

Ogden Water Wildlife WATCH Newsletter

Issue 6



Welcome to our 6th newsletter, packed with lots of information & news on what we have been up to. Thanks to your suggestions we have put together a fun filled programme for next year, beginning in January with birdwatching. We also have ideas to help wildlife in your garden over the winter, news about the work on the ponds and much more. Hope you have a good Christmas and see you all in January.

150 trees for 150 years

The December meeting of the WATCH group focused on getting outside in the winter months, getting a little muddy, having fun and helping the rangers at Ogden to plant up a new woodland area.

Over the last 12 months, members of the Countryside Works Team have been hard at work clearing an area of trees (many were old and dangerous, others were growing in the wrong area), so that we can create a special habitat. This is a wet woodland. Which is just how it sounds - a woodland but it is wet on the ground for most of the year.

Making a wet woodland here at Ogden Water would allow us to help some of our visiting wildlife. There are only a few wet woodlands throughout Calderdale and none in the local area, so having one here is very important.

Wet woodlands are special habitats, that are home to a number of different species. The main thing is to get the ground wet and the right trees growing. So we have two streams that run down through the area, these are slowly being blocked so water will spread out over the ground and make it nice and muddy. The next stage is planting the trees.

The WATCH group were lucky enough to gain a grant from the Tree Council in order to buy in trees, stakes and shelters. So the December meeting was all about getting the trees planted.

Armed with a trailer full of stakes, shelters and trees and wielding planting spears and hammers the group set about planting. First by choosing a spot, then by digging in the planting spear to create a hole, putting the tree into the hole, with a stake hammered firmly into the ground next to the young tree. The tree was then given an individual shelter that would keep it cool in the summer and warm in the winter as well as protecting it from being eaten by deer.



The trees we were planting included hazel (good for butterflies and squirrels), alder (provide food for siskins), birch (a great tree for woodpeckers and insects) and oak (one of the best trees for all kinds of wildlife).

Split into groups we set about the task in hand. digging, staking and hammering, and before long we had got a little muddy but planted 150 trees (that is one for every year that the reservoir has been built) Well done to everyone involved.

Gathering up all the tools, broken stakes and shelters we had not used we headed back to the classroom for a well earned party with sausage rolls, crisps, mince pies and chocolate biscuits. We hope that everyone has a wonderful Christmas and we will see you all in 2008!!



Events: January - Birdwatching, February - The ground beneath your feet, March - The Badger, April - Signs of spring

Things to do to help wildlife this winter

1. Feed the birds

Remember as you are eating your nice warm dinner, birds have to find food and it is hard in cold weather. So fill up a feeder with peanuts or seed and find out which birds like what to eat.

2. Put out fresh water in your garden

In cold weather, water freezes to ice, make sure there is water in your garden for birds and mammals.

3. Make a list of all the wildlife you want to see in the UK this year.

You could put your list into an envelope and keep it until next December and then tick off all the wildlife you have seen.

4. Start a wildlife diary

A simple note each day will allow you to keep records of all the wildlife you see, whether its squirrels or seals. Remember to make a note of where you saw the wildlife and what the weather was like.

5. Put out nesting materials for birds

As the weather gets warmer in late February, what not hang up small bits of wool or cat or dog hair for bird to use in their nests.

6. Build a box

Have a go at building a bird box, ladybird home or even a butterfly box. Then put it up in your garden and see who comes to live in it. If you need information sheets on how to build these boxes, just ask.

7. Plant some wildflower seeds

Get some seeds such as sunflowers and try growing them in a pot to find out how high they can grow. Alternatively visit a garden centre and get some packs of wildflower seeds to plant in the garden.

8. Track wildlife in your garden

Wait until we get a heavy frost, or light snow. Wrap up and go out lookig for signs of creatures in your garden, cat you tell the difference between a fox and a cat print!!

9. Keep ponds ice free

Who knows who is hibernating at the bottom of your pond. A smooth rubber ball can be taken out if the pond freezes and so air can still get into the pond. Also keep an eye out for frogspawn from February on.

10. Come along to WATCH group every month!!



The Ogden Water Calendar 2008 Ogden Water Calendar

Stunning photos of Ogden taken by local photographers and Friends, available from the Visitor Centre, only £5.50.

Limited Edition!

Check out the Ogden Water website at:

www.ogdenwater.org.uk
including reports and photos of
WATCH group in action, lists of future
events and much more

How to get to Jerusalem Farm

From the A646 at Luddenden Foot turn up Luddenden Lane. After 1.5 miles turn right to Booth (along Duke Street). Go through the hamlet of Booth. As the road steepens downhill, take a left on Jerusalem Lane. Jerusalem Farm is the first property on the right, with car park directly after building.

Please be warned, Sat-nav does not work to get you there, and mobile phone coverage is at a premium. If you have any questions please call Chris on 07769 954956 for more details.

Ogden Water Wildlife WATCH group
Ogden Water
Ogden Lane,
Keighley Road,
Halifax.

HX2 8YA
01422 249136 or
01422 393208



All photos taken by Janis Buckley & Chris Sutcliffe

Big garden birdwatch

It's easy to take part in the world's biggest bird survey next January. Just watch the birds in your garden or local park for an hour and help the RSPB to us learn more about the birds in the UK's gardens. Last January, over 450,000 people spent an hour watching their local birds, collectively recording over 8.1 million birds in more than 270,000 gardens.

The next Big Garden Birdwatch runs on **26-27 January 2007** and we want you to take part!

How to take part

The survey is very simple. All you need to do is watch your garden or local park for an hour on either Saturday 26 or Sunday 27 January, note down the birds you see and tell us the highest number of each species you see at any one time in the hour (this avoids counting the same birds twice.)

The RSPB analyse the results to find out about UK garden birds & postcode will allows them to look at the data by geographical area too.

Take part online

You can submit your results using our easy online form. This means that the RSPB get your records immediately and there is no cost to process your results. They go straight into our database without having to be input manually, so we have more money to spend on helping birds. Alternatively you can use the form available from us at the January social and bring it in so we can submit them together with the results from the WATCH group.

The results

In 2006, the house sparrow was the commonest bird in your gardens, beating the starling into second place. So, if you have an hour to spare over the weekend of 26-27 January, please join in and make Big Garden Birdwatch 2008 the biggest and best yet!

**Saturday 16th February
Bird box making**
Drop in between 10am and 12 noon
Come along to Ogden Water to build your very own des. res. for National Bird Box Week.
£4 per box made.

August mammal morning

We normally see squirrels, rabbits and occasionally deer when we are out and about, but what about the smaller furry creatures that normally make grown ups squeal and jump on a chair.

In August you may remember that we set some traps out in the woodland to find out what small mammals we have living around Ogden Water.

Of the 10 traps we put out we found 1 wood mouse, 2 field voles and 2 bank voles. One of our traps had been sprung by slugs and the rest were empty.



Chris will be repeating this experiment later in 2008, and will also be putting on a few mammal mornings so you can get closer to our furry wildlife. Check out the next Wildside leaflet due out mid March.

Ogden Water WATCH group meetings

Saturday 5th January

Winter birdlife

Bring your binoculars and meet 10am outside the Countryside Centre, to see if we have any winter visitors around in the woodland

Saturday 2nd February

The ground beneath your feet

Meet members of the West Yorkshire Geology Trust at 10am outside the Countryside Centre to find out about the rocks, fossils and any dinosaurs we have at Ogden Water.

Saturday 2nd March

The Badger

Meet 10am in the car park at **Jerusalem Farm**, Booth to learn about our striped woodland friend. Fordirections see back page.

Saturday 5th April

Spring woodlands

Warmer weather on the way? Hunt out the signs of spring through out our woodlands.

Important Note. Please ensure that you arrive at the meeting point in time to start at 10am sharp (unless stated).

Breathing Places

Last issue we told you about the grant that we had applied for from the BBC Breathing places. So what has happened since then .

We have started taking down the wall seperating the two ponds, this will make it easier to get the digger in to make the pond bigger. There are some great big stones within the wall and some supprises too. On a recent work party a large stone was unearthed with a fossilised imprint of a prehistoric plant!!!



Removing the wall (left) and plant fossil (right)

Staff from a local bank have been on site to assist with the building of raised beds so people in wheelchairs can find out what is living on the woodland floor. They also planted up a hedgerow alongside the grassy area below the classroom. We can keep an eye on these trees along with those planted two years ago below the Boggart Wood.

Chris is in looking into how we can view images from the nest box cameras on the website.

More work will begin in earnest after Christmas, so if any parents out there fancy getting stuck in especially after too much good food and drink over the festive period, please let Robin know.

We want something from you!!

Many of you came to the November meeting when we made colour pallets and did some tree dressing. You might remember that we put the pallets on the board in the classroom.

Well if you have anything you want to bring to WATCH group (picture, photos, sightings, poems or reports about the wildlife you see around you) then please bring it along and we will put it on our board.

'Whats that, deer....?'

.....is a phrase occasionally heard uttered between people walking in the woods at Ogden. Deer are regularly sighted during the winter months when the vegetation is sparse and they are sheltering in the woods from poor weather. Usually the walker will just glimpse a departing 'back-side' that is seen galloping off into the undergrowth.

So how do you know which type of deer you are looking at? Well, the deer seen at Ogden are roe deer, but if you are out and about else where, welcome to this brief rear end guide to deer i.d.

Muntjac - smaller than a labrador and timid. Tail raised like a white flag when running away,



This backside belongs to a **red deer**. Reddish brown heart shape on rump. Much bigger than your labrador. No spots.



Fallow Deer - black stripe down the tail on a white behind. Coat usually has spots.



The **Roe Deer** at Ogden have a round off-white target patch, with no visible tail. Slightly bigger than a labrador.



Sika - white heart on rump, spotted coat and much bigger than your labrador.



If you are lucky enough to see a deer at Ogden Water, the chances are it will be either roe or sika. and remember, only the males of these species have antlers