



Hampshire & Isle of Wight
Wildlife Trust
Protecting wildlife. Inspiring people.



NEWSLETTER NUMBER 44

October 2012

Welcome to our Autumn Newsletter. Below are details of all our meetings and talks over the next six months followed by Nature Notes, local wildlife observations and news from Horndean Biodiversity Group. Copies of the newsletter will be available at meetings if you are unable to print from this file.

Our meetings are friendly and informal. A welcome is extended to members and non-members alike so, whatever the weather, we would be glad to see more of you attending, and do bring a friend ! With all the government changes to the planning regulations, especially the recent 'streamlining' of planning applications, and with newly arrived pests and diseases and the extraordinary changes to the weather patterns our local wildlife needs our active support. The Horndean Biodiversity Group will soon be producing an Action Plan. This will include many projects and ways in which we can all do our bit to help wildlife. A similar Action Plan is also being produced in Petersfield and one has already been produced for the Havant area.

Indoor Meetings from October 2012 to April 2013

Wednesday 17th October - *The Red Kite and other Birds of Prey in Hampshire*

An illustrated talk given by Keith Betton. He is the Hampshire Ornithological Society's county Recorder for these wonderful raptors that fly above the Hampshire Downs. He will be giving some guidance on their identification.

Please NOTE - Change of date. NOT 10th October as in HWT Diary or NL 43

Wednesday 21st November - *The Bats of Hampshire*

Nik Knight from the Hampshire Bat Group will give an illustrated talk with some sound recordings of these interesting creatures and will be mentioning some species that have been seen by members locally - a must for those helping us with local recording on our nature reserves.

There is no local meeting in December

Wednesday 16th January 2013 - *Tigers and Other Wildlife of India*

Alan Key will present an illustrated talk about his recent trip with his wife to Bandhavgarh National Park in India where they captured images of some of the wonderful creatures that inhabit this beautiful sub-continent, including the elusive Royal Bengal Tiger.

Wednesday 20th February - *The Reptiles and Amphibia of Britain*

An illustrated talk by a member of the Hampshire Amphibian and Reptile Group

Photographs by members of local 'Herps' and their habitats will be on display during the tea break.

All are welcome to contribute to this.

Wednesday 20th March - *Life in the Leaf Litter*

Dr June Chatfield will give an illustrated talk on the importance to ecology and wildlife of dead wood and composting and the surprising variety of wildlife beneath our feet -

Wednesday 17th April - *Growing Wildflowers and 'Weeds' for Wildlife*

Speaker to be announced. A talk on wildlife friendly native plants that we can grow in gardens and urban open spaces. The meeting will commence with a brief AGM.

Indoor meetings are all held at **St Wilfrid's Hall, Padnell Rd, Cowplain** - 7.30 to 9.30
Park at the back of the hall (MR SU 694112) Entry £2.50 including refreshments.

Tuesday 19th March - *An Early Spring Walk in the Catherington Area* 2pm.

Come and look for early spring flowers and birds in Catherington Lith and Down. Park carefully and meet in Highcroft Lane, Horndean (Map Ref: SU 702 136) For more info. contact John Goodspeed on 9222 1361 or 078 1143 5252. Dogs on leads welcome.

We are already thinking about our guided walks programme for next year and welcome ideas from members, dont let this year's weather put you off. Would anyone be interested in a visit to Porton Down or Creech Ranges ? Both in Dorset and bursting with wildlife but they both need booking well in advance if there are sufficient numbers interested.

Please bring your suggestions to the next meeting.



A frequent sight this summer - Grey skies in Blendworth near Wick Hanger

Nature Notes for Autumn 2012

A drought in the Spring, then summer floods and gales, some newly arrived pests and diseases, then add government cut backs, this all means that trees and wildlife have never faced so many threatening issues all at once. All told, it has been a very unusual year.

Autumn colours- The unusual weather pattern this year has brought about several changes in the countryside. Notably the rapid growth in trees, grassland (incl. lawns !) and hedgerows. Many blossom trees have produced less fruit than last year and some apple trees have come into flower again, seen in this picture taken on 14th September 2012 in a Horndean garden.



Is there going to be much autumn colour this year ?

Some Wildflowers have flourished

It has been a very good year for **Ragwort** as seen in some of our gardens and in this field south of Catherington Down > on 11th August 2012. One insect that depends on Ragwort is the **Cinnabar moth**. This Cinnabar caterpillar was recorded at Dell Piece West on 9 Aug.12. - later these plants were all removed, let's hope it survived since few of the > caterpillars or mature moths have been seen this year. There are at least 30 species of insect that are entirely reliant on



Ragwort and it is an important nectar source for bees, flies and many other invertebrates. The Control Bill for the removal of Ragwort has now been modified - "it does not propose eradication of ragwort but promotes a strategic approach to control the spread of ragwort where it poses a threat to the health and welfare of grazing animals..." Most poisoning appears to be the results of the use of fodder or hay contaminated with dead or dry ragwort. A balance is needed and a certain amount can be tolerated where it is doing no harm. A good website on Ragwort is www.buglife.org.uk



< Another plant that has done very well this year is **Hemp Nettle** (*Galeopsis tetrahit*) seen here on 16th Aug. '12 in woods on the lower side of Catherington Down where large clumps were in flower, some had white flowers. Seed has been collected, if anyone would like sow some contact JV - but be warned, it is a large plant and spreads. It is good to see that the single patch of **Dropwort** on Catherington Down has survived this summer but the **Round-headed Rampion** has not done so well (only about 5 blooms seen) this one was snapped on 29 July '12. >



A plant that has done well across the region is the tiny **Eyebright** >> **Marjoram** and **Knapweed** have both done well attracting late insects.

Invertebrates

Not a very good year for butterflies and moths. Dragonfly numbers picked up by the end of August with many **Southern Hawkers** and **Red Darters** flying in September.

It has been an excellent autumn for **Hoverflies** many finding a good source of nectar on Ragwort as did many **Red Admiral** butterflies. Hoverflies are quite remarkable in their ability to mimic bees and wasps.

This fine insect seen in many gardens is a **Hornet Hoverfly** (*Volucella*) > It could be mistaken for a hornet. This one was seen on Dell Piece 23 Aug '12. Other species mimic bumble bees and honey bees.



Many flies have enjoyed having cattle to supply some juicy cow pats as these 2 fine < **Noon-flies** (*Mesembrina florea*) show. One rare sighting this summer was of a > **Yellow-legged Clearwing** moth at Hazleton Common on 17 July '12 and at Dell Piece >> a **Wasp Spider** was seen after years absent



Here are 3 invertebrates all trying to mimic wasps which are now becoming rarer !

Grazing in Horndean

Anyone wandering around our local nature reserves recently will have encountered a number of grazing animals. John Telford, the senior Ranger for the Parish Council has kindly written these notes for this newsletter to tell you what is going on.

3 of Horndean Parish Council's sites are now managed with grazing livestock. Grazing is important for preventing the encroachment of scrub onto grassland, and maintaining a varied sward structure. Dell Piece West nature reserve, opposite Morrisons in Horndean, has been grazed by 5 Hereford Cattle this year. So far, they have been successful in opening up the grassland on the site and we have received largely positive feedback from local people. (centre below)

Hazleton Common Local Nature Reserve has been grazed by Criollo Horses for the past 2 years. They have made good use of the large amount of open space available here and have a positive effect on the grass and scrub. (left below - Pictures taken September 2012)

Catherington Down Site (SSSI) would ideally be grazed by sheep, which is a traditional method of chalk downland management. This is currently untenable, due to the large number of visitors and dogs using the Down. Despite this, 14 Hereford Cattle are now grazing the site and are having a good impact on scrub and coarse grass species. (right below)

Generally speaking, grazing for nature conservation should take place between August/September and March (i.e. Autumn/Winter). This is primarily to minimise the impact of trampling on wild-flowers. The livestock are checked daily by the grazier. If you have any comments or questions, please contact Horndean PC at contact@horndeanpc-hants.gov.uk



News from the Horndean Biodiversity Group

All our efforts at the moment are directed at completing the Horndean Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) - to produce a complete draft by December and the finished product by our April meeting. The emphasis has shifted a little from being just an inventory of important habitats and lists of species to proposals for projects and actions that can be realistically carried out by local communities and volunteers. These include tree planting, wildlife and specialised surveys, more active work for some in helping manage our nature reserves and for everyone to make a contribution to wildlife gardening, since our gardens (everything from window boxes to flower meadows) all form part of a very rich nature reserve across the rapidly expanding urban area. We urgently need to maintain wildlife corridors and safe havens for wildlife against the human threat - if we don't take local action now, who will? The biggest challenge is to encourage local people to take an active interest towards saving our local wildlife and the natural environment from the present political and economical climate. Here is a brief outline of projects being organised at the moment.

Current HBG Projects

Projects at the moment fall broadly into two categories. Firstly surveying and monitoring species and habitats so that we know as much as possible about the local wildlife so that we can have an input in to the management plans. This is largely carried out between March and October although some groups such as lichens and mosses are best carried out during the winter.

Secondly, the more physical projects such as conservation work, coppicing and tree planting -

Tree Planting The Group in conjunction with Horndean Parish Council are currently planning to plant about 20 standard trees, mainly oaks and field maples, in Jubilee Field, off Catherington Lane during November and December. This is the first of 3 phases and is to be followed by hedgelaying and gap planting of the bordering hedgerows along Crouch and Frogmore Lanes in 2013.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED We would welcome more help. The first step is to dig pits for the trees so that the bare rooted trees can be planted as soon after delivery as possible. Many hands will make light work, tools provided but if you can bring a spade, this would help. If you would like to help or want to know more - please ring 92597766 or 92592647 and ask for John

This shows a bare corner at the southern entrance to Jubilee Field in February 2012 where a row of oaks and field maples are to be planted. This will undoubtedly benefit wildlife and users of the greenspace within.



The next newsletter will be published in March 2013 - your contributions and feedback are welcome.

South Down Group Committee

Tel: 023....

Chairman	<i>Peter Leversha</i>	92592711
Treasurer	<i>Pennie Medland</i>	92253293
Membership Sec.	<i>Sylvia Leversha</i>	92592711
Newsletter	<i>John Vigay</i>	92592647
Members	<i>Mike Ashton,</i>	<i>Anne Dale,</i>
	<i>Deryn Hawkins, Roger Labrum,</i>	<i>Lindsey and Julian Stevens</i>

Horndean Biodiversity Group

Secretary	<i>Deryn Hawkins</i>	92598000
Treasurer	<i>Peter Leversha</i>	92592711
BAP Co-ordinator	<i>John Telford</i>	92597766
Chairman/Newsletter	<i>John Vigay</i>	92592647



Members gallery

_This fully grown fox cub was found 'playing' with 3 others in John Vigay's garden. Photo JV 16 Aug.

This albino squirrel has been seen by several residents in Frogmore Lane. Photo Deryn Taken in 2012

