

Bealeswood Common, Wildlife Records

April 2021

Our Warblers

We have a small selection of warblers (the bird family Sylviidae) on the Common. At first glance they can be tricky to tell apart, and often the best way of identification is by learning their songs. The RSPB have excellent recordings on their website <https://rspb.org.uk>. The commonest are the Black Cap and the Chiffchaff but the Willow Warbler and the Whitethroat have been heard historically on the Common. If you believe you have heard or seen them please contact Steve Lockett (posteve@hotmail.co.uk). (Photos by Alex Potts):

Blackcap. An easy one to start with, mostly a grey-brown bird with a smart black (male) or chestnut (female/juvenile) crown or cap. It has a sweet musical warbling song.



Chiffchaff. For many, spring can be said to be here when the chiffchaff begins its two note repetitive calling of its own name. It rarely stays still for long and is constantly on the move through the trees. Both sexes look similar- a tiny bird with grey-brown upper-parts and paler underneath. It's legs are black, which is one way to tell it apart from the similar Willow Warbler.

Whitethroat. The male Whitethroat often sits on a twig or bramble stem out in the open, from where it sings it's slightly scratchy song. Both sexes have a bright white throat but the male has a darker head.



Willow Warbler. This has pinkish yellow legs, and overall brighter plumage than the Chiffchaff. Although they can be difficult to separate by sight, their voices are distinctively different. It is a descending trilling, ending in a flourish.

The first Cuckoo we heard from the Common was on the 19th April, a week later than last year. Don't forget to get up early for the International Dawn Chorus Day is on Sunday 2nd May.

Flowers

More and more spring flowers were being recorded in bloom each week through the month. 21 flowers were out on April the 1st and 35 were recorded this week. 3 distinctive and common British flowers were recorded in bloom from the first week of the month: English Bluebell, Greater Stitchwort and Cow Parsley. These all occur in the fringes of the wooded areas of the Common and along the verges to the lanes. Our two earliest grasses/rushes are now flowering: Meadow Fox Tail (tall spikes with yellowish flowers in open grassy areas) and the Field Wood-rush (distinctive brown flowering rush in area of Common above Lake Lane. The following flowers were recorded in the last week of April (10 more than were out than this time last year):

Lesser Celandine	Lords and Ladies
Forget-me-not	Groundsel
Daffodil*	Germander Speedwell
Lungwort	Garlic Mustard
Dandelion	Greater Stitchwort
Primrose	Bugle
Yellow Archangel	Purple Deadnettle
Soloman's Seal	Bush vetch
Ground ivy	Honesty
Bluebells; English & Spanish	Dusky Cranesbill
Lady's Smock	Thyme-leaved Veronica
Violet sp.	White Deadnettle
Periwinkle*	Purple Hellebore
Barren Strawberry	Meadow Fox Tail
Wood Anemone	Field Wood-rush
Hairy Bittercress	(* = garden escape)

Butterflies

The butterfly survey transects started this month and the following were recorded in order of decreasing abundance: Speckled Wood, Brimstone and Holly Blue. In addition, Peacocks, Orange Tips and Commas have been seen.

Dan & Alison Bosence, Alan & Pauline Cox, Philippa & Colin Hall, Steve Lockett, Alex Potts, Christina Rasmussen and Anne Tutt. 30th April, 2021