Welcome to another monthly update of wildlife sightings and events in the Lewes area.

I was just about to write off September as mostly grey, wet and windy when, just as I was reaching for my woolies, the temperature rose and summer returned! These weather conditions could mean that we see an invasion of butterflies and moths from the Mediterranean. In the next few days look out for beautiful painted ladies and clouded yellows or the hummingbird hawk-moth. If you have nicotiana in your garden have a look at night for the amazing convolvulus hawk-moth. If you find a death’s head hawk-moth in your garden let me know and I’ll be at your door within 30 seconds! I’ve posted photos of all these species on the sightings page of the website.

Don’t forget to send in any wildlife sightings, questions and photos of your own to our website www.leweswildlife.org.uk or to our Facebook page.

Thanks to everyone who has supported our events in September – we have plenty more coming up over the next few months (see below) and if you have any suggestions for walks or particular species we can target please let me know. See you in October!

Michael Blencowe
Community Wildlife Officer
Sussex Wildlife Trust

Wildlife News for September 2011

Our first event of the month was a well-attended moth trapping session at Lewes Railway Land run in conjunction with the Lewes District Council and Sussex Moth Group. Light traps were set up around the reserve as the sun set. The fantastic noctule bat – Britain’s largest – flying overhead was the first bit of excitement for the night but soon moth species were being drawn in. Carpets, gothics, rustics, darts and swifts. In the morning another crowd assembled as the traps were opened. I was pleased to catch up with a particular old lady that I had been chasing for a while (see photo below).

Moth trap at the Railway Land (left) the old lady (middle) and what the hoopoe at Glynde may have looked like! (right).

Aside from a few silver-yys there weren’t any migrant moths in the trap. In some years unusual species from the continent start arriving in September.
A few days after the moth trap we headed out looking for different migrants – birds which are heading out of the country and bound for the Mediterranean and Africa. Our first walk led us up the Ouse to Hamsey. We had seen our first migrant before we had left town – we had excellent close-up views of a wheatear sat on a wall on North Street. Further up the Ouse we also had close-up views as a pair of kingfishers hunted along the river.

The following day we headed downstream. Watching a peregrine attacking a raven was a great start to the walk and the birds were the highlights of this trip. Plenty of migrants were heading south through the Ouse valley and feeding up before their cross-channel flight; yellow wagtails, wheatears, whinchats, hobby, common sandpipers, common terns, sand martins, swallows.

The most exciting migrant of the season (so far!) was the exotic looking hoopoe which arrived in Glynde on September 10th. I was able to alert others to this bird via the website / twitter / facebook and it was great to get messages from folk who had seen it. Despite spending a few hours sitting in a graveyard I missed out! The hoopoe will be familiar to those who holiday around the Mediterranean but every year a few stray migrants lose their way between Europe and Africa and end up in England.

Meanwhile on Malling Down Crispin Holloway recorded a silver-spotted skipper on September 16th – a very late record. This species was first seen here on July 15th and has had a healthy, long flight period on our Sussex Wildlife Trust reserve.

Hummingbird hawk-moths were buzzing around many Lewes gardens and on September 20th there was an odd report of a dormouse running around outside Tesco! By the end of the month we had a report of the first merlin hunting over the Lewes Brooks. This small falcon breeds in northern England and some birds will spend their winters hunting around the Lewes area.

**Upcoming events:**

**Monday 3rd October (10:00 – 12:30). Meet at the Linklater Pavilion.**

**And your English Summer’s done**

Or is it? As the temperature takes an unexpected jump we will take a short walk from Lewes up into Sussex Wildlife Trust’s beautiful Southerham reserve. Here we’ll look out for the clouded yellow butterfly which migrates to Sussex from southern Europe and other autumn wildlife.

**Saturday 8th October (11:00 – 13:00)**

**Poo and Paw Prints**

Become a nature detective and find out what animals have been visiting the Railway Land reserve by identifying their tracks and signs. Suitable for 6-11 year olds. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Adults £5/£6, Children £6/£7. Booking essential. Contact 01273 497561

**Saturday 8th October (13:30-15:30) Meet at the Linklater Pavilion.**

**Peregrines and Painted Ladies**

A gentle afternoon stroll along the Ouse south of Lewes looking out for migrant birds, migrant butterflies and our resident birds of prey.

**Wednesday 26th October (10:00 - 12:00) Meet at Top of Mill Road (off Malling Hill / A26)**

**The Sheep are Baaaack!**

The Sussex Wildlife Trust’s rare breed sheep are back and are grazing in the Coombe and the Chalk Pits on our Malling Down reserve. Come and see my woolly colleagues hard at work and learn more about the sheep and the wildlife of Malling Down.

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**Check our website for future walks and events**  www.leweswildlife.org.uk