



The summer weather has given rise to a bloom of duckweed on the main pool which moves about according to the wind direction. Waterfowl do in fact eat it but clearly not fast enough!

Photo: Richard Stott

Newsletter No: 28

BIOBLITZ EDITION!!!

July 2017

Progress on the Wetland

Site Management

Hay cut was completed in early July. Soon afterwards some young people erected a tent and burned some of the hay. We are most grateful for the prompt response from our local police who rapidly brought things under control.

One of the objectives of our Management Plan is to create, where possible, what are known as MG4 floodplain meadows. You can think of these meadows as areas full of wild flowers in the way they would have been before the arrival of agro-chemicals.

The plan is to strew green hay (which is rich in wild flower seeds) onto prepared ground, followed later by sowing wild flower seed and finally planting wild flower seedlings for species that are difficult to propagate.

So, following the hay cut the area we call Middle Meadow was scarified and shortly afterwards green hay was cut from Lazy Meadow in Hampton and spread on Middle Meadow within a single day to give the seed the best chance of germinating. See page 4 of this newsletter..

Path clearing continues through the summer and the next task will be to start clearing the scrape to attract wading birds.

Organisation

Our Charities Commission application to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation has been submitted and we hope to become a CIO before the next Newsletter is issued. This means a little more administration but opens the door to a larger number of funding agencies and provides us with a legal framework to handle larger amounts of money when necessary.

The Committee will become Trustees of the Friends of Avon Meadows, responsible for seeing our funds are wisely spent.

Bird Behavior



A Song Thrush feeding its chick on Bioblitz Day.

Photo: Sarah Fowle

New Committee Members

We are delighted to announce that we have 2 new Committee Members, Tim Hutton and David Miller. Their knowledge and experience will be greatly valued.

Funding

Pershore Town Council Grant

We are delighted that the Town Council is continuing to support us with a grant for £200. We are a small organisation so this grant is important to us. Many thanks to PTC!

PTC has also applied for a Higher Tier Stewardship award for the part of Avon Meadows it owns.

Severn Waste "Welcome to Our Future" Grant

Many thanks to Severn Waste for awarding us a grant to provide a potable water supply to our store on the Wetland.

BIOBLITZ 2017



Photo: Sarah Fowle



Photo: Sarah Fowle



Gary searching for our 1000th species. He found it! A small soldier beetle. Google *Silis ruficollis* and you can see what a smart little beetle it is.

Photo: Janet Stott



Liz after the pond life!

Photo: Janet Stott



The fascination of pond dipping. You never know what you may find, water boatmen, leeches...!

Photo: Sarah Fowle

The total number of species recorded on Avon Meadows now stands at 1026! Much of this total is due to the skills of members of the Worcestershire Recorders to whom we are very grateful.

The skills of members of the Friends of Avon Meadows is increasing too.

We maintain lists of all species recorded from Avon Meadows which are available to members.



Azure Damselfly Photo: Sarah Fowle



Richard and Tim, bird watchers at the ready.

Photo: Janet Stott



Ringlet butterfly. Photo: Sarah Fowle

Total species count on Bioblitz day was 357 of which 27 were new to Avon

Surveys and Sightings

We keep detailed records of all biological records copies of which can be made available to Friends of Avon Meadows on request.

BIRDS

Status to Date

So far this year we have recorded 96 bird species. New species since the last Newsletter are Common Tern and a Common Redshank, Eurasian Curlew, European Hobby, Tawny Owl and Garden Warbler.

Weekly Bird Count

The Bird Group's average morning count so far in 2017 on our Thursday morning bird count remains at 44 species. There have been 31 bird counts in 2017 and we have logged 12,000 birds.



We only count one of these herons! Photo: Val Wood

Breeding Birds

Chick numbers seem to have been down this year for no apparent reason and 'our' Mute Swans have not bred although there are 2 pairs on the river that have done so.

The Water Rails and Cetti's Warblers have been heard occasionally throughout the summer but there has been no other evidence as to breeding.

Summer Visitors

Adult Cuckoos are the first birds to leave and the last one seen on the Wetland was on Bioblitz day, 24 June which is a new late record for an adult bird. The young birds are left to make their own way back to their wintering grounds in West Africa about two months later. The arrival of a pair of Garden Warblers was a surprise. They stayed around for a couple of weeks and then disappeared only to return at the end of July. We assume that they are not breeding on the Wetland.

The Scrape

Little Ringed Plovers continued to appear on the scrape until it became overgrown and the water dried up. We will attack the scrub again this autumn once the breeding season is over. While the scrape is wet water birds such as Shelduck, Oystercatcher and Redshank use the area but now it is dry it is full of thistles which provide food for Goldfinches.

GENERAL INSECT RECORDS

Insect populations are an important indicator of the health of a habitat. So the other important summer activity is to carry out insect survey work which includes butterflies, moths, dragonflies and this year bumblebees for the first time—thanks to Jeanne Roberts.

BUTTERFLIES

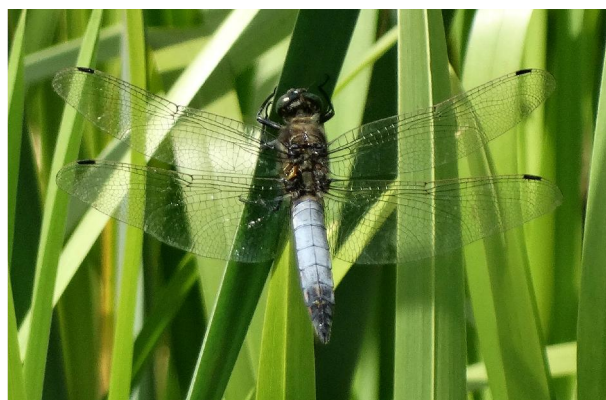
This seems to be a much better year for butterflies and although the species count remains the same the average number of butterflies is 69% up on last year. This data comes from weekly transects by Kirstie Chippendale. There are only 59 species of butterfly that occur regularly in the UK and many of these are only found in particular habitats so the scope for finding new species on our site is strictly limited.



Large Skipper
Photo Kirstie Chippendale

DRAGONFLIES

The average dragonfly count is up 34% on 2016 making it a good year for these too. Paul Jenkins conducts regular drag-



Scarce Chaser (male)

Photo: Paul Jenkins

only counts. His task is made more difficult as 'dragons' are fussy about the weather, ideally liking temperatures in the 20's with little or no wind.

As with butterflies there are only 56 species of dragonfly that occur regularly in the UK and many are habitat specific so the scope for finding new species on Avon Meadows is limited.

MOTHS

The Moth Group has had 4 moth recording nights so far this year which has produced 123 species, of which 18 are new to Avon Meadows. The count of 123 is the same as that for the whole of 2016 and then we had only 9 new species in the whole year so 2017 has the makings of a good year. Of the new species 12 were micro-moths and the other 6 were macro-moths, namely, Peach Blossom, Little Emerald, Treble Brown Spot, Scarce Footman, Triple-spotted Clay and The Clay,



Ghost Moth (female)
Photo: Sarah Fowle

Photographs of many of the moths we see are on our Flickr site at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/144642480@N04/albums>

VASCULAR PLANTS

Unlike many of the species we survey plants do not move about. However this can make seeking them out quite challenging. We are slowly finding more species.



A Common Toad caught on camera on a moth night covered in duck weed.
Photo: Bob Gillmor

Our current species count is 247. New species discovered during 2017 are Greater Birds-foot-trefoil, Alexanders, Hemlock Water-dropwort, Yellow-rattle, Wall Lettuce, Lords-and-Ladies, Orange Foxtail and Crow Garlic. Botanists amongst you will realise that none of these species are regarded as rare but it simply needs a knowledgeable person to find them! Many thanks to Ken Pomfret and Andrew Conway for their efforts in finding them.

Grassland Enhancement Project



Scarifying Middle Meadow

Photo: Ken Pomfret

Work started at 09h30 on 13 July and by 12h00, 46 green hay bales had been harvested. The first load arrived at Avon Meadows by 12h00. They were unloaded across the area (which is about 8,000 sq. metres) and a team of 8 volunteers spread the hay evenly across the whole area. The whole job was complete by 14h15.

There is to be supplemental seed sowing in September followed by planting seedlings in spring 2018 kindly grown from seed for us by Pershore Horticultural College.

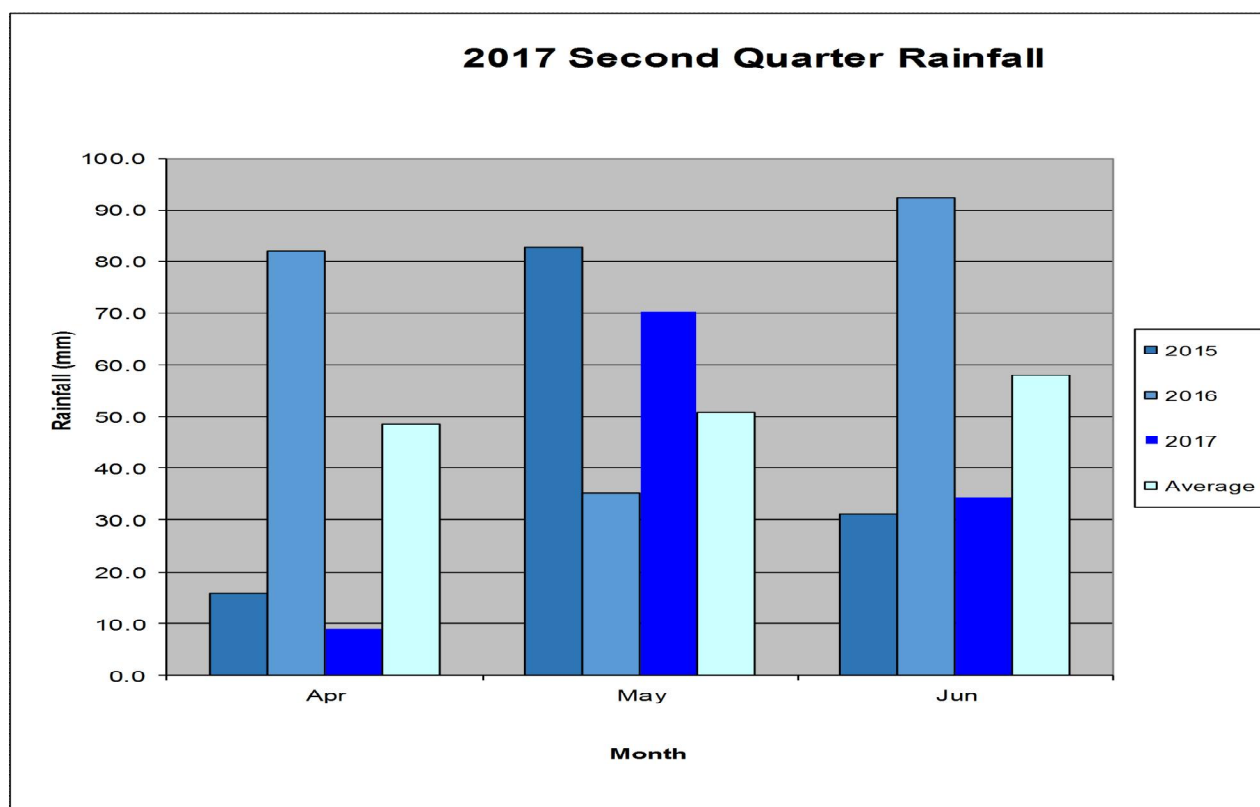
Synopsis of a report by Ken Pomfret. See the website for a full report [<http://www.avonmeadows.org.uk/> click bottom tab (Documents & Learning Resources) then select *Green Hay strewing report July 2017.*]



Rolling out the bales of green hay in Middle Meadow

Photo: Ken Pomfret

Water Levels



The rainfall over the second 3 months of this year has been very variable again. July had a very dry first half but the second half has made up for it. Even so the water levels are holding up well.

How you can help us

Work Parties - see Diary Dates below. Please come along they, are good fun! Cheaper than a gym subscription!

Interesting sightings - Take a picture. Send it to Liz, Bob or Richard with date, time and approximate location.

Newsletter Circulation - know anyone who would like one? Let Richard have their name and eMail address.

Diary Dates

Date	Activity	Date	Activity
Sat 5 Aug 17	Work Party 10h00-13h00	Fri 8 Sep 17	Moth Night 19h30-23h00*
Fri 11 Aug 17	Moth Night 20h30-00h00*	Fri 22 Sep 17	Moth Night 19h00-22h30*
Fri 25 Aug 17	Moth Night 20h00-23h30*	Tue 26 Sep 17	Committee Meeting 16h30-18h30
Sat 2 Sep 17	Work Party 10h00-13h00	Sat 7 Oct 17	Work Party 10h00-13h00
		Tue 28 Nov 17	Committee Meeting 16h30-18h30

* Will be cancelled if raining. Work parties are a valuable part of our activities on site and start at **10:00am** from the **HQ** just inside the main gate. Without your help we cannot maintain the area properly. It is a good idea to let Ken know if you can come (KenPomfret@btinternet.com) a few days before (in case there are last minute changes) but do not worry if you cannot, just turn up at the car park at the far end of Cherry Orchard at 10:00am on the appointed day.

Administration

Officers of the Committee

Chairman – Richard Stott richarddestott@gmail.com

Treasurer – Bob Gillmor avon.meadows@btinternet.com

Secretary – Val Wood val@wood20.plus.com

Work Parties – Ken Pomfret KenPomfret@btinternet.com

Website

<http://www.avonmeadows.org.uk/>. The site will be kept current, check here first to see what is happening!

Coots Eye View blog: <http://cootseyeview.blogspot.co.uk/> is another way of finding out what is going on.

The Website holds a number of other interesting and useful links which are worth exploring.

Contacts

If you would like any more information about volunteering contact either an officer of the Committee directly by eMail or by telephone to:

Mr Jim Burgin, Wychavon District Council.
Tel: 01386 565366
eMail: jim.burgin@wychavon.gov.uk

Ms Liz Etheridge, Wetlands for All Project Officer
Tel: 01386 565366
eMail: liz.etheridge@wychavon.gov.uk

(note that Liz is only working part-time on Avon Meadows and so may not be always able to answer the telephone)

Please print off this form and return it, together with your cheque to:

Mr R J Gillmor
20 Loughmill Road
PERSHORE
Worcestershire, WR10 1QB



Supporting Friend Application/Renewal Form

New member ☐ Renewing member ☐

Family subscription £10 per annum ☐ Individual subscription £5 per annum ☐

FULL NAME: _____ TITLE (Mr, Mrs, Ms): _____

ADDRESS: _____

TOWN: _____ POST CODE: _____

eMail: _____

AMOUNT PAID: £_____

Please make cheques payable to **Friends of Avon Meadows**

Please print off this form and return it, together with your cheque to:

Mr R J Gillmor
20 Loughmill Road
PERSHORE
Worcestershire
WR10 1QB

Alternatively you can transfer the funds electronically to **The Friends of Avon Meadows** bank account:

Sort Code: 77-68-78

Account Number: 01118468

IMPORTANT! If you do electronically transfer money **please confirm by eMail** to avon.meadows@btinternet.com giving your name and the amount so that receipts can be cross checked.