



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

WNFC Newsletter

Issue Number 47

September 2017

October.

Thursday 5th: “Cutting the Lake at Lady’s Island” by Jim Hurley, WNFC member. Come along for what should be an interesting and informative evening.

Saturday 14th: Coach trip to Stradbally, Co. Laois to visit managed woodland with Eoin Donnelly, Woodwright. Depart Wexford at 9am. Pick up point will be notified to all members travelling. Bring a packed lunch. Coach fare €20. Booking essential. For further details contact Club Secretary or email info@wexfordnaturalists.com **Please note: We will be walking through woodland paths and trails. There are no toilet facilities but there will be a comfort stop en route.**

November.

Thursday 2nd: “Greenland White-fronted Geese - Don't call us, we'll call you!” by Alyn Walsh, District Conservation Officer Birds Unit, Science and Biodiversity Section, NPWS. Alyn will have up to date information on the latest research on these winter visitors to Wexford.

Saturday 11th: Field trip to Ballyhighland Wood with Joanna Hodgton and Mary Foley. Meet at 1.30pm in Killanne (S851418).

December.

Thursday 7th: “My Wildlife Photography” by Pdraig Kavanagh, Photographer. A relaxing end to this year’s lectures.

Saturday 9th: Winter Wildfowl Watch with Dominic Berridge and Dave Daly. Meet at 2pm in the car park at Wexford Wildfowl Reserve (T076239).

Suitable clothing and footwear are recommended for outdoor events. Since events may change due to unforeseen circumstances please check for last-minute updates which will be circulated by email, posted on the club website www.wexfordnaturalists.com or phone Wexford Wildfowl Reserve 076 1002660

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Carmel Mackey, Elizabeth Mooney, Ultan & Patricia Cowley, John Ward, Brian Cahill, Cliff & Noreen Cunningham, Pamela Boyle, Gail Copeland and Anne Ryan

RECORDING

We welcome records from members of any species they see or hear. Records can be submitted by email to records@wexfordnaturalists.com or preferably enter them online at records.biodiversityireland.ie/record/wexford-naturalists Records can also be posted to the Club or given to the Records Officer or any member of the committee. If you have any queries, or you find a species that is not on the list, please talk to Mary Foley, Records Officer at any Club event or email the above address.

All records are shared with the National Biodiversity Data Centre and, once checked and validated, are added to the Centre’s database and can be viewed on Biodiversity Maps <http://maps.biodiversityireland.ie/>

THE LADYBIRDS AND SHIELDBUGS OF COUNTY WEXFORD

A number of members have commented that they have seen very few of these species this year however even though numbers appear to be down we have had new hectad (10km square) records for 22-spot Ladybird, Orange Ladybird, Gorse Shieldbug and Forest Shieldbug. Keep those records coming in!



Orange Ladybird showing three of the four life stages - larva, pupa and adult (Photo Zoe Devlin)

BUTTERFLY ATLAS 2021

There has been a fantastic response to Butterfly Atlas 2021 throughout Ireland and it is great to see so many members contributing by submitting their records. Among the Wexford records are new sites for Essex Skipper and Purple Hairstreak. If you think that you don't know enough about butterflies to take part don't worry, send in records for those species you can identify and you will be helping in the effort to conserve Ireland's butterflies. No matter how common, or rare the species, all records are valuable.



Wall Brown butterfly recorded recently by Dave Daly in Carne.

FLORA OF COUNTY WEXFORD

It has been a busy year so far recording for the Flora of Co. Wexford with records flowing in at a fast rate. There have been several very good new native species added to the county list this year: White Sedge (*Carex canescens*), a small patch 2m x 2m in a marshy field next to the Coolboy River at Cummerduff, the river being the border with Co. Wicklow. This is a rare sedge across the Republic of Ireland. Paula O'Meara found Yellow Bartsia (*Parentucellia viscosa*) a beautiful species with egg yolk yellow flowers and the whole plant is sticky to the touch, in an old sand quarry at Ballyleigh, NW of Ballywilliam. One of the most unexpected finds of the year was a hybrid gorse, Common Gorse crossed with Western Gorse where Zoe Delvin had 11 bushes on the bank of the disused railway at Mountelliott, north of New Ross. Hybrids are not always easy to identify. In the case of gorse lots of flowers had all their measurements taken to be sure they had a range between the parents. To be 100% sure photos were sent to a friend in Minehead, Somerset who confirmed it was the hybrid. Roy Watson came across Rough Clover (*Trifolium scabrum*) on the coast at Cullenstown, where it was last reported in 1972. Sometimes just reading an article in a plant magazine can lead to a new discovery for Ireland. I had read about a new parsnip (Eastern Parsnip - *Pastinaca sativa* subsp. *urens*) from mainland Europe turning up in England via the port at Felixstowe, Suffolk. Sure enough when I visited Rosslare Ferryport the parsnip I

had found a few years earlier was also the Eastern Parsnip. The whole plant has a grey look to it, as it is hairy and the flower heads are much smaller than the Wild Parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa* subsp. *sylvestris*) which has green foliage and larger more golden flower heads, which is occasionally found on the coast in Wexford.

Paul Green



Eastern Parsnip (photo Paul Green)

ROSTOONSTOWN FIELD TRIP REPORT

On Saturday 12th August, twenty-six members gathered at 2pm at Rostoonstown for the club's fieldtrip organised by Mick O'Connor and led by Jim Hurley. Following a brief introduction to the area, members of the group focused on some of the wildflowers growing on the hind-dune grassland. A short walk to the top of the dunes gave an overview of the landform and the probable origin of Lady's Island Lake was interpreted as the silted remains of a former glacial meltwater channel impounded by a transgressive shingle barrier topped with a decoration of wind-blown sand.

The afternoon was wonderfully bright and sunny affording excellent views of the dunes stretching away to Carnsore Point to the east and towards Kilmore Quay to the west, with the Saltee Islands and Black Rock lying offshore. The landforms at Rostoonstown and the surrounding Great Barrier Coast are rated among the best examples of their kind in Europe.

Members then ventured to the lake shore to examine the saltmarsh community and the dense stand of plants growing underwater. The rare Spiral Tasselweed was abundant together with Fennel Pondweed. A pleasant walk along the barrier leading to The Cut was punctuated by several stops to examine the invasive

Sea-buckthorn, Cinnabar Moth caterpillars on Ragwort, Puffball mushrooms, an Autumn Hawker dragonfly, lots of Common Blue butterflies and Six-spot Burnet moths.

The Cut afforded an opportunity to review four Annex 1 habitats: grey dunes, white dunes, vegetated shingle and drift lines and to discuss the problems associated with managing water level in the lagoon. The last remaining stand of Cottonweed in Ireland was visited together with the experimental plot established by the National Parks and Wildlife Service to try to delay the plant's imminent slide towards extinction.



Cottonweed (Photo Zoe Devlin)

The return walk along the sandy beach in warm sunshine was most enjoyable. Records of what was seen during the fieldtrip were kept by Paul Green (plants), Janet Whelehan (insects) and Brian O'Connor (birds). The afternoon was rounded off with a visit to nearby Meyler's Millhouse bar and restaurant for refreshments.

For those who would like to do a self-guided tour of the area, a four-page leaflet about Rostonstown is available by e-mailing Jim Hurley at swc@eircom.net.

CETACEAN SURVEY

The Irish Whale & Dolphin Group (IWDG) have been conducting surveys monthly on several Irish Ferries Ships for a number of years. The information gathered helps IWDG compile data on the numbers of whales



and dolphins in the seas around the coast of Ireland. Some members of WNFC have been taking part in the survey, which means

going from Rosslare to Pembroke and back monthly. If you would like to put your name on the rota to do this survey please contact Marion Brady on [0892387929](tel:0892387929). No experience necessary, you can learn all you need as you go. (photo of Dolphins Marion Brady)

ART EXHIBITION

Wildlife artist Dave Daly will be holding his Annual Art exhibition in The Pumphouse, Wexford Wildfowl Reserve from 21st October to 30th October open 10am to 5pm every day. All welcome.

NEW BOOK

“Blooming Marvellous –A Wildflower Hunter’s Year”
by Zoe Devlin



What began as a childhood delight in wildflowers grew into a hobby, then blossomed into an enduring passion. She recalls her encounters with various species, divulging the history of where she discovered them alongside tales from her own life. Skilfully interweaving her captivating memories with

her expertise, each chapter celebrates a particular month, capturing the beauty and joy it has to offer: birds, butterflies, mammals and even tasty recipes, from nettle soup in April to blackberry-and-apple jam in September. Available for sale in all good bookshops at €16.99.

BOTANY IN IRELAND

A workshop on ‘Botany in Early Modern Ireland’, which is being organised jointly by the Dublin Naturalists’ Field Club and the Edward Worth Library, Dublin will be held in the Boardroom of the Dr Steevens Hospital, Dublin on Friday 17th November 2017 Admission is free, but **booking is required**. To book, please e-mail eaboran@tcd.ie by 10 November 2017. Further details www.dnfc.net

ARTICLES FOR NEWSLETTER

Compiled and edited by Nicholas Egan. Thanks to all who contributed. The next newsletter will be published in December. Items for inclusion may be passed onto me at any club event or via email to newsletter.wnfc@gmail.com