

# Wormwood Scrubs



*Wormwood Scrubs, West London*

Jan '21

*Released from prison not quite, yet exploring my local park during lockdown at times feels like it.*

Wormwood Scrubs or 'the Scrubs' as it's known locally is one of the largest areas of common land in London. Part of Old Oak Common, it lies across the road from Little Wormwood Scrubs which was created in the 1840's with the construction of an embankment for the West London railway line.



*Martin Bell Wood*

A large expanse of playing fields is surrounded by several relatively small wild areas of woodland, meadow grassland and scrub which can feel as if you are almost walking in the countryside.



*Blackcap*

Areas that have been designated a Local Nature Reserve provide ground cover and habitat for nesting birds such as Warblers and Meadow Pipits.



*Common Whitethroat*

As well as a resting place for migrating birds in spring and autumn like the Yellow Wagtail, Winchat, Turtle Dove and Ring Ouzel that are among the hundred or so different species that have been recorded here. Plus a nightly roosting site for around 3,000 ring-necked parakeets, many of which race past my kitchen window, morning and evening en-route to places like Kensington Gardens where they have become very tame.



*Red Fox*

Badger sightings are rare, I've not seen any. Being an early bird, neither have I seen the common and Soprano Pipistrelle bats which have been recorded. I saw this red fox early one winter's morning and in the summer months I regularly see common lizards and a variety of butterflies flitting among the wild flowers and tall grasses.



*Black Hairstreak*

On July 3<sup>rd</sup> I saw my very first Black Hairstreak basking in the sunshine directly beneath the prison wall which the recorder for our local branch of Butterfly Conservation suggests may have been released as this species has not been recorded in the county before.



*Green-veined White*

During the past couple of summers I have seen the following species of butterflies either on Scrubs or Little Scrubs. Green-veined Whites, Holly and Common Blues, Marbled Whites, Meadow and Hedge Browns, Small and Large Whites, Small Heaths, Small, Large and Essex Skippers, Speckled Woods, Small Coppers, Orange Tips, Brimstones, Peacocks, Small Tortoiseshells, Red Admirals and Commas.



*Holly Blue*