

Round-about-Buckden

SEASONAL

Winter



Rosehips

It might seem quiet but take some time to look and listen and you will soon hear some of the resident birds, or some of our many winter visitors. Keep an eye out for hawthorn berries and rose hips and the thrushes that feast on them. Fieldfares and Redwings have flown here from Scandinavia for the winter. Many of the Blackbirds and Song Thrushes you see on the walk at this time of year will also be migrants that have come in from the continent to join the residents.



Bullfinch

Winter is a good time to see beautiful bull-necked Bullfinches on the walk, feeding silently in the hedgerows. Listen for their soft “peuh” calls and watch for their tell-tale white rumps as they fly low through the hedgerows and trees in pairs and small groups.

Bird activity will be concentrated on the wetlands. Scan over the lakes and you should see some of the many species of wildfowl that spend winter here. On deep water, look for Goldeneyes. The drakes are among our most handsome birds. The females are grey and brown and look very different. Tufted Ducks and Pochards spend a lot of the day sleeping in flocks and wake up to dive for food at night.



Tufted duck



Pochard



Wigeon



Shoveler

“Dabbling ducks” like shallow water and feed on vegetation at the edge, or by “upending” in the water. These include the familiar Mallard, the drakes of which have beautiful bottle-green heads, but also whistling Wigeon, tiny Teal with little bell-like calls, the well-named Shoveler with its shovel-shaped beak and the easy to overlook Gadwall.

On the river, keep an eye out for the Goosander – a beautiful fish-eating duck with a long, thin red beak with serrated edges that earns it the name “sawbill”.



Hawthorn berries



Other wildlife can be hard to find in winter, but spend some time admiring the beautiful lichens that grown on fenceposts and trees and the many species of moss that grow in damper areas and on wood. The more you look, the more different species you will see. It is a wonderful miniature world to discover!

Still, frosty mornings are a wonderful time to complete the walk and if snow lies on the ground, you might find wildlife being easier to approach as birds and animals conserve their valuable energy. Foxes and Muntjac Deer can be more approachable than usual at such times.



Winter moss



Muntjac Deer



Water Rail

During hard weather, long-billed Snipe can be forced out into the open and the huge, snake-necked Great White Egret is usually around too, but much rarer than the Little Egret. Shy Water Rails call from the reeds – a bizarre sound that is not dissimilar to a squealing pig- and resident Cetti's Warblers may suddenly burst into song to take you by surprise.



Cetti's Warbler



Snipe



Great White Egret



Fox

