

Whitchurch Nature Notes (4) Signs of Spring - Part 3 Photo Gallery - Birds

These photographs were all taken by Whitchurch-on-Thames residents and in our local area. This Gallery accompanies 'Nature Notes – Signs of Spring Part 2'.

Birds feeding



Jackdaws on the sophisticated feeders in Geoff & Meryl Weir's garden. Meryl said *"The jackdaws are very athletic & clever at working out how to get at the bird food. The feeder on the right (as you look at them) is spring loaded to allow small birds to access the nuts, but closing down when larger birds try to feed. The jackdaws worked out where to perch so they didn't close the feeder – good for them!"*

Birds
house-hunting

A bluetit checking out the view
from a nestbox on the side of our
house



Birds nest building



This pair of enthusiastic blue tits were filmed by John Bradon with his trail camera in early April. They were taking nesting material into the box. No sooner had the first bird started adding some more moss to the nest, the second bird pushed it away and took over the job!

(Editor's note: chaps, does this seem familiar, when helping with the household chores?!?)

Amazing nest- building skills



The tiny long-tailed tit (above) constructs a very complicated but delicate nest, as shown here.

According to the Observers Book of Birds, the nest is made 'of moss, lichens, wool and spiders' webs, well felted together and lined with countless feathers; in a bush or hedge. The nest is very deep and domed, the entrance hole being at the side near the top. In this stifling, feathery ball are squeezed, at night, about 12 chicks and both parents.'



Stunning aerobatic skills

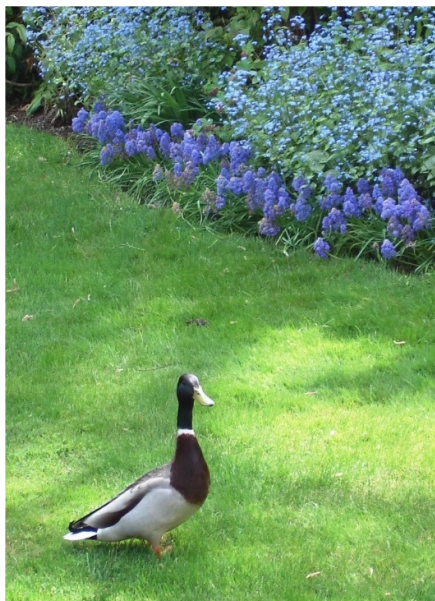


Red kites over Manor Road, contributed by a local nature lover. These birds are quite unafraid of being close to the houses and the residents – a spectacular sight when they fly down low.

There are also some more great photos by Jim Donahue of red kites following the plough at Mapledurham; you will find these in the Photo Gallery on our village website.



Just dropping in unexpectedly



Richard Wingfield explains “*One April afternoon some years ago we enjoyed visits to our garden in Hardwick Road by two species of duck. Around tea-time a drake Mallard flew in briefly and strutted around the grass. Then, a little later on, a pair of exotic Mandarin ducks perched for a while in a tree and then flew down to our lawn, showing off their extraordinary plumage. Like the Egyptian geese that can sometimes be seen on the Pangbourne meadow, Mandarin ducks were originally escapees from captivity who must have decided that life in the wild in England was just as good as in their home country.*”

And finally, other familiar birds in our spring garden



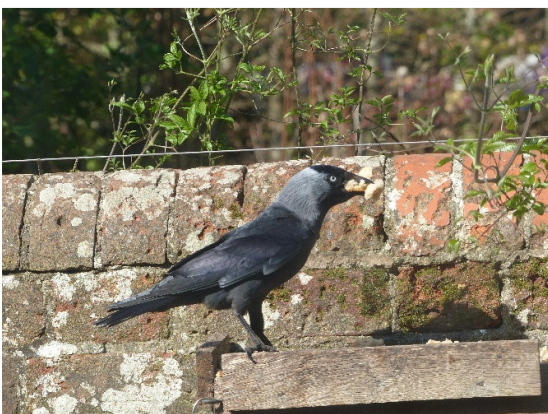
Female and male blackbirds (left and above)



The ubiquitous wood pigeon (above) - do you love them or hate them?



Robin, goldfinch & greenfinch sharing the seeds



A jackdaw with a beak-ful of breakfast



Is this a rook or a crow – you decide!!