

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Newsletter No. 146

Summer 2014

*Chorley and District Natural History Society is a
Registered Charity: Registration Number 513466*

INSECT REPORT

The prize for the first butterfly record of the year goes to the member who found a Red Admiral in Eccleston on January 14th. Clearly this would have been an insect disturbed from hibernation, but it does show that Red Admirals do attempt hibernation locally. We get occasional March/April records for insects presumably emerged from successful hibernation, but not since 2011. There were plenty of sightings of the other hibernating Vanessids (Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock and Comma) on sunny days in March and early April. Presumably the milder winter this year helped the hibernators



Red admiral

One Vanessid that is certainly not capable of surviving our winters is the Painted Lady. The only record for this migrant was in Chorley on June 11th. Hopefully more will arrive later in the year.

Another hibernating butterfly is the Brimstone, which was reported locally more often than ever before, with singles turning up at 10 sites between 10th March and 1st June. The best record was for 5 insects seen in Dean Wood Rivington on 18th April.

Holly Blue was seen only once (11th April, Euxton) but the Common Blue had its best spring since I have been keeping records. As many as 50 were estimated in Ulnes Walton on 27th May, and high numbers were also reported at Hic Bibi and Ellerbeck. Common Blue overwinters as a small larva which wakes up to feed in March and emerges as an adult in late May or June. Typically we hope to get more of the late summer generation than we do in Spring. As I write this report (August 28th), these hopes for the 2nd generation are proving well founded.

The life cycle of the Small Copper is similar to that of the Common Blue and it also seems to have done well, with as many as 10 seen at Anglezarke on 31st May. Like the Common Blue, we typically get more Small Coppers in late summer than spring, so fingers crossed. Green Hairstreak numbers were low, with only a handful of sightings in early May at Healey Nab and White Coppice.

One sharp eyed recorder found a Red Necked Footman near Lead Mines Clough on 5th June. It is a new species for the area and not at all common in Lancashire.



Red Necked Footman

There were no exceptional Odonata records. Large Red Damselfly was, as usual, the first to emerge and was seen in good numbers, with 20 at the Burgh Hall pond on 18th May. That site also produced numbers of both Broad Bodied and Four Spotted Chasers. The Emperor Dragonfly was recorded only once, at Cuerden on June 17th.

One member counted 10 mated pairs plus 12 more single Azure Damsflelies at his small garden pond in Euxton on 26th May. I am sure that other members with garden ponds also get Odonata. Please send in the records. Unlike Butterflies and Birds, we don't get that many Odonata records from gardens.

Phil Kirk

BIRD REPORT

April

Summer visitor first arrival dates, including March and May arrivals for completeness, were as follows:-

Whimbrel	18 th April	(17 th April)	<i>Bretherton Moss</i>
Common Sandpiper	19 th April	(20 th April)	<i>Adlington Res</i>
Little Ringed Plover	29 th March	(30 th March)	<i>Charnock Richard</i>
Common Tern	3 rd April	(28 th April)	<i>Croston Twin Lakes</i>
Cuckoo	22 nd April	(27 th April)	<i>Roddlesworth</i>
Swift	3 rd May	(23 rd April)	<i>Clayton</i>
Swallow	30 th March	(8 th April)	<i>Croston</i>
House Martin	3 rd April	(13 th April)	<i>Cuerden Valley Park</i>
Sand Martin	23 rd March	(31 st March)	<i>Croston Twin Lakes</i>
Wheatear	12 th March	(30 th March)	<i>Great Hill</i>
Whinchat	5 th July	(23 rd April)	<i>White Coppice</i>
Ring Ouzel	8 th April	(13 th April)	<i>Hordern Stoops</i>
Yellow Wagtail	No record	(21 st April)	<i>Croston Sewage Works</i>
Chiffchaff	9 th March	(23 rd March)	<i>Mawdesley Moss</i>
Willow Warbler	3 rd April	(12 th April)	<i>White Coppice</i>
Garden Warbler	25 th April	(23 rd April)	<i>Croston</i>
Blackcap	31 st March	(31 st March)	<i>Croston</i>
Wood Warbler	26 th April	(30 th April)	<i>Rivington</i>
Sedge Warbler	18 th April	(21 st April)	<i>Croston Twin Lakes</i>
Reed Warbler	6 th April	(21 st April)	<i>Lower Burgh Meadow</i>
Grasshopper Warbler	20 th April	(21 st April)	<i>Lower Burgh Meadow</i>
Whitethroat	15 th April	(21 st April)	<i>Arley / Eccleston</i>
Lesser Whitethroat	15 th April	(28 th April)	<i>Eccleston</i>
Tree Pipit	22 nd April	(27 th April)	<i>Belmont Reservoir</i>
Redstart	16 th April	(20 th April)	<i>Lead Mines Clough</i>
Pied Flycatcher	28 th April	(21 st April)	<i>Anglezarke</i>
Spotted Flycatcher	15 th May	(17 th May)	<i>Croston</i>

Last year's first arrival dates are shown in brackets for comparison. With two or three exceptions, most birds arrived earlier than last year, which had a very cold spell of weather in late March.

Winter wildfowl still around include Gadwall at Croston Twin Lakes with 2 still there on the 18th, and Goldeneye at Heapey No. 3 lodge, where one was still present on the 26th. The last Redwing records were from Euxton and Yarrow Valley Park, both on the 1st.

Wildfowl in residence included the widowed Mute Swan at Lower Healey which was incubating 7 eggs. A young pair of Mute Swans turned up on Cuerden Valley Park lake on the 3rd. Pairs of Little Grebe were resident at Croston Twin Lakes, Astley Park

and Common Bank Lodge. Great Crested Grebe were resident at Yarrow Valley Park, Bretherton E-shaped Pond and Croston Twin Lakes where 10 were present on the 1st. A female Goosander with 11 young was on the Yarrow at Eccleston (20th), and one with 10 young was on the Yarrow at Croston (21st). It is not known if these were different family parties, or just the same family which had moved down river. A Mallard with 12 young was on Croston Moss on the 24th. Other wildfowl records of interest included a drake Shoveler at the E-shaped Pond (1st), Mandarin Duck on the Yarrow at Eccleston (20th & 24th) and pairs of Tufted Duck at Lower Healey (12th) and High Bullough (18th). Shelduck were recorded at Charnock Richard (2nd), Cuerden Valley Park (3rd) and Croston Moss, where at least 20 were counted on the 22nd. A Water Rail was at Arley Nature Reserve on the 19th.



Greenshank

There was plenty of wader activity during the month with pride of place probably going to the Grey Plover on Yarrow Reservoir on the 26th. Not far behind was a Greenshank on Croston Moss on the 16th. Golden Plover sightings included 4 over Great Knowley (9th) and one on Croston Moss (27th). Little Ringed Plover were at Charnock Richard throughout the month with 2 present on the 22nd. Another was at a quarry at Whittle on the 27th. Green Sandpiper continued to be seen on the Yarrow at Eccleston (20th & 25th), and also at Arley Nature Reserve (15th) and on the Douglas at Croston (18th). Common Sandpiper were at Arley (19th), Anglezarke Reservoir (21st & 26th) and 3 at Belmont Reservoir (28th). Oystercatcher, Lapwing, Redshank and Curlew were noted at all the regular sites. Woodcock were observed roding at White Coppice on several dates. Annual Whimbrel passage started on the 18th with 10 birds

north over Bretherton Moss, followed by a single at Rivington (24th), 2 over Great Knowley (25th) 25 in three parties over Croston (27th) and 16 over Hoghton (29th). A report was received of a Red Kite at Rivington (24th). A Merlin was at White Coppice on the 15th. Pairs of Peregrines were on territory in Chorley and at Whittle. Buzzard sightings came from all over the area, including 5 at Euxton (1st), 4 at White Coppice (7th) and 6 over Yarrow Valley Park (8th). Tawny Owl records came from Higher Wheelton (6th), Eccleston (7th), Stronstrey Bank (8th), Withnell Fold (9th) and Arley (15th). A Barn Owl was on Croston Moss on the 24th.

A Common Tern was at Croston Twin Lakes on 3rd and 4th, with the Yarrow Valley Park resident returning on the 19th. Away from Belmont, a Mediterranean Gull was noted on the flooded field at Charnock Richard (14th).

Wheatear passage on the mosses was noted on 14th when 6 were on Mawdesley Moss and 18th & 24th when 15 were on Croston Moss. Ring Ousel passage included birds on Anglezarke Moor (8th), Withnell Moor (19th) and White Coppice (26th). Cuckoos were seen regularly at White Coppice from 23rd and at least 5 were estimated to be in the area on the 28th. Lesser Whitethroat were noted at Eccleston (15th), Heskin (18th), Croston Moss (21st) and Twin Lakes ((27th).

Records of interest of resident birds included Lesser Spotted Woodpecker calling in Yarrow Valley Park (6th), Willow Tit at Arley (15th) and Crossbill at Brinscall (15th). A pair of Stonechat in the White Coppice area was a welcome return for a species hit hard by the recent severe winters. Pairs of Dipper were noted at Lead Mines Clough, White Coppice and Yarrow Valley Park, where 3 young were fledged on the 24th.



Stonechat

May

Goosander with young were again noted on the Yarrow in the Croston / Ecclestone area with 13 recently hatched seen on the 12th, and 12 – perhaps the same brood - on the 18th. It does seem that there have been at least two and possibly three broods this year. Other wildfowl with young included the pair of Mute Swans at Yarrow Valley Park, which produced just one cygnet (8th), whereas the pair on Astley Park Lake produced 6 (17th). The widowed bird at Lower Healey was still incubating on the 10th. A pair of Shelduck at Clayton produced 6 young in an essentially suburban area, but they were quickly predated to just one young. Mandarin Duck at Arley produced 12 young (25th), and a pair on the Yarrow in the Croston / Ecclestone area had 5 young on the 28th. There were plenty of records of Mallard with young, including broods of 7 at Lower Healey (10th), 2 of 8 on the Yarrow at Croston (18th) and 11 in Yarrow Valley Park (18th). The pair of Little Grebe at Common Bank Lodge had two chicks on the 25th. Three pairs of Coot at the same site had 2, 2 and 1 young respectively. A pair at Birkacre had 2 young on the 18th.

Rare vagrants passing through the area included a Black Stork over Rivington Pike on the 26th. This is the third time the species has been noted in recent years. I wonder if it's the same bird with a set migration route? Also passing through were two Little Egrets flying west over Ecclestone on the 8th.



Black Stork

Whimbrel passage continued with records including 16 at Bretherton Moss (4th), 7 at Eccleston (8th), 13 roosting at Yarrow reservoir (9th) and finally a single bird at Eccleston (13th). Lapwing breeding success was noted at Withnell Fold, where there were at least 2 chicks on the 4th, and at Charnock Richard (2 chicks on the 21st). A pair of Oystercatcher had two young at a moorland site at Withnell. Little Ringed Plover were noted at Charnock Richard and Buckshaw Village during the month.

The Peregrine Falcons at Morrisons were thought to be feeding young by the end of the month. The pair at a site at Whittle had just one young, which was approaching fledging by the end of the month. There were also several sightings of Hobby, including Eccleston (20th), White Coppice (21st & 26th), Euxton (23rd) and Great Knowley (25th). Young Tawny Owls were noted at Anglezarke (22nd) and White Coppice (2 on 30th). Barn Owl was noted at a nest site at Anglezarke, and a pair of Little Owl made a welcome return to White Coppice.

The pair of Common Tern at Yarrow Valley Park had hatched 2 chicks by the 31st. Birds were also noted at Croston Twin Lakes (6th) and along the canal at Crosse Hall (18th) and at Withnell Fold (24th).



Cuckoos were seen throughout in the White Coppice area with at least 4 there on the 11th. A Green Woodpecker calling near Heatherlea Woods (13th) was the first record for the year.

Lesser Whitethroat were recorded at Chisnall (1st), Bretherton (6th), and 3 in the Eccleston area (18th). 15 Common Whitethroat were counted on Croston Moss on the 11th. Garden Warblers were noted on Croston Moss (3rd), Anglezarke (3rd), Lower Healey (4th), Lower Burgh Meadow (6th) and White Coppice (31st). A Wood Warbler was singing at High Bullough from 4th to 22nd. Others were noted in Heatherlea Woods (24th), Siddow Fold (31st) and 2 were reported from Raddlesworth Woods. Sedge Warblers were singing at Withnell Fold (4th), on Lower Burgh Meadow (6th) and along the Yarrow at Eccleston (15th). Grasshopper Warblers were reeling at Belmont (5th) and White Coppice (25th). Spotted Flycatchers were at Anglezarke from 15th, and at least one was at Jack Green, Brindle on the 25th. Two unconfirmed records of Tree Pipit were received from the White Coppice area (12th) & (17th).

Other records of interest included Willow Tit in a Croston garden (1st), a pair of Siskin in Heatherlea Woods (5th) and Treecreeper feeding young at Eccleston (20th).

June

The Mute Swan family at Astley Park had reduced to 5 young by 6th June, and this was a sign of things to come as two more died. The remaining three sick cygnets were then removed to a swan sanctuary, where they appear to have survived. It is believed that the problem was a worm infection *Echinuriasis*, carried by the Water-flea *Daphnia*, to which young water fowl appear to be susceptible. Still on Mute Swans a party of 6 was on the Douglas at Croston.

A Quail on Winter Hill on 1st June proved to be a false dawn as no other records were received except for one just 25 metres outside the boundary in Much Hoole (11th).



Wader of the month was **Avocet**, one of which was reported at the Yarrow / Douglas confluence, followed by two over Great Knowley on the 21st.

A pair of Oystercatcher at Charnock Richard was noted with two young on the 7th. A pair of Little Ringed Plover at a nearby site were noted with a single young on the 21st. The species was also seen at Yarrow Reservoir (7th) and a site at Whittle (25th). Green Sandpiper was seen on Syd Brook at Eccleston (8th), throwing up the possibility of the species being recorded in the area in every month of the year. Other waders recorded during the month included Common Sandpiper at Anglezarke Reservoir (5th) and Snipe on Syd Brook (29th). Roosting parties of Curlew were noted at Anglezarke Reservoir (12 on 5th) and Yarrow Reservoir (8 on 7th).

The Peregrines at Morrison's continued to feed their young in the nest, until a single chick was seen out on the ledge on the 18th. An adult was again reported feeding the young bird on the 29th. Two reports of Red Kite were received – one at Eccleston (1st) and one over the M61 at Anderton (10th), plus a possible sighting of 3 birds together flying east over Millennium Way on the 4th. Sightings of Hobby came from Eccleston (1st & 30th), and from Croston (21st & 29th). A pair of Buzzard in a woodland in the Eccleston / Heskin area was noted with two nearly fledged young on the 29th. A pair of Kestrels in the same area was noted with three juveniles (23rd). Barn Owls were feeding young at Anglezarke and Mawdesley, and other sightings came from Heskin (23rd). Little Owls were feeding young at White Coppice, and other sightings came from Eccleston (10th) and Croston Moss (9th & 13th). Juvenile Tawny Owls were noted in Heatherlea Woods (3rd), Eccleston (2 on 6th) and Heskin (23rd).

The Common Tern chicks had increased to three by the 1st, and were close to fledging by the 29th. Birds were also seen at Eccleston (1st) and Mawdesley Moss (5th). Mediterranean Gulls away from Belmont were seen at Yarrow and Anglezarke reservoirs (both 7th).

Cuckoos continued to be recorded in the White Coppice area on a regular basis with 3 or 4 on the 8th and the last (2) on the 17th. At least 50 Swift were seen over Anglezarke Moor on the 21st. A female Wheatear was a surprising find on Mawdesley Moss on both 2nd and 5th. A pair of Spotted Flycatcher was noted at White Coppice on the 1st.

Family parties of Grey Wagtail were noted in Astley Park (4th) and at White Coppice (16th). A Dipper with young from a second brood was in Yarrow Valley Park (5th). Redstart were feeding young at White Coppice and in Lead Mines Clough. Nuthatch with young were seen in Heatherlea Woods (3rd).

Many thanks to the following for submitting records:-

S.Annis, I.Ball, D.Beattie, D.Beevers, I.Cameron, J.Catt, J.Cobham, B.Derbyshire, D.Downing, S.Driver, T.Dunn, J.Edwards, M.Fishwick, J.Frankland, M.Greenhalgh, M.Hilton, D.Holland, R.Hoyle, C&T.Johnson, P.Kirk, P.Krischkiw, R.Hargreaves, L.Harrison, P.King, E.Langrish, A.Leach, G.Lilley, J.Love, I.Lynas, A.Makin, S.Martin, M.Nightingale, D.North, G.Parsons, L.Poxon, C.Rae, J.Riley, L.Rose, P.Ross, P.Rowlands, I.Ryding, J.Smith, N.Southworth, R.Spencer, C.Stanley, C.Thistlethwaite, J.Waidson, N.&T.West, P.West, P.Whittaker, I. Whittle, K.Woan.

Please continue to send your records to the forum or the editor.

Neil Southworth

MAMMALS



I took over the recording of mammals from Joyce Riley for this year commencing in January. I would value any mammal sightings, or any evidence of the presence of mammals. This means mole hills, deer slots or anything similar. The important information, as with all other sightings is where and how many. We prefer someone saying "3 brown hares on Astley Park on 6th March" rather than " a few hares in the middle of Chorley". An interesting report recently was of a grey squirrel 150ft up a cable at the top of Winter Hill. I would not have thought there would be much food up there. Another of our members was taking a rest on the bench near the memorial at Lead Mines Clough when a roe deer casually approached him even getting as close as ten feet. On the 7th June, one of our contributors spotted a hedgehog in the middle of the moors near Anglezarke. Another report from White Coppice mentioned that a field mouse had wandered onto the path eating seeds near the cricket field gate. There are lots of mammals seen around so I'll ask again for all sightings to be reported to me please. You can do that either by using the forum, or send to me c/o Cuerden Valley Park Trust, The Barn, Berkeley Drive, Bamber Bridge , PRESTON PR5 6BY

David Beattie

FIGHTING FOR THEIR LIVES

A footnote to Robert Yates' welcome article, "Orchids – Rare and Otherwise", in Newsletter no. 145.

Some members of Chorley Natural History Society share news of rarer orchids, especially in more northerly limestone areas. And the stirring tale is told of current efforts by Kew and local conservationists to increase sites for the Lady's Slipper Orchid.

Nearer home the "surprisingly common" species have their own adventures. One Common Spotted Orchid has appeared again in our Adlington back garden. More turn up as expected at Hic Bibi Local Nature Reserve, and regularly line the bridle way towards the Ellerbeck former mine workings.

Broad-leaved Helleborines fight to survive as cows and farm vehicles use a Heath Charnock track. Along the nearby canal towpath the strimmer this year has ended any attempt at increased biodiversity.

The 125 bus to Bolton passes a well mown two yard strip where horses are trotted and a seat at the end guards a plot for "wild flowers", contributing to "Blooming Britain". Mercifully, the rest of the inside verge still encourages butterflies and other insects. A shortage of rabbits doesn't cope with shrubs and trees demonstrating natural procession. Nonetheless, this summer Common Spotted Orchids have been countable, plus some other species (Northern Marsh Orchids, or hybrids?). And eight defiant Bee Orchids do Anderton proud. But you have to get off the bus to see them.

Diana Downing



Common Spotted orchids

A POND TO BE VIEWED

The pond is near the Long Lane end of the track and public footpath through Chorley Golf Course (Hall o'th'Hill). In the past notes of sightings there have appeared in the Newsletter. Then a screen of willow grew up to obscure the view. However, an appreciative email to the Club Secretary had a very welcome outcome: two very good viewing points. So maybe again we may see a variety of dragon flies, and little grebe, and even weasel, at SD 606156. (Our warm thanks have been sent.)

Gerald Downing.



Weasel

TREE BEES NOT WASPS!

On 19th May, a couple from my neighbourhood contacted the society via the website with the following quoted query *'A lot of bees have taken up residence in our garden in our bird box on the bird table. While we love and value bees, we do not want them in such large numbers in our garden. Can someone suggest what we do?'*

By coincidence a few days beforehand, Phil Kirk, in his position as the society's secretary had received an email from the Technical Director of a pest control company on just this situation and the Tree Bee Adoption Service they are offering! I quote:-*'Currently, we are receiving high numbers of call outs to homes for Wasps, which end up being Feral Bees - or most commonly Bombus hypnorum, Tree Bees. As you may know, this Bee species is most commonly known for nesting in empty Bird Boxes.'*

As a pest control company, TRG Pest Control favours conservation overall and really understands the importance of encouraging species of beneficial pollinating insects. Due to this, we will not kill Feral Bees. Unfortunately, unless the species is Honey Bees, many Bee Keepers will not remove them either. We came stuck between a rock and a hard place - on one hand we refuse to kill these Bees, on the other, some of our customers simply want the Bees gone. Due to this, we have decided to organise a Bee Adoption Service. As fully qualified and fully insured Pest Controllers we will happily remove any unwanted Bees Nests and re-home them in the gardens/land of willing volunteers. These Feral Bees do not produce honey, do not require any looking after or attention and most importantly only sting if provoked. They're great to have in the garden and are happy to be left alone. We are looking to increase our volunteer list and were hoping that the Chorley and District Natural History Society would be happy to help and work alongside us. Even if you would be happy to take in a few nests yourselves on your Wildlife sites. We will provide this service for free to anybody willing to receive a Feral Bee nest and will even remove the bird boxes and empty nest once the Feral Bees have left (they only nest in the one spot for one season then never return).'

The company has a promotional flyer on their website www.trgpestcontrol.com and you can also look at their work on Facebook www.facebook.com/trgpestcontrol

Phil, being the insect lover that he is as well as the society's insect recorder, decided to offer to adopt the local bees. However, when he contacted the couple after returning from holiday, they had decided to keep 'their' bees!

Then on Bank Holiday Monday, 26th May, when I was in my garden, my next door neighbour asked me to go to look at the bees that had taken over an old bird box attached to his bungalow. As I had already looked up some information on Tree Bees after Phil had forwarded the email to me, I was able to confirm that my neighbour's bees were also the very distinctive species of Tree Bee, *Bombus hypnorum*. My neighbour is happy to keep 'his' bees and I was also happy to see lots of them

feeding on my flowering Cotoneaster shrub by our boundary fence at the end of May. Update at end of June: Since I originally wrote this article at the beginning of June, the bees have disappeared from the nest box in my neighbour's garden. Actual date and reason unknown.

Bombus hypnorum is a small, attractive bumble bee with a conspicuous white tail, that was first recorded in Britain in Wiltshire in 2001 and has since been spreading rapidly northwards reaching Lancashire in 2012. Have any other members seen this species around the Chorley area?

Joyce Riley

BOOK REVIEW

"The Birdwatcher's Pocket Guide to Britain and Europe" Peter Hayman and Rob Hume

This is an extended edition of the ever popular Mitchell Beazley Pocket Guide that has been around for at least 20 years. To quote an advert, it does what it says on the tin, or in this case the cover. I used the original book when I first started birding and found it very useful. This newer edition does have the birds in Voous order which my original did not. This brought it in line with other guides. I prefer the illustrations this has, rather than photographs and these do show comparative breeding/non breeding and male/female images. The best thing is the size. It really is *pocket* size and fits into the map pocket most of us have in our weather proof jackets. It does contain several European birds which do not visit Britain such as Andalusian Hemipode and still refers to Zitting Cisticola as Fan Tailed Warbler. The index tells you that this latter bird is on page 57 when it is 200 pages further on. Apart from these slight irritations it still is excellent value for money. Available from the shop at Brockholes for £3.99.

David Beattie