

Bushy Park – October 2017 Diary

Deer rut advice for walkers - The deer rut really gets under way in October and the advice on Park posters and our website continues to be important.

The Royal Parks often receive reports where dogs sustain injuries from deer, as well as deer being chased by dogs sometimes with fatal consequences. We recommend walking your dog outside the Park during October. If you choose, at your own risk, to walk your dog in the Park at these times, it is advisable to keep your dog on a lead and consider an alternative route, such as following the wall line of the Park, close to exit gates. Even if you don't have a dog, keep at least 50m from the deer and stay alert.

Fungi - Once the summer weather breaks the soil and air becomes damp with autumn rain allowing fungi to emerge without drying out. Some species can be seen all year round but the abundance and variety are displaying now and last only until the first hard frost. Fungi are neither plants nor animals – they are decomposers of organic matter, surviving underground or within plants all year but emerging as mushrooms or toadstools in order to reproduce. Some of these fruiting bodies are palatable to humans, whilst most are not and a few are poisonous. Collecting mushrooms is forbidden in the Park as doing so will diminish the population and deprives other wildlife of its habitat and food.

Bird News - By the end of September most of our summer visitors, park breeders such as Common Whitethroat, Reed Warbler and Swallow or migrating birds from further north in the United Kingdom and Europe will now have departed on their long journeys to Sub-Saharan Africa. There is still a chance that a few stragglers may be found feeding up on the

last of the blackberries or the few insects that haven't yet died as the temperatures begin to drop. As this first wave of migrants move off it is then the turn of the hardier species that have bred in Scandinavia or Eastern Europe to head west in our direction. These are species that having already travelled thousands of miles and may choose to overwinter in the UK. They will stay as long as there are no prolonged cold spells and they are able to find enough food. The first signs that tell you that autumn is on the way is when you hear the seep seep call of the Meadow Pipit. This is their contact call that keeps the small flocks together as they head south west. They are closely followed by Starlings, Chaffinches, Redwings and a species that you wouldn't necessarily have thought moved great distances; the Wood Pigeon. In fact on clear frosty nights with the wind in their favour, this species leave the Scandinavian coastline in their thousands and head out over the North Sea. They fly at a great height cutting across the south east corner of the UK with Spain being their intended destination. Many of these will not make it as hunters will be waiting for them as they cross the Pyrenees. These are just the forerunners with other species to follow.
Tony Duckett

The Woodland Gardens – Sept 2017

Autumn is here and with it the colours start to turn. The best trees for autumn colour are Acers and Cherries which are found scattered throughout the Gardens.

The volunteers have been clearing areas in Birch Glade, Triss' Island, and Keepers wood stream sides in preparation for planting up this winter with a selection of plants to provide all year interest.

The Gardeners team has a new addition; Marciel is our Royal Parks Apprentice and will be working and studying horticulture with us for the next three years.

Further information can be found on The Royal Parks web site or via email bushy@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk