



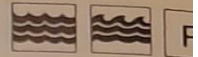
Whilst my mode of transport was being serviced I remembered a promise that I made to myself years ago and that was to get out and investigate some of our lesser known ponds or if you prefer small lochs. Like most of us I tend to drive past such places forever wondering what they attract but never taking the time out to walk around them.

Having dropped off my vehicle I headed northwards. My small rucksack packed with camera, tripod, binoculars, irn-bru and a serious chocolate bar! After a 40 minute walk I cautiously approached a decent sized loch and right away heard the unmistakable sound of greylags. Picking them out with my binos there were 3 paddling not far from the edge. Then I heard a rush of wingbeats as a pack of teal rocketed upwards. These small ducks are never slow to react to any clumsy approach, any wildfowler will tell you that, if you look at the picture above you will see it's perfect for this particular species.

Mallards, wigeon, tufted, goldeneye all sat out in the middle. Even a pair of pochard were seen slipping into a thick patch of reeds. Walking round to the north side, a solitary heron stood motionless beside some small splashes. Half a dozen curlews were also in that area. The numbers of coot were impressive compared to only 2 moorhens.

Great crested grebe, little grebe, cormorant and strangely enough yellow hammers that looked resplendent and perfectly camouflaged added to my day as I watched the little birds flying between the sweet smelling gorse bushes.

# Gadwall



One duck that was spotted I've left until last as it's not the easiest to identify. On the foreshore very seldom do you come across it. The info above will definitely increase your knowledge if you are not too familiar with it. In a nutshell it's slightly smaller than a mallard and a wee bit more refined with white patches on its wing that show up well in flight and on water. (mainly fresh water duck).

Many thanks for your bag returns, for those that haven't it's never too late to post them to me.

Last week I slow cooked my remaining Canada fillet and was more than pleased with the result. Top of the food charts has got to be venison loin, haunch and of course the old favourite burgers, massive thanks to my close friends who have assisted me in filling my small freezer. Oh, and not forgetting pigeons as well, I will certainly be dining well this summer.

JM