



Your local wildlife news

Haverhill Wildlife Group is part of Suffolk Wildlife Trust's county volunteer network. Led by local Trust members, the group organises events, talks and wildlife activities and raises money for the Trust, to help safeguard our wild and beautiful county.

BOX CLEVER WITH NO MOW MAY

The north wind doth blow and we shall have snow, according to a 16th century nursery rhyme. Well, the forecasters certainly got it right for March. As I write this towards the middle of the month a blizzard is preventing me from seeing more than a metre or two into the garden. The daffodils and crocuses that appeared unusually early and started to light up the garden in February are looking very downhearted, but they will recover and our resident robins don't seem bothered at all. I don't see them hiding their heads under their wings as suggested in the nursery rhyme: they just tuck into the mealworms that we put out for them. Perhaps they tuck themselves up at night when I do the same!

I guess the frogs and toads that have been making their way to the ponds will have gone back to their winter quarters, but they will not come to any harm, although the tadpoles may be a bit late. The same may be true of the tulips and other spring-flowering bulbs that normally grace our gardens in May.

We hear a lot about climate change these days and, despite the cold snap referred to above, there seems no doubt that average temperatures are rising. This can have a major effect on our wildlife, allowing species to spread further north and enabling various exotic species to establish themselves further south. If you have a box hedge or bush in your garden you may well have encountered the box tree moth, a native of south-east Asia that was accidentally introduced to Britain in 2007 and has since spread rapidly over much of the country. The adult is an attractive insect, with silky white wings and sooty brown borders, but it is a species that we could well do without, for its caterpillars can quickly defoliate a box hedge. Adults can be found throughout the summer and autumn and often come to lights at night.

Many of you will have heard of the charity Plantlife and its No Mow May campaign, aimed at improving our gardens for insects



The adult box tree moth has a wingspan of about 4cm. Its caterpillars are greenish yellow with copious black markings.

and other wildlife. This is an excellent plan and I commend it to all members. The idea is to leave your lawnmower in the shed and let nature take over for a few weeks. Daisies, dandelions, self-heal, black medick, and various other flowers will soon appear and you can watch the bumble bees and honeybees gathering the pollen and nectar, accompanied by numerous hover-flies. Common blue and holly blue butterflies may also join the feast. Even leaving part of your lawn unmown can help, and if you continue the plan into June so much the better. For further details of the no-mow campaign, visit www.plantlife.org.uk.

Attendance at our monthly talks has noticeably increased recently. I don't know if this has been due to my plea in last summer's Newsletter or to our recent decision to put posters up in local shops and libraries, but your steering group is very pleased to see some new faces. Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 13 September, when Brian Partridge will entertain us with a talk on English woodlands and their folklore. I look forward to seeing you then. Meanwhile, have a good summer.

Michael Chinery



Be part of Team Wilder

Research shows that if just one person in every four takes up a cause, this can be enough to change the minds and behaviour of the majority. Imagine what we could achieve if that cause was nature: if a quarter of people in Suffolk created more space for wildlife to bring back what we've lost.

**#Team
Wilder**
suffolkwildlifetrust.org

RESERVE NEWS: ARGER FEN & SPOUSE'S VALE

After what feels like a prolonged winter, spring has finally sprung on the reserve. Wildflowers such as bluebell, wild garlic, and lords and ladies having ventured out of the ground in colder months, now bloom alongside primroses, greater stitchwort and red campion. The woodland glades and ride edges come to life with vibrant colour and a flurry of insect activity, making the most of the early season and summer nectar source and innocently sustaining the woodland flora communities through the act of pollination. The open areas of the woodland warm up in the sun not only offering bees, hoverflies and butterflies places to feed and rest but adding more complex structural diversity throughout the woodland that birds and mammals also depend upon.

As birdsong fills the air through spring (the dawn chorus is spectacular by the way),

nightingales dominate this choral ensemble almost constantly, night and day, from thick cover. Other species such as skylark sing overhead on the wilded eastern field areas establishing territories and attracting mates, whilst yellowhammer and greenfinch sing from high perches along the undulating hedge lines.

Following on from some desilting work, the pond within Arger Fen close to the main trail towards the car park has filled up nicely from late winter rainfall and is now being recolonised gradually with aquatic plants (water violet and yellow flag iris). We have already seen signs of amphibian activity with the occasional smooth newt and toad spotted among the sections of open water.

Will Cranstoun, West Suffolk Sites Manager

WHAT'S ON

Wednesday 13 September 7.45pm

Talk: ENGLISH WOODS AND FOLKLORE

With Brian Partridge.

Wednesday 11 October 7.45pm

Talk: WASPS

With Ian Bedford.

All talks are at East Town Park and begin at 7.45pm. Entrance fee is £2.50. Donation for refreshments.

For more details visit:

suffolkwildlifetrust.org/events



ALAMY

CAN YOU HELP?

Thanks to the continued generous support of local volunteers, decades of editions of *Suffolk Wildlife* magazine have been hand delivered to your, and every members', door across the county multiple times each year. These geographically located teams require a volunteer coordinator(s) to organise each delivery into subsections ready for collection and distribution three times each year, January, May and September.

We are currently seeking one or two people in the Sudbury area who like organising to come forward and fill this gap. In doing so you will help the Trust save thousands of pounds in postage costs, which will otherwise be spent more directly on conservation work.

For an informal chat about the role please contact Nic Martin, Membership Manager at membership@suffolkwildlifetrust.org.

YOUR LOCAL WILDLIFE GROUP CONTACTS

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MAGAZINES

If you would like to help our magazine volunteer delivery team in the future please contact:

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WILD YOUR INBOX

Would you like to hear from us by email? Sign up at bit.ly/SWTemails

YOUR LOCAL WARDEN



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YOUR WILD LEARNING OFFICER



Joanne Atkins
Wild
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Officer

Your most local reserves

Arger Fen & Spouse's Vale ● Bradfield Woods ● Bull's Wood

Cornard Mere ● Knettishall Heath ● Lackford Lakes ● Old Broom



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