



Worcestershire Wildlife Trust

South East Worcestershire Local Group

Local News & Local Events April 2021

INDOOR MEETINGS

There have been, of course, no indoor meetings from March 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The online talks run by the Trust with local groups acting as hosts, introduced in the last local newsletter, have been a resounding success enjoyed by loyal local members as well as attracting a much wider audience from the length and breadth of Britain and, indeed, from right across the world.

The speakers have enthralled us with topics ranging from the wildlife on our doorsteps, the fritillaries of Malvern, the hills and dales of Shropshire through to the pressing threats of climate change. We have been transported to the nests of our urban peregrines from where we could admire their views of our city landscapes. We have been given a delightful and interesting insight into the private lives of pine martens and the watery life of our pond dwellers. In mid December we were treated to a most entertaining talk on the natural history of some of our nature-related Christmas traditions.

All these fascinating talks are beautifully illustrated with some stunning photography bringing the finest details clearly to life. The well fielded Q & A opportunity at the end of each talk are testament to the keen audience engagement.

Still to come we have:

18th March - Joel Ashton, "Wildlife Gardening"

Wildlife garden creator Joel will inspire us with ever more ideas on making a sanctuary for nature in our very own patches.

1st April - Gary Farmer, "The Tricks that Nature Plays"

Celebrate April Fool's Day with local naturalist Gary as he regales us with how nature fools and tricks us in its bid for survival.

15th April - Eleanor Reast, "Piper's Hill – ancients, elfcups and deadwood dwellers"

The Trust's Eleanor will reveal the inhabitants and history of this gem of a nature reserve that she manages. (Eleanor is Conservation Officer for the Trust's eastern reserves).

With so much uncertainty we continue to plan for more online talks through the summer, encouraged by the positive feedback and strong audience numbers. We are currently confirming topics and speakers to keep us all connected to nature and to each other as a nature loving community.

To see what's coming up and book your place, visit the Trust's website www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/whats-on (browse from here or click the 'Online Talks' button - click on the talk you are interested in (a donation of £2.50 is suggested) and book). You will then receive a link by email to the event - click on the night to join. Please be assured that any details you enter are purely used for the relevant event and you will not receive other unsolicited emails.

Janet Morris

WEBSITES

Information on Local Group events and log sales can be found on the Trust's main website www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk and on the local website www.tiddesley.org.uk

TIDDESLEY WOOD OPEN DAY

Because of the uncertainty regarding the progress of the pandemic Tiddesley Wood Open Day 2021 is cancelled.

FIREWOOD LOGS AND WOOD-CHIP SALES

Through very careful planning we have been able to hold log and chip sales this winter. The sales were managed with social distancing by volunteers using masks and visors. Arrangements were made to accept payments by card via a one-way system with cashiers behind screens wearing visors. This all worked very well and sales were high throughout the winter. It is very good that products of woodland conservation work by the Trust can also bring in very useful funds for wildlife conservation.

We are deeply indebted to a brilliant band of volunteers who turned out to run the sales in difficult conditions and between sales to do the endless job of filling thousands of bags with logs.

We have many regular customers and their continued support is very much appreciated – they deserve the Award of the Golden Log! Thank you all.

Home delivery of logs.

Our volunteer John Holder is able to make some local deliveries of logs. There will be a delivery charge. If you are interested, please contact John on 07583 907636. We cannot promise to meet every request and whether or not a delivery can be made is entirely at his discretion.

VOLUNTEERS!

The log sales and Tiddesley Wood Open Day are run entirely by volunteers. We are always very pleased to welcome new helpers. Log sales certainly give you plenty of exercise stuffing logs into bags or loading them into trailers! If you would like to join the happy gang please contact Harry Green 01386 710377 or email zen130501@zen.co.uk for more information.

WORCESTERSHIRE WILDLIFE SIGHTINGS

During 2020, a special online initiative called Wildlife Sightings and the **Doorstep Wildlife Survey** was started, aimed at encouraging people to record the wildlife they saw especially in their gardens and local areas www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/wildlife-sightings

Both Worcestershire Biological Records Centre (WBRC) and the Worcestershire Recorders were involved to help deal with records sent in and to offer expert support. Each record required a photograph so it could be verified both for the observer and to be sure the record was correct before entry on the county species database maintained by WBRC. There they will help keep track of the county's wildlife and record the time of year each species is seen. The records add knowledge to the understanding of Worcestershire's wildlife. In fact, species records are one of the main foundations on which wildlife conservation is built.

To start with six species were chosen, all could be seen in gardens: large red damselfly (especially if you have a pond although they do wander from water), marmalade hoverfly, common carder bumblebee, hummingbird hawk-moth, small tortoiseshell butterfly and 7-spot ladybird. More than 150 sightings were sent in, verified and entered onto the database.

Encouraged by the good start more species have been added for 2021. They are house sparrows, moles (their presence indicated by fresh molehills), red-tailed bumblebees, broad-bodied chasers (a dragonfly), mistletoe and box moths. Information on each and how to identify it can be found on the Trust website.

Why these species?

House sparrows have declined in many areas so keeping track of them is important. Nestlings are fed on small insects and pesticides and pollution may have caused the decline. Numbers do seem to be increasing again in places – how about where you are?



Male House sparrow. John Robinson.

Moles have vanished from many places in the face of intensive farming and gardening so where are they now and how can places where they still live be maintained?



Mole paws. John Robinson

Red-tailed bumblebee is an easily identified bumblebee – many species are quite difficult – and changing climate is affecting many insects. Is this species increasing or declining? Regular recording every year helps to track changes.

Broad-bodied chasers are handsome large dragonflies closely associated with ponds. The aquatic larvae need good water quality. They may be increasing slowly and good garden ponds are important for them.

Box-tree moth has arrived in the county recently and, as many gardens contain box hedges or bushes, if you find them you could be making a brand new record and helping us to track a changing distribution.

LOCAL GROUP CONTACTS

Useful phone numbers and your local committee:

Harry Green 01386 710377 (Chairman, Tiddesley Wood, logs and chips, work parties, general information, etc). Liz Stone, Bob Gillmor 01386 556685 (Treasurer, Tiddesley Wood Open Day and general information). Jayne Bache, Miriam Tilt (Secretary), John Holder & Pam Holder (log deliveries), Sue Chandler (bird food and Christmas card sales), Janet Morris (organiser local indoor events).

Newsletter edited and stuck together by Harry Green



Top: Box-tree moth (brown and white) © Oliver Wadsworth
Above: Box-tree moth caterpillar (green and yellow with dark marks) © Nick Goodrum

Mistletoe is the plant that comes out in winter and is easily spotted when the leaves of the trees it parasitises fall. A semi-parasite on trees, they're found mainly in Herefordshire, Worcestershire and nearby counties. Mistletoe can withstand cold winters with coldest month average no lower than -8°C and warmest month average is no lower than 16°C . Will climate change affect its distribution?

It grows on many tree species especially willows, poplars, common lime, hawthorn and, of course, apple trees. Can you add to the list?

The distribution appears to peter out towards NE Worcestershire near Redditch and east of Bredon Hill – maybe you can find it there? Accurate grid references needed for the record.



Lime tree (right) with mistletoe. Oak tree (left) without mistletoe. Mistletoe on oak is very rare – we know of two trees in Worcestershire. If you can find another ... what a record!