

Wildlife of the Hampshire Downs

Naturetrek Tour Report

14 - 16 June 2019



Fragrant Orchid (Scarlet Tiger moth)



Fly Orchid



Greater Butterfly Orchid



Field Cow-wheat

Report compiled by Jon Stokes
Images courtesy of Sue Harris



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

Day 1

Friday 14th June

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

After dinner, we set off and travelled a few miles north towards Odiham. Our first stop was a wet flush where Hemlock Water Dropwort and Ragged Robin were growing, alongside Ghost Moths flying around the hedges.

Our next stop of the night was beside the Basingstoke Canal. Here Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and Soprano Pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) flew overhead whilst Daubenton (*Myotis daubentonii*) bats foraged around the surface of the water. Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) bats called overhead and were joined at one point by a Serotine bat (*Eptesicus serotinus*). In the river were loads of Trout and we spotted a large Signal Crayfish on the river bed.

This canal is one of the country's best spots for bats and calls on the bat detector allowed the group to learn the different bat calls before we retired back to the hotel (seeing a Barn Owl en route) and headed for bed.

Day 2

Saturday 15th June

Our first stop of the day was to see an amazing ancient Yew (c.3,000-years old) growing in an old churchyard, 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.

Then we went to look at Beacon Hill – a national nature reserve where the view of the Hampshire chalk landscape was stunning and where the plants gave us a flavour of the 'yellow' nature of the chalk downland flora.

From here we went to a dark Beech woodland where there are literally thousands of Bird's Nest Orchids and White Helleborines. Bird's Nest Orchid was a 'must find' for one of the group - and this wood never fails to provide and impress.

Next stop was on Portsdown Hill in the family garden of the leader, where Pyramid and Common Spotted Orchids abound, but where there was also a cup of tea and a few sandwiches, despite the rain.

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

Returning back to Portsdown we returned to the leader's garden again, where for reasons beyond Jon's understanding a colony of European Wall Lizards have become established. We hadn't seen these on the first visit - due to the rain, but as the weather had now cleared this time one showed extremely well to the whole group.

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 and we also had time for a much needed Ice-Cream.

Our last stop today was Noar Hill where the orchids were as usual in profusion, comprising thousands of Fragrant Orchids, Common Spotted Orchids, Common Twayblades, and Pyramid Orchids along with Musk Orchids and Fly Orchids. However the rain then set in and we retired to the hotel for dinner and a catch up after an excellent day on the Downs.

Day 3

Sunday 16th June

Our first stop of the day was Frensham Great Pond, which involved a bit of a diversion from the chalk onto the neighbouring heathland. We were delayed slightly by torrential rain and a massive fallen beech tree which had blocked the road and necessitated some pictures and much discussion about highway tree management.

As the rain cleared we arrived at Frensham Pond and the group saw some excellent birds, with good displays from Dartford Warblers (*Sylvia undata*) (although their elusive behaviour always makes them tricky), and lots of Woodlarks (*Lullula arborea*) - one of which perched in a nearby tree and sang its heart out.

After our lunch in the woods we ventured to a small downland area on the border with Sussex, where a few Greater Butterfly Orchid were the only remaining representatives of the species, amongst Common Spotted Orchids and Fragrant Orchids. Wild Columbine also grows on the site and was looking stunning, whilst the Broad-leaved Helleborine was still in development.

Then our last 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 dry spring. Flying around us were large fat bodied and uncommon Five Spot Burnet moths (*Zygaena trifolii*) which were a great way to conclude the trip.

So that concluded our weekend and after the short trip back to the hotel, we went on our separate ways, pleased that we had seen some of Hampshire's finest wildlife including 12 species of orchid and 5 species of bat.

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Species Lists

Scientific Name

Common Name

PINOPSIDA (GYMNOSPERMS)

CONIFERS

Cupressaceae

Juniper Family

Juniperus communis

Juniper

Pinaceae

Pine Family

Larix decidua

European Larch

Picea abies ssp. *Abies*

Spruce

Pinus sylvestris

Scot's Pine

Taxaceae

Yew Family

Taxus baccata

Yew

MAGNOLIOPSIDA (ANGIOSPERMS)

FLOWERING PLANTS

Aceraceae

Maple Family

Acer pseudoplatanus

Sycamore

Apiaceae (Umbelliferae)

Carrot Family

Aegipodium podagaria

Ground Elder

Anthriscus sylvestris

Cow Parsley

Heracleum sphondylium

Hogweed

Sanicula europaea

Aquifoliaceae

Holly Family

Ilex aquifolia

Holly

Araliaceae

Ivy Family

Hedera helix agg

Ivy

Asteraceae (Compositae)

Daisy Family

Achillea millefolium

Yarrow

Bellis perennis

Daisy

Centaurea nigra

Knapweed

Centaurea scabiosa

Greater Knapweed

Cirsium palustre

Marsh Thistle

Lapsana communis

Nipplewort

Leucanthimum vulgare

Ox-eye Daisy

Matricaria discoidea

Pineapple Weed

Mycelis muralis

Wall Lettuce

Senecio erucifolius

Hoary Ragwort

Scientific Name**Common Name**

Senecio jacobae
Senecio vulgaris
Sonchus oleraceus
Taraxacum agg
Tragapogon pratensis

Ragwort
 Groudsel
 Smooth Sowthistle
 Dandelion
 Goatsbeard

Betulaceae (Corylaceae)**Birch Family**

Betula pendula

Silver Birch

Boraginaceae**Forget-me-not Family**

Anchusa arvensis
Echium vulgare
Myosotis arvensis

Bugloss
 Viper's Bugloss
 Field Forget-me-not

Brassicaceae (Cruciferae)**Cabbage Family**

Alliaria petiolata
Arabidopsis thaliana
Capsella bursa-pastoris
Sinapis arvensis

Garlic Mustard
 Thale Cress
 Shepherd's Purse
 Charlock

Caprifoliaceae

Lonicera periclymenum
Sambucus nigra
Viburnum lantana
Viburnum opulus

Honeysuckle Family

Honeysuckle
 Elder
 Wayfaring Tree
 Guelder Rose

Caryophyllaceae**Pink Family**

Lychnis flos-cuculi
Silene dioica
Silene latifolia (S.alba)
Silene vulgaris

Ragged Robin
 Red Campion
 White Campion
 Bladder Campion

Celastraceae**Spindle-tree Family**

Euonymus europaeus

Spindle-tree

Cistaceae**Rock-rose Family**

Helianthium nummularium

Common Rockrose

Clusiaceae**St. John's-wort Family**

Hypericum hirsutum
Hypericum perforatum

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

Convolvulaceae**Bindweed Family**

Calystegia sepium
Convolvulus arvensis

Hedge Bindweed
 Field Bindweed

Scientific Name	Common Name
Cornaceae	
Dogwood Family	
<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	Dogwood
Corylaceae	
Hazel Family	
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>
Crassulaceae	
Stonecrop Family	
<i>Sedum acre</i>	Biting Stonecrop
Cucurbitaceae	
Cucumber Family	
<i>Bryonia dioica</i>	White Bryony
Dipsacaceae	
Teasel Family	
<i>Dipsacus fullonum</i>	Teasel
<i>Knautia arvensis</i>	Field Scabious
Ericaceae	
Heath family	
<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>	Heather
<i>Erica tetralix</i>	Bell Heather
Euphorbiaceae	
Spurge Family	
<i>Euphorbia amygdaloides</i>	Wood Spurge
<i>Euphorbia peplus</i>	Petty Spurge
<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>	Dog's Mercury
<i>Euphorbia exigua</i>	Dwarf Spurge
Fabaceae (Leguminosae)	
Pea Family	
<i>Anthyllis vulneraria</i>	Kidney Vetch
<i>Hippocrepis comosa</i>	Horseshoe Vetch
<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>	Yellow Vetchling
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Bird's-foot Trefoil
<i>Lotus uliginosa</i>	Large Bird's-foot Trefoil
<i>Medicago arabica</i>	Spotted Medick
<i>Medicago lupulina</i>	Black Medick
<i>Melilotus altissimus</i>	Ribbed melilot
<i>Ononis repens</i>	Restharrow
<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> ssp. <i>segetalis</i>	Common Vetch
<i>Vicia sepium</i>	Bush Vetch

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

Hornbeam

Beech

Downy Oak

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

Common Stork's-bill

Long-stalked Crane's-bill

Cut-leaved Crane's-bill

Dove's-foot Crane's-bill

Herb Robert

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

Basil Thyme

Black Horehound

Wild basil

White Deadnettle

Red Deadnettle

Marjoram

Selfheal

Hedge Woundwort

Wood Sage

Wild Thyme

Linaceae**Flax Family***Linum catharticum*

Purging or Fairy Flax

Oleaceae**Olive Family***Fraxinus excelsior**Ligustrum vulgare*

Ash

Wild Privet

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

Rosebay Willowherb

Hairy Willowherb

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

Knapweed Broomrape

Ivy Broomrape

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

Wood-sorrel

Papaveraceae**Poppy Family**

Corn Poppy

Rough Poppy

*Papaver rhoeas**Pavaver hybridum**Glaucium flavum*

Scientific Name**Common Name****Plantaginaceae****Plantain Family***Plantago lanceolata**Plantago majus**Plantago media*

Ribwort Plantain

Greater Plantain

Hoary or Lamb's-tail Plantain

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

Heath Milkwort

Common Milkwort

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

Sorrel

Curled Dock

Broad-leaved Dock

French Sorrel

Primulaceae**Primrose Family***Primula veris*

Cowslip

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

Old man's-beard

Meadow Buttercup

Bulbous Buttercup

Creeping Buttercup

Columbine

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

Wild Mignonette

Weld

Rhamnaceae**Buckthorn Family***Rhamnus catharticus*

Buckthorn

Rosaceae**Rose Family***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*

Hawthorn

Wild Strawberry

Meadowsweet

Dropwort

Wood Avens or Herb Bennet

Silverweed

Tormentil

Creeping Cinquefoil

Wild Cherry

Blackthorn

Dog Rose

Dewberry

Scientific Name**Common Name**

Rubus fruticosus agg
Sanguisorba minor agg
Sorbus aria agg
Sorbus aucuparia
Sorbus torminalis

Bramble
 Salad Burnet
 Whitebeam
 Rowan
 Wild Service Tree

Rubiaceae**Bedstraw Family**

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

Crosswort
 Clevers
 Hedge Bedstraw
 Ladies bedstraw
 Heath Bedstraw
 Field Madder

Scrophulariaceae**Figwort Family**

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

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

Solanaceae**Nightshade Family**

Solanum dulcamara

Bittersweet

Urticaceae**Nettle Family**

Parietaria judaica
Urtica dioica

Pelitory of the Wall
 Common Nettle

Valerianaceae**Valerian Family**

Centranthus ruber
Valeriana dioica

Red Valerian
 Marsh Valerian

Verbenaceae**Vervain Family**

Verbena officinalis

Vervain

Violaceae**Violet Family**

Viola riviniana
Viola arvensis

Common Dog Violet
 Field pansy

Scientific Name	Common Name
Araceae	
Arum Family	
<i>Arum maculatum</i>	Lords and Ladies
Dioscoreaceae	
Black Bryony Family	
<i>Tamus communis</i>	Black Bryony
Iridaceae	
Iris Family	
<i>Iris psuedocorus</i>	Yellow Flag
Liliaceae	
Lily Family	
<i>Allium ursinus</i>	Ramsons
<i>Allium vineale</i>	Wild Onion
<i>Ruscus aculeatus</i>	Butcher's-broom
Orchidaceae	
Orchid Family	
<i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>	Pyramidal Orchid
<i>Platanthera chlorantha</i>	Greater Butterfly-orchid
<i>Cephalanthera damasonium</i>	White Helleborine
<i>Dactylorhiza fuchsii</i>	Common Spotted Orchid
<i>Epipactis helleborine</i>	Broad-leaved Helleborine
<i>Gymnadenia conopsea</i>	Fragrant Orchid
<i>Herminium monorchis</i>	Musk Orchid
<i>Listera ovata</i>	Twayblade
<i>Neottia nidus-avis</i>	Birdsnest Orchid
<i>Ophrys apifera</i>	Bee Orchid
<i>Ophrys insectifera</i>	Fly Orchid
<i>Orchis mascula</i>	Early purple Orchid

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Birds (✓=recorded but not counted; H = heard only)