

SEPTEMBER 2026 BULLETIN

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WELCOME TO OUR SEPTEMBER BULLETIN!

Like a switch, the season has changed this year to autumn, and with migrations underway, it's time to bid farewell to the swallows and welcome the pink-footed geese back to the city's coastline, a vital corridor and resting spot for them. Beyond the birds, plenty of species remain active enough to be seen and recorded, so there's always a reason to brave the weather. Biobank also shifts with the season, as our regular recorders start sending in their yearly lists, while we encourage our volunteers to hunt for the many mushrooms that start popping up and track down the now-abandoned harvest mouse nests. Please help us by getting involved!

Article by Jamshid Ghorbani

I am delighted to have joined Merseyside BioBank as an Assistant Ecologist and I thought I would take the chance to introduce myself.

If there is one theme that runs through my career, it is curiosity about landscapes and how they change. I have always been fascinated by the relationship between people and the environments they live in, and that curiosity is what first drew me towards ecology.

My academic background is in rangeland and watershed management, where I learned to think about ecosystems as connected systems rather than isolated habitats. Looking at landscapes through that wider lens eventually led me into restoration ecology and grassland management, and later to the University of Liverpool, where I completed a PhD focused on restoring bracken-dominated landscapes in the UK.

I have worked internationally across different sectors, from universities and consultancy to practical restoration projects. I have collaborated with a wide range of people, including researchers, farmers, land managers, NGOs, community groups, and policymakers. While the projects were often very different, they all focused on the same challenge: understanding how ecosystems respond to change and what we can learn from that to better support biodiversity.

One of the things I enjoy most about ecology is that it constantly combines science with observation. There is real satisfaction in standing in a field, collecting what initially seems like a collection of small details, and gradually uncovering the bigger story they tell about a place. Much of my work involves vegetation surveys, habitat assessment, and monitoring ecological changes over time.

My path to MBB started as a volunteer. I spent several months helping with biological records and digitising maps. Perhaps more importantly, I enjoyed being part of the team. So, when the opportunity arose to join MBB as an Assistant Ecologist, it felt less like applying for a new job and more like continuing a journey that had already begun.

What excites me now is the chance to keep learning. I am looking forward to getting to know Merseyside's habitats and species better, learning from colleagues across MBB and MEAS, and contributing wherever I can. For me, joining MBB feels both familiar and new: familiar because it builds on experiences I have gathered throughout my career, and new because it opens the door to a completely different way of supporting biodiversity. I am very pleased to be here and excited to see where this next chapter leads.



2. 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:



DAVID HOPKINS©

PURPLE-LOOSESTRIFE
LYTHRUM SALICARIA



PAUL ROUND©

SUN FLY
HELOPHILUS PENDULUS



LIVERAL, INAT©

IVY-LEAVED CYCLAMEN
CYCLAMEN HEDERIFOLIUM



DAVID HOPKINS©

GARDEN SPDIER
ARANEUS DIADEMATUS



GABRIEL DIXON , INAT©

YELLOW STAINER MUSHROOM
AGARICUS XANTHODERMUS



DAVID HOPKINS©

IVY CELLOPHANE BEED
COLLETED HEDERA

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 Paul Round

Observations: 3,246

Species: 998



As summer begins to give way to autumn, September's iNaturalist records provide a fascinating snapshot of Merseyside's changing wildlife. During the month, 3,246 observations of 998 species were submitted, capturing everything from late-flying insects and migrating birds to fungi beginning to emerge as conditions become cooler and wetter. Although the overall number of observations was slightly lower than in previous months, the records submitted continue to offer valuable insights into the seasonal changes taking place across the region.

We'd like to extend our thanks to everyone who has taken the time to record and share their wildlife sightings. Whether you're documenting species in your garden, local park, nature reserve or out on a countryside walk, every observation helps improve our understanding of Merseyside's biodiversity and contributes to a growing picture of how wildlife is responding to the changing seasons.

This month we've highlighted some of the most notable records submitted to iNaturalist, selecting the top five observations from birds, plants, insects, invertebrates, vertebrates and fungi. Together, they showcase the rich variety of wildlife being recorded across the region as autumn gets underway.

Top 5 Plant Species

1	Common Nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	14
2	Sycamore	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	14
3	Great Willowherb	<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>	12
4	Ragwort	<i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i>	11
5	Smooth-sow Thistle	<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>	10

Top 5 Bird Species

1	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	44
2	Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	36
3	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	27
4	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	23
5	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	22

Top 5 Insect Species

1	Box Tree Moth	<i>Cydalima perspectalis</i>	27
2	Square-spot Rustic	<i>Xestia xanthographa</i>	26
3	Large Yellow Underwing	<i>Noctua pronuba</i>	24
4	Light Brown Apple Moth	<i>Epiphyas postvittana</i>	20
5	Harlequin Ladybird	<i>Harmonia axyridis</i>	19

Top 5 Other Invertebrate Species

1	Garden Spider	<i>Araneus diadematus</i>	23
2	Garden Snail	<i>Cornu aspersum</i>	7
3	European Nursery Web Spider	<i>Pisaura mirabilis</i>	6
4	Noble False Widow	<i>Steatoda nobilis</i>	6
5	Feather-legged Lace Weaver	<i>Feather-legged Lace Weaver</i>	6

Top 5 Other Vertebrate Species

1	Eurasian Red Squirrel	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>	66
2	European Toad	<i>Bufo bufo</i>	10
3	Common Frog	<i>Rana temporaria</i>	9
4	European Hedgehog	<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>	5
5	Grey Squirrel	<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>	5

Top 5 Fungi Species

1	Fairy Ring Champignon	<i>Marasmius oreades</i>	14
2	Black Tar Spot	<i>Rhytisma acerinum</i>	13
3	Sulphur Tuft	<i>Hypholoma fasciculare</i>	12
4	Blusher	<i>Amanita rubescens</i>	11
5	Giant Polypore	<i>Meripilus giganteus</i>	8

4. Dr. Phil Smith's August Wildlife Notes

04

Article by Dr. Phil Smith

August was a persistently warm month, culminating in the UK's hottest summer since records began over 150 years ago. Thank goodness, the prolonged dry spell, with five heatwaves, broke in mid-month, Atlantic lows bringing desperately needed rain. In Formby, measurable rain fell on 15 days with a total of about 68 mm, according to Rachael Park's rain-gauge. This was only around 70% of normal but, by the end of the month, road verges and lawns began to green up and the vegetation on our internationally important sand-dunes was recovering. The sand-dune water-table fell by about 5 cm; less than expected.

Wildfires were highlighted all over the country and, although I noticed a few small fires in the dunes, we were incredibly lucky to have only one big blaze. This was at Cambridge Road, Ravenmeols, on 12th, said to be caused by a firework celebrating the partial eclipse of the sun. The fire service did a great job bringing it under control, while the National Trust organised a drone flight that measured just over 3 ha (7.7 acres) of burnt vegetation in the Local Nature Reserve. A week later, I walked over the area, noting that most of the destroyed plantlife was dense ungrazed Marram and Dewberry of limited wildlife value. Some willow and poplar scrub was also torched but two bushes of the nationally rare Don's Willow were happily unaffected.

Some sand-dune plants suffered severely in the drought. For example, patches of non-native Snowberry at Falklands Way, together with Apple Mint and Canadian Goldenrod at Ravenmeols, almost completely died off, depriving many insects of nectar sources...



Grass-of-Parnassus
Parnassia palustris

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

5. Urban Nature Notes

Article by Eleanor Reece

Fungi, Heritage, and Hidden Histories

This month has brought a lot more rain, and although the leaves are beginning to turn into their vibrant autumnal colours, creating vast palettes of oranges and reds before carpeting the ground, grasses have returned to their green state. Plants are beginning to look vibrant again, rather than drought-ridden and brown. Putting on one last display before succumbing to the season upon us.

These conditions have allowed one of my favourite kingdoms to begin fruiting: the Fungi Kingdom. Bracket fungi, mushrooms, and slime moulds are beginning to emerge in a wonderful variety of shapes, colours, and forms.



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

Article by Paul Round

Throughout September, I have continued trapping regularly and, as we move into the second half of the month, we begin to see a shift in the species on the wing, with autumnal moths starting to make an appearance. Autumn is my favourite time of year for trapping because not only do you notice a change in species diversity, but many of the moths are also among the most vibrant of the year. Take this month's spotlight species, the Frosted Orange (*Gortyna flavago*), for example. This was a first record for my garden, so I was thrilled to find one. The four other species featured below were also new additions to my garden this month, highlighting the seasonal changes now underway.



Centre-barred Sallow
Atethmia centrago



Oak Hook-tip
Watsonalla binaria



September Thorn
Ennomos erosaria



Small Blood-vein
Timandra griseata

Spotlight Species

Frosted Orange

Gortyna flavago

The Frosted Orange (*Gortyna flavago*) is an attractive moth with a broad, slightly hooked forewing. Grey-brown in colour with a striking golden-yellow central cross-band, oval and kidney-shaped forewing markings. It's flight season is September to October.

It inhabits rough grassland, woodland rides and edges, disturbed weedy places, ditch-banks, fens, marshes and sometimes gardens.

The caterpillar feeds on robust herbaceous plants; particularly Thistles (*Cardueae*), Burdocks (*Arctium*) and Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*). Sometimes also Ragworts Jacobaea, Hemp-agrimony Eupatorium cannabinum and Figworts Scrophularia.



Frosted Orange
Gortyna flavago

Article by Paul Round

Notable Wildlife Records from the last month

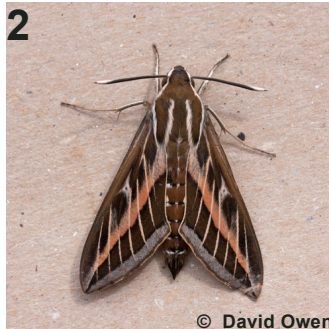
September has produced an exciting selection of notable wildlife records from across Merseyside and neighbouring Cheshire. This month's highlights include species that are rarely recorded in the region, a potential first record for Merseyside, and several scarce migrant birds and invertebrates. From unusual moths and ants to transatlantic waders and ocean-going seabirds, these records showcase the remarkable diversity of wildlife being recorded locally. Such discoveries underline the value of biological recording and demonstrate how the efforts of dedicated naturalists continue to improve our understanding of species distributions and changing wildlife populations across the region.

Local Finds

Three particularly noteworthy species were recorded in Merseyside during the month. Steve McWilliam discovered an Argentine Ant (*Linepithema humile*) (1). Despite its common name, this species is native to South America and, although first recorded in the UK in 1927, has never previously been recorded in Merseyside.

Meanwhile, in St Helens, David Owen recorded two uncommon moth species for the region. The first was the Strawberry Garden Tortrix (*Clepsis peritana*) (2), which is believed to represent the first record for Lancashire. He also recorded a Striped Hawk-moth (*Hyles livornica*) (3), a migratory species that reaches the UK only occasionally and is recorded sporadically each year.

These discoveries demonstrate that even in a well-recorded county, unexpected species continue to be found. Many invertebrate groups remain under-recorded compared with birds and mammals, highlighting the importance of ongoing recording efforts and careful observation in improving our understanding of Merseyside's wildlife.



Regional Finds

Cheshire produced several notable bird records during the month, reflecting the region's importance for both migratory and passage species. Highlights included a Baird's Sandpiper (*Calidris bairdii*) (1) at Coxbank, a scarce Nearctic wader that is only occasionally recorded in Britain and is always a sought-after sighting for birdwatchers. Along the Wirral coast, strong coastal conditions brought an influx of Leach's Storm Petrels (*Hydrobates leucorhous*) (2), an elusive seabird that spends most of its life far out at sea and is most often encountered from the shore during autumn storms. Elsewhere, a Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*) (3) was recorded at Marbury Country Park, adding to an impressive month of avian highlights.



Thank you to everyone who submitted records and photographs this month.

8. Netherley Meadows Update

07

Article by Josh Styles

Another amazing year this year (despite the drought) in the Netherley meadows which just shows what cutting and collecting clippings after Summer can achieve for not only aesthetics, but biodiversity too.

- Orchids have boomed, with around 100 recorded for the meadows - a record high for our town which is set to increase into the thousands in years to come!
- Rare plants like pignut have never been so abundant, and have started to colonise nearby grassy spaces after spreading seed produced here.
- The number of plant species recorded has almost doubled in the social club meadow, while grass abundance and vigour has never been lower. We recorded 10+ orchids here, alongside abundant red clover and knapweed which should be spectacular next year!

I've now began cutting these grasslands and am about a quarter way done.



Lychnis
Hadena bicruris

9: October Species

Article by David Hopkins

Pink Waxcap (*Porpolomopsis calyptriformis*)

It's mushroom season again so time to start spotting the splashes of fruiting bodies in lawns and fields. Waxcap mushrooms, along with other key grassland mushroom families (nicknamed the CEGDs), are powerful indicators of vulnerable, old, unfertilised grassland. While some grassland mushrooms can be tricky, some, like the distinctly green parrot mushroom (*Gliophorus psittacinus*), bright yellow Meadow Coral fungus (*Clavulinopsis corniculata*) or Pink waxcap, are easy to identify! [Click Here](#) to learn more and join the hunt! **Identification tips:** This is the only truly pink British waxcap; the domed cap is at first narrowly conical, usually splits and sometimes turns upwards. Dry and silky except during rain when it is only slightly sticky. **Habitat:** Old, short unimproved grassland, often pastures, lawns or churchyards.



© nessiesnaturenotebook, iNat

Fieldfares (*Turdus pilaris*) and Red Wings (*T. iliacus*)

Autumn is the peak migration period, bringing passerines (thrush family) such as Fieldfares and Redwings fleeing from harsh Scandinavian winters to our milder shores. Look around berry-laden bushes and open fields, where they often gather in mixed flocks. Like all migrating birds, please give them space by controlling dogs, keeping to paths and avoiding roosting places, as they will desperately need to rest and feed after flying long distances. **Identification tips:** Fieldfares: Large thrushes with grey heads, chestnut-brown backs and spotted, buff-orange breasts. Redwings: smaller, with a distinctive pale eyebrow stripe and rusty-red patches beneath the wings. **Habitat:** Look for them in hedgerows, orchards, farmland and woodland edges, particularly where rowan, hawthorn and holly are fruiting.



© STEVE MCWILLAM, iNat

MBB's Twilight Sessions

Meeting point: MBB Office

Upcoming Sessions:

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

[More information here](#)

Liverpool Botanical 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:

Dunham Massey National Trust |
Saturday 10th October | Coach trip | £25

Walton Hall Park | Tuesday 20th October |
Meet at Lifestyles Alsop Fitness Centre,
11:00am

[More information here](#)

Ento Live

Upcoming Online Sessions:

Unwelcome Guests: How Insect Pests
are Impacting Britain's Forests | Tuesday
6th October | 1:00pm

Tardigrades: The Microscopic Animals
with Survival Superpowers | Tuesday 20th
October | 6:30pm

[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:

Citizen Science Day | Saturday 3rd October | 10:00am

Harvest Celebration | Sunday 4th October | 10:30am &
2:00pm

Autumn Bird Walk | Saturday 17th October | 9:30am

Medicinal Plants Walk | Saturday 17th October | 2:00pm

Fungus ID Walk | Sunday 1st November | 11:00am

[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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[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](#)

