



Linnet



Willow Warbler



Sedge Warbler

Male Blackcap

BIRDS OF THE HERMITAGE AND BLACKFORD HILL

www.edinburgh.gov.uk/naturalheritageservice

- **Garden Warbler (S)**
Scarce breeder on Blackford Hill, a low warble song from cover
- **Goldcrest (R)**
The smallest British bird, difficult to see as often in conifers
- **Great Spotted Woodpecker (R)**
Usually one or two pairs, may be heard drumming in spring
- **Great Tit (R)**
Common breeding bird, noisiest of tits with repeated notes, it often feeds on the ground
- **Green Woodpecker (R)**
Now rarely seen, loud whistling call usually heard in older woodland
- **Grey Wagtail (R)**
One or two pairs breed along the burn, often seen on the drive to Hermitage House, yellow underparts
- **Jackdaw (R)**
Common breeding bird in the Hermitage, nesting in tree holes or holes in rock faces
- **Kingfisher (U)**
Rarely seen along the Braid Burn
- **Long Tailed Tit (R)**
Breeds in small numbers on Blackford Hill, with travelling flocks in winter
- **Magpie (R)**
Common with a loud staccato call
- **Mistle Thrush (R)**
Large thrush breeds in Hermitage Wood, loud song often in tree tops outside Hermitage House
- **Nuthatch (R)**
Seen occasionally, waiting for the first breeding record as this bird moves north
- **Redwing (W)**
Small thrush from Scandinavia, often in groups eating berries, has distinctive rust colour under wings and on flanks
- **Robin (R)**
Common distinctive bird, can be quite tame following gardeners or visiting regular feeding stations

- **Raven (U)**
An occasional visitor, this huge relative to the crow has a diamond shaped tail
- **Siskin (W)**
Scarce visitor attracted to conifer cones
- **Song Thrush (R)**
Common bird, has a loud song with often repeated phrases, will have a favourite 'anvil' where it breaks open snail shells
- **Sparrowhawk (SW)**
One pair usually breeds, may be seen soaring in spring or flying quickly through trees after prey
- **Spotted Flycatcher (SU)**
Now rare in the park, catches flies often from the same perch
- **Starling (R)**
Quite common, breeds in tree holes
- **Stock Dove (R)**
One or two pairs usually breed, with nests in tree holes
- **Tawny Owl (R)**
Rarely seen but often heard at night, may be located by alarm calls of other birds, breeds in the woods
- **Tree Creeper (R)**
Scarce breeding bird, mouse-like constant tree climber
- **Waxwing (WU)**
Sporadic visitor from Scandinavia, attracted to berries
- **Willow Warbler (S)**
Small numbers breed on the Hill, song is a sweet descending warble
- **Woodcock (WU)**
Rarely seen, more likely in hard weather
- **Wood Pigeon (R)**
Common breeding bird, builds a flimsy twig nest and display flight can be seen over trees in the Hermitage
- **Wren (R)**
Common small brown bird with a loud shrill song



Natural Heritage Service

Hermitage of Braid and Blackford Hill Local Nature Reserve

This leaflet lists the various bird species recorded at the Hermitage of Braid and Blackford Hill. Please let a Natural Heritage Officer know if you spot any rare species.

Funds and information for this leaflet provided by the Scottish Ornithologists' Club members and supported by the City of Edinburgh Council.

KEY TO BIRD LIST

R = resident
S = summer visitor
W = winter visitor
U = uncommon

Pond and Wetland
Blackford Hill and Glen
Woodland and Braid Burn

Black Headed Gull (SW)

Common at Blackford Pond, loses dark head in winter

Common Gull (W)

Regularly seen at Blackford Pond

Coot (R)

Three or four pairs usually breed on Blackford Pond, distinctive white bill

Goosander (WU)

Intermittent records of small numbers at Blackford Pond

Greylag Goose (R)

Pair with nest on Blackford Pond in 2009

Heron (SW)

Frequents the Braid Burn and quite regular at Blackford Pond

Herring Gull (SW)

Often a few at Blackford Pond and passing over

Lesser Black-backed Gull (S)

Regular at Blackford Pond, particularly in spring

Little Grebe (R)

Breeds on Blackford Pond, different winter and summer plumage

Mallard (R)

Breeds on Blackford Pond and sometimes the lower hill slopes, also seen feeding in the Braid Burn

Moorhen (R)

One or two pairs breed on Blackford Pond

Mute Swan (R)

Pair usually breeds on Blackford Pond

Pochard (WU)

Only recorded in very small numbers

Tufted Duck (SW)

Most common in winter/spring months, the male has a distinctive drooping crest



Coal Tit



Kestrel



Little Grebe



Nuthatch

Buzzard (R)

Regularly seen soaring over the Hermitage Wood or Blackford Hill, possibly a pair

Grasshopper Warbler (S)

This rare and secretive bird may be extending its range, listen out for its distinctive grasshopper like song

Goldfinch (R)

Breeds, sometimes small flocks on seeded thistleheads

Greenfinch (R)

Common and breeds on Blackford Hill in summer, distinctive hoarse call

House Martin (S)

Not regular, but occasionally seen flying over

Kestrel (R)

One pair breeds in the park, often seen hovering over hill area

Lesser Whitethroat (SU)

Very secretive, most records are from the south side of Blackford Hill

Linnet (R)

Several pairs on Blackford Hill, often nests in gorse

Meadow Pipit (U)

Occasionally seen on Blackford Hill, mostly in spring or autumn on passage

Pheasant (R)

Mostly seen or heard at fringes of reserve

Pied Wagtail (R)

Usually in open areas, often near water

Sedge Warbler (SU)

Has bred, usually sings from cover along the Braid Burn

Skylark (S)

Can be heard in adjacent fields where it breeds

Stonechat (U)

Has bred on Blackford Hill in the past, but now unusual

Swallow (S)

Often seen around Blackford Pond and over Blackford Hill

Swift (S)

From May to August regularly seen especially over Blackford Hill, dashing flight often quite high

Whitethroat (S)

Breeds in small numbers on Blackford Hill, scratchy song often from bush tops

Blackbird (R)

Common bird, with a fluty melodious song

Blackcap (S)

Breeds in small numbers on Blackford Hill, sings a quite rich and fluty song

Blue Tit (R)

Common breeding bird, readily uses nest boxes

Bullfinch (R)

Scarce all year, usually Blackford Hill area, call a plaintive whistle, males with bright pink plumage on underparts

Carrión Crow (R)

Common bird, several pairs breed in Hermitage Wood

Chaffinch (R)

Very common breeding bird, both males and females have distinctive white wingbars seen while perched or in flight

Chiffchaff (S)

Breeds in small numbers in the Hermitage and near Blackford Pond, it sings a distinctive "chiff chaff" song

Coal Tit (R)

Quite common, favours areas with conifers

Dipper (R)

One pair breeds along the Braid Burn, sometimes under bridges. Often feeds underwater

Duncock (R)

Quite common, often unobtrusive, usually feeding on the ground

Fieldfare (WU)

Large thrush from Scandinavia, feeds on berries, has a grey head and rump with a long dark tail

Pond and Wetland

Blackford Pond and the wetland area beside are important for water birds such as swan, little grebe, heron, pochard, mallard and tufted duck. The island provides a safe place for the swan and mallard to nest, away from disturbance by dogs and foxes. During spring and summer you may see geese feeding on the pond, while moorhen and coot nest along the edge of the pond where the reeds provide extra cover. In winter look for greylag geese and tufted duck with its droopy crest. *Look closely for the shy moorhen amongst reeds, recognisable by its red beak as compared to the larger, bolder coot with its white beak.*

Blackford Hill and Glen

Scrub, grasslands and cliff faces around Blackford Hill provide food and shelter all year round. Look for linnets, skylark and meadow pipit in the gorse bushes on the hill. In Blackford Glen you can see winter migrants such as waxwing, redwing and fieldfares feeding on hawthorn and sloe berries. Look up for buzzards soaring over the hill, or the smaller kestrel hovering and watching for mice. The Natural Heritage Service is hoping to improve grassland on Blackford Hill to encourage ground nesting birds like grey partridge and yellowhammer. *Listen for the yellowhammer's distinctive call which sounds a little like "little bit of bread and no cheese".*

When you visit The Heritage of Braid and Blackford Hill please remember to respect other users.

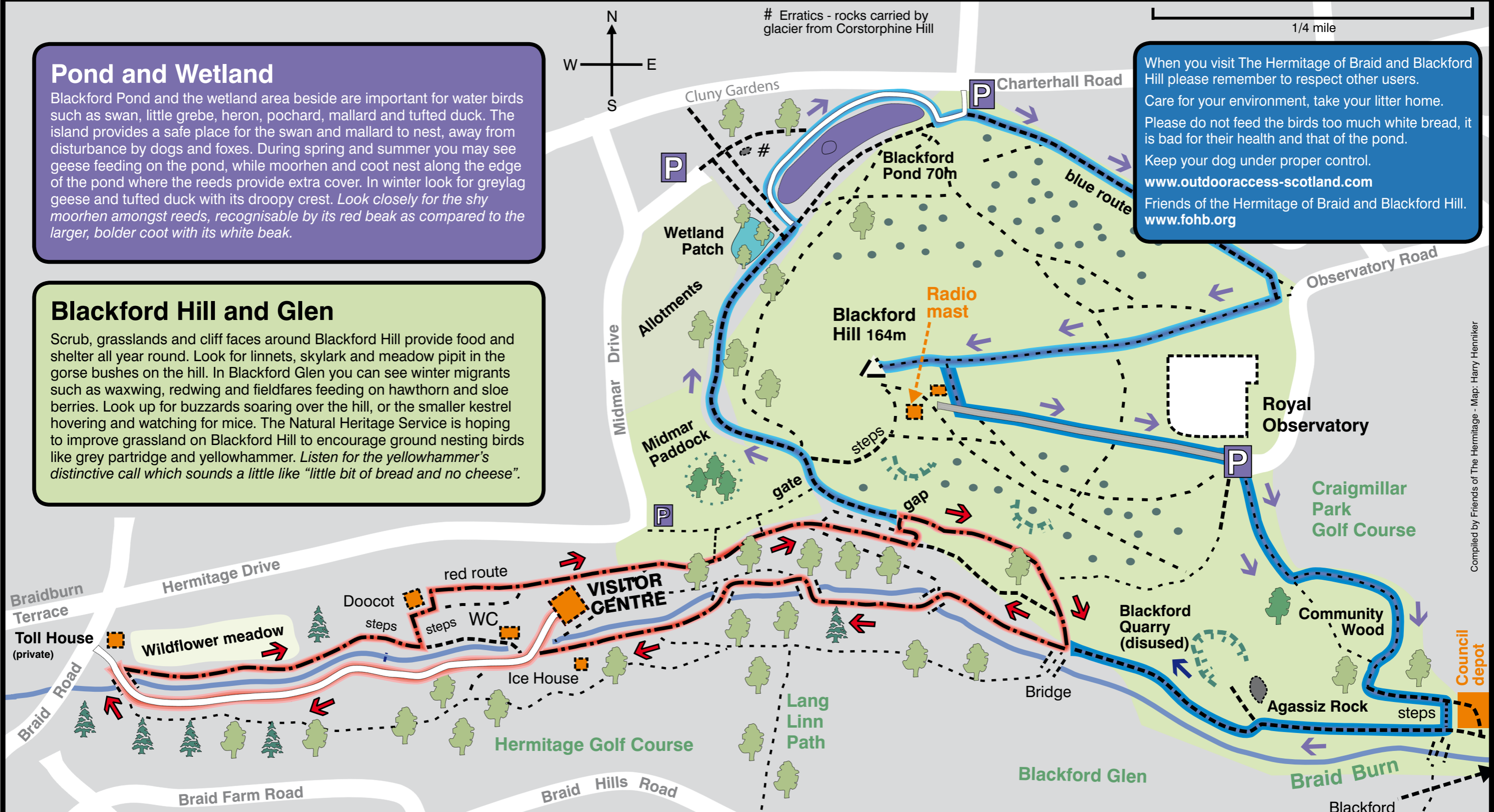
Care for your environment, take your litter home.

Please do not feed the birds too much white bread, it is bad for their health and that of the pond.



Keep your dog under proper control.

www.outdooraccess-scotland.com

Friends of the Heritage of Braid and Blackford Hill.
www.fohb.org



Wheelchair Accessible

To Visitor Centre (flat tarmac) 
By Pond (flat dust surface) 
(other paths may be rough, steep or muddy)

Blue Route 

Red Route 

Other Footpaths 

Open Hillside (gorse bushes) 

Interested in Birdwatching

Why not join the SOC - Scotland's Bird Club?

- 14 branches throughout Scotland
 - Programme of talks and guided walks
 - Quarterly magazine - Scottish Birds
 - Waterston House (SOC HQ), Resource Centre, Art Gallery, Reference Library
 - Annual membership from £12 (student/unwaged)
- www.the-soc.org.uk

SOC
Waterston House
East Lothian EH32 0PY
Tel: 01875 871330
Open Mon-Fri, 10am – 4pm
Sat/Sun 12noon – 6pm
Free Entry - Visitors welcome



Woodland and Braid Burn

You should spot the heron standing stock still by the river waiting to pounce on an unsuspecting fish. Search rocks in mid stream for the bobbing brown dipper searching for insects. In the woods listen for summer migrants like the chiffchaff and willow warbler or the drumming of the great spotted woodpecker. Search the undergrowth for blackbird, wren and robin. *Look out for a nuthatch, recently seen in south Edinburgh, which climbs up and down trees searching for insects. Please tell a Countryside Ranger if you see this bird.*