

24-4-13 Ashlawn update

At last the spring seems to have got under way with sunny weather and the cold wilds abating. Some lovely patches of flowers in the cutting with the yellow Dandelion like Coltsfoot in damp spots, Marsh Marigold in the pools, Violets near woodland edge, Primrose garden escapees, and Forget-me-not, plus Blackthorn opening up.

Butterfly and insect news: - The nectar from these plants revive the growing number of butterflies on the wing with Brimstone, Peacock, Comma being in good numbers. There are just one or two Small Tortoiseshell – once so common but really struggling over the last few years and new on the wing Orange-tip, Green Veined and Small Whites.

We expect to see Speckled Wood in the shady areas in the next few days and silvery under-sided Holly Blue searching for suitable Holly buds on which to lay eggs amongst the bushes. This species may be also found around your garden. See Butterfly Conservations local website for more information on latest sightings.

<http://www.warwickshire-butterflies.org.uk/>

Also keep a sharp lookout for the **Bee-fly**, a bee mimic that can hover before it settles to nectar and has a long, slender tongue called a proboscis, which looks frightening to some. They are harmless to humans.

<http://www.nhm.ac.uk/about-us/news/2011/april/bee-mimic-flies-in-to-a-garden-near-you96805.html>

Bird news: -

A particularly exciting sighting on 8th April by Mrs Allen was a Water Rail, not seen on the reserve for many years.

Steve Batt carried out an early morning bird survey on 4th April and 20th, the highlights being Nuthatch, Skylark, Goldcrests, & Siskin.

The Heron has been paying more visits recently, apparently feeding on frogs, and one or two Mallard and Moorhen are also around the wet areas.

The summer migrants are at last starting to arrive, with good numbers of warblers including Blackcap, Whitethroat, Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler and a sole Garden Warbler

Management News: -

We are very pleased with the newly restored Pytchley Marsh which is already attracting more birds, and great to see the Kingfisher there regularly.

We plan a few more sessions for tidying areas of the cutting but the immediate big task is to further improve the new Healthy Living Woodland Walk south of the old station.

See our workparties listed on this site for latest sessions here. These will include visits from our wildlife trusts Nature –Force teams on 1st and 8th May.

We are all volunteers so would be pleased to see you and chat if you are passing or even more pleased if you would like to join us to help.

Phil Parr, (Rugby Group Conservation Officer).