

## **Bodenham Lake Diary**

## **Spring and Summer 2019**

My last diary, Autumn and Winter 2018/2019, described the transformation of the steep-sided lake, which was previously a gravel pit, into a more natural area with shallow edges to encourage a greater diversity of wildlife.

The project officer, Sophie and volunteers made a lovely film <https://youtu.be/5HsfVigAREA> which describes the first stage of the project, using videos and photos, which really bring the enterprise to life!

The importance and success of the project was recognised nationally when Bodenham Lake Lugg Wetland Gem project won the 2019 Canal and River Trust Natural Environment Award.



Andrew and Sophie receiving the award.

## **The Camera Traps**

During spring and summer, six trail cameras were positioned around the lake and on the islands in order to record the wildlife. These cameras were programmed to record photos and videos day and night, so that birds and animals could be observed without interruption or disturbance. Cameras were visited weekly, if possible, so that the results could be recorded for the Wildlife Trust.

Although public access to the refuge area of the Lake is restricted, recordings have given a great deal of information about the variety and behaviour of the Lakes' wild inhabitants, especially after the re-profiling of the lake sides.



## Introducing the Camera Trap Team

Four volunteers operate the camera traps; namely Sam, Viv, Sue and Wendy, supervised by the Boss, Sophie!

### Sam

Will go to any heights, or depths, to get the perfect shot of the Lake or wildlife.

### Up in a plane



### On the river bank



Viv  
Expert  
goose  
wrangler,  
especially  
when  
rescuing  
young  
geese.

And  
positioning  
a trail  
camera.







**Sue**

Expert photographer, explorer and 2019 winner of the volunteer certificate for services to the project.

Ready to go through undergrowth and into the Lake for the sake of the Wildlife Trust (supervised by Sophie)



**Wendy.**

Frequently wet, but loves volunteering with a great team.





The results from the cameras were encouraging, as wildlife returned to the newly created shallows.

Otters were filmed at night in the wildlife refuge area of the Lake. Links to these videos show otters enjoying the grassy area next to the lake in April and May. They were also observed in front of the northern bird hide.

<https://youtu.be/mDKa4HNsPIk> <https://youtu.be/SEdapAI0GsE> <https://youtu.be/rKtqD9mIOM4>



An unwelcome visitor, a mink, was filmed outside the old hide. And a tawny owl made a kill in front of the camera in the re-profiled area of the Lake.



A camera trap tied securely to a tree.





Canada geese came in to land, whilst others took off. (Photo by Sue Griffin)







At the small pond in the refuge area a fox went hunting and a fallow deer came for a close up.





## **Babies at the Lake**

Babies made an appearance on the lake side and on the islands.

Greylag geese with young on the lakeside



And in a row on the lake.





Canada geese were hatching on the islands



(Photo by Rhiannon Taylor)



And fox cubs played by the lakeside. <https://youtu.be/fy1m0hy7IB0>



Work continued at the Lake following the reprofiling in the autumn of 2018.



**Volunteers were kept busy sowing seed**

Areas which had been affected by the heavy machinery during the reprofiling were flattened and reseeded. Young reeds were planted and then protected by netting. In May 2019, 1,600 reed plants (*phragmites*) were planted in the re-profile areas to create a reedbed, a nationally scarce habitat which supports a wealth of wildlife including many iconic wetland species such as bearded tits, bitterns and reed warblers.

**Monitoring water species and releasing eels**







**Supporting events,**  
such as the production of **Toad at Toad Hall**, performed in the open air in July by the lake; a traditional story with a present day ecological message.

**The audience of adults and children had a lovely day by the lakeside. It was a sell-out success.**

**(Photos by Sue Griffin)**







Meanwhile, animals and birds enjoyed the larger shallow areas and islands, although a heron had a bad feather day!



Swans were able to raise their cygnets in safety, without ambush by the fox, as happened last year.



And there were several families of greylag geese.



## Spring and summer at the Lake was lovely.

### BIRDS

There were birds, common and unusual.



Kestrel. (photo by Trevor Hulme).



Long-tailed tit (photo by Sue)



Jay and Whitethroat



Kingfisher filmed by a camera on the riverside. <https://youtu.be/fJDgZAPnbQE>





**Plants and Insects**





**And Animals and Reptiles**

**Grass snake**



**Fox cub**



**Muntjac and fawn**





Who wouldn't want to volunteer in this very special place!



In September 2019 the second phase of works to improve Bodenham Lake for wildlife will begin. These works will be focused on three of the lakes five islands, improving them for a wealth of different species, particularly ground nesting birds. Progress of these works and the resultant shallows will be covered in my next diary.



(Photo by Sam)



