

Ryburgh Wildlife Group May Newsletter

A quick bit of admin to start with. Firstly, we welcome two members to the group, Carole Bennett and Paul Stearman. I hope you enjoy your time in the group. Secondly, there are few people that I will be nudging to renew their membership.

Since the last newsletter we have two really enjoyable walks. Ian Wilson led a small group across Ryburgh Common, the Fuel Allotment. A site that has mixed habitats: wet woodland; heathland; and reed bed. At that time the trees were not out in leaf so we had lovely views of a bird sitting on what would now be a well-hidden nest. We also had a lovely view on an obliging Great Spotted Woodpecker that for once didn't land on the other side of the tree trunk.

This walk was then followed by a lovely walk around the Sennowe estate. Thanks go to Tom Cook and Steve Cale for arranging and leading the walk.

Some keen-eyed people on the walk identified a smart looking Sexton Beetle (*Necrophorus vespilloides*) doing a useful job of recycling a dead pheasant; and some Alderfly (*Sialis lutaria*). The view was that there must have been a very recent hatch as they only live as adults for a few days. Their larvae live in the lake silt for one to two years and are very active carnivores.

Not to be outdone, the two noteworthy flowers spotted were Dove's-foot Crane's-bill (*Geranium mole*), little pink-flowered geranium, and the similar-looking little pink Common Stork's-bill (*Erodium cicutarium*).

Over 25 species of birds and five species of butterflies were spotted. The singing warblers and Cuckoo, plus the Hobby are definite signs that spring is here, even if the recent weather hasn't got the message yet!

To remind that spring is here. This lovely picture was taken by Paul Stearman one of our new members. Thank you Paul it is great.



It is May already and it's time for your mower to take a rest. "No mow May" is here and by not mowing, it allows spring flowers to bloom and provide nectar for pollinators like bees, butterflies and moths, and importantly, it allows the plants to set seed.

We might still harbour old fashioned values that Dandelions are a sign on an unloved garden but they are a wonderful source of insect food especially early in the year. My wife, Julie Bunker, took this picture while we were out walking near Warham last month. Pretty much the only plants in flower and available for this Brimstone were Dandelions.



Talking about walking, especially this time of the year, I keep saying to myself, keep an eye out for Adders coiled up and basking in the sunshine. While we were on holiday last month walking along the Pembrokeshire coast, I failed to see the Adder until it slithered quickly across the path between my two feet. A salutary reminder to keep my eyes peeled.

On one of our recent walks, Jennifer was chatting to me about a Youtube video she had found about whaling and asked me to share it with the wider group. I have watched it, it's about five minutes long, and is a very powerful video. If, like Jennifer, you find something you'd like to share with the wider group please send it to me.

To Whale or Not To Whale <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lbSx2kcb70M>

Last month I wrote about "Blue and Green" infrastructure. Having read the article, it seems to be the new thinking in the highway industry about new ways to incorporate more wildlife aspects in road schemes. As well as the more obvious and simple things like planting trees and sowing flower seeds, the industry is looking at wide green bridges to reduce animals crossing roads. It is also looking at some of the less obvious parts of road or even rail construction schemes like balancing ponds, which rather than just being steep sided holes to retain displaced water are moderated for the benefit of wildlife. The concept also considers

how rainwater run-off does simply end up in a drain but how this too can be captured locally for the benefit of wildlife. Acknowledging that, unlike the Welsh Assembly that has put a moratorium on all new significant road building, the construction of new roads is here to stay hopefully this new concept might just lessen the negative impact on wildlife.

A quick reminder that the besides the dawn chorus walk on Sunday 14th May, we have events to celebrate the group's 25th anniversary. The first is a weekend of activities and a BBQ on June 10-11th, followed in November by an evening talk. Details of both these events will follow.

David
Membership Secretary