



Worcestershire
Wildlife Trust

Redditch Local Group

Winter 2025 newsletter

Autumn's recyclers

Jason Waine

By the time you read this, autumn will be upon us and, as far as trees and plants are concerned, it started quicker than usual this year. Leaves started falling as early as August because of the prolonged drought conditions. The warm ground and damp start to the autumn means that perhaps we should be keeping an eye open for fungi.

If, like me, you have difficulty naming fungi, then consider getting one of the identification apps like 'ObsIdentify'. These apps are far from perfect and accuracy will depend to a certain extent on the quality of photograph your phone is able to take but usually it will at least point you in the right direction. There are a number of good field guides to help as well, although the number of species is so great (around 15,000) that any guide can only cover a selection of the most interesting and most common species. Fungi play an essential role in recycling nutrients from dead plants and leaves, dung and even dead animals. Without fungi we would soon be knee-deep in some pretty unpleasant stuff! The nutrient-cycle is essential for all life and nothing gets wasted. Here are two photos of fungi found in or near my garden in August.



Common earthball *Scleroderma citrinum* have no stalks and their spores erupt in clouds through the top of the fungus when ripe.

Indoor meetings – 2025/2026

Our indoor meetings got off to a flying start (quite literally) in September. The title 'Falcons' was a little wide of the mark but no one was complaining as we were treated to a fascinating display of owls. These 'tame' birds were brought by their owner Steve Woodison and we were treated to a flying display from a couple of the birds (but not the eagle owl in our little hall).



European eagle owl; a little too big to fly indoors.



The wonderfully named dryad's saddle *Cerioporus Squamosus*; a large fungus found on trees.

Our October talk was all about Grafton Wood by the man who knows the site better than anyone, John Tilt. This fascinating talk has whetted our appetite for a visit in the spring. As I write, we're looking forwards to our November talk when our very own Tom and Anne Wilkins will be talking about their adventures in Sri Lanka.

Our indoor meetings are held at:

Winyates Green Community Centre,
Furze Lane, Winyates Green, Redditch, B98 0SE
Talks start at 7:30pm
£3.00 entry. Members and non-members
welcome.

December 10th – Quiz night

An informal evening with a fun quiz
set by last year's winner. Come as a team or
join a team on the night.

January 14th – Best of Britain

Tom Mabbut (Nature Trek)
You don't need to be a globetrotter to find
spectacular wildlife.

February 11th – Bats of Birmingham and the Black Country

Chris Sherlock
A detailed look at these wonderful creatures of
the night. Enter a hidden world that most of us
rarely encounter.

March 11th – What goes on at Birmingham Institute of Forest Research – Free-Air-Carbon- Dioxide Enrichment?

Gael Denny
A truly fascinating insight into some very
important science. Run by the University of
Birmingham Since 2017. How will woodland &
wildlife respond to higher levels of CO₂.

April 8th – What to look for in spring

Wendy Carter
What wildlife to look for as spring arrives and the
importance of recording what you spot with the
Wildlife Sightings project.

Check the Trust's website closer to the dates for
more details of our talks:

www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/whats-on

Local sightings

We have started asking people at our indoor
meetings if they have seen anything of interest;
a rare species, things seen at an odd time of
year, birds returning from migration. This is
something we started many years ago but
haven't done in recent years. Looking back at

1998 I noticed an entry for nightingale, Cetti's
warbler and water vole all in the same area of
Arrow Valley Country Park on one evening visit!
And ruddy ducks were still being seen on Arrow
Valley lake that year. Any reports we receive will
add to our knowledge of local wildlife and could
feed into Worcestershire's Wildlife Sightings
project, which we will be learning all about in
April.

Ideas for walks and talks

If you have any ideas for speakers or wild themes
you would like to hear about let us know and
we'll see if we can arrange something for our
next programme. We are hoping to get some
field meetings organised and will need more help
with this. Interested? Please get in touch.

Quick quiz - mammals

Ellen Cooper

- 1) What is the only venomous mammal in the
UK?
- 2) A group of badgers living together in the same
sett is known as a what?
- 3) The Latin name *Vulpes Vulpes* refers to which
mammal?
- 4) Red squirrels are native to the UK.
Approximately how long have they lived in the
UK for?
- 5) There are seven species of Mustelids
(carnivorous mammals) in the UK: badger,
polecat, stoat, weasel, otter, mink and what is
the seventh?

Answers from the summer quick quiz:

- 1) Red kite
- 2) Peregrine falcon
- 3) Osprey
- 4) White-tailed eagle
- 5) Buzzard

Committee

Don't forget that we are still looking for more
committee members to keep the group going. If
you can spare a little bit of time and want to get
more involved in promoting wildlife in Redditch,
let us know:

[garyla@outlook.com](mailto:garyl@outlook.com)