

# 2015 Autumn Survey Report for Napsbury Park Residents Association

## Foreword:

Welcome to the autumn 2015 report by the RSPB. This report lists the birds that were spotted on site in Napsbury Park during late October 2015. The RSPB visited site on two occasions as the first day was very windy. At the time of writing (late December) we have only just removed the boxes in the park for cleaning, and we have had one box that appears to have been abandoned with two eggs left in it and two other boxes that show signs of attack from species unknown, although we suspect that either squirrels or woodpeckers may have been involved. It looks like I'll have to brush up on the old woodworking skills in order to repair the two damaged boxes. The pictures below show the damage and are not for the squeamish!

*Terror in the park!!*



Box 7



Box 8

Once again our thanks go to the local RSPB group, particularly Colin Rose who has given valuable assistance to enable us to help our resident bird life.

Just about everywhere you look nowadays particularly in our newspapers there is advice about how to help hedgehogs. It even made the Sunday Times front page a few weeks back!! In October the NPRA started working with London Colney Hedgehog Rescue who do a wonderful job helping ill and injured hedgehogs. If you live in a house with a fenced in garden, you may have noticed that we posted a leaflet through your letterbox that includes useful advice on how to help hedgehogs gain access and live in our gardens. If you are going to do only one thing, simply cut two or more CD sized holes in the bottom horizontal panel of your garden fences to allow these little chaps access to your garden from the park!! If you missed the advice leaflet you can download the 'Hog Mailer' from the NPRA Website. If you have a suitable garden we may have some hedgehogs looking for homes later this spring!!

Keith & Clive– NPRA

## What we saw.

I started the Autumn survey in early November. We also had to check out the bird boxes placed in the park by the NPRA with Keith and Clive from the Residents Association. Unfortunately, the day we had chosen was blowing a gale, so decided not to climb ladders for now and to leave the boxes for another day when it was calmer.

The Autumn leaves were raining down in various shades carpeting the ground. As we made our way along the southern path magpies, carrion crows and a collared dove were getting blown around and holding on tight on the rooftop aerials. A few black-headed gulls few over us forcing their way against the gusting wind. When going through the wooded area near the old nurse's home, a jay swooped down on to a branch calling as it landed. A blackbird followed with an alarm call as it dashed into some shrubs. A greater-spotted woodpecker was seen flying with the wind at great speed across an open area in the grounds.

Great tits, blue tits and chaffinches were feeding on the lower branches of the trees well out of the wind. A group of pied wagtails were feeding on the grass under some trees near the houses. Over the fields to the back of the park a few woodpigeons were feeding in the distance. As a carrion crow flew across the field a flock of about twenty meadow pipits took off and settled back down again vanishing out of sight into the furrows. Meadow pipits congregate in the furrows for protection in winter preferring rough open pasture in the summer months. Robins were heard, we observed one following us along the path on the way back to Tamarix Crescent. At the junction with Rosemary Drive we saw about 20 Goldfinches in a birch tree chattering away. At this point we decided to finish for the day due to the gale-force winds.

Later on in the month I met Clive as Keith was not available. Again left the boxes to a later time. It was a nice calm day bright but a little cold. As we started along the north path, a song thrush was singing on top of an old tree by some brambles, another was calling in the distance. We walked further along the path and there is another field enclosed by bushes and brambles with small birch trees dotted around. In this field by some fruit trees was a gathering of variety of different birds including fieldfare, starling, and redwing. There were also blackbirds and tits feeding on the few berries and soft fruits that were still available. As a flock of long-tailed tits made their way from bush to tree we heard a green woodpecker in the distance, and a redkite glided over the railway tracks down across the fields.

After a break we continued our walk along the southern path, where we passed the old nurses home a ditch had filled with water from some earlier heavy rains that had come earlier. Several small birds had taken advantage of the water to wash or drink. A greenfinch flew up onto a branch to dry its self as a squirrel continued to drink. We decided to finish for the day at this point and went home.

A full list of the birds that we spotted on our walks can be found on the following pages.

Carrion crow



Meadow Pipit



Blue tit



Goldfinch



Magpie



Great tit



Blackbird

Collared Dove



House Sparrow



Song Thrush



Starling



Long tailed tit



Redwing



Mistle Thrush



Greenfinch



Robin



Greater Spotted Woodpecker



Fieldfare



Red Kite



Jay



Black headed gull



Chaffinch



Pied wagtail



Birds heard but not seen:  
Green Woodpecker



Conclusion

I hope that this short report on the Autumn wildlife remains helpful to monitor the health of the wildlife that live Napsbury Park. Whilst looking at the bird boxes with my binoculars showed signs of bird activity due to the many tits and finches flying around. I do hope that the NPRA will be able to check and clean out the bird boxes ready for next spring as these are a great help in particular to the smaller species. Now that the summer song birds have moved on this allows the beautiful winter thrushes to fill the surroundings.

Kind Regards

Colin Rose

RSPB (SALG) Wildlife Walks Leader.