

**SGU3A Natural History Group - Visit to Motcombe Meadows on 7th April 2021. ST8425 & 8426**

**'Willows in Meadows'**

9 members in 2 groups looked at the Willows and Sallows growing in this wet meadow. A cold morning. Pussy Willow is a common name for the flowers of various Sallows. They grow to about 10m with male and female flowers on separate bushes. Some were well in flower while others were still to open. Goat Willow (*Salix caprea*) is commonly called Great Sallow but others are Grey Willow (*S. cinerea*) and Eared Sallow (*Salix aurita*) which might explain the variety we found. Also hybridising is common. We identified two Willow trees: Crack Willow (*Salix fragilis*) and Weeping Willow

**Birds**

- Blackbird
- Blue Tit
- Bullfinch
- Buzzard
- Carrion Crow
- Chaffinch
- Chiff-chaff
- Dunnock
- Goldfinch
- Great Tit
- Heron
- House Sparrow
- Long-tailed Tit
- Robin
- Wood Pigeon

**Wildflowers in bloom**

- Bluebell
- Celandine
- Cuckoo Flower
- Dandelion
- Dogs Mercury
- Golden Saxifrage
- Ground Ivy
- Primrose
- Ramsons
- White Deadnettle
- Wild Arum

**Other interesting observations**

- Polypody fern
- Hart's tongue fern
- Much lichen growth on trees/shrubs
- Many Marble galls on oaks
- Buff-tailed Bumblebee

Goat Willow supports an estimated 266 species of native invertebrates especially moths.



Male Sallow Flowers



Young Sallow



We think this is a different Sallow



Female Sallow Flowers



Golden Saxifrage

The Crack Willow typically breaks off branches - *Salix fragilis*



Lichens on Blackthorn

Photos from Gordon & Marion