



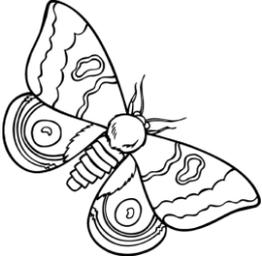
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Autumn 2012 Issue 41

Newsletter of the Gainsborough Area Group of the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust

FIELD MEETINGS - SUMMER 2012

Linda Woodward Reports:



Moth Morning - Sunday 17 June 2012

With bad weather cropping up regularly this summer, we were very lucky to have a rain-free night for moth trapping, followed by a lovely sunny morning when we assembled at Strawberry Farm, Morton to open the traps.

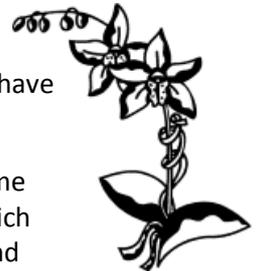
Whether it was really the moths, or the bacon butties for breakfast that was the attraction (?), around 20 people turned up and were treated to fascinating information from Matthew Blissett (N.W. Lincs Warden) as he opened each box. We had set 5 traps overnight and each had been left in different areas, so it was interesting to see the variation in contents of each. Altogether we (well, Matt and Ted really!) identified 49 different species from a total of 178 moths caught, which more than kept the photographers busy!

Many thanks to Val and Richard Williamson and their family for providing us with the ideal venue for the meeting, Matthew and Ted for taking time out to help us with ID, and all who set the traps. [*And to Linda for organising and preparing the delicious bacon rolls - Ed.*]

Messingham Sand Quarry - Wednesday 18 July 2012

We had expected to have to cancel the visit due to bad weather, but all the crossed fingers must have done the trick as we had a lovely sunny evening for a stroll around the reserve.

At one point it looked like the leaders might outnumber the visitors, but eventually 11 people came along which made a nice-sized group. We were shown lots of interesting and different things which make this reserve such a pleasure to visit at any time - marsh harriers to terns, orchids to fungi and longhorn beetles to butterflies.



Thanks to Eddie Gaunt and helpers for showing us around.



Notes From An Uphill Garden: a further extract from the diary of two Area Group members whose garden in uphill Gainsborough, which is planned with wildlife in mind, backs on to some old woodland:

2012 Summer

14 June – A pair of Greenfinches hopping along the edges of the gravel path, delicately picking seeds from the overhanging heads of Forget-me-nots with their stout beaks.

17 June – Hedgehog sounds in the wood in late evening, the snuffling and grunting carrying clearly in the still air. Was it one or a pair?

19 June – A Speckled Wood butterfly on the wing, newly emerged and fresh as paint – only the second we have seen in the garden this year.

28 June – Found a Lesser Stag Beetle resting on the window ledge of the conservatory. An impressive insect, a good inch long or more, uniformly black and with prominent mandibles. Commoner than the larger Stag Beetle they are widespread over much of England except the far north. The larvae feed on the soft, decaying wood of broadleaved trees, favouring Ash, Beech and Apple. Adult beetles disperse in the summer, often flying into gardens, especially those with orchards, large trees or hedges and are also attracted to lights. We hope they don't like cedar wood conservatories!

3 July – Heard the calls of Nuthatch in the wood, several voices together indicating a family group.

8 July – A male Blackcap, accompanied by a juvenile bird, active in the woodland margin and hedge, the male briefly flying on to the large clump of Meadow Sweet by the pond.

9 July – The female Blackcap flew into the Bramley tree, perching on a low branch with a wild strawberry in her beak. She ate the fruit and wiped her beak on the branch before flying back into the wood. We'd always thought of Blackcaps as exclusively insectivorous, but the RSPB website confirms that they also eat berries.

13 July – Chiff-chaff bathing in the pond. The native plants Wild Basil and Bristly Ox-tongue in bloom, the former with bright, deep-pink little flowers emerging from the ruff-like, hairy whorls of buds circling its long stems, and the latter with large, yellow blooms opening at the top of roughly hairy stems above warty, spiky leaves.

23 July – First 2012 sighting of Purple Hairstreak butterflies, up among the oak branches. Last year we saw them first on 2 July, the later emergence this summer no doubt due to the wet and cold weather.

26 July – The garden overrun with families of Blue and Great Tits, the young birds following one another in rapid succession in flights among the overhanging oak branches, down to the hedge, into the garden, over to the pond and then repeating the rounds again. Sometimes three or four birds would perch next to one another on a branch before setting off again. At least one young Coal Tit was caught up amongst the flurry of activity for a while.

4 August – Comma, Large and Small White, Purple Hairstreak, Meadow Brown and Holly Blue butterflies all on the wing.

10 August – Female Common Darter and immature male Migrant Hawker dragonflies active in the garden. At one point both perched on the same Foxglove seed head.

11 August – Green Woodpecker yaffling repeatedly in the wood. Male Southern Hawker dragonfly on the wing. These beautiful, blue and green insects seem quite curious and will come close to look you over if you stand still in their territory. Female Tawny Owl calling in the wood at night.

19 August – Several Migrant Hawks, Common Darters and a male Southern Hawker active in the garden on our best day yet for dragonflies.

23 August – A Red Underwing Moth resting on the conservatory window in the early evening.

3 September – A warm, sunny day. A family of Nuthatches active in the nearest oak – two young birds rapidly foraging, evidently learning by experimentally tapping their beaks on the bark but also at dead leaves and even the remains of an old plastic bag caught up in the branches. A Speckled Wood butterfly sunning itself on the hedge and a Silver-Y moth feeding on Marjoram flowers. Extended family groups of Blue- and Long-tailed Tits streaming in long flights through the oak trees.

Many thanks for this beautifully descriptive view into a fascinating garden! We would love to hear from anyone who keeps a similar wildlife diary, but perhaps in a different type of location. - Ed.



WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN..... AND HEARD:

I am very grateful to everyone who has sent me details of interesting sightings during the summer months, and especially to the new contributors who have e-mailed me. Please keep your observations coming in, be it by phone, word of mouth, e-mail or snail-mail - Ed.

* In late June a single beautiful specimen of a Bee Orchid was found beside a Laughton forest track. Although the path has been used regularly over a number of years by a Trust member she has never seen any orchids there previously.

* New member Roger Burgess finds Gainsborough Golf Club a particularly good place for wildlife sightings including a barn owl hunting very successfully in broad daylight, totally unconcerned by the presence of golfers. He has also noted muntjac deer and hares in the area as well as many different species of birds. In particular he mentions oystercatchers (yes, there *are* oysters in the lakes although these birds also feed on a variety of aquatic goodies, worms, crustaceans, insects etc.) and buzzards flying overhead.

* Southern Marsh Orchids were discovered on the dune slacks at Cleethorpes and then, closer to home, on the Scotton Common verge where they have not been seen for some time. Another rarely seen plant in a ditch adjacent to the verge was the insectivorous Butterwort which was present in the 1950's and 60's but disappeared when the forestry grew and shaded the verge. The large trees have now been felled. Also, in a water-filled section of the ditch, a grass snake was seen swimming leisurely and apparently foraging for any tasty aquatic morsel.

* Blyton member Ann Clark was interested to find a Large Emerald moth in the window of the village's Parish Meeting Room in early July. These beautiful moths favour a habitat near woodlands, heaths or hedgerows and feed on beech and silver birch trees. They are often attracted to sources of bright light so maybe the Parish Council, sitting under artificial light late on a summer evening, had aroused the moth's curiosity?

* East Stockwith member Des Lloyd has been out and about in Owlet Wood this summer where he spotted a nuthatch depositing an acorn into the bark of a pine tree and a second nuthatch hammering at the tree. Spotted Flycatcher have also been seen as well as a Buzzard flying over the forest.

* Laughton residents have remarked on the number of buzzards seen and heard over the village this summer. Their call, resembling the loud mew of a cat, could be heard frequently, and on one occasion when the calling became quite frantic, the Buzzard appeared to be under attack by a Swallow!

* There have been reports of polecats in the Laughton area. Are these really polecats or perhaps just escapee ferrets? Please contact the Editor (see Page 4) if you have sightings of either of these shy beasts.

* **OPHIDIOPHOBES - SKIP THIS!** There have been many reports of snakes seen in the Laughton area, both adders (mostly in the forest or on the coversands areas) and grass snakes. The latter seem especially prone (no pun intended!) to getting run over on the roads around the village. These have ranged from tiny bootlace jobs to whopping three-footers. They have obviously flourished in the unusually wet summer weather and lush damp meadowland provides not only excellent cover but an abundance of snakey treats such as frogs, snails, slugs etc. Oh yum!

UPDATES: STOP PRESS: There will be an additional indoor meeting on Wednesday 23 January 2013 at Morton Village Hall at 7.30pm when there will be a showing of the DVD 'The Wildlife Trust - 100 years of Nature Conservation' featuring our own Ted Smith and David Attenborough. Refreshments, raffle, sales table etc. as usual. Entrance £1 (minimum). **Everyone welcome.**

IN MEMORIAM: It is with great sadness that we record the deaths of two Area Group stalwarts - Neil Taylor and Pat Greator. Neil had been a member and supporter of the Area Group for many years and was also a member of the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust's Council where he also represented the Area Group. Pat will be remembered for her willingness to take on the role of Area Group Chairman - despite never previously having served on the Committee - in the absence of any other volunteer. It was a task she carried out for three years with efficiency, enthusiasm and good humour. We extend our sympathy to Neil and Pat's families on their great loss.

Dates For Your Diary - INDOOR MEETINGS



WEDNESDAY 20 FEBRUARY:

An evening with feathered friends
Annette Mackenzie

SALES STALL - Mystery Parcels. For our New Year fund-raiser you are invited to bring along a wrapped gift to the value of at least £1.00 which sales ace Hilary Harris will sell (yes, for £1!) on her sales table. Just a bit of fun - especially if you bag a bargain - which, we hope, will boost our funds.

WEDNESDAY 20 March:

Wildlife Gardening
Mary Porter tells us how to lure butterflies, birds and other wildlife to our gardens.

SALES STALL - Plants. Please bring any surplus plants (potted up, please) for sale for Area Group funds. All plants, large or small, will be priced at 50p; plants which attract wildlife will be especially welcome!

WEDNESDAY 24 APRIL:

AGM followed by
A presentation on the Idle Valley Nature Reserve, Retford
Warden James Simpson.

SALES STALL - Pre-read books and quality magazines (on a sale or return basis), please.

All indoor meetings are held at Morton Village Hall and begin at 7.30pm. Members and non-members equally welcome. Entrance by donation - minimum £1.00 - which includes tea/coffee and biscuits. Raffle, sales table and bird food sales (please pre-order - see below). Volunteers to help serve refreshments/clear away and wash up much appreciated!

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Bird Food Sales:

Our local distributor is Clare Holmes. Regular customers are still welcome to call at her home as before, but if you wish to buy bird food from the stall at indoor meetings please pre-order from her in good time - 01427 613128 - and she will bring your order to the meeting. In the past Clare has often lugged quantities of bird feed to meetings, sales have been poor ...and she has had to lug the stuff home again. By pre-ordering you will save Clare much time and effort.

Weight	Peanuts	Mixed seed	Black sunflowers	Niger seed	Sunflower hearts
Kg	£	£	£	£	£
2.5	6.75	3.00	4.15	5.30	5.50
5	12.50	5.25	7.30	9.20	10.25
20	-	20.00	26.00	-	40.00
25	55.00	-	-	42.00	-
Fat Balls	30p each				
Charcoal	4.75 per bag				

Please note supplies and prices are subject to availability and change.

Please send your wildlife sightings
or other info to the Editor,
Joy Bannister, 01427 628457
or
gjban786@btinternet.com



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