

NATURE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Now including Bee & Mammal news
April 2019 Issue 27



NATURE SOCIETY
Making a real difference



UNUSUAL VISITOR

Early in the month there was an unusual visitor on Moorhen island. A French Partridge also known as a Red-legged Partridge.



They do not usually fly far from their hatching ground so this is a very surprising sighting. It was taken during the very windy period we had so maybe it had been blown off course. If they are local to the area they would have been heard. The call is very distinctive. A loud, rhythmic chuffing call: "chuck-chukka-chuff". If you visit the RSPB website you can listen to it.

A pretty game bird with both sexes alike. Upperparts are uniform grey-brown. Head is boldly marked with a white stripe above the eye, black stripe through the eye, a white chin and throat with a black necklace. Flanks are boldly marked with black, chestnut and white bars. Breast is blue-grey. Red bill, legs and eye ring.

The Red-legged Partridge was introduced to Britain in the 1600s by Charles II, having brought them from France to

provide target practice for guns. They are now resident and outnumber our native Grey Partridge.

They usually nest among bushes in scrub, arable farmland, or hedgerows. Like the Quail and Grey Partridge, the nest is a shallow hollow on the ground and lined with plant material.



Red-legged Partridge are peculiar in that the female may build two nests in late April, lay a clutch in each and

then the male and female take care of each brood simultaneously and independently. The eggs are smooth and glossy, yellowish-white with reddish-buff or greyish markings, and about 41 mm by 31 mm.

The nestlings are led away from the nest shortly after hatching. The wing feathers grow quickly and they can flutter quite early. The brood remain together until the following breeding season.

When you are out and about please keep your eyes open for nests and let us know if you spot any.

-----ooOoo-----

SPONSORED BEE NESTERS

These nesters were put out on March 26th in their chosen locations.



Here are just two of two of the team getting busy.



This one is Roy's and as you can see is located on the foraging trail.

All the nesters will have your names and location numbers on them.

It will be a few weeks yet before you see any nesting activity but the males should be making an appearance shortly and will be hanging around the release chambers waiting for the females. Keep your eyes open.



-----ooOoo-----

LATEST NEWS

- 02.03.19 A frog squashed on the road by FB1
- 10.03.19 White-tailed bumblebee on heather on front of boat Grebe pontoon
- 10.03.19 Red-legged partridge on Moorhen island
- 17.03.19 Chiff-Chaff calling
- 20.03.19 Blue tits starting to nest in one of the nest boxes on edge of woodland.
- 20.03.19 First ducklings of the season seen in the water by Veery pontoon
- 21.03.19 Dead Field vole on path to Grebe Many Queen bumblebees now about across the Marina.
The White swans may be starting to nest on the island in the willow spiral field.

BATS

BAT TALK AND WALK
01 JUNE WILLOW TREE TEAROOMS
TALK STARTS AT 8:15

By Steve Rice
Vice Chair of
Derby Bat Group

MERCIA MARINA

ADMISSION £0

1 hour talk and questions followed by the handing out of bat detectors in readiness for the bat walk around the Marina which lasts just over an hour. Limited spaces so please book your space in the Marina Office.

Sensible shoes and warm clothing essential.

The registration form is now available for this fascinating evening on June 1st. Numbers limited to twenty-two persons so if you want to come along please ask in the office to get signed up.

The last time a bat survey was carried out was seven years ago so it is going to be interesting to see what changes have occurred in that time. Especially now that the marina has more buildings and boats as well as more mature vegetation. Hedges and trees are vital hunting places for bats as they support a large and varied insect population.

These are extremely good areas to watch for bats as they swoop around the leaves and branches, some will even take insects and caterpillars directly from the leaves.

The Daubentons bat specializes in hunting over the water so quite easy to see if you are sitting on your boat.

-----ooOoo-----

NATURE WALK

So sorry this had to be cancelled but as usual the weather was atrocious. Will try to plan another date on April. Look put for announcements.

POEMS

As promised these are the poems we had submitted for our competition.

SPRINGTIME

By Nancy Harman

Sing a song of Springtime

The sun is in the sky

Birds are busy nesting

Insects flying by

Hibernations over

Hedgehogs sniff the air

Isn't earth a lovely place

It's time we took more care



BUNGLE BEE

By Tony Preston

Bungle Bee lives happily in his sponsored nest,
in which kind boaters and lodge owners decided to invest
Despite being clumsy and a little
bit slow, one afternoon he goes
about beesness the only way he does know

He talks to the wildlife and talks to the flowers
before he knows it, Bungle has been gone for several
hours!

He stumbles and bungles his way back to his house
and inside is shocked to see a big brown mouse
You're in the wrong house, you silly billy bee!
Bungle makes a hasty exit and leaves quickly

I'm lost and I'm cold and I don't know what's best
Should I make my bed here or search for my nest?
He's picked up by a moorer who gives him a lift
Don't worry, says Jane. I'll get you home swift
Back home in his nest he reflects on his day
That's another afternoon I bungled away



THE SNOWDROP

By Trudy Fowler

Here I am

In the dark

Alone I have been

growing upwards

What can I see?

Light

Eyes

Staring down at me

Just a little more strength

to feel the warmth of the sun

And to see a smiling face

looking at me...



ESCAPE

By Jacqueline Croker

Blue & green are forever seen
Duck and moorhen now and then
Sunrise, sunset coy carp to pet
A sunny day – The Milky Way

The ebb and flow, days come and go
Moons wax and wane, wind turns to rain
Storm and calm – here safe from harm
Full of grace, a welcome place

Shimmering waves by ice enslaved.
Summer, Autumn, Winter and Spring
What other things does my home bring?
Landscape, Waterscape, Nightscape.....Escape



SEASONS OF LIFE

By Jane Wakeham

The summer sun beats down relentless
Parching everything from lack of rain
Grass dries out and ponds disappear
Wildlife searches for moisture in vain.
Then when hope has gone the heavens open.
Removing from daily life the strain.

Autumn arrives with its heady scents
Released from the ground in silent waves
Summer visiting birds start to make their way home
Tiny bats start to think of their winter caves
Stunning fungi start to appear everywhere
And many bumblebees lie in their earthy graves

Eventually winter starts to tighten its grip
With biting cold winds and blizzards of snow
Birds huddle together to find some warmth
Then visit seed feeders which have been left to get low
No water available only ice and hard ground
The winter delivers them blow upon blow

Then comes spring bringing a time of new hope
Delicate flowers thrust up through the warming ground
While catkins shake off their loaded pollen
Birds sing out their hearts, new mates to be found
A world now filled with fragrance and sunshine
We should all take the time to stand and look round

This world is forever changing for both good and bad
In ways that once we could never conceive
Life so often brings us much sadness and pain,
But if we allow nature into our hearts to weave
With its songs, its scents, its sights and it's beauty
It can bring joy to our hearts if we only believe



HOME THOUGHTS FROM AFLOAT

By Jacqueline Croker

Home, the heart, the boat
a flotilla of old lives
all going nowhere

Nevertheless, home
a haven from this rushed life-
all worry banished.

And so beautiful
a world perfectly formed
a sight for sore eyes.

Nature at its best
see, hear, touch, feel, taste, relax
be at one, at peace.

Blue and green pervade
here this perfect oasis,
this delightful pond.

But best at night when
you can walk the Milky Way
to eternity.



FIND THE MISSING LETTERS COMPETITION SOLUTION

BIRDS

Pied wagtail
Great crested grebe
Kingfisher
Dunnock
Green sandpiper
Reed Warbler

MAMMALS

Hedgehog
Water shrew
Bank vole
Daubenton's bat
Wood mouse
Badger

INSECTS

Red mason bee
Wolf spider
Small tortoiseshell
Six spot ladybird
Brown hawker dragonfly
Cockchafer

FLORA

Mountain ash
Bee orchid
Reed mace
English oak
Goat willow
Dandelion

Well done to all those who returned their answers and correctly identified the one with the error.