

Pamber Forest Nature Reserve

Quarterly Newsletter



April 2019

The most significant weather happened in very short bursts but the dominant theme was the very dry conditions. This resulted in the rides being practically mud free by the end of March when they are usually at their driest and stream and pond levels worryingly low. On the 1st February heavy snow fall overnight continued through the day so that 11cm was lying by the 2nd, this broke many branches off trees and bent smaller ones over. Despite this brief cold spell February was the warmest on record, with 20 C on the 26-27th beating the 19 in 1998. During this week many butterflies were on the wing, mainly brimstones, with peacock and comma. It was wet and windy in the first half of March with more tree damage before returning to exceptionally dry conditions again for the rest of the month.

Tawny owls were very active and it was probably these that were responsible for a dead barn owl found on 25th February and a dead woodcock on



Snow on 1st February

21st March; Tawnies do not tolerate barn owls in their territories and are easily able to kill them, this is only the 2nd barn owl I have come across on the reserve and shows why they enter woodland at their peril. I have recorded 4 lesser spotted woodpeckers between 2nd and 28th March so it is likely that there are two territories of this increasingly rare bird. A very early willow warbler

was heard on 21st March about three weeks earlier than usual.

Frogs spawned on 5th March with toads following on 19th March; there was only about half as much frog spawn as last year maybe as a result of the long hot summer last year.



Hitching a lift to the nearest pond

The first adder was out of hibernation on 21st February but very few have been seen since and no black ones so far.

Work during the last three months has concentrated on coppicing along the ride edges and the main coppice areas behind the deer fences.

The various volunteer groups managed to contribute 170 work days during the three month period. A big thank you to all who contributed.

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