

Wildlife Report for Turnpike Fields Working Group Meeting - Wednesday 8th June 2022

The Fields have continued to reveal the annual cycle of wildlife life.

The winter did not see such a prolonged time of wet area and the Spring with its drier and colder weather held back much of the new growth. This has meant that the Grasslands have not grown so quickly this year and some of the prolific wild flowers have not shown so early with a consequence of less insects. With the late Spring and early summer time this is now beginning to catch up.

Survey Report

Surveying began again in April. This year we have an enhanced team of seven AWEG members undertaking the survey. This has enabled a more defined survey to take place with individuals focussing on different types of wildlife and different habitats. As well as using individual knowledge and expertise, the facility of a WhatsApp Group has assisted interchange of knowledge and ideas. Our Spring sightings have totalled 76 species of wild plant, 35 species of insect and 20 species of bird. By also plotting where these were seen we are being able to build up a picture of density and spread. Each year different species seem to flourish. This year has seen extensive numbers of Lesser Celandine, Hedge Garlic, and Dandelions.

Around our ponds life is beginning to emerge. Some pond dipping has revealed a pleasing number of dragonfly and damselfly nymphs. Whilst already, one species of dragonfly and four species of damselfly have been sighted. The pond dipping also revealed among other creatures, Great Diving beetles, water spiders, snails, water boatmen and caddisfly larva.

Tree Report

Most of the saplings planted in the Autumn have survived the winter. One or two had animal damage. All the trees have been given new guards to overcome this problem. All the trees planted in the hedgerow are also thriving. Some of the trees in the original planting last May have also suffered some damage. We will wait until the Autumn to replace these.

Community Connection

Recently an evening "Safari" was undertaken with the local Beaver Scouts. A very energetic hour included a wildflower hunt, pond dipping, insect find, and "Know your Oaks" scamper. All undertaken at 100 miles an hour!. Maybe here was one of our future leading botanists or entomologist among them. Further safaris are being planned during the summer.

The provision of the wildlife noticeboard mentioned in a previous meeting would be much welcomed.