

## BODENHAM LAKE DIARY

### Winter into Spring

Observation of wildlife at the Lake continued during winter, using camera traps placed in the Wildlife Refuge area.

Initially a variety of migrants used the beaches between the reed beds, attracted by a place to rest and perform courtship rituals. The refuge area also provided a safe haven for a number of pheasants.



On the **5<sup>th</sup> January** two otters were captured swimming out of the lake onto the beach.



## Murder at the Lake

Foxes have been captured on camera frequently in the Refuge area. On the **5<sup>th</sup> January** a fox was filmed attempting to catch a swan.

### The suspect



On the **19<sup>th</sup> January** the carcass of a cygnet was found at the lakeside, half eaten. Feathers on the beach showed the murder site.

### The body





Mandarin ducks were showing off on the lake in spite of the cold weather.  
<https://youtu.be/2J9GdmsMJns>



Greylag geese sometimes joined the flocks of Canada geese, and so did the widgeon.





On the **25<sup>th</sup> January** a work party of volunteers continued with the work of clearing and burning scrub, prior to the reprofiling of the Lake in the autumn.

Two of us went around the Lake in order to reset the camera traps. It was with great sadness that we found a dead barn owl in the Refuge area, especially as one had been seen recently in the Reserve. We took the body back to Sophie, who reported the crime to the police. X-rays and a subsequent examination showed that two shots had passed straight through the body of the owl.





**4<sup>th</sup> February** : A young fallow deer was filmed at night, one of several who frequent the Reserve. A little egret was filmed feeding by the edge of the Lake.



And a badger came out at night.



On the 8<sup>th</sup> February, Ed from the Environment Agency came to the Lake for an inspection with Sophie.  
He helped setting up a camera trap.



Thanks to Ed, the elusive water rail was filmed by this camera.  
The video is on YouTube <https://youtu.be/NtyJEfW5WP0>



The afternoon of **12<sup>th</sup> February** was warm, sunny and still. Even without any wildlife, the Lake was very beautiful.



A fox strolled though the Refuge where the water rail was filmed.



Sheep wandering in the Refuge were frequently caught on camera; this one couldn't resist a selfie.

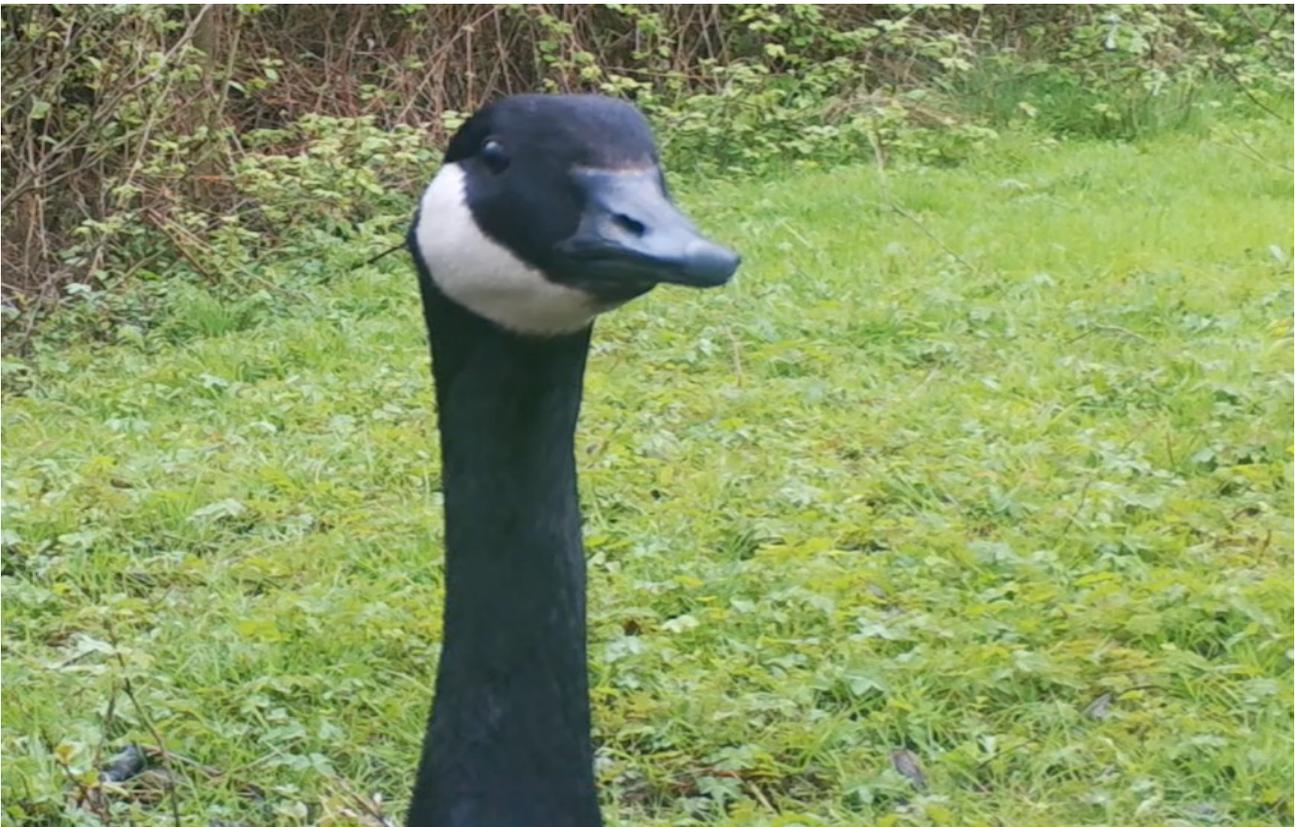




Teal, mallard, a green woodpecker and a jay were also captured by the cameras.



As were a pair of courting herons and an inquisitive Canada goose.



**GO TOAD**

In mid-February the toad patrols started, collecting toads on their migration routes to the Lake. In the past there have been many casualties as toads crossed the road at night.

I



This year a record number of toads were rescued on the road and transported safely to the lake in buckets.



On 4<sup>th</sup> March, at long last, after 9 months of filming at the Lake, the cameras captured a close up of an otter rolling in the grass.



<https://youtu.be/zr7FEv0gGnM>

The otter then enjoyed breakfast on the 7<sup>th</sup> April.



After a wet and cold spring, with beaches flooded, so very few migrants were filmed, the capture of the otter on film was very satisfying. An appropriate end to this diary.