

Bealeswood Common Wildlife

March 2023

Bealeswood Wildlife Recording Group (BWRG)

Copies of this and previous notices can be found at:

www.dockenfieldpc.org.uk/wildlife

Fungi (Amanda Adolph)

The following perennial fungi have been visible through the winter in the Lower Common (around Bealeswood Lane): Blushing Bracket (*Daedaleopsis confragosa*), Hoof Fungus (*Fomes fomentarius*), Rusty or Cinnamon Porecrust (*Phellinus ferruginosus*), Bleeding Broadleaf Crust (*Stereum rugosum*). In addition, two new perennial bracket species were recorded for the Common: the blue and cream Turkeytail (*Trametes versicolor*) and the brown-zoned Ochre Bracket (*Trametes ochracea*):



Turkeytail bracket fungus (Photo Amanda Adolph)



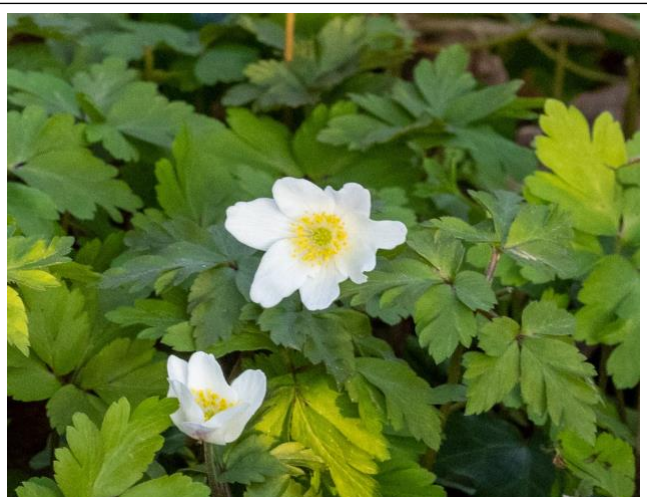
Brown Ochre bracket fungus (Photo Amanda Adolph)

Flowers (Dan Bosence)

As we write there are some 13 flowers out on the Common. Many of these can be seen along the footpaths and lane verges: Barren Strawberry (*Potentilla sterilis*), Common Dog Violet (*Viola canina*), Daisy (*Bellis perennis*), Celandine, Lesser (*Ranunculus ficaria*), Daffodil, various cultivars* (*Narcissus sp*), Hairy Bittercress (*Cardamine hirsuta*), Hellebore, purple cultivar* (*Helleborus sp.*), Lungwort (*Pulmonaria officianalis*), Periwinkle* (*Vinca minor*), Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), Primrose, pink cultivar* (*Primula vulgaris*), Snowdrop various cultivars*, (*Galanthus sp*), Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*).

The four marked with an* are considered to have escaped from neighbouring gardens, either naturally or with some human assistance. Please refrain from disposing of garden waste as it alters and competes with the natural flora of the Common.

Wood Anemone
an indicator of
ancient woodland
(Photo by Alex Potts)



Birds (Steve Lockett)

March is the time when we first hear and then see our summer warblers having travelled from southern regions. This year the first Chiffchaff was heard on the 19th of March and the Blackcap on the 27th March. This is consistent with records over the past 5 years when the Chiffchaff has been first heard between the 9th and the 29th March and the Blackcap a few days to a week later, between the 24th March and the 3rd of April.

Bealeswood Birds and Beyond

5 years living and working near Bealeswood Common by Steve Lockett

I was lucky enough to find a job working at Bealeswood House with Linda in 2018 almost by accident – another story but you could say Bealeswood Common chose me rather than the other way round.

Just about the first major event was “The Beast From The East” (remember that?) and being snowed off work meant an opportunity to explore, and it was exciting to find so many bird species within short walking distance of home. I wrote a letter to DNL about it and a few weeks later bumped into Dan on his flower count who introduced himself and asked me to write a few lines on birds for this noticeboard each month. Now we are quite a team of observers and recorders and adding to the butterfly folk we have fungus and tree experts and some very talented photographers. I have been amazed at the amount of rare wildlife on our doorstep – sand lizards, nightjars, natterjack toad, purple emperors, plus an abundance of not so rare but sadly declining species in our wider countryside – and have enjoyed sharing these on organised walks in the area.

In early 2019 I attended a talk at Marindin Hall *The Birds of Frensham Common*. The speaker was Alan Cox who I met outside our cottage that summer, not realising we had been Common neighbours for over a year. I have learnt a lot about birds in the area from Alan and was pleased to be able to direct him and his grandson to a wasp spider web outside our place for them to enjoy taking photographs of.

We all know what happened in 2020 and I felt very fortunate to be living and working somewhere where life could continue almost as normal whilst we saw desperate situations develop all over the world. One special memory was a pair of spotted flycatchers who I could watch through my lounge window, a real lockdown treat. Like many I built a small pond in my garden which is now home to newts, dragonflies and a favourite bathing spot for many birds.

As life returned to normal for most, working in Bealeswood House garden continued to turn up the odd surprise, a firecrest in the laurel and two yellowhammers clearing up spilt feeder seed. One day I found a tired and bedraggled butterfly, my first purple hairstreak. Feeling pleased with myself I shared a dodgy phone photo with the group, only to be outdone totally by Alex Potts who not only had found a little colony by this bench but taken some stunning photographs of actual egg laying.



Yellowhammers in Bealeswood
(photo Christina Rasmussen)



Wasp Spider (photo Steve Lockett)

Last year as a group we took a walk to the new village field pond to check for amphibian action – no joy but we were rewarded by a beautiful barn owl hunting over the rough grassland. Magical

For me it's always been about the birds, and this year I'm a little sad to miss the return of the swallows to the stables (20+ fledged from 6 nests in 2019) and won't be adding to the DNL cuckoo clock count (earliest on April 12th- 2020, latest 23rd 2018). But it's been a wonderful 5 years watching and listening to them from "our" robin to the mighty kites and all in between. My list of birds seen or heard on the Common, Bealeswood House and Gardener's Cottage stands at 63 and are listed below.

Not a bad accidental list!

Best Natural Wishes

Steve L

BIRDS OF BEALESWOOD COMMON

Garden Birds seen in Gardeners Cottage Garden

Blackbird
Blackcap
Blue Tit
Great Tit
Coal Tit
Long Tailed Tit
Marsh Tit

Birds Seen on the Common

Robin
Starling
Greater Spotted Woodpecker
Nuthatch
Greenfinch
Chaffinch
Wren
Woodpigeon
Stock Dove
Magpie
Sparrowhawk
Dunnock
Spotted Flycatcher
Goldfinch

Birds Seen Whilst working in Bealeswood House

Goldcrest
Firecrest
Kestrel
Jackdaw
Jay
Carrion Crow
Bullfinch
Red Kite
Mallard

Mandarin Duck
Yellowhammer
Little Egret
Grey Heron
Green Woodpecker
Tawny Owl
Swallow
Pheasant
House Sparrow
Red Legged Partridge
Buzzard
Trecreeper
Fieldfare
Redwing
Chiffchaff
Grey Wagtail
Pied Wagtail

Birds seen flying over the Common

Song Thrush
Mistle Thrush
Canada Goose
Greylag Goose
Egyptian Goose
Woodcock
House Martin
Swift
Cormorant

Heard from the Common but not seen

Raven
Ring necked parakeet
Rook
Blackheaded Gull
Skylark
Collared Dove
Cuckoo