

Ryburgh Wildlife Group August Newsletter

A few months ago I forecast that according to folk lore, we'd only have a splash of rain this summer rather than a soak. It was all to do with Oak in flower before ash. Well, I was going to say that the exception proves the rule ...but I'm actually writing this in a spell of dry, sunny and, today, hot weather. It might be that the jury is still out on this one.

I will avoid any political comments, but we do have a new Government. It's early days yet and we will have to wait and see how the new administration will help protect and enhance our wildlife. Fingers crossed.

Did you work out who the mystery person was in the photo from last month?



Photo by David Cooling

The person is Carl Linnaeus (May 23 1707 – January 10 1778) who was a Swedish biologist and physician. He changed his name to Carl von Linné in 1762 after he was enobled by King Adolf Frederik of Sweden. Linnaeus is famous for introducing a “binomial” naming system in 1735 whereby every species become known by two Latin names and which became the foundations for the modern scheme of taxonomy.

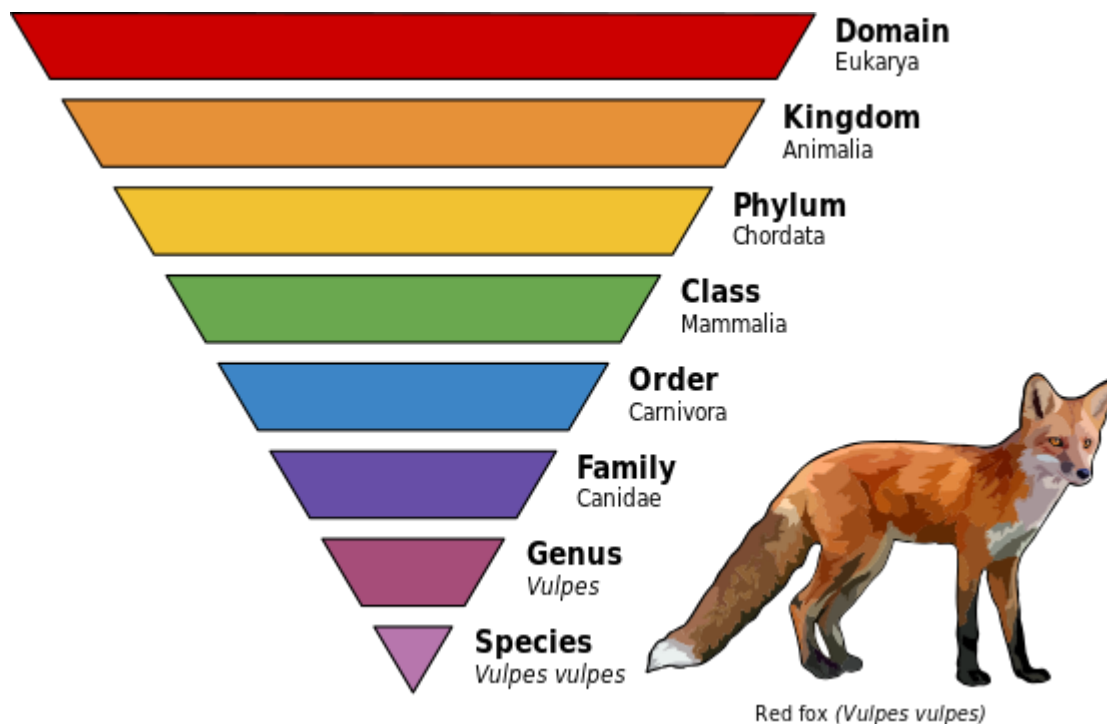
I found this statue completely by accident while we were wandering around near our hotel in Stockholm getting our bearings. Needless to say, it's not in any tourist guidebook.

I was very excited to find the statue as it brought back happy memories of short-trousered junior school times. Mr Snell, our form teacher, gave us a project to do which was to find out about Carl Linnaeus. Bill Gates was still at school then, so there was definitely no Microsoft, no world wide web and no internet. Research involved a good old fashioned quick bus trip with my mum to our local library to take out the relevant textbooks before the rest of the class could get there. Yes, I was a swot. Happy days.

Fifty plus years later, all I need do is type in “Linnaeus” and there is a wealth of information at my fingertips. Thank you, Bill Gates and Sir Tim Berners-Lee.

In Linnaeus’s original naming system the highest rank was “kingdom” followed by “class”, “order”, “genus” and “species”. Later two further ranks were added and as late as 1990 an additional rank “domain” was added above “kingdom”.

This means that classification is now: “domain”, “kingdom”, “phylum (division)”, “class”, “order”, “family”, “genus” and “species”. Typically, species still get referred to by genus and species only. Below is an example of the full scientific name for good old-fashioned Fox, now Red Fox.



Protocol is to write the scientific names in italics, and without capitalisation for the species. Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), Arctic Fox is (*Vulpes lagopus*). More local to us in the UK Pedunculate or Common Oak (*Quercus robur*), Magpie (*Pica pica*) – remember the quiz question at the last AGM?, Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*). I think I’ll stick with Bluebell.

Last Friday evening I had a morris dancing commitment in South Wimbledon. Walking from the tube station to the pub, to stock up on fluid before the practice, I came across this *Vulpes vulpes* sunning themselves.



Photo by David Cooling

Looking back in time, can you remember the last time you had to wash your car windscreen to remove insects after a long drive? Years ago it was quite a common thing to see Pied Wagtails jumping up at car number plates in motorway service stations to collect a very easy meal. Not anymore. The Wildlife Trusts have said that this year's chilly, wet spring seems to have had a big effect on the presence of pollinating insects and butterflies so far this summer. Human activity is also not helping.

The Wildlife Trusts have been challenging the need for farmers to use banned chemicals and calling for more support for nature-friendly farming, to help wildlife. One challenge is on the use of the 'banned' neonicotinoid pesticide, Thiamethoxam, on sugar beet crops. This is the link to sign their petition. [Back Nature-Friendly Beet Farmers \(wildlifetrusts.org\)](https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/back-nature-friendly-beet-farmers). The Wildlife Trusts have also produced some information on how to help insects. Again you might find this link useful [AFI Individual A5 SEP 22 NEW LOGO.pdf \(wildlifetrusts.org\)](https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/afi-individual-a5-sep-22-new-logo.pdf)

Like you I hope, we had no mow May, and we've left a patch uncut all spring and summer. The Self Heal and Ribwort Plantain have done well and looks like they've set their seed now. We'll leave it for a couple more weeks just to make sure. The little bug house close by in the garden is also getting lots of attention from small flies.

Dates for your diary

Farm Stewardship for Food and Conservation walk at Highfield take two - Date to be confirmed.

Sennowe walk –autumn walk. Date to be decided.

Tail piece – “Reasons for Hope”

Might we see Swallowtails butterflies (*Papilio machaon*) in the Wensum valley?

I’m not sure that this really ought to be here because our gain would emanate from someone else’s loss. It relates to an article in the May edition of British Wildlife about the future of the Broads written by Patrick Barkham. In the Broads generally increasing salinity is an issue. There are at least 31 species of plants and animals that are entirely or largely restricted to the Broads, the most famous of which is the UK sub-species of the Swallowtail butterfly which is in decline.

Alex Prendergast, a vascular plant senior specialist for Natural England and an expert on Broadland plants, is currently looking at the feasibility of moving a particular type of fenland plant community, including Fen Orchid and Milk Parsley (food plant of the Swallowtail) which do not like salt water, further up Broadland river valleys like the Wensum and away from the influence of saltwater incursions.

We shall see.

David

Membership Secretary