

# Bealeswood Common Wildlife

March 2025 as reported by Bealeswood Wildlife Recording Group  
(BWRG- Amanda Adolph, Dan & Alison Bosence, Alan & Pauline Cox,  
Philippa & Colin Hall, Alex Potts, Roger & Jill Trout, and Anne Tutt)

See also at [www.dockenfieldpc.org.uk/wildlife](http://www.dockenfieldpc.org.uk/wildlife)

## Birds (AC, PC, AP)

Bird surveys were conducted daily all month. In early Spring bird songs and calls are the key to identification. In the first week there were a surprising number of contact calls from Coal Tits suggesting post winter movements, by the middle month there were just a few scattered males in territorial song consistent with the scarcity of suitable coniferous breeding habitat on Bealeswood. Their song is a shorter version of that of Great, a more rapid and passionate delivery. A splendid Redwing made a brief stopover on its route north to Scandinavia, immaculate in fresh breeding plumage. Meanwhile we awaited the first summer migrants. A Chiffchaff singing on Mar 10th\* was not repeated until Mar 23rd when several individuals were on the Main and at least one on the Lower Common. The cheerful if monotonous song marks the birdwatcher's acceptance that spring has arrived. But like many summer visitors they now appear two weeks earlier than 50 years ago. It was then a close-run event to hear one before April. The far more musical Blackcap is a later arrival by around ten days but one was singing scratchily in its usual first locale on the lower Common on 23rd, perhaps even earlier. It is a strange phenomenon that we recall this beautiful song from early summer when notes are at their most pure and engaging, but first arrivals are want of many rehearsals before they attain this competence - which usually lends to a scratching of heads, as on 23rd, "Was that a Blackcap I just heard?". (\* Earliest BWRG record of returning songster)

On the Lower Common a Skylark\*\* could be heard singing way above the Chiffchaff and Blackcap on 24th. Together with another above the village field - this perhaps the most heartening bird news for some while. Two years or so ago none could be heard along the Innums trail where they have held a few territories close to Pitt Farm for at least the last 20 years previously. There must now be several additional territories, excellent news for this bird that is red-listed because of its recent dramatic decline in numbers across Britain. (\*\*First BWRG record)



Male  
**Bullfinch**  
feasting on  
spring buds  
(photo Alex  
Potts)

Other records:

Singing Willow Warbler Mar 22nd, one of the earliest British records for 2025, another first for BWRG (Pauline), our earliest House Martin ever (31<sup>st</sup>) and a very early migrant Willow Warbler.

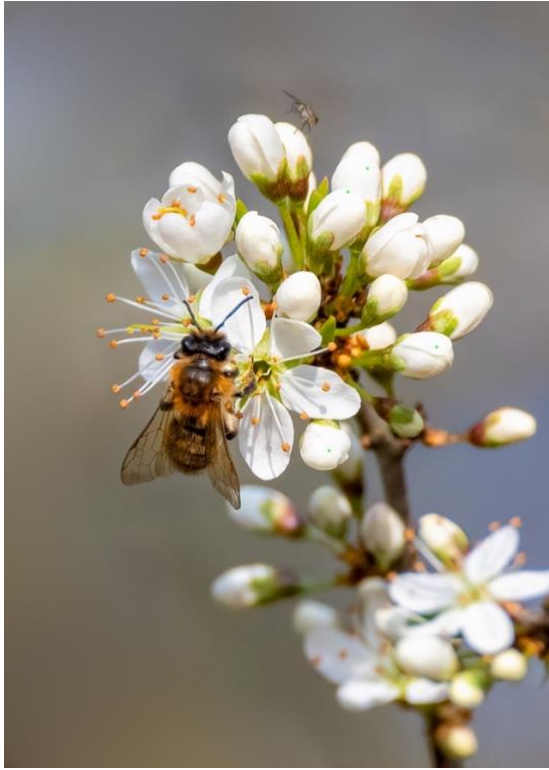
Osprey seen from Innums trail heading E towards Frensham Great Pond, Mar 26th – not a BWRG record but the third Cox sighting: the first we shared 20 years ago flying over Church of the GS in spring, I had garden record ten years ago and now this on one of Pauline’s walks around 5pm. Typical Spring arrival date for birds staging thru S Britain.

<b>SPECIES</b>	<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Notes and Observers</b>	<b>Weeks</b>
Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	Over	1
Mandarin Duck	<i>Aix galericulata</i>	AB, a pair	4
Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>		4
Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>		2
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>		4
Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>		2
Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Pair displaying – possible nesting	3
Tawny Owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>		2
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>		4
Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>		4
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>		4
Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>		4
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>		4
Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	Over	1
Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>		4
Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>		4
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>		4
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	1st rec 24th AC	1
House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	31st earliest rec DB	4
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>		3

Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	first 10th AC	4
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	1st rec 22nd PC	1
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>		1
Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>		2
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		4
Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>		4
Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>	Two territories AP	1
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>		1
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>		4
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>		4
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>		2
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>		4
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>		4
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>		4
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>		4
Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	AP	4
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		4
Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>	PC	2

## Bees (AP)

With the spring sunshine and increased amount and diversity of blossom there many bees flying and feeding on the Common. Below are a selection photographed by Alex Potts.



**Mining Bee** on a Prunus



**Hairy-footed Flower Bee** on Primrose



**Queen Buff-tailed Bumblebee** on Gorse



**Ashy Mining Bee**

## **Lichen (AB)**

Lichens are different from plants like trees, flowers and grasses, and from fungi, but are made up of fungi and algae growing together, each part having a separate function. Because light has to penetrate through the fungus material to reach the algal part, lichens need to be in well-lit habitats that have clean air. In order to grow, they simply spread outwards when conditions are right, or when dry, break off to be blown to new habitats by the wind; but some also produce spores to reproduce.

We have several lichens on the common, growing on live and

dead trees: some are obvious, but others can easily be missed, looking just like coloured patches. These are being added to our records for the first time this year. Here are four:



***Evenia prunastri*** (Oak Moss Lichen)-  
Growing on trees, often in a mass. This is easy to find, especially on the blackthorn on the lower common. The grey-green tufts look very hairy when growing in a mass.



***Parmotrema perlatum*** (Powdered Ruffle Lichen)  
A greeny-grey flaky lichen (black underneath) growing on tree branches and twigs.



***Flavoparmelia caperata***  
(Common Greenshield Lichen)  
Another flat-ish lichen with flaky lobes growing on tree branches in spreading patches



***Lecidella elaeochroma*** (Grey-green Disc Lichen). This grows in flat patches on tree bark, speckled with black dots (apothecia, producing spores) seen here next to an ivy shoot.