

## Bushy Park – April 2019 Diary

### **Oak Processionary Moth pesticide spraying**

In April the eggs of the invasive insect, Oak Processionary Moth, start hatching. The eggs over-winter on the twigs of oak trees and the young caterpillars emerge as the weather gets warmer and the leaves on which they feed unfurl. The caterpillars may cause extensive defoliation of the host tree and also carry toxic hairs which can pose a serious threat to human and animal health. Early season management of this challenging pest includes targeted pesticide spraying in mid to late April in certain areas of the park. Some of this takes place at night to minimise inconvenience to park users. However, day-time spraying is sometimes necessary, particularly where ground conditions are unsuitable for night-time working. Please avoid the proximity of the spraying operation and follow any instructions given by the ground crew accompanying the spraying rigs.

### **Deer - Advisory Note**

The Park deer herds have come through the winter in good health. Many of the Stags have cast their antlers and the Bucks will follow shortly. The deer look a bit scruffy as they lose their winter coats over the next few weeks.

It is important to recognise that deer are **wild animals** and every day, despite signs warning of the dangers, visitors put themselves and their children at risk by approaching and feeding the deer. Extreme examples of foolishness are parents lifting their children onto the backs of deer.

Please remember: **Don't feed** them, **don't approach** them and we hope you enjoy the experience of seeing them in a wonderful parkland setting.

### **Bird News**

By the first days of April there are sounds that spring is well and truly here, Blackcaps and Chiffchaffs will be singing from areas that they think are suitable to breed in. The first broods of Egyptian Geese will also have hatched and can be found by the parks ponds. The aggressive nature of this species makes them not everyone's cup of tea. A bird associated more with our mountainous areas or the Breckland's of East Anglia; the Northern Wheatear (the males are stunning little birds) annually stop off here. They have travelled all the way from sub-Saharan Africa and can often be found in either of the Skylark areas. The Skylarks in the south-east corner of the park have been gradually squeezed into a smaller and smaller area by the spread of the Bracken. In the last couple of years we have taken measures to control it, this has worked well and now the birds are reclaiming old nesting sites. We are doing this because this species is in decline nationally and within the park, so needs your help. **Please follow the instruction on the signs and put your dog on a lead.** The other Skylark area is to the south of Upper Lodge Road, here the grassland is much healthier and is what the birds require. However we would still appreciate your help here by just keeping your dog under control.

For more bird news check out [www.regentsparkbirds.blogspot.com](http://www.regentsparkbirds.blogspot.com) it also covers Bushy Park

By Tony Duckett

### **Woodland Gardens Diary**

The *Camellia* flowering season is nearly over, however *Magnolia*, *Rhododendrons* and *Azaleas* continue the spring flowering season. *Rhododendron augustinii* is worth looking out for with its lavender blue flowers. In the Bog Garden you can see *Lysichiton americanus* the American Skunk Cabbage with its large yellow flower bracts – so named due to its unattractive fragrance, the pink flowers of *Darmera peltata* which stand out before the foliage emerges and the architectural leaves and flowers of *Gunnera manicata* unfurling (Giant Rhubarb).

The hard working volunteers have finished burning ponticum for the season and will be planting up areas around the garden. The Garden team have been preparing the Bog Garden for planting, the first cut of grass is underway but the areas with bulbs will be left for a while to let them die back naturally.

Further information can be found on The Royal Parks web site or via email [bushy@royalparks.org.uk](mailto:bushy@royalparks.org.uk)