

# Affpuddle & Turnerspuddle Parish Wildlife Newsletter

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This Edition: Busy bird feeder, a trio of Dead-nettles  
Little Mammals, Sedge Warbler



Busy Feeding Station with male Bullfinch and Great Tit Photo by Charles Barter

*Charles Barter:* A pair of Bullfinches are regular visitors to our feeding station now, also a male Lesser Redpoll with a flock of Siskins and Goldfinches – birds we have rarely seen in the past.

## Three of a kind – the trio of parish Dead-nettles



The three Dead-nettles: from left to right, Red Dead-nettle, White Dead-nettle and Henbit Dead-nettle. Photo by Ian Cross

*Ian Cross:* Dead-nettles are so-called because one of them, the White Dead-nettle (*Lamium album*) is an excellent mimic of the common Stinging Nettle – that is, until it flowers and gives the game away. It has absolutely no sting at all – hence ‘dead’ nettle. Presumably, resemblance to true nettles gives it some measure of protection from grazing.

Three species of dead-nettle grow in our parish, and today I was lucky enough to find a spot where all three grew together.

The Red Dead-nettle (*Lamium purpureum*) is frequent on bare, disturbed soils. It’s equally at home on arable farmland and in gardens and is found commonly in every corner of the parish.

The White Dead-nettle also likes disturbed ground but prefers slightly lush areas. It is fond of hedgerows, road verges, waste ground and, yes, gardens. As such it is also a frequent plant throughout our area.

The scarcest of the three is the Henbit Dead-nettle (*Lamium amplexicaule*). The name comes from the fact that chickens love to eat it given half a chance. It's an arable weed and essentially a Mediterranean plant that, thousands of years ago, moved north with the spread of agriculture. Like its two relatives it likes disturbed soils but has a bit of a preference for slightly drier, lighter, chalky soils. For that reason, I only know it from the northern reaches of the parish.

### Small Mammals

*Audrey Grindrod:* Just been on the bridge chatting when a small mammal ran across the road, west to east. It had come up from the river bank. It was what I would call a stoat, or a weasel or a mink. It was about 1ft long and had short legs and its back sank down a bit. I did not get a good look at the tail, but it seemed quite short. It was a lovely golden-brown colour.

Have you seen this animal there? The Otter that I saw was 3 times the size of this. What a lot is happening in wildlife right now! Let me know please do!

*Ian Cross:* sounds like a Stoat from the description.

*Vivi Armitage:* Here is a baby weasel, found by our son-in-law outside his workshop in Southover (almost in the parish!). He heard a lot of animal squealing and thinks that the mother must have dropped it. He put it back in the same place and it disappeared, so we hope that she returned to retrieve it rather than a buzzard or crow.



## By the Piddle



Sedge Warbler Photo by Helen Frost

Many thanks to: Ian Cross, Wildlife Advisor,  
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Please send your contributions to [macheetham@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:macheetham@hotmail.co.uk).  
I will confirm receipt. If you don't hear from me it means I haven't received  
your email, so please make contact through  
Briantspuddle Community Website and we'll sort out a Plan B.