

NATURE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Now including Bee & Mammal news

December 2018 Issue 23



NATURE SOCIETY
Making a real difference



WHAT AN UNUSUAL AUTUMN

So many of our wild plants seem to think they should still be flowering. Red & White Dead-Nettle, Clover, Dandelions, Wood Cranesbill, even the Brambles are flowering again. There have been sightings of Carder bees still about so these plants could still be providing some sort of nectar.

What impact if any this will have on next year we have to wait and see.



RED MASON BEES.

Wow! There is no other word to describe our surprise at the number of new Red mason bee cocoons we collected this year. In 2017 we were donated 32 mason bee cocoons to release in spring. So last year when we cleaned the tubes and new cocoons we were very pleased to have 75.



These were put out this spring and we know that they all hatched as we retrieved the empty cocoons.

You can clearly see where the bees emerged by the holes in the side of the cocoons. They are made of very tough material so in spring the bees inside create a

chemical which softens the cocoon allowing them to get out easily.

We found that they had been incredibly busy creating new bees in the tubes and canes put out for them. We now have a staggering 483 new cocoons for next year. What an amazing success story.

DO BIRDS SEE IN COLOUR?

I was recently asked this interesting question and not completely sure of the answer decided to check it out. I found it all totally fascinating. Hope you agree.

What Colours Birds See:- Birds see more colours than humans in several ways. Not only are birds able to perceive familiar colours as well as parts of the ultraviolet spectrum that are invisible to human eyes, they can determine subtle differences between similar shades of colour, gradations that we cannot see. The cells in the eye responsible for colour detection, the cones, are in the retina, and birds have four types of cones rather than the three humans have. The exact number of cones varies in each bird species.

Each cone in a bird's eye has a drop of oil in it that selectively filters out certain colours, giving birds greater sensitivity to different colour shades. This wavelength filtering allows birds to more easily see contrasts in their surroundings, perhaps seeing through the camouflage of prey or other birds, for example.

Diurnal, birds that are active during the day have the best colour sense. Perceiving different colours is less crucial for nocturnal birds, however. Many birds that are most active at night have a greater number of rod cells in their eyes instead, which allows them to capture more light and see better in low light conditions, though they may not see colours as clearly.

Why UV Light Matters

Being able to see UV light is a crucial aspect of how birds see colour. The ability to see ultraviolet light changes the perception birds have of many objects, even though humans may not see those differences.

Food: Some berries and other fruits have waxy coatings that reflect UV light, making them stand out vibrantly against green foliage. Birds can see this fruit much more clearly than humans, making foraging much easier. Some insects and flowers also reflect UV light, giving birds a distinct advantage for finding those food sources.

Prey: Raptors use UV light to track prey, since the urine splashes and trails that voles, mice, and other rodents use to mark their territory are brilliantly visible in ultraviolet light. This allows raptors to determine exactly where prey is located for more efficient hunting, even when the prey may not be visible itself.

Plumage: Species that may not appear dimorphic (species in which the sexes appear different) to humans may actually look very different in UV light. Male blue tits, for example, have a prominent crown seen under UV light, though the genders look similar to humans. Birds have no difficulty telling the difference, and can use UV markings to help select mates, defend a territory, or tell individual birds apart.

Using Birds' Colour Sense

Understanding how birds see colour is more than just a fascinating field of study for ornithologists. Different developments have used birds' colour sense to enhance birding equipment and backyard birding tools, such as:

- Adding UV reflective properties to window decals to more effectively prevent bird window collisions without blocking views.
- Designing pet collars that reflect UV light and may make these predators more easily visible to birds.
- Designing bird feeders with UV patterns that can catch birds' interest and entice them to visit new bird feeders more easily.



Aren't they amazing?

Not only does each species see differently the eyes are different shapes, colours and position on head also differs.

BIRDS ON FEEDERS

If the birds which visit the feeders on the island near Grebe are anything to go by we certainly have a lot of species willing to visit. To date there have been 13 different species regularly visiting, that is not counting the ducks, moorhens, coots etc.

There has been Blue tit, Great tit, Coal tit, Long-tailed tit.

Robin, House Sparrow, Blackbird, Dunnock, Reed Bunting, Wren, Greenfinch, Greater Spotted Woodpecker



and Goldfinches by the score.



The Woodies adore peanuts and Goldies Niger and sunflower hearts.

It is important to know that not all birds are able to use hanging feeders and prefer to eat from the ground or a table. Birds such as Robins, Dunnocks, Blackbirds, Thrushes. There is a large variety of seed available, a good selection would include Sunflower hearts, Peanuts, Niger, Fat balls and Mixed seed. If you are able to feed them please consider it. It helps their survival and gives us plenty to watch.

WHAT CAN YOU SEE NOW?

It maybe November and cold and wet but there are still many interesting creatures about. We would not normally think about seeing Moths at this time of year.

However, The Mottled Umber, Winter Moth & November Moth (as their name suggests) are now emerging and are commonly seen in Britain. Apparently Victorian collectors would hunt November moths with a butterfly net at dusk, a practice known as 'dusking'.



The November Moth.

The advantage of winter emergence is a lack of predatory birds, bats or spiders. Most of these adult moths do not feed. However, Winter moths can have a significant impact on summer tree foliage. The Mottled Umber's Latin name *Erannis defoliaria* gives a clue to a voracious spring and summer appetite.

During spring & summer immigrant Red Admirals arrive from North Africa and Europe. They lay eggs which emerge from July onwards. These are then often seen in November feeding on Ivy, Buddleia and rotting fruit. No matter what the season there is always something to see.

GOOD NEWS ABOUT OUR POORLY SWANS

Earlier in the year we had a very poorly cygnet suffering from Botulism. It was rescued and taken to the Burton Wildlife Rescue Centre. This cygnet has recently been joined by another one found with fishing line down its throat. Happily, both are now doing well. The latest causality would not have lasted another day. It is a huge thank you to Rik Richards for finding this last one in time and for the Burton Wildlife Centre for its amazing sterling work in helping our precious wildlife.

If you would like to help them continue their work please visit their website where there are details of what and how you can donate. Not just money but many other items as well.

FISHING LINE

Fishing line causes thousands of injuries to wildlife each year. The problem is it doesn't biodegrade so a discarded piece of fishing line is left lying in wait for a bird or animal to swallow it or get tangled up in it.

Commonly fishing line wraps itself around birds' toes, cutting off the circulation and causing infection, gangrene and amputations. Birds whose feet are affected can be difficult to help as their ability to fly is often unaffected.

Left in the water, fishing line is easily mistaken for weed and swallowed by waterfowl. If you see a bird with fishing line hanging from its beak it is important that you seek assistance and do not try to capture the bird yourself. NEVER try to remove fishing line from the mouth. There may be a hook on the other end which could cause serious lasting damage so the bird should be assessed and treated at a wildlife rescue.

This type of agony for any wildlife should never be down to our bad habits and negligence.



IF YOU FIND ANY DISCARDED FISHING LINE OR TACKLE PLEASE PICK IT UP AND DISPOSE OF SAFELY.

LATEST NEWS

22.10.18 Three Carder bees seen on plant by Redwing

29.10.18 Mink seen on path by bridge over canal

29.10.18 Great spotted woodpecker on feeders by Grebe

31.10.18 Hornet trying to get inside pram cover on boat.

01.11.18 Group of Ladybirds on Stachys in Cottage Garden

02.11.18 A number of wasps on Buckthorn by FB1

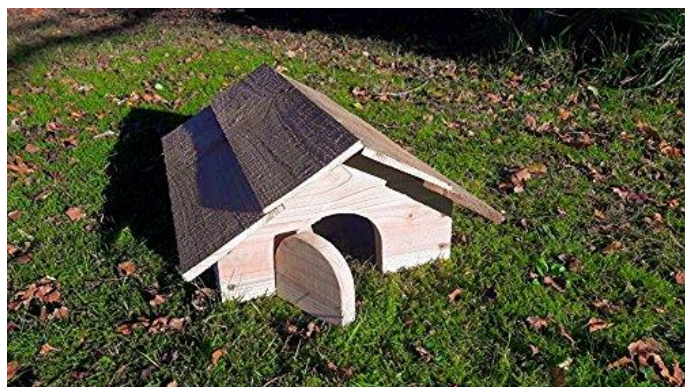
20.11.18 2 Redwings spotted on Marina perimeter

27.11.18 A group of 17 Tufted ducks seen. The first of the season? So comical and delightful.

Please keep the sightings coming either on Facebook or to the office.

A BIG THANK YOU

Maisie Trotman has been so kind in providing the Marina with three Hedgehog Houses. One for each area close by the FB's. She felt this was a great way to say thank you for those who helped her with recovery from her recent operation



Not only are the Nature Society offering thanks I'm sure that any hedgehogs who take up residence will also be grateful. That may not be this year but the houses will be ready and waiting.

NATURE SOCIETY PLANS

Dec 2nd – We will be having a Bird Stall on the Christmas Market with various seed, feeders, nest boxes etc. and a selection of Gift/Starter packs.

2019

Starting the live mammal trapping again now that all the work in the fields has been completed.

Introducing a Sponsor a Bee Nester Scheme. Details to follow in the new year.

Starting seasonal Nature Walks. We usually just walk for a purpose to get from A – B or to take the dog. These nature walks will be aimed at strolling and becoming aware of what is around. Lasting only about an hour and visiting a different area of the Marina each time.

Another Cottage Style garden is in the planning stage and will concentrate on fragrant plants. Details of location in the new year.

We hope to start a Facebook page. It will contain lots of information about various wildlife and of course all our events. As well as any bird seed we have available for sale.

Our registered charity choices for 2019 are

Derby Bat Group
Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire Entomological Society

QUIZ ANSWERS

For all of you who took part in the Autumn Charity Wildlife Quiz, here are the answers.

- 1 In the wind in the Willows what type of animal was Ratty?
WATER VOLE
- 2 The Duncton Wood books were stories about what type of animal? MOLE
- 3 Hazel, Bigwig & Fiver were animal characters in which novel? WATERSHIP DOWN
- 4 Henry Williamson is famous for his novel about which type of animal? OTTER



9. What is Britain's smallest mammal? – PYGMY SHREW

10. What is Britain's largest land mammal? – RED DEER

11. What is Britain's smallest bird? - GOLDCREST

12. What is Britain's largest bird? - WHITE-TAILED SEA EAGLE

13. Which is smaller Mink or Otter? MINK

14. Which butterfly is largest Red Admiral or Brimstone? – RED ADMIRAL

ANAGRAMS

15. RETRACTED BEER EGGS (water bird) GREAT CRESTED GREBE

16. BREWER RANG LAD (songbird) GARDEN WARBLER

17. ANODE LEG GEL (bird of prey) GOLDEN EAGLE

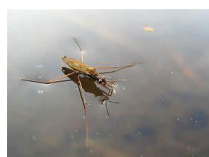
18. HURL RING LEG (coastal bird) HERRING GULL

19. In what type of habitat would you find Dead Mans fingers? - WOODLAND

20. A Glowworm is what kind of insect? – BEETLE (LARVA)

21. What birds can be Grey, Yellow, Pied? - WAGTAIL

22. What is a Corncockle? - WILDFLOWER



Well done everyone, keep an eye out for the next quarters competition.

**WISHING EVERYONE A
VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND A HAPPY HEALTHY
NEW YEAR.**

