

Wildlife of the Hampshire Downs

Naturetrek Tour Report

12 – 14 June 2015



Five-spot Burnet



Yew



Greater Butterfly Orchid



Leaves

Report & images compiled by Jon Stokes



Naturetrek Mingledown Barn Wolf's Lane Chawton Alton Hampshire GU34 3HJ UK

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

F: +44 (0)1962 736426

E: info@naturetrek.co.uk

W: www.naturetrek.co.uk

Tour Participants:

Jon Stokes

Naturetrek Leader

Together with Naturetrek clients

Day 1

Friday 12th June

The group met before dinner and we talked about the plans for the weekend, and then sat down to a great dinner. After dinner, we set off and travelled a few miles north towards Odiham. Our first stop was to look at Odiham Common, an old wood-pasture common covered in wildflowers but particularly Yellow Rattle and our first orchid - a Common Spotted.

Our next stop was a wet flush where, amid Common Spotted Orchids, Hemlock Water Dropwort and Ragged Robin, both Southern Marsh Orchid and the rare Narrow Leaved Marsh Orchid were growing.

Our last stop of the night was beside the Basingstoke Canal. Here Common Pipistrelle and Soprano Pipistrelles flew overhead, whilst Daubenton's Bats foraged around the surface of the water. Noctules called overhead and Natterer's Bats could be seen and heard flying around. This canal is one country's best spots for bats and their often continuous calls on the bat detector allowed the group to learn the different bat calls. One area of the canal had large numbers of swooping Daubenton's which were feeding low over the water and one Serotine shot past - our sixth bat species of the night. Then we retired back to the hotel and headed for bed.

Day 2

Saturday 13th June

The morning dawned dry but slightly overcast, as we headed off for our first stop - an amazingly ancient Yew. This amazing 3000-year-old tree is in an old churchyard, growing next to the much younger Norman church. Completely hollow and a natural work of art, this ancient organism is one of Hampshire's Green Monuments. Our next stop was to look at a Yew and Beech woodland - the natural climax community on the chalk. Here in the dense shade of the trees, few flowers manage to grow, but Herb-Paris and White Helleborines were in abundance.

Then we travelled onto a beautiful west facing slope where, amongst clouds of vetches, Greater Butterfly Orchid occurs in considerable number amongst Common Spotted Orchids, Twayblades and Fragrant Orchids, many of which were pure white this year. Wild Columbine glowed in the morning light and a few Early Purple Orchids were still in flower. We also found our first Bee Orchid of the day, tucked on a bank amongst an area of several hundred Greater Butterfly Orchids.

Our next stop was on Portsdown to see the extremely rare Field Cow-wheat. In the same place is a patch of Bee Orchids which are a mixture of the normal form and the much rarer variety 'Belgarium'. After collecting some sandwiches, we visited the family home of the leader on Portsdown Hill, where we had a cup of tea looking at this chalk downland garden with Bee Orchids, Pyramid Orchids, Small Blue and Common Blue butterflies. Then, over the garden hedge, we found more Bee Orchids, plus the beautiful Sainfoin.

In tall beech woodland where we found lots of White Helleborines, unfortunately the Birds-nest Orchids weren't obvious this year. So we then headed for another mixed woodland on the downs where, due to the late season, the spring orchids were in great shape with an excellent display of Sword-leaved Helleborines, White

Helleborines, Fly Orchids and Birds-nest Orchids in flower, whilst the Broad-leaved Helleborine was still in development. There was also a couple of the extremely rare hybrids between the Sword-leaved and White Helleborines. These special plants show the vigour that occurs with hybridisation, being nearly twice the height of either of the parent plants.

Returning to the hotel for another excellent dinner, our final outing of the day was to look for Badgers. Although this was not successful, it was fun travelling the narrow Hampshire lanes looking for these beautiful mammals.

Day 3

Sunday 14th June

Our first stop of the day was a roadside on a country lane where, under a large oak, 10+ Green-flowered Helleborines were growing. These weird orchids often have cleistogamous flowers which don't open and yet pollinate themselves. Heath Spotted Orchid followed next, then we set off for Noar Hill where the orchid profusion comprised thousands of Fragrant Orchids, Common Spotted Orchids and Pyramidal Orchids, along with Musk Orchids and Fly Orchids, three of which were stunning albino flowers. We also managed to find Dragon's Teeth, some more beautiful albino Fragrant Orchids and the beginnings of some Purple Helleborines.

Then we visited Beacon Hill where there were large numbers of Greater Butterfly and Common Spotted Orchids, and this downland was also covered in Rockrose, Wild Mignonette and huge quantities of vetches.

Travelling on to our next stop, we stopped briefly in a meadow which has Green-winged and Early Marsh Orchids, before we visited a small and unique woodland where Whitebeam and Rowan trees grow in proximity to the much rarer Wild Service trees. The effect of these three species living in close proximity, in this ecologically isolated spot, has been hybridisation between these trees. One hybrid is a Wild Service x Whitebeam where the only known trees are in the Wye Valley and in this small woodland. Another cross that has occurred here is a probable hybrid between Wild Service x Rowan. This has led to a unique tree which is currently being worked on genetically to determine its true identity.

Next we trekked onto the stunning Butser Hill where Common Spotted Orchids abounded, with some of the Early Purple Orchids still in full bloom. Amongst the turf, Wood Tiger moths fluttered around our feet with lots of Five-spot Burnet moths, many of which were the uncommon confluent form, where the spots have coalesced into one large red patch.

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 including 20 species of orchid.

Receive our e-newsletter

Join the Naturetrek e-mailing list and be the first to hear about new tours, additional departures and new dates, tour reports and special offers. Visit www.naturetrek.co.uk to sign up.

Species Lists

Plants

Scientific Name	Common Name
PINOPSIDA (GYMNOSPERMS)	CONIFERS
Cupressaceae <i>Juniperus communis</i>	Juniper Family Juniper
Pinaceae <i>Larix decidua</i> <i>Picea abies</i> subsp. <i>abies</i> <i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	Pine Family European Larch Norway Spruce Scot's Pine
Taxaceae <i>Taxus baccata</i>	Yew Family Yew
MAGNOLIOPSIDA (ANGIOSPERMS)	FLOWERING PLANTS
Aceraceae <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Maple Family Sycamore
Apiaceae (Umbelliferae) <i>Aegipodium podagaria</i> <i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i> <i>Heracleum sphondylium</i> <i>Sanicula europaea</i>	Carrot Family Ground Elder Cow Parsley Hogweed Sanicle
Aquifoliaceae <i>Ilex aquifolia</i>	Holly Family Holly
Araliaceae <i>Hedera helix</i> agg.	Ivy Family Ivy
Asteraceae (Compositae) <i>Achillea millefolium</i> <i>Bellis perennis</i> <i>Centaurea nigra</i> <i>Centaurea scabiosa</i> <i>Cirsium palustre</i> <i>Lapsana communis</i> <i>Leucanthimum vulgare</i> <i>Matricaria discoidea</i> <i>Mycelis muralis</i> <i>Senecio erucifolius</i> <i>Senecio jacobea</i> <i>Senecio vulgaris</i> <i>Sonchus oleraceus</i> <i>Taraxacum</i> agg. <i>Tragapogon pratensis</i>	Daisy Family Yarrow Daisy Knapweed Greater Knapweed Marsh Thistle Nipplewort Ox-eye Daisy Pineapple Weed Wall Lettuce Hoary Ragwort Ragwort Groudsel Smooth Sowthistle Dandelion Goat's-beard
Betulaceae (Corylaceae) <i>Betula pendula</i>	Birch Family Silver Birch
Boraginaceae <i>Anchusa arvensis</i> <i>Echium vulgare</i> <i>Myosotis arvensis</i>	Forget-me-not Family Bugloss Viper's Bugloss Field Forget-me-not
Brassicaceae (Cruciferae) <i>Alliaria petiolata</i> <i>Arabidopsis thaliana</i> <i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i> <i>Sinapis arvensis</i>	Cabbage Family Garlic Mustard Thale Cress Shepherd's Purse Charlock

Scientific Name**Common Name****Caprifoliaceae**

Lonicera periclymenum
Sambucus nigra
Viburnum lantana
Viburnum opulus

Honeysuckle Family

Honeysuckle
 Elder
 Wayfaring Tree
 Guelder Rose

Caryophyllaceae

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

Pink Family

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

Celastraceae

Euonymus europaeus

Spindle-tree Family

Spindle-tree

Cistaceae

Helianthemum nummularium

Rock-rose Family

Common Rockrose

Clusiaceae

Hypericum hirsutum
Hypericum perforatum

St. John's-wort Family

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

Convolvulaceae

Calystegia sepium
Convolvulus arvensis

Bindweed Family

Hedge Bindweed
 Field Bindweed

Cornaceae

Cornus sanguinea

Dogwood Family

Dogwood

Corylaceae

Corylus avellana

Hazel Family

Hazel

Crassulaceae

Sedum acre

Stonecrop Family

Biting Stonecrop

Cucurbitaceae

Bryonia dioica

Cucumber Family

White Bryony

Dipsacaceae

Dipsacus fullonum
Knautia arvensis

Teasel Family

Teasel
 Field Scabious

Ericaceae

Calluna vulgaris
Erica tetralix

Heath family

Heather
 Bell Heather

Euphorbiaceae

Euphorbia amygdaloides
Euphorbia peplus
Mercurialis perennis
Euphorbia exigua

Spurge Family

Wood Spurge
 Petty Spurge
 Dog's Mercury
 Dwarf Spurge

Fabaceae (Leguminosae)

Anthyllis vulneraria
Hippocrepis comosa
Lathyrus pratensis
Lotus corniculatus
Lotus (Tetragonolobus) maritimus
Lotus pedunculatus (uliginosus)
Medicago arabica
Medicago lupulina
Melilotus altissimus
Ononis repens

Pea Family

Kidney Vetch
 Horseshoe Vetch
 Yellow Vetchling
 Bird's-foot Trefoil
 Dragon's Teeth
 Large Bird's-foot Trefoil
 Spotted Medick
 Black Medick
 Ribbed Melilot
 Restharrow

Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Trifolium campestre</i>	Hop Trefoil
<i>Trifolium dubium</i>	Lesser Yellow Trefoil
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red Clover
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White Clover
<i>Vicia cracca</i>	Tufted vetch
<i>Vicia sativa</i> subsp. <i>segetalis</i>	Common Vetch
<i>Vicia sepium</i>	Bush Vetch
Fagaceae	Oak & Beech Family
<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	Hornbeam
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	Beech
<i>Quercus robur</i>	English Oak
Geraniaceae	Geranium Family
<i>Erodium cicutarium</i>	Common Stork's-bill
<i>Geranium columbinum</i>	Long-stalked Crane's-bill
<i>Geranium dissectum</i>	Cut-leaved Crane's-bill
<i>Geranium molle</i>	Dove's-foot Crane's-bill
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb Robert
Lamiaceae (Labiatae)	Dead-nettle Family
<i>Ajuga chamaepitys</i>	Ground Pine
<i>Ballota nigra</i>	Black Horehound
<i>Clinopodium acinos</i>	Basil Thyme
<i>Clinopodium vulgare</i>	Wild Basil
<i>Lamium album</i>	White Deadnettle
<i>Lamium amplexicaule</i>	Henbit Deadnettle
<i>Lamium purpureum</i>	Red Deadnettle
<i>Oregano officinalis</i>	Marjoram
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Selfheal
<i>Stachys sylvatica</i>	Hedge Woundwort
<i>Teucrium scorodonium</i>	Wood Sage
<i>Thymus polytrichus</i>	Wild Thyme
Linaceae	Flax Family
<i>Linum catharticum</i>	Purging or Fairy Flax
Oleaceae	Olive Family
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash
<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>	Wild Privet
Onagraceae	Willowherb Family
<i>Chamerion angustifolium</i>	Rosebay Willowherb
<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>	Hairy Willowherb
Orobanchaceae	Broomrape Family
<i>Orobanche elatior</i>	Knapweed Broomrape
<i>Orobanche hederaceae</i>	Ivy Broomrape
Oxalidaceae	Wood-sorrel Family
<i>Oxalis acetosella</i>	Wood-sorrel
Papaveraceae	Poppy Family
<i>Glaucium flavum</i>	Yellow Horned Poppy
<i>Papaver rhoeas</i>	Corn Poppy
<i>Pavaver hybridum</i>	Rough Poppy
Plantaginaceae	Plantain Family
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain
<i>Plantago major</i>	Greater Plantain
<i>Plantago media</i>	Hoary or Lamb's-tail Plantain
Polygalaceae	Milkwort Family
<i>Polygala serpyllifolia</i>	Heath Milkwort
<i>Polygala vulgaris</i>	Common Milkwort

Scientific Name	Common Name
Polygonaceae	Knotweed Family
<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Sorrel
<i>Rumex acetosella</i>	French Sorrel
<i>Rumex crispus</i>	Curled Dock
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad-leaved Dock
Primulaceae	Primrose Family
<i>Primula veris</i>	Cowslip
Ranunculaceae	Buttercup Family
<i>Aquilegia vulgaris</i>	Columbine
<i>Clematis vitalba</i>	Old-man's-beard
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow Buttercup
<i>Ranunculus bulbosus</i>	Bulbous Buttercup
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup
Resedaceae	Mignonette Family
<i>Reseda lutea</i>	Wild Mignonette
<i>Reseda luteola</i>	Weld
Rhamnaceae	Buckthorn Family
<i>Rhamnus catharticus</i>	Buckthorn
Rosaceae	Rose Family
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn
<i>Fragaria vesca</i>	Wild Strawberry
<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>	Meadowsweet
<i>Filipendula vulgaris</i>	Dropwort
<i>Geum urbanum</i>	Wood Avens or Herb Bennet
<i>Potentilla anserina</i>	Silverweed
<i>Potentilla erecta</i>	Tormentil
<i>Potentilla reptans</i>	Creeping Cinquefoil
<i>Prunus avium</i>	Wild Cherry
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn
<i>Rosa canina</i> agg.	Dog Rose
<i>Rubus caesius</i>	Dewberry
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	Bramble
<i>Sanguisorba minor</i> agg.	Salad Burnet
<i>Sorbus aria</i> agg.	Whitebeam
<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	Rowan
<i>Sorbus torminalis</i>	Wild Service Tree
Rubiaceae	Bedstraw Family
<i>Cruciata laevipes</i>	Crosswort
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Cleavers
<i>Galium mollugo</i>	Hedge Bedstraw
<i>Galium verum</i>	Lady's Bedstraw
<i>Galium saxatile</i>	Heath Bedstraw
<i>Sheradia arvensis</i>	Field Madder
Scrophulariaceae	Figwort Family
<i>Chaenorhinum minus</i>	Small Toadflax
<i>Cymbalaria muralis</i>	Ivy-leaved Toadflax
<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	Foxglove
<i>Melampyrum arvense</i>	Field Cow-wheat
<i>Odontites verna</i>	Red Bartsia
<i>Rhinanthus minor</i> agg.	Yellow Rattle
<i>Scrophularia auriculata</i>	Water Figwort
<i>Verbascum nigrum</i>	Dark Mullein
<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>	Germander Speedwell
<i>Veronica serpyllifolia</i>	Thyme-leaved Speedwell
Solanaceae	Nightshade Family
<i>Solanum dulcamara</i>	Bittersweet

Scientific Name**Common Name****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 arvensis
Viola riviniana

Violet Family

Field Pansy
 Common Dog Violet

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 morio
Anacamptis pyramidalis
Platanthera chlorantha
Cephalanthera damasonium
Cephalanthera longifolia
Dactylorhiza fuchsii
Dactylorhiza praetermissa
Dactylorhiza incanata
Dactylorhiza maculata
Dactylorhiza traunsteineri
Epipactis helleborine
Epipactis purpurata
Epipactis phyllanthes
Gymnadenia conopsea
Herminium monorchis
Neottia (Listera) ovata
Neottia nidus-avis
Ophrys apifera
Ophrys insectifera
Orchis mascula

Orchid Family

Green Winged orchid
 Pyramidal Orchid
 Greater Butterfly-orchid
 White Helleborine
 Narrow-leaved Helleborine
 Common Spotted Orchid
 Southern Marsh Orchid
 Early Marsh Orchid
 Heath Spotted Orchid
 Narrow-leaved Marsh Orchid
 Broad-leaved Helleborine
 Purple Helleborine
 Green Flowered Helleborine
 Fragrant Orchid
 Musk Orchid
 Twayblade
 Birdsnest Orchid
 Bee Orchid
 Fly Orchid
 Early Purple Orchid

Other wildlife of note

Soprano Pipistrelle

Daubenton's Bat

Common Pipistrelle

Noctule Bat

Natterer's Bat

Serotine Bat

Small blue

Five-spot Burnet

Naturetrek Facebook

We are delighted to launch the Naturetrek Facebook page so that participants of Naturetrek tours can remain in touch after the holiday and share photos, comments and future travel plans.

Setting up a personal profile at www.facebook.com is quick, free and easy. The [Naturetrek Facebook page](#) is now live; do please pay us a visit!



Narrow-leaved Helleborine



Common Twayblade