
FRIENDS OF COLWICK WOODS

Wildlife Watch

September
2022

Issue No 1

Ellie Poole - FoCW Bird and Wildlife Co-Ordinator

The wildlife of the season

The latest updates from Colwick Woods Summer/Autumn issue

As we welcome in the Autumn season, it is a great time to reflect on the summer at Colwick Woods. To do this, I will share my wildlife sightings from summer to early Autumn, including photos taken from the Woods, in hope that you too will take the time to reflect on what wildlife you have seen at the woods or in your gardens at home.

To begin, let's start during the early summer days, the woods were bursting with life - breeding season was well underway, and the woods exuded vibrant green from everywhere the eye could see. It was at this time that I met juvenile Robins (seen below), just recently fledged from the nests their parents were working hard at creating just months before. These baby Robins were very inquisitive and enjoyed sharing scattered seeds and suet - sipping water from shallow water trays and following me ever so slightly further each week, beyond the area they were most familiar with. As they grew (1-2 months from fledging), their plumage became less fluffy and spotty, slowly matching that of the adult Robin appearance. Additionally, they became less inclined to share foods, with a few juveniles starting to defend their territories from their siblings and it was soon apparent that their baby days were coming to an end.



Juvenile Robin (right) with adult Robin (above)



Adult Blue Tit parent feeding baby Blue Tit during mid-July - one of many juveniles seen around Colwick Woods during late spring - summer

Around this time, baby Blue Tits, Coal Tits and Great Tits were all following their parents and sticking together in small groups. Except for Long-Tail Tit juveniles, who were sighted to fly together in much larger groups of around 20 at a time.

Just as the breeding season was in full swing, the woods started to change. The ground began to get drier and harder - which led Song Thrushes and Blackbirds to rely on secondary sources of foods such as snails and slugs, rather than worms. I saw a few Song Thrushes smashing snails on nearby rocks to break shell and pull apart meaty flesh to eat. Moreover, the grass started to get paler, and trees began to shed brown discolored leaves early - all due to the lack of water. Matching these drought conditions, the weather became incredibly hot - up to 40 degrees Celsius. An emergency post was made on the FoCW's FaceBook page, urging people to combine efforts and put out temporary water trays around the woods - hoping to increase the woods water availability for the local wildlife.



Chiff Chaff during mid-summer

Watching the wildlife during this time, I noticed how well received the temporary water trays were by all creatures, big and small. Larger animals such as deer and foxes were all seen to enjoy drinking from them, as well as Robins, Nuthatches, Great Tits, Blue Tits, Magpies and Blackbirds. Water is one of the main ways birds and animals cool themselves down, and during this summer, and for more to come, it is crucial to consider them just as we would our pets.

Despite the hardships the wildlife and woodlands endured during the heatwaves and droughts, not to mention the grass fire at one of the main entrances to the woods, we have been lucky to have more rainfall leading into autumn. This has replenished the ground water stores and allowed grasses and trees to flourish again. Resultantly, berries are abundant right now; hawthorn and blackberries take center stage with their colour and favorability for many wild birds.

Now coming well into September, juvenile birds are showing their adult plumage, learning the calls of their parents - starting to practice ready to set their territories later on. Swallows and Chiff Chaffs have left for warmer climates, and I haven't noticed any Blackcaps around recently either, suggesting these too have also gone - although some do overwinter in the UK - so there may still be a chance to see some!

With all this said, the woods still remains to be a great home for many wildlife species. As we head into late autumn and early winter, I will provide another wildlife update - but until then, thanks for reading!