

Pre-Christmas Regent's Park Bird Walk Sat 14th December 2019

Rain forecast and quite a heavy shower on way to the tube station – but the ever-fluctuating party of MBS members and friends were blessed with sunshine as well as bitterly cold wind on our traditional Pre-Christmas Bird Walk in Regent's Park. Actually lost count of the people but there were about 30 of us including new and long-standing members, two recent subscribers to our monthly enews and one person who'd commented on the Facebook event that she'd been on coach trips with the RSPB Central London Local Group but this would be her first outing with the MBS.



We entered Regent's Park from Clarence Gate, turning left to walk along the lake where we saw Canada & Egyptian Geese and a couple of Greylag, Cormorant, only a couple of Grey Herons (used to see masses of them here), Mallard, Tufted Duck, several pairs of Shoveler, Coots and Moorhens, a great Crested Grebe and a Mandarin Duck. Gulls included Herring and Black-Headed and a Lesser Black-Backed Gull was identified despite not being able to see its legs. We also had Wood Pigeon, Ring-Necked Parakeet, Crow, Magpie and Jays.

Over the Hanover Bridges to the Rail Ditch – where we hoped to see Water Rail. Regents Park Birds @parkbirdslondon aka Tony Duckett had reported Grey Wagtail and Water Rail here just a few days earlier. The sun made it difficult to look into the ditch ... but all we could see in the Rail feeding cage was a Robin while a couple of Blackbirds, but no Redwings, were feasting on a nearby berry-laden bush.



We walked on towards Longbridge looking at the waterfowl – wondering which we could “count” and which were clearly from the worldwide collection. We did count Mute Swan, Pochard and Gadwall but not the Red-Crested Pochard, Red-Breasted Goose, Eider, Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser or Smew which we identified with the help of the information board at the viewpoint.

It was too windy for any birds to be on the feeders. Apart from a couple of Blue Tits and a Great Tit in a hedgerow, we didn't see any more birds and soon crossed the Inner Circle to reach the Garden Café just about midday. Soups and coffees, fish & chips, sandwiches and cakes were selected, queued for and consumed at varying rates and the group scattered amid best wishes for Christmas, New Year and, in two cases, imminent birthdays as well as “See you Tuesday” from the Heath regulars.



Our leader Helen McCulloch and I separately took different routes to return to the Rail Ditch. I would probably have left sooner if we hadn't been chatting ... Helen spotted it first. Indeed I thought it looked very dark for a Water Rail but there was no doubt about the bird's identification when compared to the bulkier and darker Moorhen nearby. Believe it or not there is a Water Rail in this picture! Though the more obvious dark blob near the cage is a Moorhen.

As Tweeted "Possibly more people than bird species on today's [@BirdsMBS @parkbirdslondon](#) walk." Not counting the waterfowl collection, there were at least a couple fewer bird species than humans but, despite the cold wind, it was a most enjoyable event thanks to the sunshine and good company.

And I was able to sell 6 of the Hampstead Heath calendars weighing me down at the start of the walk (possibly the last opportunity of the year) + distribute a batch of my traditional festive marzipan sweets to those who'd not disappeared too quickly from the café.

Other photographers may like to contribute to the Regents Park Pre-Christmas Walk Album on our MBS 2020 Vision group page <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=oa.990992474597699&type=3>. Additional comments also welcome – Greylag and one of the Gulls added as a result of feedback.

Canada Goose	x	
Greylag Goose	2	
Mute Swan	x	
Egyptian Goose	x	
Mandarin Duck	x	
Shoveler	x	
Gadwall	x	
Mallard	x	
Pochard	x	
Tufted Duck	x	
Great Crested Grebe	x	
Grey Heron	x	
Cormorant	x	
Water Rail		1 only seen after 1pm by 2 returning to the spot after lunch
Moorhen	x	
Coot	x	
Black-headed Gull	x	
Herring Gull	x	
Lesser Black-Backed Gull	x	
Woodpigeon	x	
Ring-necked Parakeet	x	
Jay	x	
Magpie	x	
Carrion Crow	x	
Blue Tit	x	
Great Tit	x	
Blackbird	x	
Robin	x	

28 + species from collection including Eider, Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Red Crested Pochard, Smew, Red-Breasted Goose and Bufflehead