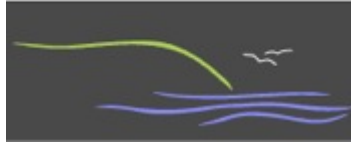


Scarborough Field Naturalists



SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

Hello everyone.

This may well be the last newsletter as we are now able to resume our indoor meetings. They will not be quite as cosy as at St Catherine's but will allow us to 'socially distance' and meet the current covid regulations.

Our first speaker is Cath Bashforth who will tell us about the beaver reintroduction programme at Cropton Forest. This will start at the usual time of 7.30pm at Scarborough Rugby Club.

IMPORTANT DETAILS RE INDOOR MEETINGS

Meetings will be held at Scarborough Rugby Club functions room upstairs starting at 7.30. Please follow the one-way signs for entry and hand sanitising.

Maximum number will be 30. You will need to book a place at nicholas.gibbons123@btinternet.com or on 07790 113025. Confirmation of the booking will be acknowledged. Details of any vacancies will be circulated two days before the meeting for anyone undecided.

Chairs will be positioned 2m apart and should not be moved except for direct family parties.

Face masks will need to be worn.

You must register your presence on arrival in the function room for track and trace and safety reasons. A form will be available.

Please aim to arrive between 7.15 and 7.30 to minimise personal contact. There is a café that is open should anyone arrive earlier and a bar downstairs for anyone who wishes to use it.

Many thanks to all those that have contributed items for this 'newsletter' venture without which this would have been almost impossible and certainly not as interesting.

Nick Gibbons

Mystery 'droppings'

I was sent some 'bat droppings' on Aug 18th to identify as the sender had found them all over his car one morning. The car was parked under a couple of large ash trees next to a hawthorn hedge, near to a river. They are clearly not bat droppings and, when crushed, contain silica fragments along with finer soil. They had clearly been 'pelletised' and were a number of clearly visible pellets that had been formed wet and then dried.





One thought was that they look like small mud pellets carried by House martins during nest building but the reply to this suggestion was *"Good point but I'm not sure why they would be dropping mud pellets this time of year? Also, where we park the car is overhung by two large ash trees and the swallows and swifts (we rarely get house martin) don't fly through that area. It's very much under cover!"*.

Has anyone any ideas what may have caused these mud pellets?
Any thoughts/ideas are welcome

Nick Gibbons

Filey Brigg trip – Aug 8th

A nice easy site for social distancing. A walk out along the base of the Brigg and on to the point as the tide went out gave us some sightings of a few waders. These were the usual suspects such as Ringed plover, Turnstone, Redshank and Dunlin plus a Whimbrel fly by. Auks and Gannets were plentiful but the terns were a little disappointing with a few Sandwich flying by and a single Common tern perched on the rocks close by. A group of 4 Eiders and 8 Common scoter flew through close enough to get a good view of them.



A climb up the steps on to the top and the botanists came to the fore exploring a variety of orchids growing on the north side of the Brigg. Binoculars were insufficient to sort them out but they were just accessible to Rob who scrambled down to have a close look. They appeared to be a hybrid causing some head scratching and no definitive identification on the spot. Passing the pond at the west end of the Brigg we had good views of a female Emperor dragonfly ovipositing on the vegetation.

A quick dip into Filey dams. Fairly quiet but did add a Black-tailed godwit to the day's lists.

Nick Gibbons

Boggle Hole Trip 23rd August

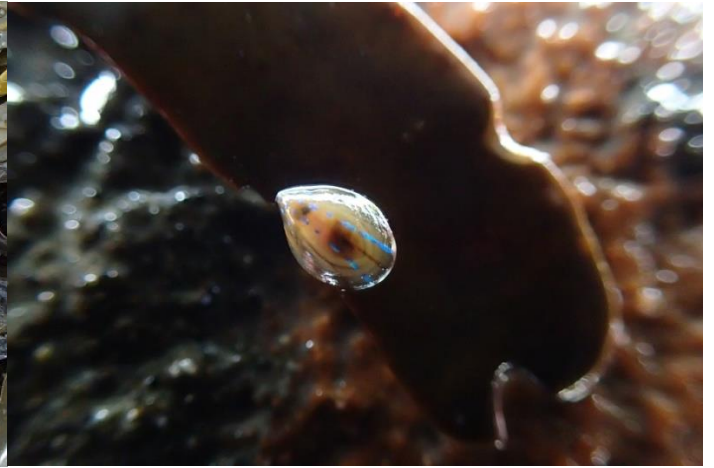
An interesting day was spent at Boggle Hole, Robin Hoods Bay on the 23rd August Without an expert on hand, it was very much a case of wracking the brains to try and identify at least a handful of species. Top of the list were the variety of crabs found especially the 'evil eyed' velvet swimming crab. Also found were edible crabs, shore crabs and broad-clawed porcelain crabs. A brittlestar starfish, beadlet anemones, 5 bearded rockling, butterfly, chitons, squat lobster and, everyone's favourite, the blue-rayed limpet, butterfly, lion's mane jellyfish were also discovered.

John Hume

Velvet crab



Blue-rayed limpet



Broad-clawed porcelain crab



Squat lobster



Brittle star



Lion's mane jellyfish



Wykeham bat survey

With the help of some automated bat recorders (red stars) we managed to cover 11 points across the Wykeham Lakes site, our biggest number of points covered to date.

Everyone had a lot of bat activity and some of the people using Duet detectors with headphones must be almost deaf, with 3 or more bats present at the same time in many instances. I am well behind with the analysis with this survey as the Keldy project, and the National Bat Monitoring Waterway surveys all peak in August. So far, we have identified Common and Soprano pipistrelle, various Myotis, including Natterer's and Daubenton's, Noctule and Brown long-eared species. Daubenton's bat was recorded at all the sites that were adjacent to the lakes and at one point 219 passes were recorded in the 13/4hr period, virtually all in the last hour. One interesting point was the late appearance of bats around the main lakes, some 20-30 minutes after we expected. This may indicate that the bats are coming some distance to what is clearly a major foraging site. The static recorders in the woods were much nearer the expected time.



Great effort and thanks to all those that turned out.

Nick Gibbons

Swift update

Despite starting during lockdown (or perhaps because of this), we have been able to make a great start in surveying the Scarborough area to find out where swifts are nesting at present. 14 people each took an area or areas to survey, covering most of Scarborough plus a number of local villages. Each surveyor walked their area a minimum of 3 times during May, June and July, generally on sunny evenings (yes, we did have a few), listening out for low-flying screaming parties and then watching them to see if any entered buildings, indicating the presence of nest sites. Locating nest sites is quite a challenge – so often a group will swoop low over roofs, disappearing from one street to another so fast that actually spotting an individual shooting up under roof tiles or eaves is very difficult. However, so far (not quite everyone has returned their results) a total of 38 actual nest sites have been located, plus several more areas that clearly have nesting swifts. The prize (well actually there isn't one) goes jointly to Charles Schofield and Dave Barry who each located 7 nest sites. Well done everyone, and a big thank you.



Ginny Leeming