

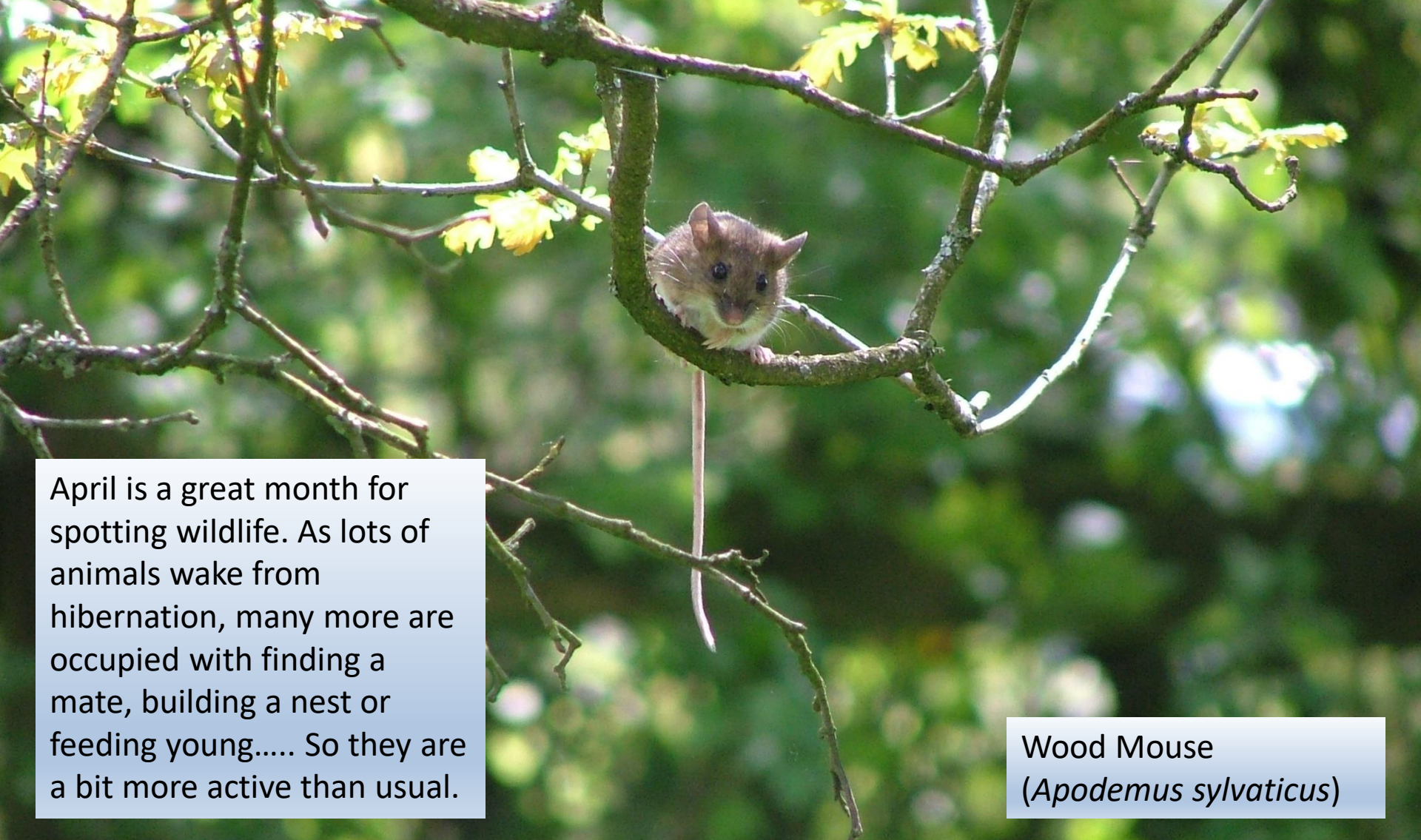
Amman Valley Wildlife Update Number 28 (April 2022)



**MENTER AR GYFER
CADWRAETH NATUR CYMRU**



**INITIATIVE FOR NATURE
CONSERVATION CYMRU**

A photograph of a small wood mouse with brown fur and a long tail, perched on a thin tree branch. The background is a blurred green forest. The mouse is facing forward, looking directly at the camera.

April is a great month for spotting wildlife. As lots of animals wake from hibernation, many more are occupied with finding a mate, building a nest or feeding young..... So they are a bit more active than usual.

Wood Mouse
(*Apodemus sylvaticus*)

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Early morning sun is a welcome boost for our common Lizards. Carrie-ann Driver spotted this beautiful Common Lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) whilst out on a walk. Common Lizards are one of the most widely distributed lizards in the world and they can even be found within the arctic circle. The colours and patterns vary on Common Lizards, on both the upper and under side of the animal.




The patterning of black dots on the belly of a lizard is unique to that individual – its equivalent to our fingerprint.

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Lately, you may have noticed bundles of tiny yellow spiders on walls and surfaces. They are the young of the Garden Spider (*Araneus diadematus*).

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When disturbed, the bundle
'explodes' into hundreds of
little spiderlings.

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The adult female Garden Spider can lay between 300 and 800 eggs.



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Female Emperor Moth (*Saturnia pavonia*). An unusual visitor to the garden, let alone a patio window. Thanks to Rhian Thomas for the photo.



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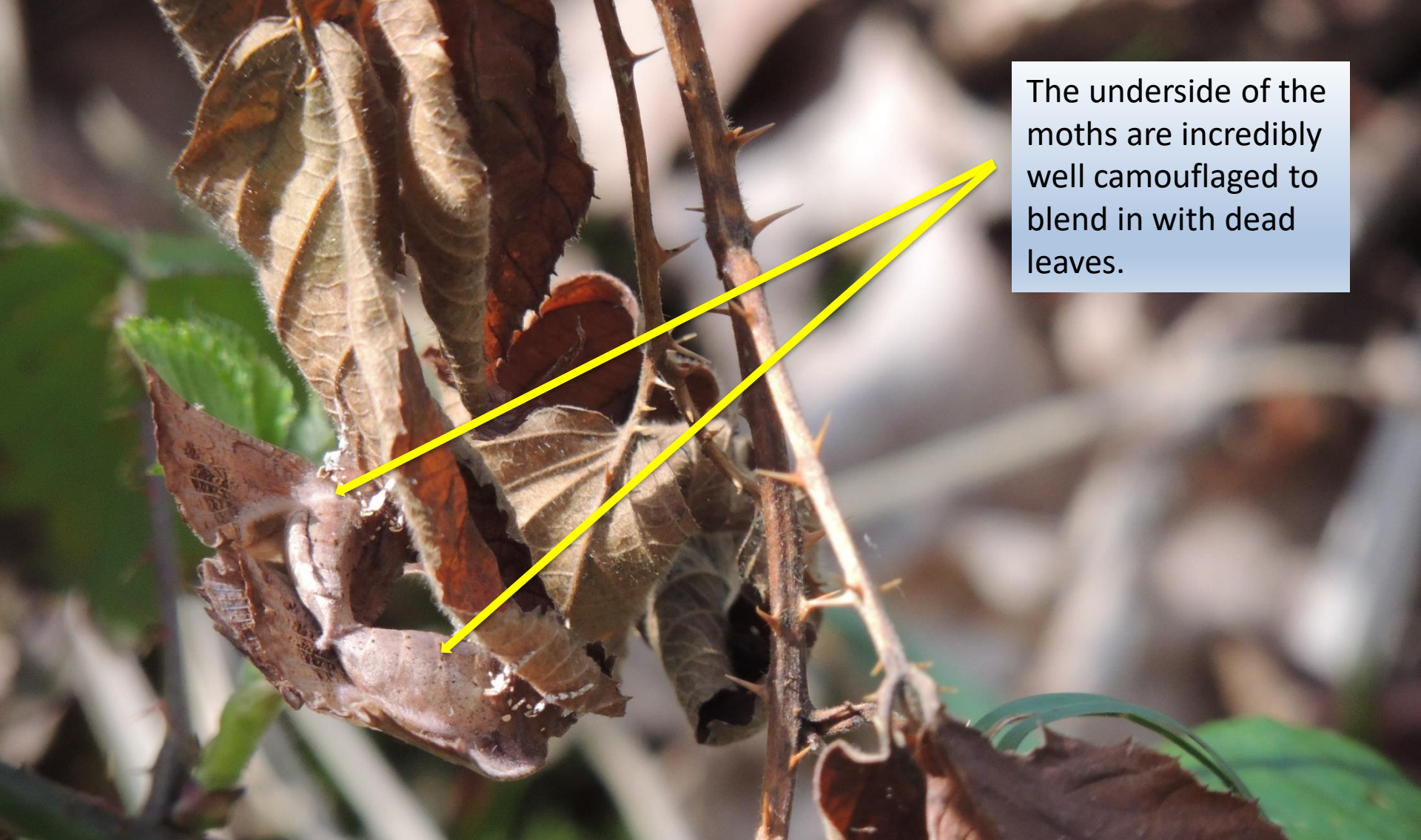
Can you spot the
two mating Herald
(*Scoliopteryx*
libatrix) Moths?



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The underside of the moths are incredibly well camouflaged to blend in with dead leaves.

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The upper side is also well camouflaged but more colourful. The jagged edge of the wing also helps to break up the moth's shape which gives them even protection from being seen by predators.



Pebble Hook-tip



Pale Tussock



Brimstone



Pale Prominent

Lots of other
moths in the
garden too
this month.
Including....



Pale Pinion



Least Black
Arches



Lesser Swallow
Prominent



Flame Shoulder



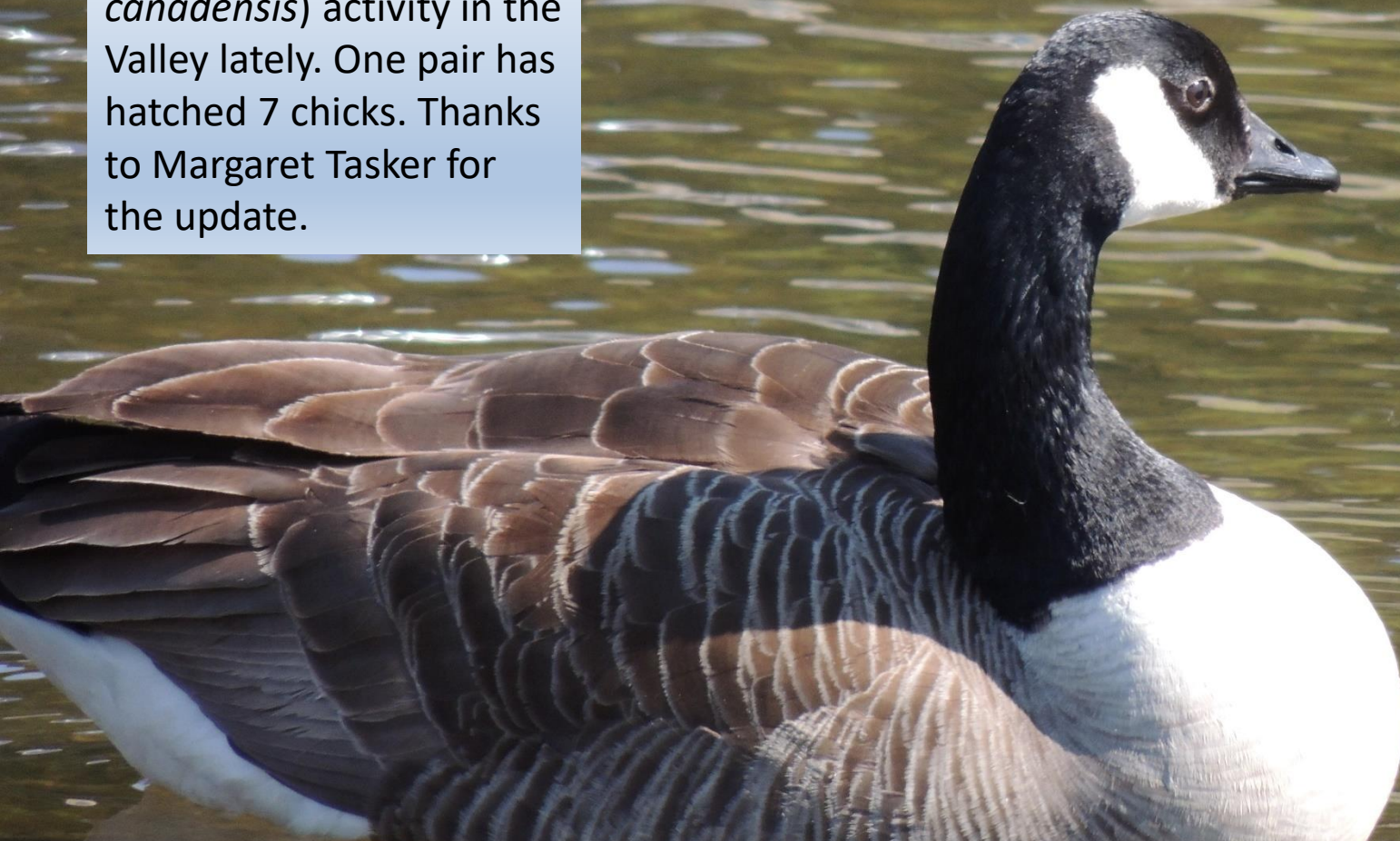
Scalloped Oak



Knot Grass



There has been lots of Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*) activity in the Valley lately. One pair has hatched 7 chicks. Thanks to Margaret Tasker for the update.



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April is also a good month for seeing wildflowers, especially woodland flowers.

Lizzie Wilberforce identifying mosses in a pasture high up in the Amman Valley.

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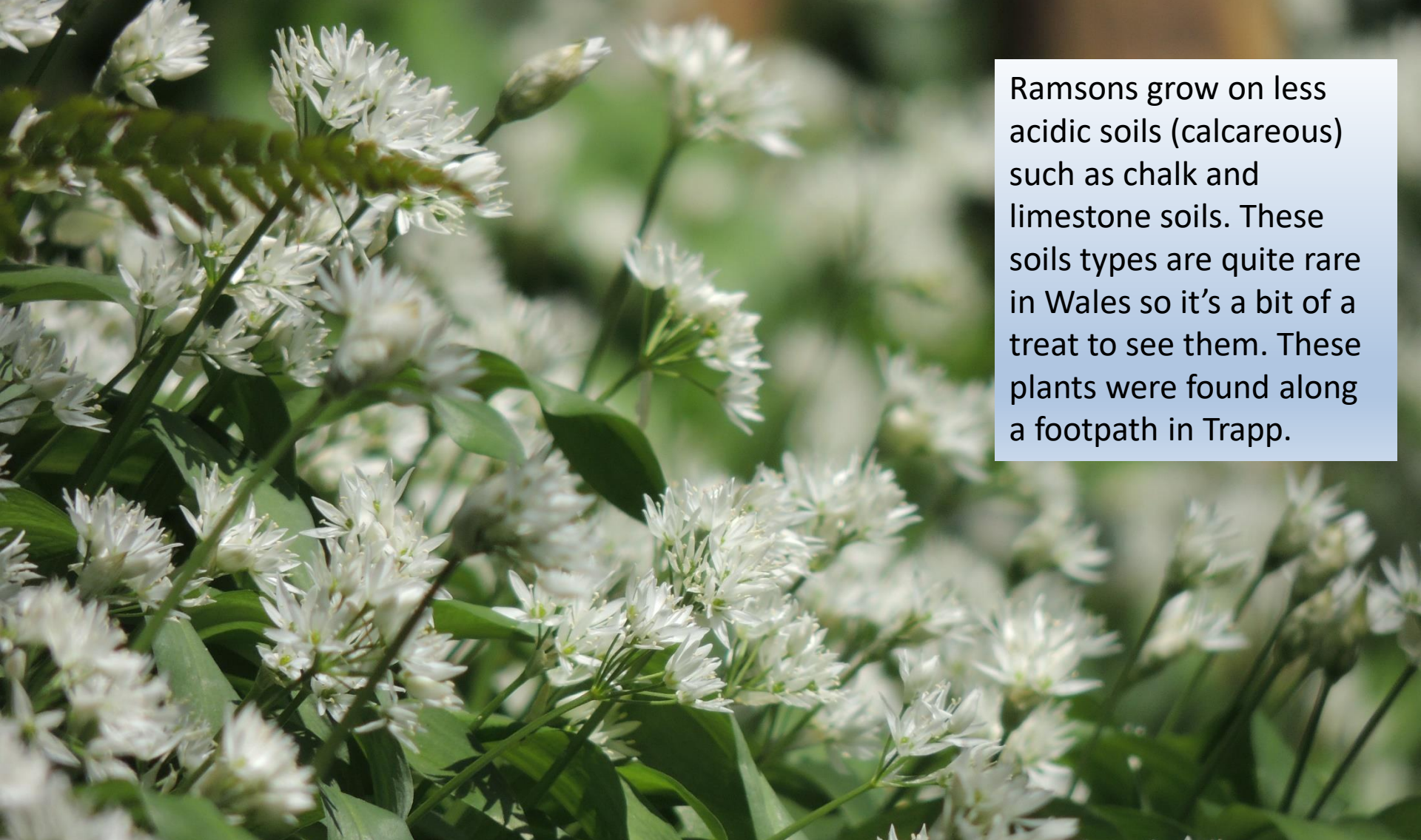
Spring is a great time of year for woodland flora including Wild Garlic, also known as Ramsons (*Allium ursinum*). They are an indicator that the woodland is an ancient woodland habitat.



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Ramsons grow on less acidic soils (calcareous) such as chalk and limestone soils. These soils types are quite rare in Wales so it's a bit of a treat to see them. These plants were found along a footpath in Trapp.

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Bluebells
(*Hyacinthoides
non-scripta*) can
be found
throughout many
of the woodlands
in the Amman
Valley and they
are at their best in
April and May.

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They can often be found growing amongst the delicate white flowers of the Greater Stitchwort (*Stellaria holostea*).

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The humble Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) is an excellent plant for wildlife. Not only are Dandelions beautiful to look at, they also provide lots of nectar for many different species of insect. The seeds are eaten by birds, including Linnet (*Linaria cannabina*) and Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*).

The roots of the Dandelion were used as a coffee substitute during the second World War when coffee was unavailable.

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A wildlife haven.....
and not a weed in site.

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Skunk Cabbage
(*Lysichiton americanus*)
on the other hand..... is
also flowering in spring.
It is a non-native species
that is also invasive, so
is detrimental to
wildlife.

It also (as its name
suggests) stinks.

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The last of our Bat Houses have now been installed in the Amman Valley. Monitoring will take place in the next few weeks to see how successful they are.



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To make our wildlife garden polytunnel more user-friendly for everyone, we are in the process of installing a new floor. When complete the polytunnel will be used to grow wildflowers as well as act as a community space to make garden wildlife habitats.

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As well as the polytunnel, the surrounding area will be wildflower meadow, a pond and lots of other wildlife habitats. We have already found Palmate Newts (*Lissotriton helveticus*) and Slow Worm (*Anguis fragilis*).

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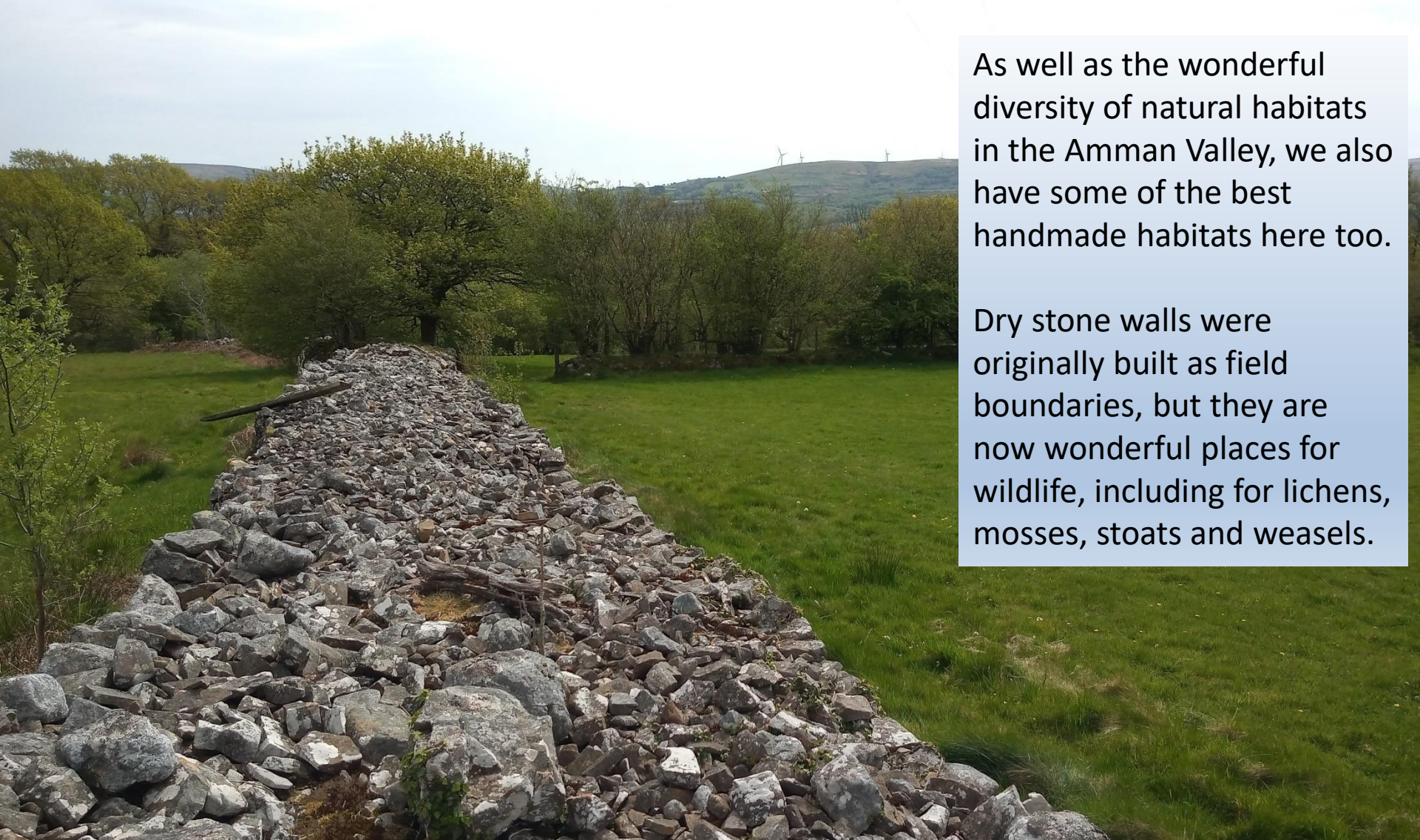


Palmate newts need ponds for breeding, but also grassland, scrub and woodland for foraging and sheltering whilst away from the water.

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As well as the wonderful diversity of natural habitats in the Amman Valley, we also have some of the best handmade habitats here too.

Dry stone walls were originally built as field boundaries, but they are now wonderful places for wildlife, including for lichens, mosses, stoats and weasels.

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Thank you for all the positive feedback and for sending through all your photos and wildlife accounts. Please do keep sending them through.

Thank You
Rob
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