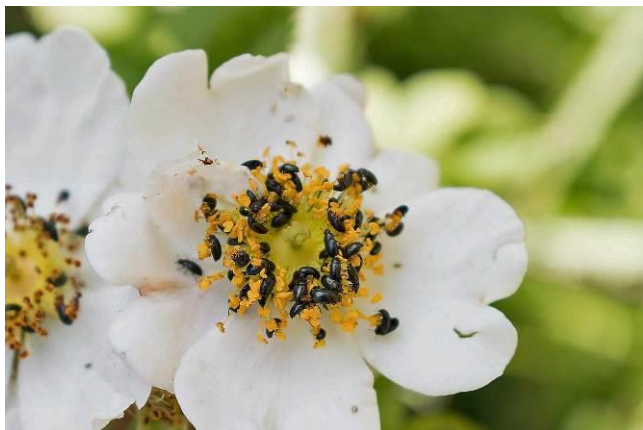


Wildlife of the Hampshire Downs

Naturetrek Tour Report

16 - 18 June 2017



Flower Beetles



Southern Marsh Orchid



White Fly Orchid



Yew

Report and images by Jon Stokes



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Tour participants: Jon Stokes (leader) with a group of eight Naturetrek clients

Day 1

Friday 16th June

The group met before dinner and we talked about the plans for the weekend, and then we sat down to a great dinner.

After dinner we set off and travelled a few miles north towards Odiham. Our first stop was a wet flush where, amid Common Spotted Orchids, Hemlock Water Dropwort, Ragged Robin and Southern Marsh Orchids were growing.

Our next stop of the night was beside the Basingstoke Canal. Here Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) flew overhead whilst Daubenton (*Myotis daubentonii*) bats foraged around the surface of the water. Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) bats displayed well, flying in large circles above us and were joined at one point by a Serotine bat (*Eptesicus serotinus*). Both Pipistrelle species were swooping around almost continuously. This canal is one of the country's best spots for bats and their often-continuous calls on the bat detector allowed the group to learn the different bat calls before we retired back to the hotel and headed for bed.

Day 2

Saturday 17th June

Today was predicated to be hot, and boy do we mean hot (the temperature heading into the 30-degree centigrade range) so our plans necessitated many short stops, with the chance to get out of the heat.

Our first stop was Noar Hill where the orchids were, as usual, in profusion; comprising thousands of Fragrant Orchids, Common Spotted Orchids, Common Twayblades and Pyramidal Orchids, along with Musk Orchids and Fly Orchids, some of which were stunning albino flowers. We also managed to find the rare Dragon's Teeth vetch and simply an abundance of spring flowers.

Our next stop was the top of Butser Hill where Common Spotted Orchids were abundant, but all the Early Purple Orchids were just seed heads due to the long hot spring. Flying around us in profusion were large fat-bodied and uncommon Five Spot Burnet moths (*Zygaena trifolii*), who found it much easier to fly than the paraglider – who remained firmly on the ground in the heat of the day.

Next stop was on Portsdown Hill in the family garden of the leader, where Pyramidal and Common Spotted Orchids abounded, but where there was also a cup of tea and a few sandwiches. After this we looked at the rare Spindle Bracket (*Phylloporia ribis*), a fungi growing from the base of an old Spindle tree, plus Wild Asparagus, which grows on the hill. Then we saw the legally protected Field Cow-wheat, growing close to a patch of Bee Orchids which are a mixture of the normal form and the much rarer variety 'Belgarium', whilst nearby another unusual plant was the yellow form of Ivy Broomrape.

On top of Portsdown, an area is being managed in a traditional method for arable weeds of the chalk, and here Rough Poppy grew in abundance whilst Swift screamed overhead and we found a much needed ice-cream before looking at the rare Sickie Medick – which greatly pleased some of the group who were 'Medick' fans!

Then we made a bizarre stop beside a main road where, on hedgerow Elms, is a healthy population of White-letter Hairstreaks (*Satyrrium w-album*) which showed well to all the group – despite some frankly curious glances from the passing motorists!

Then we went to a small downland on the border with Sussex, where a sole Greater Butterfly Orchid was the only remaining representative of its species (that long hot spring again), amongst Common Spotted Orchids and Fragrant Orchids. Wild Columbine also grows on the site and was looking stunning, as was the sinking sun at the end of a beautiful day.

On our way back to the hotel in the cooling evening we stopped at an amazing ancient Yew. This 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.

Finally it was back to our hotel for dinner and a catch up on an excellent day on the Downs.

Day 3

Sunday 18th June

Our first stop of the day was Frensham Great Pond, a bit of a diversion from the chalk on the neighbouring heathland. Here a hoped for Red-footed Falcon had disappeared, but the group still saw some excellent birds with good displays from Dartford Warblers (*Sylvia undata*), although their elusive behaviour did mean that one of the group couldn't see them, lots of Woodlarks (*Lullula arborea*), one of which sat in a nearby tree and sang its heart out, and a superb Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (*Dryobates minor*), which showed itself in an old dead tree. Around our feet many Ruby-tailed Wasps were hunting and, in the pond, hundreds of people were swimming to get out of the extreme heat, even by 10.30am.

Ice-cream followed and then we set off for some shade in an ancient Beech hanger, where we found a superb Bird's-nest Orchid. We then visited a second mixed woodland on the downs where the Sword-leaved Helleborines and White Helleborines had unfortunately gone over, but the Fly Orchids and Bird's-nest Orchids were still just in flower, whilst the Broad-leaved Helleborine was still in development. There were 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.

After our lunch in the cool of the woods we ventured out for our last stop of the day on top of Old Winchester Hill which was covered in Common Spotted Orchids, and the downland was also covered in Rockrose, Wild Mignonette and huge quantities of vetches.

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 13 species of orchid and five species of bat.

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Species Lists

Flora

Scientific Name

Common Name

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)

Ground Elder

Cow Parsley

Hogweed

Carrot Family

Aegipodium podagaria

Anthriscus sylvestris

Heracleum sphondylium

Sanicula europaea

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

Scientific Name**Common Name****Boraginaceae**

Anchusa arvensis
Echium vulgare
Myosotis arvensis

Forget-me-not Family

Bugloss
 Viper's Bugloss
 Field Forget-me-not

Brassicaceae (Cruciferae)

Alliaria petiolata
Arabidopsis thaliana
Capsella bursa-pastoris
Sinapis arvensis

Cabbage Family

Garlic Mustard
 Thale Cress
 Shepherd's Purse
 Charlock

Caprifoliaceae

Lonicera perichlymenum
Sambucus nigra
Viburnum lantana
Viburnum opulus

Honeysuckle Family

Honeysuckle
 Elder
 Wayfaring Tree
 Guelder Rose

Caryophyllaceae

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

Pink Family

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

Celastraceae

Euonymus europaeus

Spindle-tree Family

Spindle-tree

Cistaceae

Helianthum 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

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

Dragon's Teeth

Fagaceae*Carpinus betulus**Fagus sylvatica**Quercus robur***Oak & Beech Family**

Hornbeam

Beech

Downy Oak

Geraniaceae*Erodium cicutarium**Geranium columbinum**Geranium dissectum**Geranium molle**Geranium robertianum***Geranium Family**

Common Stork's-bill

Long-stalked Crane's-bill

Cut-leaved Crane's-bill

Dove's-foot Crane's-bill

Herb Robert

Lamiaceae (Labiatae)*Clinopodium acinos**Ballota nigra**Clinopodium vulgare**Lamium album**Lamium purpureum**Oregano officinalis**Prunella vulgaris**Stachys sylvatica**Teucrium scorodonium**Thymus polytrichis***Dead-nettle Family**

Basil Thyme

Black Horehound

Wild basil

White Deadnettle

Red Deadnettle

Marjoram

Selfheal

Hedge Woundwort

Wood Sage

Wild Thyme

Linaceae*Linum catharticum***Flax Family**

Purging or Fairy Flax

Scientific Name**Common Name****Oleaceae***Fraxinus excelsior**Ligustrum vulgare***Olive Family**

Ash

Wild Privet

Onagraceae*Chamerion angustifolium**Epilobium hirsutum***Willowherb Family**

Rosebay Willowherb

Hairy Willowherb

Orobanchaceae*Orobanche elatior**Orobanche hederea***Broomrape Family**

Knapweed Broomrape

Ivy Broomrape

Oxalidaceae*Oxalis acetosella***Wood-sorrel Family**

Wood-sorrel

Papaveraceae*Papaver rhoeas**Pavaver hybridum**Glaucium flavum***Poppy Family**

Corn Poppy

Rough Poppy

Plantaginaceae*Plantago lanceolata**Plantago major**Plantago media***Plantain Family**

Ribwort Plantain

Greater Plantain

Hoary or Lamb's-tail Plantain

Polygalaceae*Polygala serpyllifolia**Polygala vulgaris***Milkwort Family**

Heath Milkwort

Common Milkwort

Polygonaceae*Rumex acetosa**Rumex crispus**Rumex obtusifolius**Rumex acetosella***Knotweed Family**

Sorrel

Curled Dock

Broad-leaved Dock

French Sorrel

Primulaceae*Primula veris***Primrose Family**

Cowslip

Ranunculaceae*Clematis vitalba**Ranunculus acris**Ranunculus bulbosus**Ranunculus repens**Aquilegia vulgaris***Buttercup Family**

Old man's-beard

Meadow Buttercup

Bulbous Buttercup

Creeping Buttercup

Columbine

Resedaceae*Reseda lutea**Reseda luteola***Mignonette Family**

Wild Mignonette

Weld

Rhamnaceae*Rhamnus catharticus***Buckthorn Family**

Buckthorn

Rosaceae*Crataegus monogyna**Fragaria vesca***Rose Family**

Hawthorn

Wild Strawberry

Scientific Name

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
Sorbus torminalis

Rubiaceae

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

Scrophulariaceae

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

Solanaceae

Solanum dulcamara

Urticaceae

Parietaria judaica
Urtica dioica

Valerianaceae

Centranthus ruber
Valeriana dioica

Verbenaceae

Verbena officinalis

Violaceae

Viola riviniana
Viola arvensis

Common Name

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

Bedstraw Family

Crosswort
 Clevers
 Hedge Bedstraw
 Ladies bedstraw
 Heath Bedstraw
 Field Madder

Figwort Family

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

Nightshade Family

Bittersweet

Nettle Family

Pelitory of the Wall
 Common Nettle

Valerian Family

Red Valerian
 Marsh Valerian

Vervain Family

Vervain

Violet Family

Common Dog Violet
 Field pansy

Scientific Name**Common Name****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 ursinus**Allium vineale**Ruscus aculeatus***Lily Family**

Ramsons

Wild Onion

Butcher's-broom

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

Pyramidal Orchid

Greater Butterfly-orchid

White Helleborine

Common Spotted Orchid

Southern Marsh Orchid

Broad-leaved Helleborine

Fragrant Orchid

Musk Orchid

Twayblade

Bird's-nest Orchid

Bee Orchid

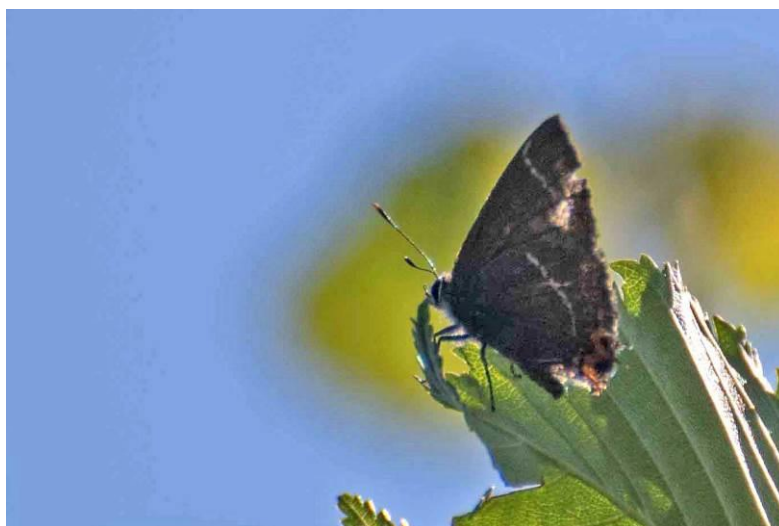
Fly Orchid

Early Purple Orchid

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White-letter Hairstreak