

Birds on the reserve

The Three Brooks Local Nature Reserve is home to a surprising variety of bird species, considering its small size. This is partly due to our variety of habitat - woodlands, hedges, open grassland and wetland - which increases the number of different birds. Early morning is probably the best time to see and hear our birds, and it helps to take binoculars if you want a closer look - although many of them are quite secretive!

The birds you are most likely to see anywhere on the reserve are members of the crow family - rooks, crows, jackdaws, magpies and jays. Magpies are the most obvious as they cackle to each other and fly from tree to tree displaying their startling black and white plumage. Rooks can be distinguished from crows by their heavy grey beaks; crows are all black, while jackdaws have grey patches on their heads. The jay is the most colourful member of the family - a pinky grey bird with blue and white flashes on the wing. Despite this gaudy coat, they can be quite difficult to spot and you may need to locate them by their harsh "kshehr" calls.

You are almost certain to see a woodpigeon as it flaps past with a loud whirring sound. Their cousins, stock doves, have been heard in the woods, and collared doves are common.

Woodpeckers breed in our woods but you are more likely to hear them than see them as they are wary birds. Great Spotted Woodpeckers (black and white, with a red spot on the head and a red rump) "drum" on hollow trunks with their beaks to establish territorial rights. Green woodpeckers (dark green with a red cap) also make a distinctive high-pitched laughing or "yaffling" sound and are quite commonly heard in the woods. You may be lucky enough to see them in our meadow areas as they search the grass for insects. All woodpeckers have very long tongues, which they use to lick up grubs from inside tree trunks. Some dead trees are deliberately left standing in the woods to provide insects and drumming stations for the woodpeckers.

There are many small birds in the woods and hedgerows. The loudest are probably the house sparrows, with an insistent peeping call, and the high, fast twittering of the dunnock. Listen out for the "teacher, teacher" call of the great tit, and the "see-see-see" of the long-tailed tit - these usually travel in groups and are quite easy to identify by silhouette - they look like ping-pong balls on sticks! The song thrush has a very varied call, but can be identified by the way he repeats every phrase two or three times. A robin may well come to investigate you as you walk through the woods. Other common birds include wrens, chaffinches, goldfinches, greenfinches, blackbirds and blue tits.








The conservation group is trying to increase the number of nesting sites for small birds by making and putting up nest boxes - look out for these as you walk around the woods.








If you stop beside the brooks and keep quiet and still, you may be rewarded by the electric blue flash of a kingfisher as it hunts for fish.

Some birds are only around at certain times of year. Our summer visitors include chiffchaffs - the "chiff-chaff-chiff-chaff" call is one of the easiest to identify - the very similar-looking willow warbler, which sings with a trickling descending note, and the whitethroat. In winter, flocks of redwings arrive to feed on berries - with their speckled fronts they resemble song thrushes, but the red smudges under the wing are an obvious giveaway.

There are also a few birds of prey around. Sparrowhawks, which can fly very fast between branches, have been recorded in the woods and sometimes you may spot a buzzard, wings outspread, wheeling high in the sky above the reserve. The bird hovering perfectly still over the grasslands is undoubtedly a kestrel, searching for mice and voles. The Hawk and Owl Trust have put up tawny owl boxes in Savages Wood, but sadly we have no evidence that owls are present - although the boxes are sometimes used by jackdaws!

How many birds did you see or hear?

	<input type="checkbox"/> Blue Tit
Buzzard <input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Chaffinch
Greenfinch <input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Green Woodpecker
Great Spotted Woodpecker <input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Great Tit

	<input type="checkbox"/> Jay
Kingfisher <input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Long-tailed Tit
Magpie <input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Song Thrush
Sparrowhawk <input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Wren



THREE BROOKS LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

BIRDS



Young Goldfinch

The different habitats of the reserve - woodland, grassland and wetland - support a variety of birds. See how many you can find on a walk through the reserve.



Group website: www.three-brooks.info



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