



Idle Valley Nature Sightings

September 2024

Welcome to the monthly 'Idle Valley Nature Sightings'. We do hope that the content is interesting, useful and informative. Feedback and suggestions on future content is welcomed.

What's On for October 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 12th October – Idle Valley Wildlife Watch: Feathered Friends 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 20th October – Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) Organised by Lound Bird Club in conjunction with the BTO. If you can help, please contact Phil Cadman at philip.cadman@sky.com

Wednesday 23rd October – Gary's 'Wildlife & Birdwatching' Walk Idle Valley NR. Meet at Chainbridge Scrape (East) viewpoint 9.00am-midday. Walking a loop checking Tiln North, Chainbridge Pit and Chainbridge Scrape (West). Leader is Gary Hobson. Contact email: ghlbc@hotmail.co.uk or Mobile: 07464964879

Around & About the Reserve

Alex Morley (Reserves Manager - North) - September is the earliest when we can start to undertake larger scale projects to manage our extensive lakeside scrub, and for 2024 we are fortunate to have funding through Countryside Stewardship and from the Metamorphosis Trust to bring in contractors for more impactful machinery work. Any earlier and we risk disturbing the fauna & flora which make up the nature reserve. After such clearances, we rely upon grazing pressure to reduce regrowth in these freshly cleared areas, mimicking the actions of our extinct fauna. These clear margins then eliminate cover for predators which potentially disturb our targeted wading birds. Hand in hand, we will start to raise water levels where possible, flooding lower lying margins which have become exposed over summer. This action will kill off any plants which have already colonised the margins and new seedlings lying in wait for spring. We rely upon sandbagging to block drains & ditches, so if you see these deployed on site, they have a purpose and should be left in-situ. So begins habitat management's busiest time of the year across all 19 of NWT's northern reserves. **If you can volunteer to help manage the Idle Valley NR, please contact the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust.**

Harri Phillips (IVNR Wilder Officer) - Well, what a busy but wonderful summer we have had at idle valley. There has been over 150 people engaging with walks in August alone. I am also happy to let you all know that the toddler sessions trials were a massive success. We met some amazing toddlers and families who were so keen to experience nature and make friends with each other, and us. We hope that this will soon become a regular thing at idle valley. Excitingly there are plenty of live volunteering roles for up north at the moment. One being talk leaders. We are often asked to do talks to local groups of people and are hoping to create a pool of volunteers who like delivering talks and want to spread the word to the community. If this interests you, please do get in touch with me. Full training will be provided. Contact hphillips@nottswt.co.uk or follow Harri Wilder on Facebook.

Birds recorded in August 2024.

Seemingly, the most prolific birding location this month, and perhaps for a large part of this year already, was Cross Lane Fishery (Cross LF) ,a strictly privately owned fishery with no public access, sandwiched between the Bittern Pools (NWT) and both Cross Lane & Neatholme Lane tracks. This area, having been flooded for all this year and only recently dropping water levels to expose much dryer ground and wet margins, has been a magnet habitat for wetland birds. Please do not enter this site, which can be viewed fairly well anyway, from gaps in the hedgerow along Cross Lane.

With the news that both **Great White Egret** & **Cattle Egret** have bred for the first time this year in Nottinghamshire, we are hopeful this will repeat itself at Idle Valley NR soon. Sadly though, we do not now have any active breeding Grey Heron nesting locally. They previously bred in good numbers at both Broom Wood (Babworth Estates) & Tiln Wood (NWT), both pine woodlands, that have now been felled for timber. Despite that, we had a good run of egret sightings this month with **Great White Egret** noted across the recording area as follows:- 1 (5th & 7th), 2 (8th), 6 together on Cross LF on (9th), 1 (11th, 12th & 13th), 2 (16th), 1 (17th), 3 (18th & 22nd), 1 (28th), 2 (29th) and 2 (30th). **Little Egret** were noted across the recording area in good number as follows:- 4 (5th), 2 (7th), 5 (8th), 2 (9th), 3 (11th), 4 (12th), 6 (16th), 15 - including 13 together at Cross LF (17th), 8 (18th), up to 17 together at Neatholme Fen (22nd), 8 (28th), 14 (29th) and just 4 (30th). The rarest of the egrets, the **Cattle Egret** was also noted this month, though nowhere near numbers seen previously, with just single birds (possibly the same individual?) noted at Chainbridge Pit on the 14th, 15th, 17th, 20th, 21st and 22nd. After a long run of records earlier in the summer just a single **Bittern** was noted at Neatholme Scrape briefly on the 28th. Only a handful of **Grey Heron** reports from Neatholme Fen, with a single on the 8th, 2 on the 9th, 4 on the 12th with 2 on the 17th & 18th. A good run of raptor sightings this month began with a sighting of a single **Red Kite** over Chainbridge Pit/Lane area on the 5th, then further sightings of singles over Neatholme Pit viewpoint on the 9th and over Clayworth Copse on the 13th. Several **Marsh Harrier** were reported regularly this month, with a single over Chainbridge Pit on the 8th, 2 at Neatholme Pit on the 9th, a single at Neatholme Pit on the 13th, a single 'cream-crowned' bird at Neatholme Fen on the 15th, a female at Tiln North on the 16th and a 'cream-crowned' bird again at Neatholme Scrape on the 28th, 29th and 30th. A single **Peregrine** sighting this month when a single was noted over Chainbridge Scrape (east) on the 28th. Several **Hobby** were reported this month with 3 on the 9th, 2 on the 13th and singles on the 18th, 20th & 28th. A juvenile **Osprey** was noted by visiting birder, Steve Bocking, stooping low over Chainbridge Pit on the 18th. However, 'star raptor' this month must go to the single **HONEY BUZZARD** that Paul Hobson noted lingering over Chainbridge Meadows at 12:10pm on the 29th which then drifted off south toward Retford a few minutes later. The month typically saw less **Turtle Dove** sightings and a belief locally that they have sadly failed to produce young this year. A single on the 5th was followed with further sightings on Neatholme Fen on the 9th and another within the recording area on the 22nd. Let's hope the planting work NWT have done at Alan's Meadow to help with feeding these birds will pay off next summer. Single **Black-necked Grebe** were noted on Chainbridge Pit again on the 14th, with further singles on Neatholme Scrape on the 20th & 29th and it or another at Neatholme Pit on the 28th.



(Above left to right) **Black-necked Grebe**, Neatholme Pit, 28th August (©A.Griffin) and possibly the same the bird? on Neatholme Scrape, 29th August (© P.Hobson)

Waders until this month have been scarce to non-existent this year so the dropping of water levels on Neatholme Fen and the almost perfect wader habitat at Cross Lane Fishery will reap benefits going forward. **Greenshank** were much in evidence with singles at Cross LF on the 7th, 8th and 9th, a single over Neatholme Scrape on the 11th, 3 at Neatholme Fen on the 16th and finally 4 birds again at Neatholme Fen then flew towards Lingham Pool on the 30th. **Green**

Sandpiper were also seen in good number at either Neatholme Fen or Cross LF with 4 on the 9th, a single on the 11th, 4 on the 12th, 5 on the 15th, 3 on the 16th, 2 on the 18th, 4 on the 22nd, a single on the 28th, 3 on the 29th and a single on the 30th. A scattering of **Common Sandpiper** were noted with singles at Chainbridge Pit and Bellmoor Lake on the 18th and a single at Neatholme Pits on the 27th. A few **Snipe** records were noted with 2 at Cross LF on the 8th, 3 there again on the 9th, 5 at Neatholme Fen on the 16th, 15 on Cross LF on the 16th, 10 noted on the 27th, a single at Neatholme Fen on the 28th and finally 3 there again on the 29th. A scattering of **Dunlin** sightings with 1-3 birds at Neatholme Fen or Cross LF on the 9th and a single at Neatholme Fen on the 16th. A scattering of **Ruff** sightings with 2 on Neatholme Fen on the 12th, singles there on the 15th, 16th, 18th and 20th and finally 2 there again on the 29th & 30th. A small number of **Black-tailed Godwit** were noted with 1-3 at Neatholme Fen on the 9th and 4 were noted at Chainbridge Scrape (East) on the 17th. Roosting **Lapwing** numbers on Neatholme Fen have increased, thanks to reduced water levels, from 50 on the 8th, to 65 on the 9th and to over 300 birds by the 29th. Two juvenile **Little Ringed Plover** were noted at Neatholme Fen on the 9th with just a single there on the 15th. Just a couple of **Ringed Plover** reports with a single flew over Neatholme Scrape on the 11th and 2 birds at Neatholme Fen on the 22nd. A single **Redshank** was noted in the Neatholme area on the 27th. **Common Tern** were notable at Neatholme Fen with peak counts of 12 on the 7th, 7 on the 9th & 12th, 5 on the 17th, 8+ on the 18th, 6 on the 21st and down to just 4 birds on the 28th & 29th. A single **Black Tern** was noted briefly at Neatholme Fen at 5:45pm on the 11th before departing east. Just a couple of reports of **Yellow-legged Gull** with 3 noted late morning on Chainbridge Pit and a further adult at Bellmoor Lake on the 18th and finally an adult again at Bellmoor Lake on the 30th. **Red-crested Pochard** have bred locally this summer, and good numbers of moulting birds were reported with 5 birds at Chainbridge Pit on the 5th, 32 (including 8 large juveniles) were at Parish Park on the 9th, 2 juveniles were at Neatholme Fen on the 22nd and finally 6 were on Chainbridge Scrape (east) on the 29th. Early **Wigeon** reports included 5+ on Neatholme Fen on the 18th with a single there on the 28th. A single **Garganey** was noted on Neatholme Fen on the 22nd. A single juvenile **Shelduck** remained on Bellmoor Lake on the 18th & 30th. Just 3 **Teal** were noted at Cross LF on the 28th. A scattering of **Kingfisher** sightings with 2 at Cross LF on the 8th, a single at Walters Farm Pool on the 18th and finally a single at Neatholme Fen on the 28th. A very early first-winter **Goldeneye** was noted on Neatholme Scrape on the 28th, normal winter arrival happens usually late October into November. A small number of **Egyptian Geese** were noted at Neatholme Fen with 2 on the 28th and 5 on the 30th. Chainbridge Pit recorded a single **Swift** on the 8th and 6 birds there on the 22nd, the only two reports. A few reports of **Sand Martin** included 20 at Chainbridge Pit on the 8th and 100+ over both Chainbridge Pit and Neatholme Scrape on the 18th. A scattering of single **Green Woodpecker** reports from the on the 9th, 11th, 13th, 22nd and with a juvenile seen on the 27th. A scattering of **Yellow Wagtail** with single at Tilt North on the 9th, a single on Clayworth Common on the 13th, 2 flew south on the 29th and finally 2 were noted at Neatholme Fen on the 30th. A single **Raven** flew west over Neatholme Pit on the 30th. A single **Yellowhammer** was noted on Clayworth Common on the 13th. A single female **Redstart** was noted in The Willows on the 29th alongside a single **Lesser Whitethroat**. A 'late singing' **Garden Warbler** was noted on Bittern Pools on the 28th. Two **Bullfinch** were notable 'calling' at Neatholme Fen western viewing screen on the 28th.

K.Roberts, S.Bocking, K.Fisher, J.Dennison, A.M.Griffin, T.Tomlinson, C.Parker, P.J.Freeman, G.Hobson, D.Housman, T.Crook, M.B.Vickers, D.Richardson, A.Pykett, L.Middleton, , C.Cooper, A.Bell, S.Davenport, S.Hughes, V.Giles, P.Cadman, P.Hobson, 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

Hoverflies at Idle Valley Nature Reserve.

Hoverflies (order *Diptera* (True Flies) and family *Syrphidae*) are a fairly common sight at the Idle Valley NR and can be recorded throughout the spring, summer, autumn and even in winter months with far greater numbers seen from spring through late-summer. Some 280 species have been recorded in the UK and locally we have recorded (to my knowledge) the following species, with their common English name added for clarity (see table below). Hoverflies, also referred to in some parts of the world as 'Flower Flies', frequent flowering plants of many species in many different habitats. Many species look & 'mimic' other insects in particularly, Bees, Wasps, Hornets and Flies. They are a much overlooked 'pollinator' in the plant kingdom and as important as the much more popular pollinator species like Bees and Butterflies. The images below are just a selection of the species already recorded here at Idle Valley NR. A huge thanks to the patience of the photographers who took time to get these images. These things are very quick and not easy to capture. If you have records or images we that can use of other hoverfly species please let me know.

<i>Cheilosia bergenstammi</i>		<i>Platycheirus albimanus</i>	
<i>Chrysogaster solstitialis</i>		<i>Platycheirus clypeatus</i>	
<i>Chrysotoxum festivum</i> *		<i>Platycheirus manicatus</i>	
<i>Epistrophe elegans</i>		<i>Platycheirus peltatus</i>	
<i>Episyrphus balteatus</i> *	Marmalade Fly	<i>Platycheirus scutatus</i>	
<i>Eristalinus sepulchralis</i>		<i>Scaeva pyrastris</i> *	
<i>Eristalis arbustorum</i>		<i>Sphaerophoria scripta</i>	Long Hoverfly
<i>Eristalis pertinax</i> *	Tapered Dronefly	<i>Syrphus ribesii</i> *	
<i>Eristalis tenax</i>		<i>Tropidia scita</i>	
<i>Eupeodes luniger</i> *		<i>Volucella inanis</i> *	Hornet Hoverfly
<i>Helophilus hybridus</i>		<i>Volucella pellucens</i> *	Great Pied Hoverfly
<i>Helophilus pendulus</i> *	The Footballer	<i>Volucella zonaria</i>	
<i>Melanostoma mellinum</i>		<i>Xylota signis</i>	
<i>Melanostoma scalare</i>			
<i>Myathropa florea</i> *	Batman Fly		



Chrysotoxum festivum (©P.Bradford)



Episyrphus balteatus (©M.Warne)



Eristalis pertinax (©M.Warne)



Eupeodes luniger (©M.Warne)



Helophilus pendulus (©P.Bradford)



Myathropa florea (©P.Bradford)



Scaeva pyrastris (©P.Bradford)



Syrphus ribesii (©M.Warne)



Volucella inanis (©G.Hobson)



Volucella pellucens (©S.Davenport)

Common 'Yellow' Flowers found at Idle Valley NR.

The following gallery of photos are just a selection of the many species of 'Yellow' flowers (not including shrubs) that have been found over the Idle Valley NR over the past year so far. All participants of the various walking/wildlife groups are now taking time to record and photograph the wide variety of flowers which can be found throughout the year. It's great to learn from each other and learn to use a growing selection of online applications (Apps) as tools to help with flower identification. Books do still come in very handy because these AI applications aren't perfect and can often throw incorrect identifications when trying to identify species. It's going to be 'Blue' flowers next month so please send your images.



(Top left to right) - **Lesser Celandine** at Bellmoor Pits, 24th March 2024. **Yellow Flag Iris** at Bellmoor Pits, 4th May 2024 and **Cowslip** at Bellmoor Lake, 4th May 2024 (all ©G.Hobson).

(Second row left to right) - **Black Medic** at IVNR, 6th June 2024 (©S.Hughes). **Smooth Hawksbeard** at Bellmoor Pits, 23rd June 2024 and **Biting Stonecrop** at Bellmoor Pits on 23-6-2024 (both ©G.Hobson).

(Third row left to right) - **Yellow Wort** at Chainbridge Lane, 23rd June 2024 (©G.Hobson). **Birds Foot Trefoil** at Bellmoor Riverbank, 1st July 2024 (©M.McCallum) and **Ragwort** at IVNR on 30th July 2024 (©S.Hughes).

(Bottom left to right) - **Common Fleabane** at Neatholme Lane, 28th August 2024 and **Evening Primrose** at Neatholme Lane, 28th August 2024 (both ©S.Hughes). **St. John's Wort** at Bellmoor Pits 10th September 2023 (©G.Hobson).

Additional Nature Sightings in August 2024

Single adult **Common Frogs** were noted at Bellmoor Lake woodland on the 4th and at Hawthorn Lane on the 12th (below left ©S.Davenport) A single **Fox** was photographed on the recently exposed island at Neatholme Fen on the 13th (below right ©K.Fisher).



Dragonflies & Damselflies of note in August were as follows:- male **Ruddy Darter** were recorded on the 9th at Neatholme Scrape, 2 along Neatholme Lane on the 18th and a single at Bellmoor Lake on the 28th (below left ©A.Davies). **Migrant Hawker** appeared in large numbers with c50 in the Neatholme areas on the 11th and c30, mainly along Neatholme Lane feeding, on the 18th. **Brown Hawker** were in good numbers with 8 noted on the 11th, 2 at Bellmoor Pit on the 13th, 5+ at Neatholme Lane area and Pits on the 18th and a single at Bellmoor Lake on the 28th. **Southern Hawker** were noted throughout with a peak counts of 16 across the reserve on the 9th, 4 on the 11th, 3 on the 14th and 5 on the 18th. A very showy female was ovipositing into a damp wooden post on the 17th (below right ©S.Davenport).



Willow Emerald Damselfly were seen across the reserve with 3 at Neatholme Fen on the 11th, 3 along Neatholme Lane on the 18th, a single at Bellmor Dipping Pond on the 18th, a single at Neatholme Lane on the 28th and finally a single at Chainbridge Scrape (east) viewpoint on the 29th. **Blue-tailed Damselfly** could still be found in small numbers amongst the **Common Blue Damselfly** with a single at Neatholme Fen on the 9th and 3 along Neatholme Lane on the 18th.

Butterflies of note during August were a single (blue) female **Common Blue** at Bellmor Lake on the 4th (below left ©G.Hobson), 3 (2 males) were at Tilm North on the 12th with a single (blue) female again at Bellmor Lake on the 18th. Single second brood **Brimstone** were noted at Neatholme Fen and Bellmor Lake on the 9th and at Tilm North on the 12th. This fine fresh looking **Speckled Wood** was photographed on the 21st (below right ©M.Vickers).



Many unusual insects were noted throughout August including a single specimen of the **Large Marsh Horse-fly** *Tebanus autumnalis* which was found resting on the south side of the Rural Learning Centre building on the 4th, a notably scarce species in Nottinghamshire (below left ©G.Hobson). A single sighting of a **Field Digger Wasp** *Mellinus arvensis* with a fly in its grasp at Bellmor Lake sheep paddocks on the 18th (below right ©G.Hobson).



Mike Vickers found a female **Roesel's Bush Cricket** *Metrioptera roeselii* in his Lound village garden on the 19th, the large ovipositor very visible. This species is expanding rapidly across the UK and was named after August Johann Rosel von Rosenhof, a German entomologist (both images below ©M.Vickers).



A bird walk on the 28th, looping to Neatholme and back to Chainbridge Lane, saw quite a few interesting sightings including **Sieve-winged Snailkiller** *Coremacera marginata* (below left ©V.Bell), a species as the name suggests, their larvae is a predator of snails. We were shown the '**Sputnik**' Gall on the underside of a Dog Rose *Rosa canina* leaf. This type of gall is formed around the larvae of the Cynipid Wasp *Diplolepis nervosa* (below right ©S.Hughes).



Moths were noted in good numbers across the month with notable species including a single **Webb's Wainscot** recorded and photographed on a moth trapping session at Bellmoor Lake on the 25th (below left © E.Crane). **Buff-tip** Caterpillars were found along Neatholme Lane with 25+ stripping a Willow sapling on the 18th and a single caterpillar there again on the 28th. (below right ©S.Davenport). Several **Red Underwing** moths were noted on the viewing screen timbers at Neatholme Fen with three noted on the 14th and a single there on the 28th plus a single at the IVNR Cattle Sheds on the 26th.



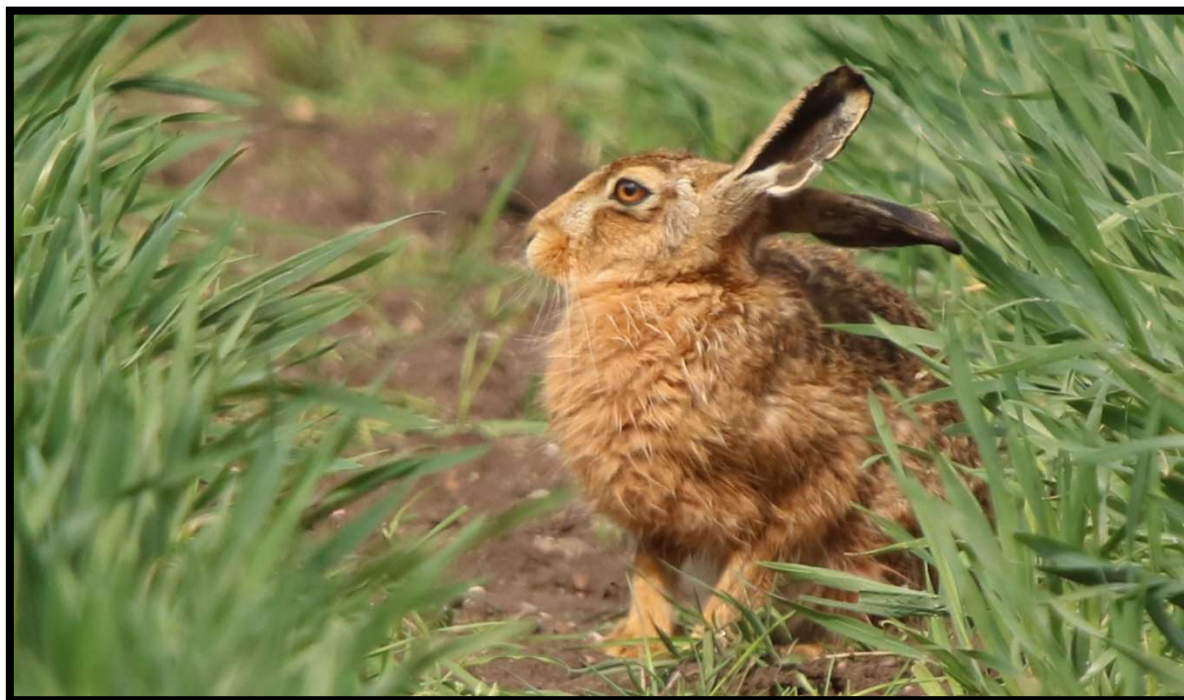
Two **Lesser Swallow Prominent** moths were noted with one above the door to the Rural Learning Centre on the 4th (below left ©G.Hobson) and another at IVNR Cattle Sheds on the 26th. This **Common Carpet** moth was photographed on the 21st (below right ©M.Vickers).



A.Davies, M.McCallum, M.Vickers, G.Hobson, P.Hobson, S.Hughes, S.Davenport, Vicky, E.Crane, M.Newman, P.Cadman, I.Hunt, V.Giles, T.Tomlinson, M.Warne, S.Harrison, R & P.White, members of Lound Bird Club, members of all Idle Valley Wellness/Wildlife/Walking Groups & finally T.Pendleton at www.eakringbirds.com for help with identifications.

Next month's issue

The **Brown Hare** is sadly not such a common sight at Idle Valley NR as it once was. We will look at the reserve's many mammals in the next issue (below ©G.Hobson).



Updated List of Events + Reserve News + All the Bird News for September + Additional Nature Sightings for September + Sheid Bug ID Guide + Moth Recording at IVNR + Photo Gallery of 'Blue' Flowers + Mammals + much more to follow.

Submissions for inclusion in the publication should be sent to Gary Hobson via email ghlbc@hotmail.co.uk Please state (species/observer/location/date) for all images. In the case of regular bird and wildlife sightings, submit sightings via the relevant **Wellness/Birdwatching/Photo 'WhatsApp' & 'Facebook' groups** linked to Idle Valley NR. Submit all Lepidoptera (moths & butterflies) plus Dragonfly & Damselfly sightings to philip.cadman@sky.com