

MAY 2026 BULLETIN

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WELCOME TO OUR MAY BULLETIN!

As everyone has experienced this past week, the summer heat is rapidly upon us, and the sifting season is reflected in the buzz of life in our woods, grasslands and hedgerows. With the climate shift as it is, in what's become a cliché, the seasonal wildlife emergences have been very early this year, and the northward march of traditionally southern species has continued. This is a reminder of why continuing to collect species records that help us understand our state of nature is so vital! In that note, below, we announce the prizes from April's City Nature Challenge in this month's bulletin, as our way to celebrate our community's dedication to recording!

Article by David Hopkins, Statistics by Mathew Hill

A massive thank you to everyone who participated in the City Nature Challenge this year. We were really pleased to see how well the Liverpool City Region did in the national ranking, but most importantly, to see what a great time everyone had. Below are the full stats for 2026, and on the next page, our prize winners!

Our Stats:

Observations - 11398

Species - 1394

Observers - 244

UK Rankings:

Observations - 5th place
(60th Global)

Species - 4th place
(82nd Global)

Observers - 8th place
(117th Global)

North West Rankings:

Observations - 2nd place

Species - 1st place

Observers - 2nd place

Liverpool, a city of super recorders

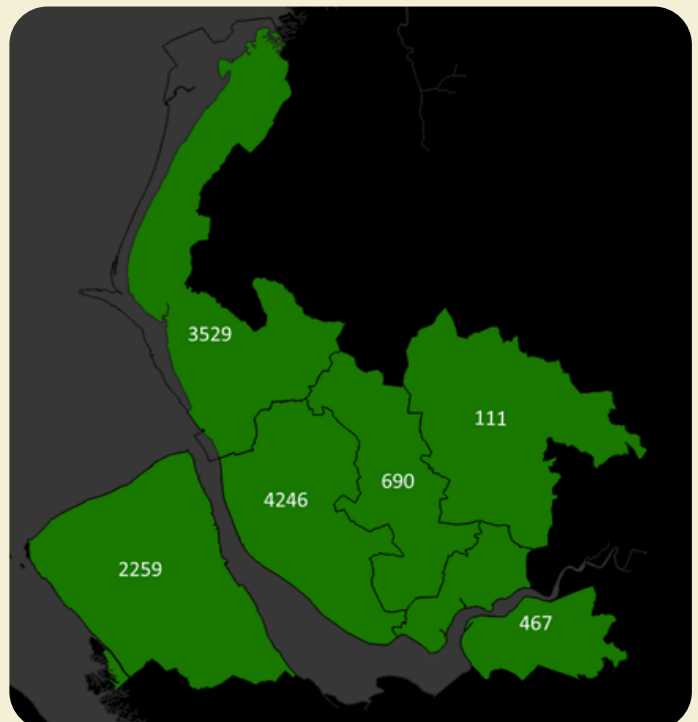
It's always fun after a data-driven event like this to get into the numbers. In this regard, we'd like to thank our summer intern, Mathew Hill, who helped put some of these numbers together for us

One of the things that struck us early on was how, even though the number of records we have was as high as other cities, we ranked well for observation and especially for species. While we had a few heavy hitters (with five people in the 500 to 1000+ range), a majority of the records were still across the wider community, who not only had the motivation to record widely but also knew their stuff to get the great species count we had

Records across Merseyside

Records were collected across the city, with particularly high numbers from Liverpool and Sefton.

This partly reflects differences in population and species density, but also highlights the challenge of under-recorded areas. A key aim of BioBank is to raise awareness of these locations, which contain valuable habitats and are great places to visit.



Article by David Hopkins, Statistics by Matthew Hill

Below are the CNC prizes. The name used are taken from their iNaturalist profiles

Best Photos - Runners up

Top Photos were selected by our intern Matthew Hill (who trawled through 1000s of records to find them!), and the top 5, including the best photo, were chosen by a poll given to the staff of **Merseyside Environment Advisory Services (MEAS)**



harrybeaman



elliottjames



elliottjames



elliottjames

Best Photo (£25 NHBS voucher)

This year's best photo award goes to PhillyMc for this fantastic shot of tawny owls, though we highly commend ElliotJames for getting three of his photos into the top five.



Biobank's CNC recording Winners:

Most Improved Number of records: 'priyastoric'

(A4 weather writer, 3 FSC guides, hand lens, MBB lanyard and MBB pencil)

Everyone new to recording is a prize to us, but Priya really stole the show as first timer with a whopping 864 records over the CNC weekend. We hope she has thoroughly caught the recording bug now and has a great future of cataloguing wildlife!



Most Sites Visited: 'gingerjo'

(£50 NHBS voucher)

This award is for the most 1km grid reference squares visited in the Liverpool city region. This prize aims to appreciate the value of not just getting records in but getting them from new and interesting places. This year, another one of our new volunteers, Jo, won by a large margin, covering 31 km squares, clearly taking her recording wherever she goes!

Congratulations to this year winners below!

You'll be contacted to collect your prizes

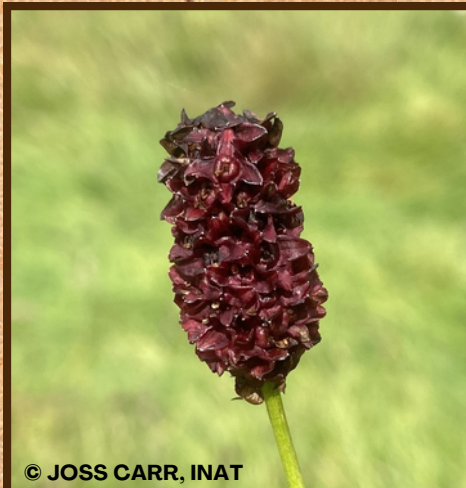
3 BIOBANK BOUNTY

EVEN WHILE DODGING BETWEEN THE RAINDROPS AND ICY PUDDLES, THE BIOBANK TEAM HAS SPOTTED A RANGE OF LIFE HERE AT COURT HEY PARK. THIS MONTHS HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:



© ROY LOWRY, INAT

NOMAD BEE
NOMADA



© JOSS CARR, INAT

GREAT BURNET
SANGUISORBA OFFICINALIS



© ROY LOWRY, INAT

SPECKLED WOOD
PARARGE AEGERIA



© PRIYA SANDHU, INAT

WOOD AVENS
GEUM URBANUM



© PRIYA SANDHU, INAT

DAME'S VIOLET
HESPERIS MATRONALIS



© SUE MILLINGTON

CINNAMON BUG
CORIZUS HYOSCYAMI

AS ALWAYS, IF YOU DO SPOT ANY OF THESE SPECIES PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU SUBMIT YOUR RECORDS TO US HERE AT MERSEYSIDE BIOBANK, SO WE CAN INCLUDE THEM IN OUR DATABASE.

Article by David Hopkins

Thick-legged flower beetle (*Oedemera nobilis*)

June is a great time of year to see pollinators as the flowers come into their best. However, while bees and flies take the limelight, there are a significant number of beetles that feed from flowers, especially the rich resources of the carrot family's umbels or ox-eye daisies, one of which is the 'Thick-Legged Flower Beetle'. As the name suggests, the hind legs of males of this species are in bodybuilder proportions, making it easy and enjoyable to identify

Identification tips: 6-11mm in length, bright metallic green, which can be almost bluish. Elytra are narrow and taper sharply. Males have "muscular" femore. **Habitat:** Perched on open-faced flowers like Ox-eye Daisies, Hogweed, and Bramble



© SEAN HARTNETT, INAT



© SUSAN MARLEY, INAT

Sand Lizard (*Lacerta agilis*)

The coastline of Merseyside is nationally important for its reptiles and amphibians, in part because it supports a significant population of sand lizards. Thanks to the hard work of NMARG, the habitat for this nationally rare species has been maintained, and its population is carefully monitored. If out on the dunes of Sefton on a warm June day, please keep an eye out for this species.

Identification tips: Stocky up to 20cm long, both sexes have brown patterned backs, but males have striking green flanks during the breeding season.

Habitat: A specialist of sefton coastline, found in complex sandy heathland and coastal dunes, where they like to bask a burrow.

Marsh Orchids, Genus *Dactylorhiza*

June is the prime time for grassland, and there is few better signs of a healthy grassland than a brilliant flower spike of an orchid. There are a number of orchids throughout the county. But a fairly common sight in June is the marsh orchid. Other orchids to look out for include early purple, pyramidal, bee, green-winged, and helaborn orchids. They can be a challenging but rewarding group to identify of species.

Identification tips: A variable group; leaves are lanceolate, often speckled; flowers are purple, pinkish, or white, clustered on a relatively long flower stem.

Click [here](#) for a free guide to some common orchids **Habitat:** Found across marshes, grassland and woodlands, on damp humeric soils.



© CHRIS KIRBY-LAMBERT, INAT



© PRIYA SANDHU, INAT

Hornet Mimic Hover Fly (*Volucella zonaria*)

I have a particular affinity for hoverflies, and no group catches the eye more than the Volucella. This group's larva specialised in scavenging debris wasp nests, providing a helpful service to the hosts, and indeed, the largest of the group, V. zonaria, not only mimics hornets but also feeds on their nests. Along with the hornets, this species has seen a massive expansion, with only two UK records prior to 1940s to become a common sight in the Merseyside area.

Identification tips: Large hoverfly up to 2cm, with a yellow and orange-brown striped abdomen and thorax. Resembles a hornet but with oversized eyes.

Habitat: Adults like to feed on flowers in and around meadows/gardens that are close to woodland.

Observations: 12,229
Species: 1,590



This month's records from iNaturalist across Merseyside included a total of 12,229 records of 1,590 species, a huge increase in records from last month which resulted in 3,781 records of 988 species. This owed to everyone's great efforts as part of the City Nature Challenge 2026, which accounted for 93% of records this month as well as more plants now in flower and more insects on the wing. Thanks again for all we have help record wildlife across the region and uploaded your records to iNaturalist.

Top 5 Plant Species

1	Herb Robert	<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	109
2	Cow Parsley	<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	107
3	Common Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	104
4	Ribwort Plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	89
5	Garlic Mustard	<i>Alliaria petiolate</i>	87

Top 5 Bird Species

1	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	71
2	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	47
3	Canada Goose	<i>Branta Canadensis</i>	40
4	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	34
5	Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	34

Top 5 Insect Species

1	Harlequin Ladybird	<i>Harmonia axyridis</i>	149
2	7-Spot Ladybird	<i>Coccinella septempunctata</i>	107
3	Alder Leaf Beetle	<i>Agelastica alni</i>	72
4	Speckled Wood	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>	57
5	Green Dock Beetle	<i>Gastrophysa viridula</i>	39

Top 5 Other Invertebrate Species

1	Sycamore Cherry Mite	<i>Aceria cephalonea</i>	30
2	Garden Snail	<i>Cornu aspersum</i>	28
3	Common Whelk	<i>Buccinum undatum</i>	20
4	European Nursery Web	<i>Pisaura mirabilis</i>	16
5	Kentish Nun Snail	<i>Monacha cantiana</i>	10

Top 5 Other Vertebrate Species

1	Eastern Grey Squirrel	<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>	14
2	Common Frog	<i>Rana temporaria</i>	13
3	Common Hedgehog	<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>	8
4	European Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>	8
5	Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	7

Top 5 Fungi Species

1	Common Sunburst Lichen	<i>Xanthoria parietina</i>	24
2	Common Goldspeck	<i>Candelariella vitellina</i>	17
3	Stonewall Rim Lichen	<i>Protoparmeliopsis muralis</i>	10
4	Bluebell Rust	<i>Uromyces hyacinthi</i>	10
5	Lecanora Lichen	<i>Lecanora campestris</i>	9

Article by Dr. Phil Smith

Fortunately, we had a few showers early in the month but not a drop of rain fell after 17th April. According to Rachael Park's rain gauge, Formby had just 15.5 mm, about a third of the expected amount. This spring drought was also experienced in most of the UK, with high pressure systems dominant. The Met Office recorded the 7th warmest April on record. Unsurprisingly, the water-table at the Devil's Hole fell by about 15 cm during the month.

I have described spring droughts, linked to climate change, almost every year since I started my monthly 'wildlife notes' in 2007; but the trend goes back to at least 2000. It has often had dramatic impacts on our local wildlife, ranging from the appearance of new species from the south to adverse impacts on breeding populations...



© PHIL SMITH

Fen Fly *Neoascia* sp
Haskayne Cutting 13.04.26



© PHIL SMITH

Heath Dog-violet *Viola canina*
Devils Hole 01.05.26



© PHIL SMITH

Large Red Damselfly *Pyrrhosoma nymphula* male
Alt Bridge 04.05.26

[To continue reading, please follow this link](#)

7 Indicating the indicators: Sheep's Fescues

Article by Matthew Hill

Fescues (genus *Festuca*) are a diverse group of hardy, drought tolerant grasses which grow slowly compared to other more aggressive grasses. This has led to a widespread presence in low-maintenance lawns and gardens, including golf courses. However, the native Sheep's Fescue *Festuca ovina* is a good indicator of acid grassland, a protected UK habitat.

Despite its importance, distinguishing Sheep's Fescue from other species in the genus can be challenging. However, it is a worthy skill as distinguishing between challenging indicators like fescues helps tell the 'ecosystem story' of a place, allowing us to identify important habitats.



© PETE GATELEY, INAT

Identification: Tufted, perennial grass 5-40cm tall. Bristle-like, narrow leaves tightly folded and coloured pale-green to bluish-grey. Forms tight bunches without underground runners and can be found on especially poor, infertile soils with little moisture.

Article by Paul Round

After a very wet April, conditions weren't particularly suitable for moth trapping. However, I managed to fit in a few sessions towards the end of May during the heatwave. These efforts were rewarded with several species, many of which were new for my garden since I only moved here last year.

Highlights included Clouded-bordered Brindle *Apamea crenata*, Green Carpet *Colostygia pectinataria*, Seraphim *Lobophora halterata*, Pale Tussock *Calliteara pudibunda*, and Lime Hawk Moth *Mimas tiliae*.



© PAUL ROUND

Clouded-bordered Brindle
Apamea crenata



© PAUL ROUND

Green Carpet
Colostygia pectinataria



© PAUL ROUND

Seraphim
Lobophora halterata



© PAUL ROUND

Pale Tussock
Calliteara pudibunda

Spotlight Species

Lime Hawk Moth *Mimas tiliae*

The Lime Hawk Moth has a distinct wing shape which are jagged on the wing tips and pink and green colour markings which are unlike those of any other Hawk-moth found in the UK. The adult flies from May to June and is found in broadleaved woodland, urban areas, parks and gardens in lowland areas.

The caterpillar is green in colour with yellow diagonal stripes laterally and a blue horn to the rear. The caterpillar feeds on Limes *Tilia*, Elms *Ulmus*, Alder *Alnus glutinosa*, Downy Birch *Betula pubescens* and, Silver Birch *Betula pendula*, Plane *Platanus x hispanica* and cultivars of Cherry *Prunus*.



© PAUL ROUND

Green Carpet
Colostygia pectinataria

Article by Paul Round

Local Finds

Some great local finds this month including Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator*, Newsham Park, Liverpool (1); Palmate Newt *Lissotriton helveticus*, Childwall Woods, Liverpool (2) which is not particularly common for the area, and Purple Ramping-fumitory *Fumaria purpurea* in St Helens (3).



Regional Finds

This month our regional finds are focused within Cheshire. The first find is a Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* Hilbre Island (1) – only the third record on the island since 2001, and the 13th record ever. The next is Bird-cherry Sawyer (2), found in Paul's garden, and confirmed by Andrew Green. This species isn't rare but very under recorded. Other species this month include; Black Winged-Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*, Ashton's Flash, Marbury Country Park (3) and Greater Scaup *Aythya marila* (4), 3 pairs in Cheshire which is unusual for breeding this far south.



10 Twilight Sessions

Article by Liv Lightfoot



09

Our Twilight Sessions are back for 2026!

We are again looking forward to providing new sessions in 2026, with more talks lead by our team and outside experts. We will continue to cater to nature enthusiasts, whether you are a beginner or seasoned recorder, please join us to learn something new.

Why attend?

- Connect with Nature
- Gain new skills and knowledge
- Contribute to conservation
- Join a community of like-minded people

How can you join?

Spaces for these workshops are limited, so be sure to register early to secure your spot! All sessions are expected to run between 18:30-20:30 on the first Tuesday evening of the month.

2026 Programme*:

FEB
3 Tuesday, 18:30-20:30
Owl Pellets

MAR
3 Tuesday, 18:30-20:30
Bees

APR
7 Tuesday, 18:30-20:30
Seabirds or Waders

MAY
5 Tuesday, 18:30-20:30
Common caterpillars and foodplants

JUN
2 Tuesday, 18:30-20:30
Longhorn beetles
[Click here to book your tickets](#)

JUL
7 Tuesday, 18:30-20:30
Ferns
[Click here to book your tickets](#)

AUG
4 Tuesday, 18:30-20:30
Hoverflies
[Click here to book your tickets](#)

SEP
1 Tuesday, 18:30-20:30
Spiders

OCT
6 Tuesday, 18:30-20:30
Fungi/Waxcap Grasslands Project

NOV
3 Tuesday, 18:30-20:30
Winter species

*Times and dates subject to change. Keep an eye on our social media for up to date information. Tickets are available on [Eventbrite](#), and will be advertised through our monthly bulletin and on social media.

Liverpool Biological Society

The Liverpool Botanical Society, our local BSBI group, have released their indoor meetings for 2026. To attend any indoor meetings or field visits, you need to be a member. Membership is **£5 per year**. These meetings are a great opportunity to improve your botanical skills, learn about new species and projects and to have a great time with like-minded people.

Upcoming Field Meetings

Haybridge (MNA Coach Trip)

Saturday 20th June

Details: Please follow the link below for details on how to book

Pat Lockdown Memorial Walk Green Beach, Ainsdale

Sunday 21st June | 10.30am

Location: Meet at car park by Ainsdale Discovery Centre, PR8 2QB.
SD2978412694. What3Words: probably.professed.encloses.

Liverpool City Centre and Everton

Saturday 27th June | 10.30am

Location: Meet outside World Museum, William Brown Street, Liverpool, L3
8EN. SJ34839075.



Liverpool Botanical Society

[More information here](#)

Mersey Naturalist's Association

Upcoming Meetings

Festival Gardens | Thursday 4th June | 11am

Meeting point: St Michaels Station

Sudley House | Tuesday 16th June | 11am

Meeting point: The entrance, Mossley Hill Road

Haybridge (Coach) | Saturday 20th June

See details on the link below for this event

More details for all events available on the link below



[More information here](#)

Ento Live

In June and July, Ento Live have the below events available. All of them are free to attend online for people with a passion and interest for invertebrates. Well worth checking them out and tuning in for the ones that are of an interest to you. To book on to any sessions, please click on the links below.



Tuesday 2nd June 2026 | 13:00 - 14:00

[Friend, Foe, or Freeloader? The Flower Crab Spider](#)



Tuesday 21st July 2026 | 13:00 - 14:00

[Can Infiltrators be Indicators? Understanding Cuckoo Bumblebees](#)



[More events here](#)

Tanyptera Trust

Lots of interesting events, workshops, webinars and recording days are coming up in June with the Tanyptera Trust. See the dates below and follow the links for more information and how to book:



Friday 5th June | 10:00 - 16:00

[Crag Bank Invertebrate Recoding Day Visit 1](#)

Location: Crag Bank Nature Reserve, LA5 9UR

There is a car park on site.

Cost: Free

Saturday/Sunday 13th/14th June

[Identification Workshop: Jumping Plant Lice \(Psyllids\)](#)

Saturday 13th | 10:30 - 16:00 | Liverpool World Museum

Sunday 14th | 10:30 - 16:00 | Rixton Clay Pits, Warrington

Cost: £20



Friday 26th June | 10:00 - 16:00

[Heswall Dales Invertebrate Recording Day](#)

Location: Heswall Dales, CH60 6SN

On-street parking available

Cost: Free

More information on these events are available on the links above



[More events here](#)

Kindling Farm

Kindling Farm have the following events available. Well worth getting involved. More information is available via the links below. Booking for all events is essential, please follow the links below to book

Sunday 7th June 2026 | 10:30-13:00

[Open Farm Day \(Morning\)](#)

Sunday 7th June 2026 | 14:00-16:30

[Open Farm Day \(Afternoon\)](#)

Kindling Farm also host various volunteering days, check out the link below for more information



[More events here](#)

British Botany

British Botany provide a series of online courses, which you might be interested in if you want to expand your knowledge on plants. We have highlighted a few below for you to have a browse:

[Reading the Landscape: An Introduction to Wetland & Fen Identification](#)

Cost: £9.99

[An Introduction to Botanical Survey: NVC](#)

Cost: £12.99

[Plants in the Planning Process](#)

Cost: £7.00



[More courses here](#)

Who we are

Merseyside BioBank is the Local Environmental Records Centre for North Merseyside. We collect, manage and share vital information about the wildlife and habitats in our area.

By bringing together records from volunteers, community groups, researchers and professionals, we provide a trusted evidence base that supports conservation, planning and environmental decision-making.

We also help strengthen local recording through training, volunteer opportunities and projects that encourage people to get involved in understanding and protecting North Merseyside's natural environment.

Interested in volunteering with us?

See the next page on our volunteering process & how you can get involved with us

Want to keep in touch?

Follow us on social media, and sign up to receive our monthly bulletin



[Merseyside BioBank](#)



[mbblerc](#)



[Merseyside BioBank](#)



[Merseyside BioBank LERC](#)



[mbblerc.bsky.social](#)

[Sign up to our monthly bulletin here](#)

Want us to advertise for you?

We would like to support any local wildlife, conservation, recording, species-specific groups or Friends of Groups.

We hope to continue to develop our local biodiversity network by:

- Advertising your up-coming events
- Help recruit new members and volunteers
- Provide support on wildlife ID and recording
- Opportunities to work together on projects, and
- Provide connections between local biodiversity groups

Please get in touch: info@merseysidebiobank.org.uk



Express interest

Get in touch by:

- Following links in our social media & monthly bulletin
- Applying via our online platform
- Contacting us directly at info@merseysidebiobank.org.uk

Attend an induction session

Held monthly, allows you to:

- Meet MBB staff
- Learn about what we do and why it is important
- Discuss your opportunities

Sign up to our volunteer portal

The portal allows you to:

- Book volunteer shifts
- Log hours worked on projects

Start volunteering

Office

- Collate records
- Digitise maps
- Write articles

Field

- Outreach events
- Surveying
- Collect data

Personal Projects: Have your own personal interests supported

To see our volunteer opportunities, or to register for the volunteer platform, please scan the QR code or click [here](#)

