

## Ryburgh Wildlife Group August Newsletter



I'm sure you are all familiar with the flower Scabious. It is a lovely flower, but I always look at it with a heavy heart. It's a late flowering plant and so I get the feeling that summer is at end and autumn is just around the corner. With so many of the fields around the village already harvested, and with the grey skies and strong winds, you might be forgiven for thinking it is already autumn.

I think 2023 will go down as an odd year. I know it's about being in the right place at the right time but I've seen only or two of our "common" butterflies, Small Tortoiseshells, Peacocks and even Gatekeepers. For me Meadow Browns and Marbled White have been the most common species, although in the past few days, the "Whites" have been trying hard to catch up, along with second brood Brimstones. The Marbled White is a grassland species and is rare in Norfolk but the species is slowly expanding northwards so you never know. As I said, being in the right place at the right time helps – and a couple of weeks ago during a short sunny period I was lucky enough to see a Purple Hairstreak flitting around the tree canopy by St Andrew's church.

August is also that time of the year when we say goodbye to some of our spring and summer visitors and hello to our wintering birds. Swifts are one of the first species to make a dash for their wintering grounds. I'm sure you, like me, will miss their screaming parties as they dash about the sky. As for wintering birds, I was at the coast at the weekend, and I saw my first Sanderling of the winter. Like Swifts, they were dashing about, not the sky but the beach where the wave had crashed just seconds before, completely oblivious to couple who were swimming in the sea close by.

While I was at Brancaster I also came across this oak tree just outside the church that was clearly popular with the Knopper gall wasp. Judging by its size it was a relatively young tree and almost every acorn I could see had been parasitised. It was quite a sight.



In May this year National Highways published a new environmental sustainability strategy including a long-term vision for a connected country and thriving environment. Their network contains 4,500 miles of motorways and A-roads and some 30,000 hectares of unpaved land. In Norfolk they manage the A11, and A47. If you are interested in the reading the strategy it could be found at [https://nationalhighways.co.uk/media/g5yfcl3m/nh-environmental-sustainability-strategy\\_final\\_020523.pdf](https://nationalhighways.co.uk/media/g5yfcl3m/nh-environmental-sustainability-strategy_final_020523.pdf)

Talking of visions, the group's committee has been discussing setting out a vision for improving wildlife in Ryburgh in the years ahead. But it's not just Ryburgh that is looking to improve its local wildlife. Both Stibbard and Colkirk are taking active steps to improve their local wildlife. With the meadow at the Stibbard crossroads on the edge of Ryburgh, and other little hot spots along the way, there is a now clear pollinator pathway linking the three villages: Stibbard, Ryburgh and Colkirk. This is great news, and who knows, we may one day be able to upgrade this from a pollinator pathway to a "pollinator motorway".

Bug hotels play a part in pollinator pathways, and the committee is still looking to set a date where you can come and help build a bug hotel. Watch this space.

While the committee may have a view on the future, we'd like to understand your views too. What are your thoughts on how we should improve our local wildlife? I'm sure you have some very clear views. We would love to hear from you. Do please write to me and I will share the views of you, the members, with the committee. All contributions will remain anonymous. Don't be shy.

**David**  
Membership Secretary