



NEWSLETTER

Spring 2004

* EVENTS COMING UP IN 2004 *

PLEASE NOTE: THERE ARE AMENDMENTS
TO THE EVENTS CARDS POSTED WITH WINTER 2003 NEWS

✧ Monday 19th April

"**The Countryside on Your Doorstep**" – a **talk** all about the **Local Nature Reserve sites** around Mansfield, by the Natural Connections Officer for Mansfield. Find out what's going on and the wildlife you might see on the reserves. Sites include The Hermitage, Quarry Lane, Maun Valley Park, The Carrs, Ravensdale and Spa Ponds.

✧ Monday 17th May

Come along on a **guided walk** around one of the **Local Nature Reserves** featured in April's talk. We will hopefully show you many interesting, and some unusual, species of flora and fauna around one of Mansfield's hidden treasures. Location to be announced at the April talk.

✧ Monday 14th June

A **guided walk** around the **Hills & Holes** in Warsop. Come and explore this lovely **SSSI site** and learn all about it from walk leader Carol Pritchard.

✧ Monday 12th July











Join us on a **guided walk** around **Coxmoor Golf Club**, led by Craig Howatt. Come and explore a lovely and unexpected wildlife oasis.

✧ Monday 9th August

We are holding a **BBQ and Bat & Moth Watch** at Portland Park, in Kirkby. Come along and join us for family fun and food - and hopefully we'll spot some flying furrries!

The talks are held at **Abbey Gates Primary School, Ravenshead**, at 7.30pm. For the walks, you can either meet at Abbey Gates School car park at 7.00pm, or at the start of the walk at 7.30pm prompt. Non-members are welcome!

10 TIPS FOR WILDLIFE GARDENING by Beth Gardner

-  1) Create a compost heap and recycle peelings and garden clippings. Not only does this give you free compost, it also provides a great habitat for frogs, toads and hedgehogs.
-  2) Stop using slug pellets and other chemicals. Pesticides may kill beneficial insects, such as bees and ladybirds, as well as pests. They can also affect birds, hedgehogs and other animals.
-  3) Install bird and bat boxes. Seek advice on the best spots to locate them.
-  4) Create a garden pond designed with wildlife in mind. Don't forget sloping sides to allow easy access.
-  5) Plant native British plants and trees that naturally occur in your area. These will encourage more wildlife into your garden.
-  6) Do not use peat-based compost. Peat bogs are among our most threatened habitats, and they provide homes for many rare and endangered species.
-  7) Grow native climbing plants up walls and fences to provide nesting sites for birds.
-  8) Feed your garden wildlife. The bigger the variety of food, the greater the number of species. Apples and pears attract blackbirds and thrushes, peanuts attract tits and woodpeckers, and crumbled cheese under bushes attracts shyer birds such as wrens.
-  9) Install a water butt in your garden and use the collected rainwater on your plants. In general, use water wisely. Many wetland habitats are drying out because too much water is extracted for domestic use.
-  10) Be nice to nettles! Or even plant a nettle patch, as they support over 40 different species including the Peacock butterfly.

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### IN MEMORY OF TONY BUCK

Tony did sterling work as Chair and committee member of the Mansfield & Ashfield Local Group. He had a particular interest in new members and was active in local surveys – Debdale Lane and Snake Hill specifically.

Tony's Open Garden days and plant fairs were a great pleasure and many of our gardens grow happy memories of that time. The excellent teas available on those open days are famed throughout the trust.

Tony was generous in many ways in his support of the Trust and is remembered kindly by us all.  
**JP**

## HAVE A GO AT OUR WILDLIFE QUIZ! compiled by Beth Gardner

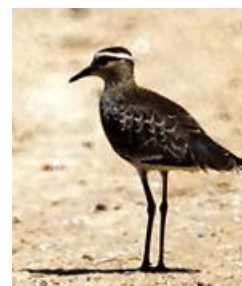
If you came along to our Christmas event last year you should have an advantage at this point, as this quiz is an extract of the one we ran whilst wreath-making and drinking mulled wine! For everyone else, here's a chance to test your wildlife general knowledge! (Answers on back page).

- 1 What colour are the eyes of a male shoveller?
- 2 Which is most numerous in Britain - the fox or the badger?
- 3 What colour is the northern marsh orchid?
- 4 How many species of bat are there in Britain?
- 5 Which of the 3 common species of buttercup has reflex sepals?  
A - Creeping buttercup; or B - Meadow buttercup; or C - Bulbous buttercup
- 6 What colour are cinnabar moth caterpillars?
- 7 Why are white-clawed crayfish on the decline in Nottinghamshire?
- 8 What colour is the male brimstone butterfly?
- 9 How can you tell the difference between frogspawn and toadspawn?
- 10 What colour are holly flowers?
- 11 Which bird's Latin name sounds like it should be living in a cave?
- 12 Whose method can be used to age a hedgerow, and how does it work?
- 13 What do the following plants have in common: Rowan, Silverweed, Burnet rose and Lady's mantle?
- 14 The nymphs of which bug live in cuckoo spit?
- 15 What name refers to both a species of elongated fish and an ericaceous plant once common in Nottinghamshire?
- 16 Which crepuscular bird has also been called "goat sucker", reflecting the notion that the birds would suck the udders of goats to get to the milk?
- 17 Which garden bird is known as "Bob" in Nottinghamshire?

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"THE ART OF BIRD MISIDENTIFICATION" - a review by Jeune Price

We'd been looking forward to starting the 2004 events by listening to Tim Melling's talk in January on the misidentification of birds. Tim, from the RSPB, was an excellent speaker – very funny and informative, with great slides, and all at a rattling pace that left us breathless. He shared with us a lifetime's worth of anecdotes about people getting it wrong when identifying birds –and how to get it right! Bird watching hints and guidelines were interspersed with bizarre stories involving kingfishers, wall creepers, pipits and, memorably, a "sociable plover" that turned out to be a friendly starling!



Sociable Plover by Ido Tsurim

Tim told us how reports of rare bird sightings can start a game of Chinese Whispers; passing down phone lines, by word of mouth or through the web at remarkable speed, with amazingly different identities by the end! Though none so rare as the baby bird heard intermittently cheeping in someone's loft, in a low but plaintive cry for help. After calling out the RSPB it turned out to be the low battery alert on their smoke alarm!

My favourite story? An enquiry came in – “There's a bird with a red face eating off our bird table”. Easy peasy, a goldfinch of course. “Oh no, we know the goldfinch. When I said eating off the bird table, that's just what it's doing – standing *on* the ground and eating *off* the table - it's six feet tall!” It turned out to be an exotic escapee crane. With a red face. Not the only one.



WILDLIFE QUIZ ANSWERS – are you a clever creature or a bird brain? Find out below!

- 1 Yellow - both males and female shovellers have yellow eyes.
- 2 Badger – around 250,000. There are only around 230 000 foxes, which have declined since the 1980s, mainly due to mange.
- 3 Deep purple. Northern marsh orchids were spotted last year on the local groups' walk at Brierley Forest Park, where it was at the very southern edge of its range.
- 4 15 species, or 16 if you concur there are 2 species of pipistrelle. The mouse-eared bat was considered to be extinct, but then a male was recently found in the south of England.
- 5 C – Bulbous buttercup.
- 6 Yellowy orange and black.
- 7 They are declining due to a disease contracted from the non-native American crayfish. These originally escaped from crayfish farms and now threaten the survival of our native white-clawed crayfish.
- 8 Yellow. The male brimstone is the reason butterflies got their name – they are literally the colour of butter!
- 9 Frogspawn is laid in clumps, whereas toadspawn is laid in strings.
- 10 White – though only the female plant bears flowers.
- 11 Wren - *Troglodytes troglodytes*.
- 12 Hooper. Age = (number of woody species in 30 yard stretch x 100) + 30.
- 13 They are all members of the rose family.
- 14 Froghopper.
- 15 Ling.
- 16 Nightjar.
- 17 Robin. There is lots of folklore surrounding the robin, and it is considered bad luck to keep one in a cage.

Your local group contacts:

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