

Friends of Avon Meadows

Newsletter of the Friends of Avon Meadows



Spring has arrived at last on Avon Meadows.

Photo: Richard Stott

Newsletter No: 31

April 2018

General Data Protection Regulations

VERY IMPORTANT!

Many thanks to all those who have taken the trouble to confirm that we can hold their personal data.

The new regulations come into force in May 2018: **We need your written permission to hold your data.** Without this we cannot send you your Newsletter!!!

A form has been sent out with this Newsletter which I would be most grateful if **you would fill in and return** so that we fulfil the requirements of the regulations.

Member's Photographs



Our first brood (9) of Mallard ducklings on 5 April.

Photo: Jeff Steady

Progress on the Wetland

Site Management

It has been a busy winter and early spring. Reed cutting was completed in good time this year and the water level on the main pool has been raised to its maximum thanks to a wet March.

Some essential tree management of old willows along Piddle Brook has taken place and the sharp-eyed will have noticed two Barn Owl nest boxes and a bat box have been installed with more to go. Nature being what it is two pairs of Stock Doves are occupying the owl nest boxes!

The hedge along the north boundary of the mini-football pitch has been laid by our volunteers and they have made a remarkably neat job of it.

The Sand Martin bank is complete providing 27 desirable residences for martins. So far no takers and it may take a couple of years before they are occupied.



Farwell to Liz Etheridge with thanks for the tremendous job she did for Avon Meadows. From L to R: Ken, Richard, Liz, Frank, Heather, Bob, Val and Charles.

Contamination Incident

On the morning of 14 February the contractor carrying out tree work along Piddle Brook noticed a lot of dead fish in the brook. The Environment Agency was notified who had technical staff on site within 30 minutes. We understand that the source of contamination was located, leakage stopped and appropriate action is being taken.

Funding

This is always an important issue for small organisations and we are delighted to report that the Friends of Avon Meadows has been awarded a grant of £400 by Pershore Town Council. They are very grateful for this award, the more so as it indicates the Council's continued support for our efforts.

Surveys and Sightings

BIRDS

New Birds

There have been three new species for Avon Meadows bringing the total recorded so far to 126. On 15 March an adult **Iceland Gull** flew over during one of our bird counts. This species is a scarce winter visitor in Worcestershire.

On 5 April a **Hawfinch** turned up. There has been an exceptional number of Hawfinches arriving in the country from Europe this winter and they have spread into areas they might not normally go. They are secretive birds and not easy to find particularly in summer when they nest in tall Hornbeam trees.

Finally, in the early morning of 15 April an **Egyptian Goose** appeared on the scrape. I watched it fly off at 09h05 so it did not stay long. It seems that our scrape is being used by a number of water birds as an overnight roost so it is the early bird watcher that gets the bird! This species was introduced into England in the 18th century from Africa and has managed to hang on with small breeding populations in several parts of the country.

Weekly Bird Count

The count continues through all sorts of weather including falling snow! Many thanks to the enthusiasm of the small band of bird recorders that make this possible.

In the last newsletter it was mentioned that our monthly species count for January was up and so it has been for February and March. This is likely to be due in part to the fact that over time there is a great variety of birds on Avon Meadows, but also that there are more observers and the average skill level is increasing. That said, the species count for the year to date is 98 compared with 100 for the whole of 2017. It does not matter how observant you are the birds have to be there!

Winter birds have left now and then we wait for the summer arrivals. Some birds move locally to their preferred breeding sites (e.g. Treecreepers last seen on 22 March) and some move away altogether (our last Stonechat was seen on 9 March).

The first Cuckoo was heard on Avon Meadows on 14 April but



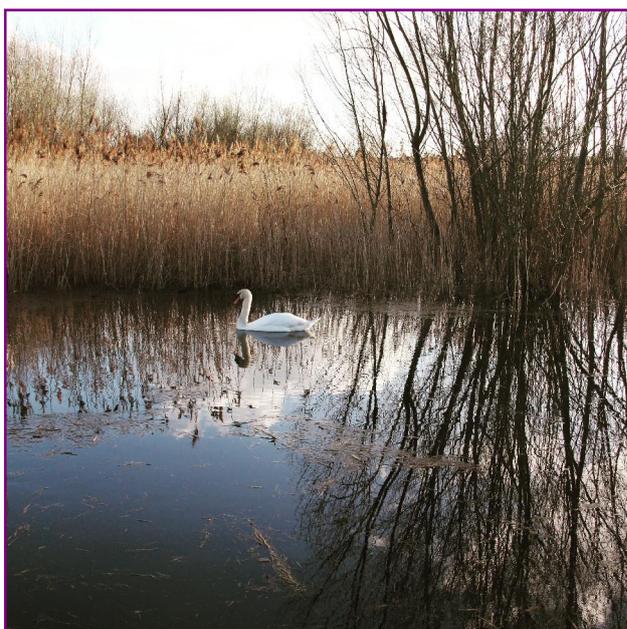
When the water level on the main pool is lowered in winter there is enough exposed mud to tempt the Water Rails into the open. Jeff caught this one very nicely in morning sun.
Photo: Jeff Steady

it continued through and it took another week before one started calling regularly on the Wetland. Their arrival time is synched with the arrival of Reed Warblers which are now buzzing in the reed beds. Swallows, House Martins and Sand Martins have all been recorded this year but the numbers are low so far. Swifts have just arrived but were preceded by the other warblers, Sedge Warbler, Common Whitethroat, Lesser Whitethroat, Chiffchaff and Blackcap.

Mallard are always first off the mark with chicks, at present there are two broods dodging between the scrape and the main pool. The pair of Mute Swans that are usually on the main pool in summer have set up a nest and we look forward to May for the cygnets to appear.

MOTHS

Our first Moth Night took place on 20 April taking advantage of a fine night. We logged a total of 7 species of which The Chestnut was new for us—now 365 moth species!



Mute Swan near the main pool in late afternoon.

Photo: Janet Stott ARPS

Weather



First snow and more snow! The main pool on Avon Meadows taken on 3 March at a time when we wondered if the winter was ever going to end! *Photo: Richard Stott*



And then there were floods! The path from the bird screen to the river was just passable in wellingtons. *Photo: Janet Stott ARPS*



At last spring arrived! A new bench recently installed near the south entrance donated by Severn Waste's "Welcome to our Future" fund. *Photo: Richard Stott*

Bird Feeder Health

Zoological Society of London has recently completed a study into the transmission of serious diseases between birds. One obvious place where one bird can infect another is our garden bird feeders. So what to do? They make 4 recommendations:

1. Offer a variety of food from accredited sources (i.e. dirty food can be infected).
2. Feed in moderation so food does not remain in the feeder more than 1-2 days.
3. Clean your feeder regularly.
4. Move your feeder from time to time so that droppings do not accumulate below it.

Food for thought!

Events

Mammal Workshop

This event was cancelled due to flooded ground which prevented small mammals from dispersing. It will be rescheduled in the autumn.

All Day Birdwatch

The All Day Birdwatch was a great success and many thanks to all those that helped on the day. The weather was cold with light rain for most of the morning and showers in the afternoon. Indeed it was the coldest birdwatch event we have held but the birds did not mind and we recorded an amazing 64 species in the day! Our previous All Day Birdwatch took place in 2014 when we only saw 46 species but the weather was nice!

We started out at 05h00, while it was still dark, for the dawn chorus and as the sun came up the scrape was full of water birds that use it as an overnight roost. One such was a Common Sandpiper mixing in with a pair of Gadwall (both new for birdwatches) and Greylag and Canada Geese. A Cuckoo started singing at 05h20.

Thereafter the birds kept appearing. Species not seen on previous birdwatches but were seen this time included; Little Egret, Red Kite, Yellow & Grey Wagtails and Cetti's Warbler.

At this time of year birds are looking for places to nest so some move away from Avon Meadows and others arrive. Among the arrivals were plenty of warblers including; Common and Lesser Whitethroats as well as Reed and Sedge Warblers.

Bioblitz (see next page)

10th Anniversary and Bioblitz 2018—Sat 16 June 2018

This year our Bioblitz takes on a special significance as July 2018 marks the 10th anniversary of the formation of the Friends of Avon Meadows.

For those who have not come across a Bioblitz before the aim is to see as many different species as possible over a 24-hour period. This includes all types of plants and creatures limited only by the knowledge of people looking. As with most FoAM events you are all welcome to join in irrespective of your expertise. Several members of the Worcestershire Recorders, who are extremely knowledgeable people, will be helping to find new things.

On the day we will start with a Dawn Chorus Walk at 05h00, the main event will begin at 10h00 and if the weather is dry we will finish off with a Moth Night starting at 9:30pm.

Check the website nearer the time for more details.

Friends of Avon Meadows—10 Years On

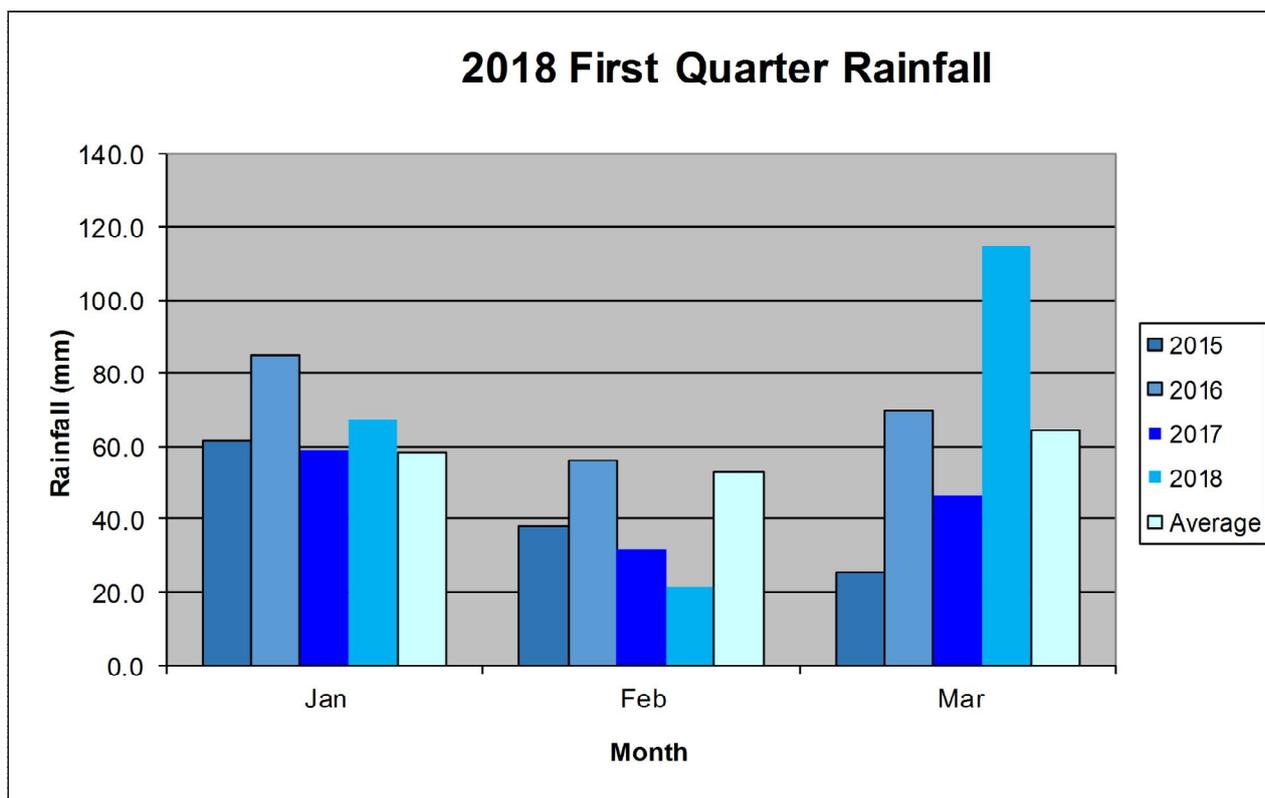
As you might guess, for those of us involved the last 10 years has passed extremely quickly. It is extremely encouraging to note that the Committee has remained substantially unchanged during that period and we must thank them for their efforts over the last 10 years. We are also extremely grateful for the support given us by the landowners, Wychavon District Council and Pershore Town Council.

Looking back it is surprising how things have moved on. It all started out in 2008 with the creation of the pools and boardwalk across that form the centre today. Then there was reed planting in which we were helped by volunteers, local schools and colleges.

The next big step forward was the Heritage Lottery Fund project which saw Liz Etheridge join us as a Project Officer to help develop the area and contact schools and colleges to make them aware of the educational possibilities of the area.

Now we have the scrape and have become a charity!

Water Levels



A dry February allowed us to finish off the reed cutting and the high rainfall in March lifted the water level on the main pool up to its maximum level.

How you can help us

Work Parties - see Diary Dates below. Please come along they, are good fun! Cheaper than a gym subscription!

Interesting sightings - Take a picture. Send it to Liz, Bob or Richard with date, time and approximate location.

Newsletter Circulation - Know anyone who would like one? Let Richard have their name and eMail address.

Diary Dates

Date	Activity	Date	Activity
Sun 6 May 18	Tiddesley Wood Open Day	Fri 29 Jun 18	Moth Night* 21h30-01h00
Tue 15 May 18	Committee Meeting 14h30-16h30	Sat 7 Jul 18	Work Party 10h00-13h00
Fri 18 May 18	Moth Night* 21h00-00h30	Fri 13 Jul 18	Moth Night* 21h30-01h00
Fri 1 Jun 18	Moth Night* 21h15-00h45	Fri 27 Jul 18	Moth Night* 21h00-00h30
Sat 2 Jun 18	Work Party 10h00-13h00	Sat 4 Aug 18	Work Party 10h00-13h00
Tue 6 June	AGM 18h30-20h30	Fri 10 Aug 18	Moth Night* 20h45-00h15
Sat 16 Jun 18	10th Anniversary & Bioblitz 2018	Fri 24 Aug 18	Moth Night* 20h15-23h45

* Will be cancelled if raining. Work parties are a valuable part of our activities on site and start at **10:00am** from the **HQ** just inside the main gate. Without your help we cannot maintain the area properly. It is a good idea to let Ken know if you can come (KenPomfret@btinternet.com) a few days before (in case there are last minute changes) but do not worry if you cannot, just turn up at the car park at the far end of Cherry Orchard at 10:00am on the appointed day.

Administration

Officers of the CIO Committee

Chairman - Richard Stott richarddestott@gmail.com

Treasurer - Bob Gillmor avon.meadows@btinternet.com

Secretary - Val Wood val@wood20.plus.com

Work Parties - Ken Pomfret KenPomfret@btinternet.com

Website

<http://www.avonmeadows.org.uk/>. The site will be kept current, check here first to see what is happening!

Coots Eye View blog: <http://cootseyeview.blogspot.co.uk/> is another way of finding out what is going on.

The Website holds a number of other interesting and useful links which are worth exploring.

Contacts

If you would like any more information about volunteering contact either an officer of the Committee directly by eMail or by telephone to:

Mr Jim Burgin, Wychavon District Council.
 Tel: 01386 565366
 eMail: jim.burgin@wychavon.gov.uk



Pershore's Community Wetland and Local Nature Reserve
www.avonmeadows.org.uk

Membership Application/Renewal

If you wish to join or renew by online banking, please use the following details:

SORT CODE 77-68-78 (TSB Bank), ACCOUNT NUMBER 01118468 and QUOTE YOUR SURNAME AS THE PAYMENT REFERENCE. Then please e-mail membership@avonmeadows.org.uk with the details requested below.

If you wish to join or renew by cheque, please print and complete this form and send it together with your cheque, payable to The Friends of Avon Meadows to:

Mr. T.C. Hutton, 15 Green Close, Childswickham, Broadway WR12 7JJ

Family subscription £10 per annum [] Individual subscription £5 per annum []

FULL NAME: _____ TITLE (Mr, Mrs, Ms etc.): _____

ADDRESS: _____

TOWN: _____ POSTCODE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

Charity Governance/Fundraising standards and Data Protection (including GDPR)

I am happy to receive information from The Friends of Avon Meadows:

by e-mail [] please tick ✓ by post [] please tick ✓

We will never pass your details to any third party organisations.

Or:

Please do not contact me [] if you tick this box we will delete you from our records.

