

## Tour Report

# Wildlife of the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley

10-13 June 2021

Beautiful demoiselle



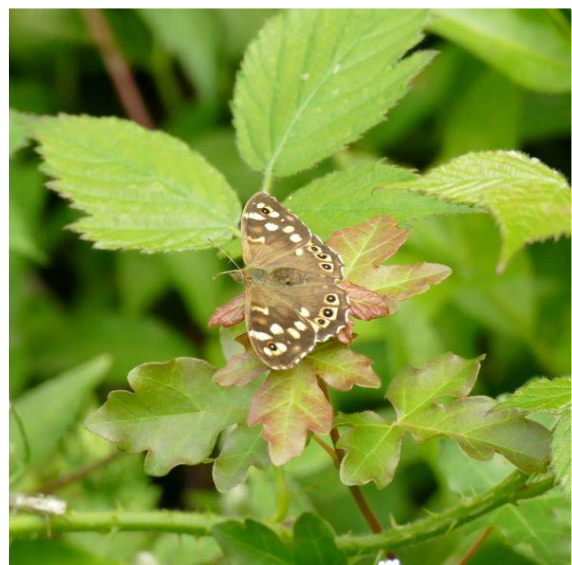
Wood warbler



Soudley ponds



Speckled wood



Compiled by Barry Embling

### **Day 1: Thursday 10 June 2021**

*Weather: Sunny, 22°C*

After meeting at the Speech House Hotel we started our tour at the nearby Cannop Bridge Marsh where we watched a pair of wood warblers descending to their nest on the ground with food, with the male occasionally exclaiming his song, a near-pulsating trill. Around nearby Cannop Ponds we saw a variety of wetland birds, including mandarin and tufted ducks, little grebe, a pair of mute swans and a feral red-eared terrapin. After our dinner we drove out into the Forest for an evening twilight walk in the beechwoods of Parkhill Enclosure and saw at least two different woodcock with their low croaking and harsh 'pissip' calls and quivering wings: this being their 'roding' display flight.

### **Day 2: Friday 11 June 2021**

*Weather: Mostly cloudy, sunny evening 20 °C*

An early start was made before breakfast and we headed for RSPB's Nagshead Reserve. Our first encounter was a close fallow deer, and we soon got to see pied and spotted flycatchers, and a pair of redstart that were feeding young. A quick check of the pond revealed two female mallards with ducklings. After a later breakfast we visited Parkend village and saw our first distant buzzards and a pair of dippers in the Cannop Brook. We then proceeded to New Fancy viewpoint where we saw our first ravens and had brief views of four passing crossbills. Superb views of bank vole were had a by all, with very tame and photogenic individuals. Next stop was RSPB's Russell's Enclosure with time spent under the oak canopy, seeing lots of signs of wild boar, but unfortunately not encountering any animals. Our final stop before a rest and evening dinner was a walk around the tranquil Soudley Ponds, where we saw rainbow trout in the fishery, and admired the towering stands of Douglas firs with accompanying singing firecrest. During the evening we visited Crabtree Hill heathland site. Characteristic birds of this habitat were seen and included hobby, tree pipit and stonechat. We were hoping to see nightjar and were not disappointed as we saw a male flying around in broad daylight, then later saw at least two churring males shortly after 10 o'clock. On the walk back we heard a grasshopper warbler, thus providing a good comparison with nightjar with their similar churring/reeling calls.

### **Day 3: Saturday 12 June 2021**

*Weather: Sunny 23 °C*

A pre-breakfast visit to the beaver reintroduction project's enclosure didn't reveal beavers, but we did see a roe deer inside the enclosure and heard much early morning birdsong. After breakfast we headed for RSPB Highnam Woods where two singing male nightingales were heard. An exciting find was wood white butterfly, a recent coloniser that was seen and photographed. Botanical highlights included Tintern spurge and zig-zig clover. We proceeded west to King Arthur's Cave in the Wye Valley and had lunch on one of the 'Seven Sisters', overlooking the spectacular wooded gorge below. We lunched with some characteristic limestone flora that included bloody crane's-bill and rock-rose. Our next stop of the day was Symond's Yat Rock with its splendid views and buzzard, red kite and the resident peregrine's. Our evening was spent driving many of the forest roads looking for wild boar, but again we unluckily had not encountered any, despite our best efforts.

### **Day 4: Sunday 13 June 2021**

*Weather: Sunny 25°C*

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After breakfast we made a more leisurely start embarking on our final destination of the trip to Tidenham Chase. A walk to the Devil's Pulpit on Offa's Dyke gave great views of Tintern Abbey and the River Wye at high tide. After our morning cuppa we proceeded across the road to Poor's Allotment and saw both green hairstreak and green tiger beetle, perhaps appropriate coloured species, signalling the end of our four days inhabiting a green and leafy landscape, where we had seen a good proportion of its seasonal wildlife highlights. Our trip was complimented by some superb food, good company and perfect summer weather.

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	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Day 3</b>	<b>Day 4</b>
	<b>BIRDS</b>				
1	Little grebe	✓	✓		
2	Cormorant			✓	
3	Mute swan	✓	✓	✓	
4	Canada goose			✓	
5	Mandarin duck	✓			
6	Mallard	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	Tufted duck		✓		
8	Red kite			✓	
9	Buzzard	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	Hobby		✓		
11	Peregrine			✓	
12	Moorhen	✓	✓		
13	Coot	✓	✓		
14	Woodcock	✓	✓		
15	Lesser black-backed gull	✓	✓	✓	✓
16	Stock dove	✓	✓		✓
17	Woodpigeon	✓	✓	✓	✓
18	Tawny owl			✓	
19	Nightjar		✓		
20	Swift	✓	✓	✓	
21	Green woodpecker (h)		✓		
22	Great-spotted woodpecker	✓	✓	✓	
23	Swallow	✓	✓	✓	✓
24	House martin	✓	✓	✓	✓
25	Tree pipit		✓		✓
26	Pied wagtail	✓	✓		
27	Grey wagtail	✓	✓		

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28	Dipper		✓		
29	Wren	✓	✓	✓	✓
30	Dunnock	✓	✓	✓	✓
31	Robin	✓	✓	✓	✓
32	Nightingale (heard)		✓		
33	Common redstart	✓	✓	✓	
34	Stonechat		✓		
35	Mistle thrush	✓	✓		✓
36	Song thrush	✓	✓	✓	✓
37	Blackbird	✓	✓	✓	✓
38	Blackcap	✓	✓	✓	✓
39	Garden warbler	✓	✓		
40	Grasshopper warbler (heard)		✓		
41	Willow warbler	✓	✓	✓	✓
42	Chiffchaff	✓	✓	✓	✓
43	Wood warbler	✓			
44	Goldcrest	✓	✓	✓	✓
45	Firecrest (heard)	✓	✓	✓	
46	Spotted flycatcher		✓		
47	Pied flycatcher		✓		
48	Great tit	✓	✓	✓	✓
49	Blue tit	✓	✓	✓	✓
50	Coal tit	✓	✓	✓	✓
51	Marsh tit			✓	✓
52	Long-tailed tit			✓	
53	Treecreeper	✓	✓	✓	
54	Magpie			✓	
55	Jay	✓	✓		
56	Jackdaw	✓	✓	✓	✓
57	Carrion crow	✓	✓	✓	✓

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58	Raven	✓	✓		✓
59	Starling			✓	
60	House sparrow			✓	
61	Chaffinch	✓	✓	✓	✓
62	Greenfinch	✓	✓	✓	✓
63	Goldfinch	✓	✓	✓	✓
64	Linnet		✓		✓
65	Siskin	✓	✓	✓	✓
66	Bullfinch	✓	✓	✓	
67	Common crossbill		✓		
	<b>MAMMALS</b>				
1	Fallow deer		✓		
2	Roe deer			✓	
3	Grey squirrel	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Bank vole		✓		
5	Rabbit		✓		
	<b>REPTILES</b>				
1	Red-eared terrapin		✓		
	<b>INVERTEBRATES</b>				
1	Beautiful demoiselle			✓	
2	Azure damselfly			✓	
3	Large-red damselfly		✓	✓	
4	Emperor damselfly			✓	
5	Dock beetle		✓		
6	Wood white			✓	
7	Meadow brown			✓	
8	Speckled wood			✓	

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9	Green hairstreak				✓
10	Dor beetle	✓	✓	✓	✓
11	Green tiger beetle				✓
	<b>MORE NOTABLE PLANTS</b>				
1	Common rock-rose			✓	
2	Columbine			✓	
3	Zigzag clover			✓	
4	Meadow vetchling			✓	
5	Spurge laurel			✓	
6	Dogwood		✓		
7	Upright spurge			✓	
8	Alder buckthorn		✓		
9	Common milkwort			✓	
10	Bloody Crane's-bill			✓	
11	Pignut	✓	✓	✓	
12	Hemlock water-dropwort		✓		
13	Common cow-wheat			✓	
14	Common spotted orchid			✓	
	<b>OTHER</b>				
1	Dog vomit slime-mould		✓		

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