



Autumn Walk – 1st November 2025

Thirteen members (including 5 committee members) assembled at 1.30pm for our annual autumn walk. The walk leaders were Richard Allan and Ian Hodgson and the focus was primarily on fungi but we also kept an eye out for birdlife. The weather forecast was indifferent at best and the walk was “bookended” with heavy showers. However the rain held off for the best part of the afternoon. The gloomy weather forecast may well have deterred some members from attending as numbers were a little down on previous years. Those that braved the weather saw a reasonable number of both fungi and birds.

Starting from the car park we proceeded eastwards through the study area and out on to Pintail Point. A look over the water at the beginning of the walk produced a Kingfisher as the stand out bird. There were the usual passerines on the feeders including a Marsh Tit. There were significant flocks of geese on the water all Canada and Greylag with one Bar-headed Goose which is likely to be an escapee from a collection.



Spot the Bar-headed Goose
Photo: Ian Hodgson

As we moved slowly through the woodland, members saw a good selection of brackets, crusts and slime moulds on the decaying wood. In spite of the recent wet weather the fungi on show were less plentiful than in late September / early October, for example there were

hardly any *russula* species evident. Notable sightings today however included Fly Agaric, the Deceiver, Lemon Disco, Jelly Ear, Stinkhorn (not yet emerged), Dog Stinkhorn, Coral and Candle Snuff.



Coral Fungus
Photo: Bob Johnson

Out on Pintail Point we stopped to look back over the reservoir towards the hide. Good numbers of Great Crested Grebe were noted on the water and most members were able to see a Common Snipe flushed from the water's edge. A member spotted a small orange mushroom in the grass which were later able to identify as Spangle Waxcap.



Spangle Waxcap
Photo: Ian Hodgson

After retracing our steps back to the car park, we then set off westwards along Legsheath Lane towards Whillett's meadows. In the meadows we soon saw Yellow Field Cap but that was pretty much it on the fungus front. There were thrushes about with Song Thrush, Mistle Thrush, Redwing and Blackbird all seen. Not surprisingly given the warm autumn there were

still a number of plants in flower including Yarrow, Betony and Meadowsweet (and Red Campion earlier in the walk).

We made our way to Meadow Pond, but unlike earlier in the week, there was no dragonfly or damselfly activity. Next stop was the viewing platform by the reed bed, primarily to watch Reed Buntings come in to roost*. A quick eye and a knowledge of their flight pattern is needed to spot these birds as they land in the reed bed. Most members got to see at least one coming in before the rain closed in and we decided to call it a day and hot-footed it back to the car park.

It may not have been a “showstopper” day in terms of species, but all attendees said how much they had enjoyed the walk and had found it of interest. We recorded 30 fungi species (see appendix A) and 33 bird species (see appendix B).



**Searching for fungi in the study area
Photos: Bob Johnson**

JE 12.11.25

*Note – the apparent decline in Reed Bunting numbers locally is concerning. Five years ago it was not uncommon to count 100+ Reed Buntings coming in to roost in the reed bed.

Numbers were in the 40s last year and so far this year numbers have been in the 20s. Informal data from the Ashdown Bird Group suggest that numbers are in decline across the Ashdown Forest too.

Appendix A – Fungi

Amethyst Deceiver	Common Bonnet	Lemon Disco
Bay Bolete	Common Puffball	Lycogala terrestris (orange slime mould)
Birch Milkcap	Common Stinkhorn	Mycena pseudocorticola
Birch Polypore	Crested Coral	Purple Jellydisc
Brown Rollrim	Curtain Crust	Spangle Waxcap
Burgundydrop Bonnet	Dog Stinkhorn	Sulphur Tuft
Butter Cap	Fairy Inkcap	The Deceiver
Candlesnuff	Fly Agaric	Turkeytail
Cladonia pyxidata (Lichenised fungi)	Honey Fungus	Variable Oysterling
Collared Parachute	Jelly Ear	Yellow Fieldcap

Appendix B – Birds

Bar-headed Goose	Goldfinch	Mandarin Duck
Blackbird	Great Crested Grebe	Marsh Tit
Blue Tit	Great Spotted Woodpecker	Mistle Thrush
Buzzard	Great Tit	Pheasant
Canada Goose	Great White Egret	Redwing
Carrion Crow	Grey Heron	Reed Bunting
Chiffchaff	Greylag Goose	Snipe
Coal Tit	Jay	Teal
Coot	Little Egret	Treecreeper
Cormorant	Magpie	Tufted Duck
Egyptian Goose	Mallard	Woodpigeon