

Birmingham
Natural History
Society

Founded 1858

Registered Charity No 500819

President: Mr Bryan Wood

Internet address: <http://freespace.virgin.net/clare.h/bnhs.htm>

NEWSLETTER No 101 – June 2013

AGM 2013

The Society's AGM was held on 19 April, with 17 members attending. Officers and Members of Council, Auditors and Trustees were all elected as proposed on the Calling Notice. Copies of the 2012 AGM minutes and of the accounts can be sent to members who were unable to attend, by request to the Hon Secretary. The AGM was followed by a talk – 'From porcupines to big cats: escaped mammals in the British countryside' – by Dr Peter Jarvis.

Field Visit to Park Hall Nature Reserve

Joint meeting with Sutton Coldfield Natural History Society, who have made the arrangements.

Please note change of date: now on Sunday 14 July (NOT 7 July as advertised in Newsletter 100)

We will be taken round the reserve by the Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust Reserves Officer, Chris Wishart. Meet at 11am opposite Park Hall Academy, Water Orton Road, Castle Bromwich, Birmingham, B36 9HF (map ref. OS128: SP16109055).

Hedgehogs slow to get going this spring

Latest results from the BTO Garden BirdWatch survey have revealed that British Hedgehogs have emerged from hibernation very late this spring – roughly a month behind what was seen in 2011 and 2012. The long winter may also have led to increased levels of overwinter mortality. The coldest spring for fifty years won't have helped either.

Mike Toms, BTO Head of Garden Ecology, commented "*The late emergence of Hedgehogs from hibernation is in sharp contrast to what happened last year and is perhaps unsurprising given the weather that we have had. It will be interesting to see what happens over the next few weeks and to discover what impact, if any, this late emergence might have on the 2013 breeding season.*"

He continued "*We had a later than usual emergence in 2010 as well, but still not as late as this year. Worryingly, the 2010 season was curtailed by a poor autumn, so it is fingers' crossed that things are better for Hedgehogs this year.*"

British Hedgehog populations are in decline, as revealed by a recent review of figures from a suite of monitoring studies.

Microscope

The Birmingham Natural History Society has a compound microscope available for members of the Society to borrow free of charge. It is a Watson 'Bactil' (1960) compound microscope with a monocular and a binocular head and a mechanical stage. Magnifications from x36 to x1500 are possible. There is also a free-standing illuminator. Contact David Antrobus (email: d_antrobus@hotmail.com).

Birmingham Natural History Society - Mycology Section

Warwickshire Fungus Survey - Programme for 2013

Crepidotus cinnabarinus was seen by Val and John Roberts at Wappenbury Wood on 20.9.1998, growing on fallen, rotting and wet trunks and branches of *Populus tremula*. This Warwickshire location was the second British site, the first being in Hertfordshire. The species was considered a recent coloniser - with its singular appearance it was unlikely to have been overlooked. Searching revealed it in nearby Bubbenhall Wood in 1999 and subsequently elsewhere in Wappenbury Wood. In Warwickshire this Oysterling is always closely accompanied by *Crepidotus mollis* and fruits reliably in September to November, if conditions are suitably damp.



Photograph © John Roberts

Sunday 18 August 2013

10.30 am Wolford Wood, VC 38, Landranger sheet 151. Meet at grid reference SP242332 on the minor road linking Great Wolford to the A44 at the entrance to the woodland track.
Contact: John Roberts. (01926 421544)

Sunday 1 September 2013

10.30 am Winterbourne Gardens and Nature Reserve, VC38, Landranger sheet 139, Explorer sheet 220, grid reference SP052839. This is a joint meeting with the Friends of Winterbourne Gardens. Park in the car park. The admission price is currently £4.50 or £4.00 concession. We are hoping to negotiate free entry for those willing to lead a group. The café should be open.
Contact: David Antrobus. (0121 422 8830)

Sunday 15 September 2013

10.30 am Sutton Park Boldmere Gate, VC38, Landranger sheet 139, grid reference SP105955. Park in car-park north of Powell's Pool.
Contact: John Sells. (02476 543217)

Sunday 29 September 2013

10.30 am May's Wood, VC 38, Landranger 151. Meet in the car park at grid reference SP145646 on the minor road linking the A3400 and the A4189. The entrance is adjacent to the two ex Forestry Commission cottages on the brow of the hill. Take care!
Contact: Bert Brand. (01789 267402)

Sunday 13 October 2013 (National Fungus Day)

10.30 am Coombe Abbey VC 38, Landranger sheet 140. The main entrance is on the B4027 Coventry to Brinklow Road at grid reference SP404790. Try to park at the northern end of the main public car-park. The pay and display fee is £3.50.
Contact: Dave Champion. (07896 752138)

Sunday 27 October 2013

10.30 am Oversley Wood, VC 38, Landranger 150. Meet at the entrance to the wood at grid reference SP110567 on the track, after going under the Alcester bypass.
Contact: John Williams. (0121 745 6395)

Sunday 10 November 2013

10.30 am Ragley Hall near Alcester, VC38, OS Landranger 150. Meet at the main entrance on the A435 at grid reference SP079563.
Contact: Bert Brand. (01789 267402)

Sunday 17 November 2013

10.30 am Ryton Meadows/Ryton Wood, VC 38, OS Explorer 221. Park in the Butterfly Conservation car park at grid reference SP377730 on the south side of the A445. The parking is entered through a metal gate, almost opposite a farm entrance, between the Police Training College and Ryton Pools CP. This gate will be unlocked for our visit. Take care when slowing down to turn into this entrance, because of the busy road and a nearby bend.
Contact: John Roberts. (01926 421544)

Sunday 1 December 2013

10.30 am Kingsbury Water Park, VC38, OS sheet 139. Meet at the Visitor Centre by the main entrance at SP204959. (Parking charge currently £3.50).
Contact: Bill Moodie. (0121 5546079)

Sunday 5 January 2014

10.30 am AGM.
Contact: John Roberts. (01926 421544)

If you want to attend a foray, please inform the contact person a few days beforehand. This will ensure that you do not arrive at a foray that has been cancelled or moved to a different location. The contact person will send a reminder by email to group members two days before a meeting. Please reply stating your intention to attend the meeting or not. If the contact person decides to cancel a meeting, he will notify group members by email.

After a foray, please check *A Fungus Flora of Warwickshire* and the additions to the Flora or the contact person to confirm that any of the less-common species that you have collected have already been recorded for the County. If they have not, PLEASE KEEP DRIED MATERIAL for the herbarium.

Please send lists of species that you have found on the forays in Warwickshire to John Sells, 57 Craven Avenue, Binley Woods, Coventry CV3 2JS or David Antrobus. Where possible, please state the habitat and associated trees and plants for each record. If you find an interesting fruiting of fungi, and think that others would be interested, please ring John Williams at the number below. It may be possible to arrange a foray at short notice. Permission has been obtained from landowners to collect for scientific purposes. In the interests of conservation, please do not collect more specimens than necessary for your personal use. We do not encourage collection for culinary purposes on our forays.

The Warwickshire Fungus Survey is affiliated to the British Mycological Society. Web address is: <http://freespace.virgin.net/william.moodie/wfs.htm>.

Chairman John Williams
100 Stanway Road
Shirley
Solihull B90 3JG *Tel* 0121 745 6395

Secretary David Antrobus
55 Gower Road
Halesowen B62 9BX *Tel* 0121 422 8830

Dr Peter Jarvis
23 Crosbie Road
Vice County 38 Butterfly mapping
Birmingham B17 9BG

Following his talk to the Society on 15th March on 'Trends in the landscape conservation of butterflies', Mike Slater reiterated his plea made in Newsletter 97 (June 2012) for butterfly records from Vice County 38, which includes the 'Warwickshire' part of Birmingham.

SAVE paper, printing and postage costs: could members let me know if they would be happy to receive the Newsletter by email. Many thanks to those who specify any details where possible.

'Though our knowledge for rare species and their whereabouts is well known, our recent knowledge of widespread species, especially in urban areas, is not of the required standard. We managed to record at least 10 species of butterfly in every 2 kilometre square in Birmingham between 2005-09, but that is not the case now. I wonder if you and your members could help with letting us know of their butterfly sightings in Birmingham especially from gardens and local parks etc. We have available OS maps of each of the 10 kilometre squares that contain missing tetrads showing the exact locations where we need butterfly records from. These maps will be provided to anyone who can help in a particular area. Please take a look at the county map and see if you can help with any squares in your area.'

Mike

01788 335 881
michael.slater50@ntlworld.com

For more information on butterfly recording contact: Keith Warmington (Warwickshire Butterfly Recorder & Transect Coordinator)
01827 715 873
keith.warmington@warwickshire-butterflies.org.uk www.warwickshire-butterflies.org.uk



Almost 590,000 people across the UK took part in the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch in January, and results show that some of the UK's most threatened and best-loved bird species are continuing to decline.

Starlings hit an all-time low in the 2012 Birdwatch and their numbers sunk by a further 16 per cent in gardens this year. As a UK 'red-listed' species (meaning it is of the highest conservation concern) this is a worrying trend. Numbers of House Sparrows, also on the red-list, dropped by 17 per cent in gardens compared to 2012, whilst Bullfinches and Dunnocks, both amber-listed, fell by 20 per cent and 13 per cent respectively.

Whilst the decline of some species continued, others fared better, with garden sightings of Siskins, Fieldfares and Jays up by as much as 85 per cent. Last year saw a particularly bad crop of acorns - a favourite among Jays - meaning these birds are likely to have visited gardens more than normal during the winter to find alternative food sources.

The national picture and results by county can be accessed from <http://www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch/results.aspx>

The UK's birds can be split in to three categories of conservation importance: red is the highest conservation priority, with species needing urgent action. Amber is the next most critical group, followed by green.

Red list criteria

- Globally threatened
- Historical population decline in UK during 1800–1995
- Severe (at least 50%) decline in UK breeding population over last 25 years, or longer-term period (the entire period used for assessments since the first BoCC review, starting in 1969).
- Severe (at least 50%) contraction of UK breeding range over last 25 years, or the longer-term period

Amber list criteria

- Species with unfavourable conservation status in Europe (SPEC = Species of European Conservation Concern)
- Historical population decline during 1800–1995, but recovering; population size has more than doubled over last 25 years
- Moderate (25-49%) decline in UK breeding population over last 25 years, or the longer-term period
- Moderate (25-49%) contraction of UK breeding range over last 25 years, or the longer-term period
- Moderate (25-49%) decline in UK non-breeding population over last 25 years, or the longer-term period
- Rare breeder; 1–300 breeding pairs in UK
- Rare non-breeders; less than 900 individuals
- Localised; at least 50% of UK breeding or non-breeding population in 10 or fewer sites, but not applied to rare breeders or non-breeders
- Internationally important; at least 20% of European breeding or non-breeding population in UK (NW European and East Atlantic Flyway populations used for non-breeding wildfowl and waders respectively)

