

Idle Valley Nature Sightings

August 2024

Welcome to this second, revised edition, of the monthly 'Idle Valley Nature Sightings'. We do hope that the content in the first issue was interesting, useful and informative. Feedback and suggestions on future content is welcomed.

What's On for September 2024.

Every Tuesday each month – Wellbeing Walk (Bellmoor Lake area) from the Idle Valley Visitor Centre Cafe at 10:30am. Volunteer led walk sponsored by Co-op Lincolnshire.

Every Wednesday each month – Wellbeing Walk (Bellmoor Lake) from the Idle Valley Visitor Centre Café at 1:30pm. Volunteer led walk sponsored by Co-op Lincolnshire.

First Thursday in each month – Idle Adventure Walk (min 8 miles) Meeting Point is the Idle Valley Visitor Centre Café at 10:30am until 3:30pm. Volunteer led walk.

Saturday 14th September – Idle Valley Wildlife Watch: Harvest Time Seasonal wildlife activities for 7 to 12 year olds, with a walk in the reserve. Meeting Point is Idle Valley Visitor Centre at 10:30am until 12.30pm. £2.00 per child. Leader is Ros Schwarz. Contact email: idlewatch@nottswt.co.uk

Sunday 22nd September – Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) Organised by Lound Bird Club. If you can help, please contact

Wednesday 25th September – Gary's 'Wildlife & Birdwatching' Walk meeting at 9:00am on Chainbridge Lane by the NWT car parking area opposite the lane/gate to the Water Ski Pit, this time walking a loop to the Neatholme Lane pits looking for waders, migrants and wildfowl. The walk will be a maximum of 3 hours duration. Leader is Gary Hobson. Contact email: ghlbc@hotmail.co.uk or Mobile:07464964879

Around & About the Reserve

Some great news from birders (and birds) on the reserve this past month is that the water levels at Neatholme Fen are finally dropping, and the recently exposed ground is already reaping benefits for many birds already using it again. Lots of waders have been seen, and roosting Lapwings are back in good numbers. Grey Heron, Little and Great White Egret's are frantically feeding again, plus there are already several hundred waterfowl now back feeding in the shallows. The plan was to dam the outfall ditch where it joins Neatholme Fen, then pump out the ditch, which then enabled access to remove the sandbags that had been used previously to seal the plate over the end of the drainage pipe. A big thank you must go to all NWT staff and volunteers who helped with this work. (This information and image below supplied by Ian Cowgill, a local birder who sits on the IVNR Management Committee)



Birds recorded in July 2024.

July, just as we saw in June, was another yet unusually exciting month, with a few rare birds noted. A single **Caspian Tern** was noted flying north over Chainbridge Pit at 10:17am on the 1st. Presumably this same bird was noted earlier that day at Finningley Gravel Pits (9:27am) and Newington Flash (9:54am), both just over the county border into South Yorkshire. A single adult **Mediterranean Gull** was also found on the Lower Sheep Fields on the 1st which was also still present at the same location on the 2nd, 4th and 7th. This gull bore a white 'colour-ring' with black lettering but was only partly read so cannot be identified, though it may have been ringed previously in Belgium.

Below - Adult summer Mediterranean Gull at Lower Sheep Fields on 4th July 2024 (© P.Hobson)



A single 'un-ringed' adult **White Stork** was found by P.J.Freeman) on the Lower Sheep Fields on the 4th, the bird thankfully remaining for the remainder of that day being seen up till 21:30pm and it was also still present from 7:30am until 8:55am on the 5th when the bird was observed to fly high to the south. This bird had been seen previously, roving around sites in South Yorkshire and North Nottinghamshire, and after it left the Idle Valley area it was seen again flying NW over Idle Washlands at 10:00am. A bird that was needed by many who keep lists for Idle Valley/Lound Bird Club recording area as I believe there has been just one record previously.

Below left to right – Adult **White Stork** at Lower Sheep Fields on 4th July 2024, (© P.Hobson & © M.B.Vickers)



A single **Hobby** was noted over Clayworth Common on the 2nd. A single first-summer (2nd C/Y) **Caspian Gull** was found on the Lower Sheep Fields on the 4th, alongside 2-4 **Yellow-legged Gulls**. A single **Red Kite** was seen flying over the reserve entrance road on the 5th, with single **Bittern** and **Turtle Dove** reported plus 2 **Hobby** noted over Hayton Common the same day. Two **Black-tailed Godwit** were noted on the Lower Sheep Fields on the 6th. Three **Yellow-legged Gull** were noted on the Lower Sheep Fields on the evening of the 8th with a single **Curlew** over Walters Lane and 6 **Little Egret** noted at Tiln North the same evening, with 5 again on the 13th. Waders continued to be seen with a single **Wood Sandpiper** noted at Tiln North on the 12th & 13th. An adult and Juvenile **Little Ringed Plover** was noted on the reserve today, the 13th, have they bred locally? with another single adult again on the 15th. A single **Whimbrel** flew south over Chainbridge Scrape (East) on the 14th with a single **Honey Buzzard** also reported moving south, being harassed by Black-headed Gulls, at 8.00am the same day. Single adult female **Marsh Harrier** over Tiln North on the 15th and 21st. A further report of a single **Whimbrel** at Chainbridge Pit on the 16th. Three **Green**

Sandpipers were noted at Tiln North on the 15th with singles on Chainbridge Pit/Lower Sheep Fields on the 15th, 17th and 28th, on Wetlands Lakes on the 28th and at the Lower Sheep Fields on the 26th and 28th. 1-7 **Common Sandpipers** were noted at Chainbridge Pit on the 15th, 17th, 21st, 22nd (7), 23rd and 31st. Three 'Cronking' **Ravens** were noted over Chainbridge Pit on the 15th. Further first-summer (2nd C/Y) **Yellow-legged Gulls** were noted (with 4 **Herring Gulls**) at Bellmoor Lake on the 17th, with another at Chainbridge Pit on the 23rd. Single **Great White Egret** and at Cross Lane Fishery on the 19th with further sightings of 2-3 birds on Neatholme Fen and Cross Lane Fishery on the 26th. Five **Little Egrets** were seen at Cross Lane Fishery on the 19th with 2 there again and a further single at Bluebell Fishery on the 26th. Single **Bittern** were reported from two areas on the 20th & 21st. A group of 8 **Yellow Wagtail** were noted on the 21st. Four **Green Sandpipers** were noted on the 22nd with four also at Cross Lane Fishery on the 26th with another also seen on the Lower Sheep Fields the same day. One or two **Hobby** were noted over Chainbridge Scrape/Tiln North on the 21st, 23rd, 25th and 31st. A group of 8 **Yellow Wagtail** were on Clayworth Common on the 21st with just a single at Chainbridge Pit on the 31st. **Turtle Dove** were still present with three noted on the 13th, with three again noted in the Chainbridge Pit/Tiln North area on the 21st and 31st with a single at Chainbridge Pit/Walters Lane on the 22nd and 28th. Waders were still noted in small numbers mid-month with single **Redshank** at Chainbridge Pit/Lower Sheep Fields on the 21st, 23rd and 26th, plus a single **Turnstone** on the 23rd at Chainbridge Pit and 3 **Snipe** at Tiln North on the 26th. A single **Wigeon** was notable in the Neatholme area on the 23rd. Two juvenile **Marsh Harrier** were noted at Tiln North on the 26th with a single at Cross Lane Fishery the same day. **Kingfisher** seemed to be scarce in July with just a single at Bluebell Fishery on the 26th. A single **Grey Wagtail** was at Chainbridge Pit on the 28th. A single **Red Kite** was over the Lower Sheep Fields and a single **Peregrine** was 'chanting' over Clayworth village, both on the 28th. Up to five moulting **Red-crested Pochard** were on Chainbridge Pit on the 28th and 31st. **Green Woodpecker** now seem to be present on the reserve again after a few very poor years for this species, with a single on Walters Lane on the 28th and 1-3 noted in the Chainbridge Scrape area on the 31st.



Above – Adult summer **Black-necked Grebe** on Chainbridge Pit on 31st July 2024. (©C.Cooper)

A nice sighting of a single **Black-necked Grebe**, still in summer plumage on Chainbridge Pit on the 31st with up to 7 adult plus 3 juvenile Egyptian Goose at Chainbridge Pit on the 31st. It's almost certain that **Common Tern** has bred somewhere locally this summer, with up to 14 adults attending 2-3 fledged juveniles on Tiln North/Chainbridge Pit on the 21st, 22nd and 31st.

K.Fisher, P.J.Freeman, G.Hobson, D.Housman, J.Lloyd, J.Parker, A.Meads, A.Scrimshaw, A.Merrick, A.Przeslak, A.Lane, R.Ward, M.B.Vickers, D.Richardson, A.Pykett, L.Middleton, D.Evans, C.Cooper, A.Bell, W.Fiuk, S.Davenport, S.Hughes, V.Giles, P.Cadman, D.Housman, M.Lambert, I.D.Baxter, P.Hobson, D.Read, I.Cowgill, Lound Bird Club (Website), Nottinghamshire Birdwatchers (Website), Idle Valley Bird Sightings (Facebook), Lound & Idle Valley Bird News (What's App), Notts Bird News (What's App), Notts Rare & Scarce (What's App) plus Idle Valley Walks (What's App). Please submit bird sightings to the above groups/pages or email to ghlbc@hotmail.co.uk

Butterflies at Idle Valley NR.

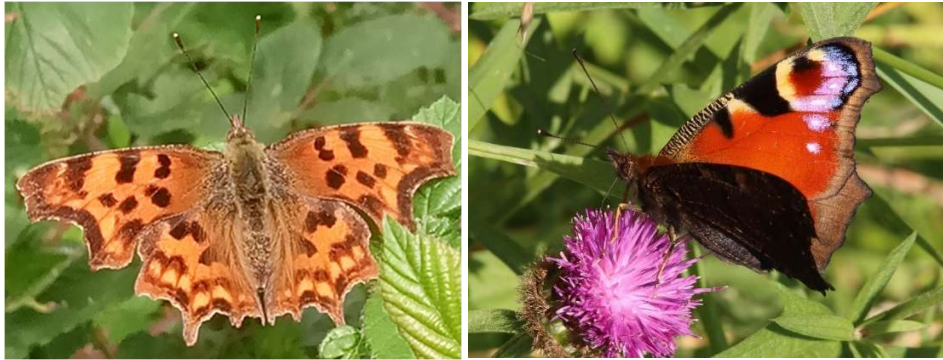
The following list contains all known butterfly species recorded within the Idle Valley NR and the local recording area. It was provided by Phil Cadman who records and manages the huge LBC/IVNR Entomology Database. There has been a total of 31 species recorded and the interesting part of this spreadsheet once again, is the earliest/latest sighting dates and the highest daily numbers of each species. Rare butterflies recorded locally have included the following:- Single **Silver-washed Fritillary** during June-August in 2001, 2013, 2018 and 2023, single **White-letter Hairstreak** during June-August in 2011, 2013 and 2021, a single **White Admiral** along Neatholme Lane on August 10th 2013, a single **Grizzled Skipper** on May 13th 2014 and rarest of all, a single **Large Tortoiseshell** at Bellmoor on October 14th 2023.

Vernacular Name	Taxon	Earliest Sighting	Latest Sighting	Highest Daily No's
Dingy Skipper	<i>Erynnis tages</i>	April 29th	August 11th	14
Grizzled Skipper	<i>Pyrgus malvae</i>	May 13th	May 13th	1
Essex Skipper	<i>Thymelicus lineola</i>	June 24th	September 4th	11
Small Skipper	<i>Thymelicus sylvestris</i>	May 29th	September 7th	185
Large Skipper	<i>Ochlodes sylvanus</i>	May 17th	August 19th	54
Orange-tip	<i>Anthocharis cardamines</i>	March 22nd	June 19th	75
Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>	March 27th	October 28th	130
Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>	March 27th	October 29th	45
Green-veined White	<i>Pieris napi</i>	March 30th	October 15th	53
Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias croceus</i>	June 8th	September 24th	2
Brimstone	<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>	January 7th	October 29th	21
Wall	<i>Lasiommata megera</i>	June 8th	August 9th	10
Speckled Wood	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>	March 30th	October 28th	67
Small Heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>	May 14th	September 26th	14
Ringlet	<i>Aphantopus hyperantus</i>	June 12th	August 20th	270
Meadow Brown	<i>Maniola jurtina</i>	June 1st	September 27th	745
Gatekeeper	<i>Pyronia tithonus</i>	June 25 th	September 19th	145
Silver-washed Fritillary	<i>Argynnis paphia</i>	June 29 th	August 22nd	1
White Admiral	<i>Limenitis camilla</i>	August 10th	August 10th	1
Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>	March 12th	November 29th	310
Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>	May 15th	October 19th	1000+
Peacock	<i>Aglais io</i>	January 3rd	December 31st	133
Small Tortoiseshell	<i>Aglais urticae</i>	January 12th	December 3rd	81
Large Tortoiseshell	<i>Nymphalis polychloros</i>	October 14th	October 14th	1
Comma	<i>Polygonia c-album</i>	March 2nd	November 10th	49
Small Copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>	April 17th	October 29th	15
Purple Hairstreak	<i>Favonius quercus</i>	June 30th	August 26th	18
White-letter Hairstreak	<i>Satyrium w-album</i>	June 19th	August 6th	1
Holly Blue	<i>Celastrina argiolus</i>	April 5th	September 24th	11
Brown Argus	<i>Aricia agestis</i>	May 3rd	October 10th	74
Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>	March 29th	October 6th	100



Above left to right – Two past rare butterflies. Adult **White Admiral** at Neatholme Lane on 10th August 2013, (©PN) and male **Silver-washed Fritillary** at Chainbridge Wood on 27th July 2013 (©D.Mannifield)

Below left to right – Adult **Comma** at Bellmoor on 24th July 2024 (©M.McCallum) and adult **Peacock** at Idle Valley NR on 27th July 2024 (K.A.Ward)



Common 'Land' Snails found at Idle Valley Nature Reserve

A few basic facts. Land Snails are in the class of 'Gastropods'. This class comprises snails and slugs from saltwater, freshwater, and from the land. Snails, like Earthworms, are 'hermaphrodites', each one being able to mate with another and reproduce new offspring. There are over 40,000 'Land' snail species found worldwide with just 120 species found here in Britain. Locally there are several species found at Idle Valley NR and here are some of those commonly seen and photographed. Snails, just like slugs, get a raw deal with many killed in gardens with the use of poisons and salt. Gardeners have long thought of slugs and snails as the bad guys, but we are beginning to understand just how valuable they are in the garden ecosystem. Many slugs and snails feed on decomposing organic matter, such as dead leaves, dung, and even dead slugs and snails.

Brown-lipped Snail *Cepaea nemoralis* - Widespread across Britain apart from northern parts of Scotland. A very variable species which can be Yellow, brown or pink in colour. The banding patterning is also very variable with up to 5 dark bands wrapping around the snail shell. The shell is semi-glossy with a noticeable dark rim to the aperture. Found most often in damp vegetation and within Nettle beds.



Above left to right - **Brown-lipped Snails** at Idle Valley NR in 2024. (©G.Hobson, ©M.McCallum, ©K.Beaumont)

Garden Snail *Cornu aspersum* - Commonly found throughout lowland Britain. A well-known species which is common in Gardens, Parks, Woodlands and other Green Spaces. It has a thick shell, with a mottled brown, red and yellow colouration but lacks the spiralling coloured stripes of other common snails. Its large size, wide shell aperture and rough, wrinkled surface are obvious features. The Garden Snail is, more often than not, very nocturnal in its habits and chooses to climb, often high up on tree trunks and large plant stems/leaves to hide from predators during the daytime.



Above left to right - **Garden Snails** at Idle Valley NR in 2024. (©G.Hobson, ©M.McCallum, ©H.Marks)

Copse Snail *Arianta arbustorum* - Widespread. This snail has a mottled brown shell with a thin band darker around the circumference, although its colour pattern can also be highly variable. The body is dark, and the shell aperture is 'C' shaped often with a paler 'bone-white' inside lip.



Above left to right - **Copse Snail** by Chainbridge Wood, 28th June 2024 (©G.Hobson) and stock image for example.

Kentish Snail *Monachia cantiana* - Widespread across England, less common in Wales and Scotland. This non-native species has a creamy shell with dark mottling. It often has a pale band around its circumference. The body of the snail is pale brown, with a darker skirting and sometimes darker tentacles.



Above - **Kentish Snail** at Bellmoor on 4th August 2024. (©G.Hobson)

Amber Snail *Succinea putis* - Widespread throughout England and Wales, less common in Scotland. The shell of this species can range from very light amber to a darker orange-brown in colour. The body of this snail is a pale colour with two dark lines running along the top of its head, extending along its tentacles to its eyes.



Above left to right - **Amber Snails** at Idle Valley NR in 2024. (©M.McCallum, ©G.Hobson)

Information for this article was sourced from Wikipedia, the Natural History Book Service website and the Royal Horticultural Society website. All images reproduced with permission from the contributor.

Dragonflies & Damselflies



Above left to right - **Emperor Dragonfly** (female blue form) 'ovipositing' in the visitor centre moat on 27th July (©G.Hobson) and two **Southern Hawk**s (immature male – blue form) IVNR, 27th July (©K.A.Ward) and (male blue form) near Chainbridge Bridge on 31st July. (©C.Cooper)

Identification Guide – Willow Emerald Damselfly



Above left to right - Male **Willow Emerald Damselfly** *Chalcolestes viridis* along Neatholme Lane, Idle Valley NR, 19th August 2024. (©G.Hobson)

The **Willow Emerald Damselfly** is a recent coloniser of the UK with the first, a single specimen recorded in East Anglia in 2007. Two years later their number had increased to 400+ and now in 2024 they are still expanding north and west at a rapid rate and is now an expected species at Idle Valley NR from mid to late summer. As the name suggests, these are often found resting and feeding on willows, sallows and alders. The easily visible distinctive features are:

- the metallic green body without any sign of blue colouring on the male or the female.
- the brown eyes.
- the pale wing 'pterostigma' spots with a dark border, shown in the above right image.
- the large 'spur-shape' dark green mark on the side of the thorax, indicated by a yellow arrow above centre.
- the outer anal appendages of the male Willow Emerald Damselfly are pale with a dark tip while the inner are dark and very short.
- the females' ovipositor is dark with a pale patch on the underside and chunky.
- there are two triangular shaped dark marks on the top of the female's abdomen.
- The wings are spread at rest and not folded along the body like other damselfly species.

Some information sourced from the British Dragonfly Society <https://british-dragonflies.org.uk> and Nature Spot www.naturespot.org.uk

Broad-bodied Chaser - Gallery.



Above left to right – male and female **Broad-bodied Chaser** *Libellula depressa* (©G.Hobson)

Spiders & Insects in July 2024.



Above – **Common Stretch Spider** *Tetragnatha extensa* at Bellmoor Lake, 20th July 2024 (© G.Hobson)

Below left to right – **Spotted Longhorn Beetle** *Strangalia maculata* at Bellmoor, 23rd July 2024 (©S.Harrison) and **Common Red Soldier Beetle** *Rhagonycha fulva* at Bellmoor, 24th July 2024 (©Chris L)



In next month's news.

Updated Events & Reserve News + All the August Bird News + Another Identification Guide + Hoverflies + Flowers + Insects + Dragonflies & Damselflies and much more.

Submissions should be sent to Gary Hobson via email ghlbc@hotmail.co.uk or in the case of regular bird and wildlife sightings, via the relevant IVNR/Wellness/Birdwatching, 'WhatsApp' & 'Facebook' groups linked to Idle Valley NR.