

2016 Spring Equinox - Lower Tamar Lake to Dexbeer Bridge – 20th March

It didn't feel at all like spring. The weather was cold and grey with a sneaky east wind.

It seemed best to stay in the car and observe the bird feeders which had recently been refilled and were attracting a wide range of tits and finches. But, I made the effort and commenced my walk.

There were spring flowers in bloom the whole length of the walk; Lesser Celandine, Primrose, Marsh Marigold and in one section Snowdrops all in flower. No Bluebells were blooming, but there was an abundance of bright green linear leaves in the wooded areas just waiting.

The trees and shrubs were flowering or bearing catkins. I noted Willow, Birch and Blackthorn. The early blooming Willow flowers are usually a magnet for flying invertebrates but today they had attracted none.

There are two hotspots for small birds, Virworthy Wharf and Virworthy Farm. The Wharf site is a recommended place to linger in summer; lots of birds including the resident "clattering" of Jackdaws as well as the open water where Damselflies, Dragonflies and water birds feature. Today there were two pairs of Bullfinches as well as Blue, Marsh and Great Tits and a pair of Wrens displaying.

Fungi were still lingering; quite a number of washed out Blushing Brackets that had lost their blusher as well as the occasional Common Jelly and Scarlet Elf Cup fungi.

I disturbed a pair of Mallard who were setting up home on a small pool of water in the mainly dry bed of the canal.

The only invertebrates that ventured out on this cold spring day, were the Queen Buff-tailed Bumble Bees. Their loud buzzing betrayed their presence in the hedge bottom where they were searching for abandoned holes in which establish their nest.

Mother Nature appeared to be holding her breath for better weather.



Birch Catkins



Marsh Marigold



Primrose



Common Jelly Fungus



Blackthorn