



Linkline

Spring 2012, Issue 39

Newsletter of the Gainsborough Area Group of the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust



JOIN THE TEAM

Our Annual General Meeting takes place on Wednesday 18 April 2012 at Morton Village Hall starting at 7.30pm and, if other years are anything to go by, will be over by around 7.45pm. Following on will be an update on the Beckingham

Marshes project as well as a light supper. So don't be put off coming thinking there will be a long and boring business session to be endured - Gainsborough Area Group is renowned for the brevity of its AGMs!

But democracy reigns supreme and nothing is cut and dried, so if you, or someone you know, would like to join the Committee, nominations are most welcome. We would like to hear particularly from anyone with a desire to be our Chairman. Jean Blades (Vice-chairman) has kindly fronted meetings for several years now while the post of Chairman has remained unfilled. Similarly we would like to appoint a permanent Refreshments Officer - at present this task is being carried out by the Secretary who sometimes finds it difficult trying to be in two places at once! For details of either post please get in touch with Jean or Joy.

The Area Group holds just 2 Committee Meetings per year which are very informal and relaxed occasions and usually take place in February and September. Go on, give it a try and enjoy the satisfaction of knowing that *you* are doing something worthwhile to keep *your* Area Group active and successful!

Contact Jean on 01427 838325, Joy on 01427 628457 or e-mail her at gjban786@btinternet.com

RUBY TAIL WASP FOUND IN SCUNTHORPE - ONLY 2ND RECORD IN 30 YEARS!

From Buglife, The Invertebrate Conservation Trust: www.buglife.org.uk



Clare Dinham, Buglife Brownfield Conservation Officer, said "This three year project in Scunthorpe is already underway with our exciting bug survey results being published today. The Ruby tail wasp was found in abundance on the Tata steelworks site. We believe that the sandy banks and vertical faces on the site are ideal nest sites for this solitary wasp. This site has great potential so we look forward to improving it even more for bugs".

Buglife will be improving five sites across Scunthorpe including sites managed by North Lincolnshire Council and the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, all of which are ex-industrial land. One active industrial site – Tata Steelworks, also included within the project, is proving to be an important site for bugs in North Lincolnshire.

Chris Jackson, Environment Engineer at Tata Steelworks said "Tata Steel are really pleased to be working with Buglife on this project as it demonstrates how industry and nature can exist side by side and flourish".

Clare Dinham said "This autumn we have been working on habitat management including scrub clearance to make space for nectar and pollen rich flowers for butterflies, beetles and bees".

The work to improve these sites for bugs is part of a national Buglife project to create networks of 'Stepping Stones for Wildlife' on brownfield sites across the UK.

SITA TRUST is an ethical funding organisation dedicated to making lasting improvements to the natural environment and community life. It is a not-for-profit company that operates under the Landfill Communities Fund distributing funds donated by the recycling and resource management company SITA UK. www.sitatrust.org.uk

NEWS FROM THE TRENT VALE LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP



In celebration of the final project year of the Trent Vale Landscape Partnership a series of events and activities are being promoted throughout the area. This includes a wide range of things to do to suit all interests and ages. To view the 'What's on Guide' of events being staged from April to October visit the TVLP website www.trentvale.co.uk or call the Scheme Administrator Christine Jordan on 01636 675770.

Do I live in the Trent Vale area? The area designated to the TVLP covers 388 square kilometres in both Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire and stretches from Farndon, just south of Newark, and follows the course of the River Trent to East and West Stockwith to the north of Gainsborough. However you do not necessarily have to reside in this area to participate in TVLP-organised events.

Celebrate the beginning of Spring with a guided walk around the RSPB nature reserve at Langford Lowfields on Sunday 25 March 2012 from 2pm -4pm. Meet at the Langford Quarry car park off the A1133 (Gainsborough - Newark road) at 2pm. Booking is essential so please contact RSPB Warden Paul Bennett on 01636 893611, 07919 301911 (mob) or e-mail paul.bennett@rspb.org.uk.



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:

2011

14 July – Two Purple Hairstreak butterflies flying all round the garden, frequently settling on the gravel paths and large stones around the pond. One appeared to drink from the pond, slowly walking down a sloping stone until it could reach the water. Perhaps they were also taking in salts from the moist earth between the gravel chips. They come into the garden only occasionally, spending most of their time flying high round the oak trees beyond the hedge. Their main nectar source is honeydew, the sweet exudation of excess sap by aphids feeding on oak leaves, and we have never seen them on flowers. In the evening we could see up to 6 of these butterflies at one time, up in the oak branches.

24 July - A warm and sunny day. Two male Blackbirds were "sunning", one on the garage roof and the other on a path, both taking advantage of the strong sunshine. They turned with their backs to the sun, spread their wings out flat and raised the feathers on their backs and heads to a nearly vertical position, exposing some of their skin to the sunlight. This behaviour is thought to help rid the birds of parasites by exposing them to ultra-violet light. The birds maintained this awkward-looking posture for several minutes and often held their beaks open in a gape, perhaps to help cool themselves by panting.

5 August – Hummingbird Hawk Moth darting about in the garden, a fuzzy blur of whirring, grey and orange wings.

11 December – Large, mixed flock of more than 30 small birds invaded the garden in the middle of the day. Most were Blue and Great Tits but there were several Long-tailed Tits, 3 Goldfinches, several Chaffinches, one Treecreeper and one male Reed Bunting. Many of them bathed in the pond and for about 15 minutes there were birds flying to and fro between pond and hedge, many resting in the hedge after bathing to complete their preening. The Treecreeper flitted round the edge of the pond with the other birds and the Goldfinches swung on the Teasel heads, extracting seeds. A Robin watched quietly from the sidelines, seemingly bemused by all the sudden activity in its territory.

19 December – At lunchtime a large, adult Fox calmly walked by the pond and came right up to the conservatory. After sniffing around briefly, it retraced its steps, ducked under the hedge and went back into the wood.

2012

12 January – Several Primroses blooming along with Common Dog Violet and garden *Pulmonaria*. Hazel catkins lengthening in the hedge.

13 January – A pair of Bullfinches in the garden, the male taking a drink at the pond and the female extracting seeds from the withered berries still clinging to the Guelder Rose bush. We have noticed before that Bullfinches do not eat

the whole fruit from the Guelder Rose, but carefully work the berry in their stout bills until all the flesh is bitten off to leave the seed.

14 January – A male Sparrowhawk with blue-grey back and wings hurtled up the driveway, below roof level, shot through the garden and over the hedge into the wood. A typical Sparrowhawk tactic, intended to surprise unwary small birds. On this occasion his smash and grab raid was unsuccessful.

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:



* October, from Wader Hide at Messingham, a beautiful young Bittern stalked around the edge of the lagoon, as coloured and as bold as brass, before being seen off to the west by two irate Lapwings!

* During the long dark winter nights of late December and early January the eerie sound of a dog fox could often be heard calling in the open fields between Laughton village and the forest. This, coupled with some serious conversations amongst the tawny owls in the cemetery trees, would have made a superb opening sound sequence for a Hammer House

of Horror episode! The dog fox has been seen regularly around the fringe of the village, on one occasion in broad daylight sitting on a roadside verge chomping on what appeared to be the carcass of some unfortunate creature, totally oblivious to passing traffic.

* A Lea member reports large numbers of wrens, blue tits, great tits, coal tits and long-tailed tits at feeders in her garden in the early part of the winter.

* On 6 January at approximately 10am a huge skein of pink-footed geese flew over Laughton village from the north west, heading south east, most probably on a direct route from the Fylde area of Lancashire, which they would have left at first light, to the Wash which they would reach by mid-day. It was estimated that there were around 160-180 birds in this noisy early migrating flock.

...AND WHAT YOU MAY NOT SEE:

* There are no major Aegirs forecast for the River Trent in 2012 according to the Environment Agency, although several of 2* rating are expected. To find out more pick up a brochure from Gainsborough Library or go on line and type 'Environment Agency Trent Aegir' into your search engine. And remember, depending on conditions, 2* Aegirs do sometimes upgrade themselves to a more spectacular level - just as predicted 4* ones often appear as a disappointing ripple!!

TALE OF FOUR KITTENS

Maybe not so much 'wild' as 'feral' life! Maureen Doyle writes:



Early in July 2011 a beautiful pure white feral cat took up residence in one of our hedgehog houses. Tony decided to feed her - but was savaged several times!

A few weeks later she gave birth to 4 kittens - one black, one grey and two white. We had a lot of enjoyment watching the kittens growing and playing, as also has our neighbour.

We carried on feeding Mum and her kittens until the sad day loomed when we had to find somewhere that would re-home them. This turned out to be the Lincolnshire Trust for Cats, and what a wonderful place that is! We have offered to have Mother Cat back if they cannot re-home her, as Tony became quite attached to her, despite the maulings!

What a delightful story. Thank you, Maureen. Perhaps you'll let us know if Mother Cat did return, also any news of other occupants of your hedgehog houses?- Ed.

Dates For Your Diary - INDOOR MEETINGS

WEDNESDAY 21 MARCH: A Wildflower Walk in the Swiss Alps with Wendy and Geoff Handford.



WEDNESDAY 18 APRIL: NOTE CHANGE OF DATE!

A short AGM followed by an RSPB Beckingham Marshes update, light supper and a chance to chat.

All indoor meetings are held at Morton Village Hall and begin at 7.30pm. Admission is by donation at the door (minimum £1.00) which includes tea/coffee and biscuits. Raffle, sales table and good company!

Dates For Your Diary - OUTDOOR MEETINGS

WEDNESDAY 2 MAY: A visit to the RSPB Beckingham Marshes with Warden Paul Bennett. Meet at the Willow Works car park, Old Trent Road, Beckingham for a 6.45pm start.

SUNDAY 17 JUNE: Moth Morning - opening of overnight moth traps - 8.30 - 10.30am. Hopefully bacon/sausage butties and hot drinks available. Ring Linda on 614915 or Joy on 628457 for details.

WEDNESDAY 18 JULY: Walk around Messingham Sand Quarry reserve. Meet at reserve car park for 6.45pm start.

*PROGRAMME SECRETARY: Linda Woodward, 24 Cromwell Ave, Lea, Gainsborough DN21 5HX.
Tel: 01427 614915. E-mail: l.woodward@virgin.net*

Bird Food Sales:

Our local distributor is Clare Holmes, on 01427 613128. Please note supplies and prices are subject to availability and change.



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



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