

Idle Valley Nature Sightings

October 2024

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

What's On for November 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 the new time of 1:00pm. Volunteer led walk sponsored by Co-op Lincolnshire.

Thursday 7th November (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 9th November – Idle Valley Wildlife Watch: Hungry Owls 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 17th November – Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) Organised by Lound Bird Club in conjunction with the BTO Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS). If you can help, please contact Phil Cadman at philip.cadman@sky.com

Wednesday 20th November – Gary's 'Wildlife & Birdwatching' Walk Idle Valley NR. Meet at Rural Learning Centre at Bellmoor Lake at 9:00am-midday. Walking a loop around Bellmoor Lake & Pits. Leader is Gary Hobson. Contact email: ghlbc@hotmail.co.uk or Mobile: 07464964879

Around & About the Reserve

Alex Morley - Reserves Manager North. If you can volunteer to help manage the Idle Valley NR, please contact the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust.



Contractors have now completed the project at the northeastern corner of Neatholme Scrape: reducing the extent of the willow scrub, connecting disparate areas of wet grassland, and reprofiling the shoreline. 300m of shoreline have now been improved, but I've yet to walk the perimeter and calculate the full measurement of the newly opened area. We are relying upon The Trust's livestock to graze off regrowth, but we will also need to intervene mechanically with reducing degrees of intensity in order to halt succession to willow scrub. Areas of turf with botanical interest have been relocated back from newly inclined stretches of shoreline. We wait to see how well this improvement entices in waders. Scrub removal at Tiln North is scheduled for before the end of October, and our volunteer teams are working hard on the western shoreline of Neatholme Fen to clear scrub prior to yet more excavator operations.

Water Vole Recovery Project at Idle Valley NR

Jack Scarborough – Water Vole Recovery Project Officer North.

In September, 115 water voles were released into the beaver enclosure with the help of a large number of volunteers, both local and from further afield. The 'soft release' required setting up release pens where the water voles could acclimatise to their new home at 30 locations around the beaver enclosure, across some challenging terrain. After a few days of feeding with carrots and apples, baffles were fitted to the pens to allow the water voles to come and go as they pleased. The pens were removed after a week, and the captive bred water voles are now wild for the first time. The release is the culmination of years of planning and arduous work and comes a year into the funding of the Water Vole Recovery Project by Natural England's Species Recovery Programme Capital Grants Scheme. This achieves the goal of taking one step closer to a full quota of native wetland fauna in the beaver enclosure, allowing natural processes to continue to restore the area for maximum ecological benefit. We will continue to monitor the success of the released water voles, having already detected feeding signs this month. Hopefully, this population will expand and spread to recolonise the rest of the reserve and beyond, with help from a further release at Idle Valley Nature Reserve planned for next Spring. The Water Vole Recovery Project also aims to improve the suitability of habitat on the reserve for water voles to aid their spread. To this end we have begun work to restore the pond at the southern end of the main car park and are working towards the possibility of the creation of ditches at the northern end of the reserve. Mink control also continues on and off site to protect our new residents, with the last mink captured in early September. Reports of any water vole or mink sightings would be appreciated, please send to jscarborough@nottswt.co.uk

A big thanks to all staff, volunteers and external organisations that gave their time to make this possible.



Birds recorded in September 2024.

The month kicked off with a single **Cattle Egret** noted at Chainbridge Pit on the 1st, with further reports of a single at Bellmoor Lake on the 14th, two birds with Longhorn Cattle on Alan's Meadow on the 18th, a single again at Chainbridge Pit on the 19th, 7 birds on Alan's Meadow on the 24th with 6 noted there again on the 26th and 27th.



(Above) **Cattle Egret** at Chainbridge Pit on the 1st September (©L.Mason).

Great White Egret were noted as follows:- Two at Bellmoor Lake (6th) with a single there (8th), singles at Chainbridge NR Scrape (East) (8th, 12th and 19th) with 2 there (20th), singles at Neatholme Fen (10th, 24th and 27th) with 3 there (12th), single at Chainbridge Pit (10th) with 2 there (19th). **Little Egret** were noted as follows:- Three were at Bellmoor Lake (6th) with a single (8th) and 2 there on (17th), singles were at Chainbridge NR Scrape (East) on (8th, 9th, 12th and 19th), two were at Neatholme Fen (10th and 25th) with a single there (12th). Chainbridge Pit, however, held the largest gatherings, with 4 on the (10th), 3 on the (19th), peaking at 10 birds (24th) then just a single (27th). **Bittern** were still around in September with a singles noted at Chainbridge NR Scrape (East) on the 8th, 12th, 19th and 20th. **Grey Heron**, as is usually the case nowadays, were seen in sparse numbers with just 3 singles noted from three sites on the 9th, 10th and 17th, and may be fairly under recorded compared to the egrets. Waders were noted throughout on suitable scrapes. Plenty of **Ruff** records with a single on Chainbridge NR Scrape (East) on the 8th, with 3 there on the 9th and 10th, 2 on the 12th and 13th rising to 3 on the 19th, to 4 on the 20th, and to 6 there on the 24th. Three were noted at Neatholme Fen on the 10th and 11th, a single on the 17th and 19th, 2 on the 24th rising to 5 birds on the 25th and to 6 on the 27th. Chainbridge Pit held 4 birds on the 27th. A scattering of **Dunlin** reports including 2 in flight over Chainbridge Scrape (east) on the 9th with a single there from the 10th until the 13th with a single noted at Neatholme Fen on the 11th. **Snipe** numbers built up across the reserve from 4 on the 9th to counts of 21 on the 19th and 15+ on the 20th, with just singles on the 25th and 27th. **Green Sandpaper** were noted in small numbers with a single at Chainbridge Pit on the 10th, 1-2 were at Neatholme Fen on the 11th, 17th, 25th and 27th, with a single at Cross Lane Fishery on the 25th. A single **Black-tailed Godwit** was noted at Chainbridge Pit on the 10th. Two records of **Pink-footed Geese** were noted including 50+ moving north over Clayworth Common on the 12th and 15 on Neatholme Scrape on the 25th. A group of 6 **Egyptian Geese** were noted in a field north of Linghurst Wood on the 2nd with 5 birds at Neatholme Fen on the 25th. A single **Black-necked Grebe** remained on Neatholme Scrape on the 19th, then two birds there from the 24th to the 25th with the same two moving to Chainbridge Pit on the 27th.



(Above) Black-necked Grebes at Neatholme Scrape on 24th September (©P.Hobson).

Three **Little Grebe** were noted on Chainbridge NR Scrape (East) on the 20th. **Red-crested Pochard** were notable with Chainbridge NR Scrape (East) holding 4 on the 9th, 2 on the 20th rising sharply to 21 there on the 27th. A total of 14 birds were noted between Parish Park, Neatholme Fen at Sutton (Doughty's) Pit on the 19th. A scattering of **Pintail** were noted with a single on Chainbridge NR Scrape (East) on the 10th, 4 there on the 20th, 6 birds were then across the northern half of the reserve on the 24th with 6 again on Neatholme Fen/Scrape on the 25th and 4 remaining on Neatholme Fen on the 27th. A single **Red Kite** flew east over Neatholme Scrape on the 27th. A single 'late' **Hobby** was seen hawking insects over Neatholme Fen on the 10th. Sightings of **Marsh Harrier** were frequent with up to three birds noted (a male, a female and a juvenile) in the area. Sightings at Chainbridge NR Scrape (East) were as follows:- two on the 10th, a single on the 19th and two again on the 22nd. Sightings from Neatholme Fen were as follows:- singles on the 17th and 19th and two were there on the 27th. A further single sighting over Clayworth Copse on the 10th. Two **Raven** were noted over Chainbridge Pit on the 10th with a single over here on the 27th a single also flew over Neatholme Pit on the 11th. There were a few reports of **Common Gull** on the reserve with a single first-winter on Chainbridge NR Scrape (East) and 5 birds flew north over Bellmoor Lake, both on the 20th and 4 birds noted at Bellmoor Lake on the 29th. A single juvenile **Stonechat** was recorded on Clayworth Common on the 17th. Single Green Woodpecker were noted at Neatholme Fen on the 10th and 17th and at Bellmoor Pits on the 18th. An amazing and surprising record of a single **WILLOW TIT** that was seen well and calling by Bellmoor Lake on the 11th. This species, formerly fairly numerous resident and breeding species at Idle Valley NR is an extremely rare bird nowadays, having declined massively over a number of years both regionally and nationally. Hirundines gathered regularly over the reserve (late local breeders and migrants). **House Martin** numbers were recorded as follows:- 150+ over Bellmoor Lake on the 10th, 10 birds over Neatholme Pit on the 27th and 70+ again at Bellmoor Lake on the 29th. **Swallow** numbers were recorded as follows:- 15 at Bellmoor Lake on the 10th, 5+ south over Lound Low Road on the 24th, 95+ birds over Neatholme Pit/Scrape on the 27th and 30+ over Bellmoor Lake on the 29th. The only report of **Sand Martin** was just 5 birds over Bellmoor Lake on the 10th. Just two reports of **Grey Wagtail** with a single at Bellmoor Pits on the 10th and a single at Bellmoor Weir on the 20th. A late evening roost gathering of 50+ **Pied Wagtail** were noted at Bellmoor Pit on the 20th. Six **Meadow Pipits** were noted on the wet grassland at Cross Lane Fishery on the 25th. The usual winter movement of **Jay** was noted on the 25th with 3 birds moving over Neatholme Fen on the 25th. September is usually a time when late breeding warblers are actively feeding up and occasionally birds can be heard singing. **Blackcap** were noted with single males at Bellmoor Pits on the 8th and 20th with 3+ noted in the northern pits area on the 25th. **Chiffchaff** were noted with counts of 4 and 8 at Bellmoor Pit on the 8th and 10th with 6+ noted in the northern pits area on the 25th. A small group of 6 **Reed Bunting** were noted on Clayworth Common on the 10th.

K.Roberts, T.Carter, K.Fisher, P.Cox, P.Huddleston, A.M.Griffin, T.Tomlinson, G.Hobson, D.Housman, T.Crook, M.B.Vickers, D.Richardson, A.Pykett, L.Mason, S.Davenport, S.Hughes, V.Giles, P.Cadman, P.Hobson, I.Cowgill, M.McCallum, K.Beumont 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

Additional Nature Sightings in September 2024

As expected, numbers of Dragonfly and Damselfly fell sharply in September, but we did see a run of **Willow Emerald Damselfly** on the back of what seems like the best season to date. A pair were at Bellmoor Lake on the 6th (Below left ©C.Booth), a maximum of 7 were in the Bellmoor Lake/Pits area on the 8th & 9th, a single was at the wooden bridge by Bellmoor Lake on the 11th (Below right ©G.Hobson), a pair were noted mating at Bellmoor Lake on the 13th and finally a single female was noted along Neatholme Lane on the 25th (Bottom ©G.Hobson).



Good counts of **Common Darter** were noted with 23 in the Bellmoor Lake area on the 13th and 61 over the pits North of Chainbridge Lane on the 16th. **Migrant Hawker** were noted, with counts of 5 on the 8th & 13th and 4 on the 16th. Single **Southern Hawker** were at Bellmoor Pits on the 13th and at Neatholme Scrape on the 16th. A single **Brown Hawker** was noted at Bellmoor Lake on the 8th. A usual sprinkle of Butterfly records due to the good weather with notable counts of 6 fresh **Large White** (Bottom ©G.Hobson) and 4 **Small White** at Bellmoor Boardwalk and 7 **Red Admiral** at the nearby wooden bridge on the 8th. The years only record of **Painted Lady** was seen at Bunker Wood with 5 **Red Admiral** on the 9th. Up to 9 **Large White** were noted from Bellmoor Lake to Bunker Wood on the 13th. A count of 7 **Speckled Wood** at Bellmoor Lake/Pits on the 13th with just a couple at Neatholme Pit on the 25th. Several **Comma** were noted with max of 3 at Bellmoor Pit on the 13th and 7 in all areas north of Chainbridge Lane on the 16th (Bottom left ©M.McCallum). Just single **Small Tortoiseshell** reports were from a Lound village garden on the 16th and 21st. Two single reports of **Brimstone** were at the Water Ski Lake on the 16th and in a Lound village garden on the 21st. A few fresh **Green-veined White** were also noted including the one below photographed on the 25th (Below right ©S.Davenport).



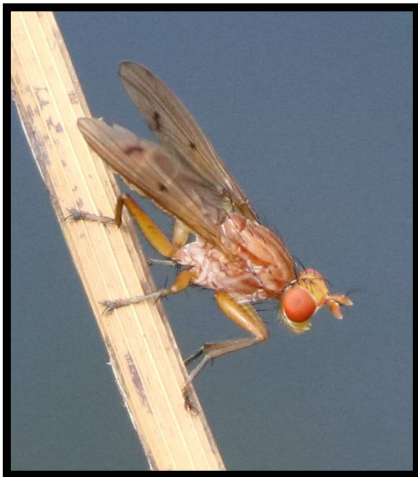
An unfortunate report of a **Shrew** species which Mike Vickers found dead on his yard on the 6th. He was not sure if it was a Pigmy Shrew or a young Common Shrew but here it is next to a £1 coin for size comparison (Bellow ©M.Vickers).



A single **Red-Spotted Plant Bug** *Deraeocoris ruber* photographed on Bramble at the metal bench at Bellmoor Lake on the 11th (Below left ©G.Hobson). Nearby there were hundreds of the shiny and colourful **Alder Beetles** *Agelastica alni* on the Alder saplings across the Bellmoor Lake boardwalk. (Below right ©G.Hobson).



Two interesting fly species were photographed at the Bellmoor Visitor Centre Moat & along the Boardwalk on the 8th. The first was a type of **Marsh Fly**, one of the *Tetanocera sp.* that my ObsIdentify App could not ascertain to a specific species. Can you identify the species from this image? (Below left ©G.Hobson). The second was a very well posed **Kite-tailed Robberfly** *Tolmerus atricapillus* which sat on a Bramble leaf in the sunshine. (Below right ©G.Hobson).



A keen eye was needed on the 8th at Bellmoor Lake where a **Sallow Kitten** moth larvae was found and photographed loafing on a Willow (Below left ©G.Hobson). A second **Sallow Kitten** moth larvae was found at Chainbridge NR Scrape (West) on the 16th (Below right ©P.Cadman).



C.Booth, P.Freeman, A.Davies, C.Barbour, K.Beaumont, M.McCallum, J.Archer, K.A.Ward, M.Vickers, G.Hobson, P.Hobson, S.Hughes, S.Davenport, V.Bell, M.Newman, P.Cadman, I.Hunt, V.Giles, T.Tomlinson, M.Warne, S.Harrison, M.Goodman, 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.

Shield Bugs at Idle Valley Nature Reserve.

Shield Bugs (order *Hemiptera* (True Bugs) and family *Pentatomidae* are a commonly seen species during the year at Idle Valley Nature Reserve. Also known as stink bugs, with their ability to spray a foul-smelling liquid from glands in their thorax, in defence of attacks from predators. Named because of their generally 'shield' like shape, there are over 40 species in the UK with several common species found locally. They can live for as little as a few months to one year and can often overwinter as adults. Their lifecycle follows from egg to nymph then to adult. Often found loafing on the trunks and leaves of trees or scrubs, for which they are often named. They are herbivorous but are also known to be predatory. Most species have evolved to become camouflaged against their environment and can be found in urban gardens, parks and wooded areas.

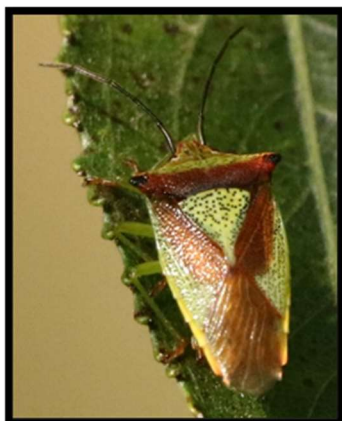
Green Sheildbug *Palomina prasine* (Below left and centre) - Two **Adult** ©G.Hobson, ©S.Hughes and (below right) **Nymph** ©G.Hobson.



Forest or Red-legged Sheildbug *Pentatoma rufipes* (Below left to right) - All **Adult** ©M.Vickers, ©G.Hobson and ©M.Warne.



Hawthorn Sheildbug *Acanthosoma haemorrhoidal* (Below left to right) – All **Adult** ©G.Hobson, ©V.Bell and ©M.Warne.



Birch Sheildbug *Elasmothethus interstinctus* (Below left) - **Adult** ©M.Warne

Gorse Sheildbug *Piezodorus lituratus* (Centre & right) - **Adult** ©M.Warne & ©V.Bell



Hairy or Sloe Sheildbug *Dolycoris baccarum* (Below left) - **Adult** ©V.Bell

Parent Bug *Elasmucha grisea* (Below right) - **Adult** ©M.Warne



Woundwort Sheildbug *Eysarcoris venustissimus* (Below left) - **Adult** ©M.Warne

Juniper Sheildbug *Cyphostethus tristriatus* (Below right) - **Adult** ©W.Hill



Moth Trapping & Recording at Idle Valley Nature Reserve.

Moth trapping and recording began many years ago when much of this site was still known as either Bellmoor Quarry or Sutton & Lound Gravel Quarries. Well before much of the area became a designated SSSI in April 2002, then latterly the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, with help from Lottery Funding, created the Idle Valley NR you see today. There have been thousands of moth trapping/sweeping sessions across many areas of the site over the last 40 years and the data from all these sessions is now compiled by Mr Philip Cadman, who compiles the Lound Bird Club/IVNR Entomology Database. Key individuals who have helped Philip over the years are Dr Sheila Wright, Colin Watkin, Trevor Pendleton, Ian Hunt, Steven Moakes, Mel Newman, Martin Warne and many others. The species list now totals an incredible 749 species of moths, including individual adult moth species, sub-species, larvae and leaf mine records. Notable and interesting species have been recorded here at Idle Valley NR including the county's first **Cliften Nonpareil *Catocala fraxini*** at Neatholme Scrape on the 6th September 2017 (Below left), and both **Kent Black Arches *Meganola Albula*** (Below right) and **Rosy Knot-horn *Oncocera semirubella*** at Bellmoor Lake on the 1st August 2019 (Bottom).



Moths come in distinct types and sizes, you have **Macro (Macrolepidoptera) Moths** which are the larger species and **Micro (Microlepidoptera) Moths** which are the smaller species. Some species are only active in daylight, but many are more active in the hours of darkness. Trapping moth species in daylight is done with just a special type of sweep net and this can be effective on many other types of insects as well as moths and butterflies but be careful of biting/stinging insects and always use clear pots to observe the moths/insects. Trapping moths after dark is done with the use of a light trap (both 'Skinner' or 'Heath' traps) which attracts the moth to a 'actinic' light bulb/tube, the moth then falls through a hole into a dark enclosed box below the light, usually filled with egg box materials. There are many types of traps, but the 'Skinner' trap is thought to be the best and up to 500 species are known to be attracted to this type of trap. These traps are simple in design and run off a 12v battery or a generator with an inverter to run at 12v. Emptying the moths out after the session ends can be an amazing experience and this is when recording/photographing your catch is so important. Sometimes just a simple light hung above a white sheet will attract species, and this way, you can record without trapping the moths, but you must make sure everything is safe and that all electrical equipment is never exposed to rain. There are several online companies that will specialise in moth trapping equipment and there is also a plethora of websites and moth identification guidebooks available. It is a fascinating and often fulfilling hobby for any budding naturalist and well recommended, but the downside is that it often takes up most of your time, it will affect your normal sleep behaviour, and it can often be a frustrating experience. Go to a Moth Trapping session and experience it for yourself, you might just see moths in a very different light, excuse the pun. Below is a selection of some striking moth species that have been recorded at Idle Valley NR. Many moths are colourful, often blend into their environment and can often have very obvious markings and patterning on them, which for many species has been used in their own species name.



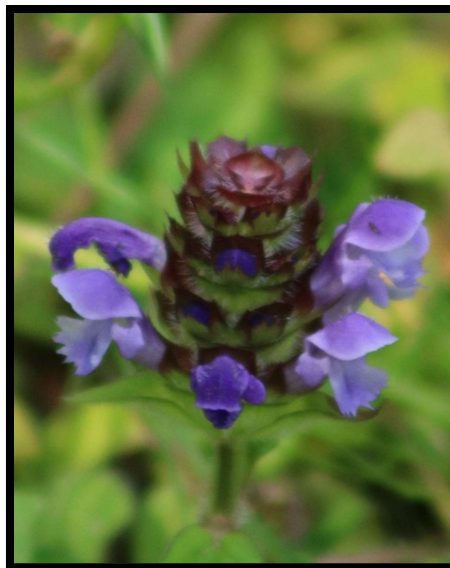
(Top to bottom moving left to right) - **Puss Moth, Hummingbird Hawkmoth, Mother Shipton, Elephant Hawkmoth, Green Carpet Moth, Merveille Du Jour, Mint Moth, Silver Hook Moth, Six-spot Burnet Moth, Small Yellow Underwing Moth and Pebble Prominent Moth.** (©P.Cadman, ©M.Warne, ©P.Bradford, ©G.Hobson,)

(Below top to bottom moving left to right) – **Blood-vein Moth, Swallowtail Moth, Brimstone Moth, Flame Carpet Moth, Pine Beauty Moth and Peach Blossom Moth** (©P.Cadman, ©M.Warne)



Common 'Blue' Flowers found at Idle Valley Nature Reserve.

The following gallery of photos are just a selection of the many species of 'Blue' 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 is 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 are not perfect and can often throw incorrect identifications when trying to identify species. It is going to be 'Purple' flowers for next month so please send your images.



(Top left to right) – **Bluebell** at Bellmoor Pits, 4th May 2024. **Common Self-heal** at Bellmoor Pits, 23rd June 2024 and **Meadow Cranesbill** at Bellmoor Lake, 10th September 2023 (all ©G.Hobson).

(Bottom left to right) – **Forget-me-not** at IVNR, 16th July 2019 and **Field Scabious** at IVNR, 9th July 2023 and **Alkanet** at IVNR, 7th May 2020 (all ©G.Hobson).



Autumn – time to forage and gather for the winter ahead of us!



This **Robin** was 'hanging out' with a new 'fungi' friend, a **Brown Birch Bolete**. ©W.Fiuk

Next month's issue

Updated List of Events + Reserve News + All the Bird News for October + Additional Nature Sightings for October + Photo Gallery of 'Purple' Flowers + Mammals and much more to follow.

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