

Amman Valley Wildlife Update Number 12 (August / September 2020)

Exciting News
about the
Marsh Fritillary!



We have been granted a license to undertake the first Marsh Fritillary Reintroduction in Wales.....

It will take place in Llantrisant, South Wales. A small number of caterpillars from 6 separate sites in South Wales will be reared in captivity so that thousands of marsh fritillary can be reintroduced into suitable habitat in the area.

As you know, the butterfly is incredibly rare and this project could save the local population. The Amman Valley will be key to the project because the caterpillars food plant – Devil's-bit Scabious is currently being grown in the polytunnel.

MENTER AR GYFER
CADWRAETH NATUR CYMRU



INITIATIVE FOR NATURE
CONSERVATION CYMRU

The caterpillars will be housed with these scabious plants down at the National Botanic Garden of Wales. **Thank you** to everyone for helping to grow Scabious plants from seeds – Its not easy.



MENTER AR GYFER
CADWRAETH NATUR CYMRU



INITIATIVE FOR NATURE
CONSERVATION CYMRU

We need your support. The project is an 8 year long project and we need to fundraise to make sure the project is the best it possibly can be – for the marsh fritillary and so that the evidence gained from the project can help future projects like this in Wales. We have just set up a Just Giving Page. If you are happy and able to donate to the project – [please visit the page](#). Thank you.



MENTER AR GYFER
CADWRAETH NATUR CYMRU



INITIATIVE FOR NATURE
CONSERVATION CYMRU

A few Kestrels
(*Falco tinnunculus*)
have been spotted
in the valley this
year, but still no
records of
breeding.
Hopefully that
might change by
this time next year
as we were able to
install a further 5
Kestrel nest boxes
recently – that's 9
in total now.





Kestrels need nests that are open and not too bushy. This tree is ideal because a Kestrel flying past could easily spot it.

As well as suitable nest sites, Kestrels need rough grassland with lots of.....

MENTER AR GYFER
CADWRAETH NATUR CYMRU



INITIATIVE FOR NATURE
CONSERVATION CYMRU



Voles. This Bank Vole (*Myodes glareolus*) is part of a small mammal monitoring project. Its often good to study small mammals because they make up the food for lots of predator species such as the Kestrel.

MENTER AR GYFER
CADWRAETH NATUR CYMRU



INITIATIVE FOR NATURE
CONSERVATION CYMRU

Cwmaman Town Council gave me some clay (Thank you) to build an artificial burrow. The clay provides a nice damp natural looking burrow, which is great for this Wood Mouse (*Apodemus sylvaticus*), as well as slugs.



MENTER AR GYFER
CADWRAETH NATUR CYMRU



INITIATIVE FOR NATURE
CONSERVATION CYMRU

I currently have three Burrow Cameras out on a mountain in South Wales to look for Water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*). The cameras have been out for 2 weeks now so hopefully - if the Water Voles are there, we should find them.

Having said that, it has been raining a lot and the cameras may have met their match.

Water Voles are the fastest declining mammal species in the UK, and are incredibly rare these days. I still don't know if we have them in the Valley, but if the cameras work then perhaps we could try a few in the uplands above the valley.



Our Swifts (*Apus apus*) have now all gone from the Valley. They are one of the last migrant birds to arrive in spring and one of the first to leave. They are spectacular birds and brighten up our towns and villages – even if its just for a short time.

They spend most of their life on the wing and can fly 100 miles in a day looking for insect prey. They eat, sleep and mate whilst flying and only stop to lay their eggs.

MENTER AR GYFER
CADWRAETH NATUR CYMRU



INITIATIVE FOR NATURE
CONSERVATION CYMRU

Another special bird that will be making its way back to Africa soon is the House Martin (*Delichon urbica*).

I think they have had an ok year in the valley, but you can see from the photo how many nests there were once upon a time. Hopefully we will see a few more nests next year.



One of the last
House Martin
chicks to fledge.



MENTER AR GYFER
CADWRAETH NATUR CYMRU



INITIATIVE FOR NATURE
CONSERVATION CYMRU



There is still lots of wildlife to see in the Valley. Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui*) butterflies can be seen at the moment. They are large and colourful butterflies and one of the most widely distributed butterflies in the world.

MENTER AR GYFER
CADWRAETH NATUR CYMRU



INITIATIVE FOR NATURE
CONSERVATION CYMRU



The underside of the Painted Lady is one of the most intricate patterns of any British butterfly.

MENTER AR GYFER
CADWRAETH NATUR CYMRU



INITIATIVE FOR NATURE
CONSERVATION CYMRU



Now is also a good time to see Gatekeeper (*Pyronia tithonas*) butterflies around our hedgerows and scrub habitat.

MENTER AR GYFER
CADWRAETH NATUR CYMRU



INITIATIVE FOR NATURE
CONSERVATION CYMRU

Also the much rarer Grayling (*Hipparchia semele*) butterfly. Graylings are expert at camouflage and if you are lucky can be seen on tracks and stone walls where they can easily blend in with their surroundings. They are normally found at the coast and inland populations have plummeted in recent years.



MENTER AR GYFER
CADWRAETH NATUR CYMRU



INITIATIVE FOR NATURE
CONSERVATION CYMRU

Grayling camouflage on
Pembrokeshire coast stone wall.



MENTER AR GYFER
CADWRAETH NATUR CYMRU



INITIATIVE FOR NATURE
CONSERVATION CYMRU



Also – please look out for Lesser Stag Beetles (*Dorcus parallelipipedus*) at this time of year. The adults can be found in and around deadwood. The eggs are laid on dead and decaying trees and the larvae can take several years to develop inside the dead tree.

MENTER AR GYFER
CADWRAETH NATUR CYMRU



INITIATIVE FOR NATURE
CONSERVATION CYMRU



Deadwood, and in particular standing deadwood is one of the most important habitats we have for wildlife.

A single Oak tree of a thousand years old supports more biodiversity than a thousand 100 year old Oak trees.

Most of our ancient trees have now been felled and many trees are cut down before they are allowed die naturally.

MENTER AR GYFER
CADWRAETH NATUR CYMRU



INITIATIVE FOR NATURE
CONSERVATION CYMRU

And don't forget to look out for the Amman Valleys wonderful meadows and grassland habitats. One of the reasons why the valley is such a special place for wildlife is because we still have meadows and species rich grasslands like this.



MENTER AR GYFER
CADWRAETH NATUR CYMRU



INITIATIVE FOR NATURE
CONSERVATION CYMRU

Its been a great few weeks for garden moth recording. This is my favourite – the Sallow Kitten (*Furcula furcula*). But we have also caught.....



MENTER AR GYFER
CADWRAETH NATUR CYMRU



INITIATIVE FOR NATURE
CONSERVATION CYMRU



Beautiful Snout



September Thorn



Pebble Hooktip



Lesser Swallow Prominent



Rosy Rustic



Beautiful Hooktip



Angle Shades



Square Spot



Spectacle



Canary Shouldered Thorn



Silver Y



Purple Bar



Moths come in all shapes and sizes. This miniscule moth is called the Azalea Leaf Miner (*Caloptilia azaleella*) and there are only 5 other records of the moth for the whole of Carmarthenshire.



MENTER AR GYFER
CADWRAETH NATUR CYMRU



INITIATIVE FOR NATURE
CONSERVATION CYMRU

Thanks again for all the photos, feedback and records – they are much appreciated.

Any wildlife queries, please let me know.

Rob

Rob.parry@incc.wales

If you are able to donate to our [marsh fritillary project](#) thank you so much – really appreciate it.

MENTER AR GYFER
CADWRAETH NATUR CYMRU



INITIATIVE FOR NATURE
CONSERVATION CYMRU