



Recorders' Newsletter

Issue 12 – October 2011

Welcome to the twelfth issue of the Powys and Brecon Beacons National Park Recorders Newsletter.

Species status is an important criteria used by Local Record Centres, Recorders, Ecologists and national organisations across Wales & the UK. In this newsletter, Sam Bosanquet has written an article describing the recent Welsh vice-county rarity list for bryophytes.

As this is a Recorders' newsletter, very appropriately all three Powys Wildlife Trusts have written articles recording some exciting wildlife in their areas in 2011, not least the first breeding ospreys on the Dyfi for over 400 years! In addition, Alastair Hotchkiss includes his

Montgomeryshire recording notes from this season; there's an article by two recorders on the recording day at Nantmel Tip in July; Bob Dennison reports on an unusually marked dragonfly; and yours truly highlights the recent spread in Powys of an alien bug – one to look out for!



Thanks again to everyone who has contributed articles and photographs for this issue.

Phil Ward

– **Editor**

The plant bug *Pantilius tunicatus* is an autumn species. This was photographed by Pete & Ginny Clarke in their moth trap in Glasbury in October.

©Pete & Ginny Clarke

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BIS microscopes and equipment for free loan

A reminder that BIS has new equipment for loan. This is freely available not only for BIS identification training days, but for individuals or recorder groups to use at BIS offices or other training venues, to help with recording wildlife.

This equipment includes the following:

- Large Brunel video zoom binocular microscope (plugs into projector or laptop)
- 2 compound binocular microscopes (up to x1000 mag.)
- 6 binocular stereo/dissecting microscopes (x20 - x80)
- Digital projector
- Projector screen 6ft wide

The new BIS office can also provide a free comfortable teaching room with space for up to 10 people.

If you wish to use microscopes, equipment or room at BIS, please contact us to discuss your requirements: info@b-i-s.org 01874 610881.



2010 Breconshire Bird Report NOW AVAILABLE

The 2010 edition is available from Brecknock Wildlife Trust or the County Bird Recorder.

This 78-page edition covers all species recorded in Breconshire during 2010, a summary of Llangorse Ringing Groups' 2010 Report, and articles on the finding of breeding Black Redstart and a sighting of Red-rumped Swallow in the county.

Price: £6.50 (+ 70 pence P&P if mailed out).

Contact Clare Morgan at BWT on 01874 625708. Cheques to be payable to 'Brecknock Wildlife Trust'. Address; Brecknock Wildlife Trust, Lion House, Bethel Square, BRECON, Powys, LD3 7AY.

Back copies are also available at ridiculous prices! Discuss with Clare at BWT.

Thanks to all those that have contributed records, photographs, articles and sketches to the Report.

BRECONSHIRE BIRDS



Local Record Centre Wales and Plant Link Cymru (PLINC) discussions

Over the last 6 months the LRCs and members of PLINC have met on two occasions - 9/3/11 and 4/7/11

The aims of the meeting were:

- addressing the issues of data flow and verification
- improving relationships and communications
- improve the long-term resources for all parties

Issues were also raised about species status and it was felt there is a requirement for local rarity lists for all plant groups, as S42 and UKBAP only flags up certain species. The LRC uses this information to report on Locally Important species in their data searches.

Thanks to Sam Bosanquet for all his work in recently producing a Wales VC bryophyte rarity list and we include his notes and methodology below.

Janet Imlach, BIS Manager

Vice-county Bryophyte Rarity Lists

The following lists identify bryophytes (mosses, liverworts and hornworts) that should be considered of regional significance in the 13 Welsh vice-counties. All were derived using data from the British Bryological Society (BBS) database at the Biological Records Centre. Hectad (10x10km square) counts for each county were used as a guide to local status, but this is a broad-brush approach to assessing status. The lists for Monmouthshire and Pembrokeshire, as well as one for Carmarthenshire, used counts of tetrads (2x2km squares) and are therefore more accurate. The Monmouthshire, Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire lists also included a Locally Scarce category that cannot easily be assigned when hectads are being used. The Extinct in Vice-county category is based on the 2008 BBS *Census Catalogue* and includes all taxa without a post-1960 vouchered record.

Clearly a species can be found in several tetrads within a single hectad, and obviously a species found in all 10 hectads in Flintshire is less notable than a species found in 10 of the 42 hectads in Carmarthenshire. Different levels of recording have led to slightly different cut-offs being used for different counties, so the 3 hectad cut-off was used in the relatively under-recorded counties of Glamorgan, Denbighshire and Montgomeryshire, whilst a 5 hectad cut-off was thought more suitable for the well-recorded Breconshire.

Some bryophyte species are under-recorded because of small size, taxonomic confusion or restriction to obscure or unpopular habitats such as arable land or

reservoir margins. Under-recording of this kind can be very patchy according to the competence and behaviour of local recorders, so some species that appear to be rare in a vice-county may just be poorly known by locals. These under-recorded apparent rarities are included in separate lists for each county and should not be considered noteworthy. There is patchiness in coverage even within a single county: many of Breconshire's ruderal species are under-recorded and thus appear artificially rare, but bryophytes of semi-natural habitats have been well covered in the county. 'Extinct' species are likely to have been genuinely lost from well-recorded counties through habitat change, whereas there is a high probability that some have been overlooked in recent years in less thoroughly explored Vice-counties.

Local knowledge is vital in assessing the accuracy of lists of this kind. SDSB knows the south Wales counties of Monmouthshire, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire very well and has recorded extensively in all of them. His knowledge of Glamorgan and Cardiganshire is derived from both recording and extrapolation from adjacent counties. The recorders for north Wales (Tim Blackstock) and east Wales (Ray Woods) have provided guidance on the lists for their regions.

These lists should be used alongside lists of national statuses: a species can be locally and nationally notable, locally notable but not nationally notable, or even nationally notable but not locally rare (plants in this last category are obviously still extremely important).

Figures for each Vice-county in each category are given below. The Locally Scarce category was only used in three Vice-counties with thorough tetrad recording. The Locally Rare lists are of remarkably consistent length, with a mean of 159 Locally Rare species per county. The small number of Local Rarities for Flintshire is the result of the Vice-county's small size and short overall bryophyte list (fewer than 400 recorded taxa, compared with more than 500 taxa for all other Welsh Vice-counties), whilst the large number of Local Rarities in Caernarvonshire reflects both its very long overall bryophyte list (40 species more than any other Welsh Vice-county) and its geological heterogeneity.

Vice-county	Extinct in Vice-county	Locally Rare	Locally Scarce	Under-recorded
Monmouthshire (35)	16	159	62	17
Glamorgan (41)	8	151	-	31
Breconshire (42)	11	164	-	42
Radnorshire (43)	7	162	-	36
Carmarthenshire (44)	17	155	57	17
Pembrokeshire (45)	10	154	48	5
Cardiganshire (46)	9	181	-	51
Montgomeryshire (47)	3	135	-	42
Meirionydd (48)	42	186	-	49
Caernarvonshire (49)	30	243	-	47
Denbighshire (50)	23	152	-	37
Flintshire (51)	12	93	-	53
Anglesey (52)	28	143	-	36

Sam Bosanquet
British Bryological Society/Countryside Council for Wales, August 2011

Western Conifer Seed Bug *Leptoglossus occidentalis* in Powys



Leptoglossus occidentalis recently from Llandrindod Wells. Photo: ©Carlton Parry

The Western Conifer Seed Bug *Leptoglossus occidentalis* is an alien species which was accidentally introduced into Italy from North America in 1999. It has since spread rapidly through Europe and has recently become established within the UK during the last 4 years. This was after large influxes recorded from southern England in 2008 & 2009, but now with many inland records as well.

This spectacular bug, being large is often first thought of as a strange shield-bug, but is in fact a squash bug of the family *Coreidae*. It feeds on the flowers, cones and seeds of over 40 species of conifers, but prefers pines and Douglas fir.

It is also attracted to light and was first recorded in central Radnorshire by Ian Standen from his garden in September 2010. Ian had a moth light running the night before. Since then, and a year later, Margaret Young photographed the first Brecknock individual in her house near Brecon, and Carlton Parry recently recorded one in October 2011 from offices in Llandrindod Wells.

Many thanks to all 3 recorders for taking good photos, which confirmed this species.



First Radnor record © Ian Standen First Brecknock record © Margaret Young

Phil Ward, Radnorshire Invertebrate Recorder
Some Montgomeryshire (VC47) Spring/Summer Recording Notes
2011

The start to the season began with a few spring ephemerals in lunchtime jaunts from the office. Late March produced a few plants of common whitlow-grass *Erophila verna* sens. str. growing out of the tiny gap between the brickwork and the tarmac in the CCW office car park in Newtown. Early April then came up with 640 plants of rue-leaved saxifrage *Saxifraga tridactylites* on some sloping flood defence masonry next to the River Severn, in Newtown. This is a county-scarce plant on the Monts rare plant register, and is elsewhere only known from the natural limestone and dolerite crags of Llanymynech and Breidden respectively, and at the railway stations at Dyfi Junction (2007 – 200 plants) and Montgomery (1972). The very same sloping masonry also supported lots of tawny mining bees *Andrena fulva*, with the bright orange females seen frequenting burrows whilst I ate my lunchtime sandwiches on the nearby bench. Early April also produced a sighting of ring ouzel *Turdus torquatus* at Roundton Hill, whilst out looking for shepherd-cress *Teesdalia nudicaulis* and small cudweed *Filago minima*. Although just passing through on migration, it looked perfectly at home on the crags of this border hill. The fine hot weather this April/May produced excellent counts of pearl-bordered fritillary *Boloria euphrosyne*, with a



P-b.Frit. © Tammv Stretton

particular highlight being 92 adults in an hour and a quarter, on a W-walk across their strongest Welsh colony near Welshpool. In June I was pleased to happen upon my first Montgomeryshire hornet *Vespa crabro* nest, with a hornet emerging from a large gash in an old external oak beam of a cottage near Welshpool - I was actually counting lesser horseshoe bats at the time, and the hornets were to-ing and fro-ing late into the night with the bats. I wonder if they are hunting the same prey? A July trip to Dyfnant Pastures yielded two new 'Lobarion' lichens



Hornet at plums © Keith Noble

to the site, *Sticta sylvatica* and *Mycoblimbia pilularis* (syn. *Biatora sphaeroides*) with *Thelotrema lepadinum*. *Sticta sylvatica* is a feature of the nearby Coed Copi'r Graig SSSI and has added value at Dyfnant with it being epiphytic (it's on mossy rock at Copi'r Graig). July's noteworthy discovery was a second vice-county site for the

common awl robberfly *Neoitamus cyanurus*, at Breidden Hill. I found this robberfly near Machynlleth a couple of years ago, and there are apparently only about 15 known Welsh localities. (Not sure if there are any more in Powys? *). The name comes from the long ovipositor the female is equipped with. It is generally a woodland species, especially ancient woods, where it is most usually found on foliage along woodland rides. In this case it was perched on a sunlit stone. Small moths appear to be the favoured prey (Stubbs & Drake, 2001). I was also pleased to see about 10 grayling *Hipparchia semele* butterflies flying in an area of rocky scree on Breidden that I had recently got cleared of the shading ash, sycamore, pine and horse chestnut. Inland populations of this S42/BAP butterfly are not particularly common, and they hadn't been recorded at Breidden since 1999. August picked up the argid sawfly *Arge pagana* at Llanymynech, which is also known as the large rose sawfly as the eggs are laid on roses. I have been told this is only the second Welsh record - the only one other historical record is from an unknown locality in Denbighshire. I caught this whilst monitoring the autumn lady's-tresses *Spiranthes spiralis* at Llanymynech Hill SSSI - The highlight of which was counting 739 spikes in an area of approximately 20m² on Severn Trent's covered water reservoir. Finally, and I have to finish on this one - Although not in BIS-land, September's -and probably the year's-- highlight was finding a Snowdon rainbow beetle *Chrysolina cerealis*. I noticed it by pure chance whilst staring at lichens on some base-rich rocks at around 720m on the eastern side of Snowdon. What a beauty! And perhaps a once in a lifetime?

Alastair Hotchkiss, CCW

(*BIS database has only 1 previous record of *Neoitamus cyanurus*. This was at Mynydd Du Forest in the Black Mountains area of the Brecon Beacons National Park on 1st June 1997. The recorder is unknown but came from Dipterist's Forum records collated by Adrian Plant. Ed.)

Invertebrate Fauna of Breidden Hill, Montgomeryshire – A request/invitation

I've begun a project to compile an "Invertebrate Fauna of Breidden Hill", and am in the process of collecting and reviewing all historical and recent records in a systematic list. The floristic qualities of Breidden are very well known and documented, but comparatively little is known of the invertebrate fauna. With the notable geology and vegetation, as well as the rich and varied habitats the site has, I feel sure that there must be more invertebrate interest, and hopefully this will be a helpful step in evaluating it.

So if anyone has any invertebrate records for Breidden (including SJ2813, SJ2913, SJ2914, SJ3014) which they would be happy for me to add to my list for the hill, then that would be tremendous. Hopefully I can pull together a fairly complete list over the autumn/winter, and then come next field season I will know where some of the biggest gaps in recording are. If you could send them by email that'd be grand (a.hotchkiss@ccw.gov.uk).

Next year, I am keen to address the gaps and may try to arrange recording days where interested folk can come and record. I've sent out a similar request/invitation to members of the Shropshire Invertebrate Group. If this is something that might

interest anyone, then drop me an email and if I sort anything out I can get back in touch.

Alastair Hotchkiss, CCW

Nantmel Tip Recording Day 31st July 2011

There's life in the old tip yet...

Waun-y-Cwrt is a former landfill site in Nantmel which officially closed for business in 1990. It's now managed by Powys County Council who monitor the capped site for signs of subsidence and harmful levels of gases and leachate arising from the decomposing rubbish. Although it may not sound like paradise, plenty of wildlife disagrees and today the site has been well and truly reclaimed by nature. Reports of water vole, otter and sedge warbler enticed Rhayader by Nature members and local recorders out to explore the site in detail at the end of July. Local naturalists were granted special permission to enter the tip by the County Council who were also keen to know more about the site's biodiversity.

The damper, northern half of the site was the initial focus for the higher plants. Large areas were dominated by meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*) and common valerian (*Valerianella officinalis*) which surrounded stands of common reed (*Phragmites australis*) deemed out of reach due to swampy conditions. Seventy-eight species were recorded, including toadflax (*Linaria vulgaris*), sneezewort (*Achillea ptarmica*), ragged robin (*Lychnis flos-cuculi*), great willowherb (*Epilobium hirsuta*) and common marsh-bedstraw (*Galium palustre*). Red bartsia (*Odontites verna*) and cut-leaved geranium (*Geranium dissectum*) were found along the main track dividing the site.



traps at Nantmel Tip ©Steve Jones

**Emma Guy, Powys BAP
Officer**

Nantmel Tip near Rhayader is located just off the Nantmel – Nantglas road (SO018659) adjacent to Llwynbarried Hall. The site is owned by Powys County Council and is one of 110 private and council owned closed landfill sites in the county. The site known as Waun y Cwrt was closed in 1990 having served as a tip for household waste for many years. As a result of the quantity of 'tin' cans at the site it posed a serious environmental threat to the nearby watercourses. A small stream runs along the easternmost edge of the site, leading from nearby Llyn Gwyn

to the river Dulas running parallel to the A44. The leachate from the waste at the site previously found its way into the local water courses, so the site was capped with clay after its closure. A series of lagoons and settling ponds combined with reedbeds work to ensure leachate is no longer a problem, with water leaving the site now cleaner than the watercourse it enters. The site is perhaps unique in the county, being a large brownfield site in the heart of the countryside. Adjacent areas of unkempt damp woodland and damp meadow provide added interest.

After the capping vegetation was allowed to re colonise naturally and in the early days Lapwing were attracted to the site. Some attempts were made to improve the site for wildlife, including the building of a high specification bird hide overlooking one of the settling ponds. This was funded through Landfill Tax. Some willow hedging was also planted but over the last few years the natural regeneration of the site has seen sedges, wild raspberry, willow and meadow sweet taking over and in local

terms the area, rarely visited has become somewhat of a wildlife haven. The northern part of the site is damp fen type habitat with angelica and meadowsweet. In addition to the natural vegetation, some of the reed planted to capture the leachate has also 'escaped' – with small patches appearing all over the site. With few areas of reedbeds in Radnorshire, the site attracts birds that although common in national terms are locally uncommon – Sedge warbler being a prime example. The reeds also attract Water rail in winter – another scarce winter visitor which has been suspected of breeding at the site. A Bittern has also been recorded at the site.



The site has public access in the form of a public footpath running down the eastern edge parallel to the brook leading to Llyn Gwyn. Unfortunately the footpath was blocked during the capping works and has remain obstructed since. The footpath runs past the hide and on across the stream to Nantmel village. In recent years neglect has meant the bird hide is beginning to deteriorate. A site meeting during May 2011 with Powys CC, Julian Jones from Radnorshire Wildlife Trust and representatives from Rhayader by Nature identified the need for an action plan. The first task was to survey the site to get a basic idea of the wildlife present and potential for the future management of the site.

Recording day

Three moth traps and 26 mammal traps were set the day before the survey by Pete and Ginny Clarke, Sorchá Lewis and Steve Jones. A further 7 people turned up the next day and helped empty the traps, as well as conducting surveys of insects, plants and birds. Although the weather was favourable the survey took place a little late in the year for some species and it is hoped that a repeat visit will be made during early summer 2012.█

Moths – an amazing 112 species were recorded at the site over the weekend including a county first – *Agonopterix conterminella* a micro moth.

Birds – quiet on the day but we did see Common Whitethroat and Sedge Warbler (agitated with possible young nearby) both good local records as well as Willow Tit which breeds at Llwynbarried but is often found foraging at the tip. Green woodpecker, Raven, Reed Bunting,



Treecreeper, Redpoll, Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff and Jay were recorded. Red Kite and Buzzard breed nearby and were also seen overhead. The single bird box on site hosted a pair of Pied Flycatcher (surely that can be improved??) and the woods adjacent has Wood Warbler and Redstart, both of which visit the willows on the site to feed.

Butterflies – Comma, Red Admiral, Small White, Green-veined White, Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell and Meadow Brown.

Dragonflies – Brown Hawker, Emperor, Golden-ringed Dragonfly, Common Blue Damselfly.

Mammals - in the traps – 3 Common Shrew, 2 Pygmy Shrew and a Field Vole. Interestingly one of the Common Shrews had white ears! Field signs of Rabbit, Mole, Otter, Water Vole, Fox, and Badger.

Plants – large areas of Meadowsweet, Wild Raspberry, Common Reed. Also Reedmace, Butterbur, Rosebay Willowherb, Hawthorn, Goat Willow, Red Clover, White Clover, Herb Robert, Ragged Robin, Rowan, Birds-foot Trefoil, Oak, Silverweed, Imperforate St Johns Wort, Common Fumitory, Teasel, Self heal, Beech, Honeysuckle, Stitchwort, Field Vetch, Square Stalked St Johns Wort, Oval Sedge, Black Medick, Daisy.

Plus – Common Frog, White-lipped and Dark-lipped Banded Snails, Common Green Grasshopper, Amber Snail *Succinea putris*, Minnow, Red-tailed Bumblebee *Bombus lapidarius* made up the rest!

Hopefully this was just a taster and more visits will allow us a better picture in the future.

Steve Jones

Invertebrates



Dead-nettle Leaf Beetle ©Steve Jones

Dipterist Mike Paskin and I recorded a total of 91 species during the visit.

Most noteworthy amongst these were three locally occurring beetles. *Chrysolina fastuosa* is a spectacularly coloured species being bright metallic green with metallic bronze, red and blue stripes, not too dissimilar to the rare Snowdon Leaf Beetle. Its common name of Dead-nettle Leaf Beetle reflects its food plants, although they do feed on other related species. This is only the 5th VC43 record.

The orange/yellow coloured *Phyllobrotica quadrimaculata* has as its name suggests four black spots on its wing cases. Its common name of Skullcap Leaf Beetle again reflects its foodplant., a total of four individuals being swept from the marshy grassland, this being only the 2nd vice-county record.



The longhorn beetle
*Leptura
quadrifasciata* ©Steve

The large yellow and black striped longhorn beetle *Leptura quadrifasciata* feeds in various broad-leaved trees as a larva, but the adults are attracted to flowers to feed.

Typical common species of marshy grassland included the marsh damsel bug *Dolichonabis limbatus*, shield bug *Picromerus bidens*, black soldier beetle *Cantharis nigra*, the large and spectacularly marked hairy-eyed crane fly *Pedicia rivosa* - which has distinctive brown triangular markings on its wings, the soldier flies *Beris fuscipes* and *B.vallata*, seven species of marsh flies *Dolichopodidae*, ten species of hoverflies *Syrphidae*, three snail-killing flies *Sciomyzidae* - which predate wetland snails and eight species of dance fly including the more local *Drapetis ehippiata*, which is no doubt under-recorded.

Phil Ward
Radnorshire Beetle & Invertebrate Recorder

Water Voling in the Cwm Marteg Area– a Story Behind a Picture!

2011 has been a funny one for water voles in my area north of Rhayader. I monitor my local water vole population, which live in a complex of pools and wetland by the Wye near Gilfach, twice a year, at the beginning and end of the breeding season.

This spring, the number of signs was devastatingly low, probably due to the dry weather which meant very low water levels in both the pools and wetland and presumably increased predation by all sorts of wildlife. It didn't seem to be much better in the summer, so it was a great surprise to find that water voles had dispersed from there in August up the River Marteg, arriving at two places at Gilfach. Even better, one was using the pools that were created a couple of years ago to increase the area of suitable water vole habitat on the nature reserve. It's not the first time that I've found water vole signs at Gilfach but they've never persisted. Likewise, there is a tiny colony higher up in the Marteg Valley near Pant-y-dwr.



The fragility of small populations was reinforced by the story behind this picture. A volunteer of Radnorshire Wildlife Trust has been monitoring a mink raft nearby and



we'd been delighted to find a water vole latrine and prints all over the clay pad as well as the occasional otter prints and spraint. However, in this latest picture the vegetation on the left is a water vole food pile on the clay inside the mink raft. You can imagine it munching away inside the tunnel, when suddenly an otter pops his head up and spots 'dinner' sitting there.

There is a scrabbling from the right as the otter claws his way in... and that's the end of the story. No more water vole signs. It's a harsh world!

Darylle Hardy, Cwm Marteg Project Officer, Radnorshire Wildlife Trust

Unusual Keeled Skimmer *Orthetrum coerulescens*

During a visit to Cwm Cadlan NNR (near Penderyn in Brecknock Ed.) that we made in June 2010, Dick Eastwood photographed this very unusually marked male Keeled skimmer *Orthetrum coerulescens*.



©Dick Eastwood

The insect is displaying five regular dorsal black spots along the abdomen, but neither of us noticed this fact until Dick's photographs were studied in detail after the visit. So far, the observation has not been fully explained. It appears to be a genetic aberration, though the phenomenon has not been found since. The photograph was sent in 2010 to the British Dragonfly Society for publication in 'Dragonfly News'. On Dick's behalf, I was somewhat irritated to see a letter in the Autumn 2011 Dragonfly News, conjecturing that the spots could be the result of a hoax, and concluding that the explanation probably involved "*human intervention rather than genetic variation*". I suppose there is a remote possibility that the markings were as a result of a mark and release study. Whatever the explanation, to Dick and me, at least, it remains a mystery!



Photo: Normal marked Keeled Skimmer
©Dick Eastwood

Bob Dennison
Radnorshire (VC43) Dragonfly Recorder
e-mail: rd19366@googlemail.com

Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust 2011 highlights

History made on the Dyfi

Ospreys, *Pandion haliaetus*, have been seen regularly on the Dyfi Estuary for many years during the spring and autumn migration seasons. In 2007, the Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust put up an artificial nest on Cors Dyfi/Morfa Dyfi William Condry Nature Reserve in an attempt to attract ospreys to found a new colony in Mid-Wales. The very next spring, Ospreys moved in and it has been occupied every year since, but no breeding took place; that was until this year...



Female Osprey feeding chick in June ©MWT



Male osprey on 9th April ©MWT

Not only did all three eggs hatch, they also survived to fledging in late July/August, amazing for a first time pair! One by one, the Ospreys left the Dyfi in August and September for their wintering grounds in Africa. Thanks to the BBC and Dyfi Osprey Project supporters, satellite trackers were fitted to all three youngsters, so we know that all three survived their migration and appear to have settled in Senegal and Gambia – they make them of strong stuff in mid-Wales!

Magnificent moths

Cors Dyfi is not only special for Ospreys, it attracts a great variety of other plants and animals, not least of which are the 370 moth species so far recorded on the reserve. With more determined survey effort this year, carried out by volunteer Maria Wagland, we have discovered 10 new county records, as well as the first record of the rare Rosy Marsh Moth, *Coenophila subrosea*, (a Red Data Book species) since 1990.



Photo:

©Maria Wagland

New Water Vole site confirmed

The Water Vole, *Arvicola terrestris*, was once a common sight on every waterway, across the UK. However, following habitat degradation and loss, and the release of the American Mink, they largely disappeared; in just 8 years, the population fell by almost 90%.

Following the national trend, the once widespread population in Montgomeryshire, collapsed, leaving only a handful of isolated colonies in the East. The Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust suspected that Water Vole could be hiding out in the remote uplands in the West, but a survey in 2004 failed to find any sign of their presence.



Water vole signs at Bugeilyn ©MWT

Undeterred, everyone remained alert for signs and in 2006 experienced surveyor and researcher, Roy Bamford, spotted signs at Bugeilyn Nature Reserve in the Pumlumon Mountains. Unfortunately, a follow up survey found only signs of the Water Vole's much smaller terrestrial cousin, the Bank Vole.



Water Vole ©DLUOGS

So Trust staff were delighted when indisputable evidence (in the form of a latrine and feeding remains) were found and photographed by Clive & Thomas Faulkner in August 2011. This is not only the first confirmed record for Bugeilyn, it is also the first record in West Montgomeryshire since 1997!

Numerous 'Naked Ladies'

The news continues to be good for Meadow Saffron at Llanmerewig Glebe Nature Reserve. Despite flowering some two weeks earlier than normal, the number of blooms continues to rise; this year's count revealed 1,492!



Meadow Saffron (*Colchicum autumnale*), a native plant of damp meadows and woods, is also known as Autumn Crocus or Naked Ladies; the latter name stemming from the habit of the flowers appearing without any leaves. The flowers, which appear in the autumn, resemble pink crocuses, but are in fact colchicums and not related to true crocuses. The leaves appear in the spring and can be confused with Wild Garlic (Ramsons) a potentially lethal mistake, since all parts of the plant carry a deadly poison called colchicine. For this reason, the unimproved grasslands where this beautiful plant grew were typically managed for hay since the leaves die down prior to harvest.

Changes to agricultural practice have meant that Meadow Saffron is now very rare;

remnant populations are generally found in field margins or road verges. Consequently, Llanmerewig Glebe represents an extremely important population and the Trust is delighted that they continue to do so well.

Tammy Stretton, Conservation Officer, Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust

New Chinese Mitten Crab Recording Project

Chinese mitten crabs are officially listed as one of the World's 100 worst invasive species. They can cause damage to fishing gear and river banks, block intake

screens, modify natural habitats and compete with native species. It is this economic and ecological damage that makes this crab such an unwelcome arrival.

The full extent of these exotic pests in English and Welsh waters is currently unclear and a consortium of research institutes is requesting mitten crab sightings from members of the public, anglers and waterway workers, to clarify the distribution of this species.

Report your Welsh sightings by email: enquiries @ccw.gov.uk, phone: 0845 1306 229 or online: www.mittencrabs.org.uk



Recording Chinese mitten crabs

Report your sightings by email or phone

North England
Tel: 0191 222 5345
email: mittens@ncl.ac.uk

Wales
Tel: 0845 1306 229
email: enquiries@ccw.gov.uk

Southeast England
Tel: 020 7942 6170
email: mittens@nhm.ac.uk

Southwest England
Tel: 01752 633291
email: recording@mbs.ac.uk

Please tell us where and when you saw a Chinese mitten crab, your contact details and, if possible:

- was it male or female?
- take a photograph:
 - take photo from above
 - use a 50p coin to show scale
 - try to show claws clearly

MALE
FEMALE

You can also report sightings by text or picture message to 07806 938789 or online at www.mittencrabs.org.uk

Orchard Survey
© Crown copyright 1999

Road Verge Wildlife : Brecknock Wildlife Trust

There was a stunning display of orchids and oxeye daisies this year on some of the main roads and to top this was the discovery of Marsh Helleborines on the edge of the A470 by plant expert Ray Woods. These plants are usually found in damp

meadows and dune slacks, rarely in road verges! Maybe they were brought in with some road building material?

Meanwhile our eagle eyed Chairman Keith Noble spotted bee orchids at the Police car park whilst waiting for a meeting. The orchids attracted lots of visitors including Brecon Beacons National Park Authority members (looking for inspiration?) on their way to meetings.



Marsh Helleborines and a Police Station Bee Orchid

An effort was also made to do species lists of the Road Verge Nature Reserves, taking on the verges with no current volunteers, I was lucky to be helped by Florence Benoy, John Crellin, Liz Prior, Sue Furber and Tony Vaughan. Although we did fairly well finding the species that had been previously recorded on the verges there were some that eluded us. Tony was a great help sending unidentified specimens to his various



contacts but there were several verges with rare Brambles on them, and without Mike Porter they were difficult to pin down. However on one day I met Mike Porter near Talgarth and discovered a whole new world of brambles! Another topic for a BIS study day perhaps?



From Top Left: An Unusual Rose (Sheard's Downy Rose); a mountain pansy; a bramble (is it a rare one); Giant bellflower by the Usk near Llangynidr.

All photos ©BWT

Steph Coates, Brecknock Wildlife Trust

Aberystwyth University Lifelong Learning Courses A selection of courses in Powys in 2012

Understanding Amphibians (Weekend Intensive)

This new course gives a thorough introduction into the amphibian species native to Wales.

Species identification including specimens, life-cycles, habits and habitats will be just some of the topics covered in the workshop. The distribution and status of these animals, including conservation issues and the Wildlife Law will be discussed. Come and learn about our Welsh amphibians with expert ecologist and an interesting venue to explore.

£80 (£70) Fee Waiver Fee: £5

Machynlleth Centre for Alternative Technology Fri-Sun 10am – 4.30pm

Starting: 13/04/12, End Date: 15/04/12 Tutor: Fred Slater, Course Code:AF301

Llandrindod Wells Llysdinam Field Centre Fri-Sun 10am – 4.30pm

Starting: 20/04/12, End Date: 22/04/12 Tutor: Fred Slater, Course Code:AF300

Bird Identification (Weekend Intensive)

Come and gain an enormous amount of pleasure and knowledge from observing and learning about birds in the wonderful habitats. The majority of the course will take place outside, observing a wide range of species but there will be some indoor sessions to consolidate observations and develop knowledge of the species encountered.

£80 (£70) Fee Waiver Fee: £5

Machynlleth Centre for Alternative Technology Fri-Sun 10am – 4.30pm

Starting: 04/05/12, End Date: 06/05/12 Tutor: David Anning, Course Code:AF303

Butterflies of Various Habitats

For sheer eye-catching beauty it is difficult to think of a more perfect insect than a butterfly. They are an important group as they are sensitive indicators of the health of the environment. There are 58 species in the UK and you will learn how to identify a good range of different species & gain knowledge of their habitat requirements. There are 5 sessions held over 3 months to enable a wide variety of butterflies and moths to be observed. Beginners as well as those who have some prior knowledge should enjoy this course. The majority of the course will take place outside, observing a wide range of species at different local venues.

£80 (£70) Fee Waiver Fee: £5

Rhayader, Giflach Farm Wildlife Trust Wed fortnightly 12.30pm-4.30pm. 5 sessions

Starting: 16/05/12, End date:11/07/12 Tutor: Phil Ward, Course Code: AF305

Diversity of Invertebrates in West Wales (Weekend Intensive)

The focus is on practical methods of capturing, handling and identifying specimens found in various habitats around the venue. This will include using pit-fall traps for those that crawl, beating and sweep-nets for those that fly and hopefully light trapping for moths and other night fliers. With the specimens indoors, their amazing diversity, adaptations and life cycles will be revealed with the aid of microscopes, identification keys and of course, help from the tutor. A wider range of organisms are covered when compared with the Entomology (insects only), these including: woodlice, millipedes, spiders, molluscs and earthworms and insects. As a consequence this course is not so weather dependent and you could select a focus group.

£80 (£70) Fee Waiver Fee: £5

Machynlleth Centre for Alternative Technology

Fri-Sun 10am-4.30pm

Starting:01/06/12, End date:03/06/12

Tutor: Phil Ward, Course Code: AF308

Dragonflies (Weekend Intensive)

£80 (£70) Fee Waiver Fee: £5

Dragonflies are stunning and amazing insects. They are often brightly coloured, killing for a living and have phenomenal powers of sight, flight and manoeuvrability. Whether it is their brilliant colours, predatory habits, association with water or the challenge of identification, dragonflies have grabbed the attention of an increasing army of fans. You don't have to be an expert as during our indoor meetings and visits to different habitats, we should see a

range of dragonfly species as they emerge. You will be guided on how to identify species by sight, behaviour and by the habitat in which they are found.

Machynlleth Centre for Alternative Technology

Fri-Sun 10am-4.30pm

Starting: 22/06/12, End Date: 24/06/12

Tutor: Phil Ward, Course Code: AF309

Pond and Streams Invertebrate Life (Weekend Intensive)

Field visits will be made to ponds and streams at the course venue where different sampling techniques will be used to collect aquatic organisms. With the specimens indoors, their amazing diversity, adaptations and life cycles will be revealed with the aid of microscopes, identification keys and of course, help from the tutor. The monitoring and management of ponds and streams to both assess their general status and to improve their biodiversity will be covered briefly.

£80 (£70) Fee Waiver Fee: £5

Machynlleth Centre for Alternative Technology

Fri-Sun 10am-4.30pm

Starting: 12/10/12, End Date: 14/10/12

Tutor: Phil Ward, Course Code: AF102V

Entomology: the Larger Insects of Wales (Weekend Intensive)

The mainly field based sessions will focus on observing and identifying large insects such as butterflies, dragonflies, moths and beetles. Practical methods of capturing and handling specimens found in various habitats around the venue will be tried. This will include using pi-fall traps for those that crawl, beating and sweep nets and hopefully light trapping for night fliers.

£80 (£70) Fee Waiver Fee: £5

Machynlleth Centre for Alternative Technology

Fri-Sun 10am-4.30pm

Starting: 27/07/12, End Date: 29/07/12

Tutor: Phil Ward, Course Code: AB313

Understanding British Bats: An Introduction (Weekend Intensive)

This course gives a thorough introduction to British bats and is one in a planned series. Species identification, life cycles, habits and habitats. Practical and field exercises will involve a guide to summer and winter roosting sites and flight corridors, feeding patterns and behaviour. There will be late evening bat watch(es) using 'bat detectors'. Come and learn about our British bats with an expert ecologist and with an interesting venue to explore. For this course it is advisable to stay on site due to the late evening sessions.

£80 (£70) Fee Waiver Fee: £5

Llandrindod Wells Llysdinam Field Centre

Fri-Sun 1pm – various finish times

Starting: 03/08/12, End Date: 05/08/12

Tutor: Fred Slater, Course Code: AF100V

Machynlleth Centre for Alternative Technology Fri-Sun 1pm – various finish times

Starting: 03/08/12, End Date: 05/08/12

Tutor: Richard Crompton, Course Code: AF101V

Understanding British Mammals 1: Gnawers, Nibblers & Insect Crunchers (Weekend Intensive)

This course covers an exciting range of mammals including insectivores, rodents, rabbits, hares and deer. Species identification, life cycles, habits and habitats, practical and field exercises, field-signs, tracks and trails, feeding remains, droppings, nests and burrows together with population and monitoring techniques.

£80 (£70) Fee Waiver Fee £5

Machynlleth Centre for Alternative Technology

Fri-Sun 10am-4.30pm

Starting: 29/06/12, End Date: 01/07/12

Tutor: Rob Strachan, Course Code: AF311

Understanding British Mammals 2: Predators & Hunters (Weekend Intensive)

This course covers an exciting range of mammals including the carnivores, seals and cetaceans. Species identification, life cycles, habits and habitats, practical and field exercises, field-signs, tracks and trails, feeding remains, droppings, nests and burrows together with population and monitoring techniques

£80 (£70) Fee Waiver Fee £5

Machynlleth Centre for Alternative Technology

Fri-Sun 10am-4.30pm

Starting: 27/07/12, End Date: 29/07/12

Tutor: Rob Strachan, Course Code: AF312

Identifying Flowering Plants (Weekend Intensive)

Examine specimens to become familiar with the huge variety of flower and leaf forms and the equally huge and often confusing terminology used in the wild flower books and 'keys'. You will be given the confidence to use a 'flora?' and 'keys', identifying unknown flowering plant species on your own.

£80 (£70) Fee Waiver Fee £5

Machynlleth Centre for Alternative Technology

Fri-Sun 10am-4.30pm

Starting: 29/06/12, End Date: 01/07/12

Tutor: Margaret Howells, Course Code: AF310

Identifying Mosses, Liverworts & Lichens (Weekend Intensive)

Mosses, liverworts and lichens make up an important but often neglected component of many habitats. There will be plenty of specimens to identify and excursions in to the habitats at the venue, enabling you to develop good basic identification skills & build up a small reference collection. This is a valuable course for professional development as identification skills within these groups are uncommon in field ecologists.

£80 (£70) Fee Waiver Fee £5

Machynlleth Centre for Alternative Technology

Fri-Sun 10am-4.30pm

Starting: 02/03/12, End Date: 04/03/12

Tutor: Margaret Howells, Course Code: AF200

To enrol on any of the above courses, please complete an enrolment form. Download the form from: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/sell/courses/lllearn/science/index.html> or email learning@aber.ac.uk to request a copy of the form. For further information about the courses, please email pah15@aber.ac.uk

Biodiversity Information Service

Unit 4, 6 The Bulwark, Brecon, Powys, LD3 7LB

Tel: 01874 610881 Fax: 01874 624812 Email: info@b-i-s.org Website: www.b-i-s.org

Funding Partners:-

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Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (BBNP)
Forestry Commission for Wales (FCW)
Mid-Wales Trunk Road Agency (MWTRA)
Environment Agency (EA)
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