

Weelsby Woods Birdwalk

Only a fool would be daft enough to turn out at 7 am in search of birds on such a rainy morning. Perhaps that's why there were so few of us, this being the *eve* of April Fool's Day, rather than the day itself!

As it happened, the rain gradually eased and, as the four of us tramped through the puddles and the mud, our spirits began to lift. There was barely another human in sight, but there were birds aplenty. The first to catch our ear was a mistle thrush. Pouring his heart out from the topmost twig of the tallest tree he was not too hard to find. Later we came across a couple more mistle thrushes and heard song briefly from its close relative, the song thrush.

Other songsters proclaiming their territorial rights included familiar favourites: robin, wren, goldfinch, blackbird, dunnock, etc. and we were also treated to great spotted woodpeckers – hard to see, but easy to recognise from their excited calls. Woodpeckers would not do well on 'Britain's Got Talent'. The nearest they come to singing is to drum loudly on hollow wood, a sound which we all heard several times, albeit briefly.

We were lucky to get some close views of a male kestrel and even closer views of goldcrests foraging low down on the leafless boughs. This bird, the smallest of all European species, often seems completely oblivious to the presence of humans.

Call me a fool, but for my money this is a better way to spend the first couple of hours of the day than foraging at Tesco. Oh and by the way, Winston Churchill once said 'the greatest lesson in life is to know that even fools are right sometimes'!

Ray Hume
Saturday 31st March

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