



Worcestershire Wildlife Trust

South East Worcestershire Local Group

Local News & Local Events August 2021

Indoor meetings/Online talks

There have been, of course, no indoor meeting since spring 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Online talks have continued to be beamed out via Zoom to our loyal nature-loving community and we have been treated to some fascinating and inspiring talks over the last few months.

Joel Ashton has given us clear, practical and straightforward ideas on how to incorporate space for nature when working in the garden and, indeed, when planning a new garden. We have learned about some of wildlife's tricks and ruses to survive in a competitive and delicate environment from Gary Farmer. Eleanor Reast has taken us on an in-depth virtual tour of Piper's Hill, the reserve that she deftly manages. Who could not now have developed a deep respect for the order Diptera after watching Erica McAlister with her energetic enthusiasm and encyclopaedic knowledge of flies.

With so much uncertainty plans for the coming winter are not yet finalised. For further information see the Trust's website and please do join us for our autumn season of talks.

Noble chafer beetle monitoring

I would like to share the sheer thrill of finding my first noble chafer beetle *Gnorimus nobilis* in the trap I had been monitoring to help us understand more about their population. For 10 days of unseasonably cool weather the trap was empty apart from the odd mosquito and crane fly. On the 10th day, from several paces away, I could see a large shape in the trap; it was my first noble chafer and, after carefully marking it, I photographed it multiple times like a frenzied paparazzi. It was very placid and I was able to observe its magnificent iridescence - so many colours in one small creature. I released her onto the apple tree; by then I could ascertain she was a female and I admired the beautiful soft pink hues of her last abdominal segment as she crawled diligently up the branch and onto a leaf until she reached the very tip and peered over the edge.

Janet Morris



Janet Morris's picture of her first noble chafer.



Worcestershire Wildlife Trust

Tiddesley Wood nr Pershore

Logs & woodchips

Sale dates

Sat & Sun 25th & 26th Sept 2021
Sat & Sun 30th & 31st Oct 2021
Sat & Sun 4th & 5th Dec 2021
Sat & Sun 8th & 9th January 2022
Sat & Sun 5th & 6th Feb 2022
Sat & Sun 5th & 6th March 2022
Sales 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. each day

Logs £6 a bag
Loose without bags £120 per cu metre (250-350 logs)
Loaded loose into trailers, car boots etc - any amount.
Chips if available £3 a bag - quantity discount and for loose.

- Pay by card if possible
- Please adhere to current Covid-safe restrictions

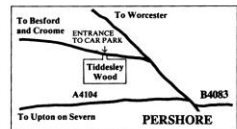
Please check our website to ensure the sale is going ahead

www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk

www.tiddesley.org.uk



Follow main road (B4084) out of Pershore towards Worcester. Turn left at top of Allesborough Hill following signposts to Besford & Croome. After c500 yds look for signs. WR10 2AD will get you near for Sat Navs.



Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, Lower Smite Farm, Smite Hill, Hindlip, Worcester, WR3 8SZ tel. 01905 754919
Charity no. 256618 company no. 929644

Firewood logs and wood-chip sales

Through very careful planning we were able to hold log and chip sales last 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 wearing visors and behind screens. This all worked very well and sales were high throughout the winter. We plan to do the same for winter 2021-2022, probably in a similar way and according to any restrictions in force at the time.

We ask that payments are made by card whenever possible as we are now well set up to operate in this way. We will, of course, still accept payments by cash and cheque

We are deeply indebted to a brilliant band of volunteers who help to run the sales and, between sales, do the endless job of filling thousands of bags with logs. Volunteers are always welcome!

We have many regular customers and your continued support is very much appreciated - you 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.

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

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 either Harry Green 01386 710377 or email zen130501@zen.co.uk of Bob Gillmor 01386 556685 email robert.gillmor@btinternet.com for more information.

Dawn chorus

Sunday 2nd May, National Dawn Chorus Day

I met my daughter, son-in-law and granddaughters, aged seven and five, at 4.30am to walk in Tiddesley Wood to experience the Dawn Chorus. Having first scraped the ice off the car the girls were excited to be going out in the dark and to be walking through the (then) almost silent wood, pausing here and there to listen, peering through the shadows and using their eyes instead of torches, trying not to jump when the occasional startled pigeon blundered off noisily through the branches.

Arriving at a clearing, we bribed the girls with hot chocolate and buns to sit quietly and absorb the atmosphere. Son-in-law wandered off to better listen to and identify the birdsong. The first bird I heard as we were walking up the track from the car was a robin. Other birds I heard were the distinctive 'teacher, teacher' call of a great tit, blue tit, blackbird, chiffchaff and blackcap. Fairly sure there were warblers, but I couldn't identify which species, and lots of other unidentified singers. It's difficult when you're not able to see them! No cuckoos - maybe they are as lazy at getting up in the morning as they are about building their own nests and incubating their eggs!

Having refuelled and now being able to see some colour, and distinguish bluebells from cowslips, we continued our adventure, spotting a few early purple orchids and twice we saw a muntjac not far off (or was it the same one twice?!).

The scent from the bluebells was delicate and lovely, gentle wafts now and again, the ramsons or wild garlic not quite so strong until someone walked on and crushed the leaves!

It was a magical experience and one I hope my granddaughters will remember; watching the light and colours developing, glimpsing the sunrise now and again through the trees, all accompanied by a lot of very noisy birds.

Sue Chandler

Regular visitors

A residential estate is not the first image of a nature reserve but various natural things do happen.

In dry weather I quite regularly have a magpie visiting my bird bath, bringing a large piece of dry bread. Having dropped it in the water, the bird pushes it around and picks off pieces as it gets softer. When not quite finished, the magpie has been seen to leave and return about ten minutes later to take the bread away. Of course, it might be a different bird but we know how bright the corvids are.

After rain, a shallow puddle accumulates in my cul-de-sac. Recently I watched a pigeon having a shower, alternately lifting its wings presumably to disturb any unwelcome insect pests. The water is not deep enough for a proper bath; pigeons do use the bird baths for that.

Back in January and February, even the traffic buzz from the nearby A46 before daybreak could not drown out the early blackbirds and robins. More recently, to my delight, they have been joined by song thrushes and wrens.

Thankfully the local pigeons have stopped courting and arguing on my conservatory roof. Unlike last year, I have not heard a cuckoo on my town walks and, for the second year, I have not seen or heard a swift. Swallows and martins seem to be few and far between. I hope other observers have been luckier!

Liz Stone

Starlings

I like starlings! They are such active, busy, interesting birds! They are also beautiful – a male starling singing (what an extraordinary mixture of sounds: pops, cracks, whistles, wheezes and chatterings) from a chimney pot on a warm April day while showing off his brilliantly glossy blue-black plumage spangled with pale spots and his bright yellow bill with blue base, is a splendid sight. Yet many people don't like starlings visiting garden bird feeders and think of them as greedy and quarrelsome but this is not really so. They seek out food from many sources, visiting rubbish tips, farmyards, gardens and also foraging in grassland.

Despite the appearance of success and commonness, the British starling population has declined by more than half in the last 20 years: we once had around 18 million breeding birds: now there are only 8.5 million and numbers are still falling. Starlings now have the sad fate of Red Alert listing as a bird showing over 50% decline in 25 years. What has caused the decline? Detailed studies of vast amounts of data collected by British Trust for Ornithology over many years shows the number of chicks fledged from the nest has actually increased but that only about 15% survive their first winter. Thereafter around 60% survive until the next year. This means that very few chicks survive to breed but, having survived one winter, they may live for another two years or more. The research shows that fewer chicks are now surviving than 20 years ago and, in some places, adult survival has also declined.

These changes are driving the decline but what is the cause? Starlings are actually mainly grassland feeders and older readers probably remember large flocks of starlings on grass fields busily searching amongst the turf for insect food. They eat many insects and other invertebrates, especially leather jackets - the grubs of daddy long-legs (crane flies). Large numbers of insects only occur in long-established grassland turf un-treated with agricultural chemicals and such places have now almost vanished from the countryside. It seems that young starlings are mainly grassland feeders and many are now unable to find enough food to survive their first year

It seems unlikely that this situation will change so we shall sadly not see a recovery in starling numbers in the near future. The decline will probably continue but such a resourceful species is unlikely to disappear. It was noticeable that during June this year flocks of young starlings (strange drab brown birds) spent much time around villages, suburban areas and gardens seeking food, rather than visiting fields – perhaps your garden holds a key to their survival?

Harry Green

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). Bob Gillmor 01386 556685 (Treasurer, Tiddesley Wood Open Day and log sales organiser). Liz Stone, Jayne Bache, 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.