

# Willoughby Society – Nature Notes 2020

## January

It has been a wet and often mild winter - lots of rain, little frost.

On January 10th Di MacKnight had a snowdrop flowering in her front garden.

Mid-January Janet Rowley had 3 daffodils in flower.

There are aconites by the bank of the stream.

A sparrow hawk has been seen in the village several times and witnessed catching a starling.

Leonie Tromans met a field mouse when she was walking near Woolscott. It came to her shoe.

Bob and Lynn Busby saw a kite flying over Willoughby.

The usual birds have been at feeders in the village.

February 2020

Lots more rain this month.

A Russian eagle escaped from its owners and after flying around for a while was recaptured in Magdalen Road.

A harvest mouse? was spotted on a bird feeder. It was described as very small with tiny eyes, very small ears, almost orange with a white chest.

A jay was seen near Jays (16) Main Street and in the same area a sparrow hawk.

About 6.0p a barn owl was seen flying across the A45 and possibly the same one later one evening.

A kestrel also flies across the A45 and had been seen by several people.

A buzzard has been heard too.

There are skylarks along Woolscott Lane and a young hare by the edge of the field.

Back in gardens there have been long tailed tits, goldfinches and chaffinches. Sparrow numbers seem to be rising (dunnocks and house sparrows).

The mallard ducks are searching for nesting sites near The Willows though there seem to be fewer on the pond this year.

## **March and April**

House martins (11th April)

Swallow near Barby

Pheasant heard by Willoughby Lodge

other birds :

Redstart

Sparrow hawk, Buzzards, Chaffinch.

Orange tip butterfly Moor Lane (14th April)

Peewits in fields Woolscott Lane (end of March)

Chiff chaff, larks Carter's fields.

Frog in pond at jays (first for 7 years)

## **May**

Wagtail

Chaffinch

Spotted woodpecker

House martins

Dutch Capuchine pigeon !! seen in Lower Street and that end of Main Street

Geese flying over Fox Covert

Moorhen on dew pond by Alpacas

Only 3 ducklings on Village pond from 7 earlier in May  
(16th May)

8 Red kites counted between Willoughby and A45

## **June and July**

No Village meetings because of the Coronavirus (This applied to March, April and May too);

but individuals have told me about the following during June and July.

Swifts over Magdalen Road

Yellowhammer heard along Moor Lane

Speckled wood butterflies seen

Bert had the skins of two grass snakes that had been sloughed off near one of his ponds

Housemartins were investigating nesting sites at Jays and have built further down Main Street.

Pair of wagtails at Jays

A late brood of ducklings on the village pond

Linda saw a Haresfoot mushroom in her garden

In July a muntjac deer was seen in the field at the back of Norman and Betty's

Bats can be seen at the corner of College Road near sunset

There is a pair of moorhens on the pond and many, many fish.

Adult & two juvenile Green Woodpeckers in one garden for a couple of days.

Hedgehogs visiting regularly (three spotted together a few times) no signs of hoglets though.

Two foxes seen in one garden regularly.

Buzzard riding thermals around the village

## **August and September**

No social gatherings in Willoughby so only a few notes.

There was a wasps nest in a tree in Brooks Close and another one in the garden at Jays

Cricket seen at Jays

Hedgehogs in Carroll's garden and at Hazeldene

Grass snake in Carroll's garden

Small copper butterfly very pretty and tiny on Michaelmas daisies

Its numbers have been declining

A sparrow hawk flew in the patio windows at Greenacre and out again

Foxes, and on one occasion a Badger, have been seen and a Tawny Owl heard at Hazeldene.

## October

First Willoughby Society meeting since February. Well attended.

Some of the sightings recorded during the last 7 months were mentioned which prompted a second sighting of a small copper butterfly and a cuckoo that had been heard.

Seen this month:

At least 2 hoglets and hedgehogs.

Squirrels

Rabbits

Green and spotted woodpeckers

Hare

Tawny owls

Lawyers wig mushroom

The most interesting but unwelcome sighting was of a Signal Crayfish in the stream by a bridge in Main Street. It is an invasive species from America and causes damage as well as destroying the habitat of native white clawed crayfish.