

Gosforth's Wild Web Adventures!

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Gosforth's Wild Web inspires us to notice nature in Newcastle. Lekshmi Vijay, NHSN Student Naturalist, embraces this, joining a guided walk through Havannah and Three Hills Nature Reserve. Read on to experience the journey through her eyes.



A Trip to Havannah and the Three Hills Reserve

I joined for a guided nature walk around Havannah Nature Reserve as part of the Gosforth's Wild Web (GWW) project. From the moment we stepped into the reserve, a collective sense of curiosity and admiration filled the air. The crisp calls of robins greeted us, while the sweet, teasing melody of a song thrush drifted from deep within the trees. Above us, a clear blue sky stretched endlessly, the gaps between bare branches allowing glimpses of its brilliance. Looking up, I traced the delicate tips and buds reaching outward, the twigs merging into the sky like an artist's careful brushstrokes. Curiosity pulled my colleague, Amelia, and I just a little off the trail, sneaking into the undergrowth in search of the elusive song thrush. It was a thrill to finally spot the wonderful bird—perched on a branch, its dappled brown feathers blending perfectly with the dry leaves. It was almost invisible, revealed only when tiny beak split wide open to pour forth the beautiful song. A fleeting moment, yet one that sent a wave of joy through me. It's a special kind of wonder to finally see something you've only ever heard before.



As we strolled along, we took in the rich details of the woodland around us. Vibrant scarlet elf cups peeked from the forest floor, their bright red hue standing out against the damp earth. Hazel catkins, in their delicate mix of pink and yellow, swayed with the slightest breeze, releasing their pollen like fairy dust into the golden sunlight. At a nearby pond, mallards and pochards paddled lazily, creating gentle ripples that shimmered under the sky. Meanwhile, our mischievous song thrush had followed us, once again teasing us from a distance—close enough to make out her shape and size, yet just far enough to remain elusive.

The path led us through a stretch of purple heather grassland, where the golden-flowered gorse bushes formed a natural gateway, curving protectively around the trail. Stepping through felt like entering another world—a hidden realm where time slowed, and nature unfolded its quiet magic. At one point, I raised my binoculars toward a distant tree, hoping to spot a little egret, only to be fooled by a white plastic bag caught in the branches. A brief moment of disappointment was quickly replaced by delight when someone in our group spotted a seven-spot ladybird resting on a pine branch. In a day full of encounters, that tiny, speckled insect became an unexpected highlight—proof that wonder lies in the smallest of details.

The final pond of our walk was the largest, a serene neighbor to the heatherland, hosting graceful wigeons and mallards gliding across its mirrored surface. As we made our way back to where we began, I felt the familiar sense of gratitude that comes with every visit to a nature reserve. Each time, my admiration deepens. Each time, I leave with more than I arrived.

One of the greatest lessons from this walk wasn't about birds or plants, but about people. I had always assumed that nature admirers all enjoyed walks in the same way—chattering about what we see, sharing knowledge, laughing at the quirks of wildlife, and soaking in the beauty together. But in truth, we come in different forms. Some embrace the group dynamic, exchanging observations and excitement. Others wander apart, drawn by the thrill of discovery, the lone adventurers seeking something new. Then there are those who keep to themselves, yet stay close to the group—a quiet connection that allows for solitude while carrying the warmth of companionship. It struck me how nature unites us in different ways, creating a shared experience even when our paths diverge. Every visit to Havannah Nature Reserve is a reminder of this unspoken bond, between people, between wildlife, and between the ever-changing yet timeless landscapes around us.





Lekshmi Vijay
Student Naturalist

Lekshmi Vijay volunteers with NHSN on a placement year from her university, where she studies environmental sciences. She has a keen interest in conservation practices and enjoys taking her camera with her on all her trips outdoors!



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