

WYCOMBE



WILDLIFE GROUP

Issue 63

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SEPTEMBER
2010

PROPOSED SCHOOLS WILDLIFE
GARDENING PROJECT

MOTH TRAPPING 2010

VISITORS TO OUR BUTTERFLY-
BUSHES

GREEN WOODPECKERS DIG THE
GARDEN

WASP IT ALL ABOUT?

THE DEMISE AND RISE OF THE
MAMMALS OF FENNEL'S WOOD

CHILTERN CHALK STREAMS

THE BIRDS OF LITTLE MARLOW

BIRDS ON THE RYE - APRIL TO
AUGUST 2010

BIRDIE BEHAVIOUR IN THE WILDINGS'
GARDEN

JUBILEE RIVER WALK

BUTTERFLY WALK AT HOMEFIELD
WOOD

WALK AT MOOREND COMMON

SUMMER REVIEW

WWG CONTACT & MEMBERSHIP
DETAILS

WILDLIFE OBSERVATIONS - APRIL TO
AUGUST 2010

LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS



*Hoverflies were the stars of
Summer 2010 - see Summer
Review on page 23*

*Reed Warblers entertained
those who went on the
Jubilee River walk - see
report on page 21.*



See page 23 for our contact details

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.

Co-operates with other groups with similar aims.

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 - Autumn 2010

As stated in my last Editorial, it is sad that people no longer have the opportunity to use the one-time Environmental Centre as a focal point of local habitat study. It used to hum with activity, as well as with bees. Now it stands empty.

So far, Wycombe Wildlife Group has not made use of meeting facilities offered by Wycombe District Council at the now re-named Rye Centre. St. Francis Church Hall at Terriers turned out to be a most successful venue for our AGM in May, and our planned future meetings will be held at Trinity United Reformed Church, where we have also been most cordially welcomed. So the problem of where Wycombe Wildlife Group can hold talks has been solved, for the time being at least, and that is good news.

Other good news is the award of £445 from Waitrose in Beaconsfield, where a sharp-eyed Group member spotted the possibility. More details about the award and how we propose to use the money are on the opposite page. We thank Waitrose for their generosity, and are very grateful to all those who voted for us, enabling us to receive such a useful sum.

Our congratulations go to Prestwood Nature for their Queen's Award for Voluntary Service 2010. It is a great tribute to their enthusiasm and dedication to the local environment, and it is more good news.

In this issue I have included several small articles sent in by members over the course of the summer, whilst wildlife-watching. I hope you will enjoy reading them.

Pat Morris

New members

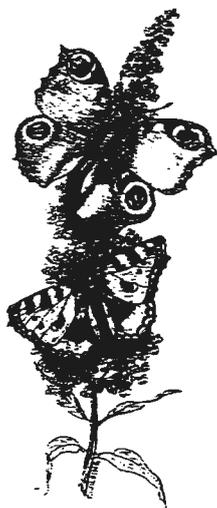
We welcome the following new members, and look forward to seeing them at future events:

Ms. M. Walkley

Ms. C. Kay

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.

Proposed schools wildlife gardening project Would you like to be involved?



In May 2010, Wycombe Wildlife Group received a cheque for £445 from Waitrose at Beaconsfield. This funding resulted from the selection of our Group as one of three local charities for inclusion in the supermarket's monthly Community Matters scheme. Each month, this scheme provides a total of £1,000, which is divided between the charities selected, in line with customer votes.

The WWG trustees felt that the money received from Waitrose should be used for a one-off project that would make a major contribution to the Group's charitable aims. The trustees also considered that additional money from Group funds could be made available to enhance the scope of the project.

The trustees decided that the project should be based on the promotion of wildlife gardening and be aimed at schools. It was felt that the existing wildlife gardening advisory leaflets should be updated and reprinted, and that local schools should be approached and invited to submit proposals for new or enhanced wildlife areas within their school grounds. Schools should be informed that their submissions will be judged on their respective merits, resulting in monetary

awards to assist with the cost of implementing the proposals considered by the judges to be the best. It was felt that all participating schools should receive something (such as a birdbox, animal home, a plant or plants) which would be of use in their existing or planned wildlife area.

Before the project can start, a project manager needs to be appointed, and he or she will chair a steering committee. The latter will support the project manager in planning, implementing and monitoring the project from its commencement until its conclusion. The project manager will be responsible to the trustees for the management of the project and will need to liaise with the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Trustees and with the Treasurer, as necessary, during the course of the project.

A draft project brief has been drawn up and agreed by the trustees. Are you interested in either managing the project or joining the steering committee? If so, please have a word with me or with any of the other trustees.

Roger Wilding

Moth trapping 2010

There were four moth-trapping events during 2010. The first was at Hughenden Valley to celebrate National Moth Night (15th May) but, because of cold weather, only four species of moth arrived at the trap. Later events did considerably better, with 17 species recorded at Collings Hanger Farm in June, 13 at Bassetsbury Lane in July and 14 at Amersham Hill Drive in August. The Old Lady moth identified at Bassetsbury was one of the most striking, as was the Copper Underwing species at Amersham Hill

Drive. The best attendance was at Collings Hanger Farm with 11 people, whilst only three to six attended the other venues.

Thanks to our expert Paul Bowyer for organising and attending these moth trapping events, and to Karen Roberts for her support. The events make a useful contribution to County records, and the moths are released following identification.

Pat Morris

Visitors to our Butterfly-bushes (*Buddleja davidii*)

At this time of year we like to keep an eye on our two *Buddleja davidii* bushes to see what butterflies have come to nectar. This year so far, visitors have included Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell, Painted Lady, Peacock, Silver-washed Fritillary, Brimstone, various other Whites, Meadow Brown, Ringlet, Gatekeeper and Large Skipper. We also get large numbers of bumblebees. On 18th August, Juliet noticed a large insect resembling a Hornet nectaring away, and close inspection revealed it to be the hoverfly *Volucella zonaria*, which is a Hornet mimic. In size and colouration, it is certainly convincing. Last year, at around the same time, we also had a *V.zonaria* visiting the *Buddleja* (identification achieved with help from Ched George) and I then watched the behaviour of butterflies when the hoverfly settled next to them. They wasted no time in disappearing fast. It was clear that they got the mistaken message that a Hornet was around. Presumably the hoverfly appearance is not meant to frighten butterflies but to deter predators.

The day after watching this behaviour last year, we got an insight into why the butterflies reacted so quickly. We saw what we thought at first was the *V.zonaria* cruising around the *Buddleja*. But shortly



Green Woodpeckers dig the garden

At six o'clock on 11th July, I was delighted to see two Green Woodpeckers digging, I presume for ants, in our front garden. One seemed to be on lookout duty, but then the other one, who had seemed much hungrier, suddenly began to feed it, so I presume it was mum and baby. After that event, the mum came right up to the front door step, while junior pattered off to the pavement and began attacking a juicy patch of tarmac! The pavement coating is at least seventeen years old, so has

many areas where plants have colonised it, hence insects. I got my camera, but it would not focus through the double-glazing, and then a car went by and the birds flew off.

We have seen solitary Green Woodpeckers before, in the garden across the road, which is closer to trees and escape cover, but today was charming and I thought worth noting. The weather was overcast and still.

Sue Mahy

afterwards, Juliet heard and saw a Hornet on the ground under the bush dismembering a Painted Lady. Later, I watched the Hornet patrolling the *Buddleja*. It would land on a flower next to a nectaring butterfly, in most cases causing the butterfly to fly off immediately, as had happened with the hoverfly. Every so often, the butterfly was not so alert, and the Hornet would pounce, sometimes catching the butterfly; both would then fall to the ground. I saw the Hornet catch and dismember another Painted Lady and then fly off carrying a large section across the field adjacent to our garden. I could see it flying away for about 100 yards before I lost sight of it. It was presumably taking it home to feed its larvae. About 2 minutes later it returned, searched for and found its butchery spot under the *Buddleja* and carried off another section of the butterfly carcass in the same direction as before. So if you are a butterfly nectaring on a Butterfly-bush, it pays to depart quickly if you see what you think is a Hornet landing nearby. We have not yet seen a Hornet on the *Buddleja* this year.

You may think of it as a Butterfly-bush, but to a butterfly, it is a jungle out there!

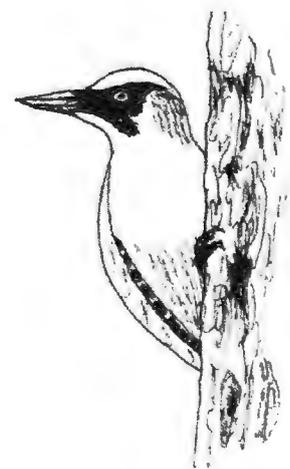
Alan Gudge

Footnote:

Two *Volucella zonaria* were seen in the Editor's garden on 15th August this year.

Photograph taken by Alan Gudge of the hoverfly Volucella zonaria - a Hornet mimic.

Green Woodpecker



Wasp it all about?

We all know that wasps do enormous good in the garden by collecting garden pests and taking them back to their nest as food. I was quite happy, then, to see that a nest had been set up under our floorboards, the wasps entering and leaving through an airbrick.

Of course, a little care is necessary when watching them come and go, but it was during a quiet moment in the garden earlier in the year that I first saw a large hoverfly approach the nest entrance in what I can only describe as a stealthy manner. First, it settled a metre or so away and, after nothing untoward happened in the next 30 seconds, it then moved to within 10 centimetres. Again it waited, and again nothing adverse happened. It then flew and paused briefly at the nest entrance and then slipped inside! Fascinated, I searched the text books and, although the literature seems a little uncertain, it appears that *Volucella* species (I'm pretty sure 'mine' is *Volucella inanus*) lay their eggs in the nests of wasps or bees, and that the larvae are parasitoids, feeding on the developing wasp

grub at first. Later they migrate to the bottom of the nest and feed on dead wasps and other detritus. Now that the colony is much larger, the hoverflies seem to find it more difficult to get in, as the wasps seem to have an instinctive activity of walking around the entrance point, say within a radius of 60 centimetres, and if they come across a waiting hoverfly, both parties take off instantly. The same thing happens at the nest hole, but battle is not enjoined, and it is not long before the hoverfly tries another patient approach.

I'm not going to undertake any hands-on research, for fairly obvious reasons, but it seems as if the hoverflies are doing well, as there are now four or five adults in the vicinity of the nest every day.

If you're the lucky 'owner' of a wasps nest, and can get a clear and safe view, you might see this behaviour too - please let us know if you do!

James Donald

The demise and rise of the mammals of Fennell's Wood

My newish infra-red system has shown that the Badgers are back in the woods at the top of my garden.

The demise of several Badger families several years ago seemed to follow the anti-terrorist searches that I regularly observed from my bedroom window. The occupancy of the wood, day and night, for several weeks with full emergency illumination, also contributed to a marked decline in the number of Foxes and Muntjac Deer using their long established routes. Recently, however, the Deer too have risen in numbers. Several nights ago, after tediously laying peanut trails for some 500 yards and placing peanut butter sandwiches at the sett

entrance for several weeks, I was delighted to catch one of the lovely beasts at the top of our steps looking for a cache of peanuts under a flint stone, again on infra-red.

I now have a query. Why do foxes squat down on their hind quarters when eating? This would seem to make them vulnerable to attack, and yet the infra-red shots regularly show such behaviour when eating Lucy's dog biscuits - but dogs never eat like that!

Stan Armstrong

Any ideas anyone?

Editor



Night photographs taken by Stan Armstrong using his infra-red system.



Chiltern chalk streams

A report on Allen Beechey's talk at Holtspur on 16th April 2010

Allen Beechey is employed by the Chilterns Conservation Board as its Chalk Streams Project Officer, although the project raises its own funding through grants and sponsorship. Raising the necessary funds for the continuation of the project has become a major challenge in the current economic situation. The Chalk Streams Project commenced in 1997, prompted by low flows in the Misbourne and Chess valleys. The aims of the project have been to organise necessary practical conservation work, give advice to riparian landowners, and improve access to enable the public to see and walk along chalk streams, where possible.

Not all chalk streams flow entirely over chalk geology, but to be categorised as a chalk stream, 50% or more of a stream's length must have underlying chalk. Chalk streams are an important part of the Chilterns landscape and support a diversity of plants and animals. They are a threatened habitat and there is a poor understanding of their importance. They are globally rare, and the 161 in Britain represent 90% of the world's total. Nearly all the chalk streams in the Chilterns flow down their dip slope, the water ending up in the Thames.

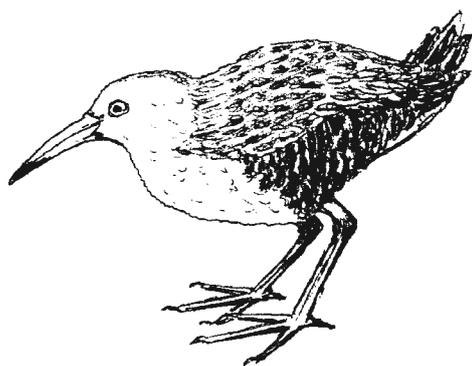
Chalk streams are usually narrow and shallow, with crystal clear water flowing over a clean gravel bed. The streams are fed by springs, which rise from groundwater in the chalk aquifer. The springwater is mineral rich (containing iron salts and magnesium) with a water temperature remaining fairly constant at around 11°C. These conditions are ideal for fish, plants and aquatic invertebrates. The River Water-crowfoot (*Ranunculus fluitans*), a member of the Buttercup Family flowering from May to July, is perfectly adapted for the chalk stream environment. It provides a home and shelter for lots of insects, whose droppings provide fertiliser for the plant. *Ephemera danica*, one of the three species of Mayfly in Britain, is a chalk stream species. The Mayfly hatches from May to June but

usually only lives one day. The huge numbers provide a good supply of food for birds and bats. The female Mayflies lay their eggs as they travel upstream, against the flow of the river. The Water Vole was common in our local chalk streams, but the species has suffered a dramatic decline, mainly as a result of predation by Mink. The Water Rail is found along chalk streams, but is more visible in the Winter and early Spring. Brown Trout is a fairly rare species, although numbers have been increased by introductions. The upper reaches of chalk streams often cease to flow in dry periods and these are referred to as winterbournes. This drying up is caused by a drop in the water table, which results from a mix of water abstraction, plants taking up more water in the Summer, and in periods of reduced rainfall. The rarest species of fauna, including Trout, tend to live in the winterbourne sections of chalk streams, because the riverbed gravels are cleaner, and there are fewer predators.

Allen gave us a detailed account of the "Trout in the classroom" project, covered by Julia Bradbury for BBC Countryfile, and the Water Vole Recovery Project. The latter showed that where habitat improvements are made, and Mink control measures are undertaken, the breeding ability of Water Voles can result in a dramatic recovery of the species. Allen finished his talk by mentioning the key challenges for the coming years, which included the control of alien plant species such as Indian Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), water abstraction to meet increasing human demands, riverside housing developments, and climate change. Tunnelling through the Chilterns to provide the proposed HS2 rail link from London to Birmingham might also have an adverse effect on the flows of the Chiltern chalk streams.

Our thanks go to Allen for his informative talk, which for Wycombe Wildlife Group members, supplemented his talk to the Group on the Wye in 2008.

Roger Wilding



Left: Water Rail

Right: Mayfly



The birds of Little Marlow

A talk by Phil Horwood at St Francis Church, Terriers on 10th May 2010

Phil's talk focused on the Spade Oak lake and its surrounding area. The lake, in Little Marlow, was formerly a gravel pit but is now a nature reserve. On its northern bank it has a mud flat made of waste from the gravel extraction and here Lapwings, Teal, and Gulls congregate. The lake has an island, on which trees provide a roost for Cormorants and Jackdaws. Close to the lake shore there are reed beds and a variety of bushes and trees. The River Thames flows close by to the south of the lake and there is a water treatment plant to the west. All these features add to the attractiveness of the site for birds. The lake is encircled by footpaths and this helps make it an ideal spot for birdwatching all year round.

The talk, with the help of some excellent photographs, covered the birds that may be seen on and around the lake. Phil started with the species of wildfowl which congregate on the lake. In Winter there may be thousands of ducks to be seen. Mallard, Tufted Ducks, Pochard, Shovellers, Gadwall, Shelduck and Teal are the most numerous. The Pintail, with its fine long tail, is also a visitor and, in late Spring, Garganey may occur. Wigeon, which have an orange stripe on their crowns, may be seen in the area, but they will probably be on mud flats grazing. Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser and female Goosanders may also pay brief visits to the lake from their wintering haunts of coasts and estuaries. Smew used to be seen during the Winter, but no longer visit. A good place to see these is the Wraysbury gravel pit. Other duck species may be seen which are probably escapees from local bird collections. These include Ruddy Shelduck, Red-crested Pochard and Mandarin and Ferruginous Ducks.

The Mute Swan breeds on the lake and Bewick and Whooper Swans are possible visitors. The Black Swan, another escapee, may also put in an appearance. There are large flocks of geese to be found at Little Marlow. Most numerous are the Canada and Greylag Geese but Brent and Barnacle may sometimes be present. Collection escapees include the Egyptian and Snow Goose.

Great-crested and Little Grebes may be seen on the lake. Mating pairs of the former are seen every year

Footnote:

This well-attended talk followed Wycombe Wildlife Group's AGM.

performing their intricate courtship displays. Numerous Coots are present and can often be seen squabbling noisily. Moorhens are always present and there are at least three pairs of Kingfishers to be seen. Thirty years ago, the first Grey Herons nested at the site; now there are large numbers. The Herons nest at the end of January and into February on the island. When these nests have been vacated, the Cormorants move in and use them. They can often be seen sunning themselves holding out their wings.

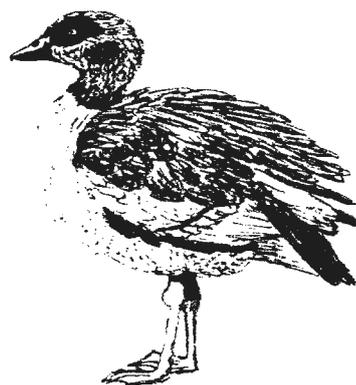
Phil continued his talk by telling us about the wading birds at Spade Oak lake. These include birds which call in to Little Marlow during migration and some which are present all year. Most of the waders may be seen on or close to the area of mudflat and include Lapwing, Oystercatcher, Redshank, Golden Plover, Snipe, Ringed Plover, Godwit and Ruff. The Little Ringed Plover is present during the Summer and breeds on the site.

The lake has a large gull roost especially during the Winter. Black-headed, Lesser black-backed, Herring and Common Gull may be seen most days and the rarer Mediterranean and Glaucous Gulls may sometimes be found. Rafts have been provided for the Common Terns and these birds often mob the birds of prey in the area, including Red Kite, Buzzard, Sparrowhawk, Kestrel and less frequently Goshawk and Hobby. Common garden birds and many other species including Swift, Chiffchaff, Whitethroat, Warblers, Spotted Flycatcher, Nuthatch, Tree-creeper, Redwing, Fieldfare, Wagtails, Meadow Pipit, Turtle Dove, Redpoll, Linnet, Siskin, Pheasant, Red-legged Partridge and Ring-necked Parakeet may also be seen in the vicinity.

Phil showed us photographs of nearly all of the vast number of bird species that may be found on and around the lake at Little Marlow. It is an easy site to visit and there is always something interesting to be seen there. Our thanks go to Phil Horwood for such a comprehensive and entertaining talk.

Paul Bowyer

Egyptian Goose



Birds on the Rye April to August 2010 (recorded by Roy Barkes)

Species	Apr 18	May 21	Jun 30	Jul 19	Aug 10
Mute swan	34	39	41	34	36
Mallard	244	201	109	232	284
Tufted duck	27	14	2	4	8
Coot	31	28	30	24	23
Moorhen	19	18	4	14	8
Little grebe	5	2	0	0	0
Grey heron	1	0	0	0	1
Canada goose	2	0	0	0	0
Lesser black-backed gull	14	3	0	5	0
Herring gull	4	1	0	1	4
Common gull	2	0	0	0	9
Black-headed gull	176	88	2	18	57
Mistle thrush	5	4	2	2	4
Song thrush	3	2	4	1	1
Blackbird	6	12	10	7	4
Robin	4	3	4	3	4
Nuthatch	2	1	2	3	2
Great tit	7	6	7	4	6
Blue tit	12	9	14	9	14
Coal tit	2	0	0	0	0
Long-tailed tit	4	17	0	8	18
Wren	2	4	4	0	0
Goldcrest	2	0	2	0	0
Chiffchaff	2	2	1	0	0
Chaffinch	12	8	5	0	0
Greenfinch	4	6	4	0	0
Goldfinch	0	5	2	0	0
Pied wagtail	2	1	2	0	0
Grey wagtail	1	0	0	0	0
Great spotted woodpecker	1	2	0	1	1
Carrion crow	4	0	4	6	4
Jackdaw	2	9	3	1	0
Magpie	5	8	14	6	0
Jay	2	2	0	0	0
Woodpigeon	28	20	29	0	0
Green woodpecker	0	0	0	1	2
Swift	0	0	0	13	0
House martin	0	0	0	0	6

Footnote: Swifts were seen feeding low over the grass on the Rye, between the Motor Show and the Dyke, on 18th June. No doubt they were attracted to the many insects nectaring on the Buttercups and Clover in bloom there.

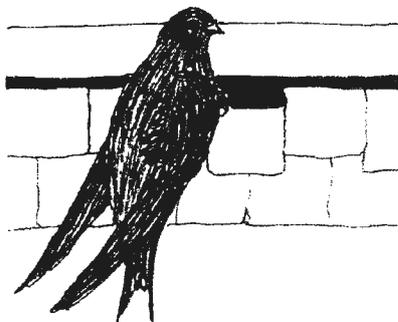


Swifts in flight

Birdie behaviour in the Wildings' garden

I am writing this article in late August at the windowsill of the back bedroom (tree canopy level). This is the best place for birdwatching. It is where I usually do the Great Big Garden Bird Watch as I can see most of the back garden and its trees. The Cherry Plums (*Prunus cerasifera*), including the purple variety *pissardii*, are the closest to the house, and the garden birds are always flitting to and fro in them. These are the best trees I know to attract birds and are very garden worthy, being ornamental (with beautiful blossom in early Spring, followed by lovely fruit in late Summer, and then wonderful Autumn colours), and a good source of insects and caterpillars. At the moment I can see a large family of Blue Tits, which have been in the garden since fledging, also Coat Tits, Great Tits and two Willow Warblers, one of which has been quietly singing its sweet silvery little cadence.

It has been a wonderful year for breeding birds in the garden. There have been dozens of Sparrow babies, and the parents are still feeding the last brood. Some of them have been jumping up and down reaching the seedheads of a Pendulous Sedge. Two broods of Starlings have grown up and gone away, having worked all over the lawn with their dagger-like beaks.



Swift prospecting for possible future nest site

There was a successful brood of Coal Tits and two families of Song Thrushes, as well as the usual Dunnocks, Robins, Blackbirds and Chaffinches.

I feed the birds in five different places twice a day, a mixture of organic wholemeal bread crumbs, sultanas, mixed seeds and suet, and ensure water, peanuts and fat balls (never in the mesh) are available all the time.

Roger and I had two "Springwatch" moments. I heard baby bird noises coming from the bird box I had made. When Roger lifted the lid gently, I discovered that the tame blackbird had a nest on the top of the box (and stayed in it whilst the lid was lifted) and inside the box was a brood of Great Tits! All were concealed by our Wisteria. The other moment was when some Swifts from along the road came prospecting nest sites under the eaves of the house next door and then circled screaming around our house roof. All very exciting! I don't know what the Winter will bring, but I do know that I have contributed to helping a large number of happy, healthy birds, and had an enormous amount of pleasure doing so.

Frances Wilding

Jubilee River walk

About a dozen of us met on Saturday 17th June 2010 in the Lake End Road car park at Dorney for the short walk alongside the Jubilee River to the Dorney Wetlands and back. Although this walk is only about half a mile each way, the one and a half hours allocated for it proved to be insufficient, and everyone wanted to spend longer, so as not to miss anything to be seen or heard.

The walk was intended to be primarily a follow-up to the March talk on wetland plants. However, the event was advertised as also covering anything else of wildlife interest to be seen. This was just as well, because we were able to enjoy the birds, a few damselflies and some of the many non-wetland plants to be seen on this walk. A wide range of wetland flora was found, some in flower, some that had already

flowered, and many not yet in flower. Amongst the non-wetland species seen were large numbers of the rare Yellow Vetchling (*Lathyrus aphaca*), Grass Vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*), three Bee Orchids (*Orchis apifera*) and a couple of Field Pansies (*Viola arvensis*). Quite a number of bird species were seen or heard, and on the boardwalks at the Dorney Wetlands, we listened to an almost constant Reed Warbler chorus. One of the keen birdwatchers had brought along his tripod-mounted telescope, and this was well-used to get a better view of some of the birds seen, and to identify a few plants on islands and on the opposite side of the river.

Thanks to all the enthusiastic attendees who made this walk such a pleasure to lead.

Roger and Frances Wilding



Yellow Vetchling

Butterfly walk at Homefield Wood

The remote, narrow country road from Bockmer End to Lower Woodend suddenly became very busy on 31st July 2010, when some 30 people turned up for the butterfly walk at Homefield Wood organised by BBOWT (South Bucks). After a lot of manoeuvring, all of the cars were packed tightly into the small parking area in front of the entrance to the wood and the walk began.

Much of the walk followed the ride along the valley bottom, and it was here that we were treated to good views of a White-letter Hairstreak and numerous Silver-washed Fritillaries. We were very lucky to have the *valezina* dark form of the Silver-washed Fritillary settle right in front of us, giving

everyone the opportunity to see this rare butterfly close up.

Although we then went into the open grassland of the BBOWT reserve, where we had hoped to see plenty of grassland butterfly species, the sky clouded over and we saw very few. Although some people would have liked to stay longer, in case the weather improved again, the need for all the drivers to return to their cars at the same time, to undo the parking knot, prevented this.

Our thanks go to Martin Robinson for leading this interesting and informative walk.

Roger Wilding



One of several photographs of Silver-washed Fritillaries taken by Roger Wilding on local walks in the Summer of 2010

Walk at Moored Common

Moored Common is bisected by the Lane End to Frieth road, and is unusual in that it lies on a small pocket of acidic soil amongst the predominantly alkaline soils of the Chilterns. Last year, I found that Purple Emperor butterflies had been recorded on the Common, and so a walk was organised during its flight period to view it. Two days before the programmed walk, I visited the Common and saw a male flying high amongst the Oaks and my hopes were high for the Saturday event. However the weather was changeable.

We started our walk from the Prince Albert pub in Frieth, where we met our local guides, Juliet and Alan Gudge. We set off on the footpath across the road from the pub and soon saw some of the commoner butterflies, including Large Skipper, Ringlet, Speckled Wood and Gatekeeper. About ten minutes into our walk, we came to an area of acid grassland and here we saw Meadow Browns, a Small Copper, Green-veined Whites and a Red Admiral. Near this grassy area, there is a sheltered spot surrounded by tall trees, mainly Oak, where I had seen the Purple Emperor two days before. This site compared favourably with others in the county where one might see this spectacular butterfly. There is plenty of Sallow, on which the females lay

their eggs, and the high tree canopy provides the ideal spot for the males to show off prior to mating. At this point, the clouds appeared and the temperature dropped considerably. We waited in hope, and ventured uphill into the woods, so that we had a better viewing point. Two of our party thought they may have glimpsed the Emperor, but in the end we had to move on without recording a sighting.

We crossed the Lane End to Frieth road and found ourselves in a more open area of grassland, again surrounded by very tall trees. Our guides pointed out that the Purple Emperor had been seen here also. The sun reappeared and were able to record Common Blue, Marbled White, Small White, Small Skipper and a freshly-emerged Essex Skipper, with the black tips of its antennae much in evidence. Some of the party saw a Silver-washed Fritillary, further evidence of how this species is now prospering in a lot of Buckinghamshire's woods.

Before this walk, I knew little of Moored Common's wildlife. I will certainly return to search for the elusive Purple Emperor and to see what other fauna and flora can be found there, Thanks to Juliet and Alan Gudge who showed us the best places to look.

Paul Bowyer

Summer Review

During the first six months of 2010, Britain experienced the worst drought since 1929, but how did it affect our natural world? Many birds seem to have had a successful breeding season, judging by the large flocks of tits to be seen this Autumn. The drought probably affected slugs and snails, for there were fewer of those. A number of insects did well: Orange Tip, Small Copper and Common Blue butterflies were all more numerous than last year. However, the stars of the Summer were undoubtedly the hoverflies, which have been counted literally in their hundreds around such plants as Fennel and Tansy. There have been plenty of bumblebees too, and more 7-spot ladybirds, but fewer Harlequins.

The rain came at last, and carpets of Hawksbeard and, to a lesser extent, Yarrow, appeared in parks and on grass verges, replacing the parched grass. It was only when

council mowing regimes were resumed and the yellow and white heads of the flowers were chopped off, that the grass regained its hold. The on/off weather conditions that followed encouraged Sycamore Tarspot fungus, mildew and brown rot, but woodland fungi began to appear, including Chicken of the woods on tree trunks, and other species on the soil below. Now Autumn is here, there are bumper crops of fruit: apples, pears and plums. Blackberries have ripened in the hedgerows, though not everywhere. Leaves are starting to fall. Although for those of the Horse-chestnut, the premature loss is again due to the leaf miner *Cameraria ohridella*.

Winter is coming, but Summer at least has been enjoyable, with little apparent effect from the vagaries of the weather on our garden wildlife.

Pat Morris

Contacting and/or joining Wycombe Wildlife Group

To join Wycombe Wildlife Group, please complete the form on the right (or a copy) and send to the Membership Secretary, 15 Cherrywood Gardens, Flackwell Heath, HP10 9AX. Subscription £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,
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Chairman & Site Management Co-ordinator:
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Newsletter Editor: Pat Morris 01494 529484
roymorris@freeuk.com

Membership Secretary: Paul Bowyer/ Karen Roberts
(Membership enquiries to Paul: 01628 526225)

Treasurer: James Donald 01494 637877

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angusjanet@yahoo.co.uk

Website: www.wycombewildlifegrp.co.uk
Webmaster: Malcolm Pusey
mac@mpusey.freemove.co.uk

Please enrol me as a member of Wycombe Wildlife Group

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

EITHER Payment by bank standing order

ToBank
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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:

Number of payments: Until further notice

Signature Date

OR Payment by cheque or cash

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



WILDLIFE NOTICE BOARD



Observations



<u>April</u>	
05/04	Hornet in garden - Deeds Grove
07/04	Skylark singing - Grange Farm
08/04	Tadpoles in pond - Amersham Hill Drive
14/04	5 Mallards on garden pond - Deeds Grove
17/04	First Orange Tip in garden - Amersham Hill Drive
24/04	Slow-worm in compost heap - Amersham Hill Drive
28/04	First Swifts - Deeds Grove
<u>May</u>	
05/05	Willow Warblers and Chiffchaffs singing - Ladies Mile
19/05	200+ Longhorn moths (<i>Adela reaumurella</i>) - Common Wood
	4 Skylarks - Puttenham Farm
	Cuckoo - Common Wood
25/05	Tree Bumblebee - Amersham Hill Drive
<u>June</u>	
03/06	Cuckoo - Tylers Green and Beacon Hill

03/06	Hornet in garden - Tylers Green
04/06	Swarm of Garden Chafers - allotments in Hughenden
25/06	Spotted Flycatchers feeding young - Hughenden Church
30/06	95 Cinnabar moth larvae - Common Wood
<u>July</u>	
01/07	Small Heath butterflies - Lude Farm area near Beacon Hill
06/07	Golden Plusia moth in garden - Tylers Green
20/07	8 Whitethroats, including juveniles - Puttenham Farm
	Female Purple Emperor - Common Wood
29/07	4 Small Coppers - Grange Farm, Hazlemere
<u>August</u>	
02/08	Last Swift - Deeds Grove
11/08	Brown Argus - Spillmoor field, Common Wood
14/08	30-40 House Martins - Wycombe Abbey School
16/08	40 House Martins - Hughenden Park
24/08	Female Wheatear - Puttenham Farm



Contacts for Wildlife, Conservation & Environmental Groups in Wycombe District



Bassetsbury Group	David Reed	01494 439665
Bat queries	WDC Rangers	01494 421824
Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust	(Oxon Office)	01865 775476
Booker Common & Woods Protection Society	Rita Luxton	01494 436807
British Trust for Conservation Volunteers	Jane Craven	01296 330033
British Trust for Ornithology (Regional Rep.)	David Lee	01844 347576
Bucks Badger Group	Mike Collard	01494 866908
	Mobile (at any time)	07887 955861
Bucks Bird Club	Neil Foster	01296 748597
Bucks Community Association	Francis Gomme	01844 274865
Bucks County Council Countryside Initiatives Team	Mark Bailey	01296 382389
Bucks Invertebrate Group	c/o BMERC	01296 696012
Butterfly Conservation	Nick Bowles	01442 382278
Chiltern Society	Angus Idle	01494 563673
Chilterns AONB	Steve Rodrick	01844 355505
Chilterns Chalk Streams Officer	Allen Beechey	01844 355502
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
Frieth Natural History Society	Alan Gudge	01494 881464
Grange Action Group	Dave Wainman	01494 716726
High Wycombe Beekeeping Association	Sheila Borwick	01494 739313
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
Natural England Conservation Officer	Rebecca Hart	01189 392070
Pann Mill Group	Robert Turner	01494 472981
Prestwood Nature	Tony Marshall	01494 864251
Ramblers Association	John Shipley	01494 862699
Risborough Countryside Group	Francis Gomme	01844 274865
St. Tiggywinkles	Les Stocker	01844 292292
Swan Lifeline	Wendy Hermon	01753 859397
Woodland Trust (voluntary speaker)	Michael Hyde	01628 485474
Wycombe District Council Woodland Service	John Shaw	01494 421825