

BIRDING NEWSLETTER

Ely & District U3A Birdwatching Group



Planning Team

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Forthcoming Events

28th April

Lakenheath / Maids Cross
(Babs & Graham)

17th May

Snettisham & Dersingham
(Babs & Graham)

7th June (evening)

Wicken Fen
(Nigel)

26th June

Swanton Novers
(Sue & Sean)

10th July

Grafham Water
(Graham & Nigel)

Spring is here!

19th April

Dear Birdwatchers,

At last spring is with us and everywhere is starting to green up and look colourful again. Another year gone and another season of new life is just beginning.

Recently I was asked by one of our members on what they should do with an injured bird in the garden. Good question and one for which I didn't have a good answer. One has to estimate how badly injured a bird is before trying to find out how to rescue it. If it is very badly injured, then the best thing is to put it out of its misery, but some may find that difficult to do. So let's assume that the bird has some minor injuries that can be sorted out with professional help. The last people you should call are the RSPB or Wildfowl Trust. They are conservation organisations and do not have resources to handle injured birds. The best options are, the PDSA or a local vet. Another options is to check the "help wildlife" website - <https://helpwildlife.co.uk>. On the website you can find information about local rescue centres.

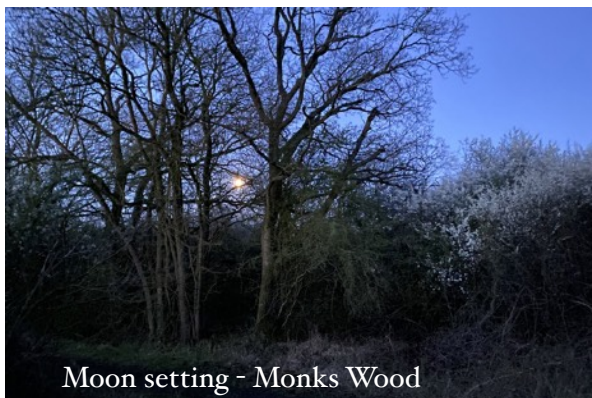
Although the RSPB do not handle injured birds, they do have a very good web page telling you what to do if you find one - <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/advice/how-you-can-help-birds/injured-and-baby-birds/if-you-find-an-injured-bird/>

The other thing to consider is "Avian Flu". DEFRA do not say anything about injured birds, but tell you not to touch any dead wild birds and to let them know. Look up "DEFRA wild bird helpline" for contact information in the case of finding a dead wild bird.

Enjoy your birding! Nigel

Sue Greenway - Dawn Chorus at Monks Wood - 11th April at 05:30

Five intrepid U3A birders met for an early start at Monks Wood to listen to the dawn chorus before the resident birds are joined by the spring migrants. After that, all hope of identifying individual birdsong for beginners is lost in this amazing mass of sound. Kitted out with our wellies and warm clothing we then spent the next two and a half hours wandering slowly along the wider paths, listening to the song and calls of the woodland birds. It started in the dark with the loud and clear song of the song thrush, a series of repetitive phrases repeated at least twice. At the same time the blackbirds song, flute like and melodic; the wren, making more noise than should be possible for such a small bird; the robin, heard singing all year, but on this spring day the song is stronger and less wistful. Finally a mistle thrush joins in, louder than a blackbird, slightly melancholy. As darkness turns to light more songs and calls are heard; chiffchaffs, a bird that sings its name; blackcap, a warbler with a sweet song that becomes louder and clearer. In the midst of this are the songs and calls of the tit family; quiet and high pitch call of treecreepers; brief chit chit sound of the nuthatch; the drumming (song) of the great spotted woodpecker and the 'yaffle' laugh of the green woodpecker. From the woodland edge we could hear the skylarks and in a more distant woodland area, a willow warbler, adding its gentle and falling notes. Added to this the harsher sounds of the corvids and more. Just before 0800 hours we returned to our cars and headed off for a well earned breakfast.



Moon setting - Monks Wood



Sun rising - Monks Wood

Pictures by Babs York

From Sean Greenway

Not been out much over the last few weeks due to a back injury. Thought a trip to Kingfisher Bridge Project would be a good start, so went on a dull and chilly morning.

The chiffchaff and chaffinch numbers were very impressive and they certainly dominated the soundtrack of the day.

There was a lot of activity and I got to see my first blackcap and sand martin of the year. There was a lot of territory sorting going on with quite a few contests overhead.

The lake had a good number of pochard, tufted duck, wigeon, redshank and shovellers. The banks were busy with snipe, avocet and lapwing.

The stars of the day were definitely two barn owls that kept appearing throughout the morning. They circled the mound making impressive leaps onto prey and flew within a few feet of me.

Marsh harriers, red kite, kestrels and buzzards kept everything moving. It was good to see the birds, but the developing foliage made photography difficult, however, it was nice to be out again and I would certainly recommend Kingfisher Bridge as a good place to get the spring bird list started.

