



Rewilding Roborough Fields Newsletter

Nick was down working on the fields the week beginning March 8th. The main work done was the planting of around 700 trees on the new banks created when four of us were there in January. We have posted a (very amateur) video on the Rewilding Roborough Fields Facebook page in which you can see what Nick did while he was there. The species planted are hawthorn, blackthorn, beech, goat willow, guelder rose, holly, spindle, gean, hazel, rowan, oak and crab apple. In the autumn we will add white and grey willow, yew and native privet.



Front field



Because the front field was cut a couple of times last year, more light is getting into the ground and there is masses of Lady's Smock coming up. This plant will also benefit from the fact that the ground is now wetter because the overflows from the ponds flow out onto the surface.

The fields are beginning to change for the better already. Rabbits are starting to make burrows in the banks; foxes, buzzards and roe deer are all using the fields regularly and there are masses of voles.



Roe deer photo courtesy of Paul Hopkinson



Back field showing ponds and swallow box



The cut ground still looks very bare and bleak but it will take a while for things to germinate and grow so that is to be expected. The idea is to create space and see what comes in.



Picture of toads spawning courtesy of Paul

The ponds are now all full and look wonderful. Frogs and toads have spawned in the original pond and in some of the digger tracks we purposely didn't tidy up.



Jo and Paul, the field "wardens" have been doing an amazing job of watching over the fields. They put two trail cameras up and these have produced shots of (four) roe deer using the fields as well as buzzard, redwing, kestrel, stonechat, blue and great tits amongst others. Our bird boxes

have attracted lots of attention already and we will get lots of baby birds in them this summer. In addition, Jo and Paul have already put up 20 dormouse boxes. These have come from Sue and David Smallshire and as well as providing nesting boxes, will also allow us to find out whether we have dormice in our hedgerows.



Jo putting up dormice boxes



Prickly work!

Apart from all the new hedges we will have created once all our planting grows up, the existing hedges will improve too. The tops and our field sides will no longer be cut so all the species already there - honeysuckle, dog rose, hazel, holly, oak etc. will grow up and out. The brambles will also extend out from the hedgerows into the fields so these strips of vegetation will expand and spread. Our first summer of the Roborough Fields since we started work on the ground is going to be really exciting!

Best regards,

Annie and Nick

