

# Ewelme Watercress Beds and Local Nature Reserve

Update on results of wildlife surveys for 2018



## Introduction

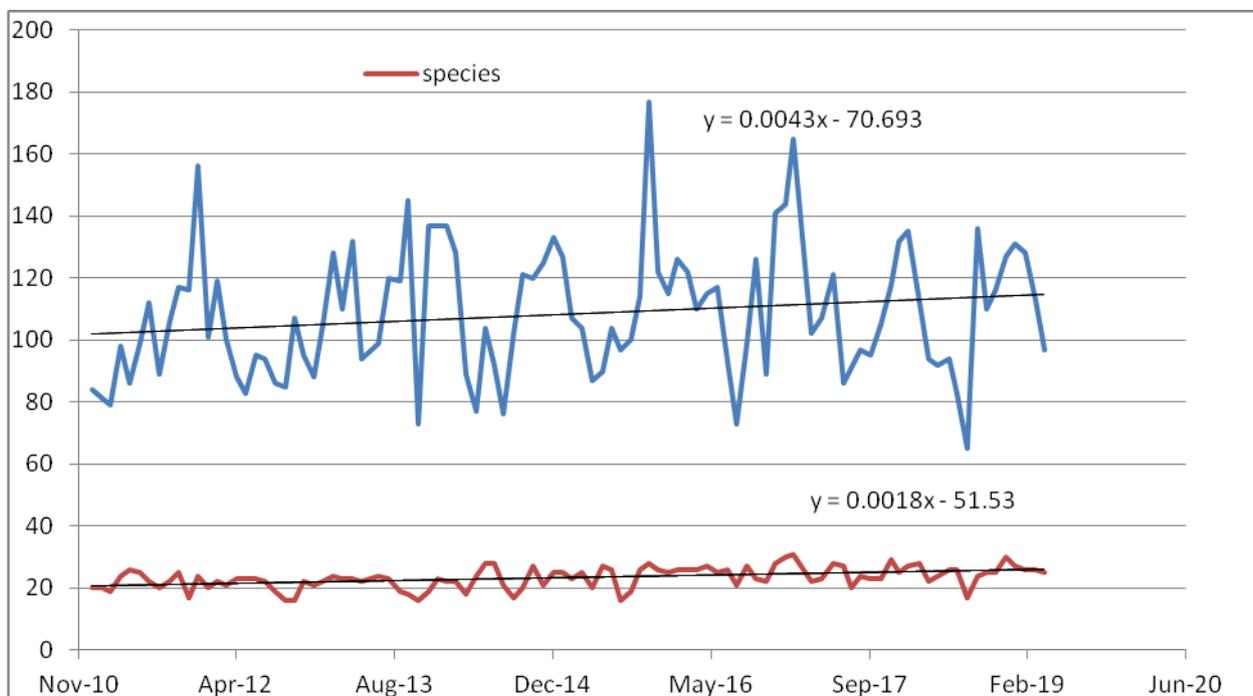
Regular, carefully designed and undertaken surveys are vital to understanding long term trends and consequences of site management strategies. Ideally it would be good to survey a wide range of flora and fauna but with only volunteer staff being available there is a limit to what can be achieved. It is also important that surveys are carried out over a long period as short term effects of temperature, floods, droughts etc can significantly influence short term results.

## Birds



Bird species, on the beds, have been recorded since October 2002 but only casual observations during walks through the site were recorded during the early years. These are not presented. The following results were obtained during monthly bird counts which commenced in 2010. The whole site was walked and every bird seen or heard noted.

The straight line shows the trend based on least squares linear regression.



Over the period from December 2010 to date numbers, both of individual birds and of numbers of species, have shown a small rise.

2018 was a good year for birds with 71 species recorded, a number only bettered twice before. No new species for the site were recorded during 2018. Water rails continue to spend their winters with us and the little egret is becoming ever more regular during the winter months.



The following table shows the percentage of visits each of the top 20 birds (long term) were seen both in 2018 and “all time” The numbers in red illustrate changes of more than 5%. Three species showed a lower percentage in 2018 and three a higher.

SPECIES		
	2018	ALL
Blackbird	97.4	98.7
Mallard	99.3	98.4
Woodpigeon	98.0	98.4
Moorhen	90.1	97.6
Rook	95.4	97.2
Robin	94.0	95.2
Great Tit	95.4	92.3
Blue Tit	89.4	91.7
Red Kite	93.4	91.0
Jackdaw	90.1	88.5
Dunnock	84.8	87.1
Chaffinch	69.5	85.6
Wren	83.4	85.6
House Sparrow	90.1	81.0
Carrion Crow	90.1	74.5
Grey Wagtail	77.5	71.5
Starling	72.8	69.8
Goldfinch	56.3	61.3
Feral Pigeon	41.7	57.3
Magpie	45.7	55.3

## Riverflies

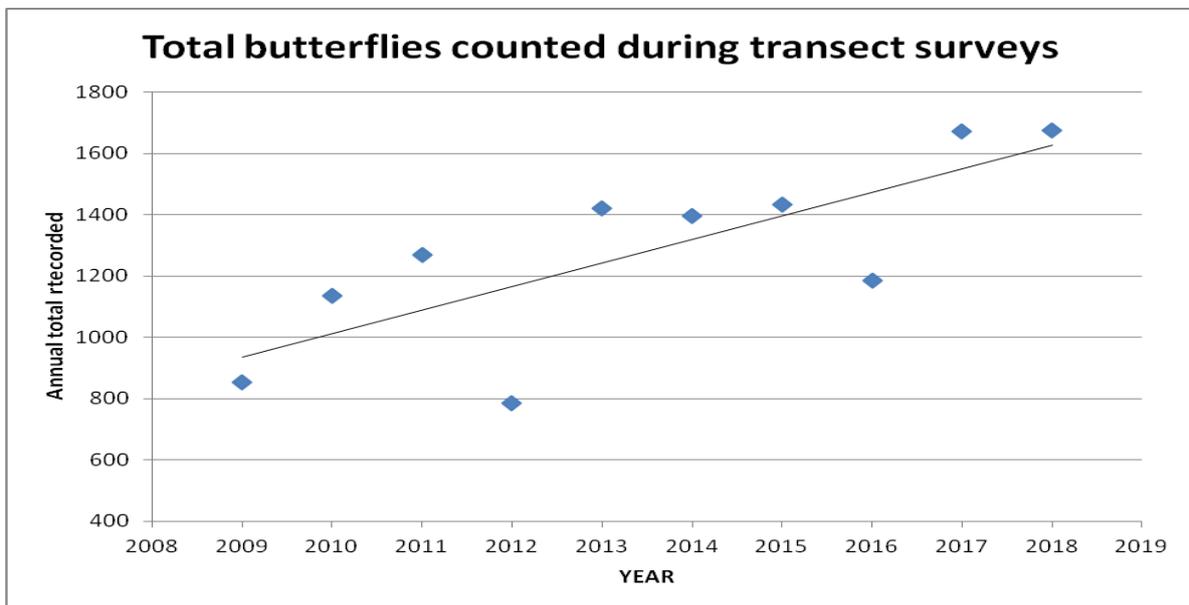




# Butterflies



Butterflies have been recorded since 2009 using The UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (UKBMS). This involves walking a route round the site under carefully proscribed temperature and sunshine conditions recording all butterflies within 2.5 metres of your person. This is carried out weekly during the summer months.



In total 22 species were recorded during 2018. The above graph shows the total number of butterflies counted during the summer and illustrates an upward trend over the 7 years of surveying. Numbers in 2018 were the highest ever recorded but only 1 higher than 2017. Numbers are affected by the weather and we were blessed with one of the warmest summers on record. Only one specie “broke site records” with best ever counts for Large White but many others were “second best”.

## Mammals



Unlike the survey results presented above the following list is simply based on casual observations and can only be considered evidence that the species has been seen on the site. Disappointingly the Water Vole survey undertaken by staff from Berkshire Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust and Chiltern Conservation Board were unable to find any evidence of current water vole activity.

<b>Wood mouse</b>	<b>House mouse</b>	<b>Bank vole</b>
<b>Field vole</b>	<b>Water vole</b>	<b>Harvest mouse</b>
<b>Brown/Common rat</b>	<b>Grey squirrel</b>	<b>Common shrew</b>
<b>Water shrew</b>	<b>Mole, European</b>	<b>Hedgehog, Eurasian</b>
<b>Rabbit</b>	<b>Fox</b>	<b>Badger</b>
<b>Polecat</b>	<b>Stoat</b>	<b>Weasel</b>
<b>Daubenton's bat</b>	<b>Pipstrelle, Common</b>	<b>Pipistrelle, Soprano</b>
<b>Roe deer</b>	<b>Muntkak Deer</b>	<b>Pygmy Shrew</b>

## Dragonflies

11 species were recorded in 2018 which is above average for the 10 years but it is possible that this, in part, is due to my ability to identify them but also helped by the addition of a pond on the lower site. A new species for the site was recorded in 2018, namely the Black-tailed Skimmer



## Pond

The pond goes from strength to strength with large populations of Toads and Common Newts recorded during 2018 as well as a large numbers of other invertebrates and insects

## Orchids



The dramatic rise in the number of orchids present in the flower meadow has been sustained with 116 of 5 species counted during 2018. Unfortunately The Bee Orchid wasn't recorded but could well have been overlooked in the chest high vegetation The list of flowering plants on the site now stands at 176.

## Moths



Seven new moth species were recorded during the year during limited trapping. The total number of species for the site now stands at 335.

A full list of species recorded on the Ewelme Watercress Beds Local Nature Reserve can be seen at

<http://www.ewelmewatercressbeds.org/>