

on's comments about birds 2016

9th June

On the subject of owls, whereas we've been hearing 2 adults calling in the night, we're now hearing 2 more younger calls ... there's also a raptor that regularly quarters the line of trees along Heysham Lane, but I haven't quite identified whether it's a kestrel or sparrowhawk! Also the swifts have been back already this year fly-hunting over here & Oakhill woods.

23rd June 2016

I have wondered about that Branch Hill House triangle for a while: there's a thrush that sometimes sings from the top of a tree somewhere there, as well as blackbirds, but I have also seen a wren flying in from the Heath over the road this year, so it must have had a nest or foraged there because the cover is quite thick & protective from the jays & magpies & crows that regularly predate the Branch Hill area. Because that triangle is somewhat forgotten & is sheltered by the high wall along the roadside, I think the insect life there would be quite rich & is probably a good source of food for many of these birds. Interesting you mention that there's holly there, because here in Firecrest I regularly hear robins & other small birds singing from within holly, I guess because the bigger birds don't like the prickles! There's also woodpeckers somewhere closer to the Heysham/Firecrest border that come every year to nest; their mad, 'laughing' call is wonderful & they regularly drum for insects & this year I even watched one poking about on the front pine trees in Firecrest!

I'm not fully sure what this raptor is yet ... he/she's not large & is quite sleek hovering & in flight; I'm tending towards kestrel because when it came on a sunnier day, it looked more redder-brown than grey. Weirdly I've also seen a heron labouring above the Heysham/Firecrest trees a couple of times lately; there is one that regularly lurks among the reeds in Whitestone Pond & I can only think that ha'she's commuting from somewhere, but can't think where!