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Our world is worth saving

Four special
summer
blue
butterflies



Summer **Moth**
trap news

British
Nature
Guide on
tour in
Wisconsin,
Michigan,
Vancouver
& Portugal



The plastic
crisis



For fun, for knowledge
and for nature

Trip Report
South Stack RSPB
Reserve

Adults and teens e-magazine #2 – Summer 2019

Welcome to the British Nature Guide e-magazine

for adults and teens

Our aim is to encourage a wider appreciation of nature in all of its forms. You will find topical features about British wildlife, as well as articles about threats to our natural environment.

For those who like to see wildlife abroad, the British Nature Guide on tour pages will include profiles of some of the species our team have seen and information about the places we have visited.

We hope that you discover something new in the magazine, but most of all we hope that you enjoy reading it and that it inspires you to get out and to spend quality time with nature.



Elephant Hawk-moth (*Deilephila elpenor*) is one of our largest moths and can be quite common in July

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Cover photo

Stonechat
taken at the
Great Orme in
Wales in July
2017



Did you know that the onion is a flowering plant? It is a member of the Allium family along with Chives, Garlic, Shallots and Leeks.

Onions no longer occur in the wild and their exact origin is unknown, but they have been cultivated for more than 5000 years.

What you will find in this issue

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Four special blue butterflies to look for in the summer

Small Blue - *Cupido minimus*



This tiny butterfly has a strange distribution in Britain, with isolated populations in South Wales, Northern Scotland, Cumbria and Southern England suggesting that it was once far more widely distributed.

The under sides of the wings are silvery-grey with black dots and a blue sheen near to the body. The upper sides of the wings of the female are dark brown and the male dark grey each with a white fringe. Males have a sparse covering of tiny blue scales on the upper sides.

Good sites to find this butterfly are Rodborough Common in Gloucestershire and Hutchinson's Bank in Surrey.

Large Blue - *Phengaris arion*



The British sub-species of this Butterfly became extinct in Britain in 1979, but since then the species has been successfully reintroduced into several sites in south-western Britain, using larvae collected from a Swedish island which had a similar sub-species.

The main feature which distinguishes this butterfly from the other blues is the bold black spots on the blue upper wings in the shape a paw print. The under sides of the wings are silvery-grey with black and white eyespot markings.

Good sites to find this butterfly are Daneway Banks in Gloucestershire and Collard Hill in Somerset.

Chalkhill Blue - *Polyommatus coridon*



You need to look for this butterfly in southern Britain where it is only found on chalk or limestone grasslands. It starts to fly in early July and has gone by early September.

The upper wings of the males are blue with black and white along the edges. The wings of the females are mainly brown with a white fringe.

The females lay their eggs on Horseshoe Vetch plants. The caterpillars do not hatch until the following spring.

Two good sites to find this species are Denbies Hillside in Surrey and Barnack Hills and Holes in Cambridgeshire.

Adonis Blue – *Polyommatus bellargus*



Restricted to the southern counties of England. It flies in two distinct generations for about five weeks May to June and the same again August to September.

The male has bright blue upper wings and the female has brown. Both sexes have white fringes to the wings.

Horseshoe Vetch is the host species for the caterpillars.

Two good sites for this species are Rodborough Common in Gloucestershire and Denbies Hillside in Surrey.

Dragonflies, Hawkers, Skimmers, Emperors, Chasers, Darters & Damselflies

We have 57 species of these wonderfully colourful insects in Britain. Some are rare and have quite restricted ranges, but many are reasonably common and easy to see.

Getting a photo, however, can prove quite a challenge.

If you want to see any of these creatures you need to head out on a sunny day from May to October and look for somewhere with slow-moving or standing water with a good amount of waterside vegetation.

To give you an idea of size, Damselflies are usually less than 4cm in length. The largest Hawkers are almost 9cm in length and have a wingspan of up to 12cm.



The Migrant Hawker (above) is one of the largest species, the Large Red Damselfly (below) is one of the smallest.

Species like the Common Darter (above) can be quite approachable, often settling on fences, posts or dry paths. The male is red, females and immature males are yellow.

All of our dragonfly species are hunters, catching flying insects. They are in turn hunted by birds, with the Hobby being a specialist dragonfly hunter.

Dragonflies are territorial and can often be seen patrolling a pond or a stretch of river.



Interesting facts about our wildlife

For hundreds of years bird names were passed from one generation to the next mainly by word of mouth.

Most of our birds had several commonly used local or regional names.

With the advent of bird identification books and the internet, many of these alternative names have now been lost.

Here are two names which were still in use in the 1960s.

Red-legged Daw and Moorfowl.

Do you know, or can you guess which species these names belonged to?

Have a look at page 12 to check whether you were right.

A distinct sub-species of the Large Copper Butterfly (*Lycaena dispar dispar*) once occurred in a restricted range in south-east England. As fenlands were drained it became rarer, and consequently more attractive to collectors.

It last bred in 1851, just over a hundred years after it had first been identified.

Unsuccessful attempts have been made to re-introduce the species to Britain using continental stock, but even if the attempts resume and are successful in the future our unique sub-species has been lost forever.

Which is the rarest species of breeding bird in Britain?

Go to page 12 for the answer

Just for fun - Which of our birds do these three scientific (Linnaean) names belong to?

Erithacus rubecula, Tyto alba & Cyanistes caeruleus

Answers on page 22

Horse Chestnut Tree (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) commonly known as the Conker Tree

It may come as a surprise to many that this deciduous broadleaf tree is not native to Britain. It was only introduced here for ornamental purposes in the 17th century. The nearest naturally wild growing population is in the Balkans. Other members of this family are native to temperate regions in Asia and North America.



Horse Chestnut trees can grow to heights of around 40 metres. The hand-like leaves have between 5-7 leaflets. The flowers form in May and the spiky seed pods develop during the summer, falling in late summer or early autumn.

It might surprise you to find the popular children's game of conkers is thought to have developed in the early 1800s using snail shells. It was only when Horse Chestnuts were used instead of snails in the Isle of Wight in 1848 that the game as we know it began.

The Horse Chestnut Leaf-miner moth has recently colonized Britain and its leaf mines are already a common sight on the leaves. What effect this will have on the trees in the long-term has yet to be established.



Rock-pooling on the Welsh coast



Dog Whelk



Dog Whelk eggs & Barnacles



Shore Crab



Spiral Wrack

Find a rocky shore anywhere along the Welsh coast and you are sure to find plenty of wildlife living in the area between the high and low tide marks.

Turn over a few rocks in the pools, carefully, and look underneath. One or more crabs will usually scurry away looking for somewhere else to hide.

Most rocks will have small white barnacles. Take care with these as they can be quite sharp and it is easy to get a nasty cut from them.



Common Limpet



Beadlet Anemone

So what will you find?

In the larger pools you may well find seaweed. Sometimes you might find the egg case of a Dogfish, known as a Mermaid's Purse.

If you come across a Lion's-mane Jellyfish do not touch it. It can give very painful stings.

You will certainly find plenty of shells stuck to the rocks, and if you are lucky perhaps a few Anemones. The jelly-like Anemones are usually red or green.

Many shellfish such as Cockles, Mussels and Whelks are eaten by birds as well as people.



Dogfish egg case



Lion's-mane Jellyfish

Recommend a nature reserve - Rye Meads (RSPB)

Location: Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire

Opening times: 9am-5pm all year round (closed December 25th-26th)

Entrance fee: free to the public but donations encouraged

Parking fee: £4 per vehicle for non-RSPB members

Facilities: visitor centre, toilets, refreshments, picnic area, viewing point, classroom



Green Sandpiper



Brimstone



Common Darter

How to get there

By train: Rye House station is 400 yards from the reserve

By bus: the nearest stop is on the Old Highway (off Rye Road) 700 yards from the reserve

By bike: the reserve can be reached by road and via the Lee Valley cycle way

By car: the reserve is situated on Rye Road in Hoddesdon and clearly signposted

Birds: the reserve attracts a wide range of species throughout the year with a lot of thought and preparation having gone into providing specialised habitats complemented by well used nesting boxes for Kestrels and Tawny Owls, artificial sandbanks for Kingfishers and nesting rafts for Common Terns. A visit to the Kingfisher hide is a must, often yielding excellent views, while from the other hides numerous wader, waterfowl and warbler species can be enjoyed through the seasons. Green Sandpipers are a regular presence on the scrapes and in the spring some of the less common waterfowl species such as Garganey and Black-necked Grebe often occur along with occasional rarities.

Habitats: extensive scrapes, large reed beds, a dragonfly pool, woodland areas and a riverside walk support a rich variety of wildlife. Many of the standard butterfly and moth species can be found along with less common species such as Dark Green Fritillary. Dragonflies are well provided for and adaptable species such as Common Darter can be seen well into autumn.

Star species include: Kingfisher, Green Sandpiper, Garganey, Water Rail, Bittern, Tawny Owl, Yellowhammer, Bearded Tit, Dark Green Fritillary, Willow Emerald Damselfly, Wasp Spider, Water Vole, Stoat.

Recommend a nature reserve - South Stack Cliffs (RSPB)

Location: Holy Island, Anglesey

Opening times: Open all year-round.

Visitor Centre and shop 10am - 5pm, café 10am-3pm

Entrance fee: Free to RSPB members. Free to the public but donations suggested

Parking fee: free at the time of writing

Facilities: Visitor Centre, toilets, café, shop, picnic area, viewing point



Chough



Wall Brown



Rose Chafer

How to get there

Public transport: The nearest train station is Holyhead station but there is no public transport to the reserve.

By bike: The reserve is 3 miles from Route 8 of the National Cycle Network

By car: Take the A55 across Anglesey to Holyhead and follow the signs to the town centre. Then follow the brown signs to the reserve which is approximately 3 miles away.

Birds: The cliffs provide nesting sites for approximately 9,000 seabirds, the cacophony of bird calls as you approach the cliff edge is incredible. Expect Puffins, Guillemots, Razorbills and Gannets. South Stack cliffs are also a breeding site for Choughs, the rarest member of the crow family in the UK. In the heathland area of the reserve you should see Meadow Pipits, Skylarks, Stonechats and Linnets.

Habitats: Heathland, farmland, cliffs, coast and ocean. South Stack RSPB is a great place for wildlife. The different habitats mean a wide range of wildlife can be spotted all year round.

Star species: * Silver-studded Blue butterfly * Adder * Common Lizard * Dolphin * Porpoise * Chough * Puffin * Gannet * Guillemot * Razorbill * Spatulate Fleawort

Hoverflies – marvellous mimics

Many people see a hoverfly and think that it is a bee or a wasp, this is not surprising as hoverflies have evolved to effectively mimic bees and wasps.

Most predators will not catch bees and wasps because they can give a nasty sting. Because hoverflies look similar they leave them alone as well, even though hoverflies do not possess a sting. Hoverflies fly faster than bees and wasps and can make sudden changes in direction.



The large hoverfly *Volucella inanis* (left) has evolved yellow and black stripes to effectively mimic wasps. It is so large that it can easily be mistaken for the Hornet (right). Predators which know better than to take on a Hornet will also avoid this hoverfly. The larvae use the same mimicking tactics as the adults and live in the nests of wasps.



Volucella bombylans (left) is one of the largest hoverflies. It has evolved to mimic several bumblebee species, including the Buff-tailed Bumblebee on the right. This hoverfly can have either a white or buff coloured tail. Like many other species the larvae live in the nests of wasps and bees.



Eristalis interruptus (left) is a hoverfly species which looks like a Honey Bee. There are some obvious differences. A hoverfly will often hover in a spot in thin air and defend it, bees will not do this. Bees have pollen sacs on their back legs where they collect pollen to take it back to their colony, hoverflies do not.



Dasysyrphus albostriatus (left) is one of many hoverflies which have evolved to mimic the yellow and black stripes of the Common Wasp. The antennae are always longer in wasps. If you find a wasp or a hoverfly trapped indoors please let them out. Remember while you are doing this Hoverflies do not sting.



Hoverflies and bees are the two most important pollinating insects in Britain so it is important that we look after them.

Moth trapping news – Cheshire

What to expect from June- August

What to look out for in June

There are so many good moths in June. Here are a few of the special ones. Heart & Dart, Flame Shoulder, Bee Moth, Peppered Moth, Common Marbled Carpet, Light Emerald, Green Pug, Silver-ground Carpet, Buff Ermine, Blood-vein, Blotched Emerald, Garden Pebble, Large Yellow Underwing, Scorched Wing, Plain Golden Y, Elephant Hawk-moth, Clouded Silver, Riband Wave & Small Magpie.

What to look out for in August

Perhaps the best of the summer months in Cheshire. So many moths around. Red-barred Tortrix, September Thorn, Dusky Thorn, Single-dotted Wave, Canary-shouldered Thorn, Swallow Prominent, Yellow-tailed Moth, Ruby Tiger, Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow-underwing, Bordered Beauty, Gold Spot, Orange Swift, Setaceous Hebrew Character, Flounced Rustic, Double-striped Pug, Large Emerald & Chinese Character.

What to look out for in July

Another great month for moths in Cheshire. Here are a selection of what is around. Dark Arches, V-Pug, Dun-bar, Scalloped Oak, Marbled Beauty, Plain Wave, Poplar Hawk-moth, Dot Moth, Mother of Pearl, Fan-foot, Scarce Silver-lines, Barred Marble, Poplar Grey, Grey Dagger, Beautiful Hook-tip, Willow Beauty, Garden Tiger, Sallow Kitten, Small Phoenix, Iron Prominent, Common Wainscott, Copper Underwing, Varied Coronet, Bramble Shoot Moth, Miller & Buff-tip.



Elephant Hawk-moth



Varied Coronet



Yellow-tail Moth



Canary-shouldered Thorn

Responsible moth trapping

If you do try your hand at moth trapping please make every effort to release the moths unharmed. Research the type of trap that would best suit you best on the internet. Do not use it every night. Please record what you find and share your records with your county moth group.

To discover what else has been trapped in Cheshire by our team over the last few years go to <http://www.britishnatureguide.com/moths>

More interesting facts about our wildlife

Once commonly referred to as a "Hedge Sparrow" and similar in size to a House Sparrow, the Dunnock is in fact not a sparrow at all. Instead it belongs to a family of small songbirds called accentors who are mainly found in the mountainous regions of Europe and Asia. One of only two lowland accentor species, the Dunnock is otherwise typical of this genus of birds in feeding mouse-like fashion on the ground, mainly on seeds and insects.



The Brimstone is one of the longest-living butterfly species in adult form, usually emerging as a herald of early spring and flying through to September or October. After building up its energy reserves by nectaring in the late summer, the Brimstone then goes into winter hibernation in evergreens such as ivy, whose leaves it has a remarkable resemblance to when at rest. After re-emerging the following spring its natural lifespan ends with a brood around May.

For about 250 years the commonly used name for the Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) in Britain was Sheld-Duck. This name seems to have gone out of fashion in the mid 20th century.



Slow Worms may look like snakes, but they are in fact lizards which have lost their legs. They grow to about 50cm in length.

Just like other lizards Slow Worms can shed their tails if attacked.

They do not lay eggs, the females incubate their eggs in their body and produce tiny live young in the autumn.

They mainly eat snails, slugs and worms and do not have a venomous bite. They can be found all over Britain, living under rocks and logs, and usually hunting in the mornings or evening.

They are very long-lived and can live for more than 20 years in the wild.



Brown Hares are thought to have been introduced into Britain during the Iron Age.

Odds and ends page



Can you name this seabird?
You will find the answer on page 22



Can you identify this summer butterfly? It only flies between July and September.
Not sure? The answer is on page 22.

Did you know that flamingos and pigeons produce a milk-like substance to feed their young?

Not hearing or seeing as many birds as you did when you were a child?

This is hardly surprising when recent research has estimated that the bird population numbers in Britain have dropped by more than 40 million since 1966.



Young birds often do not look like their parents.

What species of bird is this?

You will find the answer on page 22

Answer to question about which is our rarest breeding bird on page 5

Our rarest breeding bird species is the Montagu's Harrier.



Sulphur Beetle - *Cteniopus sulphureus*

If you find small yellow beetles on flowers in July or August they will be this species. It is our only yellow beetle species. Where they occur they can be quite common.



The wildflower above is common in Britain, but can you identify the species?

Go to page 22 to find the answer.

Did you know that there are over 4000 species of beetles in Britain and Ireland?

Answer to questions from page 5

The Red-legged Daw was used as a name for Chough.

The Moorfowl was a name for the Red Grouse.

Try to leave a patch in your garden to grow wild. Even just a few square metres can make a difference for wildlife.

For example more than 10,000 Springtails can make their home in each square metre.

British Nature Guide on tour



British Nature Guide

A look at wildlife and wild places outside Britain



Painted Lady – *Vanessa cardui*

This butterfly is a long distance migrant in both the Old and New Worlds.

In the Palearctic region it begins its migration in North Africa and reaches as far as southern Sweden, Ireland and Turkey.

In the Nearctic it sets out in spring from central Mexico. By summer its range covers all of the continental USA (except Alaska) and much of southern Canada.



The Purple Swamphen (left) and the Red-knobbed Coot (right) have been successfully reintroduced to the s'Albufera Marshes in Mallorca. They are now spreading to other wetland areas on the island. If you would like to see these birds and lots of other Mediterranean species then this is a great site to visit.



Crown daisy - *Chrysanthemum coronarium*

Look out for this large and distinctive wildflower. It comes in this and an all yellow form and is common around the Mediterranean.

This picture was taken in Cyprus in April.



Although you might not guess it from the blue version above, this is in fact a Scarlet Pimpernel – *Anagallis arvensis*. It occurs widely in Europe, Asia and North Africa.

British Nature Guide on tour

State profile: Wisconsin USA



Northern Crescent



White Pelican



Hummingbird Clearwing

On a summer visit to Wisconsin you will find that even its largest city Milwaukee offers some peaceful walks around the bay where you are sure to encounter the regular coastal species including Ring-billed Gull, Double-crested Cormorant and perhaps a Peregrine hunting offshore.

If possible though, head to the sparsely populated Door County, situated on a peninsula stretching around 75 miles and dividing Green Bay from Lake Michigan. Its county seat Sturgeon Bay offers memorable views of White Pelicans offshore with Caspian Terns and Spotted Sandpipers also present. Onshore you may encounter Cedar Waxwing, Northern Bluet damselfly and Black Squirrel as below.



Also worth visiting around the peninsula are Fish Creek, Sister Bay and Egg Harbor, all scenic settings where you are sure to meet a warm welcome and find plenty of wildlife.

Below are Wisconsin's state bird American Robin and the widespread Ring-billed Gull, both seen in Sturgeon Bay.



Monarch waystations in Wisconsin



While the number of Monarch butterflies has declined alarmingly over the last quarter of a century (see spring issue), concerted efforts are being made to redress this across the eastern United States with a network of nearly 23,000 waystations providing milkweeds (a vital source of nectar) and shelter. There is a concentration of waystations in Wisconsin like the one pictured above in Sister Bay, Door County.

Below are two other species you may be lucky enough to find, the ornate Eastern Tiger Swallowtail and the ghostly Clouded Sulphur.



For more photos taken in Wisconsin please visit <http://www.britishnatureguide.com/illinois-michigan-and-wisconsin-species-gallery.html>

Some of the birds enjoyed by this observer in Wisconsin during a late summer 2018 visit:-

American Robin, Barn Swallow, Caspian Tern, Cedar Waxwing, Chipping Sparrow, Common Grackle, Double-crested Cormorant, Mourning Dove, Peregrine, Ring-billed Gull, Spotted Sandpiper, White Pelican

Lepidoptera seen: Cabbage White, Clouded Sulphur, Dun Skipper, Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Gray Comma, Hummingbird Clearwing, Monarch, Northern Crescent, Orange Sulphur

British Nature Guide on tour

Reserva Natural Do Paul De Boquilobo in Portugal

Reserva Natural Do Paul De Boquilobo is located on the outskirts of the small town of Golega, in the district of Santarem, Central Portugal. If you are in the area, and would like to see a variety of different species of wildlife, then this place is worth a visit. Easy to access from Lisbon, heading north on the E1 for approximately 95km, turning east onto the A23 for 17km and then south on the IC3 for 10km, you should make it within 1 hour and 45 minutes. The habitat is made up of marshland, and the reserva is protected and run by the ICNF, who are the Instituto da Conservacao da Natureza e das Florestas.



When driving through the flat agricultural land leading up to the reserve keep your eye out for bird species, such as Red Kites, Cattle Egret and Glossy Ibis. Parking is available on the road outside the small visitor centre, which I hear is open occasionally, although I am yet to visit the reserve when this is the case! From the visitor centre there is a pathway on the left, which leads along the edge of the boggy area. This is a great area for Cattle Egrets, White Storks, White Wagtails, Stonechats and Sedge Warblers. Dragonflies and other insects are abundant along this trail.

Considerable hard work has been put into the development of this site. The road access has been improved, fresh pathways have been laid and new bridges built over the irrigation trenches lining the reserve.

Near one of the hides are breeding Barn Owls, which take residence in a barn roof. The barn is accessible from the path and you will know you are in the right location when you see the pellets on the floor! The Barn Owls were seen on a visit to the reserve at dusk in June.

Another big part of the wildlife of the reserve are the Wild Boar. You are unlikely to see these animals when you visit, but you will more than likely see the churned-up soil on the edge of the pathways, where they have been searching for acorns and other food sources.

I was lucky enough to find the lower jaw bone of a Wild Boar during my last visit.



Keep a look out for the Booted Eagles soaring effortlessly and circling high above the reserve. The walk around the edge of the reserve path takes around 2 hours and 30 minutes at a gentle pace, including time for numerous stops.

British Nature Guide on tour

Vancouver: A city full of nature

Within five minutes of leaving one of Vancouver's modern skyscrapers you can wander into Stanley Park and step back into a time when this part of Canada was a wilderness. Much of the park's 1000 acres is covered in forest. There are plenty of roads, tracks and trails to follow and to give you an idea of the scale the seawall walk around the park is 10km long. Make sure you stop to look at the First Nations totem poles at Brockton Point, and follow the trails around Lost Lagoon and Beaver Lake.



If you are lucky while walking in the parks in West and North Vancouver, you might see signs of Black Bears. (below)



Stanley Park covers a promontory almost surrounded by water. There is amazing wildlife to be seen at every turn. From the seawall you can see River Otters, look up for Bald Eagles, scan the lakes for Wood Ducks, check grassy areas for American Robins and Northern Flickers. You will be unlucky not to see Racoons.



Vancouver is a great base for explorers, with railways and roads heading into the Rocky Mountains.

Although Vancouver is the largest city in British Columbia, Victoria on Vancouver Island is the provincial capital. Ferries are regular from Vancouver to Victoria.

Mammals to look out for around the city

Coyotes, Black Bear, Beaver, Raccoon, three species of squirrels, several species of bats, Harbour Seals and River Otters.



More than 200 different species of birds can be seen in the city over the course of a year. Here are a few to look out for:

Bald Eagle, Great Blue Heron, Black-capped Chickadee, American Robin, Song Sparrow, Northwestern Crow, Northern Flicker, House Finch, Anna's Hummingbird, Downy Woodpecker, Steller's Jay, Violet-green Swallow, Red-winged Blackbird, Rufous Hummingbird, Varied Thrush, White-crowned Sparrow, Black-and-White Warbler, Townsend's Warbler, Spotted Towhee & Swainson's Thrush.

You are never far from greenery in Vancouver. There are well over 200 parks and gardens to enjoy.

British Nature Guide on tour

State profile: Michigan USA



Common Checkered Skipper

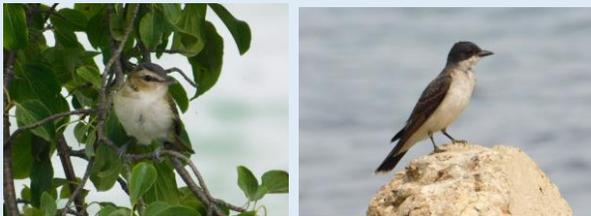


Black-crowned Night Heron



Thirteen-lined Ground Squirrel

Michigan is a great place to enjoy wildlife in the summer with no need to wander very far off the beaten track at any stopping point alongside the Great Lakes. Escanaba on Lake Michigan, Marquette on Lake Superior and Mackinac Island in Lake Huron are just three sites that offer plentiful wildlife watching opportunities with a wide range of birds likely to be present.



Above are a Red-eyed Vireo (a songbird more often heard than seen) found on Mackinac Island, and an Eastern Kingbird (a bold flycatcher usually favouring an open perch) seen in Escanaba.

On rockier terrain you may be lucky enough to encounter a Thirteen-lined Ground Squirrel peeping out from cover, while it is worth keeping an eye out on road trips for Wild Turkey (a noted conservation success in Michigan), Bald Eagle and Turkey Vulture.

Any excursion can offer possibilities for a pleasing nature walk. Below are Emerald Spreadwing (Lestes dryas), Great Egret and Great Blue Heron, all seen along the river in the friendly small city of Frankenmuth, known as Michigan's "Little Bavaria".



A wildlife haven in Wayne County MI



On a visit to Dearborn, Michigan it is worth spending a whole day at the fascinating Henry Ford Museum which aside from its collections has delightful grounds ideal for a nature stroll. On a summer's day you are likely to find a wide range of butterflies and moths such as Silvery Blue and Chickweed Geometer (both pictured above) while various skippers are a possibility including Common Checkered, Broad-winged and Silver-spotted. A riverside walk can be rewarded with views of Belted Kingfisher, Black-crowned Night Heron or even a Common Snapping Turtle in repose. Below are Double-crested Cormorant and Red-eared Slider.



For more photos taken in Michigan please visit <http://www.britishnatureguide.com/illinois-michigan-and-wisconsin-species-gallery.html>

Some of the birds enjoyed by this observer in Michigan during a late summer 2018 visit:-

American Goldfinch, American Robin, Bald Eagle, Barn Swallow, Belted Kingfisher, Black-capped Chickadee, Black-crowned Night Heron, Brown-headed Cowbird, Common Grackle, Common Merganser, Double-crested Cormorant, Eastern Kingbird, Eastern Phoebe, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Herring Gull, Least Flycatcher, Mallard, Red-eyed Vireo, Red-tailed Hawk, Ring-billed Gull, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Song Sparrow, Turkey Vulture, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Wild Turkey
Lepidoptera seen: Broad-winged Skipper, Cabbage White, Chickweed Geometer, Common Checkered Skipper, Monarch, Pearl Crescent, Silver-spotted Skipper, Silvery Blue

British Nature Guide on tour

Mexican wildlife

A taster of what can be found on a holiday to the Yucatan in Mexico

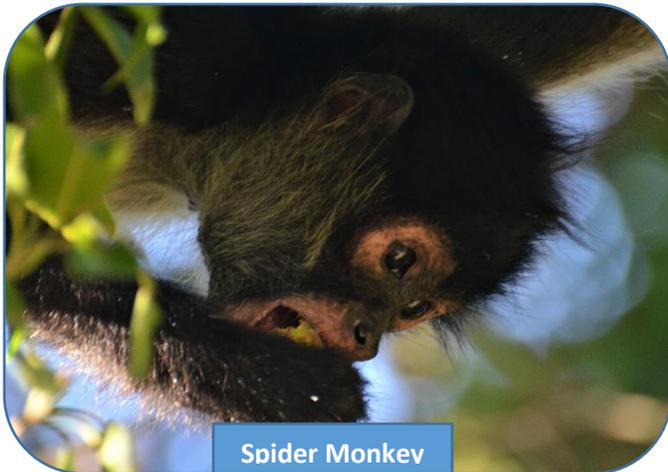
(More to come in future magazines)



American Flamingo



Fine-lined Stripe Streak



Spider Monkey



Coconut Palm



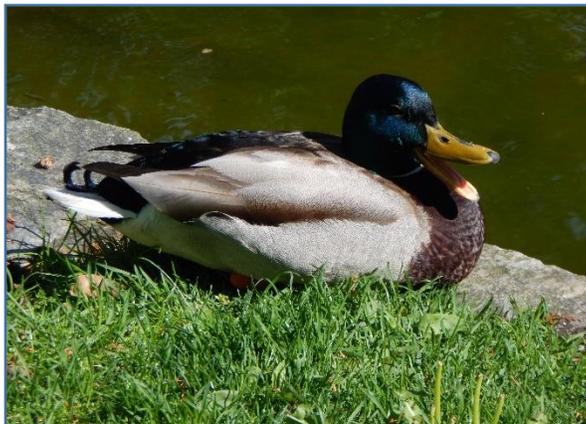
Iguana



Spiny-backed Orb-weaver Spider

British Nature Guide on tour

Birds don't have to be rare to make a trip abroad worthwhile. Below are a Common Gull, Chaffinch and Mallard I saw in Norway in May 2017. Don't discount the birds we think of as common. One day soon that might no longer be the case.



Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus Polyglottos*): an appreciation



"Mockingbirds don't do one thing but make music for us to enjoy...they don't do one thing but sing their hearts out for us"

Miss Maudie's words in Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird* ring true from the moment one first encounters a Northern Mockingbird. Their vocal range is extraordinary with males mastering up to 200 different songs during their lifetime while also developing distinct repertoires for the spring and autumn.

Mockingbirds have mellifluous songs of their own but can also mimic the songs of around fifty other bird species along with a bewildering array of other sounds including dog barks, chirping crickets, croaking frogs, human voices, musical instruments, car alarms, sirens and dog whistles. The female mockingbird sings too though less loudly and for less sustained spells than the male.

Like the Blue Jay (see spring issue), the Northern Mockingbird is a highly intelligent and adaptable species. Studies have revealed its remarkable ability to distinguish individual humans from one another on short acquaintance in order to identify threat levels.

Mockingbirds are largely monogamous with the male doing most of the nest building, the female all the incubation and both parents feeding the young when hatched. This sharing of parental duties enables mockingbirds to produce up to four broods per breeding season with three to five eggs per brood. Fearless in defending their young, Northern Mockingbirds have been known to dive bomb cats (their main predator in urban areas) and dogs while also fending off large birds including hawks and crows.

Mockingbirds are omnivorous, dining mainly on insects (such as grasshoppers, beetles and caterpillars) in the warmer months and berries at other times. Although not naturally drawn to feeders, they can sometimes be tempted to gardens during the winter by suet feeders combined with fruits such as apples and oranges.

While once associated mainly with the south, the Northern Mockingbird has in recent times fluctuated in number there, especially in Texas, though this has been offset by a gradual expansion in range north and south reaching into Canada and Mexico. An ability to thrive in both urban and rural settings means that its current conservation status is *Least Concern*.

"Hush, little baby, don't say a word, Mama's gonna buy you a mockingbird..."

Celebrated in a popular traditional lullaby to this day, the Northern Mockingbird also gained the Presidential seal of approval in 1793 when Thomas Jefferson wrote to a friend describing his beloved pet mockingbird Dick (who sometimes sang to his violin accompaniment) as a "superior being in the form of a bird". Little wonder then that this delightful and resilient species is honoured and protected as the state bird of Arkansas, Florida, Mississippi, Tennessee and Texas (and formerly of South Carolina).

The plastic crisis facing our planet

A selection of thoughts and ideas

Food for thought.

A million plastic bottles are sold every minute and most are not recycled.



On this small stretch of beach in the Yucatan in Mexico I counted more than 50 large pieces of plastic, along with countless smaller pieces, all washed up in just one tide. Every day a beach cleaning vehicle went along the beach collecting it all up to recreate the illusion of a tropical paradise. Both the weed and the plastic were piled up just behind the beach out of view of the hotel, waiting for the next storm to wash it back out to sea again.

Many people have heard of the Great Pacific garbage patch, an area twice the size of France in the Northern Pacific, where plastic waste is carried by ocean currents.

What a lot of people do not realise is that there are similar accumulations of waste plastic in the North and South Atlantic, the South Pacific and the Indian Ocean.

These patches contain trillions of particles of micro plastic and hundreds of thousands of tons of larger plastic waste. Bad as this might sound it is only a small amount of the plastic that is in our oceans and seas.

Plastic is all around us.

Wherever you go you can't escape it.

Plastic is not bad.

It has a lot of important uses.

I would go so far as to say that we would find it hard to survive without it.

We need to do two things to stem the flow of plastic waste.

We must ensure that all plastic is made to be easily recyclable, and we must invest in the infrastructure needed to cope with the quantity we are using.

Plastic is cheap to produce and it has not been designed with recycling in mind. Much of it is openly described as single use, fitting nicely into the throw-away culture which developed over the last 60 years in the world's richest countries.

Since plastic was developed it is estimated that we have produced over 8 billion metric tons of it.

That is about a metric ton for every man woman and child alive in the world today.

Most is used only once and then thrown away. Less than a quarter has been recycled or burned.

For years the world's rich nations have taken the easy option and sent their plastic waste to less developed nations rather than recycling it themselves. Much of this waste has found its way into rivers and ultimately the sea.

Recently some countries have decided not to take any more of our waste. Hopefully this will encourage western governments to increase their own recycling capacity.

The plastic crisis facing our planet (continued)

Whales and Dolphins are dying after eating hundreds of pieces of plastic. Sea Turtles are eating plastic bags which look just like the Jellyfish they like to eat.

The plastic we throw away is killing the wildlife we have worked so hard over recent years to protect.

It is estimated that more than half a million tons of nylon plastic fishing nets are either lost or dumped at sea every year.

Many of these nets, known as ghost-nets, continue to drift around the oceans, catching fish, dolphins, sharks, seals and turtles. Any sea creatures trapped in this way are condemned to a slow and painful death.

Micro plastic particles are in our food chain. They are in most of the things we eat and drink including fish, beer, sea salt and water (tap and bottled). We are ingesting dozens of particles each day and this will increase dramatically unless something is done soon.

Micro plastics come from many sources. One we can do something about is washing our clothes.

Because most of our clothing is made from synthetic materials like polyester thousands of micro plastic fibres are released every time we use the washing machine. Acrylic materials are thought to release the most fibres. Fleece jackets are one of the worst offenders.

These fibres are small, much thinner than a human hair. They are washed into the drains, then the rivers and finally reach the sea.

To reduce the number of fibres produced we should wash our clothes only when they are dirty. Use a cool setting and use short wash cycles. If you can, avoid buying clothes which include polyester.



Single-use Plastic

Did you know that it takes up to 500 years for a plastic straw to break down?

It doesn't decompose or go away. It breaks down into millions of micro plastic particles which drift in the oceans until they are eaten by fish or shell-fish.

If we carry on as we are within a few hundred years our seas will turn into a thick plastic soup.

When we pick up a piece of plastic litter and put it in the recycling bin, where does it go?

The sad truth is that less than 40% of the plastic we put in the recycling bin is actually recycled. The rest goes to landfill or is sent overseas where it is meant to be recycled or burnt. Inevitably some of the waste we send abroad finds its way into the oceans.

It is not all doom and gloom. There is hope on the horizon and things are starting to change.

We as consumers have influenced companies to start to move away from plastic packaging. Some shops have started to encourage customers to take their own containers for loose items such as meats, fruits and vegetables

Organisations such as the RSPB are now sending out their magazines in 100% compostable potato starch wrappers, rather than polythene.

British Nature Guide on tour in
Mexico and Southern Spain

Migrant
birds –
some leave
and others
arrive

Waterfalls
of Iceland

In our
autumn
e-magazine

Recommend a nature reserve –
Titchwell (RSPB)

Hedgehogs
getting
ready for
winter

Moth
trapping in
the autumn
months

Information about the British Nature Guide
website

www.britishnatureguide.com

If you have enjoyed reading this e-magazine
then you might like to check out our
website. It is a photographic record of the
wildlife seen by our team, focusing mainly
on British species, but also including some
species seen on trips abroad.

More than 1700 species of British
invertebrates, birds, plants, mammals,
reptiles, fungi and amphibians are featured.

There are moth trap record pages,
photographic site reports for some great
places to see wildlife, photo quizzes and
individual species pages for all of the species
we have seen in this country.

To encourage children to develop a love for
nature we have set up a Resources for
Children section where you will find
photographs, fact sheets and activity sheets
about mini-beasts, birds, mammals,
amphibians, reptiles and plants. This section
is aimed mainly at children from 4-12 years
old. All of the resources are free to enjoy,
download and to use for non-profit purposes
by teachers, childminders, parents and all
other child-carers.

All of the photographs in this e-magazine are
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Little Egrets, Great
White Egrets and
Cattle Egrets have
all successfully
colonised Britain
over recent years.

Could White Storks
(above and below)
be the next species
to join them?



Quiz answers

The answers to the quiz about
Linnaean names from page 5

Robin, Barn Owl & Bluetit

The seabird featured on page 12
is a Fulmar.

The young bird pictured on page
12 is a Robin.

The summer flying butterfly on
page 12 is a Gatekeeper. Field
gates and stiles are good places
to look for it.

The purple wildflower on page 12
is a Common Mallow.

You will be lucky to see one of
these in 2019

In the 40 years up to 2017 the
number of White-letter
Hairstreak butterflies in Britain
fell by more than 90%.

Thank you from all of our team for
taking the time to read this e-
magazine.

If you have enjoyed it please tell your
friends about it.