



## Newsletter of the Friends of Avon Meadows



The water level on the main pool is still quite low after a dry late summer and autumn.

*Photo: Richard Stott*

### Newsletter No: 33

October 2018

### Progress on the Wetland

#### Site Management

Following our normal management plan, sheep were introduced in early September to graze the grass for a period of 3 months. From our point of view their purpose is to weaken the grass to allow wild flowers to do better.

Summer volunteer activity of path clearance is completed as plant growth slows down. Volunteers' attention turned to clearing the scrape (largely complete) which has to be done before winter rains fill it up with water. Ideally the scrape would remain a clear muddy patch throughout the year but as it dries out in summer plants can grow. This autumn there is the additional task to spread 8 tonnes of pebbles onto the 4 islands we have prepared for them.

Once the scrape work is complete we move onto clearing reeds which should start in the next couple of weeks.



The cleared scrape, 30 Oct.

*Photo: Richard Stott*

**WARNING:** As you approach the bird screen there is a wasps nest buried in the bank on which the screen stands, on

### Member's Photographs



Inspecting a Pygmy Shrew, a new species for Avon Meadows (see Events section below). *Photo: Liz Etheridge*

the right hand (river) side in the longer grass. They do not cause a problem unless you walk over that area.



Improvement to the path off the boardwalk completed by volunteers. *Photo: Richard Stott*

## Funding

The materials for path improvement have been funded by Severn Waste's Welcome to Our Future scheme as have the pebbles for the scrape islands. We are really grateful for Severn Waste's support.

## Surveys and Sightings

### BIRDS

Whenever there is unusual weather it is an opportunity for naturalists to look out for unusual sightings as wild creatures attempt to adapt to the conditions. Our long, hot, dry summer and mild dry autumn have provided such an opportunity. It is not possible to say that any particular species has only turned up just because of the weather but when you find a number of new species or early winter arrivals is perhaps an indication.

#### New Birds

A male **HEN HARRIER** flew along the river on 25 Oct during our Thursday bird count. This is a new for Avon Meadows, the 128th species. This is a species that has suffered considerable illegal persecution on the grouse moors of the north in recent years so it is pleasing to be able to see them here.

Our 2018 year count continues to tick upwards and presently stands at 108 species. A Siskin was heard first on 22 September and then seen on several occasions afterwards. This is our first autumn record for this species and our 105th for 2018. Following close on an Osprey flew over Avon Meadows on 23 Sep, the 106th species. Another Thursday record on 11 Oct was a Red-legged Partridge, number 107. The Hen Harrier of course the 108th.

#### Weekly Bird Count

You will guess from the above section that bird counts generally have been good with interesting sightings. Two species we lost during last winter have been recorded recently. A Cetti's Warbler has been heard on a number of occasions and seen once or twice (they are skulking birds that are heard more often than seen). Less frequently a Water Rail has been heard too. We hope that their presence will mean they will re-colonise our reed beds. Birds move off after breeding but even so our weekly bird count in recent months has been a creditable 40 species.

#### Winter Visitors

Common Stonechats were first seen on 24 Sep, a new early record for this species. Recently 2 pairs have been present of this attractive, perky little bird.

Meadow Pipits and Skylarks have been flying over in small flocks in recent weeks but so far few have stayed. The same can be said of the Scandinavian thrushes, Redwing and Fieldfare. Our first Common Snipe was seen on 18 Oct.

European Golden Plover were first recorded in March 2017 and have been recorded flying over on a number of occasions. A flock of several hundred have wintered around Lower Moor regularly in recent years but in winter they prefer ploughed fields so Avon Meadows does not really suit them.

Other scarce birds Coal Tit (8 Oct), a mainly woodland

species which appears from time to time with us, usually in winter. Both Brambling (26 Oct) and Lesser Redpoll (29 Oct) have been reported and each of these dates are new early ones on Avon Meadows.

Jays, another woodland species, have had a good breeding year this year judging by the fact several have been recorded on Avon Meadows.

### BUTTERFLIES & MOTHS

Most of our records on Avon Meadows come about by finding an adult of a species. This is not always the case though.

Recently we conducted a search of the eggs of a Brown Hairstreak butterfly. This species local stronghold is Grafton Wood near Flyford Flavell. However this summer there has been evidence that it has been extending its range.

So it was on 25 Oct, with the help of experts from Butterfly Conservation, a number of volunteers could be found searching the Blackthorn suckers along the hedges on Avon Meadows. To everyone's delight we did find a single egg and so were able to add Brown Hairstreak to the Avon Meadows butterfly list. It is a big step now to find adult butterflies but if we get a good summer in 2019 who knows?

While looking for Brown Hairstreak eggs we came across an egg of the Blue-bordered Carpet moth, another new record!



The egg of the Brown Hairstreak butterfly. As you can see you need sharp eyes to spot them, they are about 0.75mm in diameter.

*Photo: Jean Young*

## Events

### Small Mammal Workshop

This event went ahead on 3 Oct with the help of the Worcestershire Mammal Group and was a great success. Those attending were able to gain 'hands-on' experience in the safe handling of small mammals. There were plenty of Wood Mice trapped, including young ones and our first **PYGMY SHREW**. The Pygmy Shrew is a new record for Avon Meadows and overall this workshop indicates that these populations are in good heart.



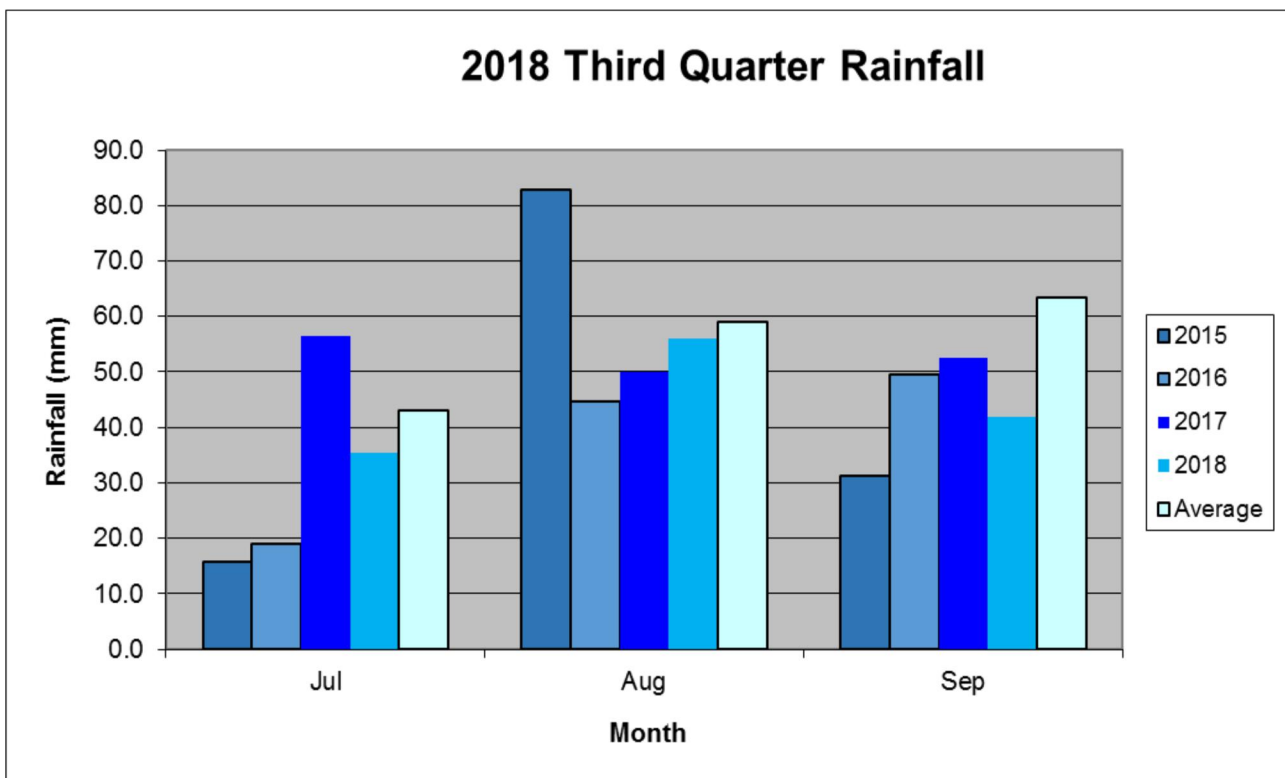


Avon Meadows looking NW in 2009 soon after the pools had been excavated. The water level in the pools is low so only the two deeper sections of the main pool are full. It is interesting to spot the changes that have taken place in the nearly 10 years since this image was taken.  
*Photo: Colin Reeves.*

Compare this with a recent Google Earth image taken while the Cherry Orchard House extension was being built.

<https://earth.google.com/web/@52.11706551,-2.07175796,17.163312a,987.26059914d,35y,0h,0t,0r/data=Cj8SPRIgYWJiZTA3ZGNkODM3MTFhZmFhNWViMDhYjQ5ZmMiDWxvY2F0aW9uLTU5MjQaCkVhcnRoIFZpZXc>

## Water Levels



The rainfall graph shows this year to be somewhat drier than average and although not shown it was good deal hotter!

## 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 3 Nov 18	Work Party 10h00-13h00	Sat 8 Dec 18	Work Party 10h00-13h00
Sat 10 Nov 18	Work Party 10h00-13h00	Tue 11 Dec 18	Committee Meeting 14h30-16h30
Sat 17 Nov 18	Work Party 10h00-13h00	Sat 3 Nov 18	Work Party 10h00-13h00
Sat 24 Nov 18	Work Party 10h00-13h00	Sat 5 Jan 19	Work Party 10h00-13h00
Sat 1 Dec 18	Work Party 10h00-13h00	Sat 12 Jan 19	Work Party 10h00-13h00

\* 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 CIO 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;

Ms Liz Etheridge, Wychavon District Council.

Tel: 01386 565366

eMail: [liz.etheridge@wychavon.gov.uk](mailto:liz.etheridge@wychavon.gov.uk)



**Pershore's Community Wetland and Local Nature Reserve**  
**www.avonmeadows.org.uk**

## **Membership Application/Renewal**

If you wish to join or renew by online banking, please use the following details:

SORT CODE 77-68-78 (TSB Bank), ACCOUNT NUMBER 01118468 and **QUOTE YOUR SURNAME AS THE PAYMENT REFERENCE**. Then please e-mail membership@avonmeadows.org.uk with the details requested below. If you would like to set up a standing order, please use the same details and again let us know by e-mail. We cannot currently handle direct debits.

If you wish to join or renew by cheque, please print and complete this form and send it together with your cheque, payable to **The Friends of Avon Meadows** to:

Mr. T.C. Hutton, 15 Green Close, Childswickham, Broadway WR12 7JJ

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

FULL NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ TITLE (Mr, Mrs, Ms etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TOWN: \_\_\_\_\_ POSTCODE: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Charity Governance/Fundraising standards and Data Protection (including GDPR)**

I am happy to receive information from The Friends of Avon Meadows:

by e-mail ☐ please tick ✓      by post ☐ please tick ✓

We will never pass your details to any third party organisations.

Or:

Please do not contact me ☐ if you tick this box we will delete you from our records.