



Look carefully at the picture below – What do you see?



This is a woodcock (see over for a clearer picture), a bird normally seen in woodland and certainly not in Birmingham city centre. This one was spotted on campus during early November by gardener Phil Randle.

Woodcocks are resident in the UK all year around, but during autumn, Scandinavian and Russian woodcocks migrate to the UK to spend winter here, which increases the population. We suspect this was a migrant on his/her way to somewhere more suitable.

Interestingly woodcocks may have been common on campus during medieval times when the area was wood and heath land – possibly this is why we have Woodcock Street.

It's pretty difficult to see them woodcocks at all when they are still, their camouflage is so good.

It's a nocturnal bird, spending the majority of the day resting under cover. They eat worms, beetles, spiders, caterpillars, fly larvae and small snails.

A few years ago we had another woodcock on campus, which had accidentally flown into the bridge between the Student Union and Main Building. Stunned, but not injured, he went on his way after a rest. Perhaps this means we are on an ancient migratory path for woodcocks?

Dispatches

Following ACWG winning an **Excellence Award** earlier this year and being awarded a small pot of money, members met to discuss what we should spend the money on. We decided on:

- An information sign to be put by the lake, detailing the biodiversity of the area.
- Further development of our existing brown roof to provide a suitable habitat for local black redstarts.

Our stand during **Fresher's Week** went well, people were very interested in our deluxe 5 start bee hotel! Welcome to our new members!

Many thanks to our group members and gardening team for helping to make **repairs to our Hibernacula** during September. The hibernacula (a safe hibernation area for amphibians) by the lake had become rather tatty looking and needed a bit of TLC.



Group members making repairs to the hibernacula under Gardening Supervisor David Bibb's instruction



A woodcock with worm against grass, much easier to see!

Thanks to group member Shelley Campbell, we know that at least one **kestrel**, a female, is using the nesting site on campus to spend the cooler evenings.

This shows the importance of our campus as not just a breeding site but of a year round roosting site for these declining birds. Don't forget to check [Kestrel Cam](#) every now and then, and keep your fingers crossed for some more lovely fluffy chicks in spring.



Female kestrels have much more distinct barring down their neck and back than males.