



Wildlife News from Rushcliffe July 2023

July, a month of relative inactivity amongst our birds as they are busy raising young or moulting, still has plenty to see in terms of flowers and trees, and – hopefully, given weather conditions last summer and in recent months – insects, with some of our showiest butterflies on the wing.

Read our guide 'What to look out for in July' by following this [link](#).

GET CLOSER TO NATURE THROUGH ORGANISED EVENTS

Wed 5th July – Lily Ponds, Radcliffe on Trent

Join Philip Taylor to have a wander round the ponds. Meet 7 pm at Rockley Gate (top of Park Rd) philtaylor_422@hotmail.com

Sat 29th Jul – Moth Morning at Wilwell Cutting Nature Reserve

Take the chance to view in detail the contents of last night's moth trap with Paul Dulwich. Meeting 7 am at the Wilwell car park on the left, just before the ring road bridge on the B680 between Ruddington and Wilford (look out for reserve sign). Post Code for approx location NG2 7UT, Just Three Words = home, news, fuzzy.

Please note that NUMBERS ARE LIMITED to allow people to get a good view of the night's haul, so kindly contact Gordon Dyne (gordon.dyne@gmail.com) to reserve a slot.

Sat 10th June – Rushcliffe Wildlife WATCH GROUP

11:00 am - 1:00 pm. Meet at Wilwell Farm Cutting (location details above).

For young people between 8 and 12 years old who are interested in wildlife-related activities.

Meets monthly, on every second Saturday. Charge £3 per session.

WINTER WILDLIFE TALKS PROGRAMME

Our next Winter Wildlife Talks Programme starts in October and promises to be as diverse, informative and enjoyable as ever:

- See the incredible wildlife and landscapes of the Falkland Islands and Australia's Blue Mountains.
- Enjoy the best of British wildlife from Ardnamurchan to the Forest of Dean.
- Visit England's chalk streams and delve into the fascinating world of the wide range of honey, bumble and solitary bees found in the UK.
- Hear about rewilding in practice, as regeneration of the natural environment brings plants and animals back to the land.



Each talk will be available online through Zoom (some may be available as recordings). Each talk costs £4 per device; subscribe to all six for £20 (both include booking fee). For dates, full details, including technical requirements and how to book, please follow this [link](#).

MOTHS – THE UNDERESTIMATED POLLINATORS

A new study published in *Ecology Letters* (available [here](#)) suggests that moths should be as highly valued as bees because they play a larger role in pollinating plants than was originally thought.

The research involved collecting pollinating insects on sunny summer days and during calm, warm nights at eight allotments in the Leeds area. The researchers recorded which species were caught and sequenced the DNA of the pollen that was stuck to them to find out which types of plants they had visited during their foraging.

The scientists caught 67 species of moth, compared with 20 species of bee. According to the researchers, over half of the moths analysed carried pollen, significantly more than some prior studies had indicated. They were visiting several species of plants not previously known to be pollinated by them, including redcurrants and strawberries; eight percent of the plant species analysed in the study were pollinated only by moths.

Moths accounted for up to one-third of the plant-pollinator stops, and in late summer visited as many plants as bees, indicating that moths provide an essential but previously unknown role in urban pollen-transport networks.

One observation from the research is particularly troubling: “Given that macro-moth abundance has declined by ca. 33% in the last 50 years in the United Kingdom (Butterfly Conservation 2021) our results suggest that these declines may represent a significant and previously unacknowledged threat to pollination services for both wild and crop plants.”

However, the results suggested that gardeners can help support moth populations by growing plants such as buddleia. “Pollen from the plant was the most common found on the moths’ bodies, probably in part because the bushes give them a place to hide during the day” said the researchers.

PAINTED LADY MIGRATION

Over the past few years we have learned more about the migration of Painted Lady butterflies that arrive on our shores, sometimes in large numbers, and how their progeny migrate back south at the end of summer. Until now, though, it has been a mystery where they spend the winter after crossing south over the Sahara and arriving in countries like Chad in the autumn.

It has long been suspected there must be important areas for the species further south, and now Bird Guides reports that newly-published research has revealed their wintering grounds: “Sightings revealed that Painted Ladies take up residence in semi-arid savannahs on their arrival between September and November, when these areas become drier and the butterflies move south to more humid savannahs and highlands between December and February. During these



months, the warmer weather seems to allow the butterflies to breed rapidly, producing between three and five generations in sub-Saharan Africa before surviving adults move north towards Europe in February."

Click [here](#) to see the full article. The research is published the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*; click [here](#) to access it.

BUTTERFLY INTRODUCTIONS

Earlier in the month, there was a real flurry of media interest about the appearance of Black-veined White butterflies at a London reservoir. This wonderfully-striking insect has not been seen in the UK for 120 years, which explains the excitement: distributed across *Spain and North Africa, across Europe and temperate Asia to Japan, could it be moving northwards like, for example, the Long-tailed Blue which has established a small population in Southern England in recent years?*

Sadly, this does not seem to be the case here. Butterfly Conservation issued a statement which said that "these sightings are the result of an unofficial release", adding that it is "supportive of reintroductions when they are based on sound research". The statement went on to say: "Undocumented releases confuse existing conservation effort. They disrupt the recording of species' natural ranges and trends, and Butterfly Conservation does not support these unofficial releases."

However, artificial releases can sometimes lead to long-term sustainable populations. Consider Silver-washed Fritillaries and Purple Emperors, both of which have bred in Cotgrave Forest for a number of years, and which may be spreading across Rushcliffe. For more information go to our website, or click [here](#) (SWFs) and [here](#) (PEs)..

So, not this time, but who knows how long before they do arrive?

SPREADING POPULATIONS

Staying with the theme of animals 'new' to our area, we have recently reported on our FaceBook page sightings in Rushcliffe of Marbled White butterflies at Wilwell and East Leake, a species very seldom seen before in Rushcliffe. The NBN Atlas shows one previous record at Bingham in 2015, (although I'm fairly sure there was at least one sighting on the Bingham Linear Path last year). According to Butterfly Conservation, it is widespread in southern counties from late June through to early September, with outposts found running up through the East Midlands into Yorkshire.

We also shared on FaceBook a sighting at Rushcliffe Country Park of Small Red-eyed Damselfies, not previously recorded there. According to Paul Simons in The Times on 24 June "The species came from Hungary before landing at the Bluewater Shopping Centre in Kent in 1999. Since then it has moved northwards and is now found in Newcastle." The article also states that "Britain is experiencing a boom in dragonflies and damselfies flying over from Europe or native to the UK. Among the migrants were unusual numbers of Vagrant Emperor" and "another rare species that appeared this year was the Scarce Chaser"



A native species we also reported seen in June at Cotgrave Country Park and Ruddington was the Hairy Dragonfly. The NBN Atlas shows only three records in Rushcliffe since 2019.

HEDEHOG MONITORING

A partnership of organisations is looking to set up a National Hedgehog Monitoring Programme pilot; a three year project is starting currently, and is looking for volunteers. The pilot is looking for sites to be included in the project and it would be great to have a number of sites from Nottinghamshire included in this work. Go to our website [here](#) for more details.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE DORMOUSE SURVEY

This season, the Nottinghamshire Dormouse Group will be attempting to undertake a county-wide dormouse survey to attempt to determine if there are any 'natural' dormouse populations in Nottinghamshire. They are particularly interested in establishing who owns Gotham Wood, and identifying areas of woodland with the potential to support Hazel Dormice. If you can help, or want more details, please click [here](#).

CONNECTING WITH NATURE

Nottinghamshire in general, and Rushcliffe in particular have many wonderful sites to visit and connect with nature, even in the dark days of winter ... or, perhaps, especially in the dark days of winter!

You can find a full list of NWT reserves [here](#), and a list of sites in Rushcliffe [here](#).

WORK PARTIES

Our local nature reserves rely on volunteers to help maintain them, and organise regular work parties. Planned parties for July are as follows:

Sat 1st	Wilwell Farm Cutting	
Sun 2nd	Skylarks	
Fri 7th	Skylarks	
Sat 8th	Wilford Claypits	Meadow Park
Fri 21st	Skylarks	
Sun 23rd	Sharphill Wood	

Details of times, etc. can be found in the Diary section of our website [here](#), so if you have some spare time and energy please feel free to join in – you will be very welcome!



PLEASE NOTE: All of these dates and details are based on the current entries in the Diary. Could work part organisers please let me have planned dates for 2023, as and when they are available, so I can keep the entries as accurate as possible. Thank you.

And finally...

Don't forget that you can find more news, events and items of interest from SNG, Notts Wildlife Trust and other local Friends of Groups etc. by visiting our website at www.southnottswildlife.org.uk, or following us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/SouthNottsWildlifeGroup .

If you want to contact us please email southnottswildlife@gmail.com

Chris Overton
South Notts Local Group
2nd July 2023