



Wexford Naturalists' Field Club,  
c/o Wexford Wildfowl Reserve, North Slob, Wexford, Ireland.

## WNFC Newsletter

Issue Number 42

June

2016

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Welcome to the June issue of WNFC newsletter.

### UPCOMING CLUB EVENTS

All lectures held at the Pumphouse unless stated otherwise.

#### July

**Thursday 7th:** 8pm at the Pumphouse (not Enniscorthy Library as initially advertised) "Native Woodland History and Recent Initiatives" by Dr. Declan Little, Project Manager, Woodlands of Ireland.

**Saturday 9th:** Field Trip to the Woodland of Brian Hennessey, (WNFC member) to look at trees and wildlife. Meet at 2pm in the car park at the Horse and Hound Hotel, Ballinaboola (S791 248).

**Sunday 17th: WNFC Summer Party** further details from Club Secretary [info@wexfordnaturalists.com](mailto:info@wexfordnaturalists.com) and at the July lecture. Cost will be €10.

#### August

**Thursday 4th: "The Irish Dipper"** lecture by Dr. Alex Copeland, Birdwatch Ireland.

**Saturday 13th:** Coach Trip to Lough Boora, Co. Offaly. the cost will be €25. To book please contact the Club Secretary or email [info@wexfordnaturalists.com](mailto:info@wexfordnaturalists.com). A €10 non-refundable deposit will be required on booking.

#### September

**Thursday 1st: "Wildlife and Conservation in the Slieve Bloom Mountains"** lecture by Jason Monaghan, NPWS Conservation Ranger.

**Saturday 10th:** Field Trip to Ballyteigue Burrow to look at Wildflowers and Insects with Roy Watson and Margaret Scally. Meet at 2pm in the car park beside the children's playground in Kilmore Quay (S964 031).

### IMPORTANT REMINDER

Don't forget to book your place for the Kerry Deer Rut, weekend trip on 7th and 9th of October. This is a 'must see' event for all Wildlife Fans. Price €220 pp (single supplement €56 and consists of 2 nights B&B and 2 evening meals, in the Rose Hotel, Tralee. A non-refundable deposit of €50 is payable by Thursday 4th August. Please contact the Club Secretary for details [secretary.wnfc@gmail.com](mailto:secretary.wnfc@gmail.com) or call Marion 086 8290163.

### YOUR WNFC PROGRAMME FOR 2017

If you would like to hear about a particular topic on lecture nights, or visit a particular venue on a field trip, then please drop a note into the 'Suggestion Box' at the Wildfowl Reserve. Or email to [info@wexfordnaturalists.com](mailto:info@wexfordnaturalists.com) or post to The Secretary c/o Wexford Wildfowl Reserve, North Slob, Wexford.

### WELCOME

Special welcome to the following new members  
Gerry and Jenna Byrne, Michael Murphy, Heike Wiehagan; Willow Abdullah, Amelia Murphy, Ann, Luc and Leah Van Kempen, Vera Casey

### NOTE TO MEMBERS

If you wish to receive emails for reminders of upcoming club events and details of other events which may be of interest, please ensure that Marion Brady, Membership Secretary, has an up to date email address for you.

We would politely like to remind members who have had a book from the library for more than 3 months, to return it as soon as possible. New books have been added to the collection and we will have an updated list on our website in the coming weeks.

To ensure greatest enjoyment and benefit during field trips, please remember to bring binoculars, field guides, notebook and pen or pencil. If you are a camera buff, photographs are a good identification guide for later perusal. The club has binoculars that you can borrow for the day, please see Janet Whelehan on the day or email [info@wexfordnaturalists.com](mailto:info@wexfordnaturalists.com). Guide books can be obtained from the library at the Wildfowl Visitors centre, a titles list can be viewed on [www.wexfordnaturalists.com/library](http://www.wexfordnaturalists.com/library) or find out more details from John Kinsella or Mick O'Connor.

### RECORDS REPORT by Mary Foley

Over 1900 records have been received through the club's online recording form, by email or through personal communication since 1<sup>st</sup> January this year. Records are also being submitted for the Hedgerow Survey. Our 'Species of the Month' has encouraged more members to submit records of their observations. The online form is also proving to be very popular with a number of non members. All records received are forwarded to the National Biodiversity Data Centre where, once validated, they are added to Biodiversity Maps (see [maps.biodiversityireland.ie](http://maps.biodiversityireland.ie))

To celebrate International Day for Biological Diversity on 22<sup>nd</sup> May, the National Biodiversity Data Centre launched a '5,000 Biodiversity Records Challenge' which ran from 20th to

22<sup>nd</sup> May. A number of members took part and helped the county come out on top with 1,691 records being submitted.

Record what you can identify and remember that records of the common species can be just as important as the rare ones. If you see something that you cannot identify, if possible, take a photo and I will try to have it identified. Please forward your records online at [wexfordnaturalists.com/recording/records-submission](http://wexfordnaturalists.com/recording/records-submission), by email to [records@wexfordnaturalists.com](mailto:records@wexfordnaturalists.com), by post to WNFC, c/o Wexford Wildfowl Reserve or to me, or any committee member, at club events. If you have any queries or need help with the online form or obtaining grid references please talk to me. Thank you to everyone who has submitted records and I hope you will continue to do so.

### THE LADYBIRDS AND SHIELDBUGS OF COUNTY WEXFORD

Work is continuing on recording the distribution of the ladybirds and shieldbugs of the county. So far this year four ladybird species and four shieldbug species have been recorded in a number of 10km squares which previously had no records for these species.

The 'Species of the Month' for June is the Hairy Shieldbug (*Dolycoris baccarum*). This is a distinctive purple and green shieldbug and is covered in fine hairs. The antennae and flanks have black and white bands. Hairy Shieldbugs can be found in dry, warm sites including grassy bases of hedgerows and amongst low shrubs. It can also be found in flowerbeds. If you see this, or any ladybird or shieldbug species, please forward your records by any of the methods outlined above.

### DAWN CHORUS AT THE RAVEN



**Dawn Chorus Photo (N. Egan)**

Wexford Naturalists Field Club hosted a Dawn Chorus in the Raven Nature Reserve on the 15th May. Thirty two people left the warmth and comfort of their beds to arrive at the meeting point for 4.30am. The sky was starting to light up with sunrise at 5.25am. One of the first birds to call was a Wood Pigeon. Dave Daly, our leader for the morning, took us down the main roadway into the wood, stopping and identifying the bird songs as we went along. Thirty seven species of birds were identified by sound or sight, with a Red Squirrel seen hopping about in the trees. After we left the wood we walked up the road to Culleton's gap with a few more species of birds added to our list. On returning to our cars, three Red Squirrels were spotted in a tree basking in the sun, over-looking the car park. Our morning was rounded off with breakfast in Hotel Curracloe. Many thanks to our leader Dave Daly for leading the walk.

#### Birds:

Wood Pigeon, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Sedge Warbler, House Sparrow, Robin, Wren, Blackcap, Goldcrest, Pheasant, Hooded Crow, Magpie, Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler, Great Tit, Chaffinch, Moorhen, Crossbill, Meadow Pipit, Mute Swan, Coal Tit, Jackdaw, Buzzard, Whitethroat, Swallow, Goldfinch, Rook,

Greenfinch, Linnet, Starling, Collared Dove, House Martin, Stonechat, Mallard, Herring Gull and Dunnock.

**Mammals:** Red Squirrel

**Moths:** Cinnabar

Article contributed by Nicholas Egan.



Photo of one of the more unusual birds spotted at the Dawn Chorus, a female Crossbill. Photo courtesy of Wildlifesnaps, taken in Co. Antrim, note the tips of the beak cross (hence its name) allowing the bird to prise the pinecone scales apart to extract the seeds on which it feeds.

### BUTTERFLIES OF THE RAVEN



A "Butterflies of the Raven" brochure, in memory of Chris Wilson, was launched on Thursday 23rd June in the Raven Nature Reserve. This site, which was monitored by Chris as part of the Irish Butterfly Monitoring Scheme, is one of the longest running butterfly survey sites in the country.

The brochure has been produced by the club, together with the National Biodiversity Data Centre, the Friends of the Raven Group, Wexford County Council and the National Parks and Wildlife Service. A copy of this brochure is enclosed with your newsletter or attached as a PDF. Copies will be available at all club lectures.

Mary Foley.

### SHIELDBUG & LADYBIRD WORKSHOP, JAMESTOWN NATURE RESERVE

A very enjoyable and informative day, but if you missed this event, don't worry you can still identify the Irish species from the swatches on sale through the club. But here are a few interesting facts gleaned from the workshop, which was led by Dr Brian Nelson, a NPWS Ecologist.





Ladybird and Shieldbug Workshop Photo (N.Egan)

Shieldbugs are classified as bugs and belong to the **Hemiptera** order, whereas Ladybirds are beetles and belong to the Coleoptera order. So what's the difference between Bugs and Beetles? **Bugs** feed by means of a **Rostrum**, a segmented feeding tube with which they pierce the plant or insect and suck the fluids out. But a **Beetle** has chewing mouthparts, capable of biting plants and animals. Their wing parts too are very different, note when viewing a **Beetle** you will see a straight line down the centre of the back, defining the wing margin, which is hard and leathery. Whereas **Bugs** have a X marking, the top triangle is the hard fixed part of the thorax. The lower triangle, the Scutellum, is membranous tissue, soft and lighter in colour. The side triangles are the thicker leathery part of the outer wings. In flight **Bugs** use both sets of wings but **Beetles** only use the hind wings to fly, holding the top wings out stiffly (the Elytra which add a aerodynamic element to the beetle). **Beetles** have approximately 20 segments to their antennae with clubbed endings, which probably aid sensory perception. Whereas **Bugs** only have 4 or 5 segments to their antennae. Hope this helps with differentiation.

The **Dicranocephalus Agilis** is a Shieldbug, that has now been introduced to the Irish survey. It is found on Seaspurge and since at the moment it does not have a common name, it is probably easier to call it a Spurge Bug. It is a long, thin, brown bug with a chequered border to its body. If you spot one of these, please record your sighting at [www.wexfordnaturalists.com/records-submission](http://www.wexfordnaturalists.com/records-submission) as records of this bug are minimal at present. See photo below to aid identification.

by Lynn Cassidy edited from Brian Nelson Workshop.



Photo of *Dicranocephalus agilis*

#### *Dicranocephalus agilis* Coastal spurge Squash Bug

This species is a large bug about 12-14 mm and the only Irish species of Stenocephalidae. It is a dark, rather flattened species with conspicuous black and white banding on antennae, legs and along margin of abdomen. The larvae also have banded antennae and legs and look like the adults from an early instar. The species is associated with coastal species of spurge especially sea spurge *Euphorbia paralias* (hence the name devised for it) and they can be seen by examining plants as they are quite conspicuous. This has a restricted distribution along the south and east coast from West Cork to Wicklow.

#### Wexford records

Cahore sandhills	T24
Kilgorman, 9km NE of Gorey	T26
Ballyteige	S90
Fethard	S70
Tinnabearna	T14
The Raven	T12



Photo of *Corizus hyoscyami*

*Corizus hyoscyami* is a member of the Rhopalidae. It is sometimes called the Cinnamon Bug because of its smell. Typically found on low herbaceous vegetation such as Restharrow and Bird's-foot trefoil. The larvae can be found by searching around and beneath the plants. Adults are found by searching or sweeping as despite colour they can be quite inconspicuous. Adults are about 9mm in size so similar to medium-sized shieldbugs. The body is very hairy. The larvae are sandy with black specking and thorn like projections along sides. Within the current Irish fauna, it is an unmistakable red and black bug but there are many superficially similar ones in Britain and Europe. The only other rhopalid on the Irish list is *Liorhyssus hyalinus* In Ireland *Corizus* is confined to the coasts of Wexford and Wicklow. In Britain however it has spread inland presumably in response to climate.

#### Wexford records

Courtown	T25
Kilgorman	T26
Cahore Point	T24
Ballyteige	S90
Tinnacree	T24
Lady's Island Lake	T00
Tacumshin	T00
The Raven	T12

by Brian Nelson

## THE ALL IRELAND POLLINATOR PLAN

A talk on this very important subject was given by Dr Una Fitzpatrick for WNFC members, which was well attended, but for those unable to attend, I would like to reiterate the salient points of this lecture as the global consequences of the actions taken pertaining to this subject will affect us all in the long term. Ireland has a large agricultural, which is expanding. Crops are increasing but Pollinators are decreasing in numbers. This could affect the economy and decrease the wealth of Ireland and in turn affect our Health and Wellbeing by making it harder to afford and produce a balanced diet. Our landscapes could change because wild plants may not be sufficiently pollinated, which could lead to lack of food sources for birds and mammals. If our landscape changes then tourism could be affected, hence a loss of income. A future chain of events can be envisaged that would not be beneficial to the country.

So who are the Pollinators and how can we help them? **Bees** are major pollinators, but merely providing hives is not a solution as these only provide for the Honey Bee and there are 98 species of bees! But they do all need food and a protected habitat. We can help simply by providing patches of wild grass, clover, dandelions and brambles for our 20 different species of bumble bees. Bare ground, a small patch in a banking will suffice, for our solitary burrowing bees, or cavities in a stone wall or insect box for 15% of them. But with all bee species we must remember that they need a nearby food source early in the year as they emerge from hibernation or begin their productive lifecycle. New queens need to visit 6,000 plant sources per day and need to attain a weight of 6.6gms by Autumn to successfully hibernate. Bees also have a limited distance they can travel from the nest site, with Bumble bees this is often only 200 metres, so nearby early flowering and flowering into Autumn plant food sources are a must.

It is because habitat and food are declining due to changes in the environment, as a result of many variants, such as farming practices, urbanisation, introduction of pesticides and invasive species, along with climate change that, our bees are suffering homelessness, hunger and sickness. But **YOU** can make a difference! For more advice and information booklets for Gardeners, Local Communities, Farmers, Businesses and even a Junior Pollinator Plan guide for children, plus much more - you can even participate by recording your efforts and actions on a Online Map. Please consult [www.biodiversityireland.ie/pollinator-plan](http://www.biodiversityireland.ie/pollinator-plan).

edited by Lynn Cassidy from Dr Una Fitzpatrick's lecture.

## BUTTERFLY WALK AT THE RAVEN

This event was held on Saturday 11th June with Mary Foley, proved fruitful and enjoyable, with Speckled Wood, Cryptic White, Small Heath and Common Blue being amongst the species spotted. The Cinnabar moth abounded (see photo below). Plant species included the Pyramid Orchid, Adders Tongue, Kidney Vetch, (food of the Small Blue butterfly), and Bulbous buttercup. Emperor and the 4 Spotted Chaser dragonflies and the Azure Damselfly also were spotted.



Photo of a Cinnabar Moth (Irish Wildlife Trust). Ragwort is a favourite food and they eat voraciously, often leading to cannibalistic habits.

## FURTHER IDENTIFICATION ALERT

The National Biodiversity Centre has just launched a pilot scheme and volunteers are required to record all plant species found within small plots of 2 metre x 2 metre in size within different habitats. For more information and further resources please visit: [www.biodiversityireland.ie/plant-monitoring-scheme](http://www.biodiversityireland.ie/plant-monitoring-scheme).

## LADY'S ISLAND LAKE TERN COLONY 2016

It is extraordinary how consistent the natural cycle of life can be. Through keeping annual notes of dates when the first swallow arrives, or the blossom on blackthorn, do we notice such consistencies.

On the tern colony on Lady's Island Lake, dates of tern arrivals and nesting are carefully noted each year. More importantly, the dates of 'first eggs' laid are monitored closely. This in turn gives an indication of when the first chicks will hatch, usually 23-25 days later.

In 2015, the first roseate tern eggs were laid on the 14<sup>th</sup> May, which in turn hatched on the 7<sup>th</sup> June, 25 days later.

This year 2016, the first egg was again laid on the 14<sup>th</sup> May and hatched on the 7<sup>th</sup> June.

The breeding season commenced somewhat later in 2013/2014, with the first eggs not laid until 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> May respectively, but again hatched 25 days later.

More fascinating still, many older pairs will return to the exact location, sometimes within inches of their previous nest site.

To date, numbers of roseate tern breeding pairs have reached 196 and are likely to exceed the 215 recorded in 2015. We are already ten nests ahead and with another month before the final egg laying date, usually around the 10<sup>th</sup> July, it is looking promising. But as the saying goes, 'never count your terns until they have hatched'.



Article and photo courtesy of Dave Daly.

## ARTICLES FOR NEWSLETTER

Compiled and edited by Lynn Cassidy. Thanks to all who contributed. The next newsletter will be published in September. Items for inclusion may be passed onto me at any club event or via email to [newsletter.wnfc@gmail.com](mailto:newsletter.wnfc@gmail.com)