

# **Amman Valley Wildlife Update Number 21 (August 2021)**



**MENTER AR GYFER  
CADWRAETH NATUR CYMRU**



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CONSERVATION CYMRU**

# Event

Bat Walk – Thursday  
7<sup>th</sup> September 2021



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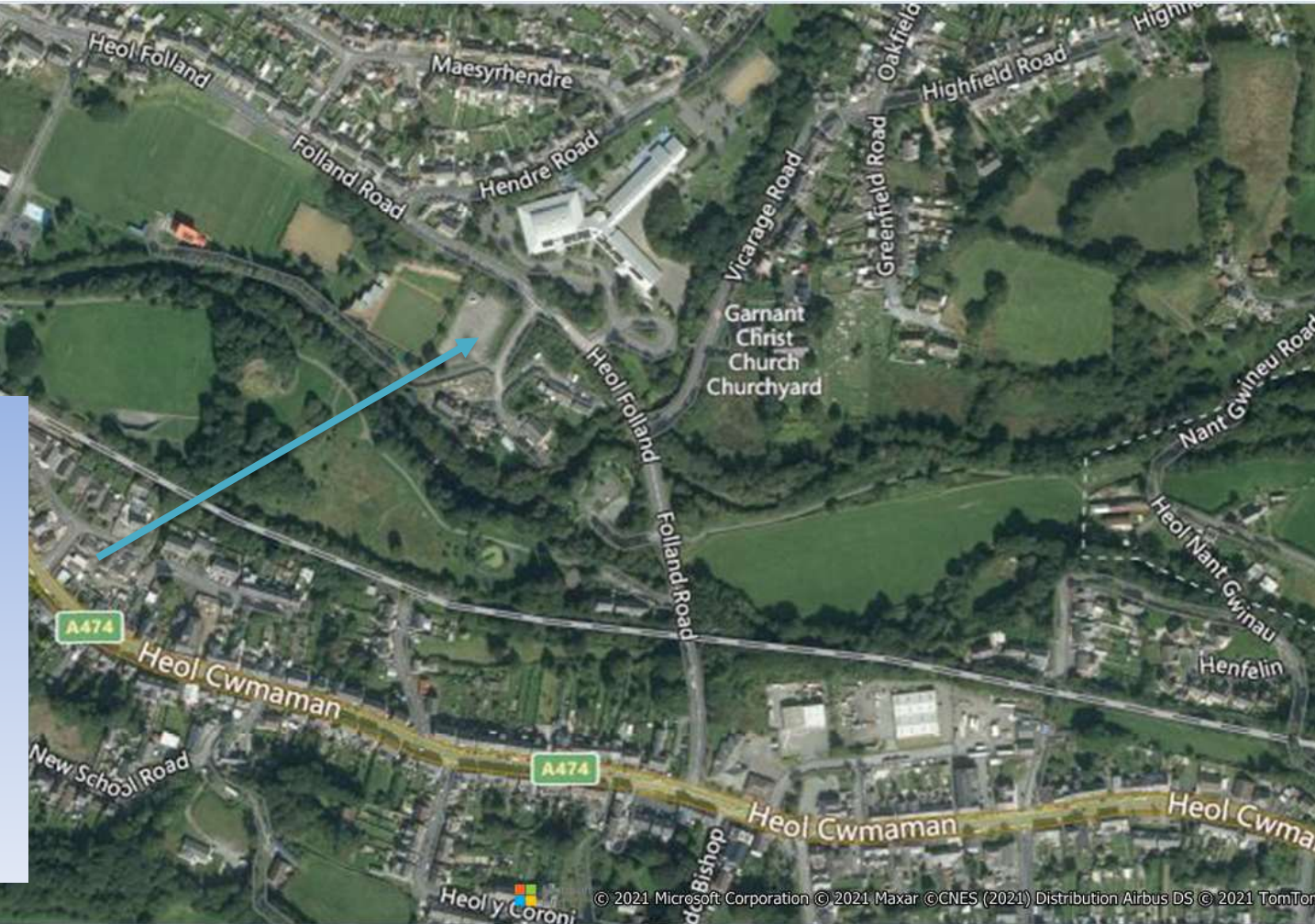
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# Event

Bat Walk – Thursday  
7<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Meet at the Bowls  
Car Park in Garnant  
(Opposite Ysgol y  
Bedol) at 8:30 pm.



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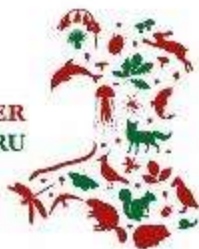
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You will need some sturdy footwear and a small torch if you have one.



If you are interested in joining and discovering a bit more about the bats in the area, please get in touch to book on. [rob.parry@incc.wales](mailto:rob.parry@incc.wales) or 07821397625 – Thank you.

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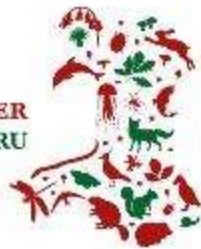
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August and September  
are some of the best  
times of year to go  
walking in our uplands.



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Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) is in full flower. As well as the colour and smell, the spectacle also attracts thousands of insects, including many bees and butterflies.





The heathland is managed by grazing animals including these ponies. The ponies help break up the sward and create a greater diversity of plant species. The greater the diversity of plants the better it is for insects and other animals.

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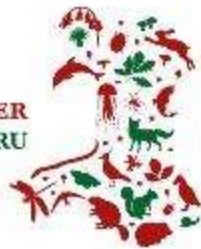
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One of the stars of the Amman Valley (there are many) is the Red Grouse (*Lagopus lagopus scotica*). They feed on the fresh heather and although difficult to spot, you can always see their distinct droppings scattered on the heathery hills.



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Red Grouse Droppings.



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August is a good month for Wood Pigeons (*Columba palumbus*) in the Amman Valley. They flock to the upland heathland to feed on the glut of Whimberries / Bilberries.

If you see large squidgy purple bird poo in the garden, then its these guys.





All summer, I have been looking in our upland habitats for Water Voles (*Arvicola amphibius*) – the UK's fastest declining mammal ever.


Water Voles are now incredibly rare and are still dying out in many of their habitats.

Unfortunately, I still can't find them in the Amman Valley.



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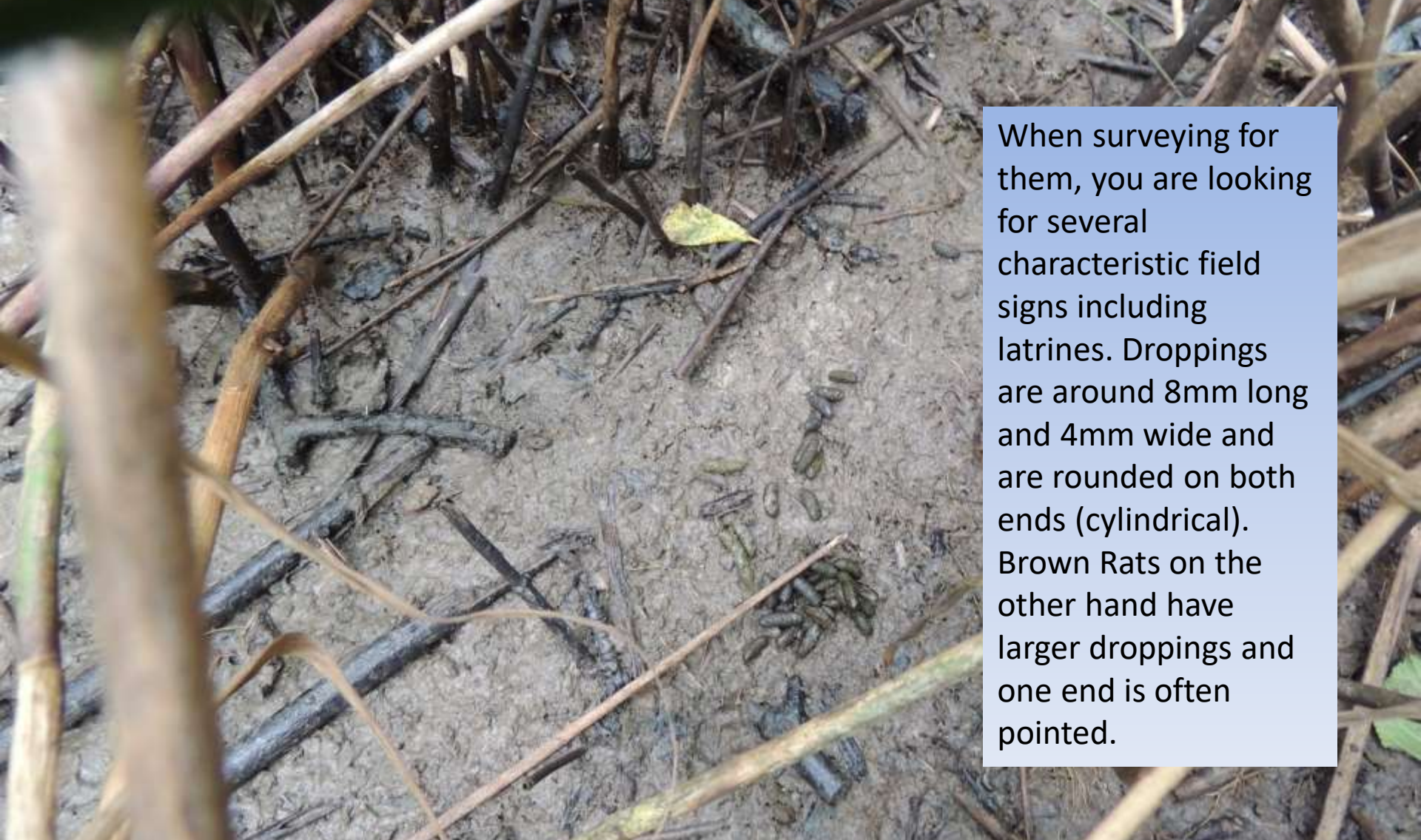
Although more often associated with lowland streams and canals, the Water Vole is just as happy in our mountainous bogs and ditches. This ditch in Ceredigion is the perfect Water Vole habitat.

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When surveying for them, you are looking for several characteristic field signs including latrines. Droppings are around 8mm long and 4mm wide and are rounded on both ends (cylindrical). Brown Rats on the other hand have larger droppings and one end is often pointed.

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We are slowly starting to run events again as well as more surveys, including this botanical survey at Christ Church in Garnant where we found dozens of different plant species.



As well as plants to spot, the churchyard is also very good for Waxcap Fungi. Waxcaps come in different colours and their fruiting bodies can be found in Autumn in short turf areas.

They are quite rare, so please do record them if you see any out on your travels.

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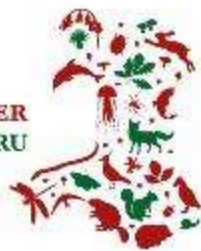
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We were lucky enough to spot a few yellow waxcaps on a recent wildlife walk in Gwaun Cae Gurwen.

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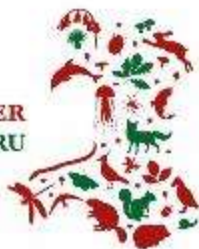
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I couldn't resist  
stopping off to look  
for Marsh Fritillary  
(*Euphydryas aurinia*)  
larval webs amongst  
patches of Devil's-bit  
Scabious (*Succisa  
pratensis*).



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And we found some. This is an old Marsh Fritillary web. The caterpillars have marched on to some new food and have left their old web full of droppings (called frass) behind.



Our moth trap loan scheme is still going well and, on the 27th August one lucky volunteer (Jan) caught 16 species, including this Poplar Hawkmoth (*Laothoe populi*).



Late summer and early autumn is a great time to see some of our reptiles including Adders (*Vipera berus*). The zigzag patterning of an adder helps them camouflage amongst the dead leaves and Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*).

This Adder is a male. You can tell by the black zigzag down the body and the pale blue / grey colour.



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Female Adders (like this one) on the other hand have a dark brown zigzag and are often browner in colour. Colour between the sexes can be quite variable, but you can often tell the difference by the darkness of the zigzag.

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We have been looking for reptiles in the Amman Valley using sheets of corrugated onduline. The sheets warm up and cool down gradually so are great for reptiles. Not much luck yet, but we will keep looking.

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Our garden is full of Large White butterfly (*Pieris brassicae*) caterpillars at the moment. Its Latin name (*brassicae*) gives you an idea of its favourite food. We plant the garden with lots of nasturtiums, which also provides a great food resource for them.

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Thanks again for all your feedback  
and your wildlife records and stories.

Any queries, please feel free  
to get in touch and please  
keep sending in your photos  
and wildlife records – they are  
very much appreciated.

Please do get in touch if you  
fancy coming along to the bat  
walk on the 7<sup>th</sup> September.

Thank You  
Rob  
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