

AUGUST 2026 BULLETIN

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WELCOME TO OUR AUGUST BULLETIN!

As with our native species, I hope everyone survived the 2026 droughts. However, the Med-like climate has given us some exciting new regional records. This month is a slightly reduced Bulletin as the MBB team have been taking some well-earned holidays, while also compiling our big yearly data report to the environmental agency and interviewing for our new ecologist roles! If you're particularly disappointed about a missing article, or dare I ask the reverse, please let us know by contacting us at info@merseysidebiobank.org.uk, as we very much value feedback. However, please still find our regular regional and iNat updates, including nature notes from Phil's, El, and Paul, and news on upcoming events. We also have a couple of great volunteer contributions, so please read on!

1. BIOBANK BOUNTY

THE BIOBANK TEAM HAS SPOTTED A RANGE OF LIFE HERE AT COURT HEY PARK THIS MONTH. THE HIGHLIGHTS SPOTTED ENJOYING THE HOT WEATHER INCLUDE:



© PAUL MASTERS, INAT

LESSER HORNET HOVERFLY
VOLUCELLA INANIS



© BLAHTTODEA, INAT

GREEN LEAFHOPPER
CICADELLA VIRIDIS



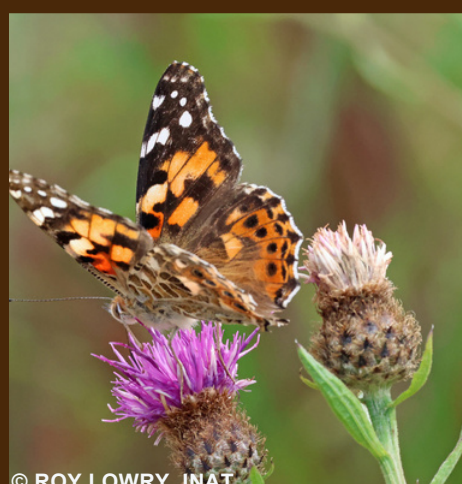
© NEIL62530, INAT

HOLLY BLUE
CELASTRINA ARGIOLUS



© SCOTT VANCE, INAT

HUMMINGBIRD HAWK MOTH
MACROGLOSSUM STELLATARUM



© ROY LOWRY, INAT

PAINTED LADY
VANESSA CARDUI



© PAUL ROUND

LARGE DAISY APHIDS
UROLEUCON

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.

2. iNaturalist Review: August

02

Article by Paul Round

Observations: 3638

Species: 1131



This month, wildlife recorders across Merseyside submitted an impressive 3,638 observations covering 1,131 species through iNaturalist. While this represents a small decrease compared to last month's total, it still highlights the incredible effort being made by local naturalists, volunteers, community groups and wildlife enthusiasts to document the region's biodiversity. Every record helps build a better understanding of the species that live in our area, providing valuable information that can support conservation, planning and environmental monitoring.

A huge thank you to everyone who has been out exploring, spotting wildlife and uploading their observations to iNaturalist. Your contributions continue to make a significant difference and help create one of the most detailed pictures of Merseyside's natural environment.

As always, we've taken a look at some of the standout observations from the month. Below, we feature the top five records for birds, plants, insects, invertebrates, vertebrates and fungi, showcasing the remarkable variety of wildlife recorded across the region.

Top 5 Plant Species

1	Ragwort	<i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i>	27
2	Great Willowherb	<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>	24
3	Spear-leaved Orache	<i>Atriplex prostrata</i>	17
4	Common Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	14
5	Wild Carrot	<i>Daucus carota</i>	14

Top 5 Bird Species

1	Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	19
2	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	13
3	Rock Dove	<i>Columbia livia</i>	12
4	Canada Goose	<i>Branta Canadensis</i>	9
5	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	7

Top 5 Insect Species

1	Light Brown Apple Moth	<i>Epiphyas postvittana</i>	44
2	Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>	34
3	Large Yellow Underwing	<i>Noctua pronuba</i>	31
4	Six-spot Burnet	<i>Zygaena filipendulae</i>	28
5	Common Field Grasshopper	<i>Chorthippus brunneus</i>	27

Top 5 Other Invertebrate Species

1	Garden Spider	<i>Araneus diadematus</i>	20
2	Feather-legged Lace Weaver	<i>Uloborus plumipes</i>	19
3	Long-bodied Cellar Spider	<i>Pholcus phalangioides</i>	6
4	Thin-legged Wolf Spiders	<i>Genus Pardosa</i>	5
5	Garden Snail	<i>Cornu aspersum</i>	5

Top 5 Other Vertebrate Species

1	Eurasian Red Squirrel	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>	16
2	European Hedgehog	<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>	7
3	Common Frog	<i>Rana temporaria</i>	6
4	European Wood Mouse	<i>Apodemus sylvaticus</i>	4
5	European Toad	<i>Bufo bufo</i>	4

Top 5 Fungi Species

1	Chicken of the Woods	<i>Laetiporus sulphureus</i>	5
2	Stonewall Rim Lichen	<i>Protoparmeliopsis muralis</i>	4
3	Dryad's Saddle	<i>Cerioporus squamosus</i>	4
4	Giant Polypore	<i>Meripilus giganteus</i>	3
5	Golden Shield Lichen	<i>Xanthoria parietina</i>	2

3. Dr. Phil Smith's July Wildlife Notes

03

Article by Dr. Phil Smith

In my notes for June this year, I described various heatwaves, concluding with “There could be more to come.” That prediction became abundantly true; the Met. Office described July as “A remarkable month.” England and Wales had the driest July since records began 190 years ago! This was coupled with exceptional warmth. Formby had measurable rain on only five days, totalling 7 mm, compared with an average for the month of around 100 mm. Here, the sand dune water-table fell by about 17 cm. More than half of England and the whole of Wales were officially in drought, with severe impacts on agriculture and water-supply. Wild fires devastated many of the country's most important wildlife sites, though, so far, the Sefton Coast seems to have escaped...



© PHIL SMITH

Acord Weevil
Curculio venus



© PHIL SMITH

Round-headed Leek
Allium sphaerocephalon



© PHIL SMITH

Clouded Yellow
Colias croceus

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

4. Urban Nature Notes

Article by Eleanor Reece

Moths, Meadows, and Musings

This month, I have immersed myself in the small wonders that make spending time in nature so special and healing. As someone working to build a career in nature and ecology, it's easy to get caught up in the technical details instead of simply enjoying the pure joy of observation.

While recording in my local area of Netherley, we spent time near where Mill Brook merges with Netherley Brook. As we watched the birds from the bridge above, a sudden flash of blue caught our eye – my very first sighting of a Kingfisher! It was an unexpected and beautiful reminder of how much we can miss when we don't take the time to pause and truly observe.



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

Article by Paul Round

August has again proved a fruitful month for moth trapping in my Cheshire garden with the continuation of warm weather. Three of the five species I have never seen before, and the latter two are new for this garden, and highlighting the excitement and importance of collecting data for nocturnal species..

There are only 460 previous Cheshire records for Small Rufous *Coenobia rufa* and 126 for Wax Moth *Galleria mellonella*. Pebble Hook-tip and Six-stripe Rustic are species I have recorded before in my previous Cheshire garden but new for this one as I steadily build towards 100 macro moth species in my current garden in which I have lived for just shy of 12 months. At the time of writing I have recorded 95 macro species.



© Paul Round
Small Rufous
Coenobia rufa



© Paul Round
Wax Moth
Galleria mellonella



© Paul Round
Pebble Hook-tip
Drepana falcata



© Paul Round
Six-striped Rustic
Xestia sexstrigata

Spotlight Species

Pale Eggar *Trichiura crataegi*

The Pale Eggar *Trichiura crataegi* was new moth record for me and only 575 previous records for Cheshire. They inhabit open woodland, hedgerows, heathland, moorland, scrub and gardens.

The forewings are primarily a pale grey colour with a central wavy-edged darker band. The females are duller and slightly browner in colour and the adults are incapable of feeding and tend to live from only a few days to a couple of weeks whilst searching for a mate and laying eggs.

Flight season is from August to September and their caterpillars can be found from April to June feeding on the likes of Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* but also Hazel *Corylus avellana*, Crab Apple *Malus sylvestris*, and Bilberry *Vaccinium uliginosum*.



© Paul Round
Pale Eggar
Trichiura crataegi

Article by Paul Round

Local Finds

This month we have three records of species that have been rarely recorded in Merseyside or not at all before. These include *Loricula elegantula* (1) which is a species true bug belonging to the family *Microphysidae* which was recorded by Josh Boe at Freshfields, Sefton, possibly a first for the region. Steve McWilliam then recorded Vagrant Piercer *Cydia amplana* (2) and *Ophion slaviceki* (3) a species of micro moth and parasitic wasp respectively.



Regional Finds

There has been some superb finds over the border in Cheshire including a first for Britain, Welcomed Marbled Moth *Odice pergrata* (1) which appeared in a moth trap in Bramhall. A Silver-barred Sable Moth *Pyrausta cingulata* (2) was trapped in Kingsley and is a first record for Cheshire since 1924. Paul Brewster recorded up to six Bee Wolf Wasps *Philanthus Triangulum* (3) at a private site in Cheshire, and Ruby Merriman recorded a Wasp Spider *Argiope bruennichi* (4) at a private site too, a species that is found usually in the south but is starting to expand north. And two notable avian finds included two Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* (5) seen in flight over RSPB Burton Mere Wetlands and Parkgate and a White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis* (6) in Meols.



Article by Gabriel Dixon (Volunteer)

The last couple of months have been a scorcher, and whilst the grass in my garden hasn't seemed to enjoy it very much, one group of animals has had an amazing time: invertebrates. My garden, located in Southport, has been a favourite spot for recording since we moved in—both for its ease of access and because I see a distinct appeal in being able to pique the interest of budding recorders by telling them how many species can be found in a relatively small patch of land. Over the last couple of years recording in my back garden, my partner and I have managed to record just shy of 300 species, a number we are very proud of. In this article, we will be focussing just on the interesting invertebrates we have spotted since the start of June.

Our garden is currently filled with (slightly brown and parched) tall grasses, allowed to grow right through No-Mow May, Let-It-Bloom June, and Knee-High July, punctuated with patches of common knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), wild carrot (*Daucus carota*), oxeye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), and ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*). Whilst some patches have been quite trampled by our little boy (particularly around the swing set), others have truly flourished in the increasingly common heatwaves. With this vigorous plant growth has come a wide range of invertebrate visitors. Some of these are quite common and would be expected in most UK gardens, such as European garden spiders (*Araneus diadematus*), marmalade hoverflies (*Episyrphus balteatus*), and green shield bugs (*Palomena prasina*). Others are typical grassland and meadow staples, such as meadow browns (*Maniola jurtina*) and common field grasshoppers (*Chorthippus brunneus*). Rather than focussing on these, I thought it would be a little more interesting to highlight some of the rarer or under-recorded finds I have identified (to the best of my ability).

Featured Finds

Knapweed Ghost

Acanthiophilus helianthi

I spotted this little grey fruit fly, which certainly lives up to its spectral name, resting on a small knapweed flower head. Often overlooked, making it rarely recorded in the Northwest, it uses knapweed heads for egg-laying, making our unmowed meadow patch the perfect host environment.



Lesser Hornet Hoverfly

Volucella inanis

My partner and I spent the best part of 20 minutes waiting for this impressive mimic to return after glimpsing it leaving the ragwort. Eventually, it came back and settled down long enough for us to confirm its identity, and we went on to spot it multiple times over the next couple of days.



False-Acacia Gall Midge *Obolodiplosis robiniae*

Found on the non-native false acacia (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) planted in our neighbour's garden, the distinctive, thickened, curled leaf-margin galls were spotted hanging right over our garden fence. This species is highly host-specific, so its presence relies entirely on nearby ornamental trees.



Small Dusty Wave *Idaea seriata*

Becoming increasingly more common in the North of England, this individual was an unfortunate victim of our bathtub pond, found floating on the water's surface before being fished out for careful identification. Despite its grim end, it marks a great local moth record for the garden.



Trembling-Wing Fly *Toxonevra muliebris*

I noticed this striking fly sitting squarely on the roof of my son's Cozy Coupe. It instantly caught my eye thanks to its distinctive patterned wings.



Shark Moth *Cucullia umbratica*

Hiding on our wooden washing line prop, this species wouldn't have been spotted if it had landed on one of the nearby trees. The next day we found a potential larvae of the same species



How You Can Help

Most of the species mentioned above are yet to be verified, so please take a look at our iNaturalist profile pages (dixgab and glumey) to see if you can confirm any of these observations or offer a correction. We would be very grateful for the help, even if it means our original ID was wrong! Hopefully, this snapshot demonstrates how rich a small greenpatch can be and inspires you to spend a little time in your own garden to see what under-recorded or locally rare species are hiding in plain sight.

Parasitoid Wasps

Identification is a little trickier in this group, but wasps seem to have been the biggest beneficiaries of the heat this year, with many distinct species visiting the garden. While exact verification requires specialist study, our best identifications include:

Aritranis director



Amblyteles armatorius

Any time we looked in the long grass, several individuals of this species were hiding within, after researching it seems they parasitise caterpillars of large yellow underwings (*Noctua pronuba*) which were another of our frequent garden visitors.



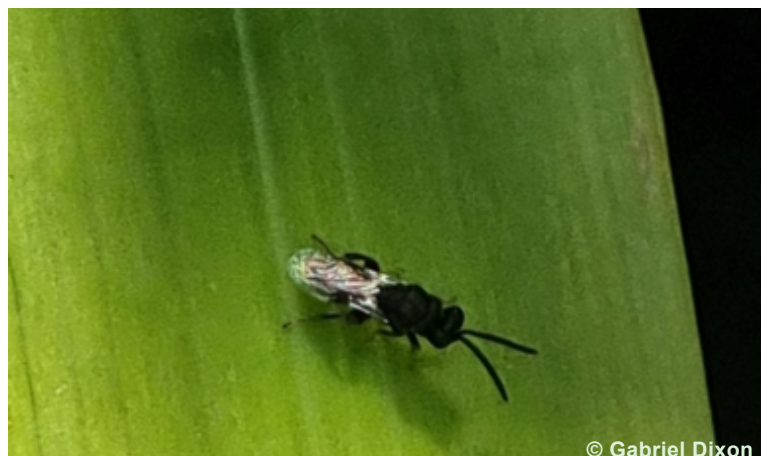
Barylypa propugnator

A particularly exciting find, identified after witnessing a female actively ovipositing into a cinnabar moth (*Tyria jacobaeae*) caterpillar; another species that has been thoroughly enjoying the abundant ragwort growing around the base of our young cherry tree



Haltichella rufipes

A chalcid wasp helpfully identified by a French Hymenoptera expert on iNaturalist, based on its swollen hind femora.



Article by Jo Johnson (Volunteer)

My first attraction and love for Lepidoptera began as a child and read the “The Very Hungry Caterpillar” book by Eric Carle, I was instantly enchanted by the lifecycle of butterflies going from a tiny egg, to that of caterpillar with their sometimes-disagreeable appearance due to being poisonous or for camouflage. The caterpillar then fills its stomach and grows in size, anchors itself down, sheds its skin and builds its own unique house (the Chrysalis stage). Yes, its very own house! It blew my mind that this little creature could do such a thing all on its own without hands or feet, just from what appears to be wriggling movements! They emerge weeks or months later so different, that of a magnificent, kaleidoscopic marvel that is a Butterfly!

This transformation spoke to me. I believed that one day I might transform from the little girl that was not aesthetically pleasing to others (the caterpillar) and would one day emerge as a beautiful butterfly as I glide and flow through life.

I used to collect caterpillar in a shoe box and store them under my bed bringing them food and water and watch their lifecycle with a front row seat, until my mother found out and was extremely cross and demanded I realise them into the wild, this is a philosophy I have kept with me to this day.



Black Arches
Lymantria monacha



Lychnis
Hadena bicruris

As I have always been fascinated by things that move in the night, due to my innate ability to sleep my love of butterflies inevitably transferred to a passion and enthusiasm of moths.

I discovered that butterflies and moths not only have a fascinating life cycle and look fabulous but that they pollinate flowers and their presence shows a healthy environment. Oh did I mention that they been around for at least 50 million years and probably first evolved some 150 million years ago!!

As I grew older my contact time with nature unfortunately reduced, adult life took over and I saw less and less of the green spaces I held so dear. I grew apart from it and it to me. I had a second chance when I joined Merseyside Biobank (MBB) as a volunteer. Initially I thought I would utilise my previous experience with facts and figures. Well as some will tell you.....nature had others' ideas for me. I have spent the majority of time since March 2026 not in the office at all but out in the field.

Article by Jo Johnson (Volunteer)

With Rimrose Valley (RV) being local to me and seeing how much the Rimrose Valley friends (RVF) work together as a team I felt this was a place where I wanted to be. With my love for moths my mind was electric with the possibilities for moth trapping within such different habitats. Initially I had the idea of using a homemade moth trap and a bought one and compare the two. With a reduced budgets you can do extraordinary things without breaking the bank! However, after testing my trap it became apparent that my home-made trap required more tweaking and adaptations. I will not be defeated and the trap will be amended at a later date....what this space.

We ran a moth trap overnight in an allotment within 50 metres of the valley and also a manned 'field' trap in the meadow for four hours in July 2026 with considerable success, Listing many new species to the RV moth records.



Swallow-tail
Papilio machaon

RV is a 3.5 km country park and valley which forms a border between Crosby and Litherland in the borough of Sefton, Merseyside, with the Leeds and Liverpool Canal on its eastern edge. Historically a flood-prone valley separating Crosby and Litherland, the area was used for farming, refuse tipping, allotments and recreation before abandoned allotments became colonised by reeds, with only a few allotments remaining. Today, RV offers a diverse mix of wetlands, woodlands, grasslands and wildflower meadows, alongside open spaces and walks along the Leeds-Liverpool Canal, all supporting a rich variety of wildlife. The aims now are to form up to date lists of moths within RV, mapping, educating others on identifying, recording and the applications available to do this.

Moth recording so far has been a success and I hope to trap on a monthly basis, trap within RV and work alongside experts for guidance and support. I hope that these recordings can be used to measure biodiversity health, gather data on climate change and habitat loss all of which are vital for conservation.

All this would not have been possible without the collaborative efforts of everyone involved from Merseyside Biobank, Rimrose Valley Friends and Queensway Allotments. I cannot wait to work with you all again soon. Let's getting moth-ing!!!



Pale Prominent
Pterostoma palpina

Do you want to write about something in our bulletin?
Get in touch at Info@merseysidebiobank.org.uk

MBB's Twilight Sessions

Meeting point: MBB Office

Upcoming Sessions:

Spiders | Tuesday 1st September | 6:30pm

Fungi | Tuesday TBA October | 6:30pm

Winter Species | Tuesday 3rd November | 6:30pm

[More information here](#)

Liverpool Biological Society

Upcoming Sessions:

Southport | Saturday 26th August |
10:30am | Meet at Lakeside Inn,
Promenade, PR9 0EA

Rufford | Saturday 3rd October | 10:30am |
Meet at Rufford Station, L40 1TB

[More information here](#)

Mersey Naturalist's Association

Upcoming Sessions:

Burton Mere Wetlands RSPB Reserve |
Saturday 5th September | Meet at Visitors
Centre 10:30am

Fungi Foray at Dibbinsdale | Sunday 27th
September | 11:30am | Meet at
Bromborough Rake Station, 11:00am

[More information here](#)

Ento Live

Upcoming Online Sessions:

The Search for German Hairy Snails |
Thursday 17th September | 6:30pm

Discoveries After Dark: How Insects
Connect Us to Nature | Thursday 24th
September | 1pm

[More information here](#)

Tanyptera Trust

Upcoming Sessions:

Chalcid Wasps | World Museum | Friday 2nd
October | 10:30-16:00

An Intro to Cuckoo Wasps Webinar |
Monday 12th October | 19:30-21:00

Picture Winged Flies | World Museum | 22nd
and 23rd October | 10:30-16:00

[More information here](#)

Kindling Farm

Upcoming Sessions:

Kindling Farm Bat Walk | Saturday 5th
September | 19:30-21:30

Small Mammals Survey | Sunday 6th
September | 8:30-12:30

Lots of volunteering opportunities

[More information 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.

Want to keep in touch?

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



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[mbblerc.bsky.social](#)

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

Volunteering with us:

Step 1: Express your interest

Contact us directly at info@merseysidebiobank.org.uk, on social media, or by our online platform

Step 2: Attend an induction session

These sessions are held regularly, allows you to meet MBB staff and learn more about what we do and why it is important, as well as discuss your opportunities

Step 3: Sign up to our volunteer portal

The portal allows you to book into our office rota and log hours

Step 4: Start volunteering

We have a range of different opportunities including; collating records, writing articles, outreach events, collecting data etc.

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

