

# LEINTWARDINE WILDLIFE GROUP

## Newsletter - August 2025

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Welcome to the very first  
Leintwardine Wildlife Newsletter!

At our last group meeting in April, those attending discussed the responses from Mike's questionnaire about the future direction of the Wildlife Group. At the time there was a strong feeling that in addition to the Summer Walk and Winter Talk programmes, there was scope for the group to become more actively involved in helping our local wildlife. As a result, eight willing volunteers stepped forward to form what has now become the Leintwardine Wildlife Steering Group. All the members have a passion for the natural world and have been meeting regularly to plan and start the preferred improvements you identified, all aimed at supporting our local environment and wildlife.

Throughout the spring and summer, they, along with other LWG volunteers, have been actively involved in several wildlife projects and we wanted to share what's been happening. So, without further ado, here goes...

### Money matters

LWG has gradually accrued funds from the Winter Talk entrance fee and from a very generous grant of £700 from The Riverside at Aymestrey. At the last group meeting, you made it clear that you wanted to put that money to good use in our local environment. Therefore, the Steering Group have pledged £250 to a project led by Toby Fountain aimed at monitoring Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers in the county. These birds are extremely elusive and

likely to be under-recorded and yet the species is



also one that has undergone a large decline nationwide and is now red listed in the UK. Urgent monitoring is needed, and Toby intends to use the donation, along with a grant endowed by the Herefordshire Ornithologists Club, to buy and place sound recorders in tracts of forest (including Wigmore Rolls) to record their presence. We've also set aside £600 for Leintwardine Primary School to spend on equipment to help the rewilding of their school field and £200 to spend on seeds and plants to help restore wildflowers around the village. Many thanks to Karen Blake for acting as our 'treasurer'.



## School Bioblitz

In June, members of the Wildlife Group helped pupils at Leintwardine Primary School with a 'bioblitz' to identify as many species of plant and animal as possible. The event took place at the field owned by the school as it gradually rewilds after many years of intensive farming. The field represents a superb facility for the pupils, enabling them to get close up with nature and to take part in activities that will hopefully give them a lifelong appreciation of nature. The project is driven by Head, Nicola Gorry and, so far, a pond has been dug and trees have been planted.

The night before the bioblitz, we set up a moth trap and in the morning members of the LWG met to welcome the pupils. The children watched as the trap was opened, and we witnessed an amazing 'wow' moment as even the those who had claimed to be scared of moths couldn't fail to be impressed by a fabulous Poplar Hawkmoth and two Elephant



included a Broad-bodied Chaser dragonfly and lots of Roesel's Bush Crickets. The field looks to be in good hands, and we hope to be able to return to monitor its progress and count many more species with the schoolchildren.



Hawkmoths that had been attracted to the trap. The children were thrilled and took turns to have the moths placed on the back of their hands.

In total the bioblitz identified 120 different species of animals and plants. Some of the other highlights

## Two New Wildflower Sites

Following the sterling efforts of Sue Wilkinson, it appears that the management team at Fletcher Homes have agreed to restrict the future strimming of the wildflowers that were flourishing along the bank in Rosemary Lane and around the designated 'nature reserve' by their landscaping contractors. The Oxeye Daisies, Bird's Foot Trefoil, Ragged Robin, Foxgloves and many other species of wildflower were in full bloom and looking glorious when contractors moved in earlier this Summer. Sue reports that reassurances have been received that future discussions about the management of the site and the creation of meadow areas will follow.

Sue has also been instrumental in negotiating with both BT and CBRE Ltd about the Telephone Exchange in Rosemary Lane. The land in front of





and surrounding the exchange building was identified by LWG as a potential area to “re-wild” with British native flowers for pollinators. She is delighted to report that we have been given the go ahead to “tidy up” and plant the site with native wildflowers. We have also been given permission to put up both a bird and a bat box and we hope to start this work in late August. We will be needing volunteers to help with all this and more, so please contact us at if you’d like to get involved at [leintwardinewildlifegroup@gmail.com](mailto:leintwardinewildlifegroup@gmail.com).



## A Sign of the Times

Wildlife Group volunteers, Janey Evershed, Alison Jackson and Lucy Thompson have been out and



about conducting botanical surveys across several sites, three of which have been nominated for improvement as part of a project to improve botanical interest along our verges and green spaces. The data

collected will help to identify the effects any

interventions make, and the plan is to continue to monitor the diversity of our plant life in years to come. So far, we have identified over 175 different trees, grasses and wildflowers across five sites, of which an amazing 144 were recorded at Wheatstone during their open day and 35 species were identified on the school field at their bioblitz.

Of the three sites that LWG are managing we identified a very encouraging 43 species at the old Saw Bank on the High Street opposite Griffiths, but fewer than 20 at both the new cemetery and the telephone exchange in Rosemary Lane, largely due to previous management practices. It will be very exciting to see how these two sites recover when managed for wildlife.





With that in mind, volunteer work parties have been out and about collecting seeds, clearing hogweed, raking



and cutting back ready for the autumn when we'll be sowing a specially selected mixture of yellow rattle and wildflowers in

time for spring, and hopefully extending the flowering season for us all to enjoy. Many thanks to Richard Rawlings, Fiona Naylor, Alison Jackson, David Evershed, Keith Arrowsmith and David Williams for all their input. If anyone would like to join us or can help with entering data into spreadsheets just let us know by contacting us at [leintwardinewildlifegroup@gmail.com](mailto:leintwardinewildlifegroup@gmail.com).

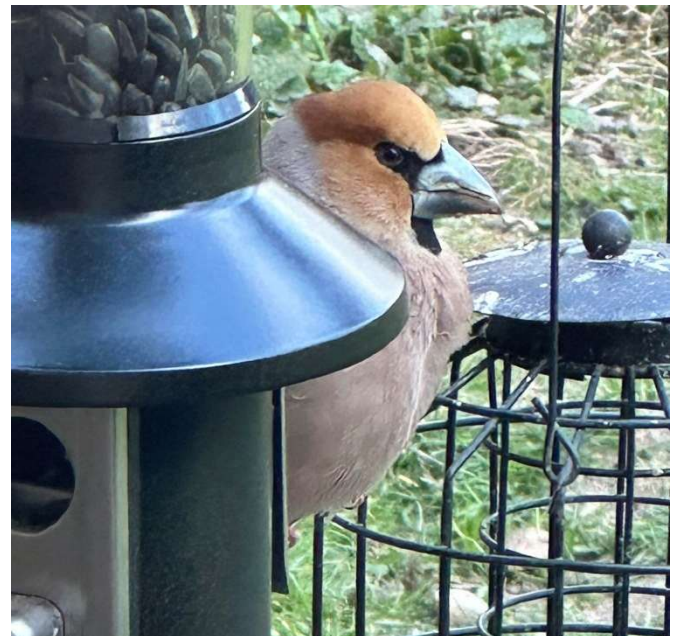


## A year in birds – August 2024 to July 2025

Last year was an interesting one for some of the scarcer birds that we find locally. Summer 2024 was reasonable for passage of birds moving south, especially as the Teme for once did not dry up (some compensation for the very rainy summer!). It is around August that the more unusual birds can

turn up and this year included both a Greenshank (which stayed around for at least eight days) and a Wood Sandpiper on Brockley Meadow. It is always worth looking out in late summer for passing waders but it's also a time when songbirds are on the move, so passage Whinchat, Stonechat, Willow Warbler, Yellow Wagtail, Tree Pipit, Redstart and Wheatear are all possible. Indeed, a Wheatear was seen near Pember's Ditch in August, and a Tree Pipit was on Brockley Meadow in September.

The winter of 24/25 turned out to be interesting because of a nationwide influx of Hawfinches. Although these can be found in the county every year, they tend to be scarce so it was interesting to see if they would turn up here and indeed, they did. One was seen in Leintwardine churchyard in December (they like to feed on yew berries), another was in Buckton in December. Best of all, one was seen in gardens in Hopton Heath in March (here photographed by Karen Thorne).



The size of the influx can be gauged by the fact that elsewhere in the county, over 30 spent weeks at a churchyard near Ross-on-Wye. You may have to wait a few years for another influx but it's always





worth looking for them around the yews in the churchyard in winter.

The spring of this year was also a good one for passing birds, with early sightings of Black-tailed Godwit and Curlew near Trippleton in late February followed by two sightings of Ospreys in April and May. The first of these spent a good deal of time perched in a tree near to the Teme where it was photographed by Mike Wheeler.



Ospreys seem to be passing through the county more frequently and it is likely that they will stay on to breed within the next few years, possibly not around here but certainly along the Wye in the south and west of the county.

In terms of the scarcer breeding birds, 2025 has been a very good year for Yellow Wagtails. A pair seems to have nested somewhere near to Brockley Meadow as both adults and young have been seen regularly on the meanders of the drying riverbed through June and July. There are others locally as well, including this lovely male photographed by Mike Attwood.

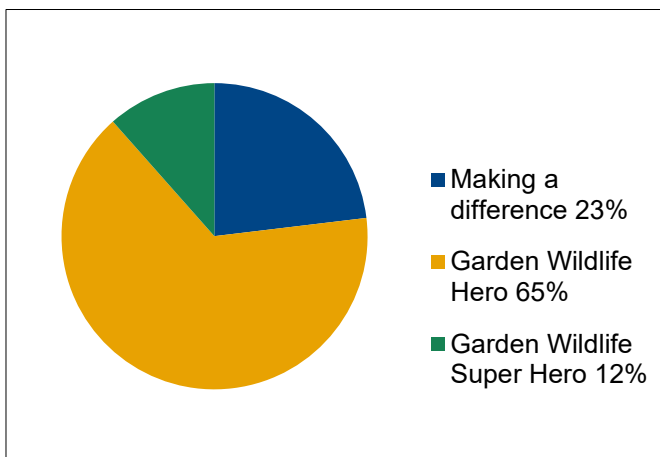


A real rarity turned up this year in the form of Quail. Most years these will be absent from the area but an influx in June into the county of at least seven birds occurred in June with two found locally. One bird was heard by Shirley Gregory calling its distinctive 'wet-my-lips' call in the wheat fields south of Adley Moor for a few days in June while another was heard calling in flight over Watling Street later in the month. A call is the best you can realistically hope for with this bird as they are notoriously difficult to see, spending their time hunkered down in the middle of crops. Here's hoping that the following year will be just as good for the birdlife of the Leintwardine area!

## Garden Wildlife Survey

Many thanks to those who completed and returned the Garden Wildlife Quiz and congratulations to Orla Preece, the winner of the bird box made by David Williams. The results are in and wow! It seems we have some real life Garden Wildlife Heroes in our village.





Everyone that replied said that they no longer used peat, 80% were feeding the birds and keeping areas of their grass longer and over half had a pond or a small area of water reserved for wildlife. Several respondents pledged to add more wildlife features to their gardens in the coming months. Nest boxes for Swifts, Swallows and House Martins were less well provided for with only a third of respondents making specific provision for these species. Interestingly, at the Leintwardine Open Gardens one garden owner had only put up two House Martin cups the day before and when we visited, they were already being investigated by Martins, which goes to show that if we provide the habitat the birds will find it.

The majority of gardens had provision for hedgehogs, making sure that there was water available, places for them to hide and access to other gardens, but there was only one sighting reported. It seems that Leintwardine, like many other villages, is a place where hedgehogs should thrive, but where it doesn't seem to be the case. If anyone is interested in looking into this further we'd love to hear from you at [leintwardinewildlifegroup@gmail.com](mailto:leintwardinewildlifegroup@gmail.com)

## Wheatstone Open Day

Lots of us from the Wildlife Group descended on Wheatstone for their annual Open Day. This year we were asked to do this in conjunction with the Earthworm Housing Co-operative who were showcasing their permaculture system of land and community management. Our role was to look at the biodiversity of the site by identifying as many species of animals and plants as we could. Mike Wheeler set up the moth trap the previous evening and early on, Shirley Gregory, Ella Curry and Mike went in to sort through the moths. The trap in the end contained 60 species including this wonderful Oak Eggar moth.



Other members of the Wildlife Group worked through the grounds identifying plants (144 species) and other insects, birds and other animals. The heat was intense but, in the end, we got to a total of 275 species (largely due to the wonderful botanical knowledge of Janey Evershed, Judith Cock, Richard Rawlings, Keith Arrowsmith and Lucy Thompson among others, and the fabulous knowledge of insects that Ella has). There is fabulous biodiversity on the site. A great success and we look forward to a repeat invitation next year.





## Volunteering with the Wildlife Group

As you can see, a number of amazing wildlife initiatives have started to take shape, but we could do so much more with your help. We have a range of activities in the pipeline and here's a list of just some of the activities you could get involved with:

- ▶ helping at winter monthly meetings – front desk, setting up, kitchen and bar duties, projection/IT, etc;
- ▶ helping to develop the wildlife verge areas with autumn planting of wildflower seeds;
- ▶ joining in the village litter pick (see ad on last page);
- ▶ helping us to produce publicity material for the group;
- ▶ putting up bird/bat boxes/camera traps;
- ▶ entering data into survey spreadsheets;
- ▶ helping with surveys of plants, birds, butterflies, etc;
- ▶ supporting the bioblitz days;
- ▶ helping out at various information events e.g. Leintwardine Fun Day, Village Fetes;
- ▶ gathering data on hedgehogs in the village.

Specialist knowledge is welcomed but so is enthusiastic ignorance!!

Simply contact us to join in the fun and help your wildlife at

[leintwardinewildlifegroup@gmail.com](mailto:leintwardinewildlifegroup@gmail.com).

Don't forget the winter programme starts again in October but until then there's still plenty of opportunity to get those bird boxes up and join the volunteers in doing some practical conservation work around the village. We couldn't do it without you.

## Remembering those we lost in the last year ~ Mike Wheeler

It has been a very sad year with the loss of three members of the Wildlife Group all three of whom gave so much support when the group was being set up. The group would not be in the place it is now without the encouragement of Merry Morris, Malcolm Turner and Andi Moore, all of whom have left us in the past year. I remember Merry's bubbly enthusiasm when I first suggested the idea of a wildlife group (I think she was the first person I mentioned it to!), Malcolm's insistence on attending meetings even when he was very ill, and Andi's passion for all things nature whether it be plant or animal. I have fond memories of doing bird surveys in Radnorshire with Andi and also her keenness to ensure that the Wildlife Group got lots of exposure in Leintwardine Life. All three are missed but we count ourselves lucky that they were members of the Wildlife Group.

## Your Steering Group

Mike Wheeler

Janey Evershed

Alison Jackson

Karen Raymond-Blake

Fiona Naylor

Sue Wilkinson

David Williams

Richard Rawlings

[leintwardinewildlifegroup@gmail.com](mailto:leintwardinewildlifegroup@gmail.com)



# **Come and join us for the Leintwardine Village Litter Pick**

## **Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> August**

**Litter Pickers, Hi Viz, Gloves and  
bags all supplied courtesy of  
Balfour Beatty**

**Meet on the Green at 11.00**

