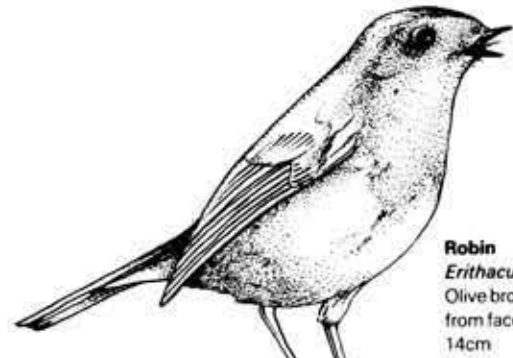


Birds



Robin
Erithacus rubecula
Olive brown above, orange red from face to breast
14cm

Heron
Ardea cinerea
Pale grey above, white below
90cm



Kestrel
Falco tinnunculus
Male: Bluegrey head and tail with black band above white tip.
Female: Chestnut brown above darker bars on tail and body
34cm



Skylark
Alauda arvensis
Streaked brown above whitish below with boldly streaked breast
18cm

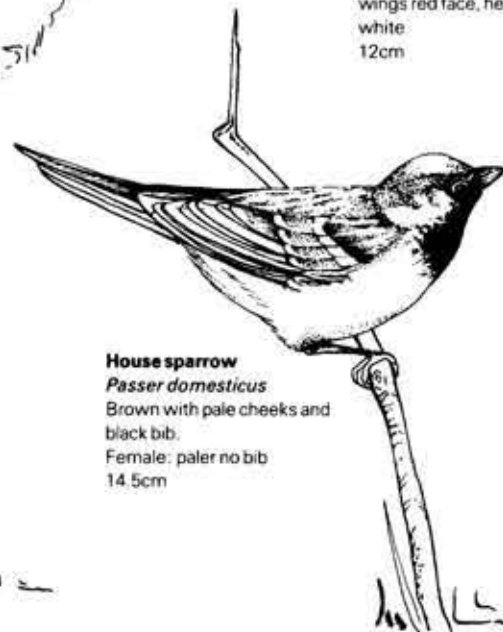


Blackbird
Turdus merula
Male: Black with yellow bill and eye ring
Female: darkish brown
25cm



Wren
Troglodytes troglodytes
Tiny brown bird with paler underparts. Note cocked tail
9.5cm

Goldfinch
Carduelis carduelis
Brown back, black and yellow wings red face, head black & white
12cm

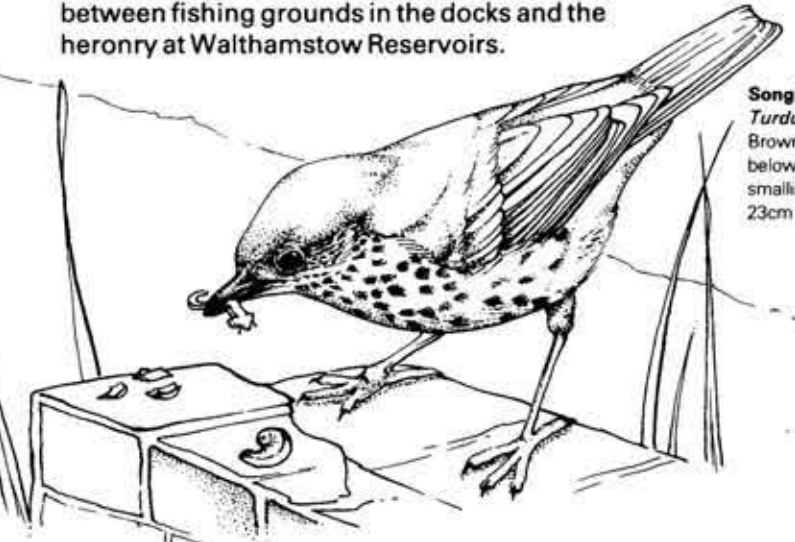


House sparrow
Passer domesticus
Brown with pale cheeks and black bib.
Female: paler no bib
14.5cm



Greenfinch
Carduelis chloris
Olive green with yellow rump wings (patches) and (sides of) tail
14.5cm

These birds are most often noticed in winter and spring. Many of the male birds sing then, but not in high summer. When grass is long and bushes leafy birds can hide easily. In winter, the resident birds are often joined by others that have left the bitter weather in countries like Sweden and Poland. Each bird is usually found in the place where it can best find food: the wren among the brambles; the robin in bushy places; the skylark on open grass; the goldfinch on thistles; sparrows in the farmyard; the kestrel hovering, searching the ground for mice and beetles. Herons flap across, travelling between fishing grounds in the docks and the heronry at Walthamstow Reservoirs.



Song Thrush
Turdus philomelos
Brown above, whitish below with a pattern of smallish spots
23cm

More Birds

Around 100 bird species could be seen on the Mudchute in a year but for a majority of them the Mudchute does not provide the right conditions for a long stay.

Many species winter in southern England, but breed only further north. The Fieldfare, a large, harsh-voiced thrush, is one winter migrant regularly seen on the Mudchute. The Meadow Pipit does breed in southern England. It is regularly found on the Muddie in winter, but not summer. The area is probably not large enough or wild enough for it to breed.

In severe winter weather there are great movements of birds and unusually large flocks form. Hungry birds may venture into places, such as towns and gardens, that their species usually avoid. Birds seldom seen on the Muddie, such as Redwings, Bulfinches and Chaffinches are most likely in very cold weather. Others like Lapwings which are unlikely to land, might fly over, travelling long distances in search of milder weather.

Other birds are summer migrants, breeding in Britain but spending the winter in southern Europe or Africa. Swallows may fly even to the southern tip of Africa.

For many summer migrants, the Mudchute does not provide the right conditions for them to breed, but it does attract such birds as Wheatears, Spotted Flycatchers and Chiff-chaffs to rest on their journey in spring or autumn. In May 1980 a male Cuckoo was calling for a while but, finding no females, moved on.

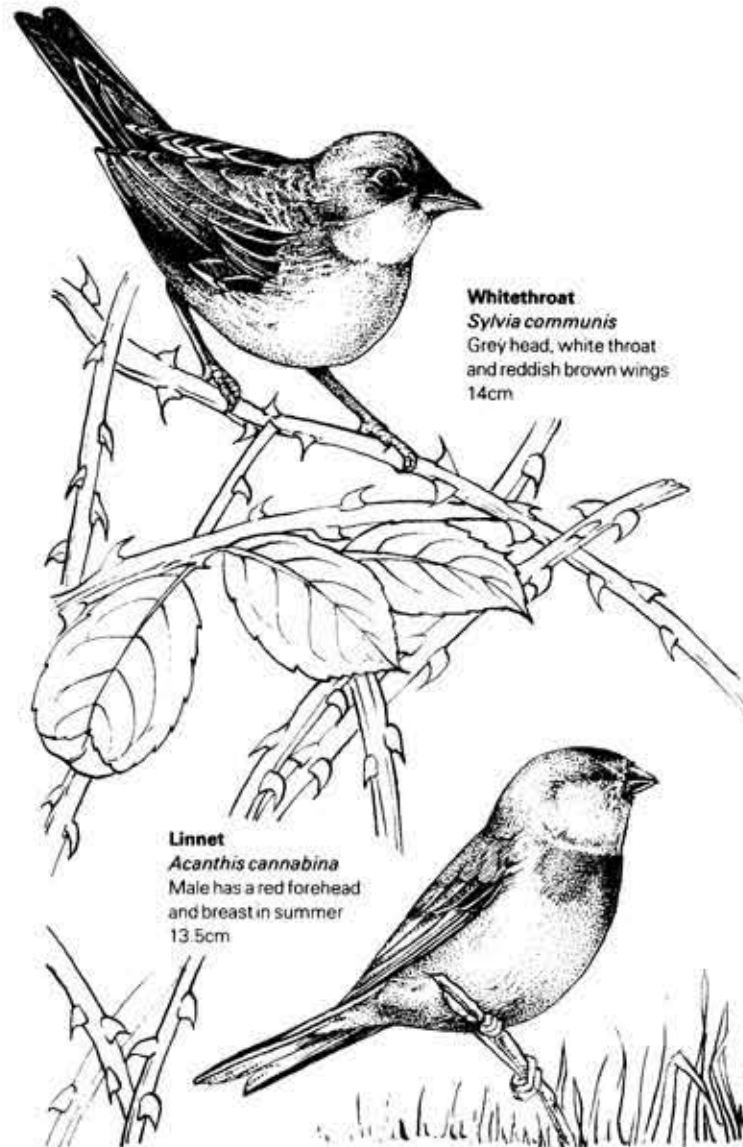
In sudden gales, migrating birds can be forced down anywhere, and anything can turn up — even Puffin in Central London.

House Martins regularly hunt flying insects over the Mudchute from late April to October and Swifts from May to August. Both breed nearby. The Swift nests in crevices in buildings. The House Martin sticks its mud nest under the eaves of dwelling places, where it is protected from rain. The Whitethroat, an insect-eating summer migrant, and the Linnet a seed-eating resident both breed regularly on the Mudchute, among the elders and brambles.

Mallard ducks often fly over. They nest nearby in the Docks, and Mother Mallards have several times been noticed leading their brood across East Ferry Road, on to the Mudchute. Mallard and Linnet are both birds where male and female are very different in appearance.



House Martin
Delichon urbica
Underparts and rump white with blue-black upper parts
12.5cm



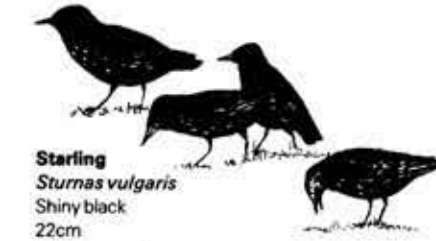
Whitethroat
Sylvia communis
Grey head, white throat and reddish brown wings
14cm

Linnet
Acanthis cannabina
Male has a red forehead and breast in summer
13.5cm

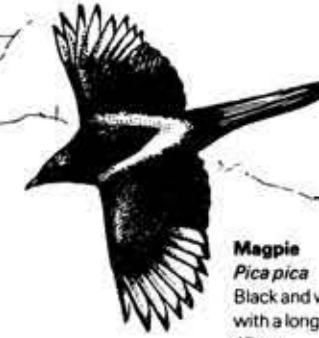
As trees and shrubs increase on the Muddie in future years, providing more food sources and hiding places for birds, more kinds especially woodland birds, will breed.



Swift
Apus apus
Dark sickle shaped wings and underparts
16.5cm



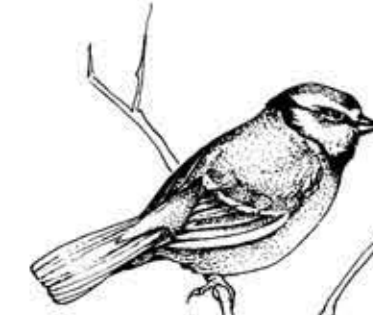
Starling
Sturna vulgaris
Shiny black
22cm



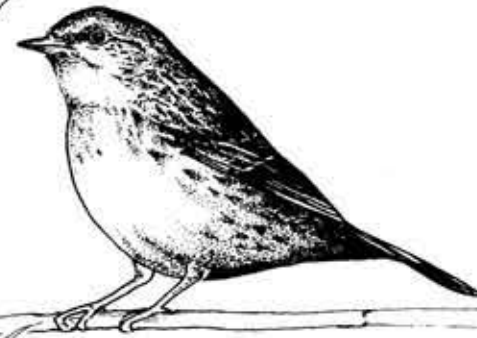
Magpie
Pica pica
Black and white plumage with a long tail
45cm



Mallard
Anas platyrhynchos
Female has violet blue wing patch
58cm



Blue Tit
Parus caeruleus
Blue and yellow with white face
12cm



Dunnock
Prunella modularis
Grey head and underparts with thin bill
14.5cm



Woodpigeon
Columba palumbus
Pink/grey with white patch on neck and wing
40cm