

## Surveys at Motcombe Meadows

As part of our management of the Meadows we are trying to achieve a better understanding of the varied habitat there, and in particular, the wildlife either resident or transient on the site.

Annual surveys of **butterflies and moths** have taken place for a number of years, and you can find the latest survey results from last summer on the Motcombe Parish Council website (<http://www.motcombeparishcouncil.org.uk/>), or go direct to <https://www.dorsetbutterflies.com/places/motcombe-meadows/>. The 2021 survey will be published in the autumn. Also, look out for Broad-bodied Chaser **dragonflies**, three of which were spotted recently patrolling the pond.

There is also a year-long survey of **reptiles** underway, being run by DARN (Dorset Amphibian and Reptile Network) with mats scattered round the edge of the site. Latest sightings include three Grass Snakes. These are the largest UK reptiles, an endangered species and harmless to humans. This is part of a much larger project on sites across the county. See <https://groups.arguk.org/darn> for more details. As the notices about this survey posted at the entrances to the Meadows say, please don't disturb the mats if you come across them.

Also, a year-long survey of **bird** sightings at the Meadows has just been completed by a local ornithologist, the accompanying table showing all the 52 species recorded by the village member covering the year from mid-April 2020. Some were flying over (e.g. Red Kite, Lesser Whitethroat) – so look at the sky on your visits, not just the bushes, hedges, trees and meadow - but this very varied list includes common year-long UK residents and seasonal visitors, such as Redwing in winter and House Martins in late spring and summer. Some species appear to be commonly there, whereas others were single sightings. Some are common species, such as Blackbird and Robin; Song Thrushes have declined in the UK; Redpolls and Red Kites are less commonly seen in Motcombe. This is the first such survey, proving how the varied habitats available at the Meadows attract such a variety of species.

Finally, a survey of **willow/sallow trees** was conducted on a specific day in early April by a local natural history group. They found only 2 species present: Crack Willow and Weeping Willow. They also noted a variety of early wildflowers in bloom, including Cuckoo Flowers and Dogs Mercury, plus ferns, lichens, and galls on some of the trees. In that one day they also recorded 15 bird species. This survey is also being posted on the Motcombe Parish Council website.

I'm sure many visitors would be hard-pressed to recognise what they see on visits to the Meadows. However, the parish council are planning to update existing information boards around the parish, and provide some interpretation boards at the Meadows, based on the recordings from these surveys, and other information. Also, we'd be very interested in your sightings – so let me know what you see ([cllr.mouncey@motcombeparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:cllr.mouncey@motcombeparishcouncil.org.uk)).

Finally, on behalf of ourselves and the other members of the parish council I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank all those who have undertaken these surveys and underline the importance of their enthusiasm in helping us understand what we have on our doorstep at the Meadows.

Cllrs Peter Mouncey and Jason Hood

Motcombe Parish Council

23rd June 2021