

BIRD VIEWING AREA

You are standing in front of the reserve's largest bird viewing area. The current wooden screen was built by volunteers in 2012 replacing an older and less sturdy version. Its prime function is to enable birdwatchers and photographers to sit undetected, to view and film a variety of small birds visiting the feeders at different times of the year. The winter months often brings a variety of migrants such as redpoll and siskin.

The 2 triangular structures made from long branches enable birds to flit between the cover they provide and the feeders. You will notice that many don't spend long feeding as they are constantly scanning the area for potential threats and other food sources, ready to fly quickly if danger approaches.

A pulley system has been constructed in an effort to allow these smaller birds to feed with less competition from grey squirrels, who have previously found it too easy to dominate the feeders to the detriment of smaller birds. This system, coupled with the introduction of feeders of a different design, has been largely successful in preventing the squirrels from accessing the feeders. They can, however, easily feed on the dropped fragments of peanuts, suet balls, nuggets and seed which are the 3 types of food provided.

Volunteers come down and refill or top up these feeders twice a week to ensure a plentiful supply.

Down the steps and to the left is an information board about the work of Cromwell Bottom Wildlife Group and photographs of birds which are the most common visitors to the feeders, helping members of the public who are less confident with bird identification.

Above and to the left of the area is a bird viewing platform constructed several years ago by volunteers to enable less mobile visitors and those in wheelchairs to view the feeding area. A smaller version of the identification board is to the left of the platform.

You will see that the fencing above the area has been constructed of small saplings, woven in between posts. These are ones which have mainly blown down in strong winds and is part of our commitment to sustainability and recycling natural materials.

Some of the vegetation under the feeders is trimmed back at an appropriate time each year as part of our annual maintenance programme.