

Tatton Wildlife Newsletter

Winter 2017-18

The rut has now ended and the deer have come through relatively unscathed with only one fatality. Early winter sees the males gorge themselves on acorns and chestnuts to regain condition quickly after using up vital reserves during the rut. The deer are fed daily during the winter months by the ranger team to make sure they stay well fed and healthy when the grass ceases to grow. This feed is of utmost importance during bouts of frozen weather and when snow is on the ground. They are fed with carrots and haylage. The deer are now in their thicker winter coats, the hairs of which are hollow which traps warm air, providing better insulation during the cold winter weather. The deer tend to stay together during the winter months and do not roam far away from where they are fed. The best place to see them in winter is the open area between the Old Hall and the Memorial Stone. Opportunities to enjoy a tractor/trailer ride in the parkland observing the spectacular sight of hundreds of deer feeding at close quarters are being run in February. (Tuesday 20th and Wednesday 21st February, 9:30 – 10:30 am). On Tuesday 13th February (10am – midday) why not join a ranger for a guided walk in the beautiful winter parkland, observing the deer in their natural surroundings and learning about their importance to Tatton. (Please note, pre-booking is essential for the guided walk and the trailer ride– please call 01625 374428 for further info.).



In September interesting bird sightings in the park included a Hobby and a Barn Owl which was hunting in twilight over the fishing area. Thirty one Egyptian Geese were on the Ice Pond in front of the mansion. A late Swallow lingered until the 30th. October saw the first arrival of one of our winter visitors with Redwings seen on Beech Walk on

the 9th. Another sure sign winter was on the way was the magnificent sight of over 200 Pink-Footed Geese flying over the parkland on the 18th. A very early pair of Goldeneye were on Tatton Mere on the 27th, this is another winter visitor and Tatton Park is a great place to see them as numbers will increase as winter sets in. Most of our winter visitors are joining us for our relatively milder climate from Scandinavian countries. These include winter thrushes such as Fieldfare and Redwing. Bramblings, Woodcock and various wildfowl can be seen at Tatton during the winter months too. Look out for Stonechats on the rushes along the edges of the meres, or the elusive Water Rail emerging from the reedbed in frozen weather at Dog Wood. January is a great time to listen for drumming woodpeckers, also in Dog Wood.

Members of the local Knutsford Ornithological Society and a Tatton Ranger will be at the 'Allen Bird Hide' (from 11am – 1pm on Sunday 21st January) hosting a 'drop-in' session looking at Tatton's winter birds. This event is open to all and provides an excellent opportunity to ask the experts!

The recent fungal foray in the park saw us record a magnificent 111 species of fungi, proving the value of our policy of leaving dead wood *in-situ* and standing dead wood wherever we can. There was a wide variety found including the stunning Fly Agarics and Amethyst Deceivers. Bats will also emerge on warmer winter evenings and are always worth looking out for as are a variety of insects including winter moths.



Compiled by Tatton's Ranger Team