



Amman Valley Wildlife Update Number 25 (January 2022)

Photo: Lizzie Wilberforce

MENTER AR GYFER
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CONSERVATION CYMRU

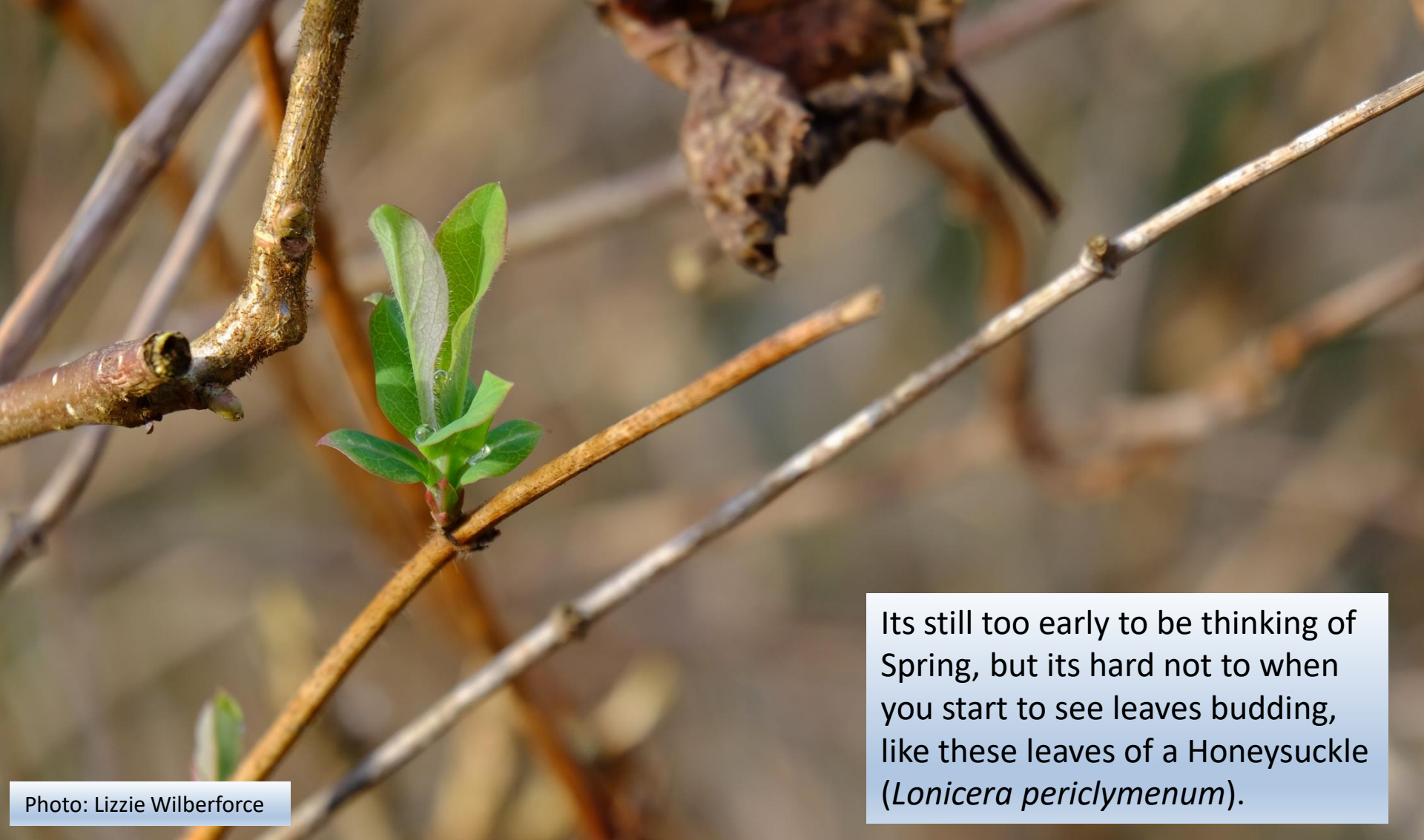


Photo: Lizzie Wilberforce

Its still too early to be thinking of Spring, but its hard not to when you start to see leaves budding, like these leaves of a Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*).

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On warm winter days you can often see birds looking for potential nest sites for spring. Its not so much that they are looking to breed now, just get a head start for when the time comes.

That said, it has been an unusually warm January....

Photo: Lizzie Wilberforce

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We have already
seen a Small
Tortoiseshell
(*Aglais urticae*)
butterfly in the
garden in late
January.



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A close-up photograph of a small, brown and black patterned Common Lizard resting on a grey knitted glove. The glove is being held by a person's hand, with fingers visible in the background. The lizard is facing left, with its long tail extending towards the right. The background is a blurred natural setting with green grass and brown twigs.

Some animals such as this Common Lizard can get caught out during warm days in January. The warmth wakes them out of their winter hibernation and they often venture out, looking for food when there is none around.

This poor lizard was rescued off the road in Cwmtwrch in January.

Photo: Lizzie Wilberforce

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January and February are good months to see some of our winter visiting birds like this Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*).

Brambling don't breed in Wales, but they do visit in winter where they feed on seeds and can often be found in flocks with other species of finch, especially Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*).



Photo: Sorcha Lewis

Another winter visitor is the Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*). These birds are rarely seen as their camouflage enables them to blend into their woodland habitat, only flying off from the woodland floor when you get too close. Their long beak/bill is ideal for foraging for soil invertebrates.

At night the birds often leave their woodland shelter and forage in open fields.

The numbers of woodcock breeding in the UK have been declining for many years.



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Another species of bird that is resident all year long is the Treecreeper (*Certhia familiaris*). This very small bird can be best seen wandering up tree trunks in winter when there are no leaves on the trees. Look out for old trees with gnarled bark.



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One of the most unusual phenomena to see in winter is Hair Ice.



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Hair ice is relatively rare in Wales because you need very specific conditions, including damp deadwood, cold (below zero) conditions and the presence of the fungus *Exidiopsis effuse*.

Thanks to Carla Williams for spotting it at Golwg yr Amman.





Fungi are fascinating and are key to healthy ecosystems across the world.

The turquoise colour of this piece of deadwood is caused by the fungus *Chlorociboria aeruginascens*

Photo: Lizzie Wilberforce

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Pseudoscleropodium purum
Neat Feather Moss

When there are only a few flowering plants to see in winter, it's good to get your eye in to some mosses.



Thuidium tamariscinum
Common Tamarisk-moss



Rhytidiadelphus loreus
Little Shaggy Moss

Photo: Lizzie Wilberforce



Things can often look a bit gloomy in winter. Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) always offers a bit of bright colour and interest. It's a great tree for all sorts of wildlife. These 'spiky' holly leaves are from the bottom of the tree.

Photo: Lizzie Wilberforce

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Whereas these smooth Holly leaves are from the top of the tree.

Spiky leaves are a defensive mechanism by the tree to safeguard itself against browsing animals such as deer. When the tree reaches a height where grazing animals are no longer a threat, they can revert to smoother leaves which takes less energy to produce.

Photo: Lizzie Wilberforce

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Thanks to the support from the Brecon Beacons National Park, Brecon Carreg Water, volunteers and members of the Cwm Amman Makerspace, we have been able to install our first Bat House at the Brecon Carreg site near Trapp.



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The bat house will help provide a safe resting area for our two species of Horseshoe bat which can be found nearby.

We have 6 more bat houses to install in the Amman Valley before the end of March.

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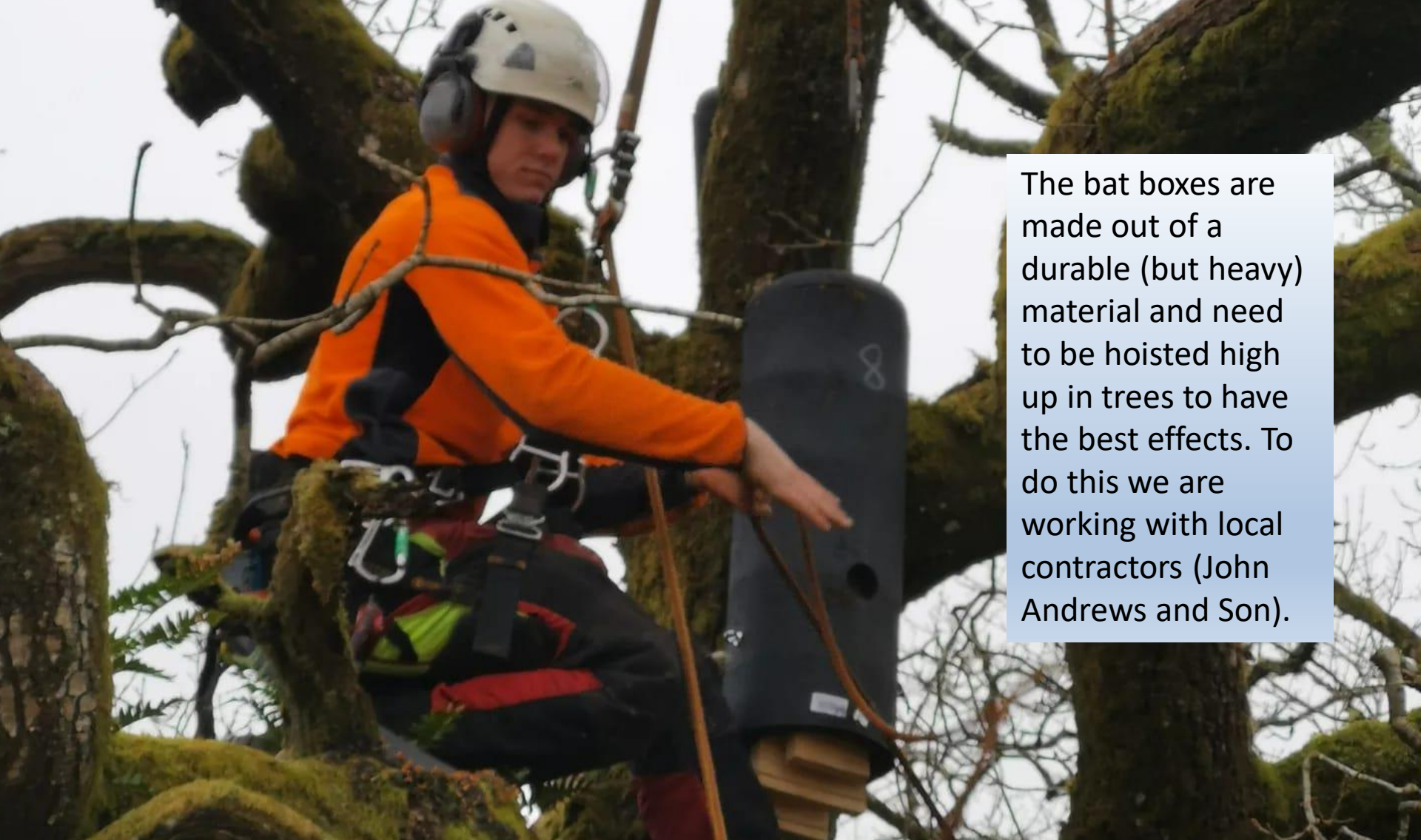


As well as the Bat Houses for Horseshoe bats, we are also installing 100 bat tower boxes in the Amman Valley to provide roosting opportunities for other species of bat. There are 18 species of bat in the UK and many can be found in and around the Amman Valley.

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The bat boxes are made out of a durable (but heavy) material and need to be hoisted high up in trees to have the best effects. To do this we are working with local contractors (John Andrews and Son).

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Another conservation project INCC are undertaking in the Amman Valley is the restoration of marshy grasslands and hedgerows. Work is well underway fencing a marshy grassland habitat in the valley so that cattle grazing can be reintroduced.

It's a big job.....



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Hundreds of meters of new fencing is being installed. This means that sheep can't get into the marsh and the cattle can't get out. Cattle are the best nature conservation grazers.

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As well as fencing the marsh we are also restoring several hundred meters of hedgerow and we have created a small area of orchard with traditional fruit tree varieties.



We are looking for volunteers to help us plant the hedgerow and some wildflower plants.

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Join Us:
Tree and Wildflower Planting Day
Wednesday 16th February 2022



Join us on Wednesday 16th Feb to help plant a new hedgerow in the Amman Valley and to plant wildflowers in and around the orchard.

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Hope you are having a lovely start to the year. Please do keep sending me your wildlife sightings, photos and queries. Thank you.

If you would like to join us on the 16th for the hedgerow and wildflower planting day – please do email me or phone

rob.parry@incc.wales

or

07821 397625



Thank You

Rob

rob.parry@incc.wales

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Cronfa Datblygu
Cynaliadwy

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