

Pamber Forest Nature Reserve

Quarterly Newsletter



July 2020

As lockdown has proceeded the reserve has been very busy with visitors taking their daily exercise and this has generally not been a problem as most people have observed the rules. What has helped is that April was very dry and the sunniest on record, so the good weather encouraged people to walk here. I have never seen it busier in my 29 years here! In May it stayed dry and sunny but with several hard overnight frosts that severely damaged the opening bracken fronds. It was so dry during this period that Honey Mill Stream stopped flowing on 27th May, a really early date for this to happen. Many of the spawning sites of frogs dried up too, meaning that this year very few managed to make it through the tadpole stage.

Most work on site was suspended including all volunteer work so this allowed me to spend more time on conducting surveys with some very interesting results. I have had many sightings of scarce species like minatur beetle and glow worm larvae. A very rare



Male Stag Beetle

beetle was discovered in Sphagnum moss in seepages in Beggar's Bridge Copse and in Inham's Copse, and a variety of longhorn beetles have been seen visiting flowers and caught in moth traps. One mothing session on 25th June caught this stag beetle; very rarely recorded on the reserve although seen regularly in gardens nearby.

The same session recorded over 260 species of moth with an amazing 10 notable species, three of which were new for the site. In greatest abundance was the Bilberry Pug of which there were 33, as its name suggests its larvae feed on bilberry, abundant in the drier parts of the reserve but very scarce in North Hampshire as a whole.



Bilberry Pug

During this session a pair of nightjar were observed displaying at dusk and this is a good indication that they are breeding on site; the first time I have seen this in my 29 years here! Another nightjar was heard 'churring' in coppice in the south of the reserve two weeks earlier.

A white-legged damselfly was seen on 22nd June, this is rarely seen here and suggests it is having a good year, as it has also been seen at Decoy Heath nearby in Berkshire.

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Basingstoke
and Deane