

Reserves News August 2011

Forthcoming events

Walk with us

Wednesday 7th September Magdalen Hill Down Wednesday Wander. Meet at 10.30am in gravel car park opposite the cemetery on Alresford Rd B3404, Winchester (SU 512 295), for sat nav SO21 1HE Come along to enjoy seasonal wildlife and a leisurely walk with friendly company. Leaders: Jayne Chapman and Jenny Mallett

Work Parties

No dates are fixed yet but if you are interested in helping then please contact Jayne to go on the work party email list. The help that members and volunteers give to the reserves is absolutely vital in making and keeping them the wonderful places they are.

New Reserve Signs



With the aid of 70% funding from Natural England new reserve signs have gone in at each end of Magdalen Hill Down – the one at the eastern end is illustrated here – and at Yew Hill.

Reserve Visits

It was a busy month for visits by groups which at MHD included Hamble U3a, a wildlife group from Romsey, Winnall Active Kids holiday play scheme, John Negus and friends and Kempshott Conservation Group. There were a couple of well attended public walks at MHD too. As ever we are grateful to those of you who encourage both individuals to join in the public walks and tell groups of the special visits we are happy to do for them. All of our walks are free and they raise grant income for BC. Bookings are being taken now for 2012. Contact jayne.t.chapman@hotmail.com. We would especially welcome some bookings for Bentley Station Meadow.



Six-belted Clearwings

On 10th August Tim Norriss used pheromones to attract this moth which breeds on Bird's-foot Trefoil, thus having the potential to be very numerous on the reserve. At an earlier date – 3rd July – 20+ had quickly come to the lure. It was good that even much later about 4 turned up on the several occasions the pheromone was used.

This picture is off <http://www.fungalpunknature.co.uk> and reads... “However this moth is easily identified with its six yellow bands around the black abdomen and the clear wings with orange scales on the tip and central bar. Remember though that the female has only 5 yellow bands on her abdomen”. Lynn writes “I am not sure I agree with their comment that the moth is easily identified. It is very fast flying even when around the lure.”

Other moth news



Nemophora metallica was seen on 12th August which seems to be a late date for the species. Patrick had seen many many of these in July. It is described on www.hantsmoths.org.uk

“In Hampshire, very local on the remaining downland in both vice-counties, most notably between Porton Down and Leckford. Not recorded from the Isle of Wight to date. Wingspan 15-20mm. Larva feeds on seeds of Field Scabious and Small Scabious, subsequently feeding in the fallen leaves, living within a movable case.” The picture is taken from http://www.cambs-essex-butterflies.org.uk/photos_Jun2011.php. So just to say most BC

branches have web sites just bursting with information and photos!

How we manage the reserves

Some of you may be unaware of our system for achieving satisfactory management of the reserves. Each reserve has a management group of about 6 of us, comprising a core group of Jenny Mallett, Lynn (in future Jayne) Patrick, Colin Beyer. At BSM Sue Clark joins us, at MHD & Yew Hill Colin Matthews, at MHD Andy Barker and at Yew Hill Ivan Arnold.

We have two meetings a year at MHD and on eat YH & BSM. We walk around looking at the work that has been done & what is to be done. We identify management problems & try to find solutions. This can be quite hard when it comes to dealing with difficult plants like Wild Clematis, Wild Parsnip and bramble growing through the grassland. We constantly consider improvements to make our reserves better habitat for butterflies.

The deliberations at our meetings are then converted into work plans to guide both the work that Patrick & other contractors do and work parties, other volunteers and of course the Reserves Officer. The strength of this system is that it makes the best use of the knowledge that individuals have accrued over the years & is a key factor in ensuring our reserves are the splendid places that they are.

And a quick update from me (Jayne Chapman) – Lynn and I saw a Hornet robberfly *Asilus crabroniformis* on the path at Yew Hill on 26th August, and would kindly ask you to report any sightings at Yew Hill or MHD. It is on the wing from late June to late October. The Hornet robberfly is categorised as Nationally Notable (Scarce) and is listed on the priority list for UK BAP. www.nhm.ac.uk. At one inch long it is arguably the largest fly in the UK and relies on cattle dung to support its larval stage. www.buglife.org.uk



Hornet robberfly *Asilus crabroniformis*



There was an abundance of glorious pink Sainfoin (*Onobrychis*) at MHD this year. (Photo taken on 28th May). Not only is it attractive to butterflies and a wide range of other insects, it is also a high-protein forage legume and was once grown as a fodder crop, so the cattle benefit too.