



Hay Bridge News

The Newsletter of the Hay Bridge Nature Reserve Society. Registered Charity No. 501384

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SPRING 2019

Warden's Report for the Society Newsletter Spring 2019



TIP TOE THROUGH THE.....

NEWS FROM THE RESERVE

We had a brief taste of Spring – far too early, which has not only set us out of kilter, but the same may be said for some of the flora and fauna too! Bats, bees, grass snakes, adders, frogs and toads.....all seen, but have now done a disappearing act! It was lovely while it lasted – let's hope there is more to come.....

It has been a busy few months on the Reserve – new hedges have been planted along the track bounding Crooked Dale, along the boundary between Low and High Moor, and soon to be completed along the woodland edge between the ford below the car park all the way to White Moss Tarn. Standard trees are to be inserted along their lengths, and the new hedges will of course greatly extend the wildlife corridors within the Reserve. The planting has necessitated new fencing, provided by the JSCF, with the plants provided by Rusland Horizons and the elbow grease by volunteers from both Rusland Horizons and Cumbria Wildlife Trust. This now brings the total of new hedging on Hay Bridge to over 1000 metres. Deer fencing has also been erected along the river bank in readiness for some imminent tree planting, using a variety of species including Alder & Willow.

We have a new pond in the wet area of Low Moor, the central pond in Newlands Fen has been extended, and the car park has been resurfaced.

The Red and Roe deer are around in reasonable numbers, and last year's Roe twins are regularly seen close to the study centre and house (we even have droppings on the terrace by the conservatory!) Another resident around Keith's workshop is a solitary young Rabbit, which has been here all winter, and hides under the cars or behind the bins when disturbed, and we have regular sightings of a Brown Hare in the area between Harold's Hide and the cattle grid.

The Buzzards are spending quite a lot of time near the tarns, no doubt aware of the spawning season, and there are reasonably regular sightings of Sparrowhawk, Kestrel and Tawny Owl (although numbers of the latter seem to have been down a little this winter). We also catch occasional glimpses of a Barn Owl.

Other bird recordings of note – Little Egret (up to three at a time), Goldcrest, Green Woodpecker, Reed Bunting, Water Rail, Bullfinch, Crossbill, Redpoll, Siskin, Fieldfare, Redwing along with our usual good number of Tits, Finches, Thrushes & Blackbirds, Treecreepers, Robins, Great Spotted Woodpeckers and a communal roost of Wrens in the walls of the workshop (counting eight on one night).

We now await the arrival of our summer visitors (and summer!) with eager anticipation.....

DOGS ON THE RESERVE



Members have always been welcome to bring their dogs with them when they visit Hay Bridge. However in the last year it has been observed that we are getting even more 'doggy' guests than ever coming to the Reserve and so it seems that now is a good time to remind members of a few simple 'rules of the road' for dogs.

Firstly please can members note that while well behaved dogs are allowed on the Reserve, they **must** be kept on a short lead **at all times**. As members will appreciate there is plenty of diverse wildlife around which we are trying to protect and it rather defeats the purpose if dogs are allowed to wander (or run!) loose at any time. We have also decided that it is just not appropriate to bring dogs on any of the guided events organised by the Society.

Secondly please can dog owners clear up after them if necessary and please **do not** leave 'doggy bags' on trees or fences. The warden has plenty of tasks to accomplish to maintain and improve the Reserve, but one of them is most certainly not to be a 'doggy bag' collector!

Finally if members see anyone on the Reserve who is not following our code of dog behaviour please can you ask them to respect these simple guidelines.

THE BIG BIRD RACE, SATURDAY 19TH JANUARY

Chris Berry presents the prize to Team Parky!



Photo by: Jamie Green

It was billed as 'The Big Bird Race' to start the year at Hay Bridge and the aim was to identify as many birds as possible in just over an hour. It was a deadly serious competition for some, especially with a prize in the offing! It was rather a damp start for the teams of bird spotters, who set off to obey Chris Berry's watchwords for the 2019 Bird Race: "Keep warm, have fun and please be back in an hour"! Some teams were so keen they were even seen running round the Reserve, but it was Team Parky, with 36 birds spotted that won.

As well as the damp weather there was a chill in the air, so everyone was pleased to get back to the Study Centre to be greeted by plenty of homemade soup; a most welcome way to beat the cold. Chris Berry encouraged all the teams to share what they had seen and heard as they raced around the Reserve and it was fascinating to discover the wide variety of birds that had been spotted and that were active so early in the year.

After hot soup and prize giving, Chris led a short walk with his usual blend of knowledge and enthusiasm to entertain and enlighten us all.

REGISTRATION FOR EVENTS AND WALKS

Please can members be aware that once an email flyer is sent out 'advertising' an event or walk it is really crucial that they apply by email AND THEN PLEASE WAIT TO GET A CONFIRMATION BY EMAIL IN RETURN. Sorry, this does sound draconian but from bitter experience events and walks have been spoiled when members just turn up 'on spec'. Too many attendees make the event or walk difficult to manage and have meant that the whole point of having a guide has been lost with too many people strung out through the Reserve or unable to find a seat in the Study Centre. Please can members check the website for future events and pre-register or respond as advised to the correct email contact on the relevant flyer.

PHOTOGRAPHY AT HAY BRIDGE NATURE RESERVE

The Society is always delighted to welcome members who are also photographer's – either novice or professional – and there are some wonderful opportunities throughout the year to photograph the flora, fauna and diverse wildlife on the Reserve. But please do take note of these simple guidelines:

Firstly take time to learn the patterns of animal behaviour - know when not to interfere with animals' life cycles. There have been some unfortunate incidents at Hay Bridge recently when photographers have disturbed wildlife by trying to get too close, especially to bird's nesting boxes. This behaviour is really not acceptable.

Secondly it is important to respect the routine needs of animals - remember that others will attempt to photograph them too. So use appropriate lenses to photograph wild animals - if an animal shows stress, move back and use a longer lens.

Thirdly please acquaint yourself with the fragility of the Reserve's ecosystem - stay on the paths and walkways across the Reserve and please do not stray off them as they are intended to lessen impact on nature.

SPRING WALK, SUNDAY 17 MARCH 2019



It was a damp day but not so wet as to discourage attendees on one of Chris Berry's now famous guided walks around the Reserve. As well as all the fascinating information about the habitats on the Reserve, Chris is always ready with an appropriate joke or two as well.

The walk took everyone through the Hay Bridge woods and one of the attendees discovered lichen on the ground which could be used as a dye. On return to the Study Centre a Red Kite was spotted flying over the Mosses.

EVENT DATE CHANGE

Please note the date change for the events below:

September 22nd – Fungal Foray

Event details will be emailed to members, listed on the website and in the Newsletter.

2019 AGM

Will Members please note that the 2019 AGM will be held on **Saturday 27th April from 2.30pm** at the Study Centre, Low Hay Bridge. The AGM Notice to Members is included with this newsletter. The AGM provides an opportunity for Members to hear a full report from our Chairman and from the JSCF. In addition there will be a presentation by, a raffle in aid of the Society and a proper tea with cakes and sandwiches for all to enjoy! So please do plan to come along, to join in and to meet fellow Members and your Committee.