



BEACON HILL NATURE RESERVE

Gateway to the South Downs National Park

TQ 364028

ANNUAL NATURE REPORT 2020/21



Beacon Hill Windmill by Judy Pow

From the Beacon Hill NR Stewardship Group of
Rottingdean Parish Council

Beacon Hill NR Stewardship Group and Report Distribution

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Cllr Jo Davies	Rottingdean Parish Council
Cllr Bernard Turnbull	Rottingdean Parish Council and Beacon Hub Chair
Cllr Louise Arnold	Rottingdean Parish Council and FoBH Secretary
John Cumming	Founder of Beacon Hill LNR
David Larkin	Conservation Manager B&HCC & Founder
Nick Lane	Countryside Ranger
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Joanne Spickett	Specialist
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NB This Annual Wildlife Report can be downloaded free of charge from the Rottingdean Parish Council website: www.rottingdean-pc.gov.uk along with quarterly Nature Notes for Beacon Hill NR. The species records of BHNR are regularly uploaded onto irecord by Peter Whitcomb, Wildlife Co-ordinator for BHNR 2

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Sea Daisy by Peter Whitcomb

Chair's Report by Cllr Sue John

As I walked across Beacon Hill today amidst the bluster of a keen south-westerly, the sight of the Cityparks team shifting the sheep to a fresh location was a poignant one. It is always heartening to see the sheep at work, thinning out the brambles and grasses to allow the wildflowers room to breathe and push through again in the warmer weather. They are an important part of our ecosystem, contributing to making the Nature Reserve a colourful and stimulating natural environment. It was sad though to note the absence of volunteers for the task in hand, due to the enduring Covid-19 restrictions and a reminder of both the beauty and the challenges posed by stewardship of the Reserve at this time.

This year has seen another change of Ranger with Paul Gorrington departing for pastures new (pardon the pun) and Nick Lane joining the fold (ditto). Nick is a keen environmental educator along with his other skills and has been swift to form working links with the Friends and the local community. I know he shares our regret that the pandemic has prevented him from working alongside the Friends on practical tasks on Beacon Hill or from erecting the remaining new noticeboards, as the City Council has to pay heed to social distancing guidelines as do we all.

On a more positive note, it was pleasing to see human traffic increase significantly during lockdown, as many people discovered the therapeutic benefits of exploring the Reserve and the adjacent woodland when other activities were severely restricted. Beacon Hill, free from the habitual hum of traffic in the distance, became an important sanctuary for many and we were pleased to be able to supply updated information leaflets for the new more waterproof containers. Watching nature run its course and observing birds, flora and fauna provided a new or rediscovered pastime for people of all ages and backgrounds and it is just a shame that any potential extra volunteers were not permitted to join the Friends' team and get to work with loppers or tree-poppers, or monitoring local wildlife. Hopefully this pent-up enthusiasm can be put to good use in the future.

Our wildlife experts have kindly put together illustrated feedback on their observations for you here. This has been a rich year for bird life and it is pleasing to notice the further integration of the former golf course as part of the Reserve.

After lockdown, Beacon Hub were able to re-open the Café, helping to build funds for the refurbishment and extension of their environmental education facilities, with new activities taking place in the main building and exciting plans for a temporary classroom in the near future.

Although projects have been hampered this year, there is still much to enjoy and to look forward to with plenty of enjoyable tasks for volunteers once restrictions are lifted.



A selection of sheep by Kay Woolner

The 2019/20 Management Report by Nick Lane

This has been a strange year to report on. I joined the Brighton and Hove CityParks Ranger team in December 2019, having historically worked as a park ranger in south London and more recently delivering environmental education and community engagement projects for The Royal Parks.

In September 2019 Paul Gorringer replaced Will Furze as the ranger for Beacon Hill when Will took on the NLHF (National Lottery Heritage Funded) Stanmer Estate Ranger post, then with Covid-19 restrictions impacting everyone I took over from Paul in April 2020.

Over the winter months several members of the ranger team, myself included, and volunteers installed another two noticeboards. One was on the edge of the Rottingdean Recreation Ground and the other at the Longhill Road entrance. Unfortunately, we have been unable to install the final two because of Covid-19 social distancing restrictions but we will do so at the earliest opportunity, inviting John Funnell to observe the excavations on behalf of Brighton & Hove Archaeological Society.

Covid-19 began to have an impact on the delivery of our activities from March 2020 onwards. Unfortunately, group volunteer activity on council land had to cease other than volunteers operating in isolation, where previous training and associated PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) had already been provided. We will be in touch with groups once activity can resume once more.

The Beacon Hill spring grazing programme started in March this year, shortly before I took on responsibility for the site. The existing system involves dividing Beacon Hill into six areas, constructing and grazing one area at a time in an anti-clockwise direction. Each compartment requires between 600 and 1,000 metres of electric fence, depending on the ability to incorporate existing permanent perimeter fence. We would like to make this process less labour and material intensive. We can do this by reducing the reliance on electric fence through the installation of permanent stock fence along the edge of North/South Wood. This will enable the site to be grazed using three temporary sections: north, central or south. A permanent trough in each of these zones would remove the requirement for the yellow bowser that also requires regular refilling. These proposals are pending funding. We will continue to liaise with both the Friends of Beacon Hill and John Funnell as plans progress. A flock of sheep were brought back to the hill mid-September. They have been monitored by our volunteer Lookers twice daily since. We plan for the flock to be grazing the final Windmill section by either mid-December 2020 or early January 2021, weather conditions allowing.

Earlier this year I made repairs to the Alan Holden memorial bench, which had become disconnected from its base. It is now firmly screwed down and should last for many years to come. My colleague Andy and I also repaired the rather dilapidated St. Dunstan's gate. Ultimately this will need replacing so I have reported it for when future resources permit.

I sincerely hope the year ahead will enable a range of activities to take place that provide for a more positive report next year.



Friends of Beacon Hill by Louise Arnold

In September 2019 the volunteers of Friends of Beacon Hill came back to work, raring to go, after taking a well earned break during August. We returned to our usual patch known as the “experimental area”, atop the hill to the north of the copse, and were pleasantly surprised to find the brambles were really underdeveloped and weakened by previous pulling along with spring grazing. The sycamores seem to have taken root and grown quite tall so initially our main efforts were in this area. As is usual at the beginning of the season we held a weekend session, this year tackling a huge bramble patch that had grown on the area between the windmill and the old allotments. It took another visit on the regular Tuesday session but after a total of 37 work hours the patch was no longer. Generally we try to pull the brambles up by their roots but those that are too deep get cut right at ground level so that the ground will “swallow them up” and they will rot away.

October saw us being blessed with sunshine during the month and, along with working on the lee of the Nature Reserve, we were protected from that biting westerly wind. The sycamore shoots are prolific natural spreaders and it is quite amazing just how quickly they grow. We spend hours digging out the sycamore roots that are more of a ball shape which doesn't give up without a fight. The hawthorn and blackthorn tend to have a horizontal root system that leads a merry dance, sometimes across a few metres of land.

The sheep failed to make an appearance this Autumn due to a breakdown in our maintenance program caused by a switch of ranger, mis-communication at ranger HQ regards handover and a lack of electric fencing.

2020 arrived in much the same way as ever with scrub bash at the forefront of our minds but without the benefit of having the sheep nibble away at the shoots.

The 3rd and 4th new Noticeboards were erected, one at the Longhill Road entrance to the Nature Reserve and the other Rottingdean Recreation Ground. New leaflet holders were attached to all 4 noticeboards and also to various gates around the Reserve.

The sheep arrived on 2nd March for their Spring graze and remained in situ until 26th May covering 6 sections. The grazing covered 85 days during the Sept 2019-Aug 2020 compared with 172 the previous year. Unfortunately due to the COVID restrictions we were only allowed to complete 3 rounds of fence erection with the BHCC Rangers completing the other 3 moves. The sheep are supposed to be “empty” upon arrival, this delightful term means they are not pregnant. Something clearly went wrong with the scanner as we greeted 5 new arrivals this season which is the highest number of lambs ever seen on the Reserve.

One day the sheep were seen happily rubbing themselves up against the Alan Holden bench but the following day the Ranger found that the bench top had separated from the leg posts. After a couple of days the Ranger came back and repaired the sheep-damaged bench.



Friends of Beacon Hill preparing for a workday by Atlanta Cook
(post production by Caroline Cortizo of Shifting Pixels)

We had another first on the reserve in the form of Knapweed Broomrape. The new plant was spotted by a dog walker and officially identified by our resident fauna and flora man. A first for our Nature Reserve and the only other site he'd seen it on in the Brighton Area was Woodbourne meadow, part of the Wild Park LNR at Hollingbury.

The 2019/20 season saw the volunteer hours drop due to COVID and no grazing in Autumn 2019 but still managed 282 hours – which equate to 7 working weeks which is a great achievement. The Friends attracted a number of new volunteers along with retaining the old hands. New members are always welcome to join the conservation conversation .



The annual competition for pulling the longest root had a lot of entries this year

Beacon Hub, Brighton by Bernard Turnbull

Beacon Hub has continued to pursue its aims and objectives in the face of all the difficulties that we have all faced. We remain focussed upon creating an eco-educational facility located in a building that is suitable for large classes of children, adult recreational activities and social gatherings.

From the outset the Trustees recognised that we would need to adapt the building to cope with the average size of school classes. All our planning and fundraising was dedicated to replacing the building and creating a space suited to all of our purposes including a 35 seater classroom. The pledged fund we achieved was £165k but the quotations to demolish and rebuild were more than £225k. In the last year we decided to change direction and look to retain the existing building but add on a temporary classroom located out of sight behind the existing building and clad in materials that would chime with the existing building. We are currently developing the planning application for this temporary building.

The current conditions have severely hampered our events and education programme. The schools programme has been cancelled as have all activities other than some on-line courses. This will remain the case for the foreseeable future. We have been able to hire out our events room for 1 to 1 activities that fit in with our aims and objectives. Currently the room is being used on week days for wellbeing activities. We were able to re-open the café kiosk and the car park and this has been well received, particularly where we have supported the open days at the Windmill.

The charity remains financially sound. In 2019 our expenditure has exceeded our income as a consequence of employing professional support to aid our build plan decision making. During 2020 that position is reversed despite the current conditions. A combination of; café takings, donations, hire of rooms and car park charges makes our income exceed our expenditure. We have a healthy bank balance that covers the required reserve and funds to contribute toward the proposed building. As a result of a partnership with the Co-op, these funds will increase during this year. All the accounts and report submissions for the Charity Commission have been prepared ready for the submission deadline of 30th September 2020.

Our constitution allows for a rotation of the Chair and this year Bernard Turnbull stood down and was replaced by Atlanta Cook. One of our Trustees and Treasurer, Graham Beaver, resigned and Bernard Turnbull took over the Treasurer role. We were fortunate to be joined by a new Trustee, Jess Bavinton who has a wealth of experience in environmental issues. She developed and implemented Plastic Free Ovingdean.



Beacon Hub at sunset by Clive Bonny

STEWARDSHIP AND MONITORING REPORTS

Plant Report by Peter Whitcomb

With Covid and restricted visits, I am afraid plant monitoring was not up to scratch this year. My butterfly transect walks are on a fixed route and I am only able to make brief notes on the flowers as I walk round. It is quite difficult to generalise on the numbers and spread of our two important plants, Cowslips and Round headed Rampion, and how the grazing may have affected them. My own view was there seemed not to be the usual high numbers of both, but only very slightly. I really don't think the extension of grazing into May was a good idea.

In March I checked out some of the early flowers along the woodland edge and felt the lack of a cut the previous autumn was restricting both access and plants. Lesser Celandine and Violets were present in small numbers and the patches of Alexanders would have been useful for early insects.

I was not able to visit the Hill until mid May and I was surprised to discover a new plant for the Reserve on the old putting green area near the Hub. Seaside Daisy (*Erigeron glaucus*) is widespread in Rottingdean village, verges and undercliff but it has taken some years to encroach on our reserve. Later in May I was very pleased to see the plants doing so well on the mini-bank by the carpark. Rock Rose and Kidney Vetch had survived all sorts of weather and were looking healthy. For some years now we have been hoping to see Twayblade, a woodland orchid in flower, in South Wood but the picture below shows this year's rather feeble showing. In recent years they have been regularly eaten by snails!



Yellow Rattle



Twayblade



Pyramidal Orchid



Houndstongue



Knapweed Broomrape

On 1st June, Louise Arnold discovered another new plant for the Reserve – Knapweed Broomrape. As far as we know, the nearest colony of this scarce plant in Brighton is in Woodbourne Meadows, part of the Wild Park LNR at Hollingbury. It really is no surprise as it is a saprophytic plant nourishing on Greater Knapweed which we have here in abundance!

I was keen to check out the plants inside the old dewpond and was pleased to find some of the speciality short turf species found there – Bastard Toadflax, Wild Thyme, Quaking Grass and Squinancy, but I fear the sheep had nibbled the Pyramidal Orchids again and I could not see any Fairy Flax. Elsewhere there was no sign of Common Spotted Orchids in their normal spot – that is two years running no show. About a dozen Pyramidal Orchids did appear on the west facing slope.

In the Summer there was an amazing display of the white of Wild Carrot, the yellow of Lady's Bedstraw and the purple of Greater Knapweed. It was also interesting to see flowers flourishing in parts of the old Pitch & Putt Course, particularly the SW corner where Wild Thyme was predominating.



Wild Carrot

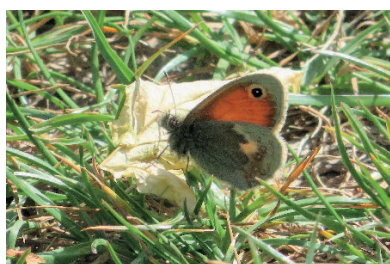


Wild Thyme

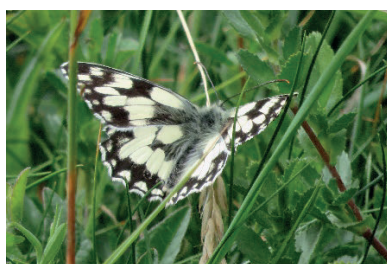
Butterfly Report by Peter Whitcomb

There has never been a year like this and with the outbreak of Coronavirus through March and April UK Butterflies called off all transect counts. With some relaxation of Government guidelines it wasn't until mid-May that counts were resumed. Normal counting would have been from 1st April, this meant losing six weeks. In actual fact some of the April counts would have been quite high as for once there was a spell of hot weather.

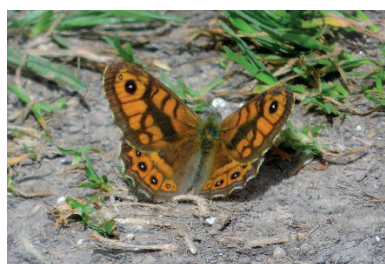
On the plus side the species that did well were **Marbled White** with a max count of 104 on 24th June, **Gatekeeper**, **Wall Brown** and **Small Heath**. **Common Blue** had a better year but were still a little below average. Hovering around average were **Small Skipper**, **Large White** and **Dark Green Fritillary**.



Small Heath

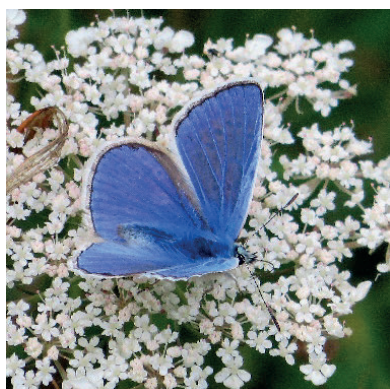


Marbled White

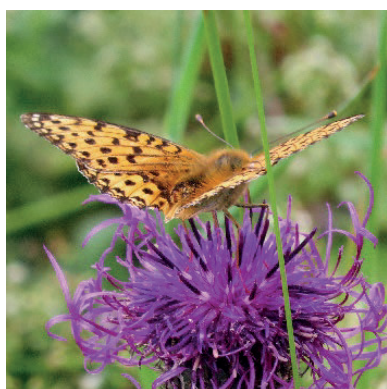


Wall Brown

Missing the first six recording weeks would have increased the chances of higher counts on some of the early fliers. In fact there were no **Speckled Wood** or **Brimstone** recorded even though they have a second flight period. Once again some of the larger butterfly species fared poorly with very low numbers of **Comma**, **Peacock** and **Small Tortoiseshell**. This was echoed by the 2020 Big Butterfly Count which showed reduced numbers of Peacock down 42% and Small Tortoiseshell down 41% on the previous year in spite of more people taking part. **Red Admiral** too, did not improve much during the last couple of weeks when Ivy flowers are predominant. It was most disappointing not to record **Ringlet** and **Painted Lady** this year.



Male Common Blue



Dark Green Fritillary



Male Gatekeeper

A possible sighting of a **Green Hairstreak** on 9th April would be a first for the Reserve.

Blue butterflies are a feature of chalk grassland and although **Common Blues** had a better year the other species could do with some encouragement. In the past we have recorded small numbers of **Adonis**, **Chalk Hill** and **Small Blue** and they require certain larval foodplants for their survival. Beacon Hill could certainly do with some seeds or plug plants of Horseshoe Vetch and Kidney Vetch or better still a properly created butterfly bank which B&HCC have successfully placed elsewhere in the Brighton area.

Here are the details of the butterflies counted on my transect walks in 2020, with the average number over the last eight years in brackets. The italic shows the normal flight periods:

SMALL/ESSEX SKIPPER 59 (79) *End June/July*

Another poor year with similar numbers to the previous three years. One of many species having a poor year. There was a count of 23 on 7th July and although numbers appeared through to early August it was still a low total. The two species are linked together as they are almost inseparable in the field, with the main difference being the colour of the antennae!

LARGE SKIPPER 6 (5) *June/July*

A slight improvement but still hovering around average.

DINGY SKIPPER 0 (1) *Mid May/June*

None found this year. The last recorded was in Spring 2013.

CLOUDED YELLOW 1 (2) *Aug/Sep*

There was just the one sighting of this iconic butterfly on the transect count, but there were others seen by visitors – all in September.

BRIMSTONE 0 (2) *End Mar-May, Aug/Sep*

After last year's record Spring count it was a shame that the lack of counting during the first six weeks resulted in no sightings.

LARGE WHITE 40 (40) *End May/Jun, Aug/Sep*

A much improved year and bang on average numbers, with double figures on two dates in July.

SMALL WHITE 61 (106) *May/Jun, Aug/Sep*

Below average numbers with many being seen in close proximity to the allotments. There were two flight periods with peaks in early May and mid September. As Small Whites are more likely to be seen, there has been a general assumption over the recording years that most of the 'smaller' whites are recorded as such, rather than female Orange-tips or Green-veined Whites.

GREEN-VEINED WHITE 1 (2) *May/Jun, Aug-early Sep*

Only one seen close enough to identify from Small White (see above).

ORANGE-TIP 0 (1) *May/Jun*

None seen, possibly may have been some during those first six weeks along the woodland edge in April, and like Brimstone it prefers woodland glades rather than edges.

SMALL COPPER 3 (3) *May, Aug-end Sep*

Average number with singles seen on three dates in the second flight period.

BROWN ARGUS 2 (3) *May/Jun, Aug/Sep*

A good close-up view or a photograph is necessary to clinch the identification, as brief in-flight views are very similar to female Common Blues.

COMMON BLUE 141 (155) *Mid May-end Jun, Aug/Sep*

After last year's dismal showing it was especially pleasing to get up close to average and whilst the all over blue males are easier to see, there were a good sprinkling of females. The max was 32 on 28th July, plus a really good late count of 20 on 21st September.

CHALK HILL BLUE 0 (2) *Mid Jul-end Aug*

No sightings again, an unfortunate decline from 15 in 2012 and 4 in 2013 and 2014. The caterpillar's food plant is Horse-shoe Vetch and there is very little of this on the reserve and it is hoped that by adding plug plants the species may return and even increase in numbers. This attractive butterfly is a South Downs speciality and it deserves to be a regular sight here at Beacon Hill.

ADONIS BLUE 0 (1) *End May-mid Jun, end Aug-Sep*

This is the blueist of all blue species and has not been found in any numbers here as its larval foodplant Horse-shoe Vetch is quite scarce. Same sentiments as above.

HOLLY BLUE 1 (6) *Apr/May, Aug-mid Sep*

This was another disappointingly poor count after a run of decent numbers. The missing six weeks would likely have increased the number to nearer average.

RED ADMIRAL 7 (9) *Jun-Oct*

Below average, but a poor year with only a few recorded on ivy flowers during the last couple of weeks which in the past have swelled the numbers.

PAINTED LADY 0 (5) *Jun, Aug/Sep*

Perhaps after the mini-influx last year it came as no surprise that there were very few around this year, and certainly not one seen on my transect counts.

SMALL TORTOISESHELL 1 (12) *End Mar-May, end Jun-Oct*

Just one noted on 14th June. This extraordinary demise of this attractive species is difficult to explain. There are a few patches of nettles around the transect route, but no caterpillars were seen. The low counts were also reflected in the UK Big Butterfly Count for 2020.

PEACOCK 2 (6) *Mar/Apr, Aug/Sep*

There are normally a few early Spring sightings but with no counts then the only sightings were on two days in July.

COMMA 1 (2) *Apr-early May, Jul-Oct*

Never a regular species here, but just a single at the end of August was a poor result.

DARK GREEN FRITILLARY 7 (5) *Jul/Aug*

Above average year for this beautiful chalk grassland speciality, with 3 on 14th June being the peak.

SPECKLED WOOD 0 (8) *Apr-Oct*

Another negative which may have recorded a few during the early Spring period.

WALL BROWN 19 (6) *May/Jun, Aug-mid Sep*

A really excellent result equalling the previous record count back in 2003. Last year was good, this year even better, with late counts of 5 on 15th Sep and 7 on 21st. The larval food plant is grasses, so no problem there.

MARbled WHITE 178 (159) *End Jun-mid Aug*

This was a better year and above the average. The peak count was a high 104 on 24th June. Their flight period generally extends into August but the last was on 28th July.

GATEKEEPER 239 (149) *Jul/Aug*

The counts were well above the average and a species really doing well here this year. The peak count was 65 on 11th July.

MEADOW BROWN 402 (474) *Mid Jun-early Sep*

Still the most numerous butterfly on the Reserve. Peak count was 94 on 24th June.

SMALL HEATH 321 (215) *May/Jun, Aug/Sep*

Well above average and the second highest total ever. The highest count was 44 on 24th June, but of interest was that they were noted on every day of the transect counts through from May until September. This species has a distinctive habit of keeping its wings closed when alighting, so it is practically impossible to see a photograph with open wings.

RINGLET 0 (2) *End Jun/July*

After last year's significant counts, it was disappointing not to record any this year.

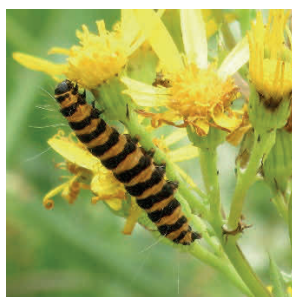
Photographs by Peter Whitcomb except as marked.

Moths, Insects and Miscellaneous by Peter Whitcomb

Very few moths were positively identified during the year. A Mother Shipton was seen in May and there were a number of sightings of Yellow Shell. A Hummingbird Hawkmoth was seen in June and a caterpillar of Six-spot Burnet was found at the end of June. Cinnabar caterpillars were feeding on Ragwort in July but very few of the moths were seen. The first Six-spot Burnet moths were seen on 4th July, with max 18 on 11th July and continued to be seen in decent numbers until early August. I managed to secure a person willing to set up moth traps on the Hill, but owing to the pandemic this did not materialise. Hopefully something will take place next year.



Six-spot Burnets



Cinnabar

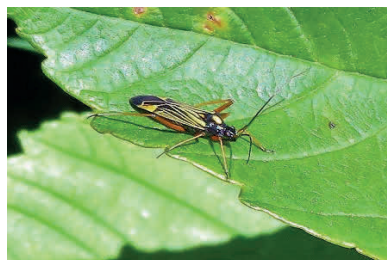


Yellow Shell (by Joanne)

There was a good number of miscellaneous sightings with at least six species of Bumblebee noted, included a possible rare Brown banded Carder Bee seen by Libby Darling on 13th June. Other insects included Hoverflies (*Scaeva pyrastris* etc), a Yellow Dung Fly and Cockchafer, and various Grasshoppers. Numerous St Mark's Flies were encountered towards the end of April. On 14th May the quaintly named Fire-streaked Bugkin was found – a first for the Reserve. A Common Darter dragonfly was hawking along the woodland edge on 30th August.



Field Grasshopper



Fire-streaked Bugkin



Wasp Spider

Other species reported were a Weasel in April, a Stoat in May and unusually a Brown Rat in September. Foxes, Grey Squirrels, Badgers and Lizards are present but not always reported. A Wasp Spider was seen on 18th August.

Thanks for contributions from Libby Darling, Steven Munday and Joanne Spickett

Butterfly Figures by Section

Species	Section	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Small/Essex Skipper		8	32	8	5	3	3	59
Dingy Skipper								
Large Skipper				2	4			6
Grizzled Skipper								
Clouded Yellow					1			1
Brimstone								
Large White		16	14	2		4	4	40
Small White		31	26	1	5	4	4	61
Green-veined White		1						1
Orange-tip								
Small Copper		1	1			1		3
Small Blue								
Brown Argus			2					2
Common Blue		11	59	16	23	18	14	141
Chalk Hill Blue								
Holly Blue						1		1
Red Admiral		2	4				1	7
Painted Lady								
Small Tortoiseshell					1			1
Peacock			1		1			2
Comma					1			1
Dark Green Fritillary			3		1	3		7
Speckled Wood								
Wall		1	8	1	2	6	1	19
Marbled White		13	82	26	36	12	9	178
Gatekeeper		17	76	21	46	56	23	239
Meadow Brown		37	152	61	86	34	34	402
Small Heath		46	109	29	56	37	33	321
Ringlet								
TOTAL 2020		183	570	167	268	179	126	1493
2019		194	465	223	219	116	165	1382
2018		235	447	223	248	173	245	1571
2017		223	410	139	189	137	248	1346
2016		160	277	131	151	143	218	1078
2015		146	372	182	255	73	125	1153
2014		173	563	227	312	159	292	1726
2013		286	654	216	368	238	352	2114
2012		315	901	316	364	300	240	2427
2011		144	676	156	278	163	133	1550
2010		227	519	106	238	94	261	1445
2006		149	420	163	94	113	182	1113
2004		137	393	181	137	180	229	1257
2003		228	424	143	245	264	218	1522
2002		159	265	123	160	100	208	1015

Weekly Butterfly Count

Week	Apr-May	7	8	9	10	11	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	22	23	24	26	Total	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
Date		19.5	26.5	30.5	9.6	14.6	24.6	7.7	11.7	18.7	28.7	2.8	6.8	18.8	30.8	8.9	15.9	21.9	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
Small/Essex Skipper	Corona				2	4	2	23	14	6	1	2							59	53	57	58	64	78	124	143
Large Skipper	Virus																		6	3	1	6	7	9	4	2
Dingy Skipper	Lockdown																		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Grizzled Skipper																			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Clouded Yellow	No Counts																1		1	0	1	2	0	3	3	3
Brimstone																			0	7	2	0	0	0	0	0
Large White					2	3	3	11	13	4	1	2	1				2	1	40	19	81	10	31	51	26	60
Small White		2	8	2					6		5	3	4	2	9	8	6	6	61	139	94	80	123	100	72	180
Green veined White				1															1	3	5	1	7	0	0	1
Orange Tip																			0	2	4	0	0	0	1	0
Small Copper														1		1	1		3	2	1	4	1	0	9	3
Small Blue																			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Brown Argus											1			1					2	1	3	0	2	1	10	1
Common Blue		3	5	9	5				2	8	32	22	18	7	1	7	2	20	201	53	198	189	51	145	167	301
Chalk Hill Blue																			0	0	2	0	0	0	4	4
Adonis Blue																			0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
Holly Blue	1																		1	4	16	7	15	7	1	1
Red Admiral									2	1							2	2	7	13	3	11	16	8	10	4
Painted Lady																			0	27	0	0	0	4	2	5
Small Tortoiseshell					1														1	0	1	8	6	19	30	32
Peacock									1		1								2	12	1	6	3	6	4	13
Comma															1				1	1	6	2	1	1	0	2
Dark Green Fritillary					1	3	1		2										7	6	7	6	0	5	6	7
Speckled Wood																			0	4	9	6	5	9	19	12
Wall Brown	3								1	1	2						5	7	19	11	1	0	0	2	9	4
Marbled White					1	38	104	18	10	5	2								178	169	126	111	150	149	188	201
Gatekeeper									27	65	42	27	26	2					239	222	125	81	80	134	273	236
Meadow Brown				11	23	69	94	30	18	14	26	43	26	26	11	8		3	402	370	349	444	454	353	682	741
Small Heath		23	30	34	22	36	44	6	3	3	10	17	13	27	15	17	12	9	321	249	477	314	62	66	80	157
Ringlet																			0	11	0	0	0	2	0	0
WEEKLY TOTALS		30	43	57	52	155	259	117	136	91	123	116	88	66	37	41	31	48	1493	1382	1571	1346	1078	1153	1743	2114

The Birds of Beacon Hill by Peter Whitcomb

This report is in the format of a diary, listing the more significant sightings during the year.

March – 2 Ravens on 9th. Flock of 800 Starlings noted on 15th. Evidence of early nesting with Skylarks present and Rooks collecting nesting material on 26th and 4 Red Kites flew over. The Rooks nest count was 25.

April – The first sign of Spring with a Chiffchaff singing on 1st and a pair of Greenfinch on the old allotment area. The first Swallow noted on 4th. Two more Red Kites over on 7th and a Peregrine on 11th. On 16th a Grey Partridge and the first Wheatear of the year. Pair of Buzzards seen mating in South Wood. The first Whitethroat seen on 21st and Swift on 30th.



Whitethroat



Greenfinch

May – Some positive signs of nesting with Blackcaps, Whitethroats and Greenfinch on 19th. Good numbers of Skylarks.

June – A Peregrine chasing prey on 18th.

July – A couple of Sand Martins passed through on 7th – perhaps early migration. Another Peregrine on 11th. The highlight of the summer for two observers – a Cuckoo on 22nd which stayed on the Reserve for a few days. This was only the second sighting of this declining species on the Reserve.

August – 4 species of warbler were noted by a visiting birder on 4th. Juvenile Buzzard seen. A Short-eared Owl was seen on 30th, and again on 31st by different observers.

September – On 1st there were 11 Whitethroats counted and 8 Blackcap, but the best birds were a Redstart, 2 Spotted Flycatchers and a Yellow Wagtail. A Grey Heron also flew over. A nice selection of migrants on 3rd included Pied and Spotted Flycatchers, Blackcaps and Whitethroats. Good numbers of Swallows were fly catching over the horse paddocks and a Peregrine flew over Beacon Hub on 8th. What must surely be a record count, and so unusual, were 26 Magpie counted by Jay on 14th. A flock of 16 Meadow Pipit flew east on 15th, also a Tree Pipit and Lesser black-backed Gull were noted. Migrants included a few Whitethroat, Swallows, a Whinchat and 3 Stonechat on 17th. A Red-legged Partridge was seen along the west slope. 8 Stonechat were noted on 18th plus a Whinchat, 5 Chiffchaff, 3 Whitethroat and 9 Siskin flew overhead. A late Wheatear was seen on 26th.

October – A male Pheasant was disturbed by dogs on 1st and a Mute Swan flew over. Steven had a good walk round accumulating the following – 6 Stonechat, 2 Yellow Wagtail, 40+ Chiffchaff, a Spotted Flycatcher and a handful of Goldcrest and a Firecrest. On the 5th Andrew found a Yellow-browed Warbler along the woodland edge, with a Firecrest and a handful of Chiffchaff. A flock of 140+ Brent Geese flew west on 13th. On 23rd there was a small overhead passage of Redwings – the first of the autumn for this winter visitor. A male Sparrowhawk was hunting over the reserve on 24th. After some previous rain, there were a good number of Skylark around the reserve on 26th, but not yet singing for territories.



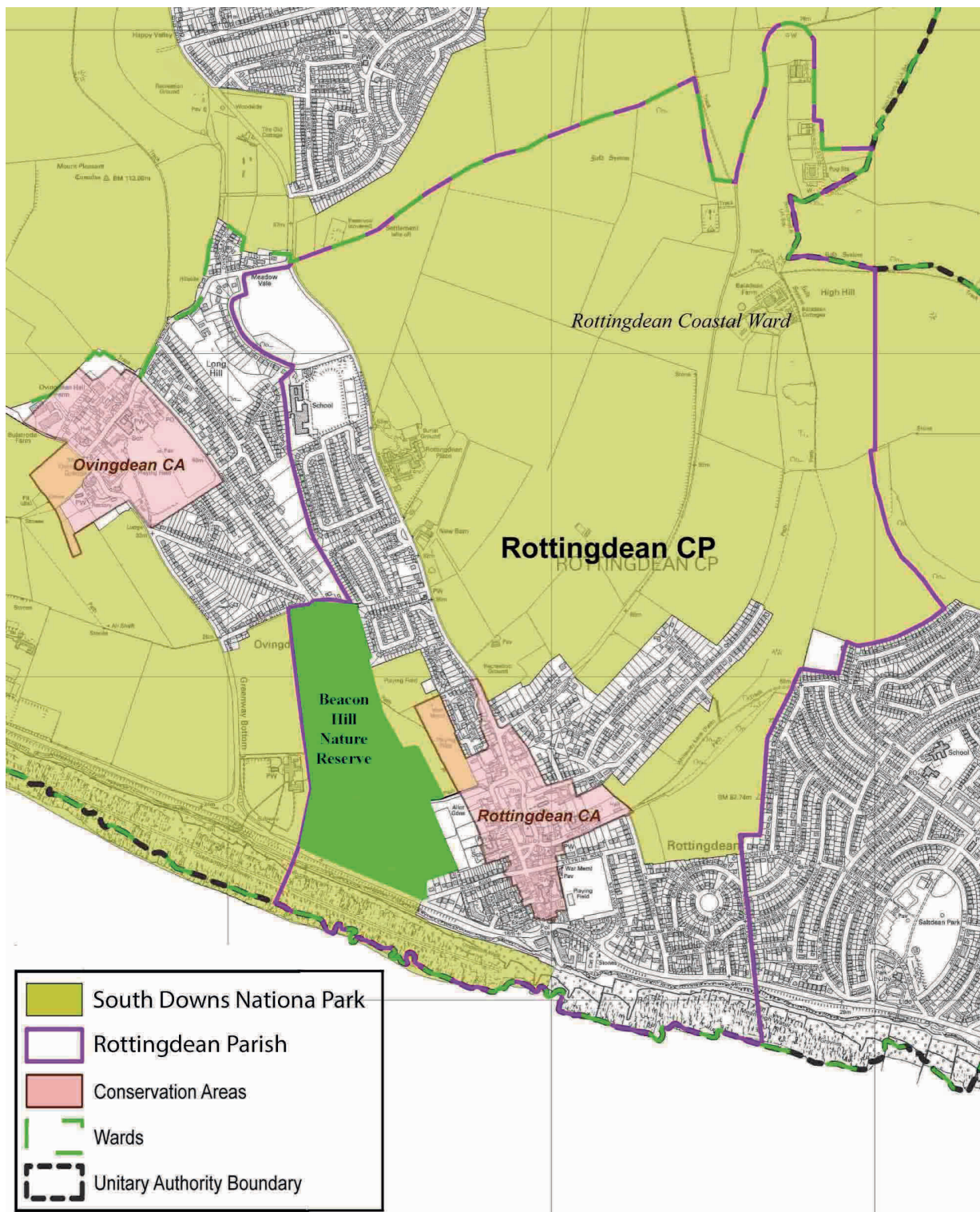
Starling flock by Louise Arnold

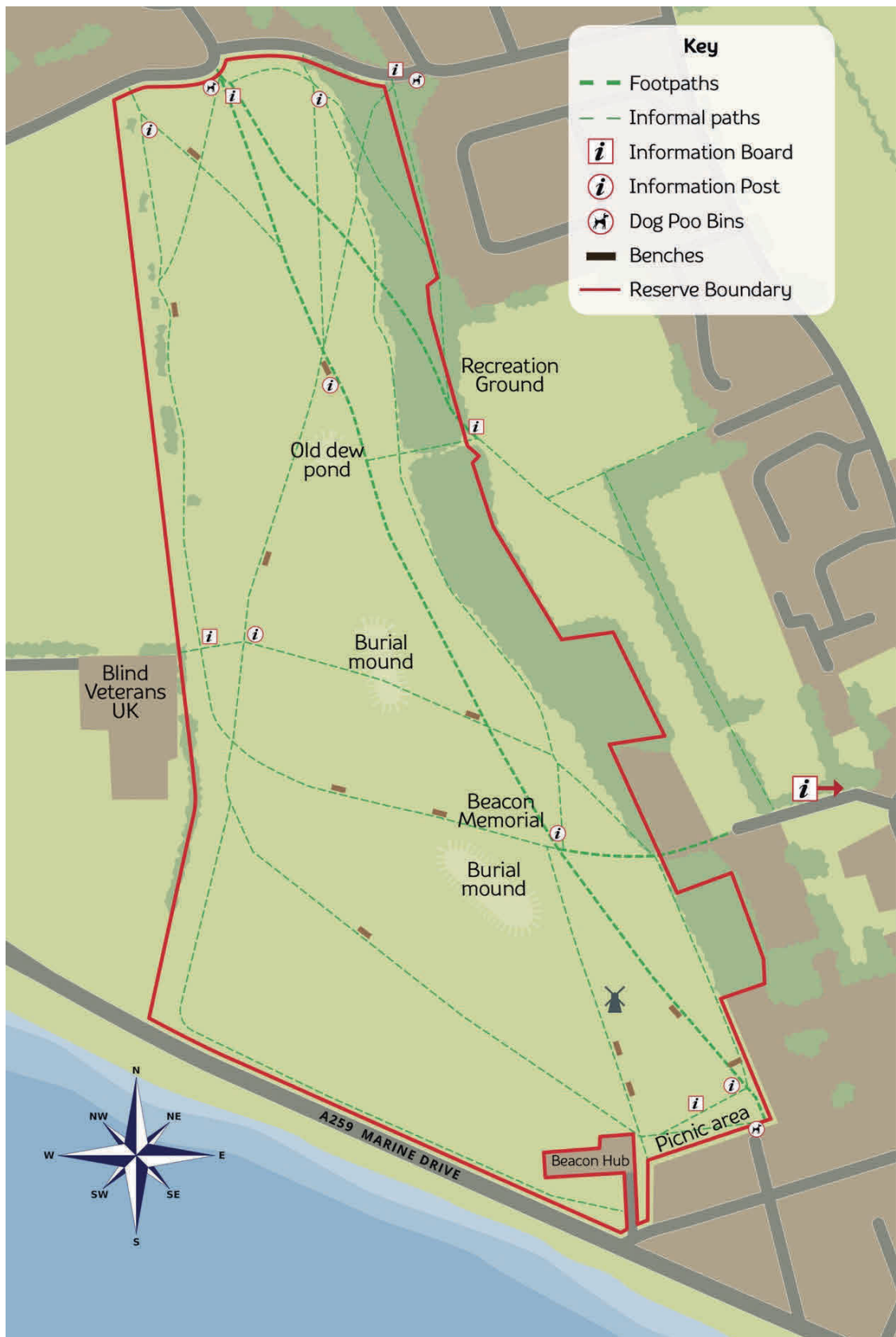


Brent Geese flock by Andrew Whitcomb

Thanks to Louise Arnold, Jay Butler, Libby Darling, Don Marten, Steven Munday, Andrew Whitcomb, and other contributors.

Maps of Beacon Hill





Photos of Beacon Hill



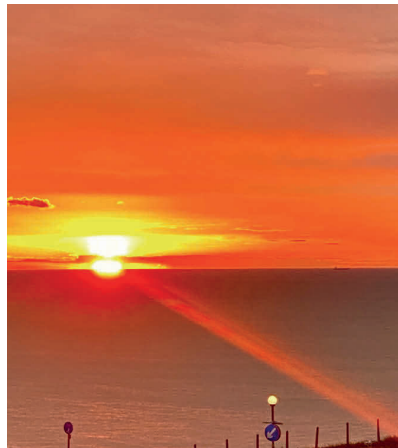


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