

# Countrycare's Catch-up



## Spring 2021

After the dark Winter, **Spring** has been beautiful, bright and exactly what we needed. Nature has burst back into life, trees are full of leaves, a carpet of wildflowers is developing in meadows, young animals are appearing everywhere and we are set for Summer!

*Countrycare* jumped straight into the season keeping busy with grass cutting, boardwalk repairs and completing the first wildlife surveys of the year.

We hope you enjoy hearing a little of what we, and nature, have been up to this Spring, as well as some of the first signs of Summer to keep an eye out for!

### What's about? – Wonderful Wildflowers

Spring returns with the blooms of wildflowers to gardens, verges and meadows. Not only are these flowers beautiful they are expertly adapted to their vital job and valuable contributors to the ecosystem.

These flowers provide shelter and food to many, many species, and in return these species help them with pollination.

Above all, native wildflowers are arguably the most valuable, they have grown and evolved in UK conditions and climate for thousands of years. They have evolved alongside other UK wildlife, a key example of this is pollination. Native wildflowers have adapted their shape, colour and scent to attract the specific pollinators also present in the UK.





## Volunteer update

After another long break from volunteer days due to the Covid-19 restrictions, the Countrycare Team was chuffed to be able to welcome volunteers back onto our wonderful sites. With restricted numbers we bounced back into volunteer days in April and by the beginning of May we were able to invite everyone along as our group is smaller than 30. We have already been back working on seven of our nature reserves and there was plenty of work to be done, including:

- ✦ Cutting and raking the wildflower meadows. By doing this we are reducing nutrients and therefore competition for the wildflower species
- ✦ Building benches to install or replace on sites throughout the district
- ✦ Installing new interpretation to inform visitors about the reserve and features such as the newly installed *Solitary Bee Hotels*
- ✦ Creating *habitat piles* from fallen trees
- ✦ Digging new *ditches* and *ponds* to assist drainage and also create new habitats



# Spring Highlights

Spring has been an exciting season for Countrycare, here's a few highlights:

- While getting ready for a volunteer day Common Spotted Orchid leaves were spotted at Roughtalley's Wood Nature Reserve
- Invertebrate life has been bursting back into life, damselflies starting to make an appearance, caterpillars have been moseying around and bumblebees are as busy as ever.
- Bare trees were adorned with Blossom which seemed to appear almost overnight, kick starting the season for invertebrates to feed and pollinate
- The surveying season also got off to a strong start from butterflies to reptiles. A record 42 reptiles were found in one day on one site and Grass Snakes were reconfirmed after being absent on a site since 2009.



Grass Snake



Common Spotted Orchid



Blackthorn Blossom



Drinker Moth Caterpillar



## Looking for the first signs of Summer

As we now look to Summer, there are many sights and sounds to look forward to. Crickets will begin chirping in the long grasses, butterflies will be fluttering around meadows, Devils-bit Scabious will be popping up with beautiful purple flowers and dragonflies will be transforming from larvae to their adult form.

**We invite you to visit our social media pages to keep in touch and learn about our other nature reserves – there might be one closer than you think!**

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/EFCountrycare](http://www.facebook.com/EFCountrycare)

**Twitter:** [www.twitter.com/efcountrycare](http://www.twitter.com/efcountrycare)

