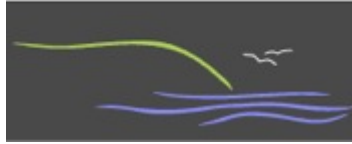


Scarborough Field Naturalists



AUGUST 2020 NEWSLETTER

Hello everyone

I hope you are enjoying our newsletters and they are at least keeping you in touch with what everyone is doing. As you will see we have been running a few trips locally and have three more lined up: -

August 8th – Filey Brigg for birds – all day

August 23rd – Bogle Hole for rock pool flora and fauna – all day

September 15th – Beavers at Keldy – evening (12 limit for site)

As we have done to date, you will need to book a place on these. Details of the trip regarding meeting point etc will be sent to interested parties. At present we are restricted to groups of 6 but this may change and any arrangements we make will be in line with current Covid restrictions. Contact me if you are interested in attending any of these.

We are also running limited bat surveys and data on these is being sent to our 'regular' bat enthusiasts but if you fancy an evening bat detecting please let me know and we can sort out the necessary arrangements.

As a result of a ballot of members on email we have decided to go ahead with our autumn indoor programme but moving the venue to a larger room at the Scarborough Rugby Club where we will be able to achieve 2m social distancing and also meet the current Covid regulations. Meetings will start at 7.30 as usual. We will send out further information later.

Nick Gibbons

Unusual Common spotted orchid



"This is a form of Common Spotted Orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsia* known as 'rhodochila' which is growing on the undercliffs in Jackson's Bay. This is a widespread but rare form which I have only seen before once, and even then, not this striking. This plant was particularly beautiful as the foliage was near normal green with just dark edges. The one I saw previously had near black leaves. As this is very unlikely to come 'true' from seed the smaller plant to the side is almost certainly the result of vegetative production.

The undercliffs at Jackson's bay are one of the best orchid sites I know of and always changing. All of last year's Bee Orchids have been lost to a landslip but a new patch of Fragrant Orchids has really peaked this year. This story of loss and creation of new early succession habitat must have been going on since the ice sheets left."



A stunning hoverfly

Found in my Scarborough garden today, *Callicera aurata* is a very unusual hoverfly with those white-tipped antennae. This species has a limited, mostly southern distribution and the larvae require water-filled rot holes in which to develop in mature or dead trees, principally beech. It's rarely seen, but when it is, it's a stunner with the gold abdomen and semi-circle of pale hairs around the edge of the scutellum, and of course, those antennae! I spotted it sunning itself on a wall in my garden and took a couple of banker shots with my phone before running in to get my camera. Fortunately, it was still there when I returned to get some better photos.



Joan Childs

Scarborough swift group spreads its wings



With the current coronavirus situation bat volunteers are having to do all the voluntary visits for the Bat Conservation Trust by remote using Skype, Zoom etc. My latest 'callout' was from Chester-Le-Street, hardly my local patch. The brief looked like I was in for an unpleasant call as the owner was adamant that they wanted 'rid' of the bats and was going to block up the access. One 'bat' had been hanging on the wall under the soffits for the last two days and there was a lot of mess on the floor and window sill. The first call was pleasant enough but was by phone only and the elderly lady said she would get her grandson to come in the evening when we could do some video work where I could see what was going on. After several very amicable, and humorous, video calls that evening and the swapping of photographs of the house, the windowsill, and a bat dropping identification key, it was patently clear that the issue was bird related rather than bats. It looked to me as if I could see some swift wings rather than a bat.

A call to the RSPCA the following day by the concerned lady meant that the Fire brigade would be required and, to avoid this, the grandson climbed a ladder and, sure enough, there was an adult swift wedged in the gap. Sadly, it was dead. There appeared no sign of a nest. On the plus side I think I have talked her into having some swift boxes on the house that can be sited away from windows and doors to avoid the mess.

Whilst all this was going on, I had been in touch with the Durham Bird Group. There is no swift group in Durham, but they are going to call and are going to see if they can get a pair of swift boxes erected. Maybe it will even get them to start a swift group there.

Good examples of swift poo on the windowsill for those who were involved in the discussion of what it looks like on the WhatsApp page!



Nick Gibbons

Fen Bog Trip



Unfortunately, the morning was overcast and quite cool so there were no dragonflies about. There were a few butterflies though - small pearl bordered fritillaries, dark green fritillaries, a common blue and a couple of large skippers. marsh cinquefoil, cranberry, heath spotted orchid were photographed as were a white-tailed bumblebee with pollen sacs and at least two whinchat. A crane fly identified as *Pedicia rivosa* and a spectacular



horsefly, *Tabanus sudeticus*, were also spotted. At the Hole of Horcum there were plenty of dwarf cornel plants but none in flower although one looked as though it had had fruit on it. More dwarf cornel plants were seen at Whinney Nab but again no flowers. Also seen at the Hole of Horcum was a large emerald moth.

John Hume

Wykeham Lakes Trip



The visit to Wykeham Lakes was primarily to see the many species of dragonflies which the lakes hold. Unfortunately, this year they haven't been as plentiful as expected due to the poor weather that we have experienced over the summer months. However, there were plenty of brown hawkers and emperor dragonflies flying around, although none would perch decently for us. One black tailed skimmer did allow us a good look at it. Common darter and ruddy darters were emerging. There were good numbers of common blue damselflies and blue tailed damselflies (with good views of the colour variants of the female blue-tailed damselflies). And there was one red

eyed damselfly seen at a great distance. A female southern hawker was also seen by some members.





Butterflies seen included, small skippers, ringlets, meadow browns, peacock, red admiral, comma, and large and small whites.

John Hume

Ruston bat survey

After a successful exit survey at Dalby visitor centre, we tried a spot survey of Ruston village on 17th July. Again, the separation and controls worked well and we had a good selection of bats. We did not find the roosts that we were hoping for and the numbers of bats was down on what I would have expected from a village with so many old and pantile roofed properties. One property definitely does have a roost but this appears to have dispersed and only a single Whiskered/Brandt's bat was recorded as definitely associated with the site,



As expected, Common and Soprano pipistrelles were the most common species. With Tom's enthusiasm for trying to sort out the calls of the Myotis group we are fairly certain that we had Natterer's and some Brandt's/Whiskered species. The latter two are still very hard to separate. Only a single Noctule was a bit of a surprise.

Ginny was pleased to further advance the swift group's nest records with one nesting on her survey patch in the middle of the village.

Eliza and Ted unfortunately spent part of the evening helping a lady with dementia who had fallen in the road. The two of them did a great job of getting her sorted and back home safely. Well done to both of you.

The next bat survey is at Wykeham Lakes on August 14th. Contact Nick Gibbons if you are interested.

Nick Gibbons

We try to send this out as far as possible by e-mail so being on our e-mail register is very helpful. Contact Nick Gibbons (nicholas.gibbons123@btinternet.com) to get your details added. We also have an active Facebook page where many of our members keep everyone up to date on what is going on. Follow it on Scarborough Field Naturalists' Society