

Flora of the Hampshire Downs

Naturetrek Tour Report

22 - 24 June 2012



Bee Orchid



Frog Orchid



Musk Orchid



Wood Tiger

Report and images compiled by Jon Stokes



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Day1

Friday 22nd June

The group met before dinner and we talked about the plans for the weekend, then we sat down to a great dinner. The weather has been spectacularly wet over the last few months, and the cold has caused many species to have a very difficult year. So our plans for the weekend are a bit in the air and who knows what we might find!

After dinner we set off and travelled a few miles north towards Odiham. Our first stop was to look at a rare Black Poplar tree, followed by a look at Odiham Common. This lovely spot was wetter than ever before but beautiful and covered with Yellow Rattle and Common Spotted Orchids. One nice moth was also on display - a Straw Dot, a species which thrives in wet meadows.

From here we went to a wet flush where Common Spotted, Southern Marsh Orchid and the rare Narrow Leaved Marsh Orchid were growing amid Hemlock Water Dropwort and Ragged Robin.

Then our last stop of the night was beside the Basingstoke Canal. This spot abounds with bats as the largest winter bat roost in Britain is just slightly upstream at the Greywall tunnel. As we arrived we saw Soprano Pipistrelle Bats hunting along a hedgerow, whilst in the river trout swam quickly past, and we started to see Daubenton Bats feeding over the surface of the water. We also started to hear Common Pipistrelle, Long Eared Bats, Natterers Bats and one of the larger species - probably a Serotine.

Over a nearby meadow a Barn Owl hunted and in the distance a Tawny Owl hooted. Finally we dragged ourselves away and returned to the hotel, for a well earned rest.

Day2

Saturday 23rd June

The morning dawned overcast but dry and we headed off for our first stop. This is a beautiful west facing slope where amongst clouds of vetches, Greater Butterfly Orchid occurs in considerable number amongst Bee Orchids and Common Spotted Orchids. The sun broke through to light up this beautiful down and the Wild Columbine glowed in the morning light.

A southerly drive then took us to Portsdown. Here an old arable field had a mixture of Rough and Common Poppies flowering over a carpet of the tiny Field Pansy.

Further along the Down, the beautiful and extremely rare Field Cow-wheat was in full flower, and needed to be photographed. Nearby a patch of Bee Orchids of the variety *belgarium* had been mown down by the grass cutters forcing us to search other areas which revealed two identical and extremely unusual Bee orchids.

The family home of the leader then beckoned and a cup of tea and biscuits later, we were admiring this chalk downland garden with Bee Orchids, Pyramid Orchids, Small Blue butterflies and the fantastic Six Belted Clearwings moths for company. Then over the garden hedge we found six Common Lizards basking in the sun, the beautiful Sainfoin and Wild Asparagus.

Having purchased a few sandwiches we made our way to the top of Butser Hill for a picnic. Hounds-tongue was a great find, as was the place we chose for our lunch. Here Swifts fed around us on the thermals created by the steep down, often passing within feet of our heads. Then one of the group members spotted a Frog Orchid a few inches from their sitting position, which was followed by another 11 in the area. Wood Tiger moths fluttered around in the sunshine and lots of Five Spot Burnets were also on the wing.

From Butser we travelled to a wood where we located White Helleborine and Birds Nest Orchids in flower but unfortunately the Sword Leaved Helleborine had finished, whilst the Broad Leaved Helleborine was still in development. En-route to this wood we had also seen a pair of Hares and a hunting Red Kite, adding to our list.

We set off for our final destination, Noar Hill, where the orchid profusion was as good as ever. Thousands of Fragrant Orchids, Common Spotted Orchids and Pyramid Orchids can be seen on this site and were as usual in flower. We also managed to find Musk Orchids, Fly Orchids, Knapweed Broomrape, Dragons Teeth and some very beautiful albino Fragrant Orchids.

Finally we went back to the hotel for our evening meal and a well earned rest, after a really good day in the field.

Day3

Sunday 24th June

Sunday dawned bright and dry and we set off for our first stop. This fantastic ancient Yew in Farringdon Churchyard is about 3000 years old and is one of Britain's most important ancient trees. Its shape and form have allowed it to survive for this amazing period of time, and with luck it should last for a few thousand more.

Our next stop was the margins of a field on the chalk which has often supported a wide range of arable weeds. These ephemeral weeds are one of the rarest parts of the British flora, as modern farming practices have eradicated them. Here we found Hebnit Deadnettle, Dwarf Spurge, Small Toadflax, one of the Cornsalads (either Narrow or Broad Fruited), and the very beautiful Ground Pine.

A short trip then took us back to the meadow from Friday night where we had a better look at the marsh orchids and found Marsh Helleborine which was almost in flower.

Having collected some sandwiches and eating them in the sunshine on top of the Downs, we went to a Yew and Beech wood where we located Deadly Nightshade, more Greater Butterfly Orchids and Herb Paris.

Now down to our last few hours, we decided to use them on Woolmer Forest. This special area of heathland sits at the base of the north side of the chalk and is a very interesting place to visit. Unfortunately being a military training ground, access to this space is very restricted but we timed it well, and gained access to the site. Silver Studded Blues and the rare Grass Wave moth were on the wing, whilst beneath our feet Heathers intermixed with lichens, orchids and the tiny Birdsfoot Fenugreek. The ponds on this Heath are very short lived in nature, but the extremely wet summer had ensured that they were all full with water. Thus we found many Newts, water beetles and Blue Tailed Damselflies, but to the leader's great joy, we then found a pond, heaving in young Natterjack tadpoles/toadlets. These beautiful creatures have a strong yellow line down the centre of their back was very obvious as they swam.

So that concluded our weekend and after the short trip back to the hotel, we went on our separate ways, but knew that we had seen some of Hampshire's finest wildlife

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Species List

Plants

PINOPSIDA (GYMNOSPERMS)

CONIFERS

Cupressaceae

Juniperus communis

Juniper Family

Juniper

Pinaceae

Larix decidua

Picea abies ssp. *abies*

Pinus sylvestris

Pine Family

European Larch

Spruce

Scot's Pine

Taxaceae

Taxus baccata

Yew Family

Yew

MAGNOLIOPSIDA (ANGIOSPERMS)

FLOWERING PLANTS

Aceraceae

Acer pseudoplatanus

Maple Family

Sycamore

Apiaceae (Umbelliferae)

Aegipodium podagaria

Anthriscus sylvestris

Heracleum sphondylium

Sanicula europaea

Carrot Family

Ground Elder

Cow Parsley

Hogweed

Sanicle

Aquifoliaceae

Ilex aquifolia

Holly Family

Holly

Araliaceae

Hedera helix agg

Ivy Family

Ivy

Asteraceae (Compositae)

Achillea millefolium

Bellis perennis

Centaurea nigra

Centaurea scabiosa

Cirsium palustre

Lapsana communis

Leucanthimum vulgare

Matricaria discoidea

Mycelis muralis

Senecio erucifolius

Senecio jacobae

Senecio vulgaris

Sonchus oleraceus

Taraxacum agg

Tragapogon pratensis

Daisy Family

Yarrow

Daisy

Knapweed

Greater Knapweed

Marsh Thistle

Nipplewort

Ox-eye Daisy

Pineapple Weed

Wall Lettuce

Hoary Ragwort

Ragwort

Groudsel

Smooth Sowthistle

Dandelion

Goatsbeard

Betulaceae (Corylaceae)

Betula pendula

Birch Family

Silver Birch

Boraginaceae

Anchusa arvensis
Echium vulgare
Myosotis arvensis
Cynoglossum officinale

Brassicaceae (Cruciferae)

Alliaria petiolata
Arabidopsis thaliana
Capsella bursa-pastoris
Sinapis arvensis

Caprifoliaceae

Lonicera periclymenum
Sambucus nigra
Viburnum lantana
Viburnum opulus

Caryophyllaceae

A. serpyllifolia ssp. *serpyllifolia*
Cerastium fontanum
Gerastium glomeratum
Lychnis flos-cuculi
Silene dioica
Silene latifolia (*S. alba*)
Silene vulgaris

Celastraceae

Euonymus europaeus

Cistaceae

Helianthemum nummularium

Clusiaceae

Hypericum hirsutum
Hypericum perforatum

Convolvulaceae

Calystegia sepium
Convolvulus arvensis

Cornaceae

Cornus sanguinea

Corylaceae

Corylus avellana

Crassulaceae

Sedum acre

Cucurbitaceae

Bryonia dioica

Forget-me-not Family

Bugloss
Viper's Bugloss
Field Forget-me-not
Houndstongue

Cabbage Family

Garlic Mustard
Thale Cress
Shepherd's Purse
Charlock

Honeysuckle Family

Honeysuckle
Elder
Wayfaring Tree
Guelder Rose

Pink Family

Thyme-leaved Sandwort
Common Mouse-ear
Sticky Mouse-ear
Ragged Robin
Red Campion
White Campion
Bladder Campion

Spindle-tree Family

Spindle-tree

Rock-rose Family

Common Rockrose

St. John's-wort Family

Hairy St. John's-wort
Perforate St. John's-wort

Bindweed Family

Hedge Bindweed
Field Bindweed

Dogwood Family

Dogwood

Hazel Family

Hazel

Stonecrop Family

Biting Stonecrop

Cucumber Family

White Bryony

Dipsacaceae

Dipsacus fullonum
Knautia arvensis

Ericaceae

Calluna vulgaris
Erica tetralix

Euphorbiaceae

Euphorbia amygdaloides
Euphorbia peplus
Mercurialis perennis
Euphorbia exigua

Fabaceae (Leguminosae)

Anthyllis vulneraria
Hippocrepis comosa
Lathyrus pratensis
Lotus corniculatus
Lotus uliginosa
Medicago arabica
Medicago lupulina
Melilotus altissimus
Ononis repens
Trifolium campestre
Trifolium dubium
Trifolium pratense
Trifolium repens
Vicia cracca
Vicia sativa ssp. *segetalis*
Vicia sepium
Tetragonolobus maritimus
Trifolium ornithopodioides

Fagaceae

Carpinus betulus
Fagus sylvatica
Quercus robur

Geraniaceae

Erodium cicutarium
Geranium columbinum
Geranium dissectum
Geranium molle
Geranium robertianum

Lamiaceae (Labiatae)

Clinopodium acinos
Ballota nigra
Clinopodium vulgare
Lamium album
Lamium purpureum

Teasel Family

Teasel
 Field Scabious

Heath family

Heather
 Bell Heather

Spurge Family

Wood Spurge
 Petty Spurge
 Dog's Mercury
 Dwarf Spurge

Pea Family

Kidney Vetch
 Horseshoe Vetch
 Yellow Vetchling
 Bird's-foot Trefoil
 Large Bird's-foot Trefoil
 Spotted Medick
 Black Medick
 Ribbed Melilot
 Restharrow
 Hop Trefoil
 Lesser Yellow Trefoil
 Red Clover
 White Clover
 Tufted vetch
 Common Vetch
 Bush Vetch
 Dragons teeth
 Fenugreek

Oak & Beech Family

Hornbeam
 Beech
 Downy Oak

Geranium Family

Common Stork's-bill
 Long-stalked Crane's-bill
 Cut-leaved Crane's-bill
 Dove's-foot Crane's-bill
 Herb Robert

Dead-nettle Family

Basil Thyme
 Black Horehound
 Wild basil
 White Deadnettle
 Red Deadnettle

Oregano officinalis
Prunella vulgaris
Stachys sylvatica
Teucrium scorodonium
Thymus polytrichis
Lamium amplexicaule
Ajuga chamaepitys

Linaceae

Linum catharticum

Oleaceae

Fraxinus excelsior
Ligustrum vulgare

Onagraceae

Chamerion angustifolium
Epilobium hirsutum

Orobanchaceae

Orobanche elatior
Orobanche hederea

Oxalidaceae

Oxalis acetosella

Papaveraceae

Papaver rhoeas
Pavaver hybridum

Plantaginaceae

Plantago lanceolata
Plantago major
Plantago media

Polygalaceae

Polygala serpyllifolia
Polygala vulgaris

Polygonaceae

Rumex acetosa
Rumex crispus
Rumex obtusifolius
Rumex acetosella

Primulaceae

Primula veris

Ranunculaceae

Clematis vitalba
Ranunculus acris
Ranunculus bulbosus

Marjoram
Selfheal
Hedge Woundwort
Wood Sage
Wild Thyme
Henbit Deadnettle
Ground Pine

Flax Family

Purging or Fairy Flax

Olive Family

Ash
Wild Privet

Willowherb Family

Rosebay Willowherb
Hairy Willowherb

Broomrape Family

Knapweed Broomrape
Ivy Broomrape

Wood-sorrel Family

Wood-sorrel

Poppy Family

Corn Poppy
Rough Poppy

Plantain Family

Ribwort Plantain
Greater Plantain
Hoary or Lamb's-tail Plantain

Milkwort Family

Heath Milkwort
Common Milkwort

Knotweed Family

Sorrel
Curled Dock
Broad-leaved Dock
French Sorrel

Primrose Family

Cowslip

Buttercup Family

Old man's-beard
Meadow Buttercup
Bulbous Buttercup

Ranunculus repens
Aquilegia vulgaris

Creeping Buttercup
 Columbine

Resedaceae

Reseda lutea
Reseda luteola

Mignonette Family

Wild Mignonette
 Weld

Rhamnaceae

Rhamnus catharticus

Buckthorn Family

Buckthorn

Rosaceae

Crataegus monogyna
Fragaria vesca
Filipendula ulmaria
Filipendula vulgaris
Geum urbanum
Potentilla anserina
Potentilla erecta
Potentilla reptans
Prunus avium
Prunus spinosa
Rosa canina agg
Rubus caesius
Rubus fruticosus agg
Sanguisorba minor agg
Sorbus aria agg
Sorbus aucuparia

Rose Family

Hawthorn
 Wild Strawberry
 Meadowsweet
 Dropwort
 Wood Avens or Herb Bennet
 Silverweed
 Tormentil
 Creeping Cinquefoil
 Wild Cherry
 Blackthorn
 Dog Rose
 Dewberry
 Bramble
 Salad Burnet
 Whitebeam
 Rowan

Rubiaceae

Cruciata laevipes
Galium aparine
Galium mollugo
Galium verum
Galium saxatile
Sherardia arvensis

Bedstraw Family

Crosswort
 Clevers
 Hedge Bedstraw
 Ladies bedstraw
 Heath Bedstraw
 Field Maddar

Scrophulariaceae

Cymbalaria muralis
Digitalis purpurea
Melampyrum arvense
Odontites verna
Rhinanthus minor agg
Scrophularia auriculata
Verbascum nigrum
Veronica chamaedrys
Veronica serpyllifolia
Chaeorhinum minus

Figwort Family

Ivy-leaved Toadflax
 Foxglove
 Field Cow-wheat
 Red Bartsia
 Yellow Rattle
 Water Figwort
 Dark Mullien
 Germander Speedwell
 Thyme-leaved Speedwell
 Small Toadflax

Solanaceae

Solanum dulcamara

Nightshade Family

Bittersweet

Urticaceae*Parietaria judaica**Urtica dioica***Nettle Family**

Pelitory of the Wall

Common Nettle

Valerianaceae*Centranthus ruber**Valeriana dioica***Valerian Family**

Red Valerian

Marsh Valerian

Verbenaceae*Verbena officinalis***Vervain Family**

Vervain

Violaceae*Viola riviniana**Viola arvensis***Violet Family**

Common Dog Violet

Field pansy

Liliidae**(Monocotyledons)****Araceae***Arum maculatum***Arum Family**

Lords and Ladies

Dioscoreaceae*Tamus communis***Black Bryony Family**

Black Bryony

Iridaceae*Iris psuedocorus***Iris Family**

Yellow Flag

Liliaceae*Allium ursinum**Allium vineale**Ruscus aculeatus***Lily Family**

Ramsons

Wild Onion

Butcher's-broom

Orchidaceae*Anacamptis pyramidalis**Platanthera chlorantha**Cephalanthera damasonium**Cephalanthera longifolia**Dactylorhiza fuchsii**Dactylorhiza praetermissa**Dactylorhiza traunsteineri**Epipactis helleborine**Epipactis palustris**Gymnadenia conopsea**Herminium monorchis**Listera ovata**Neottia nidus-avis**Coeloglossum viride**Ophrys apifera**Ophrys insectifera**Orchis mascula***Orchid Family**

Pyramidal Orchid

Greater Butterfly-orchid

White Helleborine

Narrow-leaved Helleborine

Common Spotted Orchid

Southern Marsh Orchid

Narrow-leaved Marsh Orchid

Broad-leaved Helleborine

Marsh Helleborine

Fragrant Orchid

Musk Orchid

Twayblade

Birdsnest Orchid

Frog orchid

Bee Orchid

Fly Orchid

Early purple Orchid

Other Wildlife Noted:

Soprano Pipistrelle
Long Eared Bats

Daubenton Bats
Natterer's Bats

Common Pipistrelle

Barn Owl

Small blue
Silver Studded Blue

Six Belted Clearwing

Five Spot Burnet

Common Newt

Natterjack Toad

Common Lizard