

# Affpuddle & Turnerspuddle Parish Wildlife Newsletter

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This Edition: Hedgehog in Throop

Another Pheasant tale, A new record for the Parish



Hedgehog in Throop garden      Photo by Jane Courtier

*Jane Courtier:* Investigating a surprisingly loud rustling and crashing among the shrubs last night (30 April) I was pleased to find this hedgehog in our garden.

The torchlight stopped him dead in his tracks; while he did not form an actual ball, he kept his head tightly tucked under his body so that his vulnerable head and underparts were well protected. Our cat came to see what I was finding so interesting, but a perfunctory sniff soon reminded him that hedgehogs' spines and cats' noses don't mix.

I was hoping that if I waited long enough the hedgehog would start to unfurl and show his face for a photograph, but I'm afraid my patience ran out before his.



Cat checks out Hedgehog in Throop garden Photo by Jane Courtier

### **Hedgehog Facts – Extinction Risk**

The first official red list for British Mammals was produced recently, highlighting those that are at risk of extinction in the next twenty years. Out of the 47 native mammals, 11 are at risk of extinction, including the much-loved hedgehogs and water voles.

Reasons for the decline in British mammals differ depending on each animal, although the usual suspects such as destruction of natural habitat, use of chemicals and introduction of non-native species remain at the top of the list. Hedgehogs have decreased by about 46% over the past 13 years. Scientists think it is due to an increase in farming, habitat fragmentation in urban areas, and the continuing loss of suitable environment over the years.

<https://www.nhm.ac.uk/discover/news/2020/august/hedgehogs-and-water-voles-face-extinction.html#:~:text=inform%20conservation%20plans-.First%20official%20Red%20List%20for%20British%20Mammals,loved%20hedgehogs%20and%20water%20voles>

### Swift Update

*Adrian Middleton:* I saw a Swift this morning (May 3rd) flying high over Affpuddle village, before the wind strengthened. Sadly, of course, no pic, but I'm sure someone won't be far behind on that one!

*Margaret Cheetham:* Swifts also reported in Briantspuddle (on 1<sup>st</sup> May). The Swift boxes at the village hall are being closely monitored!

### A long way from the Parish, but...

*Henry Hogger:* Probably about as far as you can get from our parish: but some of your readers might be interested to watch this excellent talk by Andy Lester on 21 April, organized as part of the Great Exhibition Road Festival in which the Royal Geographical Society is a partner, along with its neighbours such as the Natural History Museum, etc. I thought the photos were very impressive - and of course as the speaker explains Costa Rica is one of the most advanced countries in the field of wildlife conservation. Enjoy!

<https://www.rgs.org/geography/online-lectures/land-of-the-emerald-forests-andy-lester/>

## Another Pheasant Tale

Pheasant  
Photo by Adrian Middleton



*Adrian Middleton:* At the risk of constantly repeating myself, here's another pheasant tale. Over the last couple of days, I have noticed what I thought was my usual male ring-necked pheasant, this time behaving rather oddly. It mostly looked very sleepy all day and took to nestling down in one flower bed or other at night-time. To cut a long story short, unfortunately one morning I found it had died there. This pheasant turned out to be in very poor condition which was a bit puzzling considering how much I thought it had been eating.

Nevertheless, this looked like the end of my sequence of encounters with the rather tame ring-necked bird I had become used to over the last few months.

However, to my surprise I have since been greeted in the morning with the usual territorial crowing that I had become accustomed to, and it looks as if I shall be able to carry on where I left off.

But who knows for sure? I suppose a ring on the leg would have been helpful!

## A New Record for the Parish



The Yellow-footed Furrow Bee Photo by Ian Cross

*Ian Cross:* The Yellow-footed Furrow Bee (*Lasioglossum xanthopus*) is a scarce bee in Dorset these days. So, I was very pleased to find this female - the first ever recorded from the parish - today (1st May). Not only that, but as far as I am aware, this is also the first time this species has been recorded on Bluebell.

This just goes to show that, in the world of creepy-crawlies, there are still exciting new discoveries to be made - even in well-recorded Britain.

Many thanks to: Ian Cross, Wildlife Advisor,  
Campbell De Burgh, Briantspuddle Community Website  
Margaret Cheetham, Editor

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.