

## **BODENHAM LAKE DIARY- SPRING AND SUMMER 2021**

Sam, part of the camera trap team, comments on volunteering at the Lake.

“We love it though don't we ?

Every moment is worthwhile, knowing we are part of the wildlife world. The cameras are our eyes when we step away again.”

Misty summer morning in the refuge

Fallow hind



Morning fox



Due to Covid restrictions the camera trap team continued to work in pairs. Sue and Viv braved a very cold day to reset the cameras on 26th March and again on the 12th April, with snow on the ground.



In the wildlife refuge they noticed toad skins and entrails on the gate post between the wooded area and refuge 3 (RF3), so focussed a camera on this site. The culprit was a buzzard. His prey were toads and a grass snake





A stoat was also filmed here, a first for the team.



On their next visit, Viv and Sue decided to refocus the gatepost camera to get a better close-up of the buzzard.

Sue checks the camera to get the best angle.



The view captured by the camera. The sheep were not very wild, but provided a lovely photo of the refuge at dawn.



Just when I was nodding off after watching over 100 videos of sheep, up popped the buzzard, two muntjacs sparring and a barn owl, to make it all worthwhile.

The buzzard was filmed calling to his mate with a gift of food, a grass snake.

[https://youtu.be/uy\\_rwCZiDNU](https://youtu.be/uy_rwCZiDNU)

If the volume is turned up, the birdsong is impressive.

### Buzzard





Muntjac sparring The Youtube video of the muntjacs can be seen at [https://youtu.be/uy\\_rwCZiDNU](https://youtu.be/uy_rwCZiDNU)



Barn owl



Fallow deer were frequent visitors. These hinds show the three colour variations.



A camera set up in the refuge by the lake side at RF3, next to the wood, filmed a good number of species, including Canada geese, greylag geese, tufted duck, otter, muntjac, oyster catcher, coot, moorhen, great crested grebe, swan, heron, sand martin, fallow deer, cormorant, pheasant and wood pigeon.

Sam notes the position of a camera at RF3



Photos taken at RF3

Sand martin



These lovely little birds visit the lake each year and were captured by the camera in flight. A sandy bank has been created on one island in the hope they may nest here.



Little egret (lovely yellow feet)



Oyster catchers at the lakeside



Pairs of common sandpiper, little ringed plover and oystercatcher were all spotted at the reserve in the spring. It was great to see all the hard work of project staff and volunteers paying off - exactly the species it was hoped to attract to the lake with the major habitat improvements.

### Otters

The cameras filmed otters in three separate locations in the refuge area. A notable increase in sightings since we started recording there.

Otters were filmed by the small pond in the refuge area next to the wood

[https://youtu.be/EByFdh1jF\\_k](https://youtu.be/EByFdh1jF_k)

As well as by the large log pile and at RF3.



Mostly observed at night, they sometimes ventured out early in the morning





Little ringed plovers hatched young at Bodenham Lake for the first time this century! These little wading birds are scarce nationally with around 1200 pairs in total. This was especially pleasing for us, as attracting them to the site was one of the aims of the recent project work.



(Photo by Mick Colquhoun at Brockhall Gravel Pits)

The view from the new hide shows the transformation of the cleared islands into perfect habitat for these ground nesting birds. (Trevor Hulme)



### Flowers, butterflies and bugs

Viv and Sue not only set and monitor the camera traps and rescue goslings, but they are also involved in carrying out surveys at the Lake. They even keep the hides shipshape!

Viv comments after a morning survey last August:

“Good morning at the Lake. Lovely view of a female muntjac, rabbits and a small grass snake. Five brown hawkers and ten species of butterfly including five common blue, two comma, five gatekeeper, three red admiral and eight peacock. By far the best I’ve seen this year. Also 43 species of bird”.

Spring clean (Photos by Sue Griffin). Gosling rescued from the reed enclosure



Sue explains why the butterfly surveys are conducted at the Lake:

“A team of butterfly survey volunteers cover a transect in Bodenham Nature Reserve from April to September on a weekly basis. The results are collated and passed to Butterfly Conservation to form part of a national database. Bodenham comes under the West Midlands Region and our records contribute an important indicator of the Herefordshire butterfly population.

To encourage and support a healthy butterfly population at Bodenham Nature Reserve, regular habitat management by groups of volunteers and HWT staff are carried out through the winter to prepare for the emergence of Spring and hopefully lots of butterflies!

The diverse habitat within Bodenham Nature Reserve - orchards, grasslands, riverbanks, wildflower meadows, hedgerows to name but a few, provide the early and over-wintering butterflies and many other insects with food and shelter. It is also why the birdlife both on and off the lake is increasing every season”.





Brown hawker, seen on the path leading to the south hide, and red admiral seen on the buddleia in the car park. (Viv)

Comma butterfly(Sue)



Green veined white - Sue



Long horned beetle (Sue)



Bee orchid (Dennis Longmore)



All these photos were taken at the nature reserve.



Wildflower meadow in the refuge. Volunteers planted the reeds by the waters edge. (Sue)





## Camera at NSP



Sam set up a camera at NSP(near small pond) in the refuge. She is known for her ability to spot otter spraint. It is said to smell like jasmine tea! This was a very good site for capturing fallow deer, mink, muntjac, water rail, heron, moorhen, fox and otter etc; in total 20 plus species in two weeks.



<https://youtu.be/N4NJavHsI2o>

The Youtube video filmed at this site shows two otters, possibly mother and kit, nuzzling each other, and then the youngster spraints on the log at this site.





Fox and muntjac caught by the camera at NSP







Many young were successfully raised at the lake during spring and summer, including these grey lag geese.

28<sup>th</sup> August - Our beautiful Lake



Concluding words from Sam:

"Time at the lake is precious and always well spent with informative and like-minded company. For me, it's definitely a favourite place to be!"