

## Autumn Equinox 2014 – Lower Tamar Lake to Wooda Bridge 21<sup>st</sup> September

The impending arrival of a grandchild prompted an earlier than planned walk this time in case the birth coincided with the true equinox on the 23<sup>rd</sup>

Lower Tamar Lake was very well frequented by birds with gulls and other water birds, but a Peregrine Falcon made an appearance being chivvied by Carrion Crows too. The growing Great-crested Grebe chicks with their zebra-like striped necks were insistently demanding food from parents with their high pitched whistling calls.

Along the first leg of the route from the lake by the Aqueduct walk to Virworthy Wharf, the path was fringed with dying-off undergrowth festooned with myriads of spider webs reflecting rainbow colours from the bright low sun in front of us.



Comma on Bramble

The trees were still in full leaf making bird observation challenging although plenty were heard; the harsh calls of crow and magpie contrasting with the higher pitched piping calls of tits and a large flock of goldfinch and the occasional “creak of a rusty gate” from a lone Bullfinch.



King Alfred's Cakes

It was strange to see trees in all stages of growth – Birch were displaying catkins whereas Elder, Hawthorn and sloe carried bright black or red berries. Hazel had ripe nuts and leaves were all shades from bright fresh green through yellows to those going gold and brown. A couple of Guelder Rose were a pretty sight with leaves turning bronze in contrast with the bright shining jewel-like berries.

Water mint, Ivy and Blackberry were all attracting butterflies – Small Tortoiseshell, Red Admiral, Comma but there was a profusion of third brood Speckled Wood were everywhere throughout the whole walk

The canal bed was all but dry from Virworthy Wharf to the end of the walk but there were Emperor and Common Darter dragonflies along most of it.



Small Tortoiseshell on Water Mint

Autumn is certainly on the way – King Alfred's Cakes and Blushing Bracket both freshly growing – but Summer has not quite let go.