

Gedling Country Park Wildlife Walk—7th December

It was a welcome change when a bright, almost cloudless sky greeted ten of us at Café 1899, with three



Migrant blackbird

newcomers ready to join the walk. We did not expect to see much more than migrant birds from the continent (redwings, siskins, redpolls) so the very first find was indeed this blackbird, slightly larger than our own species. As we made our way down the zig zag path, we spotted (what better word?) this Harlequin ladybird well hidden under a leaf, unwittingly displaying seasonal red.



Partly cleared reed pond

The reed pond had recently been partly cleared of the oppressive rushes, leaving a broader expanse of water for



1 Harlequin Ladybird



Cleared vegetation

the birds. It is many years since the grey heron has been able to land here. The cleared vegetation remains nearby, offering rent-free accommodation to insects and small mammals.



In the other direction, two redwings sat in a tree whilst we watched a cormorant fly over—fairly common at Netherfield Lagoons but rarely seen here—followed



shortly by a kestrel. Soon after, Mark's binoculars picked out a squadron of lesser blackback gulls flying south east as the walk went on.



Resupinate cylindrobasidium

Apart from another lurking migrant blackbird and a flight of seven redwings, most of the ensuing time was devoted to fungi, much of attached to rotting tree branches. This undistinguished mess on a tree trunk enjoys the fancy Latin name 'resupinate cylindrobasidium laeve'.



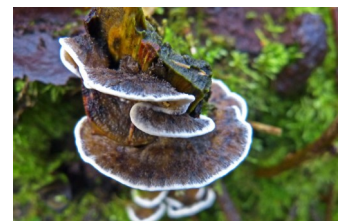
Deceiver fungus

Almost next to it, I took this photo of this slightly more artistic sinuously-shaped fungus curving along a narrow pole supporting the tepee in the wood. But we can't identify it. A little further away, a more conventionally-shaped fungus stood, - one we've seen before—a Deceiver. Perhaps the most attractive was this plate-like beauty, with a grey-white edge to its



Unidentifiable fungus

multi-shaded surfaces, identifying it as a Turkeytail—also seen recently.



Turkeytail

These fungi stimulate very little interest for most people, but thousands of different varieties return nutrients from dead vegetation back to the soil, to support and maintain new growth. Fungi have been doing this almost since life began on Earth, as recently discovered.

We plan to continue these wildlife walks during 2020, at 10.00 am every **first Saturday** in the month, meeting as usual outside the Visitor Centre Café 1899. During the winter months it would be wiser to bring a walking stick as paths can be muddy or icy. Binoculars and a camera are both worth bringing all year. Full details will appear from January on the Notts Guided Walks website <https://nottsguidedwalks.co.uk> and in the Notts Guided Walks booklet out in March/April from information centres and libraries.