

# Amman Valley

## Wildlife Update: May 2023




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CADWRAETH NATUR CYMRU



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They're back. Our beautiful Marsh Fritillary butterflies are on the wing again and are flying around a marshy grassland near you. The Amman Valley, really is such an important landscape for this rare and wonderful butterfly.







Our Marsh Fritillary walk certainly didn't disappoint as lots of Marsh Fritillary were seen flying.





Other butterflies spotted on the walk were Dingy Skippers.






And Small Coppers.

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The walk was also good for seeing  
wildflowers like these Meadow Thistles.





Several patches of Meadow Thistle were seen in damp patches within the old coal spoil next to the Trotting Ground. Its an excellent place for wildlife.





Pied Flycatchers are also at a crucial time, with many of the boxes now having nests and eggs.





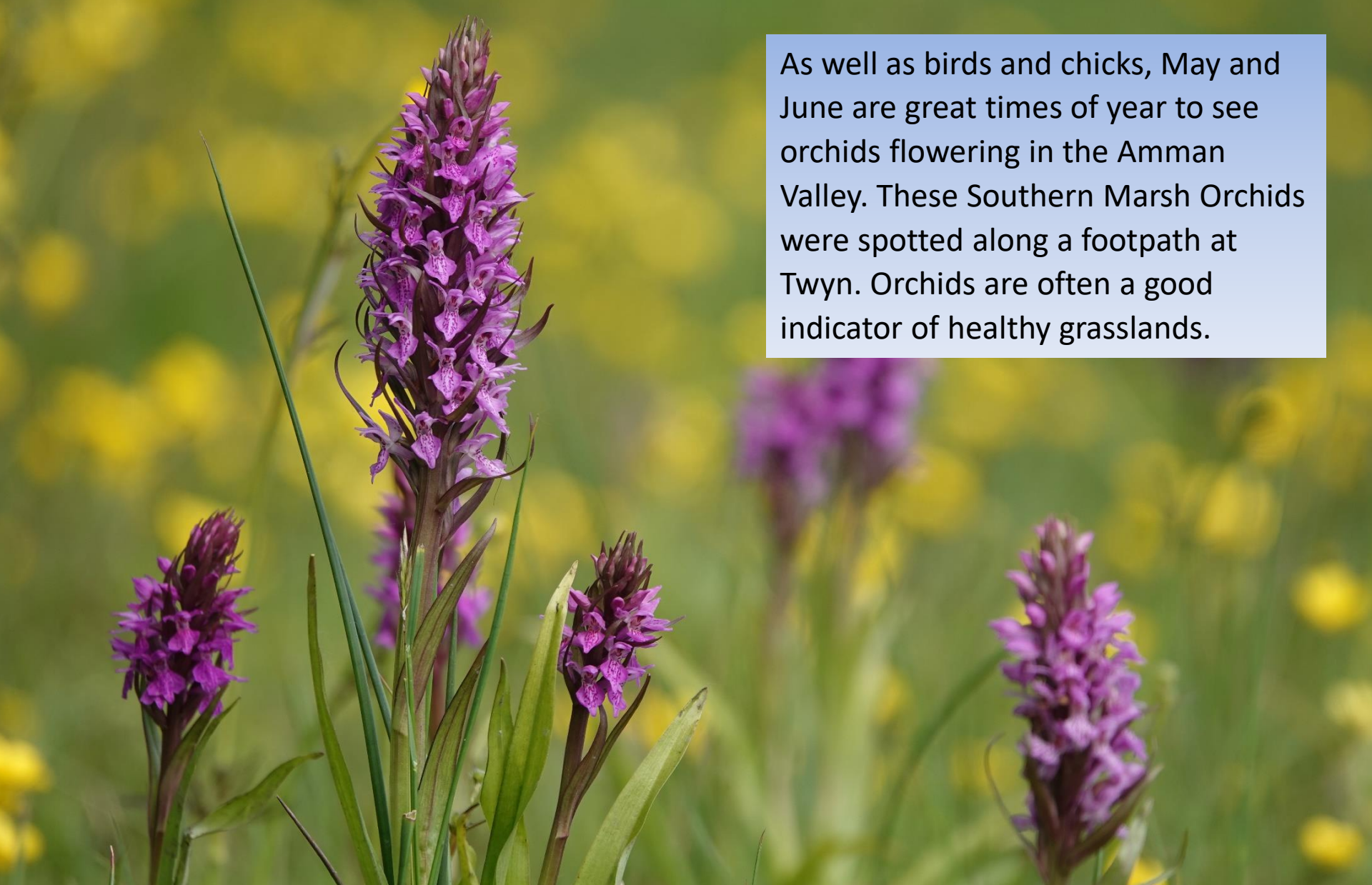
It has also been an exciting time in many of our Barn Owl Boxes. Three of the boxes installed in the valley now have Barn Owl chicks, including these quite mature chicks.



Other boxes had very young chicks just a few days old and even some that hadn't hatched yet. The cracks on this egg suggest that an owl chick is just about to hatch.







As well as birds and chicks, May and June are great times of year to see orchids flowering in the Amman Valley. These Southern Marsh Orchids were spotted along a footpath at Twyn. Orchids are often a good indicator of healthy grasslands.





We had a lovely bat and moth night up at Hen Bethel earlier in the month, and thanks to all for coming along. Not that many bats, though we did see and feel lots of midges.



We were treated with a few moths landing in the moth trap, including some Flame Shoulders and Green Carpets.




Flame Shoulder



Green Carpet

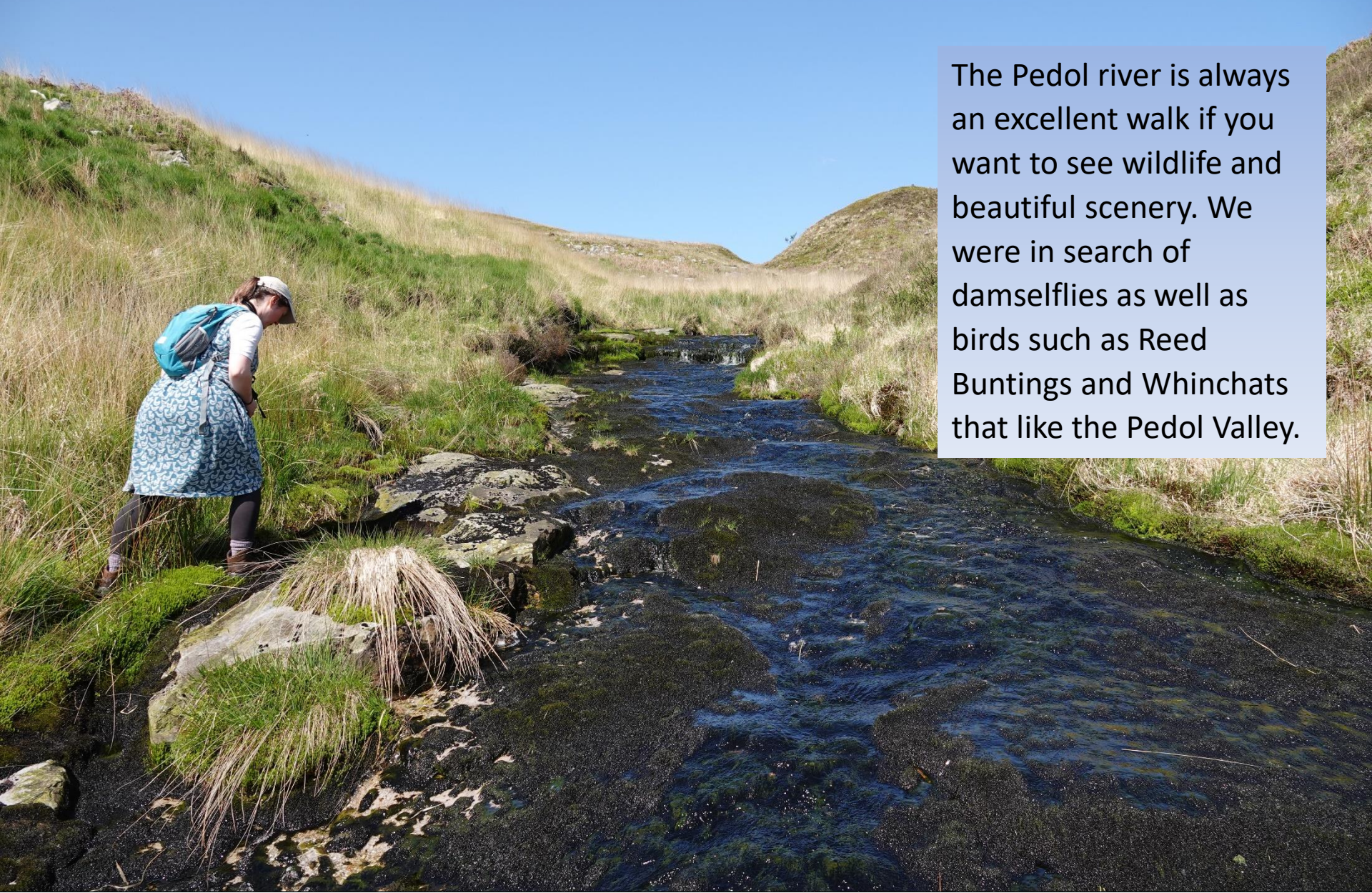




A photograph of a dead bird, possibly a sparrow, lying on its back on a dark asphalt road. The bird's body is mangled, with visible red blood and feathers. The road has white dashed lines and a white arrow pointing forward. In the background, there are stone walls and green trees under a cloudy sky.

Not the nicest photo to look at, but it's a reminder that at this time of year, when birds are trying to defend territories and raise their family, they might not be a road-wise as they normally are. They don't always get out of the way in time of faster cars. Go slow is a good policy.



A woman wearing a blue patterned dress, a white cap, and a blue backpack is standing on a mossy rock in a grassy valley. She is looking down at the stream. The stream flows over dark, mossy rocks. The valley is covered in tall grass and has rolling hills in the background under a clear blue sky.

The Pedol river is always an excellent walk if you want to see wildlife and beautiful scenery. We were in search of damselflies as well as birds such as Reed Buntings and Whinchats that like the Pedol Valley.



As well as seeing birds and insects, the walk also revealed carpets of mountain flowers including these Milkwort.





If you take a closer look at many of our birds at this time of year, you can often see a beak full of insects. It means that there are chicks in the nest waiting to be fed.





There has been lots of volunteering and events going on in May and thank you to everyone for helping and coming along – much appreciated.

Thanks to help from volunteers like Jan, we were able to install another 50 Dormouse boxes in the local area.





The boxes are attached to trees with the entrance hole facing into the tree for easy access for the Dormouse. Carla, is now an expert in installing Dormouse boxes, so hopefully more boxes installed soon.







Helped by Jess, our new  
Student Placement from the  
University of South Wales.

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Other volunteering events were held at the wildlife garden as we were able to plant out lots of wildflowers in the meadow.





As well as planting in the meadow, there were lots of plants planted around the pond to help create a bog garden.



Thanks to Laura for sending in this photo (right) of an Orange Tip butterfly. Both males and female Orange Tips have this mottled green underwing, but only the males have the bright orange tips to the wings. If you look closely, you can just about see faint orange showing through the wing, so I think this one is a male. The females lay a single egg on crucifer plants such as Cuckoo Flower.

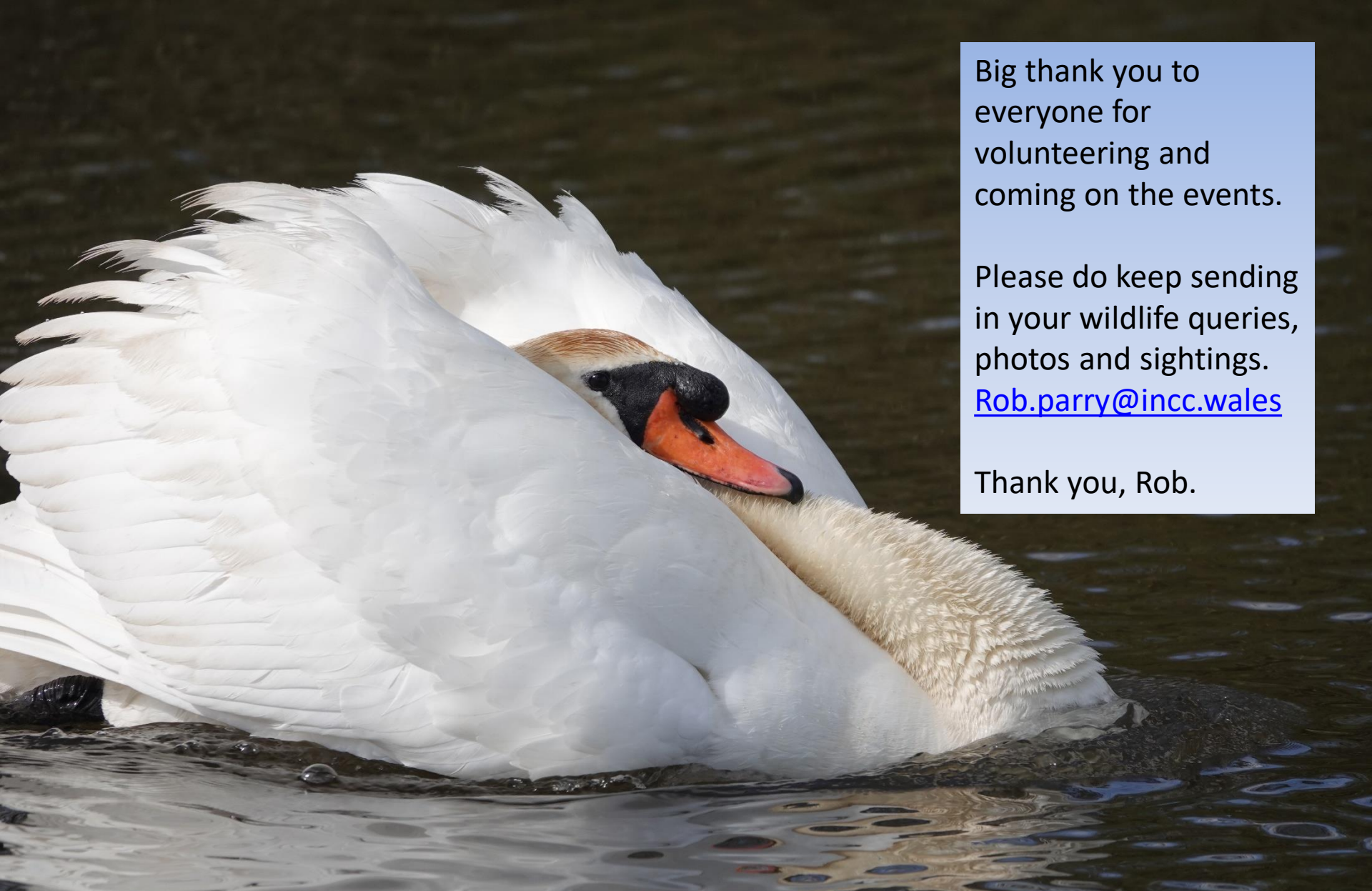






A new event this year was the dawn chorus walk. An early start to hear some of our singing birds. Here, we are cupping our ears to listen to a distant Cuckoo.





Big thank you to everyone for volunteering and coming on the events.

Please do keep sending in your wildlife queries, photos and sightings.

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Thank you, Rob.

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