A walk around Holt Island one Monday afternoon in March.

We start our walk beside the old pond where the cut willow wands have been resting with the catkins just breaking into dots of yellow pollen, then mud continues along both sides of the boardwalk with the foot prints of muntjac deer, and many water birds clear.

The bird box to our side shows the random pattern left by a snail grazing on the algal growth. While on a log the skeleton of a fish shows the fate of many of the stranded fish, slowly picked out by Heron, kingfishers, with the fox and other scavengers polishing the bones clean. The Heron is clearly a regular visitor still, leaving footprints in the mud and flying above at times during this walk.

Under the large Ash tree we pause to look along the length of the newly mown meadow, looking so much bigger before the reeds and nettles regrow.

On we go, bird song all around us, past the willow a woodpecker has been stripping and the wild dog rose with vicious looking thorns visible before the shoots and flowers are present. The willow twigs all around are yellow with lichen.

At the corner, beside the flood flattened reed beds, we look out along the river at the bridge, a scene that is clearer now before the reeds grow tall again. Walking beside the river we can see more mown areas edging the reedbeds and the nettle growth is just beginning, good news for the summer butterflies! Inland, below the shrubs and trees there is a carpet of all manner of seedlings just emerging bringing welcome colour.

As we walk into the meadow, over the soggy little stream and through the willow tunnel we see the only blossom at present comes from a large old Cherry Plum tree that breaks into blossom before the leaves show. There are even a few bees braving the flowers on this cold day. Amongst the bird song around us are the loud bursts of song coming from the Cetti's Warbler hidden in the scrubby undergrowth. Only recently recorded on Holt Island, one pair has been in evidence throughout the winter and were recorded again during this Monday's Bird ringing session.

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