

Turnpike Fields Wildlife Report for 2022

Review

Once again the Fields have proved to be a place of great interest and natural diversity. The survey results this year have been assisted by having an enhanced team of surveyors. This has meant that not just more eyes looking and recording but a higher level of identification using the experience and skill of individual surveyors. From the accompanying tables, it will be noted that this is particularly noticeable in the increase in species of insects and birds recorded this year. A new area of species has also been added which is that of Fungi. I will note more about that later.

Plants

The range of wild plant has been comparable to previous years. There have been some species which have not been recorded this year which may be due to a very short flowering season due to the weather. It was noticeable that a number of plants flowered early and were quickly over, especially the summer flowering plants. We were, however, able to add a number of new species to our list. Most notable of these was the Spotted Orchid. This signature species, shows the changing nature of the Fields. The loss of the improved nature of the fields should reveal a nature change increasing the range of species able to flourish. Another indicator of this change has been the proliferation of Common Ragwort in the upper fields (T1). However, some of this profusion could also have been the result of the dry conditions which gave this plant with deeper roots considerable advantage over other plants.

Insects

Our records show a considerably increased number of insects recorded. This has been achieved with the help of an experienced entomological presence on the team who have added considerably to our surveying skills. The increased increase in sightings does not however show the presence of greater numbers of insects. Indeed this year has seen a rather poor year for the number of bees and butterflies. This may be the result of the knock on effect of the dry weather reducing the food sources. Among the newly recorded insects was the Hoverfly, *Xylcita Segnis*. This is a nationally scarce species, so it is good that it has found a home on the Fields.

Birds

Similarly our bird numbers have increased thanks to a team member who has focussed primarily on bird observation. Again it is probable that the new species recorded were already present but we now have clearer awareness of what is present although most live quite hidden lives in the hedgerows. It does reveal that we have a healthy number of summer visitors although most would be considered common birds. The decline in the numbers over the years means that they are less often seen.

Fungi

As already mentioned this year a new section has been added to our records. The presence of the fruit of fungi has been observed in the Autumn time. This year an attempt has been made to record the types present. We have been helped by a very fruitful year and fifteen species have been identified. There are several more that await a positive identification. What is observed is the above ground fruiting body which belies the beneath ground mycelia fungal network. Interestingly the fruit have been so prolific that these networks have become more visible with the lines of fruiting bodies. The full importance of the fungal presence is now being appreciated through advancing technological techniques. The place of the fungal networks in symbiotic relationship with trees and plants and their place in providing a healthy soil has been certified through research using equipment capable of detecting and recording micro-organisms. The study of these organisms, which is now possible, is probably the next new big advance in ecological knowledge, which we will see recognised more openly. So watch this space. Next year it is intended to make a fuller record of the fungi we have present in the Fields. This will go alongside related genera of Algae and Lichen.

Reflecting Forward

After three years of public use of the fields, it is worthwhile to reflect on the appropriate ecological approach for the future. The Covid Lockdown situation presented a situation where the natural ecology was allowed to follow its own course. This is now generally thought to represent a valid way of “hands off” management. The term commonly used for this is “Rewilding”, although this can be applied to various management strategies. In applying it to the Fields, it is clear that some active management is required as the area is necessary for public use. It is clear that the grassland area of T1, experienced in 2020, which many people enjoyed so much will not return because of the use of the area. Indeed the high volume use of the fields means that more active

management is required, i.e. to pathways. Accessibility of the fields means that the benefits of a truly wild area cannot be sustained. As a Community Amenity Area it is fulfilling its purpose.

From an ecological point of view the best that can be attained is enabling that quality to be maintained as far as possible. The natural landscape and the proximity to natural life still provides considerable benefits to a sense of well-being for those who use the Fields. Yet, the natural change of the Fields from pasture land, which would take, unhindered, 10 years, will not take place and I suspect that there will be pressure to “tame” those areas which are naturally wild, despite their ecological value.

The Working Group will need to decide whether that wild side should be left to flourish in its own way or our human order placed on it, There are clearly those in the community who feel that this is what is appropriate. Such a process will diminish the immense variety of species that we have present on the Fields, as conservation gives way to human convenience and convention. We will continue to struggle with this, as does the rest of the planet, but hopeful we in our small part may find as balanced pathway as possible.

As research has shown, the natural world has taken a hammering both in terms of number of species lost and the percentage of each species left. To arrest this maybe we can give the needs of a healthy and thriving ecosystem more of a weighting over human intentions., at least in parts of the Fields. This may also prove to be of human benefit as well. New ways to raise awareness, will help with an understanding of the balance we seek to achieve.

Adrian Leighton

January 2023

Recorded Sightings of Plants, Grasses and Fungi

Species	June2019	2020	2021	2022
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Alkanet Evergreen				*
Alkanet Green		*	*	*
Angelica Wild	*	*		*
Aven Wood (Herb Bennet)			* T3	*
Balsam Himalyan	*	*	*	*
Bedstraw Common		*	*	*
Bedstraw Marsh	*	*	*	*
Bistort		*	*	*
Bittercress Hairy				*
Bittercress Large		*		
Bittercress Wavy			* TM	*
Bittersweet/ Woody Nightshade	*	*		
Bluebells English		*	*	*
Bluebells Hybrid		*	*	*
Bluebells Spanish		*	*	*
Borage				*
Brambles (in flower)		*	*	*
Brome Soft				*
Brooklime				*
Burdock Greater				*
Burdock Lesser		*	*	*
Butterbur		*		*
Buttercup Bulbous		*	*	*
Buttercup Creeping	*	*	*	*
Buttercup Meadow	*	*	*	*
Campion Red	*	*	*	*
Campion White			* TiH	*
Catsear Common	*	*	*	*
Celandine Greater		*	*	*
Celandine Lesser		*	*	*
Cinquefoil Creeping		*	*	*
Chickweed Common		*	*	*

Cleavers	*	*	*	*
Clover Red		*	*	*
Clover White	*	*	*	*
Cocksfoot		*	*	*
Columbine		*		
Comfrey Common		*	*	*
Coltsfoot	*	*		*
Cow Parsley		*	*	*
Crocus			* T1	*
Crocsmia (Montbretia)		*	*	*
Crowfoot Common Water		*		
Cuckooflower (Lady's Smock)		*	*	*
Daffodil			* TM	*
Daisy		*	*	*
Daisy Oxeye		*	*	*
Dame's Violet		*	*	*
Dandelion Common	*	*	*	*
Dock Broad-leaved	*	*	*	*
Dock Curled	*	*	*	*
Dog's Mercury			* T1H	*
Elder Ground				*
Eyebright Common		*	*	*
Figwort	*			
Forget-me-not		*	*	*
Garlic Mustard (jack-in-the hedge)		*	*	*
Gorse		*	*	*
Hawkweed		*	*	
Herb Robert		*	*	*
Hogweed	*	*	*	*
Honesty		*		
Horehound Black		*		
Horsetail	*	*	*	*

Iris Yellow Flag	*	*	*	*
Ivy Ground		*	*	*
Kingcup		*	*	*
Knapweed Greater				*
Loosestrife Purple		*	*	*
Lords-and-Ladies		*	*	*
Marigold Marsh	*	*	*	*
Mayweed		*		*
Meadowsweet	*	*		*
Mousebit		*	*	
Mouseear Common	*	*	*	*
Mullien Greater		*	*	*
Nettle Common	*	*	*	*
Nettle Red Dead		*	*	*
Nettle White Dead		*	*	*
Nipplewort		*	*	*
Orchid Common Spotted				*
Pansy		*	*	*
Pignut		*	*	*
Pimpernel Scarlet		*		
Plantain Broad-leaved	*			
Plantain Common	*	*	*	*
Plantain Greater		*	*	*
Plantain Ribwort				*
Poppy	*		*	*
Primrose Evening		*	*	*
Ragwort Common		*	*	*
Ramson (Wild Garlic)	*	*	*	*
Raspberry Wild				*
Redshank	*			
Reed Mace		*	*	*
Rocket yellow				*

Rose Dog		*	*	*
Rush Bull		*	*	*
Rush Hard		*	*	*
Rush Jointed	*			*
Rush Soft	*	*	*	*
St John's-wort	*	*	*	*
Saxifrage opposite-leaved golden			*	*
Sedge Lesser Pond (?)	*	*		
Sedge Pendulous		*	*	*
Sedge Yellow		*	*	*
Snowdrop			*	*
Sorrel Common		*	*	*
Spearwort Greater			*	
Speedwell Field		*	*	*
Speedwell Germander		*	*	*
Speedwell Slender		*		
Speedwell Thyme leaved				*
Teasel	*	*	*	*
Thistle Creeping	*	*	*	*
Thistle Marsh	*	*	*	*
Thistle Rough		*	*	*
Thistle Spear	*	*	*	*
Thistle Sow Prickly	*	*	*	*
Thistle Sow Smooth		*	*	*
Trefoil Greater Birdsfoot	*	*	*	*
Trefoil Common Birdsfoot	*	*	*	*
Violet - Purple			* TM	*
Vetch Bush		*	*	*
Vetchling Meadow		*		
Willowherb Greater Rosebay	*	*	*	*
Willowherb Lesser Rosebay		*	*	*
Willowherb Hoary		*		*

Woundwort	*			*
(119)			(+7)	(+12)
Grasses				
Bent Common	*	*	*	*
Bent Creeping	*			*
Cocksfoot		*	*	*
Crested Dog's-tail		*	*	*
Fescue Red	*	*	*	*
Fescue Meadow		*	*	*
Field Woodrush		*	*	*
Foxtail Meadow	*	*	*	*
Grass Reed Canary	*		*	*
Grass Rough Meadow	*		*	
Grass Sweet Vernal	*		*	*
Oat Grass False	*	*	*	*
Rye Grass Perennial	*	*	*	*
Timothy	*	*	*	*
Yorkshire Fog	*	*	*	*
(15)				
Fungi				
Horseshoe Parachute (Marasmiaceae)				*
Tubariceae				*
Shaggy Inkcap (Copinaceae)				*
Bonnet Mushroom				*
Beef Steak Mushroom (Crusts Fistulinaceae)				*
False Truffle (Hyumenogastraceae)				*
Yellow Fieldcap (Bolbit)				*
Witches Butter				*
Purple Jellydisc				*

Oyster Mushroom				*
Yellowleg Bonnet				*
Spring Fieldcap				*
Shaggy Parasol				*
Lilac Bonnet				*
Milking Bonnet				*
(15)				

Recorded Sightings of Insects, Birds and Animals

Species	June2019	2020	2021	2022
INSECTS				
Bee Buff-tailed Bumblebee		*	*	*
Bee White-tailed Bumblebee		*	*	*
Bee Red-tailed Bumblebee		*		
Bee Common Carder		*		*
Bee Honey		*	*	*
Beetle Alder Leaf		*	*	*
Beetle Blood-sucker (Soldier)			*	*
Beetle Frog hopper			*	
Beetle Leafhopper			*	
Beetle Green Dock				*
Beetle Longhorn		*	*	
Beetle Oedemera Nobius				*
Beetle Rove		*	*	
Beetle Soldier				*
Beetle Swollen Thighed				*
Butterfly Comma		*	*	*
Butterfly Common Blue		*	*	*
Butterfly Small Copper			*	
Butterfly Fritillary		*		
Butterfly Gatekeeper		*	*	*
Butterfly Green-veined White		*	*	*

Butterfly Honet Blue				*
Butterfly Large White		*	*	*
Butterfly Small White		*	*	*
Butterfly Speckled Wood		*	*	*
Butterfly Meadow Brown		*	*	*
Butterfly Orange Tip		*	*	*
Butterfly Peacock		*	*	*
Butterfly Red Admiral				*
Butterfly Ringlet		*	*	*
Butterfly Large Skipper		*	*	
Butterfly Small Skipper		*		
Butterfly Small Tortoiseshell		*	*	*
Cranefly (Tip[ula Melanocerus)				*
Cricket Great Green		*		
Cricket Oak Bush		*	*	*
Grasshopper Common Field		*		*
Grasshopper Meadow		*		
Damselfly Azure				*
Damselfly Banded Agrion			*	*
Damselfly Blue Tailed		*	*	*
Damselfly Common Blue		*	*	
Damselfly Large Red		*	*	
Dragonfly Broad Bodied Chaser		*	*	*
Dragonfly Emperor		*	*	
Dragonfly - libellula depressa			*	
Dragonfly - Black-tailed Skimmer			*	
Drone Fly (Eristalis Pertinax)				*
Fly Dung				*
Fly Scorpion (Panorpa Communus)				*
Fly St Marks				*
Hover-Fly Dronefly		*	*	
Hover-fly Eristalis				*

Hover-fly Helophilus pendulus			*	
Hover-fly Pertinax				*
Hover fly Marmalade (Episyrphus Balteatus)				*
Hover fly Sphaerophoria Scripta				*
Hoverfly Thick legged (Syrirta Pipiens)				*
Hover fly (Xylcita Segnis) <i>nationally scarce</i>				*
Hover fly Xanthandrus Aruensis				*
Ladtbird Harequin				*
Ladybird 22-spot			*	
Ladybird 2-spot			*	*
Ladybird 7-spot				*
Leatherbug Dock				*
Mayfly				*
Micro Fly			*	
Moth Brown Plume				*
Moth Cinnabar		*	*	
Moth Cinnabar Caterpillars		*		
Moth Common Rustic			*	
Moth Garden Carpet			*	*
Moth Grass (Agriphilia Tristella)				*
Moth Heart-and-Dart		*		
Moth Nettle Tap				*
Moth Scalloped Oak		*	*	
Moth Silver Ground Carpet				*
Moth Silver Y		*		
Moth Strawdot				*
Moth Yellowtail (caterpillar)				*
Pond Skater		*	*	*
Shield Bug Green				*
Shield Bug Halothorn				*

Spider Araneus Dladematus				*
Spider Plsaura Mirabilis				*
Spider Wolf				*
Wasp Solitary				*
Water Beetle		*	*	*
Weevil (Utophllous Tessulatus)				*
			42	89
BIRDS				
Blackbird		*	*	*
Blackcap				*
Blue Tit			*	*
Bullfinch				*
Buzzard		*	*	*
Chaffinch				*
Chiffchaff				*
Coal Tit				*
Cormorant				*
Crow		*	*	*
Fieldfare				*
Goldfinch			*	*
Great Tit				*
House Martin				*
Jackdaw			*	*
Kingfisher		*	*	
Long Tailed Tit				*
Magpie		*	*	*
Mallard				*
Nuthatch			*	*
Pheasant				*
Raven				*
Redwing				*

Robin			*	*
Starling			*	*
Thrush Song				*
Wagtail Grey		*	*	*
Wagtail Pied		*	*	
Woodpecker Great Spotted				*
Wood Pigeon			*	*
Wren		*	*	*
			15	31
ANIMALS & REPTILES				
Common Frog		*	*	*
Frog spawn			*	*
Fox (smell)		*		*
Otter			*	
Rabbit		*	*	*
Vole Bank			*	
Vole Field		*		
Vole Water			*	
Squirrel Grey			*	*