



Wildlife News and Nature Notes

This year we have all noticed the extreme changes in weather from 'hot and dry' to 'wet and windy'. This has been quite a challenge to wildlife, some species have increased in numbers and others have been on the decrease or have hardly been seen at all.

These nature notes briefly reflect on observations in our area by local members and observers, followed by some notes on developments in the news (not Brexit !)

The Growth of Trees, Hedgerows and ground flora. Many local trees have made exceptional growth this year, some putting on at least 6 feet in height in less than six months especially holly and ivy. At the end of September, volunteers helped clear trees from impassable tracks in Clanfield woods, made worse by the heavy growth of ivy. The ivy will, on the other hand soon be in flower and provide a rich source of food for wasps, bees and hover flies which in general have done very well this year. *Bees, Wasps and Hover flies* after a slow start have had a very good year, but beekeepers are concerned about the increased sightings of the Asian Hornet (*Vespa velutina*) in the south of England as they are strong predators of honey bees, they decapitate bees and take their bodies back to their nest, a large nest has recently been destroyed in Christchurch, Dorset. The public are asked to report any sightings, More info on ID on google. From very large to very small is the Knoppa wasp, mainly known from the Knoppa Gall which develops on acorns. It is particularly common this year, the galls are now brown and falling from oak trees - our lawn is covered with bucket loads of these galls which have affected at least 90% of the acorns.

Butterflies and Moths Butterfly Transects have been walked weekly from 1st April to the end of September on four of our conservation areas : Catherington Down, Hazleton Common, The Holt and Windmill Hill (Horndean Down). Recording sheets have now been sent in to Butterfly Conservation and a summary of the year's records will appear at the end of the year. The top star this year has to be the Large White butterfly which has been flying around our gardens even on very cloudy and damp days often rising to the tree canopy. This has also been a good year for Painted Ladies many seen in August. My own lucky sighting was of this magnificent White Admiral, the last butterfly to be seen on a transect walk to the Holt (Pyle Farm) on 19th September. A perfect specimen sunning itself between showers but very shy and difficult to get close. *Moths* - Amongst the day flyers the most common was the Silver Y moth seen on all of our transect areas. *Spiders* Plenty of garden spiders around this autumn in fact on a walk around the garden it has been necessary to wave a long stick in front of you. There have also been several magnificent Wasp spiders especially seen on Winmill Hill with a web similar to a garden spider but with a 'ladder'. Also there have been many large House spiders running across the carpets in October, one has to stand-by with a jar to trap them then walk down the road to release them.



Portsmouth Water is now going ahead with **Havant Thicket Water Storage Reservoir**. **Dont miss our meeting on 20th November 2019 and find out all about the plans to help the local wildlife.** More information on their website - www.havantthicketreservoir.co.uk

Another meeting worth attending ---

Wednesday 23rd October "The Knepp Rewilding Project"

7.30pm - 9.30pm

An illustrated talk by the Knepp Estate ecologist Penny Green on this Estate in West Sussex. This is at Warblington School, Southleigh Rd., Havant PO9 2RR (£3 entry) Contact Andrew 02392258457