

December News

As winter starts to get a grip, the feeding station at the Woodland Hide really becomes a great place to visit. The best time is after a hard frost (even better if there is snow) because this makes natural food even harder to find and hence there is greater reliance on the food provided.

Over the years, over 40 bird species have been seen at the Woodland Hide; usually there are about 30 species seen each year by regular visitors. It is quite common to see 15 species in half an hour; the current 'record' is 20, but you could beat that if you are lucky. Although some species are those you can see in your own garden, you will be unlucky if you do not see Nuthatch, Bullfinch and Great Spotted Woodpecker in a half hour visit.



Nuthatch



Bullfinch



Great Spotted Woodpecker

Because they get used to the food put out by Rangers and to the number of visitors, the birds are not usually disturbed people being in the Hide if you are quiet. This makes them comparatively easy to photograph, and a great place to practice taking wildlife photographs if you are lucky enough to receive a camera for Christmas. However, the birds are still vigilant against potential attack by the local Sparrowhawk and will scatter if they are alarmed. All of the food at the Woodland Hide is sponsored by RIMAG at a cost of around £500 each year; there is a donation box in the Visitor Centre if you have enjoyed your visit and would like to make a contribution towards it.

As you walk around the site you can occasionally hear and see flocks of small birds feeding. These are usually referred to as 'tit parties' because they often include the five species of tits that are resident at Risley Moss. It is always worthwhile looking over these groups because they can also include more unusual species such as Goldcrest (the smallest UK bird), Siskin and Lesser Redpoll.



Goldcrest



Siskin



Lesser Redpoll