

Kiltonga Nature Reserve

Leader: Dot Blakeley

12th June 2018



Mute Swan (*Ardeidae*)



Grey Heron (*Ardeidae*)

Dot Blakeley, a local bird expert, met us and took us round the reserve. This consisted of a walk along a track round the lake and close to hedges and trees. The weather was mild, dry and with a pleasant breeze.

We started by looking over the lake from the car park. A notice unfortunately ignored by some, advised not to feed bread to the birds as it's junk food for them, causes contamination and attracts rats and mice. These are particularly unwelcome during nesting season as they can be predators of eggs and young vulnerable birds. From there we could see Greylag geese (*anser anser*), various gulls and mallards some looking very bedraggled as they were in eclipse, a period usually lasting 2 weeks and during which they are unable to fly. We proceeded along the track and Dot immediately heard the calls of young Robins (*Erithacus rubecula*) asking parent birds for food. Young birds of Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*), Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*), Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*), Longtailed tits (*Aegithalos caudatus*) and Blackbird (*Turdus merula*) were heard calling as we went along.

The dense foliage didn't allow very clear views but we did see young fledglings at times and adult birds. In particular we had nice sightings of Longtailed tits, Goldfinch, Chaffinch, Blackbird, Robin and fleeting glimpses of Goldcrest. Half way round there was a clear view of the lake and a Mute swan (*Cygnus olor*) sitting on a nest. A nesting Coot (*Fulica*) was also spotted. There we saw a very active Little grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*), Moorhen (*Gallinula*) and 3 Herons (*Ardeidae*) along with Mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*) and gulls of various types. Overhead Swifts (*Apodidae*) were flying high, a Swallow (*Hirundinidae*) flew low over the water and Housemartins (*Delichon urbicum*) were plentiful as were the flies and other insects they were after.



Greylag geese (*Anser anser*)

Overall this was a very pleasant outing enhanced by Dot's amazing ability to hear and identify so many different bird calls and share her extensive knowledge in an easy manner.