



Linkline

Spring 2011, Issue 37

Newsletter of the Gainsborough Area Group of the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust

HOORAH AND WELCOME: After a long period of anxious searching for someone to come forward and volunteer to produce Linkline electronically, David Stockley, possibly better known locally as 'Computer Sage', has come to our aid and very willingly offered to transform the Editor's ragbag collection of news, reports, forthcoming events, information etc into this most professional-looking publication you now see before you. David, you are a star and we are eternally grateful to you.



IF YOU WENT DOWN TO THE WOODS.....

on Saturday 23 October you were in for a BIG surprise as Linda Woodward reports:

FUNGUS FORAY: Around 15 people of all ages assembled at Thurlby Wood near Gainsborough on a fine, autumnal afternoon in October. It was our first fungus foray at that location and it was nice to think that our collecting would give new records for that area. We were warmly welcomed by the owner of the wood, Colin, who too was interested to find out what little gems his wood held!

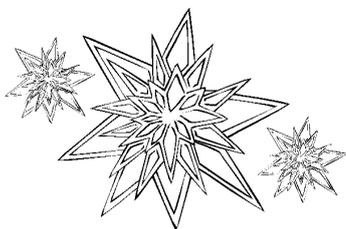
We had a brief briefing about how to collect our finds – 1) pull them up completely rather than break them off as significant ID features are sometimes contained in the bit at soil level and 2) try to make a mental note of what they were growing on (not easy when you can't tell one tree from another and you've got a basket full of different fungi that look fairly similar!).

Some started the walk with Colin or our leader Ray Halstead, while others went their own way, but we all met back at the beginning after an allotted time to have our species identified. Despite duplicates of the very common types, we managed to collect and identify 65 different species – an impressive total without really trying!

People who hadn't taken part in a fungus foray before were truly amazed at the variety that could be found with very little effort. Many thanks to Colin for allowing us to roam all over his wood.

PS Look out for a Spring walk in the wood in May this year when we will get chance to see typical flowers of a broadleaved woodland.

HOME SWEET HOME: Now is the time to think about providing nesting sites in your garden. Go to <http://www.lincstrust.org.uk/factsheets/nestbox.php> to find instructions on how to build your own bird box. If you do, and you get results, please let Joy know (see Page 3 for contact details) and you and your new family can be sure of a mention in a future edition of Linkline!



SNOWY SCOTTER: It is difficult to imagine now, but it was only just over a month after the Fungus Foray that the first snow of the winter fell, instantly transforming familiar scenes. Mary Sargent of Riverside, Scotter wrote:

Snow en masse, truly en masse, two feet in depth and a steady fall of large flakes from a seemingly endless supply. It falls so silently like the scenes on Christmas cards. Only an intrepid lone blackbird inhabits the garden, knocking a tiny flurry of snow from the fence top as he lands. The seed and bread put out on a cleared patch is not disturbed and quickly becomes covered with a layer of white. People with cameras are much in evidence on the Green - a magical scene to be captured by their lens. Children in brightly coloured anoraks pull younger siblings on sledges or throw snowballs. Ducks, wisely, do not venture up the banks to sink icily into the mass of white but stay on the water or fly off under the bridge to some unknown destination. A section of the river is now frozen over, it sparkles in the rays of a weak sun. The old willow tree casts its shadow on the blank white screen of the opposite bank - a perfect filigree of light and shade resembling a charcoal drawing. There is beauty for us in winter as well as spring.



WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN: Thank you to those who have sent in sightings during the past few months. Please keep them coming!

* While the snow was lying 'deep and crisp and even' a Laughton resident noticed some very small footprints on the surface of the snow which he followed until they suddenly disappeared. On investigation he realised these were rat paw prints and they disappeared down a vertical shaft in the deep snow. Digging to see what happened next, an under-snow tunnel at ground level was revealed. So THAT'S how Ratty travels about, keeping dry, in inclement weather!

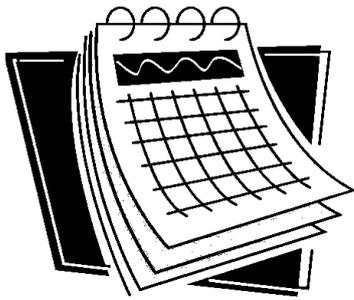
* Maureen and Tony Doyle report that a moorhen took up residence in their ornamental pond in Lime Tree Avenue, Gainsborough on 4th December in the midst of the near-Arctic conditions. As the ponds' pumps were on 24/7 they didn't freeze over completely and the moorhen was still enjoying this luxury accommodation, feeding and swimming, in mid-January.

* Despite the severity of the winter weather, snowdrops and aconites appeared in bloom two weeks earlier than last year according to one diary keeper.

* Foxes, hares and deer have all been sighted regularly from a house on the periphery of Laughton village where the garden backs onto a farm field with a large area of miscanthus (elephant grass) beyond. This crop, which is grown as a biofuel, provides valuable shelter and cover for larger species of wildlife during the winter months as it is not harvested until early spring. On one occasion a fox was seen emerging with a cock pheasant in its mouth. It looked around furtively then hurriedly buried the bird in the snow on the roadside bank before running off. The watchers later went to the spot where the interment had taken place and found an untidy mound of snow. It had, indeed, been a rushed job as the pheasant's head was poking out at one side and its tail feathers, visible for all to see, at the other!

* On Christmas Eve an uphill garden in Gainsborough was visited by a woodcock, male muntjac deer in good condition and a bevy of eight female pheasants. Goldfinches have also appreciated the teasle heads in the garden during the winter.

* Back in Laughton, the Scotter Road grey squirrel which visits several gardens - and bird feeders, often with disastrous results - was out and about most days during the severest weather and, to everyone's amazement, has come through the winter in remarkably good condition (have all those peanuts and fat balls had anything to do with this?) considering what a poor, thin, moth-eaten specimen he/she appeared to be in the autumn.



WHAT'S ON IN THE GAINSBOROUGH AREA GROUP

Members and non-members are equally welcome at our indoor meetings held at Morton Village Hall. They all start at 7.30pm and entrance is by donation (minimum £1) which includes tea/coffee and biscuits.

2011

Wed 16 March:

Lincolnshire from the air – David Start - at Morton Village Hall 7.30pm

Wed 27 April:

AGM followed by 'The Himalayas – Meera Peak adventure by Roger Bannister - at Morton Village Hall 7.30pm.

Sat 7 May:

Return to Thurlby Wood near Gainsborough for Spring walk, led by Michael Barke and starting at 2pm. With kind permission of Colin Watkin. Numbers limited and booking essential for start location etc. Ring Joy 01427 628457 or Jean 01427 838325

Wed 13 July:

Wildlife and conservation walk around Hall Farm, Harpswell 7pm. With kind permission and led by Mark Tatum. Meet at the Nursery car park 6.45pm

Programme Secretary: Linda Woodward, 24 Cromwell Ave, Lea, Gainsborough. DN21 5HX Tel: 01427 614915 E-mail: L.Woodward@virgin.net



BIRD FOOD SALES:

Our local distributor is Clare Holmes, on 01427 613128. Please note supplies and prices are subject to availability and change.

Weight	Peanuts	Mixed seed	Black sunflowers	Niger seed	Sunflower hearts
Kg	£	£	£	£	£
2.5	4.50	2.25	3.75	5.00	5.00
5	8.50	3.75	6.95	8.50	9.00
10	16.50	-	-	-	-
12.75	-	-	17.00	-	-
20	32.00	14.00	-	33.00	35.00

Please send your wildlife sightings or other info to the Editor, Joy Bannister, 01427 628457 or giban786@btinternet.com



Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust

Banovallum House, Manor House Street, Horncastle, Lincolnshire LN9 5HF

Tel: 01507 526667

Fax: 01507 525732

website: www.lincstrust.org.uk

email: info@lincstrust.co.uk

The Trust is a company limited by guarantee registered in England, no. 461863, and is registered as a charity, no. 218895. VAT no. 128 7453 52