

Round-about-Buckden

SEASONAL

Spring



Chiffchaff



Sedge Warbler



Skylark

Winter turns slowly to spring with the first leaf break and early flowering plants such as Coltsfoot, Snowdrop and Lesser Celandine. The jaunty song of the Chiffchaff in March, the first Sand Martins feeding up on flies over the lakes, the yellow flash of a male Brimstone butterfly, or the buzzing of a bumblebee are all signs that spring is truly here.

As April progresses, more and more migrant birds arrive to set up territory and hope to attract a mate. There are many species of warbler to listen, and look, for but you will hear many more than you see! In the reeds, listen for the chuntering of Reed Warblers and the lively song of the Sedge Warbler from waterside scrub. The melodic songs of Blackcaps and Garden Warblers comes from trees and bushes and the cascading song of the Willow Warbler is a delight. They are not just found in willows though! Lesser Whitethroats "rattle" from hedgerows and Whitethroats throw themselves in the air to give their simple, scratchy ditty.

The much-declined Skylark can still be heard here. Listen for its energetic song coming from high in the sky above its breeding sites in fields and stare skywards to see just how high they fly as if being pulled upwards on a piece of string.

An early start in April and the first two weeks of May will give you the chance of catching the best performance from our songbirds and it is well worth getting up to hear this morning chorus.

Overhead, Swifts, Swallows and martins feed and listen for the song of the Cuckoo. Keep your eyes peeled and you may catch a glimpse of one making its fast, direct flight on pointed wings.

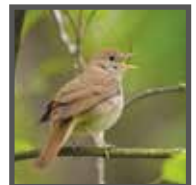


Cuckoo



Whitethroat

A very special visitor to listen for in the scrub as you walk along the north side of Pumphouse Pit is the Nightingale. Up to four of these rare and sadly declining migrants now set up territory here. The end of April to the third week of May is the best period to listen to them. They sing clearly and loudly early and late in the day and even at night when competition from other birds is far less.



Nightingale

Other birds are pass over head on the Ouse Valley flyway. A wide range of wading birds fly through heading to the Norfolk coast. Many start the day on the west side of the country and fly across land as they head for the Arctic which brings them through the area.



Arctic Tern





Osprey

Special visitors are seen in April and May, including migrating Osprey, Spoonbill, Black Tern, Arctic Tern and Little Gull and sometimes real rarities: Black-winged Stilts, American Wigeon and Ferruginous Duck, have all been seen on lakes that you will pass on the walk.



Little Gull



Ferruginous Duck



Black-winged Stilt



Spoonbill

When the sun shines, insect diversity is fantastic. Orange-tip butterflies dart past along hedgerows and through scrub. Brimstones are big butterflies and the butter-yellow males are hard to beat for colour. The fluffy-looking Bee-fly hovers at low flowers such as Bugle and likes to bask on bare soil and sand by the lakes. It is one of the first insects on the wing in spring and is a delight.

May also sees the start of the dragonfly season with Large Red Damselfly first to appear, but the Hairy Hawker and Scarce Chaser can be seen through May, often in good numbers – local specialties. The Banded Demoiselle is a damselfly, so holds its wings along its body rather than out at right angles. They are tropically coloured blue and green and the males have big dark patches on their wings that really catch your eye as they fly. Look for the tunnels of mining bees in sandy soil and check blossom on willows and blackthorn for them. The abundant Cow Parsley attracts many beetles, bugs and other insects – stop to see how many you can see on the white flowerheads.



Brimstone



Bugle



Bee Fly



Cow Parsley



Large Red Damselfly



Scarce Chaser



Banded Demoiselle

Emerging dragonflies and other insects attract the beautiful Hobby and flocks of more than 20 have been counted feeding together over the meadows high in the sky



Hobby

