



Gwent-Glamorgan Recorders' Newsletter

Issue 3
October 2010

Biodiversity Blitzes

Welcome to the third issue of the Gwent-Glamorgan Recorder's Newsletter. This edition is jam-packed with articles, interesting wildlife sightings and great photos. Please make sure you read the important message about Trichomonosis in finches (p22).

It is widely accepted that world governments have failed the attempt to halt the loss in biodiversity by 2010. The recording of wildlife and sharing of data has therefore never been so important if we are going to come anywhere near to reaching the next target by 2020. I urge you all to keep passing on your records, so that they can be used to direct local conservation efforts in the coming years.

I hope you enjoy the issue. Please send any comments or suggestions to the usual address.

Rebecca Davies (Editor)

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Our Biodiversity Blitz Days were a success again this year, helping to increase knowledge of the areas and also give recorders the opportunity to mingle and have fun while sharing their expertise!

The season kicked off on 6th June with a blitz at Nelson Wern, a mixed habitat of wet woodland, meadows, ponds and streams. Run in conjunction with Caerphilly County Borough Council, this event included an evening session of moth trapping. The day resulted in 133 species, with highlights including *Pseudotelephusa paripunctella*, a species of micromoth not recorded in the county since the 1970s.

The second 2010 BioBlitz took place at Shirenewton Meadows on 10th July. Run with the help of the Shirenewton and Mynyddbach Fields Association (SAMFAL), the day was a great success, with even the sun deciding to make a rare appearance! The group of naturalists who attended the day managed to record 126 species (including marbled white (*Melanargia galathea*) and hummingbird hawk-

moth (*Macroglossum stellatarum*), 108 of which were new to the SEWBRc database for the area. SAMFAL hope to improve the site for use as a public amenity in a variety of ways, including as an education resource for the local school. This increase in knowledge of the species found at the site will hopefully help greatly with their efforts.

The final BioBlitz took place on a rather damp and gloomy day at Cwm Taf Fechan LNR, near Merthyr Tydfil. A few hardy souls braved the slightly offputting weather, and managed to gather an impressive list of 476 species for the day, 341 of which were new to the site for SEWBRc! Jim Davies of the Botanical Society of the British Isles (BSBI) kindly helped guide the day, ensuring that nobody missed out on the rare plant species found on site, including brittle bladderfern (*Cryopteris fragilis*) and broad-leaved helleborine (*Epipactis helleborine*). The day was run with the help of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, and a public facing event was run alongside the traditional BioBlitz, to engage people of all levels of expertise and knowledge (see Karen McCullough's article for an attendee's perspective of

this event). Species highlights for the day included silver washed fritillary (*Argynnis paphia*), and *Oligolophus hanzeni*, a harvestman previously unrecorded in Glamorgan (see Greg Jones' article for more information on this species).

Elaine Wright (SEWBRc)

Cwm Taff Fechan Bio-Blitz

My seven year old son Craig and I decided we'd go along to the Beginners Event after having had such a fantastic day out at Atlantic College last year. The weather forecast was a little iffy, but we have the gear, so we agreed to go whatever the day turned out like.

Despite my somewhat suspect navigational abilities, the Cefn Coed Community Centre was very easy to find. We got there spot on time. Once a few more of us gathered we were lead off by Dr Lizzie Wilberforce and Mr Robert Parry from the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales. We hadn't met either of them before, but they soon had us relaxed and looking forward to our day of species recording. The meadow we were taken to was stunning. I drive past this site regularly and never knew this little gem was hiding in the valley. This pretty little meadow (continued overleaf...)



Marbled white © Elaine Wright

Cwm Taff Fechan Bioblitz (...cont)



Silver washed fritillary
© Karen McCullough

has the River Taff running down one side and then some large cliffs on the other.

Within minutes of arriving one of the experts had found an otter spraint. Now I've found loads of these, but never managed to persuade Craig to take a sniff, but this time he overcame his disgust and actually got close and personal with it. He didn't actually pass comment, but neither did he pull away horrified. Lucky it wasn't mink scat. I've made that mistake early on in my spraint hunting days. Once smelt, never forgotten!

We dumped the ridiculously huge and heavy rucksack I had packed for the day and I skipped off to look for whatever species would reveal themselves to me. In the meantime Craig explored the bridge and the river. We had a dull start, but the sun broke through and gave us perfect butterfly conditions. Using my greatly improved field skills I headed for the verge of the meadow and was rewarded with numerous common blue butterflies, hoverflies, bees, wasps and countless other invertebrates. I got some

lovely photos. There was an abundance of devil's-bit-scabious, common knapweed and various umbellifers (I don't know where to start with these).

As I was prowling with my shiny new compact camera taking lots of photos for later identifications, a large orange coloured butterfly fluttered over

my head and settled on the knapweed ahead of me. I knew that this was a new one to me. It looked to be too large for a comma and I got quite excited. What could it be? I used my old camera to get the distant shots which I've learnt is a good method. I've missed so many identifications by trying to get the close up first. Long shots and then a gradual creeping up seems to be the most expedient method with butterflies.

I checked that I had a clear shot and virtually ran back to pick up my butterfly guide. You have to understand that I don't care if it's rare or not, I just get ridiculously excited by finding anything I've never seen before. To my delight it looked like it was a silver-washed fritillary. Rob had noticed my dash for the field guide and came over to investigate what I thought I'd found. I was thrilled when he confirmed it was indeed a silver washed fritillary. It was also quite a good shot, as apparently they don't still for long. I think I was lucky as the sun hadn't been out for long and it was probably still a bit sluggish. Beginners luck too.

We spent the whole morning wandering around the meadow and had our lunch down there. Craig and I had the company of Lizzie and Rob and we both learnt lots more about the grasses, plants and insects in the meadow. It always amazes me how helpful naturalists are, and how willing they are to share their hard earned knowledge. I can be a bit like an over-enthusiastic puppy, but it didn't seem to bother them.

After lunch Craig and I decided to complete the circular walk back around to the Community Centre. Luckily for Craig it was pretty dark under the canopy, so I didn't stop for that many photo opportunities. He loves river valley walks as there's always the prospect of a waterfall. He's easily pleased thankfully, as a 2 inch drop constitutes a waterfall for him. I spotted some birds flittering about down by the water but couldn't really make out what they were. I could exclude dippers, but that was about it. When we later caught up with the expert group they confirmed that they were grey wagtails. I got a couple of distant shots and I'm happy that they were my first grey wagtails.

Our luck with the weather held out for most of the day. We got caught in a few heavy downpours but there were enough sunny spells for us to spot silver washed fritillaries twice more (could have been the same one of course). We also caught up with a group of expert naturalists and we found all sorts of fungi. I'm a complete dunce at identifying them but it seems I've got an eye for spotting

them. None of us were fungi experts, but one of the gentlemen out with us knows a man who is, so he gathered photos and specimens and we left identification with him.

My final first of the day was a broad-leaved helleborine, although I didn't spot it myself. I got a pretty poor photo of it as the light conditions were dreadful, but clear enough for me to recognise it if I came across it again. Craig had a thoroughly enjoyable time too finding bugs and fungi and asking the experts.

Once again we had an incredibly informative, fascinating and fun day out. Many thanks in particular to Lizzie, Robert and SEWBReC. Craig and I spend a lot of time out on our own exploring and learning, but it's a delight to meet up with like-minded people and share the experience.

Karen McCullough

It will soon be time to start organising the 2011 BioBlitzes – any suggestions for suitable sites are gratefully received! Please contact SEWBReC with any ideas.

Oligolophus hansenii: a Harvestman new to Glamorgan



Harvestmen are members of the Class: Arachnida, Order: Opiliones and despite their resemblance to spiders are only distantly related, being closer to the scorpions. It is a relatively small order with only about 5,000 known species worldwide, of which 27 have been recorded from the British Isles.

Until the SEWBRc Bioblitz at Cwm Taf Fechan on 14th August 2010, *Oligolophus hansenii* (Kraepelin, 1896) had never been recorded from Glamorgan, nor indeed from south-east Wales. Hillyard (2005) says that “this species has something of a northerly distribution ... its preference is for Scots pine ... it is nowhere abundant”. The distribution map shows that the bulk of the records are from the Caledonian pine forests of north-east Scotland, with a scattering of records from elsewhere.

I collected two specimens at Cwm Taf

Fechan on 14th August 2010, beaten from hawthorn bushes bordering the “lower meadow” at SO042095, they were preserved in ethanol 70% and determined following microscopic examination the following day. As it was a species that I had not previously encountered, and was collected from a tree or shrub not mentioned in the literature and located well outside its known range, I forwarded the specimens to Simon Warmingham for a second opinion who agreed with my determination.

I re-visited the site on 18th September 2010 and targeted this species, again beating deciduous shrubs and trees. I collected 7 specimens from hawthorn bushes and also from ash trees bordering both the “lower meadow” and the “upper meadow” at SO043096. I took these specimens home alive to photograph using a studio set-up (see photo).

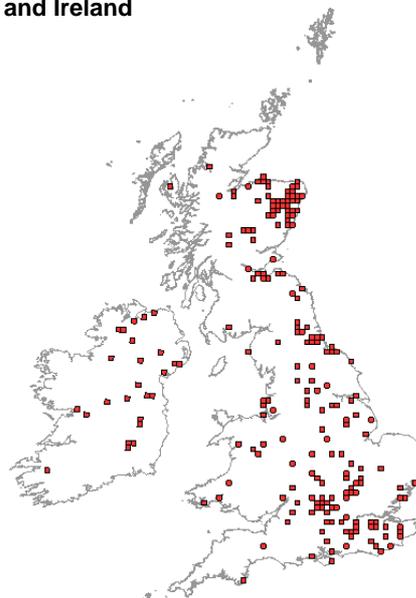
The site is a good one for Opiliones as a total of 7 species were recorded on the day of the SEWBRc Bioblitz; I beat 5 arboreal species - *Oligolophus hansenii*, *Paroligolophus agrestis*, *Dicranopalpus ramosus*, *Leiobunum rotundum* and *Leiobunum blackwalli*. Steve Bolchover added 2 terrestrial species — *Nemastoma bimaculatum* and *Oligolophus tridens* by searching the ground layer and turning rocks and logs. Further searches may well reveal even more species as the Glamorgan list currently stands at 22.

Reference

Hillyard P D (2005), *Harvestmen Synopsis of the British Fauna No. 4* (Linnean Society, London).

Greg Jones (VC 41 Recorder Orthoptera)

10km distribution of *Oligolophus hansenii* in Great Britain and Ireland



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The information used here was sourced through the NBN Gateway website and included the following resource: Biological Records Centre. “Opiliones (Harvestmen) Dataset”. Updated 03/07/2006. <http://data.nbn.org.uk> (Accessed 07/10/2010). The data providers and NBN Trust bear no responsibility for the further analysis or interpretation of this material, data and/or information.

SEWBRc's Data Holdings

The SEWBRc main database now contains over 1.6 million records, of which nearly 750,000 come from the MapMate recording community. Bird data continues to dominate our volunteer time, and looks likely to do so for some time yet. Other major contributors of data in the past twelve months have been the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales, Caerphilly County Borough Council (SINC & Road Verge Surveys), Peter Sturgess Ecology, Steve Williams (personal notebooks), and of course Countryside Council for Wales. **Thank you to everyone that has submitted a record over the past year.**

We have records for over 17,500 different 'Taxa' - and here I use the term in the loosest sense, as this includes records where only the family was given, or worse. Four species have been recorded from all 61 of the 10km squares in our area: red fescue (*Festuca rubra*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), common ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*), and cat's ear (*Hypochaeris radicata*). A further 21 have been recorded from 60 10km squares, including a few birds.

The 'most diverse' squares (as you might expect), are on Gower and around Cardiff (see table 1 below):

10 km square	Number of Taxa
SS58	5979
ST17	4705
SS49	4589
ST18	4510
SS78	4352
SS69	4167
SS87	4134
SS79	4015
ST48	3763
SO00	3632

Table 1: Most diverse 10km squares

And equally unsurprising, the least 'diverse' squares are those that have very little land (i.e. they are located on the

coast or on the SEWBRc border), see table 2 on right.

It is also interesting to note that most of the squares at either end of the scale are in VC41 - presumably showing that there is a more uniform level of recording across VC35! The top ten most recorded species are largely unchanged from last year:

10 km square	Number of Taxa
ST58	690
SS77	631
SN51	597
SS38	431
SS39	186

Table 2: Least diverse 10km squares

Common Name	Scientific Name	Records
Large Yellow Underwing	<i>Noctua pronuba</i>	8974
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	8157
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	7081
European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	6977
Heart and Dart	<i>Agrotis exclamationis</i>	6719
Silver Y	<i>Autographa gamma</i>	6556
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	6492
Light Brown Apple Moth	<i>Epiphyas postvittana</i>	6373
Yorkshire-fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	6251
Brimstone Moth	<i>Opisthograptis luteolata</i>	6227

Table 3: Top 10 most recorded species

And the top species recorded from the most distinct grid references is also remarkably similar to last year:

Common Name	Scientific Name	Sites
Yorkshire-fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	4372
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	4025
Sweet Vernal Grass	<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	3933
Soft Rush	<i>Juncus effusus</i>	3713
Common Bent	<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	3708
Ribwort Plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	3679
Creeping Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	3482
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	3441
Tormentil	<i>Potentilla erecta</i>	3407
Red Fescue	<i>Festuca rubra</i>	3259

Table 4: Top 10 species recorded from distinct grid references

Species ID Training Days

Both this year and last, SEWBReC have been fortunate to receive funding towards species identification training workshops from Wales Biodiversity Partnership (www.biodiversitywales.org.uk), with the aim of stimulating recording interest and generating biological records.

The topics chosen this year were: **Coleoptera** (beetles) – Trainers: Brian Levey & Steve Bolchover (event held in association with Department of Biodiversity: Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/biosyb/); **Bryophytes** (lower plants, mosses) – Trainer: Nick Hudson; **Freshwater pond species** – Trainer: Dr Dan Forman; and **Orthoptera** (crickets, grasshoppers, etc.) – Trainer: Greg Jones.

Following informative talks and discussion, beetle identification training day attendees were able to take advantage of the museum's extensive collections, and used microscopes and fully illustrated keys to identify (to species) specimens from the family Carabidae. The remainder of the training days were held at sites rich in their subject matter, enabling a field element to be in-

cluded in the training. Those on the bryophyte course were given the opportunity to attempt the identification of specimens both in the lab and in situ around Forest Farm, Cardiff, using a combination of microscopes and hand lenses. The freshwater day attendees took part in a practical wetland sampling session at Margam Country Park, using keys to identify specimens to family, as well as being treated to a lecture on wetland ecology. Orthoptera training day participants practiced their capture and identification skills around Kenfig National Nature Reserve, and each received a CD of grasshopper and cricket sound!

All of the identification days proved popular, with excellent feedback being received from each. We hope that all those who were able to attend were inspired by their experience; we are pleased to report we have already begun to receive records from attendees using the knowledge they gained on the day!

Lindsay Bamforth (SEWBReC)

The experiences of Bryophyte Training Day attendee Richard Carpenter:

After a brief introduction on the life cycle of bryophytes, Nick took us through the main differences between mosses and liverworts, and between the major types of mosses. Then we got down to work with hand lenses, field guides and spray bottles on a tray of specimens which Nick had collected that morning. What had seemed relatively simple in theory proved to be more difficult in practice, but with patience and Nick to guide us, we began to make progress in spotting the salient features, such as ranking of the leaves and the presence or otherwise of nerves, so that by the end of the morning we had taken half a dozen or so specimens down to species level. After lunch we took what we had learned into the field in the immediate vicinity of the Centre, finding plenty to examine on walls and trees, in a meadow, and on the surface of a parking area. By the end of the afternoon the subject seemed less daunting than previously, and we had acquired some basic skills on which we could build. Altogether an informative and enjoyable day.

Richard Carpenter
(SEWBReC Volunteer)



Students hard at work at the Coleoptera workshop © Lindsay Bamforth

Recorders' Fora 2010 (Theme: Aquatic Habitats & Species)

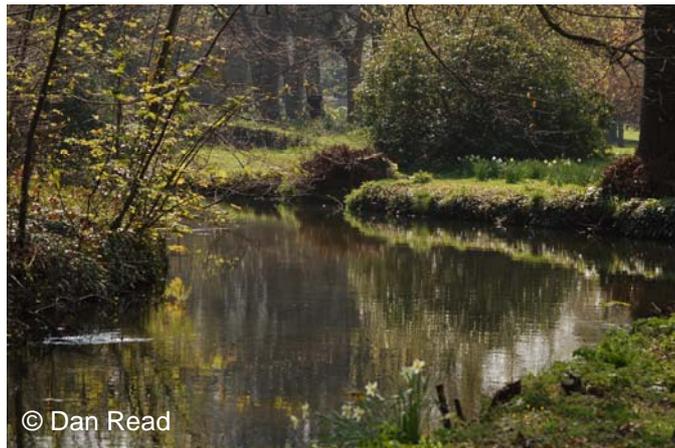
Glamorgan

The Glamorgan Recorders' Forum was held at Kenfig National Nature Reserve, where we welcomed a new Chair for the event, **Rob Parry** (*Wildlife Trust for South and West Wales*). Kicking off proceedings was **Dr John Taylor** (*Environment Agency Wales*), with a talk on the captive breeding and juvenile culture of the freshwater pearl mussel taking place. This species is at risk of extinction in Wales, with factors leading to past decline including poor water quality, silt build up, habitat loss and pearl fishing. It is hoped that the breeding program, in conjunction with habitat improvement work, will secure the future of the species.

Next up was **Judith Oakley** (*Marine Biologist*), speaking on marine non-native species. The talk included details of the project 'Marine Aliens II: Controlling Marine Invasive Species by Targeting Vectors of Dispersal', as well as her input to the Wales Biodiversity Partnership Invasive Non-Native Species subgroup. We were also treated to some stunning photography, which accompanied information on the species themselves. **Dai Roberts** (*The Riverfly Partnership*) then brought us up to date on the work of the Partnership, including their training workshops and river monitoring program, and the importance of riverflies to aquatic conservation and function. The series of themed talks was concluded by **Rob Parry** himself, with a presentation on 'Re-introducing Beavers to Wales'. This began with fascinating details of beaver anatomy, ecology and life history, and the reasons why a feasibility study into their re-introduction is being undertaken. The talk also included

tales from Wildlife Trust Wales' 2008 trip to Norway, where Rob had the opportunity to observe beavers, their habitats and interaction with the community.

Outside the central theme, **Dr Rob Davies** (*IT/GIS consultant*)



© Dan Read

gave us the latest information on mobile recording technology, including the pros and cons of different software and a comparison of different gadgets. He also recounted his experiences using such technologies to map rocky outcrops and black eagle in Africa. The day was rounded up by **Dr Mike Wilson** (*National Museum Wales*), with a talk entitled "Industrial melanism in the meadow spittlebug (*Philaenus spumarius*): a 25 year perspective". A survey of this species (which has both typical and melanic morphs) was undertaken between 1973 and 1987 around the Phurnacite Plant, Abercwmboi, revealing that the population in the area was predominantly black. Alongside a Nuffield funded bursary student, Mike revisited these survey sites in 2009, with the aim of discovering whether any changes in population composition had occurred since the plant closed. Preliminary findings showed a large decrease in the number of melanic morphs adjacent to the plant.

A SEWBRc update, including details on becoming a member of the company, was provided by **Adam Rowe** (*SEWBRc*). The event also featured a walk around the site at the end of the day. Attendees were lucky enough to spot a bittern at Kenfig Pool.

Gwent

The Gwent Recorders' Forum was held at the RSPB Centre, Newport Wetlands National Nature Reserve. Starting us off was **Dr Elizabeth Chadwick** (*Cardiff University*) who gave us a fascinating talk about her research into otter carcasses. Elizabeth pointed out that the post-mortem is much more than just looking into the cause of death. It can generate useful biological information that can guide conservation and be used as an index of condition of ecosystems.

Dai Roberts (*Riverfly Partnership*) outlined the work of the partnership and the importance of monitoring the riverfly population as they are essential indicators of the health of aquatic systems. **Dr Ingrid Juettner** (*National Museum of Wales*) provided a unique insight into diatoms—a group that most attendees knew very little about. Diatoms are very much under-recorded and their taxonomy

needs considerable more work as many species have not yet been described, or have been grouped with others. The work of the Environment Agency (EA) with the reintroduction of water voles at Llangorse Lake was presented by **Selwyn Eagle** (*EA*). The reintroduction programme is going well despite the pressure of leisure activities around the lake and numerous predators, in particular, mink.

Outside the central theme, **Adam Rowe** (*SEWBRc*) gave an update on SEWBRc, and how to become a member of the company. **Jerry Lewis** (*Gwent Ornithological Society*) gave a talk on hawfinches. Jerry has developed a more successful methodology for ringing hawfinches. His studies have shown that it is probable that by using traditional bird ringing techniques we have been underestimating hawfinch population numbers. Jerry illustrated the talk with some amazing photos of these colourful birds.

In the afternoon and in the last hour of the glorious winter sunshine, a few attendees took a walk around the reserve.

A big thank you to all the speakers at the fora. They made both days highly informative and very enjoyable.

Lindsay Bamforth & Rebecca Davies (SEWBRc)

Keep an eye out for dates of the 2011 Recorders' Meetings, they will be announced very soon.

Mike Sayce

Article taken from the Monmouthshire Moth & Butterfly Group Newsletter, No. 71, September 2010

We were sorry to hear in September of the death, aged 63, of one of our members, Mike Sayce. I first got to know Mike in 1985-1990 when he was a trustee, and latterly



Vice-Chairman, of the Gwent Wildlife Trust. After a short break, Mike resumed on GWT Council and was Chairman of the Conservation Committee for six years to 1998.

Having done a degree at Hatfield Polytechnic, Mike worked for many years with the Home Office Forensic Science Service, rising to senior posts at the Chepstow laboratories and subsequently on a UK-wide basis. After taking early retirement Mike became a magistrate but devoted much of his time to his beloved Shirenewton meadows. He was instrumental in forming the Shirenewton & Mynyddbach Fields Association Limited in

2006 which raised money to purchase (2009) and manage the meadows near to his home. Only a month before his death he accompanied Roger James and me on an evening's moth trapping to add to the list of fauna for the site, and on 10th July SEWBRc had held a biodiversity blitz day at the site.

Mike had a very dry, self-deprecating sense of humour. He claimed to have the largest moth trap in the country, though it was actually his local pub the Tredegar Arms, where he had carefully trained the staff to catch and retain any moths which flew into the pub in the evenings so that he could get them identified!

Our condolences go to Mike's family and friends.

Martin Anthony, Monmouthshire Moth & Butterfly Group

Editor: SEWBRc came to know Mike through the organisation of the Biodiversity Blitz at Shirenewton Meadows. We would also like to extend our deepest sympathies to Mike's family and friends.



Wildlife Crime in Wales Review



A review of the prevention and investigation of wildlife crime in Wales



The Welsh Assembly Government recently requested a review into the prevention and investigation of Wildlife Crime in Wales. This was carried out on behalf of Ian Arundale, the Chief Constable of Dyfed Powys Police, who has responsibility for combating Wildlife Crime within Wales.

On the 1st September 2010 the final report was presented to Environment Minister Jane Davidson at the Senedd

by Superintendent Tony Mathias on behalf of Ian Arundale.

The full report can be found at the following link: <http://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/content/uploads/documents/SG%20Meetings/SG11/wildlife%20crime%20review%20for%20paper%205.pdf>

Sgt Ian Guildford, Wildlife & Environmental Crime Officer (South Wales)

Gwent's Living Churchyards



Spring flowers, St Michael's, Llantarnam
© GWT

The churchyard – ‘God’s Acre’ – is one of the most enduring features of our landscape. Over the centuries, many churchyards have become sanctuaries for the living as well as the dead, where an abundance and diversity of indigenous and naturalised wildlife can flourish. Taken together, Gwent’s churchyards make a significant area of land that has survived untouched by wider agricultural changes and development pressures.

Over the past 3 years Gwent’s Living Churchyards project has worked with individuals, groups and Local Authorities to inspire and educate about our rich churchyard heritage. The project has been a fantastic way of engaging local people with local wildlife in both urban and rural situations. Balancing the needs and expectations of visitors with the needs of wildlife can sometimes be a challenge, but when achieved can have immense rewards for both.

The project has attracted interest from over 75 churchyards

and cemeteries and has worked most closely with its target of 25 sites. New data on the species and habitats of these churchyards has been collected and wildlife friendly care plans developed. In some churchyards this has meant identifying appropriate areas for trial wildflower meadow areas or leaving uncut margins, whilst in others creating reptile refuges, rebuilding stone walls or in one case building a new compost bin, to replace an old pile located beneath a fantastic veteran yew tree.

A diverse series of talks and training sessions have been delivered, attended by over 600 people. Highlights have included Fred Hageneder’s talk on ancient yews at Bettws Newydd, hedgerow planting at St Peter’s, Panside and the charismatic Ivan Pedley (British Lichen Society) inspiring the people of St Teilo’s, Llantilio Pertholey about churchyard lichens. In addition local groups have organised local churchyard open days and events such as community ‘rake and bakes’, bug hunts and native bulb planting with school groups. Such events provide the opportunity for local people to learn more about the wildlife and history to which their churchyard is home and join in helping record it, care for it and enjoy it!

Support has also been provided for small grant applications by churchyard groups, to a variety of funding bodies. Over 10 successful grant appli-

cations have been made including an artistic interpretation board to celebrate Bettws Newydd’s famous yew trees, and strimmers and native spring bulbs at St Michael’s, Tintern.

The Gwent Living Churchyards project has attracted interest and support from churchyards across Gwent – there is certainly a demand for advice on ‘wildlife friendly’ churchyard management and as the project approaches its end (this December) it continues to attract new interest. It’s hoped the 25 key churchyards/ cemeteries we’ve worked with will act as models of good practice, for those wanting to know more about the concept of Living Churchyards. One churchyard group already has a PowerPoint presentation on their churchyard project which they’ve been giving to other churchyards locally.

The project has been possible thanks to the support of a variety of partners. Thanks are made to all our funders and those who’ve delivered training and talks, undertaken specialist surveys and supported groups with grant awards. The biggest thanks go to those enthusiastic, active individuals and groups associated with Gwent’s churchyards, which have embraced ‘Living Churchyards’ and encouraged others to join them.

Rebecca Price (Wildlife Projects Officer, Gwent Wildlife Trust)

See www.gwentwildlife.org/livingchurchyards for more information or to download the latest edition of the Living Churchyards newsletter



Stone walling course at Groeswen Chapel transformed this.....

© GWT



Into this...

© GWT

A Syrphid Summer...

A copy of Alan Stubbs' 'British Hoverflies' had been on my bookshelf for nearly ten years, defying me to try to get into these attractive insects. But, despite my best intentions, it remained unopened until 2010.

So when I got the opportunity of a training course at the National Museum in Cardiff, it was hard to resist. There is no better way to learn a new taxon than under the patient guidance of real experts. In Roger Morris, Stuart Ball and Mark Pavett, who ran the course, I had that in abundance. After two days of keying out specimen after specimen under their expert eye, I felt I was ready to fly solo.

Hoverflies offer the perfect balance between accessibility and challenge. With about 270 species in Britain, the group is not too overwhelming, and the more common ones can readily be identified with-

out optics of any kind. But there are still an alarming number of little black jobs, for which a binocular microscope is essential.

It's also possible to break new ground. A glance at the distribution of records on the hoverfly recording scheme web site (www.hoverfly.org.uk) is really just a map of the most active invertebrate recorders in Wales. There are lots of records from Ceredigion up to Anglesey, Gower, Llanelli, the Tywi Valley, and Gwent. But large parts of the country are marked the hoverfly equivalent of "Ere be dragons". My home square, SN60, had been barely touched. Next door in SN70, there wasn't even a record of the marmalade fly *Episyrphus balteatus*!

Roger reckoned it should be possible to record about 80 species in a year. I'm well short of that at about 150 records of 40 species or so.

My prize find of the summer was a specimen of the marshy grassland specialist *Microdon mutabilis*, only the third or fourth record for East Glamorgan and, of course, new to that 10km square. But I've still only scratched the surface of this fascinating group. I've had my share of mistakes, carefully keying out a species, only to discover that I'd supposedly found a hoverfly in my back garden usually confined to the Caledonian pine forests. But by and large it's gone well, and the knowledge that almost anything I find will be 'new' has kept my enthusiasm going.

I still have a tray of specimens awaiting identification, to keep me going through the winter. It's only October, but already I'm looking forward to spring, and the chance to get out, net in hand, once again!

Andrew Lucas

Wildlife Sightings, Parc Taf Bargoed, Trelewis

My spring highlight at Parc Taf Bargoed was a pair of sand martins who attempted to breed in a drainage pipe on the man-made island on the lakes. I am unsure whether they were successful, but we will be keeping a close eye on them next year. Definitely successful in their breeding attempts were our two pairs of dippers, who can still be seen regularly on the river.

Over the summer months, we saw young goldfinch, sand martin,

green woodpecker, grey wagtail and cormorant around the park. Other sightings included common sandpiper, reed warbler, kingfisher and a number of butterfly species, such as red admiral and common blue.

Without doubt, the best record of the year so far was made in May by volunteer bird surveyor, John Harley, who reported spotting a hobby over the park on two separate occasions. Another interesting sighting was a grey wagtail, with a

difference! This individual, seen regularly in July and August, had the usual yellow belly, but its upper, rather than the normal grey, was pure white. This phenomenon is known as leucism and can occur for genetic reasons or due to a mineral deficiency in the diet.

More recently, a pair of red kites have been seen circling over the park, followed closely by a watchful buzzard. There have also been a number of reports of otter,

adding to some received earlier in the year, and spraint have been found on the park.

Craig Leitch
(Environmental and Heritage Warden, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council)

Fishes of Gwent



Donald Parrish and the 51½lb salmon taken from the River Wye just below Bigsweir Bridge, Llandogo in May 1962. The photograph (courtesy of Roger Brown) was taken at Brown's Hotel and Tearooms in Llandogo. Examination of this fish suggested that it had spent 5 years feeding at sea and that its weight on entry into freshwater (the River Wye) was probably 57lb. This is believed to be the 5th largest salmon taken from the Wye, and the largest since 1939 - will we ever see its like in the Wye again?

One of the richest streams in southern Gwent, as far as its piscifaua is concerned, is the Llanmartin Brook. It rises at two points on the south-facing slope of the Wentwood ridge from where it passes down on a parallel course with Henrhiw Lane, below the A48 at Llandevaud, through Llanbedr and Llanmartin to run along the north-westerly edge of the Underwood Estate before turning south to pass through Llanwern and under the Llanwern Steelworks. It then merges with, and becomes a part of, the Caldicot Level drainage system (Monks Ditch) and enters the Severn Estuary at Goldcliff Pill.

Fish species noted in the Underwood section of this stream during the summer of 1986 were minnow, stone loach, eel, bullhead, brown trout and three-spined stickleback. In May of 2006 I also noted the spawning of Brook Lampreys in this stream, just below the bridge which leads to the Underwood Leisure Centre, while the Monks Ditch sections also hold both nine-spined sticklebacks and roach.

SALTWATER FISH

Thorn-back Ray (*Raja clavata*) - egg-cases once found frequently along the Severn Estuary strandline during the 1970s, and on one

occasion, the tail of a dead thorn-back.

Conger Eel (*Conger conger*) - this marine species was frequently to be found below boulders on the intertidal flats of the Severn Estuary. Records include - 3 found under rocks on the Severn intertidal flats off Caldicot on 17.6.64; 1 individual of c.16lbs weight found on the Severn intertidal flats off Nash in September 1980.

Greater Pipefish (*Sygnathus acus*) - one of this species was found dead in the River Wye at Chepstow in the spring of 1981.

Cod (*Gadus morrhua*) - commonly taken from the Severn Estuary by anglers (and at one time netsmen too) during the 'winter' months. Records include a specimen of c.10lbs caught on rod and line at Magor Pill on the 29.11.81.

Bib (*Trisopterus luscus*) - a frequent 'winter' visitor to the Severn Estuary and commonly caught by anglers -1 caught at Magor Pill on the 21.11.82.

Whiting (*Merlangus merlangus*) - another species caught by anglers and netsmen in the Severn Estuary.

Hake (*Merluccius merluccius*) - 1 small specimen washed up dead on the Severn Estuary foreshore near Goldcliff Pill on the 1.6.80.

Three-bearded Rockling (*Gaidropsarus vulgaris*) - 1 found

dead on the Severn Estuary foreshore near Collister Pill, Undy on 24.3.73.

Bass (*Dicentrarchus labrax*) - a 'summer' fish in the Severn Estuary. Records include 1 caught in a Lavenet in 'The Lake', an intertidal pool in the Severn Estuary off Caldicot on the 18.4.65; 1 taken by an angler at Magor Pill on 18.4.74.

Thin-lipped Mullet (*Liza ramada*) - a 'summer' visitor into the Severn Estuary in small shoals and a species noted for considerable vitality. Its feeding behaviour means that it is rarely taken on rod and line, and it can be difficult to net. Records include - 'grey mullet' (apparently of this species) jumping in 'The Lake', a tidal pool in the bed of the Severn Estuary off Caldicot on the 1.8.64.

Mackerel (*Scomber scombrus*) - not a frequent fish in the Severn Estuary to my knowledge but during the late spring of 1997 a large number found their way well up the Estuary beyond Gwent.

Swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) - remains (torso) of a swordfish was washed up on the Severn Estuary foreshore near Collister Pill, Undy on 1.8.71 (see photo, p11).

(continued overleaf...)

Fishes of Gwent (...cont)



Bones taken from the corpse of the Collister Pill swordfish © Colin Titcombe

Common Goby (*Gobius minutus*)

- a small species and common in the Severn, e.g.- 1 at Black Rock on the 1.10.01.

Red Gurnard (*Aspitrigla cuculus*)

- specimen washed up dead along the Severn Estuary strandline below Undy on the 20.11.65.

Sole (*Solea solea*) – next to the flounder, this is the commonest flatfish in the Severn Estuary off Gwent. Records include - 4 sole (along with 3 grey mullet, 1 flounder and 2 whiting) taken in a 'long-net' off Farmfield Lane, Nash near Usk-mouth on the 18.9.66; reported as 'particularly abundant' in the Severn Estuary during the summer of 2001.

Sunfish (*Mola mola*) - a specimen was taken in the 'Putcher Rank' at Sedbury (just east of the mouth of the Wye in Gloucestershire) during July 1995.

Anglerfish (*Lophius piscatorius*) - frequent in the Severn Estuary with specimens taken by the Chepstow 'Stop-boats' and the Goldcliff 'Putcher Ranks'. Records include a specimen c.3 feet in length washed up dead on the foreshore near Collister Pill, Undy on the 31.5.74; distinctive L-shaped bones of this species often found along the Severn Estuary strandline in Gwent.

FRESHWATER FISH

Brook Lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*) - At one time a common species in Gwent but now becoming increasingly scarce. Records include - 2 in the Cas-troggy Brook between Lower Cwm Mill and Great Llanmelin Farm when the brook was partially dry leaving the fish stranded in pools - 15.2.59; 6 brook

lampreys noted spawning in the Llanmartin Brook at Underwood on the 11.5.06.

Brown Trout (*Salmo trutta*) - a common and wellknown fish of clean freshwater habitats. Records include - 1 brown trout (along with several

roach and dace) taken in a 'cleachnet' in the River Wye at Monmouth on the 2.3.67. This type of fishing can only be carried out when the river is 'high' (in flood); 2 small brown trout in the Afon Cibi (Park area above Abergavenny) on the 26.8.02, 1 of at least 1lb in weight in the River Usk at Llanwenarth; 'several' noted in the River Usk at Llangattock-nigh-Usk on the 5.9.04; 4 in the Afon Lwyd at Pontypool Park on the 28.7.06.

Pike (*Esox lucius*) - this large predatory species has been widely introduced into various freshwater habitats in Gwent - Llandegvedd Reservoir, the canal system at Newport, St. Pierre Lake near Chepstow, etc. Records include - St. Pierre Lake, Chepstow on the 23.7.67; 'In the shallows (of St. Pierre Lake) we noticed several pike swirling slowly near the surface. After checking the text-book we found it highly likely that these fish were spawning' - 18.3.74.

Roach (*Rutilus rutilus*) - noted in Monk's Ditch at Whitson on the 10.8.64; noted in St. Pierre Lake, Chepstow on the 23.7.67; one found dead at the side of the River Wye at Dixon, Monmouth on the 7.2.82; 'shoals' in the canal at Mamhilad on the 14.8.00.

Dace (*Leuciscus leuciscus*) - a widespread species in Gwent's major rivers (Wye, Usk and Monnow, etc.) but also introduced into other freshwater habitats. Records include - specimens taken from the River Wye at Tintern on 15.7.64, specimens taken from the River Monnow at Monmouth on the 7.2.82; 'several' noted in the River

Usk at Llangattock-nigh-Usk on the 5.9.04.

Chub (*Leuciscus cephalus*) - common in the Rivers Wye, Usk and Monnow but also introduced into other freshwater habitats such as Llandegvedd Reservoir (Chris Hatch). Records include - 1 taken from the River Wye at Tintern on the 15.7.64; 2 in the River Wye near Hadnock Quarry on 1.8.00; 2 of 'moderate size' in the River Monnow at Mill Farm, Grosmont on the 22.7.02.

Minnow (*Phoxinus phoxinus*) - a common but somewhat localized species in Gwent, noted recently from the Nant Trefil above Trefil Village on the 29.3.02.

Rudd (*Scardinius erythrophthalmus*) - reportedly introduced into the pool at Clytha Park, and also Llandegvedd Reservoir (Chris Hatch).

Tench (*Tinca tinca*) - noted in St. Pierre Lake, Chepstow on the 23.7.67, and more recently in Llandegvedd Reservoir (Chris Hatch).

Gudgeon (*Gobio gobio*) - noted in the River Monnow at Skenfrith on the 10.9.67; specimens taken from the Monnow at Monmouth on the 7.2.82; 'numbers' noted in the 'middle pond', Waun-y-pound between Ebbw Vale and Tredegar - on the 21.7.02.

Barbel (*Barbus barbus*) - reportedly in the River Wye.

Common Bream (*Abramis brama*) - introduced for coarse-fishing purposes into a number of pools in Gwent.

Crucian Carp (*Carassius carassius*) - introduced into a number of pools in Gwent, e.g. Llandegvedd Reservoir and the Nant-y-Mailor Reservoir (Chris Hatch).

(continued overleaf...)

Fishes of Gwent (cont...)

Carp (*Cyprinus carpio*) - a large fish of Asian origin, widely introduced - e.g. 'large carp' in the moat at Hen Cwrt, Llantilio Crossenny on the 15.8.02; 1 with 'spawning tubercles' in the 'Green Pool' of Llandegvedd Reservoir on the 4.6.04.

Stone Loach (*Noemacheilus barbatulus*) - noted in the Nant Trefil above Trefil Village on the 12.6.82 and 29.3.02: found under stones in the River Monnow at Tregate on the 21.7.86; found in the Bettws Brook, Newport during August 1986; 'good quantities' in the River Monnow at Tregate on the 21.9.03.

Perch (*Perca fluviatilis*) - introduced into many waters in Gwent including Llandegvedd Reservoir. Records include 'shoals of small-medium sized perch' in the Canal at Mamhilad on the 14.8.00; 'shoals of small Perch' in Nant-y-Mailor Reservoir, Abersychan (one of a number of 'exotic' species that have been illegally introduced into this water) - 21.6.03.

Ruffe (*Gymnocephalus cernua*) - now present in Llandegvedd Reservoir (Chris Hatch).

Bullhead (*Cottus gobio*) - one of the most widespread and abundant fish in Gwent. Records include - 'c. 40 - 50 bullheads found dead in the Cas-troggy Brook in the Cwm near Maesgwenith after electric-shock techniques had been used by the land-owner to take brown trout (*Salmo trutta*) on the 27.7.64; noted in the Nant Trefil above Trefil Village on the 12.6.82; found below stones in the River Monnow at Tregate on the 21.7.86; 1 found under stones in the Pant-yr-eos Brook above Bettws, Newport on the 26.3.02; noted in the Gwyddon Brook, Abercarn on the 16.5.02; 1 found under a stone at the head of the Nant-y-Mailor Reservoir, Abersychan on the 21.6.03; 2 found in the Afon Lwyd at Pontypool Park on the 18.7.06; found in the Afon Lwyd and its small tributary in Pontypool Park on the 10.8.06.

Three-spined Stickleback (*Gasterosteus aculeatus*) - once

abundant in the Cas-troggy/Nedder Brook below Caerwent, Recent records include - 'specimens noted in the back-ditch' at Temperance Hotel, Goldcliff on the 14.9.91; noted in the Bettws Brook, Newport during August 1986; 'several' in water-tank 'reservoirs' in M.O.D Caerwent (close to building 337) on the 13.5.03; noted in the pond at Grove Farm, Llanfoist on 31.3.03; noted in breeding colours in the Canal near Bettws, Newport on the 22.4.03; 'good numbers' in pools on Castle Meadows, Abergavenny on the 29.3.04; 'small numbers' of this species in ponds at Pontypool Park, Pontypool on the 4.5.06.

Nine-spined Stickleback (*Pungitius pungitius*) - once present in the Nedder Brook below Caerwent. Recent records include specimens noted in the 'back-ditch' at Temperance Hotel, Goldcliff on the 14.9.91; noted in the Duffryn Pond (near the Duffryn Estate and Tredegar Park, Newport) on the 24.3.02.

EURYHALINE FISH

River Lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*) - 6 or 7 river lampreys found parasitizing trout in Llandegvedd Reservoir on the 25.6.99; and during the spring of 2009 river lampreys were removed from 10 trout, also in Llandegvedd Reservoir (Chris Hatch).

Sea Lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*) - 1 found in the River Wye above Tintern in a spent condition on the 23.6.63; 1 specimen found dead at the side of the River Usk near Llanwenarth on the 11.7.00; a large sea lamprey found dead in the River Wye on the Bigsweir Islands in the River Wye around the middle of June in 2007.

Twaite Shad (*Alosa fallax*) - once caught in considerable numbers on the River Wye at Symonds Yat (just inside Herefordshire) using 'Cleachnets' during the month of May (hence the local name of 'May-fish'). This statement holds true at least as recently as the 1970s. My main informant was Mr. Edward Gardiner of Monmouth who was a Cleach-net

licence holder. On the 27th May 1970 Ted phoned me in order to report the following:-

Shad	Date	Comments
1	09.05.70	first fish of the year.
-	13.05.70	dirty brown water after rain.
19	14.05.70	between 5am and 8am.
29	14.05.70	during the evening
5	16.05.70	10.30am until 4.00pm.
-	20.05.70	
-	23.05.70	
2	24.05.70	4.30 in the morning.

In addition to this - 1 found dead at the side of the River Usk below Llangibby on the 14.6.91, having been killed by a predator, believed to be an otter (see photograph).



The twaite shad is the more common of the two migratory shads
© Colin Titcombe

Salmon (*Salmo salar*) - a declining species of recent times but, during the early years of the 21st century, making something of a comeback, given a range of conservation aids. Records include - 4 dead salmon (spent fish) on the bank of the River Usk opposite Llanbadoc Church, Usk on the 16.2.97; Salmon jumping at Osbaston Weir on the River Monnow during November 1997.

Sea Trout (*Salmo trutta*) - this is the migratory form of the brown (*continued overleaf...*)

Fishes of Gwent (cont...)

trout and one of which I have little experience.

Eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) - during the 1950s and 1960s the eel was regularly found in the deeper pools of the Cas-troggy/Nedder Brook below Caerwent. In the Wye Valley the tradition of 'elvering' is age-old and I was first introduced to this activity during the 1960s when I accompanied local fishermen in their pursuit of the elvers between Tintern and Llandogo on the River Wye. Records for this species are as follows - 'large numbers' of elvers swimming up the Nedder Brook on the 26.5.59 and 16.4.61; 'hundreds' of dead eels on dried up

bed of the 'First Pool' of the Nedder on the 4.7.59; 'small specimens' found below stones in the River Monnow at Tregate on the 21.7.86; found in Bettws Brook, Newport during August 1986 1 noted in the 'back-ditch' near the mouth of the River Rhymney on 8.9.01.

Flounder (*Platichthys flesus*) - this is the 'flatfish' which frequently moves far up into freshwater from the sea via the brackish estuaries. Over the years I have noted this species in the River Wye, River Usk and in the Olway Brook beyond Llanllowell. Other records are as follows—5 caught in Lave-nets

off Caldicot on the 15.3.64; 11 'sizeable' flounders caught by two Lave-netters on the Severn Estuary off Caldicot on the 17.5.64; described as 'common' in tidal channels on the Severn Estuary flats off Caldicot in June, 1964; 3 'small' flounders noted in the Magor Pill Reen on the 8.4.71; reported from the Mally Brook in the Buckholt Valley on the 28.3.85; 1 found in the Bettws Brook, Newport during August 1986; a male goosander having some difficulty in swallowing a flounder in the River Wye just below Redbrook on the 16.12.98. It was eventually successful!

Colin Titcombe

Biodiversity Action Planning (BAP) in Wales

The BAP process is now devolved from the UK level to the country nations with the UK fulfilling a communications and research role. Building on the success of the existing structure in Wales, the approach to BAP delivery introduces a new layer of Welsh groups that will pool expertise and close the gap between those who deliver action in Wales and those who are able to provide strategic advice, guidance and support. The new groups are nine Ecosystem Groups (Woodland; Lowland Grassland and Heathland; Wetland; Urban and Brownfield; Freshwater; Upland; Coastal; Enclosed Farmland; and Marine), a Species Expert Group and a Wales Biodiversity Policy Group.

The Wales Biodiversity Partnership (WBP) are leading on the BAP approach supported by many other organisations including the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) Partnerships, Local Record Centres (LRCs) & recorder net-

works. The Wales approach encompasses the needs of all species and habitats listed for Section 42 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, of which there are 545 priority species and 55 priority habitats in Wales, addressing their conservation through ecosystem approach principles. The broad idea is that maintaining and improving habitats encompassing the nine ecosystem groups will enable species to recover although some species will require individual action plans for their conservation.

For more details, please visit www.biodiversitywales.org.uk and click on the 'BAP in Wales' link.

Sean McHugh, WBP Communications Officer

VC Recorders' Funds

The Wales Biodiversity Partnership (WBP) is keen to support Vice County recorders who carry out a vital role in recording our native and non-native species to build an invaluable temporal record of biodiversity for all the respective counties. VC recorders can claim in any one calendar year up to £25 towards books, identification guides and keys to support their recording effort. Please contact Sean McHugh (s.mchugh@welshwildlife.org) if you are interested in making a claim.

Other Funding

WBP provide funding for Wildlife Training days organised by LRCs in Wales and have also supported funding of bee habitat creation; meadow creation; marine recording; conservation management leaflets for lichens and lepidoptera; and a fungi project (details to be confirmed). In addition, WBP have provided funds to LRCs to support data transfer from archive records to the active database, mobilising many thousands of species records. Please contact Sean McHugh for further information.



Torfaen LBAP Update

Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) Audit and Review. Torfaen's LBAP Review is currently underway and the first draft is due for completion by the end of the year. The partnership will be holding a workshop with key recorders during October to agree the habitats and species that will be in the new BAP.

Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act (2006). The Welsh Assembly Government has developed a Sustainability Charter in order to promote sustainable development in Wales. In May 2010 Councillor Bob Wellington, in his capacity as both biodiversity and sustainability champion, formally signed up to the Charter on behalf of the Council to become '*an exemplar organisation, to lead and inspire others to act*' and to '*provide clear leadership for sustainable development, within our organisations and those we work with*'. One of the charter's priorities is the natural environment.

Improved management of grasslands for biodiversity in Torfaen is also an agreed action for compliance within our NERC (Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act) action plan. As a result of this commitment we have set ourselves a number of challenges over the coming year that are aimed at increasing community level awareness and engagement around sustainability, including a flagship project to exemplify a

sustainable approach to land management.

The Council has made a commitment to adjust the management of a selection of grassland sites for the benefit of biodiversity - to encourage more species-rich meadow which is a priority habitat for conservation in Wales. As part of the Council's commitment to Welsh Assembly Government's Sustainability Charter, several areas of amenity grassland have been chosen as pilot areas for recreating grassland meadows in areas owned by the Council.

This project was presented to members at a members seminar regarding Sustainability earlier in the year and we will be looking for much more public support.

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation.

Torfaen County Borough Council has joined in partnership with the Mid-Valleys SINC group. The steering group covers the unitary authority areas of Blaenau-Gwent, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil, Torfaen and Rhondda Cynon Taff (excluding the parts that lie within the Brecon Beacons National Park). This is referred to as the "*Mid-Valleys Area*". Each unitary authority area is land-locked and comprises a characteristic valley landscape with similar habitats and species. The role of LBAP partnerships and recorders in the ongoing development and

review of the SINC system is recognised as important in the Mid-Valleys SINC Criteria.

Local Nature Reserves.

There will be a public consultation on the proposed designation of Hollybush Heights in the next couple of months. The site includes several fields of species-rich neutral grassland and would be Torfaen's 7th Local Nature Reserve.

Torfaen Local Development Plan.

Due to the need to obtain further information to inform the Local Development Plan (LDP) process in relation to the future development of Cwmbran Town Centre, the Deposit LDP was reported to Full Council during September 2010. This will allow Members to be aware of all of the additional information that becomes available and enable them to make a fully informed decision in determining whether or not to approve the Deposit Plan for a 6-week consultation period. We now anticipate the Deposit LDP being advertised for a 6-week public consultation period during November 2010.

Review of Consents.

TCBC is finalising work on their Review of Consents (RoC) obligation as set out in the Habitats Regulations (1994). This work has involved assessing the impact of all historic consents given by the local authority for their possible impact on nearby Special Areas of Conser-

vation (SAC). Consents assessed included planning applications and Building Regulations, etc, and it is on course to be completed by the end of 2010. Areas will be identified which will require tests of likely significance, i.e. sites adjacent to watercourses and/or woodlands in respect of Torfaen. TCBC have also come up with a suggested methodology for other local authorities which that are undertaking a similar review to use. This is fully supported by CCW.

SEWBRcC. TCBC has been working very closely with SEWBRcC on updating its wildlife site inventory on GIS. SEWBRcC have also provided an Alerts Map to be displayed on the Council's GIS system for every officer to use helping us to implement our NERC duty. TCBC's Service Level Agreement will be up for renewal in 2011.

Friends of the Afon Lwyd (FOAL) Project Update.

Three barriers for freshwater fish migration have been removed along the Afon Lwyd enhancing the habitat for salmon, trout and other species. Through monitoring we have found fry (salmon and trout) in the very top stretch of river between Cwmavon and Blaenavon. Migratory fish haven't been able to use *(continued overleaf...)*

Torfaen LBAP Update (cont....)

this stretch since the weirs were put in for industry 2-300 years ago.

South Wales Pond Creation Project. Torfaen has identified 2 areas for wetland creation – Garn yr Erw, Blaenavon and Henllys Vale, Cwmbran with thanks to EAW and Million Ponds Project.

LBAP Bird Subgroup.

There has been a grey partridge survey undertaken but no birds found. However, there was some anecdotal evidence of a family of grey partridge feeding along the mountain ridge above Henllys Vale and Ty Canol, Cwmbran.

Gwent Wildlife Trust will be making 90 Bird boxes for Pied Flycatchers and

will be going up before next spring.

The current population of long-eared owls in Wales is c.30 pairs and thus is a scarce breeder and therefore on the RSPB's Amber List (Birds of Conservation Concern, (2010) (in press). Blaenavon Woods hold 20% of the Welsh population and 6 breeding pairs could be affected by Forestry Commission felling plans. We are cur-

rently trying to resolve this issue.

**Kris Roberts
(Biodiversity Officer,
Torfaen County Borough Council)**

Caerphilly LBAP Update

Sunflower Fields

Another 4 sites owned by Caerphilly County Borough Council were ploughed and seeded with a mix for farmland birds. This has been done as part of the Regional Bird Survey Project (Glamorgan). The fields will be monitored over the winter to see what species of birds are using these sites. Two farmers have also volunteered to provide winter bird feeding stations.

Surveys & CCW Grants

Several species surveys have been undertaken this year that are supported by CCW grants. These include water vole survey and training, bumble bee survey and training and great crested newt surveys. The great crested newt surveys are annual surveys that have been running for a number of years. We will continue the water vole and bumblebee surveys next year.

Roadside Verge Audit

An audit was undertaken on roadside verges in Caerphilly county borough. The aim of the audit is to manage important verges for biodiversity. The audit has been completed and the written report has been received with some fantastic findings. A paper is being written to go to cabinet to introduce the roadside verge audit and the intended proposals, and our Biodiversity Champion will try to gain money for the project.

Woodland Audit

All woodlands within the borough have been mapped onto GIS to identify areas for potential planting schemes through Coed Cymru. A woodland management leaflet has been designed for landowners; and along with a letter explaining about available grants, has been sent out to landowners in the three target areas that are lacking in woodland. One hundred letters were

sent and 34 landowners have been in touch in regards to obtaining a woodland grant. Out of these 34 landowners, 27 are progressing with a woodland grant. Other areas will be targeted in subsequent years. This project will progress again, once a replacement Coed Cymru officer is in post.

Gwent Living Churchyards Project

Abercarn and Brithdir cemetery have again undertaken changes in management for biodiversity. The frequency of the cutting regimes were reduced in pilot areas within cemeteries to allow the wildflowers to flower and set seed. Abercarn cemetery has developed a large area of heathland on the top embankment and Brithdir was a mass of wild flowers that had never been allowed to appear before. This project is still in its early stages and we are hoping to make further progress.

Other sites will be introduced at a later date.

Harold Finch Memorial Park

The Harold Finch Memorial Park has been managed sympathetically as a hay meadow again this year. The number of orchids this year was double the number from last year. A small patch of heathland has started to develop in one corner of the site, as well as devil's bit scabious. It is hard to believe when looking at the abundance of wild flowers present on the site, that it was cut amenity grassland 2 years ago. The site will continue to be managed for biodiversity in the future.

Million Pond Project

In October 2009, a grant was received from the Million Ponds Project to create 5 new ponds in **(continued overleaf...)**

Caerphilly LBAP Update (cont...)

Parc Cwm Darran. The grant of £2,850 required one large pond (that can hold water all year) to be created at each location and a succession of smaller ponds and scrapes to be created around the large pond. These smaller ponds and scrapes will hold water seasonally/or semi-permanently. The ponds will be surveyed and monitored over the coming years.

Management Plans for Marsh Fritillary

Management of Local Authority sites is still underway and a new management plan for the Local Nature Reserve (LNR) at Parc Cwm Darren has included additional areas with potential for marsh and small pearl-bordered fritillary. These additional areas have been fenced off ready to introduce stock and will be managed as an

extension of the existing LNR.

Orchard Creation

Three community orchards have been created in Caerphilly county borough using 'Tidy Towns' funding. The trees were purchased off Dolau-hirion fruit trees in Camarthen-shire and Ian Sturrock and Sons in Bangor. Both nurseries specialise in the old Welsh varieties of apples, pears, plums, damsons and cherries. We are hoping to create some more orchards with local communities in the future.

Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS)

All of the contacts have been updated and SINCS have been added along with their grid reference. Information has been sought from staff who have undertaken biodiversity actions within the

council to add to BARS. Sessions are to be arranged with some of the partners to obtain information on their projects. This information is currently being added to the system. The information added to date relates to Habitat Action Plans (HAPs). Once the HAPs are completed we will be looking at Species Action Plans.

Tunnel Bat Roost at Parc Cwm Darren

The Countryside and Landscape section are working with the Valleys Bat Group to create a bat roost in an old

tunnel that runs under the cycle track at Parc Cwm Darren. Designs have been drawn up and funding has been applied for. Hopefully the works can be undertaken next year.

Margaret Iles
(Biodiversity Officer,
Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC))



Marsh fritillary © Karen Wilkinson

Marsh Fritillaries at Aberbargoed Grasslands

Aberbargoed Grasslands is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and Special Area of Conservation (SAC), designated for its *Molinia* grasslands and large breeding population of marsh fritillary butterflies. Caerphilly County

Borough Council has been actively managing this site since 2006 primarily for the marsh fritillary. Scrub and bracken have been cleared from the site and fencing erected to allow cattle grazing to take place. Grazing keeps the

sward between 8–25 cm in height and tussocky; it also allows bare patches to form for devil's bit scabious (larval food plant) to seed into, creating

the right habitat conditions for marsh fritillaries. Over the last few years adult numbers have been disappointing with results mirrored throughout Britain, probably a result of the recent spate of bad summers. This year, however, adult counts were high with 150 seen on one day alone. September web counts were also very good with 201 recorded on the best field and 16 further webs scattered around the site. This has been the best count for over ten years.

An education centre has been erected on adjacent Welsh Water land which is to be used by visiting school groups, volunteers, etc. There are also plans to designate the site as a National Nature Reserve next year!

Margaret Iles (CCBC)



Larval webs © Karen Wilkinson

SPOTLIGHT ON A LOCAL RECORDING ORGANISATION: Valleys Bat Group

We need to get out more

The summer bat season has yet again been a busy one. Our activities have included bat walks, talks, training and of course field surveys. All elements relevant to biological recording.

The Valleys Bat Group undertakes its public role seriously, through bat walks, talks and other events. It is our main source of interaction with the general public, now that bat roost visits have been contracted out by the Countryside Council for Wales. Without this interaction we would lose out on an enormous wealth of information on the distribution of bat species across our catchment area. We would also lose out on the changing perception of bats among our communities. Of course we need to follow-up on roost identification and verify sightings, but we do get to build up, fairly quickly, both a historic picture and current indica-

tion of bat populations. We also need to focus on interpreting our findings. Any offers?

We now provide members with a 'training logbook'. This simple booklet allows you to record your bat experience throughout the year, within broad categories such as 'field surveys', 'roost visits', 'training courses' and 'bat care/handling'. It should prove useful for those wishing to train for a bat licence, but also as a general record of volunteering effort throughout the year. Some will complete a book easily within a year, whereas others may have the same book for 3 or more years. It's up to the individual to use it as they see fit. Training activities we have provided this year include bat identification in the hand and sonogram analysis for beginners.

Our largest role as a bat group is of course field surveys. We monitor some important roost sites

within our catchment area of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Torfaen. Our Morlais (Merthyr) hibernation sites, counts of brown long-eared and lesser horseshoe bats are steady with no noticeable increases or decreases since we started surveying back in 2006. Summer brown long-eared counts at Rudry are also stable. We have noticed slight increases in numbers at our greater horseshoe and lesser horseshoe sites, but trends indicate that again, numbers are stable.

We are currently improving roosts within Parc Cwm Darran. A disused tunnel and powder store – both known roosts for brown long-eared bats – will be modified progres-

sively and monitored for presence of bats. We also have a bat box scheme to complete which will involve the making and installation of bat boxes.

I hope you get a feel for the work we undertake across our catchment area and apologise for skimming over or leaving out a lot of the other work we do. We are still forming as a group and please bear with us with regards to organisation of events. We would like to encourage people to submit their records to SEWBReC or VBG. More importantly, we would like you to come along on one of our many tasks planned for the next 12 months and perhaps lead an event?

Richard Dodd and Geri Thomas (Valleys Bat Group)



Good News for Orchards in Gwent!

A new project was launched this summer by the Gwent Wildlife Trust called the Gwent Orchards Project. Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Countryside Council for Wales and the Wye Valley AONB, this project aims to help bring orchards in Gwent back to their former glory. In 1890, 4000 acres of or-

chards were recorded in Monmouthshire alone with this region being responsible for most of the fruit production in Wales. This gave it a fruit producing reputation rivalling that of Herefordshire and Worcestershire! Sadly, in the past 50 years almost 90% of our orchards have been lost from the region, due to development, ne-

glect, and lost interest in the art of fruit growing.

As well as having high historical importance, orchards are of very high value to wildlife. Several important species rely on orchards including the noble chafer beetle (*Gnorimus nobilis*). This beetle is a very rare UK Biodiversity Action Plan

(UK BAP) priority species whose grubs feed on dead wood inside old apple trees (causing no harm to the tree). One of the major aims of the project is to find records of this beetle within Gwent. Another

Good News for Orchards in Gwent! (cont...)

fascinating species associated with fruit trees is mistletoe (*Viscum album*). Gwent boasts one of the best populations of mistletoe in the UK, most probably due to the high numbers of orchards we historically had in the area. Many species rely on mistletoe, including the mistletoe marble (*Celypha woodiana*), another UK BAP priority species whose leaf miner larvae feed on the leaves of mistletoe. In 2007, the significance of orchards for wildlife conservation was recognised by the habitat being designated as a priority habitat in the UK BAP.

Through its duration, the project will be running

training days, enabling orchard owners to manage and maintain their own orchards. It will also support the planting of new orchards one of which will be planted by the Gwent Wildlife Trust at their new reserve at Springdale Farm. It is hoped that this orchard will be used to help people learn about their orchard heritage, as traditional Welsh fruit varieties will be planted. The orchards in Gwent are also being surveyed as part of the project. This allows us to map the orchards in the area so we have a better understanding of the current condition and extent of the habitat within the region.

If you own an orchard, would like to plant one, or are simply interested in finding out more about this important habitat and the project, please contact Alice Britt, the Gwent Orchards Project Officer on

01600 740600 or abritt@gwentwildlife.org

Alice Britt (Gwent Orchards Project Officer, GWT)



© Alice Britt

FLP: Call for Volunteer Recorders

Torfaen County Borough Council is lead partner for the Forgotten Landscapes Partnership (FLP). It is responsible for the delivery of a three-year landscape conservation management programme funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and a range of other partners. The project covers an area of 71km² including Torfaen, Monmouthshire, Blaenau Gwent and incorporates a large area of the Brecon Beacons National Park.

Among the many natural heritage projects will be the restoration of wetlands, grasslands and heather moorland to provide habitats for the area's wildlife; the conservation of red grouse and the re-

turn of Welsh mountain ponies and traditional breeds of cattle to the common-land for the first time in a generation.

During 2009 an ecological audit identified a range of survey and monitoring needs to be completed over three years beginning in the spring of 2010. Consultant ecologist Chris Hatch was appointed by the Partnership and has completed a number of surveys.

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

Great Crested Newt Survey at Garn Lakes Local Nature Reserve

This relates to a project that will create approximately two hectares of

reed bed at the 'Kays and Kears' site, Blaenavon, using Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*). Great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) were found to be absent from the area, but a good population of palmate newts (*Triturus helveticus*) was found to be present. Other amphibians found at the site included common frog (*Rana temporaria*) and common toad (*Bufo bufo*).

Pond Biodiversity Assessment

This exercise aimed to establish the biodiversity value of key ponds in the Cefn Garn yr Erw area and a cluster of small water bodies within the Blaen Pig and Canada Tips area. The information will

be used to target resources for management of these waterbodies and of adjacent land. Some significant species were found to be present, including great crested newt which was found incidentally during one of the surveys.

Of particular significance is the community of Odonata, which includes keeled skimmer (*Orthetrum coerulescens*), emerald damselfly (*Lestes sponsa*), scarce blue-tailed damselfly (*Ischnura elegans*), golden-ringed (*continued overleaf...*)

FLP: Call for Volunteer Recorders (cont...)



dragonfly (*Cordulegaster boltonii*), black-tailed skimmer (*Orthetrum cancellatum*), black darter (*Sympetrum danae*) and common hawkmer (*Aeshna juncea*).

Otter and Water Vole Survey

A baseline survey was conducted during the summer of 2010 for signs of otter (*Lutra lutra*) and water vole (*Arvicola amphibius* (formerly *A. terrestris*)) in all suitable habitat throughout the project area.

Otter spraint was found at a number of locations, including along the Afon Llwyd, at Garn Lakes, Coity Pond, Slope Pond, along the river Clydach and its tributaries, at Pinchey Ponds (Llanelli Hill) and along the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal. Otter tracks and an area where otters had been lying up, rolling and playing were found at Waunafon Bog – an area that according to Chris, “appears to be of importance in terms of connectivity between the Afon Llwyd and Clydach river

catchments.”

No signs of water vole activity were discovered during the survey (despite suitable habitat along the Monmouthshire and Brecon canal and some of the larger ponds). Evidence of mink (*Mustela vison*) was found at some locations.

Butterfly Survey

The area was found to be very productive for butterflies. Of particular importance is the large number of grayling (*Hipparchia semele*) to be found utilising the patches of bare ground. In total, 17 species of butterflies were recorded during the survey period.

Species present listed as being ‘of Principal Importance for Conservation of Biological Diversity in Wales’ under Section 42 of the NERC Act 2006 are small pearl-bordered fritillary (*Boloria selene*), present in small numbers, small heath (*Coenonympha pamphilus*), present in large numbers, dingy skipper (*Erynnis tages*), present in small numbers and gray-

ling, present in large numbers. Of local importance is the dark green fritillary (*Argynnis aglaja*), which is present in small numbers.

Birds

Reasonable records exist for certain species within the landscape area. However, the Partnership has identified a suite of species which would benefit from conservation land management. The species of concern are: red grouse (*Lagopus lagopus scotica*), long-eared owl (*Asio otus*) and grasshopper warbler (*Locustella naevia*).

Red Grouse: Previous surveys indicate that red grouse numbers are worryingly low and possibly declining. Long-term monitoring is a high priority. Chris will be undertaking follow-up surveys this autumn.

Long-eared Owl: Eight pairs of long-eared owls breed within the Forgotten Landscapes Project area. A further two pairs breed just to the south of the area. Chris said of his findings, “The eight breeding pairs represent 80% of the known Gwent breeding population and 27% of the known breeding popu-

lation of Wales (The ‘Birds of Gwent’, 2008). The population within the Forgotten Landscapes Project area is therefore particularly important.”

Grasshopper Warbler:

The high, insect-like ‘reeling’ of the male grasshopper warbler was detected at Waunafon bog and a number of locations in and around Blaenavon. According to Chris, “The ‘Birds of Gwent’, 2008, estimates a breeding population of less than 35 pairs within Gwent, so the population within the Forgotten Landscapes Project area is particularly significant.”

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

The Forgotten Landscapes Partnership is looking for enthusiastic volunteers for a wide range of projects to suit beginners and experts alike. There will be many opportunities to work alongside ecologists and project staff as well as opportunities to learn new recording skills.

Alvin Nicholas
(Forgotten Landscapes Partnership Commons Officer)

If you would like to get involved, please contact:

Alvin Nicholas, Forgotten Landscapes Partnership Commons Officer, Blaenavon World Heritage Centre, Church Road, Blaenavon, NP4 9AS.

01495 742334 / 07980 682749

Alvin.Nicholas@torfaen.gov.uk

Marmora's Warbler (*Sylvia sarda*), Blorenges SSSI



Marmora's warbler © Nathan Casburn

A couple of friends (Martin Wright and Tony Perry) and I were visiting the area to look for whinchats (*Saxicola rubetra*). Martin has visited the area for over 40 years and owns a small piece of land nearby, where he has nest boxes for pied flycatchers (*Ficedula hypoleuca*). We parked in the usual lay-by car-park and on opening the car door I heard a song that was unfamiliar to me. When I heard it again a few minutes later from about 30 yards up the road, I mentioned it to the others, and within a few seconds we saw a warbler heading towards us through the vegetation on the side of the road. Our immediate instinct was Dartford warbler (*Sylvia undata*), as we could see it was distinctly long-tailed, and was flying in the distinctive way of a *Sylvia* warbler; it perched up on a small gorse bush in typical Dartford style – tail cocked, and then we quickly saw that it was all grey, with no hint of the wine coloured under parts

of Dartford coloration. It also quickly dawned on us that it wasn't singing like a Dartford, either.

There was almost a chorus of 'it's a Marmora's', but with complete disbelief! We had a camera to hand and were able to get some adequate pictures to look at when the bird flew out of sight.

I put a message on Bird Guides (one of the national bird information networks), as I needed someone with expertise to pinch me. Fortunately, we found a National Park warden, who was monitoring Whinchat nests nearby, and then someone (a birder who happened to be driving through South Wales at the time the information was released onto the national bird information networks) who was doing a thesis on Dartford warblers, was able to confirm our thoughts from the photos. About 20-30 people turned up in

the following couple of hours, and I believe that some very good shots were taken.

We had excellent views through binoculars, sometimes down to 15 feet or so. The bird perched quite openly on gorse and hawthorn bushes, singing regularly. On one occasion it did a towering song flight in the style of a whitethroat (*Sylvia communis*) – it also did several other short song flights.

The general impression was of dark slate grey upperparts, fading to slightly darker on the head, with a slightly darker area around the cheeks. The eye was red, and stood out clearly. The bill was orange-yellow and the gape was a similar coloration. Under parts were also grey, although slightly paler than the back. Subsequently, through a telescope, I saw a hint of a grey brown tinge to the wing coverts. The song was *Sylvia* warbler style – and rather on

one note (Dartford style) – but after a few scratchy notes it developed into a strident, dry trill. It was very distinctive, and made location of the bird easy.

The bird remained in the area, being very faithful to a particular circuit and was last seen on the 15th June. It was enjoyed by a large number of twitchers, as it was the first bird that was readably accessible in Britain since 1993.

There have been 5 previously acceptable records of Marmora's warbler in Britain (see table below). There are two 'races' of this species, the nominate race *sarda* is restricted to Corsica, Sardinia and small islands off the western coast of Italy with the species wintering in north Algeria, Tunisia and Libya. The second race *balearica* is resident on the Balearic Islands of the Mediterranean.

Tim Hutton

Year	County	Details
1982	Yorkshire, South	Midhope Moor, male, in song, 15th May to 24th July.
1992	Yorkshire, East	Spurn, in song, 8th to 9th June, trapped 8th June.
1993	Borders	St Abb's Head, male, in song, 23 rd to 27th May.
2001	Norfolk	Scolt Head, in song, 12th, 18th May.
2001	Suffolk	Sizewell, male, 29th May.

WILDLIFE SIGHTINGS



Slender slug © Christian Owen

Slender Slug

Christian Owen found the slender slug (*Malacolimax tenellus*) at Groesfaen Woods, near Deri. It is a species associated with Ancient Woodland and is considered rare throughout Britain. It has a great liking for fungus seeming to prefer the *Russula* species, of which there are plenty in these woods. Not one fruiting body seemed to be untouched by this slug, so if you're visiting, then a careful look around these mushrooms will soon pay dividends in finding several. This is a species worth looking out for in Autumn when there is plenty of fungi about.

Lithobius tricuspis

Christian Owen also found an unusual centipede in Groesfaen Woods, near Deri. He was unsure of the species so he sent three specimens off to Antony Barber for identification. He quickly got a response by email congratulating him on finding *Lithobius tricuspis*. The sightings turned out to be only the second known records for Wales. The rest of the

British population are found in various scattered localities around the Devon area, although they seem not to be associated with any preferred habitat. On further visits to this site it is evident they are abundant throughout the wood, in similar numbers to the commoner *L. forficatus* and *L. variegatus* which are also found here.

Bleached Pug moth

Dave Beveridge recorded a bleached pug moth (*Eupithecia expallidata*) in a garden in Treowen on the 29th August 2010. This moth is a nationally scarce B moth. It has been recorded at a few sites in Gwent but is not at all common.

Mompha terminella

Dave also found the leaf miner *Mompha terminella* on enchanter's nightshade (*Eupithecia expallidata*) in his garden. This was the first record of the species in Gwent, so obviously the first breeding site for them. It is a relatively local species occurring in Eng-

land and Wales, but is less common in the eastern counties. A single generation flies in July and August but is not easy to locate as an adult.

Adela fibulella

Dave Beveridge has also found two sites for *Adela fibulella* within Caerphilly county borough. Up until now *A. fibulella* had only ever been recorded in the east of Gwent. One site was in Nelson Wern Woodland Park, which is only the 8th county record, and the 2nd record for the century. The other site was in Treowen.

Highlights from MMBG —more firsts for Gwent

A small blue butterfly (*Cupido minimus*) was spotted by Bill Jones in June at the Newport Wetlands Reserve. This record is a first for Newport

and Gwent.

Orthotelia sparganella, *Euproctis chrysorrhoea* (brown tail) and *Apamea sublustris* (reddish light arches) are all new moths for Gwent. All were caught at light at the Newport Wetlands Reserve by Kevin Dupé.

Contributors: Margaret Iles (Caerphilly County Borough Council) and Monmouthshire Moth & Butterfly Group



Adela fibulella © Dave Beveridge

Trichomonosis—Present in Finches in Caerphilly

Trichomonosis is a disease caused by a microscopic parasite (*Trichomonas gallinae*) that causes disease in the back of the throat and gullet in birds. Outbreaks are most severe and frequent in the period of August to October. The parasite lives in the upper digestive tract of the bird, and it progressively blocks the bird's throat, making it unable to swallow food or water. The bird eventually dies from starvation. Birds with the disease show signs of lethargy, they are easy to approach, have fluffed-up plumage, they may drool saliva, regurgitate food, have difficulty in swallowing, show laboured breathing, have wet matted plumage around the face and beak and are constantly cleaning their beaks on branches, feeders, etc. Sick birds are obvious due to the symptoms and they have a tendency to stay close to feeders and water sources, and often die there.

If you see a bird in your garden showing symptoms such as those listed above, the BTO recommends that you: -

- Ensure optimal hygiene at garden bird feeding stations. Clean and disinfect feeders and feeding sites regularly. Suitable disinfectants that can be used include a weak solution of domestic bleach or disinfectants. Always rinse thoroughly and air-dry feeders before re-use (drying kills Trichomonosis).
- Consider leaving bird baths empty until no deaths occur in your garden. Otherwise, be particularly vigilant to provide clean drinking water on a daily basis. Empty and dry the bird bath on a daily basis (drying kills Trichomonosis).
- Feeding stations encourage birds to congregate, sometimes in large densities, thereby increasing the potential for disease spread between individuals when outbreaks occur. If birds in your garden are sick or dying, consider significantly reducing the amount you feed or stop feeding for a period. However, it is not recommended to stop providing food and water unless you feel confident that naturally occurring alternatives are available near your garden. If you are not sure, then clean up regularly and keep on feeding – many birds could rely on the food and water that you provide and removal of these resources might cause 'your' birds to find less sanitary gardens.
- Brushes and cleaning equipment for bird feeders, tables and baths should be disinfected and kept outside. Ensure you wear rubber gloves when cleaning feeders and thoroughly wash hands and forearms afterwards with soap and water. Avoid handling sick or dead birds directly.

If you wish to report finding dead garden birds, or signs of diseases in garden birds, please call the Garden Bird Initiative on 020 7449 6685.

Margaret Iles (Caerphilly County Borough Council)



SEWBRc is now on Facebook.

Join us at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/South-East-Wales-Biodiversity-Records-Centre/103544599683127?ref=ts>

or follow the link from our website at <http://www.sewbrec.org.uk/>

Post messages, wildlife photos, species identification questions, join in with discussions, and debate with other Facebook members. Watch out for our 'record of the week' - it might be yours!

A big thank you to all those who have contributed to this newsletter! But, thinking ahead to the next issue, we want more articles from Recorders – it could be just a list of species you have recently recorded, or an update of where you have been surveying in the last year. This is an opportunity to plug your favourite recording location, to raise awareness of the species that you record, and to communicate to a wide range of individuals about your hard work!

Please forward any comments, articles, events, species sightings etc to SEWBRc.

Gwent-Glamorgan Recorders' Newsletter

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