



Witney Woodland Volunteers
Newsletter 5 - October 2024

Hello All,

Hope you are keeping well. Another newsletter to keep you up to date with all the comings and goings of Witney Woodland Volunteers which we hope you will enjoy. Attached to the Newsletter is a one page guide to bats which we hope you find informative. We held another WWV committee meeting on Thursday 24th October 2024 and the following points of interest were discussed:

- WWV member attended a Bat introduction course using a bat detector. It was agreed that WWV would fund a bat detector to monitor the bat population within DPW and DP South
- Tony's circulations on fungi was found to be very useful and should be a living document that can be updated as and when new fungi's are identified
- DPW east side path hardening delayed due to access issues
- Corrugated Reptile Survey Refuge x Ten for monitoring reptiles purchased for the woods to replace old ones that are falling apart. Will be marked and placed into woods shortly.
- Specimen tree identification and marking on-going
- Christmas function planned for 12.30hrs on Monday 9th December 2024 at The Fleece

DPW and DP South

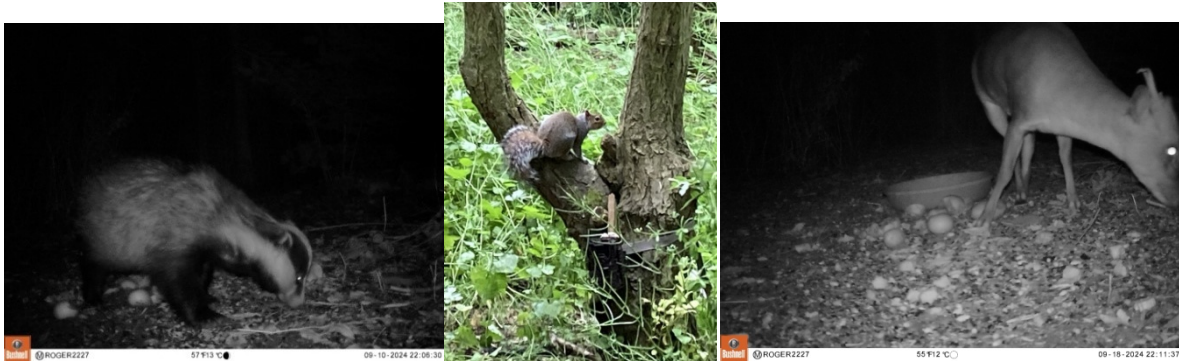
We have been very busy during September and October cutting back the vegetation along the fence line in DPW so that the grass cutter can access most areas. This took a great deal of work due to the increased growth that we have seen this year with the wet and warm weather, however, we finally finished the work on Monday 7th October so well done to all involved. The grass cutter and grass remover was delayed due to heavy rain, however, finally arrived on Wednesday 23rd November, unfortunately, the ground at the north end of DPW was still so wet that they could not access the grass area without the vehicles becoming stuck in the mud. We will now have to wait and see what happens next and whether the north end ever dries up enough for the work to be undertaken this year.

Work will continue on the willow arch shortly once the leaves have dropped, however, it is good to know that the Great Willow Aphids have returned and can be seen within the arch, both above and along the supporting willows. They have been there for a number of years now, they are not a threat to the willows, so do take a look as and when you wander through.



The animals have continued to visit DPW and the fox in particular has been seen out and about during the day on a number of occasions, wandering through the open grass both within the orchard

area and just north of the outside class room. Below are a couple of photographs taken with the wildlife camera, one of our badger and the other of our muntjac buck, who is missing part of his rear left hoof. The middle photograph shows a squirrel just above the camera, seemingly not too worried about being photographed.



Unfortunately we have had another unwelcome discharge into the Colwell Brook again which has been reported to the Environment Agency through both WODC and WASP and we now await a response as to what it was and where it came from. The photographs below show the discharge which looked and smelled awful. This is not the first time this has happened and we will be keeping a close watch on the stream and will continue to report such pollution to the relevant authorities in the hope that it will result in stopping such discharges.



We have also been busy scything the grass in the open area within DP South and removing the cut grass to the benefit, hopefully, of the wild flowers. We hope to increase the wild flowers and will be spreading more rattle seed in this area in order to do so.

Although most of our energies over the last couple of months have been directed towards DPW and DP South we have also managed a couple of other activities. We undertook path clearing and litter picking down Loom Lane right through to the old bathing place, by the Windrush. We also undertook a visit to Gibbets Hill, a fifty acre site managed by the Wychwood Forest Trust, which was well received and attended by almost twenty members and a big thank you to the trust for allowing us access and for a most informative walk around the site.

Finally, a reminder of the WWV Christmas function this year which will be held at The Fleece, Church Green, Witney at 12.30hrs on Monday 9th December 2024. If you would like to go and haven't put your name down yet, then please contact Chris.

Wishing you all well
WWV Committee

Information Concerning UK Bats

- There are 18 species of bats that can be found in the UK
- 14 of them can be found in Oxfordshire
- All are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act
- They make up one third of all UK mammal species
- They can only be handled or disturbed by a qualified and licensed bat person
- Bats will roost in any cavity found within houses, outbuildings, trees or other suitable accommodation, including of course bat boxes
- Bats have defined routes which they follow on a regular basis
- On average they can consume around 2000 insects each night
- Bats are important as a pollinator, pest control and an indication of a healthy ecosystem
- They mate during September – November
- They hibernate December – February
- Bat pups are born during June – July
- The pipistrelle bats are the smallest and most common bats within the UK
- The pipistrelle bat is 3.5-4.5cm in length with a wingspan of 20-23cm and weighs 3-8gms
- Average life span is four to five years
- Bats over water are likely to be Daubendon bats
- The most likely time to see bats is half an hour after sunset
- The bats will not be seen out and about if the temperature is under 10 degrees, in high winds or heavy rain
- The biggest threat to bats is the loss of habitat and cats
- Some owls will also take bats
- They are difficult to identify due to their flight pattern, speed and the fading light
- They all emit different sounds which generally can only be picked up using a bat detector



Bats do frequent DPW and DP South and some years ago we did have a bat survey undertaken as part of a nature weekend that was run jointly with the Earth Trust. We certainly have pipistrelle bats (Photograph above) and with the agreed purchase of a bat detector for WWV at our recent meeting, hopefully we can now go on to undertake bat surveys and obtain a better understanding of which bats live and feed within the locality of our woods.