

January 2011

Newsletter

Aston Campus Wildlife Group

They're back! Kestrels are sticking with Aston

Despite all the building work that has been going on over campus in the last few months/years, our kestrels are remaining faithful to us.

Our breeding pair have been present at the nest site, roosting all winter, and now they are showing some signs of aerial courtship display and are regularly in the window nesting hole as spring approaches. From March onwards we should start to see more activity in the nest site during daylight hours.



Help us with Kestrel sightings!

Please keep checking KestrelCam and if you spot them, save a shot and send to Denise. We are trying to keep a record of as much activity as possible.

To save a picture, right click over the picture, choose 'Save Picture As', save it somewhere safe and then send via email). The more proof we have of kestrels roosting the better!

Spotted!

Reports from the local area:

- Urban fox seen at dusk in Erdington
- Redwings in multiple locations across Birmingham
- Long-tailed tits on campus!
- The ever present brown rats in the City Centre and Erdington (a yummy treat for our local kestrels and peregrines)

If you have spotted anything different or unusual, please let us know!





Wildlife Wednesday - 2 March 2011

The group have been asked to have a display again at the annual Sustainability Week Event. We need volunteers to help put the display together and to man the stand in half hour slots between 12 and 2:30pm on the day (half hour slots in pairs). This is a great opportunity to promote the group, and to involve other staff and students. Last year was really good fun – please let Denise know if you wish to help!



Big Garden Birdwatch 29 & 30 January 2011

This weekend it is the RSPB's annual Big Garden Birdwatch – You can do your birdwatch wherever you like - at home, in your local park, from a beer garden... Visit the RSPB website for more information.

Staff Volunteering Challenge 24th February 2011, Birmingham Wheels Park

Aston Staff will be working on a remote part of an adventure park, chopping and pruning trees, clearing out hedgerows and creating habitats for local wildlife.

Transport to and from the University, as well as lunch, will be provided.

Activities - Your Choice

We are planning our next group activity, these are our current options:

- RSPB representative to give talk at the University on Urban Wildlife in Birmingham (on a weekday).
- Bird ringing demonstration near Droitwich (at a weekend).
- Guided walk around Sandwell Valley Nature Reserve near Great Barr (On a Saturday).

We need a show of interest before we start organising – please can you let us know which you would be interested in (or chose all if you wish!).

Next Meeting

Please come and join us over a coffee in Dolce Vita on 16 February between 1:00pm and 2:30pm. This will not be a 'formal' meeting as we have had in the past, but more of a discussion about issues and a chance to see other members. We hope to see you there!

Book & Magazine Share

Many thanks to Ron Neale for his kind donation of wildlife books to the group. The books are available to borrow from Carolyn, along with wildlife magazines.

Not to be confused with the Grand Prix karting which takes place on site, Birmingham Wheels Park offers a personal and social development programme for young people and those with special needs, through the use of motor vehicles.

To participate on this challenge, please contact Sarah Hosten.

Contact: Denise d.jackson@aston.ac.uk or Carolyn c.taylor@aston.ac.uk