

WYCOMBE



WILDLIFE GROUP

Issue 56

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MAY  
2008



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and observations on the back page*



*Southern Hawker - report  
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Contact address, telephone and e-mail :  
see page 35

Registered Charity No : 1075175



**Wycombe Wildlife Group** is a registered charity with the following objects:

To conserve the environment, mainly using volunteers, for the benefit of the public.

To educate the public in the principles and practice of conservation.

Within **Wycombe District** the Group:

Surveys wildlife habitats and their associated flora and fauna, giving those taking part plenty of opportunities to increase their knowledge and identification skills.

Helps manage local wildlife sites, undertaking practical conservation work on local nature reserves.

Provides advice to schools, other bodies and individuals on all aspects of wildlife.

Stimulates public interest in wildlife and its conservation.

Organises walks, talks and other activities covering a wide range of wildlife topics.

Provides advice on and encourages wildlife gardening.

Organises activities for young children and their parents.

Co-operates with other groups with similar aims and supports the Environment Centre on Holywell Mead.

**Wycombe Wildlife News**

is published 3 times a year to promote the Group and wildlife issues and inform members and the public of its activities.

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**Editorial**

On Friday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2008, my husband and I were trapped in our car at Hughenden Park, by a most ferocious hailstorm; with thunder and lightning. Twenty minutes or so later, we were able to step out of our car under a sky of blue and crunch through piles of hailstones to view carpets of Wood Anemones, and Goldilocks Buttercups around the trees. The countryside was unaffected by the changeability of the weather.

And what of our gardens? A friend complained that the hailstorm had beheaded his Tulips, and certainly I had lost some too. In the main, our gardens and the wildlife in them appear not to have been much affected by the contrasts of this winter's weather. The warmest January night on record (Jan 20<sup>th</sup>) and the worst April snow for two decades did not hinder the progress of a succession of blooms, through Crocuses and Snowdrops, to Daffodils and now Tulips. Only the waxy Magnolia cups have been browned off by brief periods of frost, and my Clematis Armandii blossoms torn off by gales.

Birds do not seem to have suffered much in the last three months. They have attended normally at garden feeding stations; their numbers enhanced this year by an influx of Bramblings, and the occasional Siskins, Redwings, and maybe a Fieldfare. No signs of abnormally early nesting, in my garden at least. A few butterflies have emerged during spells of warmth and sunshine, along with Bumblebees and other insects.

As spring has advanced, so have the affairs of Wycombe Wildlife Group. Attendance at talks, complained of in my last Editorial, has improved, and arrangements for our forthcoming Wildlife Gardening Exhibition progressed. We are planning a Cheese and Wine evening to follow our AGM this year, and holding it in June: to take advantage of fine weather, and light evenings. Read all the details in your Newsletter.

We hope to see you there. You will be very welcome.

Pat Morris

**New Members**

We welcome the following new members, and look forward to seeing them at future events:-

Mr P.G.Daltry, Mr Andrew Dodd and family, Mr & Mrs Sagajillo

Views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Group.

For the purposes of management of the Group, membership information is held on computer.

# The Wildlife Gardening Exhibition

## Major event

This year's major event for the Group will be our Wildlife Gardening Exhibition at the Environment Centre. It already has the active support of several of our members together with other Groups and generous help from Notcutts Garden Centre and The Waterlife Studio.

## The exhibition

The exhibition will showcase a number of features including composting, a pond, bird feeders, artificial nesting and hibernating opportunities, vegetable growing and much more.

## Purpose

The purpose of the exhibition is to show how habitats, food sources and shelter for wildlife can be provided in gardens for the benefit of wildlife, while at the same time gardening in a sustainable way.

We will be encouraging homeowners to "do their bit" by means of displays and demonstrations and through our supporting range of leaflets and other events.

## Associated events

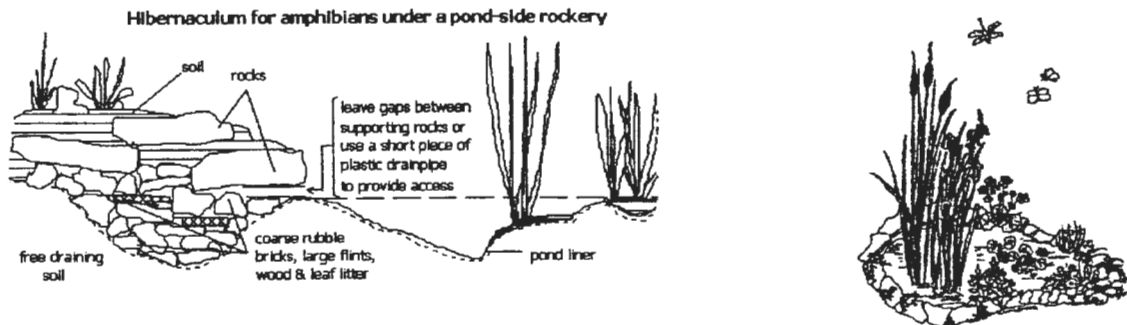
During the run of the exhibition, the Environment Centre will be staging a number of related events and we would be pleased to hear from any of our members who might like to give a talk, a demonstration or prepare an information panel on their favourite topic.

## When

The exhibition opens to the public on Friday 6 June and runs for some six weeks before closing on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> July. It will be open to the public each Friday, Saturday, and Monday from 11.00 to 4.00 and on Sunday from 2.30 to 4.30.

## Help

There are plenty of opportunities to help both before and during the exhibition. Assistance is still needed with some preparatory work as well as members being at the Centre to help visitors get the most from their visit. We need people to brief and support the Centre volunteers and to tend the plants. If you feel you'd like to help in any way please let James Donald know on 01494 637877.



*Illustrations from WWG's pond leaflet*

## What type of garden is good for wildlife?

**A**t this year's annual Bucks Records' Seminar on 19<sup>th</sup> April, Dr Ken Thompson gave a talk on "bugs, bugs and more bugs - the biodiversity of Sheffield gardens". After spending three years studying the invertebrate population in 61 Sheffield gardens, large and small, urban and suburban, manicured or "laissez-faire", he came to the conclusion that garden type made no difference to their biodiversity. However, gardens with ponds, compost heaps, or a three-dimensional structure, of whatever the type, were the best. A three-dimensional garden was one with large trees, shrubs and other vegetation, and not just a flat strip.

There were 15 -16 million gardens in Britain, said Dr Thompson - a huge resource for wildlife, and these were England's most important nature reserve. They should not be regarded as brownfield sites to be built on, or have their front gardens concreted over to act as car parks. Hard surfaces were definitely bad for biodiversity.

Invertebrates were chosen for study because they formed by far the largest part of the world's fauna.

Visit our exhibition to see if we have "got it right".

Pat Morris

## What Wycombe Wildlife Group events will you be enjoying next year?

### Our programme of events

The Group has always had a extensive range of events for members to enjoy, including walks, talks, trips, wildlife gardening, biological surveys and species identification and recording.

A Members Activities Sub-committee decides on the broad outline of future activities and these are then passed to the Programme Secretary to make the more specific arrangements, confirm all the details and then prepare the programme for publication.

### Who arranges it?

This role has been ably undertaken by Pat Morris for many years but she is now standing down. If the Group is to continue to flourish, the time has come for someone else to take on this very important task.

### Skills required

This voluntary role requires someone who is organised, can operate within guidelines and has good people skills. The process is computer based so access to a PC and a working knowledge of Microsoft Word and Excel is required.

### Training

Full training and ongoing guidance and support will be available and it is expected that the role holder will develop their skills as time goes on and become self sufficient in the role.

### Next steps

If you are interested and think you could be the next Programme Secretary, please get in touch with James Donald for an informal, no commitment, chat.

## NOTICES

### The 2008 Annual General Meeting

This year's AGM will be held on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> June, starting promptly at 8pm. This is much later in the year than normal but it will make a change to have it on a summer evening. One of the main reasons for choosing this time of the year was to coincide with the dates of the Wildlife Gardening Exhibition. One of the activities planned for the evening, after the conclusion of the usual brief business session, is a private members viewing of the exhibition. Cheese and wine will be served (along with non alcoholic drinks) and there will be a few short presentations on the current tasks of the Group.

### The Wycombe Wildlife Family Group

Following the appeal in the last newsletter, one of our members volunteered to help run the Family Group. Approaches to other members have resulted in a total of six potential leaders which makes restarting the Family Group a viable option. Arrangements will be made for the team of leaders to meet and discuss the way forward as soon as possible.

### Buckinghamshire Dragonfly Atlas

Alan Nelson, the Bucks Dragonfly Recorder, would be very grateful to receive any Dragonfly records, old or new, for inclusion in the new Buckinghamshire Dragonfly Atlas. He is also looking for help with data entry and with recording Dragonflies and Damselflies, especially in the south of the county. Records need to contain the observer's name, the species, site name and grid reference, and date. Alan can be contacted on 01908 211795 or by e-mail on [bucksdragonflies@googlemail.com](mailto:bucksdragonflies@googlemail.com). (See report on Alan's talk to WWG on pages 32 and 33.)

## WILDLIFE GARDEN SNIPPETS

My grand-daughter was delighted to find a fox lying between the garden shed and the hedge but, sadly, it was dead. It was a mature dog fox with no visible signs of disease or injury. I rang WDC the next morning and was asked if the body could be left in a bag by our gate. Within about half-an-hour, he was collected - a very swift response. We did toy with the idea of leaving him out for the red kites but decided against it, thinking he was probably too big to be taken in one go!

Hilary Hide

We can help garden nesting birds survive, not only by continuing to put out suitable food for the adults, but also mini meal-worms for the chicks. Growing plants such as Nasturtiums, upon which the Large White butterfly breeds, will supply baby birds with extra larvae. Other larval food plants will also help. Pick up a leaflet at our wildlife gardening exhibition for further ideas on how you can help.

Pat Morris

## Priestfield Arboretum and Twig Identification

An evening event with Barbara Rippington on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2008

This event was in two parts. The first was a talk given by Barbara Rippington about the Priestfield Arboretum, the second a quiz and some instruction on identifying trees by means of their twigs.

Barbara began her address by giving a brief history of Priestfield Arboretum. Originally the area had been associated with the estate of Harewood in Little Kingshill. It had been part of the kitchen garden and orchard for the house. In 1917, local Thomas Priest acquired 6.5 acres of this land and started to plant a collection of trees. Up to 70 different species were planted in groups according to their botanical similarities. In 1943, another local man, Marcel Pom of Little Kingshill Grange, bought the collection and it has stayed within his family ever since. The upkeep of the collection proved too much for the owners and by 1983 only 90 of the original 400 trees were left. At this point interest in preserving and improving Priestfield came from the "Small Woodlands Group" within the Chiltern Society, and in particular the curator of the arboretum, Merelene Davis. A group known as the Friends of the Arboretum was set up and the maintenance and enhancement of the collection is still in its hands. There are two open days for the public at Priestfield every year or one can join the Friends of the Arboretum for £10 and access is allowed all year.

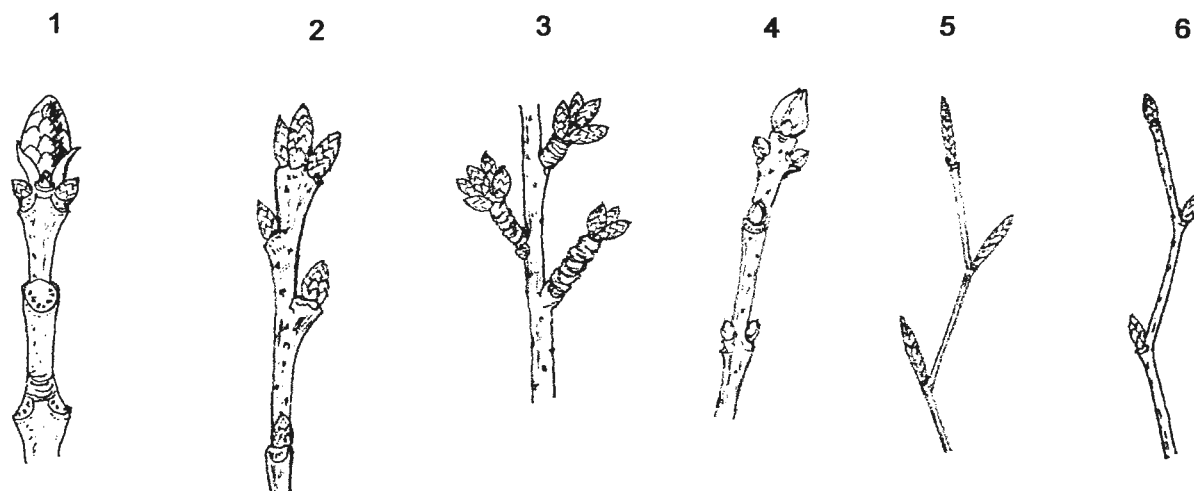
This collection of trees, Barbara pointed out, was of particular importance because most of them were coniferous. There are only about 600 species of conifer worldwide compared with roughly 250,000 flowering trees. Many conifer species are endangered. Priestfield is able to support these species because it has slightly acidic soils, the remains of a river terrace.

A selection of slides were displayed by Barbara showing trees found at the arboretum. These were mainly from the Pine Family, which includes the Cedars and Spruces. She explained how to differentiate between these groups, referring in particular to the arrangement of needles on their twigs. This part of the talk moved seamlessly onto the introduction to the second part of the evening. Barbara had arranged about 30 sets of twigs, all numbered, on the display tables. We were invited to identify the species of tree from which each sprig came. We didn't do very well. It was acknowledged that there are far easier ways to identify trees than by looking at their naked twigs.

This was an enjoyable and entertaining evening and thanks go to Barbara Rippington for her elegantly delivered talk.

Paul Bowyer

### Can you identify these twigs? (Answers at the foot of the page)



Barbara also supported the follow-up winter tree identification walk in Hughenden Park on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, when facts learnt at her talk were put into practice. Thank you to Angus Idle (and Grandson!) who led the walk.

Pat Morris

1. Horse Chestnut, 2. Pedunculate Oak, 3. Wild Cherry, 4. Ash, 5. Beech, 6. Hornbeam

# The Bucks Amphibian and Reptile Group (Bucks ARG)

A talk by Tony and Val Marshall on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2008

This talk was given by Tony and Val Marshall who represented the Bucks Amphibian and Reptile Group (Bucks ARG). This group, which has only been in existence for a year, is affiliated to the national organisation ARG-UK. We were told that the group exists to encourage recording of amphibians and reptiles and to spread knowledge about them. At present records of these animals within this county are poor, and we were encouraged to help in improving them by joining the group, which is free, and by sending details of any amphibians or reptiles seen, to the Bucks ARG.

Tony Marshall then summarised the status of each of the amphibians and reptiles found within our locality. He started with the amphibians which depend upon water in order to breed. The recording of the Common Frog, it was explained, is a good example of how poor records are. Current records show it to only exist in 12% of tetrads within the county and these tend to correlate with the places where members of Bucks ARG live. However a local survey within the Prestwood area showed that the Common Frog had been seen in 79% of all gardens in the locality.

The Common Toad, a drier animal, and one tending to frequent larger ponds, has been recorded in 28% of the county's tetrads and in 41% of gardens in the Prestwood survey. The other amphibians recorded in Bucks were, in order of their abundance, the Smooth, Great Crested and Palmate Newts. Tony stressed the importance of being able to identify the different Newt species for recording purposes. Some pointers are that Palmate Newts have webbing on their back feet and the end of their tail is needle like. Great Crested Newts are larger, very dark and

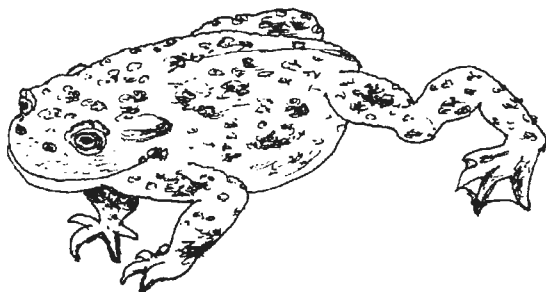
warty, with a distinct tail. Smooth Newts have a small crest the length of their body.

We were then told that there are four reptiles recorded within Bucks. The Grass Snake is shy and secretive and so may well be under recorded. The Adder, which has a zigzag pattern and tends to be browner than the Grass Snake, is found in more specialist habitats. The Slow-worm (really a legless lizard) hides in the ground most of the year but was found in 16% of gardens within the Prestwood survey. The last of the reptiles is the Common Lizard, which again is secretive and may be confused with the Smooth Newt.

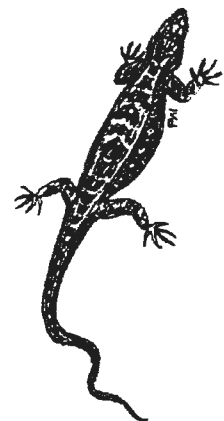
It was pointed out that there are a few historical records of other reptiles, notably Sand Lizard and Smooth Snake, but that these do not exist in this area any more. Mention was also made of alien species which have been introduced to this country. Amongst these is the Wall Lizard, 100 of which were released on East Burnham Common in 1964, the Red-eared Terrapin, which can be found at Willen Lake and at Black Park, and the noisy Midwife Toad, which can be found in a few areas of High Wycombe. A warning was given that with the introduction of non-native creatures came the risk of introducing diseases which can kill indigenous animals, especially Toads and Frogs. So do not move spawn from pond to pond and do not keep alien species in garden ponds.

Thanks to Tony and Val Marshall for sharing their enthusiasm for amphibians and reptiles and providing us with details of all our local species.

Paul Bowyer.



Left.: Common Toad  
Right: Common Lizard



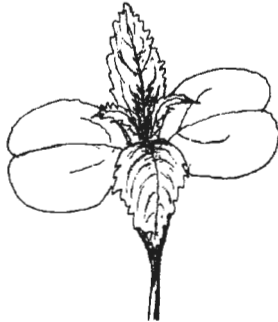
If you find amphibians or reptiles, either in your garden or while out walking, send your records to:- Bucks ARG, 49 Lodge Lane, Prestwood, HP16 0QG or e-mail Tony and Val at [ecorocker@gmail.com](mailto:ecorocker@gmail.com). Include the name of the species, how many, where seen (with OS grid reference or postcode), type of habitat and date seen. Don't forget to provide your own name.

## Reviving the Wye and its wildlife

A talk by Allen Beechey on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2008

Allen Beechey works as the Chalk Streams Project Officer for the Chilterns Conservation Board and his main task is to look after all the chalk streams of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This includes advising the appropriate landowners and helping to provide riverside management. First of all, Allen explained that the chalk stream is a recognised type of wildlife habitat and that there are more in England than in the rest of the world. The crystal clear water of chalk streams is ground water fed, is rich in minerals and is good for wildlife. The streams should be narrow and shallow, and have clean gravel beds which are good for spawning. The River Wye, which runs through High Wycombe, is one of these streams.

We were told that the wildlife of a typical chalk stream would include fish such as Brown Trout, Grayling, Roach and Minnows. The habitat would also favour Dragonflies, Damselflies, Mayflies, Crayfish and Water Voles.



*A seedling of Indian Balsam, an invasive annual plant which, if not controlled, adversely affects the biodiversity of river banks.*

Allen then assessed the problems which faced the River Wye, most related to human activity. In the past the river has been used by a great number of water mills, which have diverted and slowed the flow, which in turn has led to silting and consequently hampered the passage of fish. The making of ornamental lakes and the use of culverts, which take the river under urban areas, have also slowed the river. Pollution is another of the problems faced by the Wye, being generally harmful to plants and animals. This lowering of water quality has been worsened by the silts from roads, which can occur when long dry periods are followed by heavy rain. A lot of bankside habitat along the Wye has been lost to urban development. In some areas, back gardens actually form the river bank itself so that wild habitat is removed altogether. The river also seems to be a conduit for the seeds of invasive weeds. An example of this is Indian Balsam which is spreading along the banks of the Wye in the Wycombe area.

In order to combat these problems, Allen told us that a project is planned to "Revive the Wye", involving the Environment Agency and Wycombe District Council, as well as the Chilterns Society, High Wycombe Society and Wycombe Wildlife Group. The idea is to involve local people in helping to look after the river and its immediate surroundings. Some improvements have already been made to the river. For example during the development of the Retail Park on the former papermill site, a stepped weir was built on the river in order to help the passage of fish upstream.

Thanks to Allen Beechey for a professionally delivered talk and slide show.

Paul Bowyer

## Bird feeding and survival of the young

Bramblings visited our gardens in great numbers during the winter of 2007-8, due to the shortage of natural food in the wider countryside. The food we put out will have helped them, along with the other birds, to survive the winter, and they will have returned to their northern breeding grounds healthy and fit.

The assistance given to birds during the winter, and indeed throughout the year, has led researchers to ask whether well-fed birds produce more and healthier offspring, and whether birds with this advantage in the urban environment have greater breeding success.

To discover the answers, the University of Exeter and Birmingham University are comparing the breeding success of Blue and Great Tit nesting in gardens, with those in woodland. Studies so far have found that, whereas garden bird feeding helped them to survive during the winter, Blue and Great Tits produced fewer chicks when nesting in gardens. Sadly, gardens contain fewer caterpillars (the staple diet of their young) than woodland, and the chicks die of starvation, as many did in 2007.

Pat Morris

Information based on an article "Are gardens good for birds" by Mike Toms in the BTO publication "Bird Table" Spring 2008 Issue 53.

# Dragonflies

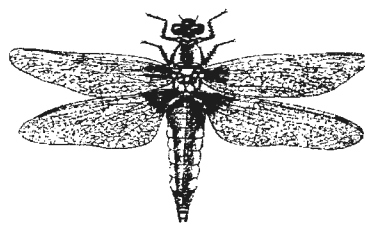
An illustrated talk by Alan Nelson on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2008

This talk featured Alan Nelson's remarkable understanding of the life cycle of Dragonflies, his encyclopaedic knowledge of how to identify different species in all their life stages, and some outstanding photography portraying his subject beautifully.

General points made about Dragonflies were that there are about 40 species found in this country. This number sometimes increases with occasional migrants. The term Dragonfly applies to both Dragonflies and Damselflies. Dragonflies have wings held at right angles to their bodies, Damselflies have wings usually held over their backs. The wings are powerful and enable Dragonflies to fly at great speed, to hover and, in some cases, to fly backwards. Dragonflies have a pair of very large compound eyes giving excellent all-round vision, as well as 3 other more simple eyes or ocelli, used, it is thought, for orientation. Aided by these characteristics, Dragonflies are very successful carnivorous hunters. Alan told us of the fascinating unique life cycle of Dragonflies. Mating between these insects is not straightforward at all. The male has to transfer sperm from his reproductive organs under the ninth segment, near to the tip of his abdomen, to his accessory genitalia at the front of his body under segments 2 and 3. The male then grasps the female round the neck with

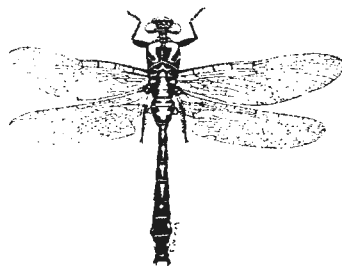
claspers at the very end of his body. The female may then curve her body round so that her genitalia at the end of her abdomen meet the accessory genitalia of the male. In this way copulation can take place in a position sometimes known as the wheel. Female Dragonflies may lay hundreds of eggs. All eggs will be laid on or near to water. Some species lay eggs when submerged, others by tipping the end of their ovipositor at the tip of their abdomen onto the surface of the water, and some may lay in neighbouring vegetation, such as reeds or decaying wood. Eggs laid in water are balloon shaped, while those inserted into vegetative matter are torpedo shaped. The hatching of eggs may take a few weeks, or it may take place in the following spring.

With the aid of his photographs, Alan showed us the idiosyncrasies of various species in these matters, as he did with the next part of the Dragonfly life cycle, the larval and emergence stages. He explained that Dragonfly larvae or nymphs are very efficient predatory carnivores, moulting up to 14 times as they grow. The larval stage may take up to 7 years, as in the case of the Golden-ringed Dragonfly, but usually it is only a couple of years. It can be dependant on the amount of food available and the warmth of the water.



Top left:  
Broad-bodied  
Chaser

Top right:  
Dragonfly  
larva



Bottom left:  
Club-tailed  
Dragonfly

Bottom right:  
Damselfly  
larva





Alan then told us of how the emergence of the adult Dragonfly is a highly vulnerable time for the insect. The larva, having left the water, clasps on to neighbouring vegetation. It then bursts its back open, gradually emerging as an adult from the larval skin or exuvia, and begins to use its redistributed body fluid to pump up the adult body and wings. The Dragonfly requires periods of rest, and must rely on the initial fastening of the larva to keep it steady. During this stage, predators such as birds or ants may eat the defenceless insect, rain may cause irreparable damage to its wings or, if its hold is not secure, it may fall off and drown.

Our speaker then drew our attention to Dragonfly species identification. This may be possible at the larval stage, as adults, or even by examining their exuvia. Identifying dragonflies as adults can be complicated, because their colour changes with age. Recently emerged adults, known as teneral, tend to have pale colours, and patterns may not be distinct. In old age, colours fade and diagnostic markings may be rubbed off. Other factors have to be taken into account apart from size, colour and markings. Consideration should be given to the body of water around which the dragonfly is found.

Some species favour small ponds or wet ditches, others favour larger lakes, swift running streams, large rivers or canals.

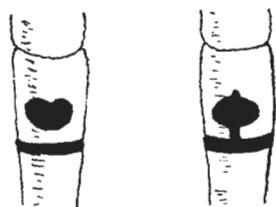
In conclusion, Alan, as Bucks Dragonfly Recorder, encouraged us to take part in a new recording programme launched by the British Dragonfly Society, aimed at creating a new atlas of these insects. To find out more about how to identify species and recording procedures, log on to [www.dragonflysoc.org.uk](http://www.dragonflysoc.org.uk).

Thank you to Alan Nelson for engaging us with his enthusiasm for this fascinating order of invertebrates.

Paul Bowyer

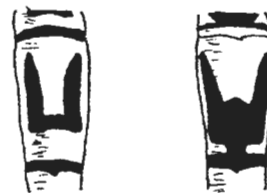
Editor's note:

At the end of his talk, Alan offered to lead a Dragonfly walk to help us in identification. This will not take place until next year, however, due to Alan's many other commitments. Watch out for next year's programme to find out when this event will take place.



*The Common Blue Damselfly and the Azure Blue Damselfly look very similar but their markings on segment 2, although variable, help to identify these two common species.*

*Left: Common Blue Damselfly  
Right: Azure Blue Damselfly*



## In the Editor's Garden - Spring 2008

The month of April each year marks the end of the winter garden bird survey period and I, like other recorders, have been busy filling in my record sheets.

My garden feeders have been dominated by Bramblings, to the disadvantage of Greenfinches and Chaffinches, who have had to wait till a perch became free. I have also had a few Siskins on my nyger feeder, displacing the Goldfinches. Another Bucks garden had a "charm" of 100 of these attractive little finches, which have risen to number 14 in the Bucks Top Twenty chart.

Imagine having 32 Woodpigeons landing in your garden, and the damage they could do! This is what happened to another Bucks Garden Bird Survey contributor. In my own "patch", I have been exasperated by eight of them stripping my Cherry Plum of its buds each morning, then moving on to the fruitlets left behind. Nothing frightens them away for long. During the course of the winter, they have also devoured the Ivy and Cotoneaster berries, leaving nothing for Blackbirds and Thrushes. Woodpigeons have now been noted in 100% of Bucks Survey gardens, and they now share the No.1 position with Robin and Blackbird in the Bucks chart.

Pat Morris

## From the garden seat with Phil Space

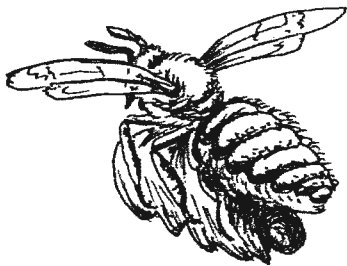
When I was mowing the lawn at the end of last summer, I noticed a bee which seemed to be paying a lot of attention to the garden seat. So I stopped work, sat down and watched. The bee flew off down the garden and over the hedge and disappeared. I waited a while and then a strange shape came into view and approached the seat, and I could see that it was a bee and that it was carrying something. It was of course a Leaf-cutter Bee and it was carrying a piece of leaf, perhaps from a rose, about the size of a 5p piece. It flew around, and back and forth, in a series of very short, quick movements but then vanished. I looked around the seat, but the insect was not to be seen. Where was it? I sat and waited. The bee suddenly reappeared, and flew off down the garden and over the hedge. So I sat and waited a bit more, and back it came. I paid more attention this time and, after its arrival manoeuvres, it slipped beneath the arm of the seat and into a space in the mortice joint, where the arm fits over the front leg. After a few minutes, it emerged and repeated its flight away, then returned, taking another piece of leaf into the space.

Leaf-cutter Bees often lay their eggs in rotten wood, which doesn't say much for the garden seat. A piece of leaf is laid down in a suitable cavity, blobs of honey and pollen are placed on the leaf, and one egg is laid on the food, which will nourish the larva when it hatches. The larva in turn will spend the winter as a pupa, and the bee will

emerge in the spring. When the available space is filled, it is sealed off with a further piece of leaf, and the bee flies away and perishes. I should have got on with the mowing, but this was much more interesting. I watched for some time as the insect came and went again. The bee spent between 4 and 5 minutes laying each egg, and the same time fetching another bit of rose leaf.

On with the mowing, and the seat needed moving, so I dragged it well out of the way. Now when the bee returned, it located the seat in its new position but wouldn't enter the nest space. It flew around, as if it was quite perplexed, and then gave up and flew away, only to return at once. It was as if it was thinking whether or not it had made a mistake in its navigation. "Now let me see, over the hedge and left at the Weigela, then buzz up the garden for 5 seconds and there we are". And though it flew up and down the garden many times, it wouldn't enter the nest until I had finished cutting the grass and replaced the seat in its original position. Then it continued for a long time, and must have laid dozens of eggs. I wonder how big the hole in the leg is.

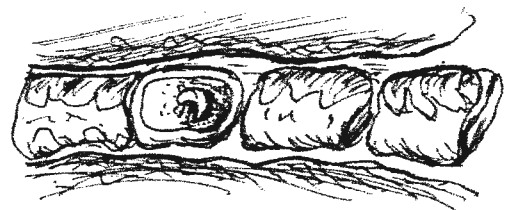
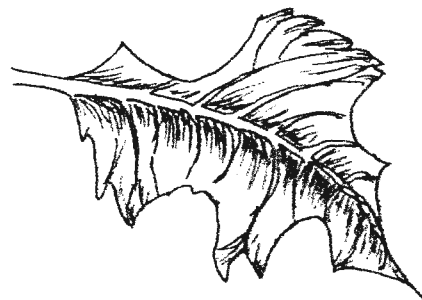
Now I'm waiting to see if I notice the bees emerging in the spring. I doubt it. But the first ones to emerge will all be males, and they will then be followed by the females. And if you find small ovals cut out from the leaf edges of your roses, then you'll know what caused it.



Above: Leaf-cutter Bee (*Megachile centuncularis*) carrying piece of rolled up leaf. The bee, which is 12mm long, has orange hairs on its underside

Top right: Leaf with pieces chewed out of it

Bottom right: Tunnel with egg capsules packed inside, showing egg with pollen store



# Birds recorded on the Rye during February and March 2008

by Roy Barkes

## February 22<sup>nd</sup>

Mute Swan (49) Mallard (185) Coot (28) Moorhen (17) Tufted Duck (32) Black Headed Gull (210)  
Mistle Thrush (4) Nuthatch (1) Goldcrest (3) Song Thrush (2) Grey Wagtail (1) Herring Gull (8)  
Lesser Black Backed Gull (4) Brambling (6)

## March 28<sup>th</sup>

Mute Swan (31) Mallard (204) Coot (23) Moorhen (21) Tufted Duck (7) Black Headed Gull (104)  
Mistle Thrush (8) Nuthatch (3) Goldcrest (5) Song Thrush (3) Grey Wagtail (1) Herring Gull (3)  
Lesser Black Backed Gull (2) Common Gull (2) Heron (1) Chiff Chaff (4)

## To join Wycombe Wildlife Group

Please complete the forms below (or photocopies) and send to the Membership Secretary, 73 Carver Hill Road, High Wycombe, HP11 2UB.

**Subscription rates:** £6 per annum, if paid by standing order or £7 per annum, if paid by cash or cheque.

### WWG Contact Details

Postal correspondence should be addressed to:  
Chairman, Wycombe Wildlife Group,  
c/o 129 Deeds Grove, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP12 3PA

Chairman & Site Management Co-ordinator:  
Roger Wilding 01494 438374  
[w.w.group@btopenworld.com](mailto:w.w.group@btopenworld.com)

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Membership Secretary: James Donald 01494 637877

Treasurer: Peter Hazzard, 15 London Road,  
High Wycombe, Bucks, HP11 1BJ

Biological surveys: Angus Idle 01494 563673  
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Website: [www.wycombewildlifegrp.co.uk](http://www.wycombewildlifegrp.co.uk)  
Webmaster: Malcolm Pusey  
[mac@mpusey.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:mac@mpusey.freeserve.co.uk)

### Please enrol me as a member of Wycombe Wildlife Group

Name:.....  
Address:.....  
.....  
Telephone:..... Email:.....

### Payment options

#### EITHER Payment by bank standing order

To .....Bank  
.....Branch  
Address:.....  
.....

#### NEW standing order instruction:

#### Account to be debited (your account details)

Sort code:  
Account number:  
Account name:

#### Beneficiary bank and payee details

HSBC 1 Corn Market High Wycombe HP11 2AY  
Sort Code: 402417  
Account number: 92116685  
Account name: Wycombe Wildlife Group  
Ref:

#### Payment details

Amount of payment: £6.00 Six pounds  
Frequency: Annually  
From: Date in box below  
Number of payments: Until further notice

Signature  Date

#### OR Payment by cheque or cash

I enclose my cheque/cash for £7.00, payable to  
Wycombe Wildlife Group.



# WILDLIFE NOTICE BOARD



## Observations



### January

- 22/01 Grey Wagtail on refuse bin - Hughenden Park
- 26/01 2 male Greater Spotted Woodpeckers - Downley
- 30/01 Wood Blewitt in A404 hedgerow - Terriers
- 31/01 Bumblebee - Downley

### February

- 02/02 Male and female Redpoll - Little Marlow Gravelpits
- 02/02 Small Tortoiseshell inside house - Hughenden
- 05/02 *Bombus terrestris* queen - Amersham Hill Drive
- 08/02 Red Admiral - Hazlemere Crossroads
- 09/02 Frogspawn - Carver Hill
- 09/02 Brimstone - Amersham Hill Drive
- 09/02 *Bombus terrestris* queen - Common Wood
- 14/02 Female Blackcap - Downley
- 19/02 Willow Tit on sunflower seed feeder - SU876919
- 23/02 Slow worm - SU877921
- 24/02 Male Siskin on nyger seed feeder - Amersham Hill Dr

### March

- 16/03 2 Toads crossing road into wood - SU845970
- 18/03 Grey Heron on lawn - Amersham Hill Drive
- 24/03 2 Siskins on nyger feeder - Amersham Hill Drive
- 26/03 Cock Pheasant in garden - Amersham Hill Drive
- 29/03 Red Kite taking chicken trimmings - Amersham Hill Dr
- 29/03 Sparrowhawk hunting in garden - Amersham Hill Drive
- 30/03 2 Peacocks & male Brimstone - Common Wood
- 30/03 Chiffchaffs calling - Common Wood
- 31/03 Female Blackcap on feeder - Carrington Road

### April

- 03/04 Chiff Chaff calling in hedgerow - Ladies Mile
- 22/04 Willow Warbler singing - Common Wood

3-15 Bramblings daily from 01/01 until 23/04 - Amersham Hill Drive

Other records - see website

### Contacts for Wildlife, Conservation & Environmental Groups in Wycombe District

Bassetsbury Group	David Reed	01494 439665
Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust	(Oxon Office)	01865 775476
Booker Common & Woods Protection Society	Ron Walker	01494 444824
British Trust for Conservation Volunteers	Alison Smith	01296 330033
British Trust for Ornithology (Regional Rep.)	David Lee	01844 347576
Bucks Invertebrate Group	Mike Palmer	01296 624519
Bucks Badger Group	Mike Collard	01494 866908
Bucks Bird Club	Roger Warren	01491 638691
Bucks Community Association	Francis Gomme	01844 274865
Bucks County Council Countryside Initiatives Team	Anna Humphries	01296 382288
Butterfly Conservation	Paul Bowyer	01628 526225
Chiltern Society	Angus Idle	01494 563673
Chilterns Chalk Streams Officer	Allen Beechey	01844 355502
Chilterns AONB	Steve Rodrick	01844 355500
Chilterns Conservation Board (Activities and Education)	Cathy Rose	01844 355506
Chilterns Countryside Group	Julie Rockell	01628 526828
Chilterns Woodland Officer	John Morris	01844 355503
Downley Common Preservation Society	Bill Thompson	01494 520648
English Nature Conservation Officer Bucks	Jenny Young	01635 268881
Frieth Natural History Society	Alan Gudge	01494 881464
Grange Action Group	Dave Wainman	01494 716726
High Wycombe Beekeeping Association	Christine Hazell	01494 531599
High Wycombe Society	Frances Presland	01494 523263
Lane End Conservation Group	Bärbel Cheesewright	01494 882938
Marlow Society	Bob Savidge	01628 891121
National Trust	(Office)	01494 755573
Pann Mill Group	Robert Turner	01494 472981
Prestwood Nature	Tony Marshall	01494 864251
Ramblers Association	J.L. Esslemont	01494 881597
Princes Risborough Countryside Group	Francis Gomme	01844 274865
St. Tiggywinkles	Les Stocker	01844 292292
Swan Lifeline	Wendy Hermon	01753 859397
The Environment Centre on Holywell Mead Co-ordinator		01494 511585
Woodland Trust (voluntary speaker)	Michael Hyde	01628 485474
Wycombe District Council Ranger Service	Julie Hopton	01494 421825



For queries about **BATS** contact the **WDC Rangers** : 01494 421824

