

Urban Wildlife (Bewdley 11th June 2016)

ROSEMARY WINNALL



Wyre Forest Study Group in Bewdley, 11 June 2016

Rosemary Winnall

We weren't the only ones at Blackstone Riverside car park meeting up that morning. Rabbits had beaten us to it and there were several grazing together below the bypass embankment to the accompaniment of the songs of 2 Garden Warblers in nearby scrub and buzzing *Bombus pascuorum* bumble bees amongst the Russian Comfrey. On the walk to the river, Brett spotted Least Yellow Trefoil *Trifolium micranthum*, a local species in the county, growing on the edge of the sandy track. This plant has between 2 and 6 flowers on each head compared with Lesser Trefoil *Trifolium*

dubium with which it can be confused, which has up to 15. Those not looking at the ground were pleased to spot a male Peregrine Falcon perched up on Blackstone Rock.

Under the bypass bridge we paused and spotted a female Mandarin Duck with 4 half-grown ducklings in the river below, and as they paddled off downstream a male Goosander flew past. Banded Demoiselles *Calopteryx splendens* were already dipping and diving like aerial jewels in the warmth of the day.



Will Watson dipping the River Severn, 11 June 2016

Rosemary Winnall



Scarlet Tiger 11 June 2016

Rosemary Winnall



Andrena nigrospina, found at Ribbesford

John Bingham

Will in his waders soon found a place to climb down into the water to join the Minnows present under submerged *Salix* roots. He and Rosemary Hill identified a range of river molluscs, including River Nerite *Theodoxus fluviatilis*, Duck Mussel *Anodonta anatina*, *Sphaerium corneum*, *Lymnaea stagnalis*, *Viviparus viviparus* and *Bithynia tentaculata*. Diving beetles *Platambus maculatus* and *Nebrioporus elegans*, common river mayfly *Ephemera danica* nymphs, *Hemiclepsis marginata* (a fish leech) and Water Slater *Asellus aquaticus* were netted plus a single River Saucer-bug *Aphelocheirus aestivalis*. One Bullhead was discovered among a matrix of dead twigs and silt on the submerged riverbank.

We followed the path alongside the river admiring the song of the Blackcap. A good range of insects were found, including hoverflies *Volucella pellucens* and *Eristalis intricarius*, Hairy Shieldbug *Dolycoris baccarum*, several small nymphs of Dark and Speckled Bushcrickets, many Green Dock Beetles *Gastrophysa viridula*, Red and Black Froghoppers *Cercopis vulnerata*, several Nettle-tap moths *Anthophila fabriciana*, Straw Dot moths *Rivula sericealis*, Carpet Beetles *Anthrenus verbasci* nectaring on Hogweed, and the mirid bug *Deraeocoris flavilinea*. Beautiful Demoiselles *Calopteryx virgo* landed tantalizingly close to us on the foliage but always seemed to move before the perfect photograph could be taken. Strident calls alerted us to the presence of a Kingfisher as it flew across the river carrying a fish. Brett showed us the difference between grasses Sterile Broom *Anisantha sterilis* and Great Brome *Anisantha diandra* growing alongside the cricket pitch just before Gary Farmer spotted Welsted Thistle *Carduus crispus* in flower.

We'd only got as far as Lax Lane when we found a conveniently low wall on which to sit to eat our lunch

with a good view of the river. The Kingfisher and several Scarlet Tiger moths added colour to our vista, and a cheeky crow sidled across to gather some bread before flying off across the river presumably to feed its brood. *Myrmica rubra* red ants clambered over some of the diners as we watched the Sand Martins that delighted us with their aerobatics. It was good to see these migrants back nesting in Bewdley quay after their winter in Africa.

A slow wander along Severnside South revealed a wide range of flowering plants in the nooks and crannies of the quayside. Creeping Yellow-cress *Rorippa sylvestris* and the similar yellow-flowered Wintercress *Barbarea vulgaris* were identified and Wall Barley *Hordeum murinum* was a new species for our quayside list. Across the river the Canada Geese, Mute Swans and Mallards were joined by a male Goosander in eclipse, possibly the father of the brood of 11 youngsters seen near Blackstone recently.

Will clambered down into the river again with his net and added more species to his list for the day, including Jenkins' Spire Snail *Potamopyrgus antipodarum*. 100+ River Saucer-bugs including juveniles, were netted from under stones and in riffles, and one live young Zebra Mussel *Dreissena polymorpha* was found attached a rock. Examining a water-filled storm drain one metre above river level, he found a female Palmate Newt and about a hundred Minnow fry.

We could see crowds gathering along the bridge for the Bewdley Carnival Parade so we made a hasty diversion into Jubilee Gardens through Tanners Court which reminded us of the historical importance of the local tanning industry using Wyre Forest oak bark. Gary Farmer discovered a rarely recorded Cream-streaked Ladybird in one of the conifers and some very

Wyre Forest Study Group

large aphids were seen on Dogwood bushes. Many of us could not resist the temptation of eating an ice-cream from Bewdley Museum's café whilst admiring the large leaning Walnut tree.

We went up Lax Lane (norse for Salmon) and then followed the old coffin track that links Bewdley town to Ribbesford churchyard via lower Snuffmill Dingle. The first of the large Pedunculate Oaks still housed the colony of Jet Black Ants *Lasius fuliginosus* that we'd discovered some years previously (see photo below) and this year the tree sported a large Sulphur Polypore bracket fungus *Laetisporus sulphureus* up in its branches. There was no evidence to show that a Barn Owl was using one of the holes in the oak trees further up the track this year, but we were pleased to see the snail *Monacha cantiana* snail lurking amongst the foliage, evidence of the fly *Phytomyza lilicis* mining Holly leaves and the tiny *Trioza remota* psyllid galls in oak leaves.

As we dropped down towards Ribbesford Church it was the flowering Hogweed that provided us with most records of hoverflies, bumble bees, beetles, moths and honeybees. There'd been a recent hatch of Garden Chafers and longhorn beetles *Stenurella melanura* and Dave Scott caught a Chimney Sweeper moth. Rosemary Hill found the slug *Deroceras invadens* not far from the cottages, Nicki Farmer spotted a Slowworm and John Bingham identified Crow Garlic *Allium vineale* growing alongside the track. Then, much to our delight Jane Scott spotted a single nectaring female *Andrena nigrospina*, a rare solitary bee. More were located along this track north



Ribbesford churchyard with friendly cat Nicki Farmer

of Ribbesford Church, providing plenty of opportunities for photography. Another was seen on Hogweed alongside the main road east of the church. This was the first record of this species west of the river near Bewdley. Are they flying across the river from the Blackstone fields colony or nesting more locally? This rare species made an excellent finish to an interesting day looking at wildlife in and around Bewdley...and we only covered a very small area, so there is much more still to discover.

Thanks to Will Watson, Rosemary Hill, Dave and Jane Scott for sharing their records of the day.

Members attending: Mike Averill, Dave Barnett, John and Denise Bingham, John Cox, Gary and Nicki Famer, Roy Finch, Kari-Anne Heald, Rosemary Hill, Robn Jones, Bob Kemp, Susan Limbrey, Jane Pope, Dave and Jane Scott, Will Watson, Brett Westwood, Rosemary Winnall.



From left, John Cox, Jane Pope, Rosemary Winnall, Bob Kemp, Kari-Anne Heald, Snuff Mill 11 June 2016

Nicki Farmer