

BOC Walk: Wishmoor Bottom, 3rd February 2022

Ten BOC members met on Kings Ride, Camberley at 10am on a mild and mainly overcast morning.



Photo © Carl Flint

We set off after a brief introduction from Robert as to the number and type of species we might expect and quickly spotted some of the more obvious species such as: Blackbird, Woodpigeon, Blue and Great Tit. A Jay followed, calling as it flew, and a Green Woodpecker was spotted landing in a nearby tree.

Turning into a more open area of heather and gorse a couple of the group detected the distant call of a Woodlark which was competing with background firing from that day's army exercise. We moved in the direction of the sound which soon became more distinct and the bird was spotted soaring high above us and singing. It then landed and showed very well on the edge of the path, giving Andy Tomczynski time to get a lovely photograph.

We quickly added Stock Dove to the list as well as Goldfinch and Chaffinch. Stopping by a marshy area with birch trees we picked up three Redpoll and a group of Siskins, all of them rather flighty.

One member of the group spotted a Treecreeper which quickly crept round the back of the tree and out of sight before flying off. Robert bravely squelched through the bog in search of Jack Snipe and thankfully emerged with both wellies still on his feet but no snipe.



Woodlark © Andy Tomczynski

After passing Wishmoor Cross, we came upon five Reed Bunting in a tree and a handsome male Stonechat. While watching these a Woodlark perched high up on a conifer with his crest raised and one member of the group saw a Great Spotted Woodpecker fly past. A Red Kite flew high over the trees. At this point Andy, who had disappeared from view in search of a friendly frond, reappeared to tell us that he had seen the unmistakable silhouette of a Dartford Warbler which perched on the top of a bush for about a minute.

Robert was an excellent and informative guide throughout, pointing out what might be seen in various areas at different times of year, including areas for Chaffinch and Brambling in winter, breeding Redstart and Spotted Flycatcher in summer and migrating Wheatear and Whinchat in autumn.



Siskin © Andy Tomczynski



Lesser Redpoll © Andy Tomczynski

Despite having visited Wishmoor Bottom several times I certainly came away with a much better appreciation of what might be found there and when might be good times to visit. He also kept the serious county listers informed of the various points at which we crossed between Berkshire and Surrey on the walk. All in all, a delightful trip.

Judith Clark