

## Ryburgh Wildlife Group July Newsletter

Our Nature Watch Week has now over and we are into the second half of the year. Where has the time gone?

I hope that you managed to get out and enjoy some of the events during the Nature Watch Week. I was out of the area and not able to join in, but I've been told that the weather was against us.

Sadly the moth trapping, the bat hunt and the flower walk down the old railway line all succumbed to the weather. Despite the weather a few people did join the quiz in the community woodland and the walks to the common and Little Ryburgh. Those who went to Little Ryburgh were treated to discover a lovely wildflower meadow there. Fortunately, our flower expert, Barley Wilson, was on hand to identify Bee Orchids and Common Broomrape. Another event that proved a hit was the water quality testing. I don't yet have any record on how good the water quality was but once I know I will share it with you.

We concluded the week with a fantastic talk by Nick Acheson entitled "Reasons for Hope" - Over 30 people came along and enjoyed the evening. Nick also selected the winning photo submitted by Simon Rout. Well done Simon.



Photo by Simon Rout

Thank you to all of you who sent photos in. The standard was very high. They are on the website now. At the last committee meeting we discussed the idea of a photo calendar so although the competition may be over, do please keep sending the photos.

<https://ryburgh-wildlife-group.co.uk/photography-competition-2024/>

The photos show us that we have some very interesting species in the village from Bee Orchids to Broad-bodied Chaser dragonflies to Mouse-ear flowers. The village bird list is also quite impressive.

During one of the open hide sessions, Nick Parson noted a total of 52 species. Highlights included a reeling Grasshopper Warbler, Sedge Warbler, three Marsh Harriers, a Cuckoo and a Gadwall with 10 ducklings. Sadly, only one Willow Warbler was noted and worryingly - no Swallows.

If you've been to the hide recently you will have noticed that it is currently locked. We've experienced some unsociable behaviour in the hide and we've had to take the decision to lock the hide to prevent further damage. The committee is looking at a better longer term access solution but in the meantime if you would like to use hide please collect a key from from Mike Rundle.

At the very start of June John Savory led the Farm Stewardship for Food and Conservation walk round Highfield farm. Just under 20 people attended. They were given a real treat from John about how he balances wildlife conservation and farming. The walk managed to see only a fraction of the farm and John is very keen to have a follow up walk to show and share more. Watch this space. Below are some photos of the day.



Sown winter bird food mixture and restored pond.

Photos by Gill Waldron

A couple of bits of interest. I came across this Gorse covered by Dodder at Incleborough Hill near West Runton. Dodder is a parasitic heathland specialist and is listed as vulnerable. I've certainly not seen it before. I know we are past Spring, but we often talk about seeing Celandines as one of the earliest plants in flower. To be accurate we really ought refer to them as Lesser Celandines - we have a Greater Celandine too. Oddly they are not related – not even distant cousins.



Dodder and Greater Celandine. Photos by David Cooling

If it's July then it's time for Butterfly Conservation's Big Butterfly Count. It starts on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July and runs until 4<sup>th</sup> August. More details can be found here.

<https://bigbutterflycount.butterfly-conservation.org/>

Mystery competition. Who is the person in the statue and why are they famous? Have a guess and email who you think it is. I will reveal the details next month.



Photo by David Cooling

### **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”**

I picked up two “reasons for hope” from BBC Radio 4 recently. One was an interview with a National Trust ranger from the Farne Island where they were running a Puffin count. The good news is that Puffins levels are holding up post avian flu and are actually marginally better than last year.

The second was an interview about Cuckoos with a representation from the BTO (British Trust for Ornithology). The BTO person explained although Cuckoo levels have been declining generally, levels in Scotland are now starting to bounce back. Research has shown that although Cuckoos from both Scotland and England winter in the same place they take different migration paths, which may account for the differences in how Cuckoos are faring.

Scottish birds tend to migrate via Italy whereas English birds are tending to migrate via Spain. The research did not explain why the Spanish migration was less favourable for birds.

Lastly, following on from Cuckoos is good news about Turtle Doves. A new report has been prepared for the European Commission by the international team of scientists advising governments on how to manage populations of Turtle Doves sustainably. A temporary hunting ban, in place across France, Spain and Portugal since 2021, has resulted in dramatic improvements for Turtle Doves. The even better news is that the hunting ban has been extended for another year. Key in the UK is the availability of good breeding season habitats.

<https://www.birdguides.com/news/european-turtle-dove-increases-dramatically-following-hunting-ban/#:~:text=Following%20a%20hunting%20ban%2C%20European,according%20to%20a%20new%20report.>

One our near neighbours, Pensthorpe, is part of the Operation Turtle Dove partnership which is dedicated to helping the UK's breeding population of Turtle Doves to recover.  
<https://operationturtledove.org/>

Fingers crossed.

**David**

Membership Secretary