

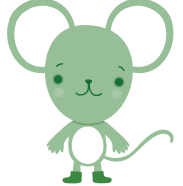
# Loose Leaves

Newsletter for Eastleigh Countryside Volunteers

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2012



## Small Mammal Success



Each autumn Hampshire Mammal Group volunteers survey parts of Itchen Valley Country Park for small mammals. The latest survey took place on 20<sup>th</sup> November with a great result of seven species, totalling 56 animals. The catch included a water shrew, which haven't been recorded on site since 2006.



Bank Vole



Bank vole <i>Clethrionomys glareolus</i>	26	Common shrew <i>Sorex araneus</i>	3
Field vole <i>Microtus agrestis</i>	3	Pygmy shrew <i>Sorex minutus</i>	4
Wood mouse <i>Apodemus sylvaticus</i>	17	Water shrew <i>Neomys fodiens</i>	1
Yellow necked mouse <i>Apodemus flavicollis</i>	2		



The method used involved setting out 84 live-capture traps on the ground in small mammal runs through the vegetation. Longworth traps have two parts to them: the tunnel containing the door tripping mechanism, and the nest chamber which attaches to the tunnel. The nest chambers were stuffed with hay to provide insulation for the animals, and baited with grain and carrot for mice and voles. Plenty of casters (blowfly larvae) are also included for shrews, which are insectivorous and need to eat every 2-3 hours to survive. The traps were put into position and locked open for several nights to allow the small mammals to become accustomed to the new objects and encourage investigation. A few days later the food was topped up and the traps set, ready for surveying.

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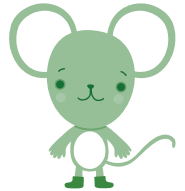


## Small Mammal Success *(continued)*



**Hampshire  
Mammal Group**

The next morning the tripped traps are carefully opened into a large clear bag to allow identification of species and gender and weighed. The small mammals are then released into the vegetation close to where they were caught.



This year's high number is great news for the staff and volunteers who manage the scrub to ensure the provision of a suitable grassy habitat.

The survey data and other wildlife records are collated by Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) and used both locally and nationally to gain an understanding of populations and distribution for management. The Countryside Service is always interested to hear about wildlife sightings at IVCP, LCP and any of our sites. Just make a note in the book by the info desk at IVCP or drop Hazel a line at [hazel.burt@eastleigh.gov.uk](mailto:hazel.burt@eastleigh.gov.uk) or 02380 475084, please include as much information as you can, including the date, species, the specific location on site, and if possible age/life stage, gender, any other comments about the sighting.



For more information about Hampshire Mammal Group or other local wildlife groups please contact [feedback@hwt.org.uk](mailto:feedback@hwt.org.uk).

*Article written by Hazel Burt  
Countryside Ranger*



# Non-Native Plants



An opportunity to volunteer in the Spring and Summer to pull Himalayan Balsam at Monk's Brook as part of a partnership event to tackle non-native plants.

Eastleigh Borough Council, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and BTCV invite you to an

Information event & talk:

# Tackling Invasive Non-Native Plants

Wednesday 7th March 2012 7.30pm

The Hilt Community Centre  
Hiltingbury Recreation Ground  
Hiltingbury Road, Chandlers Ford  
SO53 5NP [www.thehilt.org.uk](http://www.thehilt.org.uk)



Indian 'Himalayan' Balsam



Japanese Knotweed

Catherine Chatters, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust's New Forest Non-Native Plants Officer, will give an illustrated talk on recent work to control the spread of invasive non-native plants along watercourses in the New Forest. Find out about the similar problems facing us here on the Monks Brook in Chandler's Ford and Eastleigh and our plans to tackle them.

Free of charge (donations welcome) plenty of free parking available.

For more information contact Rachel Hardy, Biodiversity Officer, Eastleigh Borough Council. Tel: 023 8068 8352. [biodiversity@eastleigh.gov.uk](mailto:biodiversity@eastleigh.gov.uk)



Hampshire & Isle of Wight  
Wildlife Trust  
Protecting wildlife. Inspiring people.



# Past Task Report



## Sunday 20th November

Thanks to the 16 volunteers who help clear birch scrub that was invading a heathland clearing in Telegraph Woods. The heather and grasses will be able to flourish now that they are no longer being shaded out by small trees. Volunteers have been working on this area on and off for fifteen years. When they started there were only a few scattered heather plants, there is now a large area of flowering heather.

*Kevin Young*  
*Countryside Officer*

## Sunday 18th December

Thank you to all the volunteers who came along to the task last time around. 21 of you came along to enjoy the mince pies and soup - and most importantly to carry on with the coppicing in the Woodland Nature Reserve. A lot was done - however still a lot remains and we will continue to work through the coppice coup.

*Claire*  
*Countryside Ranger*

# Volunteer Christmas Events

The Christmas Quiz was attended by 15 people making up four teams. The winners won wine while the losing team demolished a chocolate Santa each. The buffet was very good and there were no disputes over the answers this year!!!

The Forest School volunteers were invited to an outdoor cooking day with Jamie Corry, a bushcraft instructor, who introduced us to the delights of a rabbit cooked in a hangi (pit), bread cooked in the embers of the fire, gutting of fish and the making of a contraption to cook it over a fire and the method for extracting the breasts of four partridge (kindly supplied by Dave) which we cooked in a Muurikka over the fire.



## Website Changes

If you want to check the details of the next task and have lost your newsletter (how dare you!), you can find details at: [www.eastleigh.gov.uk/ecv](http://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/ecv) and click on Practical Task.



## Next Tasks



### Sunday 16th January (IVCP)

More coppicing in the Woodland Nature Reserve

**Task Leader: Hazel Burt**

For more details about the task contact him on 02380 475083 or [hazel.burt@eastleigh.gov.uk](mailto:hazel.burt@eastleigh.gov.uk)

Meet at the Visitor Centre 9.30am to 9.45 if you would like tea/coffee before we leave for the work site at 10.00am. The task will last until around 3.00pm but you can, of course, come for all or part of the day.



### Sunday 19th February (IVCP)

Continuing with the coppicing in the woodland nature reserve at IVCP led by Dave. Spring should be well on its way by now, with most of the woodlands wildflowers starting to push through, why not come along and see what we can find?

**Task leader: Dave Payne**

For more details about the task contact him on 02380 475086 or [david.payne@eastleigh.gov.uk](mailto:david.payne@eastleigh.gov.uk)

Meet at the Visitor Centre 9.30am to 9.45 if you would like tea/coffee before we leave for the work site at 10.00am. The task will last until around 3.00pm but you can, of course, come for all or part of the day.

### Every Wednesday Morning (Lakeside Country Park)

A variety of tasks from 10.00am to 12.00pm volunteer tasks are run at Lakeside Country Park.



Number are limited so please book with Jenna or Claire.

For more information: 023 8061 7882 or [lakeside@eastleigh.gov.uk](mailto:lakeside@eastleigh.gov.uk)



# Birds to look out for



## January & February

With the winter so far being relatively mild the birds in the Country Park consist mainly of the usual wintering species. Duck numbers have been low so far but normally increase in January and February especially if the weather turns much colder.

In the Meadows streams and along the river Mallard, Teal and Gadwall should be present with the chance maybe of a few Wigeon or Shoveler. One or two Grey Herons and Little Egrets are also usually present. In the wetter areas if they are not frozen look out for Water Rails, Moorhens, Snipe and possibly the odd Jack Snipe.

In the bushy and scrubby spots look out for Cetti's Warblers, Reed Buntings, Meadow Pipits and Stonechats. Chiffchaffs usually winter in the area especially at the north end of the Meadows

and can often be heard singing on warmer sunny days. In the grassy fields look out for feeding Greylag Geese, Starlings, Lapwings, Black-headed Gulls, Herring Gulls and possibly a few Common Gulls. Overhead look out for the local Golden Plover flock especially over the south end of the Meadows. At the river the usual Mute Swans Little Grebes, Coots and Moorhens should be present. Occasionally a Kingfisher maybe also be about.

At the reservoir look out for the usual Duck species such as Tufted Duck and Mallard. Occasionally they can be joined by Pochard, Teal and Wigeon and, if like last winter, possibly overnight roosting Goosanders. Little Grebes, Coots, Cormorants and the regular flocks of Gulls should also be present whilst on the Reservoir wall tops look out for Pied and Grey Wagtails.

In the Parks woods it's been generally quiet but look out for the many Redwing and Fieldfare that have been about recently plus small flocks of Siskins feeding in the alder trees.

Long-tailed Tit flocks roam through the woods and are often accompanied by Blue Tits, Great Tits, Coal Tits, Goldcrests, Nuthatches and Treecreepers. Woodcock are present but are usually only encountered when flushed from dense cover or seen entering the woods at dawn or leaving the woods at dusk.

During February the first Canada Geese usually return to the Meadows and Greylag Geese tend to fly up and down the valley more frequently. Some wildfowl especially Mallard, Teal and Wigeon are seen more often feeding up in the meadows ponds and streams. Small flocks of Cormorants can be seen regularly flying to or from their roost site at Allington Gravel Pitt Birds of prey are seen more now especially on fine days with a lot of interaction between pairs of Buzzards, Kestrels and Sparrowhawks. In the more wooded areas Green Woodpeckers are 'yaffling', Great Spotted Woodpeckers are drumming, Stock Doves displaying and Mistle Thrushes and Nuthatches singing. Some Finch species are also about with Greenfinches displaying, Chaffinches singing and the local pairs of Bullfinches being much more obvious in the still bare bushes.



# Birds seen in December



## Itchen Valley Country Park

Mute Swan  
Greylag Goose  
Gadwall  
Teal  
Mallard  
Tufted Duck  
Red-legged Partridge  
Pheasant  
Little Grebe  
Cormorant  
Little Egret  
Grey Heron  
Sparrowhawk  
Buzzard  
Kestrel  
**Merlin (1 female/immature on 28/12)**  
**Peregrine (pair on 18/12 and 24/12)**  
Moorhen  
Coot  
**Golden Plover**  
Lapwing  
Jack Snipe  
Snipe  
Woodcock  
**Green Sandpiper (1 on 24/12)**  
Black-headed Gull  
Common Gull  
Lesser Black-backed Gull  
Herring Gull  
Great Black-backed Gull  
Stock Dove  
Wood Pigeon  
Collared Dove  
Tawny Owl  
Kingfisher  
Green Woodpecker  
**Total species for December**  
**74 M.J.W. HAY**

Great Spotted Woodpecker  
Skylark  
Meadow Pipit  
Grey Wagtail  
Pied Wagtail  
Wren  
Dunnock  
Robin  
Stonechat  
Blackbird  
Fieldfare  
Redwing  
Song Thrush  
Mistle Thrush  
Cetti's Warbler  
Chiffchaff  
Goldcrest  
Long-tailed Tit  
Blue Tit  
Great Tit  
Coal Tit  
Nuthatch  
Treetreeper  
Jay  
Magpie  
Jackdaw  
Rook  
Carrion crow  
**Raven (1 on 12/12)**  
Starling  
House Sparrow  
Chaffinch  
Greenfinch  
Goldfinch  
Siskin  
Bullfinch  
Reed Bunting



Merlin



Green Sandpiper



Raven



Peregrine



Golden Plover



Jack Snipe



# Events coming up .....

**Itchen Valley Country Park (023 8046 6091)**

## **Half Term Trail**

**Saturday 11th to Sunday 19th February**

Take part in our trail—find the answers and win a prize!

**Any time between 10.30am and 3.30pm. Cost £1.75 per trail pack**

## **Valentine's Cookies**

**Tuesday 14th February**

Come and decorate a cookie. Give it to someone you love or eat it yourself!

**Any time between 10.30am and 12.30pm. Cost £2.00 per cookie**

## **The Very Hungry Caterpillar Walk**

**Wednesday 15th February**

We will take a walk through the woods based on The Very hungry Caterpillar story then come back and take part in a craft. For younger children aged 2 - 5

**10.30am to 11.30am (approx). Cost £2.00 per child.**

**LIMITED SPACES. BOOKING ESSENTIAL**

## **Forest Activity Day**

**Thursday 16th February**

A day of outdoor activities in the woods for children age 6 to 11 years.

**Cost £18.00 per child. BOOKING ESSENTIAL**

## **Fabulous Fishy Magnets**

**Friday 17th February**

Come and make a fishy magnet to stick on your fridge.

**Any time between 10.30am and 12.30pm. Cost £1.50 per magnet**



**Little Forester's Toddler group resumes Wednesday 29th February**

*Phone 023 8047 5082 for more details*

For further information about the articles in this newsletter or for details about becoming a Volunteer Ranger for Eastleigh Countryside Service, please contact:

The Volunteer Coordinator,  
Itchen Valley Country Park  
Allington Lane  
West End  
Southampton  
SO30 3HQ



023 8046 6091    ivcp @ eastleigh.gov.uk    www.eastleigh.gov.uk/ecv

