

Kemerton Conservation Trust

Kemerton Court
Kemerton
Tewkesbury
Gloucestershire
GL20 7HY

Tel: 01386 725 254

www.kemerton.org

Registered Charity No. 702488

**GOVERNORS**

ADRIAN DARBY, OBE (Chairman)

MATTHEW DARBY

PETER DOBLE

LORD HOWICK, VMH

PETER MARREN

BRETT WESTWOOD

ROGER WORKMAN

Kemerton Conservation Trust

Report to the Governors

John Clarke and Pamela Clarke

October 2018 to October 2019

Overview

Another exciting year but for different reasons. This autumn Overbury Enterprises will take over the arable side of Kemerton Estate.

CCARP continued to grow until FWAG called a temporary halt to the recruitment of more farms. With 30 members we are now able to look at projects over wider areas of the catchment. (see attached addendum). E.g. FWAG tell us we now have a chain of rough grass habitat sites along the ridge of Bredon Hill. Meanwhile in that respect the EA is looking to get involved along the Carrant Brook.

Due to ill health JC was unable to get as involved as usual and so this report is shorter.

In January, the **Starling roost** at Kemerton Lake was estimated to have peaked at around 26,000 birds.

The spring of Teal at a nearby pool on neighbouring land was estimated at c.250. Flocks of up to 700 were recorded at Kemerton Lake.

Daffurn's Orchard

We have asked Olivia Chance if the work party in September could leave one or two heaps of hay cuttings for Grass Snake and if possible to have one or two tin sheets.

Worcestershire Biological Records Centre

KCT continues its close association with the WBRC, submitting copies of all of its own records of wildlife at Kemerton. Simon Wood of WBRC has been working with Pamela to update our Recorder database and she will input 2019 data this autumn/winter.

Several excellent photographers – including Paul Jackson, George Day, Dave Keen and Roger Littleover have provided KCT with some wonderful wildlife photographs which we keep in our library. The pictures are taken at Kemerton and elsewhere.

KLNR – some records of note:

2nd Jan 1 male Smew and on 3rd Jan 2 males. Occasional sighting of 1 male into Feb with the last sighting on 19th.

In late March Pamela observed male Sparrowhawk attending to a nest in a Scots Pine: various sightings of adult(s) through the summer – presumed successful breeding.

In May, George Day identified 3 Dingy Skipper and in July 3 Silver-washed Fritillary close to the Long and South Rides.

Pair Great-crested Grebe built 2 nests but failed to breed. Culprit unknown but a Stoat was photographed swimming across the lake. Mink and Otter have also been recorded here.

As in the previous year very few Willow Warbler heard in Kemerton and none reported on the reserve (Rob Prudden's records still to come in however).

Lapwing attempted breeding at Lakeside (Adrian found nest with 4 eggs).

3 Hobby hunting over lake 10th September

Barn Owl nested nearby and was seen hunting the lake area. Dave Keen photographed the bird with prey.

In August the uncommon Small Red-eyed Damselfly was identified (several male and female viewed from the Water Hide mating) – and photographed by George Day.

Kate has put in a number of useful records for a variety of taxa including Small Eggar moth caterpillars (in a hawthorn hedge between Frankwells and Long Ground) and Grass Snake on the reserve which was also recorded by others – it seems to have been a good year for them. One observer recorded one on the path by the East Hide which remained there, facing up to him and rising up in front of him as if to strike. He took several photos and the snake refused to leave: in the end it was the observer who left!

Bird Surveys

Pamela carried out part of the Skylark surveys.

Butterfly Survey

George Day continued with this important survey. This year he was again rewarded for all his hard work (12 surveys!) by finding new species. He recorded Dingy Skipper and Silver-washed Fritillary (at 3 sites).

Glow-worm Survey

Pamela and a volunteer carried out one Glow-worm survey above Westmancote in August - only 2 were seen but it was rather windy. They were unable to synchronise another date. A local resident reported 31 glowing between The Stables and Bell's Castle with others on the road by Daffurn's

Orchard. She expressed concern about the strimming of the verges - this was communicated to Adrian and Matt.

Crayfish

JC had a wide-ranging discussion with Brian Smith of the EA during which the Crayfish in Kemerton Lake were considered. The following conclusions were agreed:

A more thorough survey by trapping should be carried out by the EA to assess whether a) the Crayfish are surviving and b) if the lake has been colonised by the Signal Crayfish.

If the answer to a) is yes and to b) is no then we should increase the use of the lake as an Ark Site by adding up to a further 1,000 Crayfish as and when available from threatened sites elsewhere.

Polytunnel/trees etc

No further tree or shrub seedlings were produced this year. There are still trees in pots/trays by the polytunnel – they have been in them for some time now but it may be that the Trust does not require them. If this is the case we can find homes for them. (A tray each of Box and Holly and some single Black Poplar and Whitebeam – the latter two do need homes).

Forestry

After almost two years absence, JC took his mobility scooter through the woods around the lake in late Spring and noted the development of the shrub layer and ground cover along the eastern side in particular. Given the problems caused by deer in local woodlands this picture may well change. Along that section we counted 6 Blackcap territories (singing males). We also heard one Chiffchaff but no Willow Warbler.

Proposed additional monitoring

Moth trapping at Cherry Tree Cottage and Meadow and KLNK.

Water Quality Monitoring to be discussed with EA.

For grass snake - put out suitable sheets of tin, linoleum or roofing felt approximately 2ft square, mark on map, survey in summer. Pamela is sourcing materials needed.

Repeat Glow Worm survey above Westmancote in standard weather conditions. Liaise with local people to survey above Kemerton. We will ask Overbury if they have any historical data for glow worm on their land.

Addendum: FWAG – September 2019

CCARP update - Joanne Leigh (FWAGSW Farm Conservation Advisor)

Lots of achievements this year and lots more to do in terms of spending funding, linking habitat, recording water quality and mapping veteran trees.

Our achievements to date

- * Planted 3Km of hedgerow
- * Planted 1000 trees
- * Reviewed HT applications for 4 farmers

- * External funding £18,000
- * 30 members 8740 Ha of landscape
- * 9 NFM features at Charlton Abbots and 5 NFM features on the Merry brook
- * Habitat Restoration at Aston under Carrant; 500 Meters and 81 pollarded trees
- * Habitat restoration at Kemerton 400 Meters with an ox box creation
- * Areas left rough for skylarks on Bredon Hill
- * Mapped veterans trees for the VCB
- * Monitored Bats for Back from the Brink

Work we have lined up

- * Freshwater Watch water quality monitoring
- * EA funding for Wildflower meadows, orchards, hedges and bee boxes
- * Last of the Cotswolds AONB funding for hedges and fruiting trees
- * Natural flood management opportunities
- * Volunteering opportunities
- * GCN ponds - Glos area only
- * ELM trial

Our ELM trial is about finding an easy mechanism that will enable farmers to map their farm for Natural Capital, at present that means the current state of features that help to capture carbon, enable better air quality, provide linkage for habitat to thrive.... It's what we are already doing on our farms through the facilitation project, CCARP, which is most encouraging. Additionally we would like to see a specialist facilitator who can help to lever in additional funding from other NGO's or the public sector to help farmers understand the complexities of the targeting their farm is being prioritised for; that could be SSSI, SAC, NNR, breeding birds, water quality, priority habitat, grassland restoration and much more.

Phase 1 - October 2019-March 2020

- * Using 'Land app', advisers to record data
- * 30 control farmers - don't receive 1:1 help

Phase 2 - March 2020-March 2021

- * 30 Control farmers get assistance
- * A Land management plan
- * Shared data & experience with DEFRA
- * Cost benefit analysis funded by Roderick Foundation