

Warwick Natural History Society

Snippets

No. 71

23 September 2022

The Society is now on Twitter! Follow us on [@WarwickNatHist](https://twitter.com/WarwickNatHist)

Second hand Binoculars

Whilst reading the recent edition of WMBC News, there is a piece written by Dave Jackson, their Conservation Officer, who had been on a tour in Georgia and Armenia. One of the local guides he came across on his tour is trying to grow the birding community in Georgia but in order to do this it would be really helpful if he could loan interested people binoculars to hone their skills. Dave has put out a plea for any serviceable but surplus to requirement binoculars. So, if any members have any "bins" they no longer need - perhaps you have upgraded or inherited extra ones - do let me know and I can co-ordinate with Dave the collection arrangements. It doesn't matter how old they are, but they need to be useable.

Avian Flu

Last week while on holiday in Cornwall we came across this gannet at Mevagissey. I thought it was strange behaviour although he appeared to be able to walk and fend off dogs which showed a little bit too much interest. Sadly, I think he was almost certainly yet another victim of avian flu which seems to be spreading quickly through gannet and gull populations.

On our final day, whilst sat on a beach, a masked man in full protective overalls appeared to pick up in plastic bags the 6 dead gannet corpses on this one smallish beach. He had already collected around 30 that morning on 3 separate beaches.

So sad to see.

12th September BC



Our friends in Castle Close, Warwick have been having visits by Mrs. Peahen, bringing her chick to the garden over the wall. Seems she was teaching it how to clean itself and look smart, making sure it was washing behind its ears! The chick has a little "crown" so does this denote its sex?

13th September MP

Doing our final butterfly transect of the year at Leam Valley we noted the fruits of autumn very much in evidence.

13th September LD

These images are also attached to the email



We had our first record of a small copper at Guy's Cliffe Walled Garden (on Heritage Open Days weekend), and it chose to rest on our display board (developed in partnership with Warwickshire Butterfly Conservation) illustrating the common species of butterfly that have been recorded there. It must have been a bit put out that it wasn't on our list of regularly seen species!

We've also had a hummingbird hawkmoth in the Garden (and 5 sightings on the Buddleia in my garden next door - likely the same individual) so it's been a good year for them (as illustrated in previous Snippets this year).



Sabina visited the Garden on Sunday and was impressed by the insect activity on the Dahlias and Cosmos, and I'm lucky to be keeping my bees just next door with three hives that produced over 100lb of honey this year. Local field trip next year could be a possibility? We've never done a comprehensive survey of all the insects - so a nice project for someone!

15th September BM



Fungus Foray in Bubbenhall Woods - 15th September

David Champion, who described himself as a “mushroom nut”, was a great guide, full of fascinating information and enthusiasm for fungi. It was particularly good that some families could come along. The older boys were surprisingly knowledgeable and were brilliant at finding a variety of fungus on the dead trees and in the leaf litter.



The first photo, showing the large reddish species, did not come from our foray. It would excite the experts if they thought it was found at Bubbenhall. In fact, it was an example of an unusual 'Bolete Satanas' or Satan's Bolete. David had travelled specially to Gloucestershire a couple of days before to bring it from a site where they have appeared this year.



Despite the extremely dry weather which has prevented many species from 'fruiting', the group was able to find about 20 different species and David was able to explain the different methods they use to distribute their tiny spores.
15th September RT



In view of our plummeting pollinator numbers, it is an undeniable fact that we need to do everything possible to stop this catastrophic decline. We all need to stop using pesticides in our own gardens and in addition, please go to the site below to encourage Warwick District Council to do likewise.

<http://change.org/wdcpestfree>

19th September BC

In our Kenilworth garden, a female *Rhingia campestris*, the Heineken hoverfly, shows the long mouthparts normally protected in the upper beak-like snout. An apt common name because Heineken used to advertise their beer saying it could reach the parts other beers couldn't reach. With that long snout and longer proboscis the Heineken hoverfly can easily reach into tubular flowers such as White and Red Dead Nettle. The larvae live and feed on dung.
20th September SG



*This strikingly attractive but very invasive pest is the Rhododendron Leafhopper, *Graphocephala fennahi*. Native to the USA and introduced (no idea why) to Europe in the early 1900s it is described as being a mostly southern UK pest. I disturb it on many shrubs in my Kenilworth garden even though both adults and larvae feed on Rhododendron sap. Jury is out on whether it spreads the fungal disease known as bud blast that kills the flower buds. Since it appeared I now remove many more dead buds on our rhododendrons so I know which way I'd cast my vote.*
20th September SG

Snippets to Linda please at: wesandlinda@btinternet.com

www.wnhs.info