

Withymead
Nature Reserve



Welcome to Summer

July Newsletter



Whilst we are well into summer and have all been in lockdown over the past few months, nature has more than flourished at Withymead. The Wardens have been doing their best to stop the reserve turning into a wilderness, and we are sad that visitors have missed the wonderful show of Loddon Lilies in the Spring, see the orchard that was planted in February or caught a glimpse of young kingfishers being taught how to catch fish.

During June, wildlife photographers have taken advantage of the quiet time and

captured some wonderful sights at Withymead. We are grateful that they have allowed us to share these through Instagram and Facebook for all to see. And we have recently started to open the reserve on an appointment basis, which has proved very successful, particularly for those who are shielding and want the security of knowing that they are safe when visiting Withymead. For more information see [Withymead is Open!](#)

Thank you to all who have supported us during these difficult times, and we look forward to welcoming you back to Withymead.

Withymead is open!

Withymead is open by appointment from Friday to Sunday each week. Routine time slots are:

10:00 -11:30hrs

12:00 - 13:30hrs

14:00 - 15:30hrs

16:00 - 17:30hrs

To book a time slot, [check availability here](#) and then send in a request via the booking site allowing at least 24 hours. For other times, please email info@withymead.org.

Our aim is to make all visits safe for everyone, by ensuring that only one party or person is on site at any one time and that the wardens have time to sanitise the hides between visits. At this time, a party can be a family group from the same household, a group from two households or a support bubble, or up to 6 people from different households, observing social distancing. Please [click here](#) to read the latest Government advice on accessing green spaces safely.

Sadly we are unable to provide refreshments at the moment, so why not make the most of your visit and bring your own refreshments or a picnic. What could be nicer than relaxing on the landing stage with a glass of wine, and observing nature close-up, or sitting at the picnic tables by the Study Centre surrounded by buddleia and butterflies!

To protect the wildlife, we regret that dogs are not allowed onto the main site. However, dogs are allowed, on leads, in the Study Centre area. We ask the owners clean up after their dogs.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

[Book A Visit to Withymead Nature Reserve](#)

Withymead Wardens' Species Spotlight

The Sleeping Habits of Solitary Bees



Solitary bee asleep in a Viper's bugloss-flower

I always find it a delight to see bees sleeping in flowers, and the reason behind this behaviour is so interesting.

The honey bee is well known for dwelling in hives, whether it is in a beekeepers box or a cavity in a tree. It's a designated place to call home; a place to spend their nights and to shelter. It's much the same for bumble bees, which will occupy old burrows & cavities. This gives the bees somewhere to return to with a purpose. Solitary bees on the other hand can emerge in spring from a burrow or hole that was

built by their mother the previous year, or they may even hatch in the summer they were laid. Once emerged, the young bees find themselves out in the wide world, eager to complete their cycle and face any challenges laid out before them. The females will begin to search for suitable nesting locations and the males will spend all day searching for a mate. Once dusk rolls around and these daytime pollinators begin to grow weary, they prefer nothing more than a blanket of petals and a cup full of nectar ready for them to sip in the morning.

But there's another reason for this behaviour. Males will strategically place themselves where the females will frequent. Often groups of males can be seen exhibiting this behaviour, sometimes in large gatherings known as leks, in and around favoured forage plants. The best time to observe them is on a summers day where rain has delayed their mornings activities. Roaming males and females that have yet to make a home will often be seen in the flowers grooming themselves, filling up on nectar or just outright asleep waiting for the weather to become more favourable.



Solitary bee sheltering on thistles during rain

Would you like to support us by becoming a Friend of Withymead?

The friends of Withymead make a big difference to the reserve, either by giving their time as volunteers or by providing funds through donations. Both Volunteers and Patrons offer essential support which helps with the planning and implementation of current and future projects.

Please [click here](#) to read more information.

If you would like to visit or to Volunteer, or if you would like to become a Patron and support the work of the Trust through donations please contact us:

info@withymead.org

www.withymead.org

01491 872265

Recent Sightings at Withymead



Pyramidal orchid and beetle



Peacock butterfly



Adult kite and chicks in nest



Juvenile slow worm



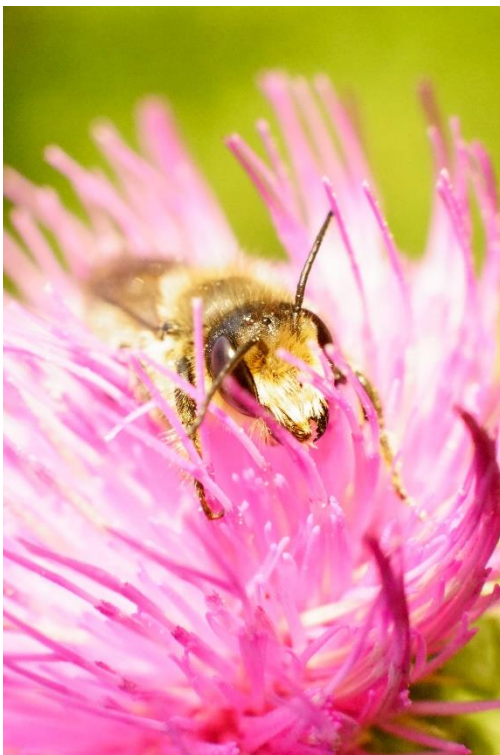
Scarlet Tiger moth



Two kingfishers



Crab spider

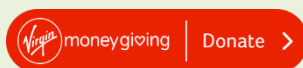


Leaf-cutter bee on thistle

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Donations

If you would like to make a donation to Withymead Nature Reserve, please follow this link:



All donations are very gratefully received.