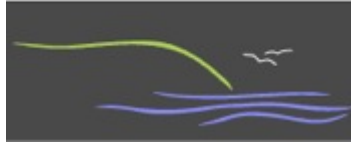


Scarborough Field Naturalists



OCTOBER NEWSLETTER

Hi

Sadly, with the changes in the regulations and the advice that accompanies it we will have to cancel indoor meetings until further notice.

We will try and maintain as much activity in the Society as possible with as many 'mini' outdoor meetings with a maximum of 6 people as we can. We will try and make sure everyone has a chance to get on as many of these as possible.

We already have a fungi foray planned this weekend for which 6 are already interested but will try and organise another in the near future. We will put dates etc out on email and web site as they are confirmed.

The seashore trips have been very well received and there are super low tides next on the 17th and 18th October. John Hume is coordinating these trips and already has a number of takers for the 17th but there are places available for the 18th. Please book directly with John for this.

There was a number of people who did not get to see the beaver site and a further visit will take place in a couple of weeks the site and then sit quietly for a period to see if they emerge at dusk.

The bird watching at Flamborough was well received and a bird watch trip would be another suitable option either as a sea watch or a 'migration' search.

If you have a particular interest that you wish us to try and organise please contact me and we will see what we can do.

Nick Gibbons

Flamborough for sea watch and migrants

By popular request a group attended a bird watch at Flamborough Head. We started early with a sea watch at 8 for those that were keen to try this, with the others joining us at 10.45 for a walk round the headland to look at more terrestrial habitats.



The sea watch was pretty quiet with just a small number of Manx shearwater, Arctic and Great skuas drifting through. Sea ducks were limited to a group of 4 Eiders and a scattering of Common scoters all moving northwards.

Meeting the others at the lighthouse we set off to Old Fall woods which is the usual favourite place for migrants to turn up. A Chiffchaff in the willows near the car park was the first possible migrant to be identified and sadly the last. The hedges and Old Fall were distinctly lacking in migrants that day but there was plenty of other things to look at. Migrant



hawker and Common darter dragonflies were found in the shelter of a hedge near the road and a male Kestrel sitting in the stubble allowed a close approach.

A quick dip into Thornwick fishing lake and bird hides yielded some additional views of some more dragonflies and a few butterflies as well as some interesting fungi.

Not as successful as we hoped but a good day out in the fresh air in some nice surroundings.



Willow emerald confirmed

The latest edition to Scarborough's 'bug-eyed monster' list, aka dragonflies and damselflies, (following on from the small and large red eyed damselflies) is the willow emerald damselfly (*Chalcolestes viridis*). First recorded in East Anglia in 2009 it has spread within the south east and then rapidly expanded northwards in the last 2-3 years. One individual was recorded at the Helwath Road ponds in Harwood Dale last year,



but now a number of individuals have been recorded at Wykeham Lakes. There has even been a record of a mating pair, so hopefully breeding will be successful, and the species will rapidly increase in our area.

John Hume

Bats and windy pits

Our planned bat visit to the 'Windy pits' to see bats swarming at their hibernation sites near Helmsley did not come off as we were not allowed access to the sites by the landowners. Brian W mentioned there were some pits in Dalby Forest that may be worth investigating and supplied me with the locations.

I managed to find these and installed bat loggers at the two I could find and returned with Brian 3 days later to see what bat usage there was. The 'Old Fat and Past It' pit showed a count of over 3800 files during the previous 3 nights and was clearly being very well used. The Newclose Rigg site had only a few files on the recorder and was also fairly overgrown including quite a few brambles. We managed to clear these with extended tools and left the bat detector in place to see if there was any difference over the next few days.



Old Fat and Past It



Newclose Rigg before and after clearance



A small group attended 'OFPI' three nights later to see if there was any swarming. Sadly, the temperature dropped and only a couple of bats emerged fully, the others flying around in the pit entrance. Luckily, with an IR monocular everyone had a chance to watch the bats whizzing around in the confined space. A further 3000 files were recorded on the detector in the previous 3 nights and it is somewhere where we will be able to organise some 'swarming visits' in 2021. The other good news is that this site has not been identified as a bat hibernation site previously and was purely a place for potholers. If you want to see what the pit looks like underground there are some good photos on: -

<https://www.yucpc.org.uk/gallery/album.php?id=754>

Nick Gibbons

Beavers

The beaver introduction at Keldy by FC has proved a fascinating project. After the talk by Cath Bashforth at the Rugby Club, 10 members split into groups and were shown the site by Cath. At the end of the visit we all sat quietly overlooking the pool at dusk in the hope of actually seeing them.

After a fairly quiet start since their introduction the last few months has seen an amazing amount of activity. The main dam, which was originally in the beck, has been extended upwards and outwards such that the larger of the ponds and the beck are a contiguous sheet of water. Signs of their 'arboriculture' are now widespread around both of the ponds but there is still not a lot of activity elsewhere further down the beck.

As usual the beavers did not emerge in daylight. At dusk as we were all sitting quiet the sounds of 'munching' could be heard close by but the beaver was underneath the bank out of sight to us. After quite a while it went very quiet and we were all then startled by a loud warning 'tail splash'. The beaver had clearly got our scent and was warning the other family members that there were strangers about!



The dam and what was the access causeway for bat, butterfly, botanic etc surveys!

This visit was oversubscribed and a further visit will take place for all those on the 'waiting list'.

Nick Gibbons