and Wildlife Officer for Affinity Water sites, spoke about her role and her important objective to reach out to and involve the local community in the reserve. Something we have been doing successfully for 27 years.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Working Parties for 2017

We welcome any members who would like to get more involved in practical conservation work. The work parties last about 2½ hours. Please bring wellies/boots, strong gloves and also garden cutters if you can.



Working Parties 2017

Sunday September 3rd 2017
Sunday October 1st 2017
Sunday November 5th 2017
Sunday December 3rd 2017
Sunday January 7th 2018

All start at 9.55am

Meet: usually by Stocker's House (next to Stocker's Lock) but it is a good idea to check with Sarah Coombs (01923 779008) before the date in case we have changed meeting place.

Wildflower Walk

Sunday June 25th 2017 2pm

Join us for a walk around Stocker's lake to identify wild flowers

Meet: 2pm on the Causeway between Stocker's Lake and Bury Lake

Dragonfly and Butterfly Walk

Sunday August 13th 2017 10.30am

A walk round Stocker's Lake identifying Dragonflies and Butterflies

Meet: 10:30 on the Causeway between Stocker's Lake and Bury Lake

Joining Leaflets & Litter

We are looking for a member who walks round the lake regularly and who would be willing to keep our leaflet boxes topped up. If that person is you, can you please phone Dick Beeden on 020 8421 9958 or email him at rhbeeden@gmail.com.

FoSL Committee

Nigel Daley (Chairman)	01923 282844
Dick Beeden (Treasurer & membership)	0208 421 9958
Sue Sanderson (Secretary)	01923 445541
Simon Jones (Web Site)	01923 285763
Ian Watson (Work party organiser)	01923 282136
Trish Jeneid (Newsletter editor, posters)	01923 770221
Sarah Coombs (Volunteers organiser)	01923 779008
Steve Carter (Wildlife recorder)	07917796976
	Text preferred