

Amman Valley

Wildlife Update: July 2023



MENTER AR GYFER
CADWRAETH NATUR CYMRU



INITIATIVE FOR NATURE
CONSERVATION CYMRU

Garden Bat Survey

Garden Bat Survey

Huge thank you to Steve Lucas who has been undertaking bat surveys in gardens around the Amman Valley.

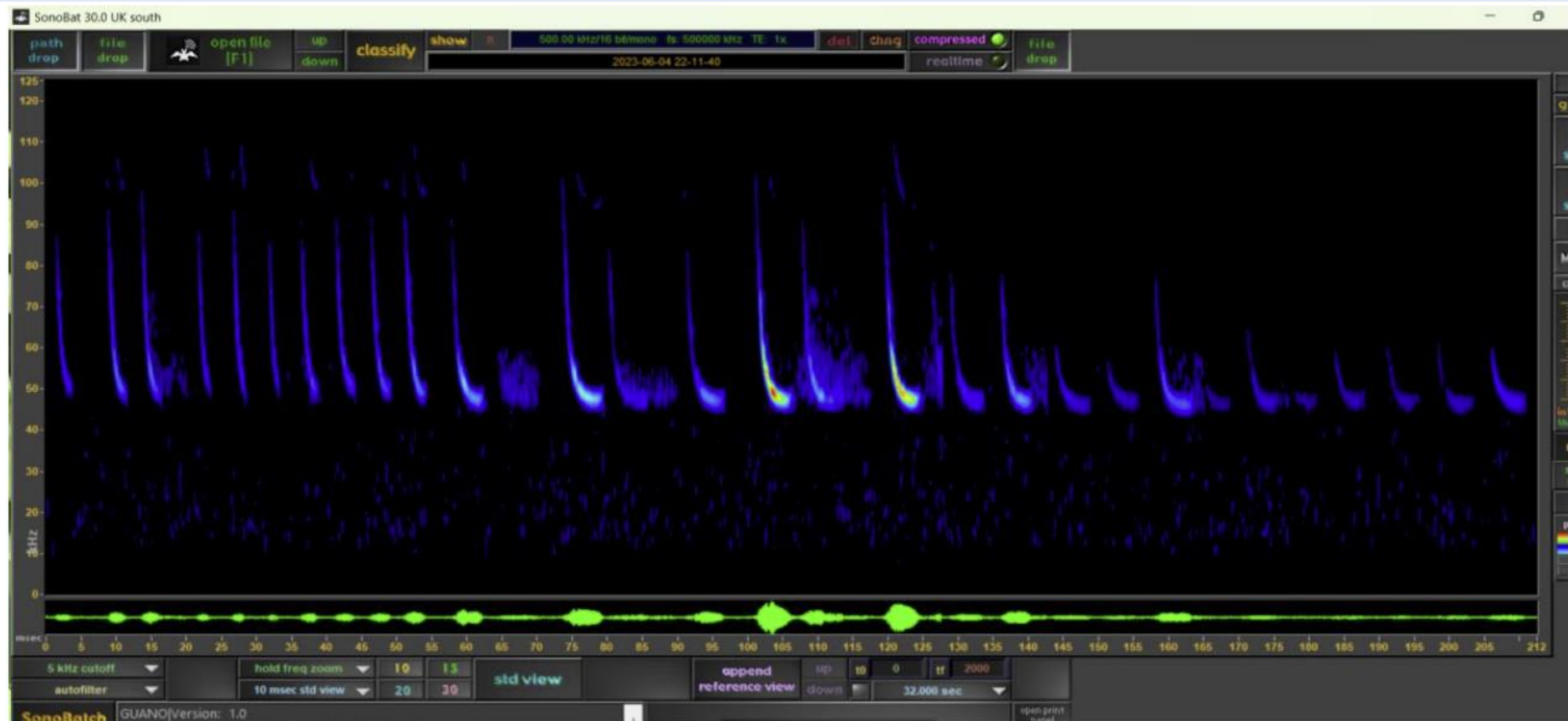
If you are interested in having a bat survey done in your garden to see what bats you have, please do get in touch, or email Steve Directly on.

s.lucas543@btinternet.com



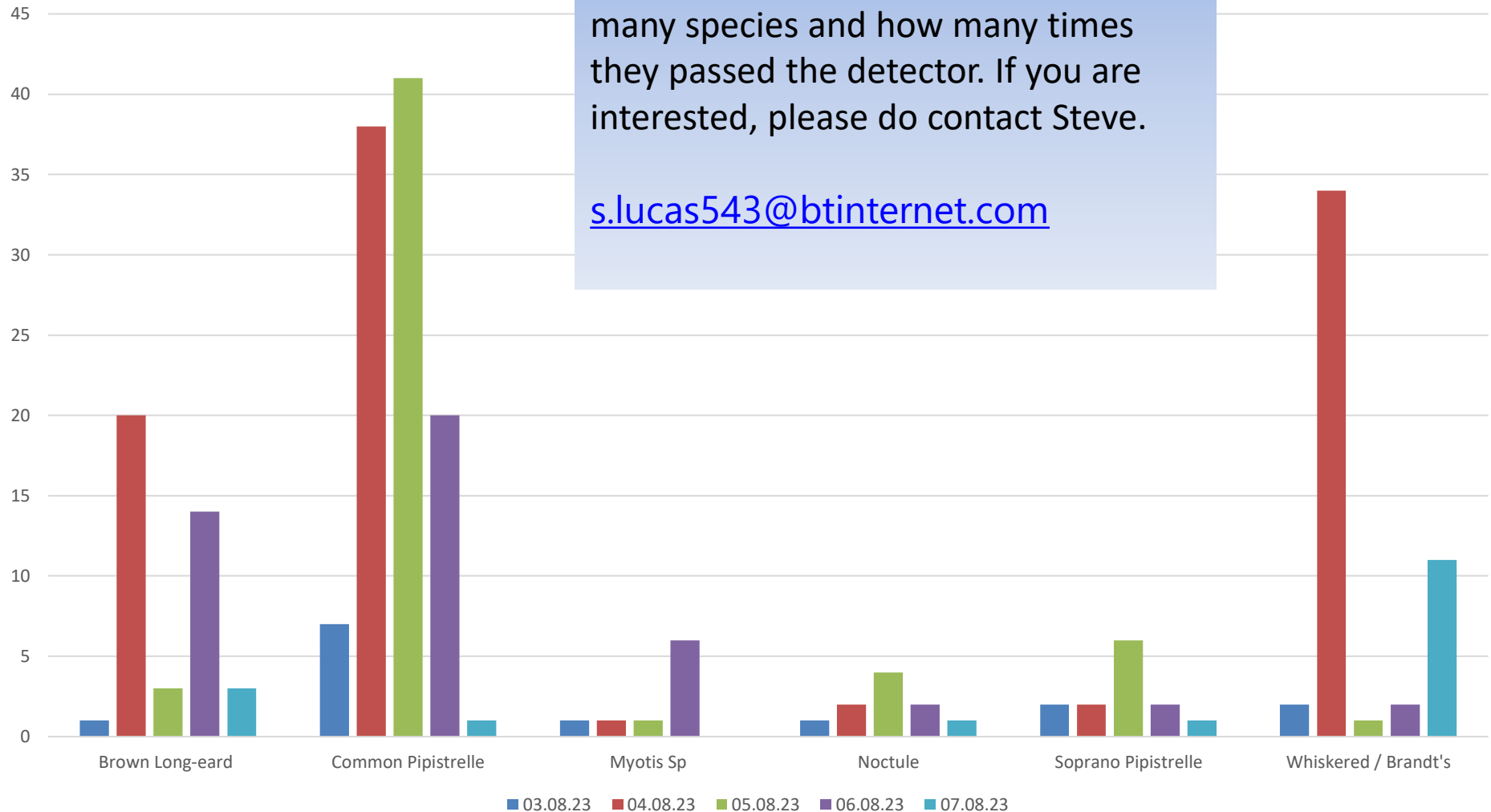
Garden Bat Survey

The surveys work by placing a bat detector in the garden for a few days. The detector records bat calls throughout the night so that the calls can be analysed to see what species of bat are in the garden. Below is a sonogram of echolocation from a Common Pipistrelle. The sonograms are used by Steve to help with bat identification.



The survey doesn't tell you how many bats you have, but it can tell you how many species and how many times they passed the detector. If you are interested, please do contact Steve.

s.lucas543@btinternet.com





Join us on a Bat Walk – Saturday evening, August 26th. Meeting down at the Wildlife Garden in Garnant. Time to be confirmed closer to the time, but likely to be around 8:30pm.

MENTER AR GYFER
CADWRAETH NATUR CYMRU



INITIATIVE FOR NATURE
CONSERVATION CYMRU



It's been a great few weeks down at the Wildlife Garden. New volunteers, who normally help the community by litter picking on a Friday, popped in to help sow some wildflower seeds.

The wildflower seeds came from various sources in the valley. More seeds were collected for sowing whilst out on our wildflower walk. It was a bit damp, but lots of flowers still flowering and setting seed.





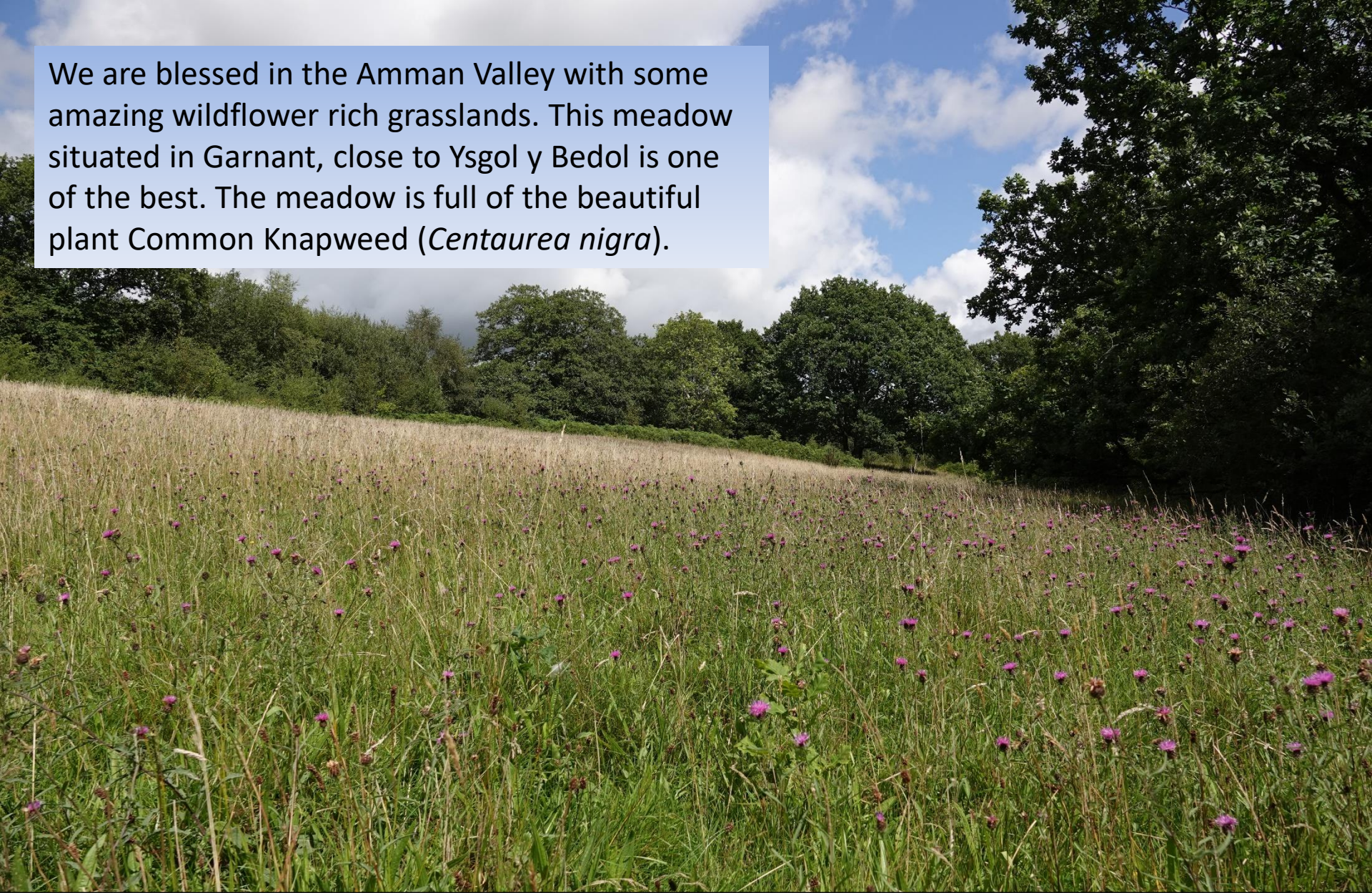
One of the stars of the wildflower walk was the Broad-leaved Helleborine (*Epipactis helleborine*). These woodland orchids are quite rare, but we counted around 10 in total.





Another rare woodland plant flowering at this time of year is Common Cow-wheat (*Melampyrum pratense*). The plant is an indicator of ancient woodland as it is slow to spread. Seeds of Cow-wheat have a tasty (protein rich) substance attached to them, known as an elaiosome. Ants are attracted to the elaiosome and drag the seeds off where some eventually germinate.

We are blessed in the Amman Valley with some amazing wildflower rich grasslands. This meadow situated in Garnant, close to Ysgol y Bedol is one of the best. The meadow is full of the beautiful plant Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*).



The knapweed is a great nectar source for our insects. During a walk through the meadow several species of butterfly were recorded, including.....





Dark Green Fritillary (*Speyeria aglaja*).
The caterpillars of the Dark Green
Fritillary feed mainly on Common Dog-
violet (*Viola riviniana*).



This Peacock (*Aglais io*) butterfly was also spotted.

In the damper areas of the meadow, Small Copper (*Lycaena phlaeas*) butterflies feed on the nectar of Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*), which is just coming into flower.



The bramble scrub margins of many of our meadows and wildflower rich areas are also very important for butterflies. This Gatekeeper (*Pyronia tithonus*) butterfly can be seen feeding on the nectar from Ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*).





Because Ragwort is poisonous to livestock and horses, it is often removed from fields and nearby verges. This has led to the loss of many insect species that rely on Ragwort for feeding, including the caterpillar of the Cinnabar Moth (*Tyria jacobaeae*).

This Cinnabar moth caterpillar was seen down at our Wildlife Garden.



We had a great Moth Morning down at the Wildlife Garden in July. Lots of different species recorded including.....

MENTER AR GYFER
CADWRAETH NATUR CYMRU



INITIATIVE FOR NATURE
CONSERVATION CYMRU



Elephant Hawkmoth
(*Deilephila elpenor*).

Always nice to see moths
whilst having a cup of tea.





Most of the plants down at the wildlife garden are now in flower or seed. Our Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) has had another good year. It is an excellent food plant for insects.



This Small White butterfly (*Pieris rapae*) was seen down at the Wildlife Garden feeding on the nectar of the Purple Loosestrife.

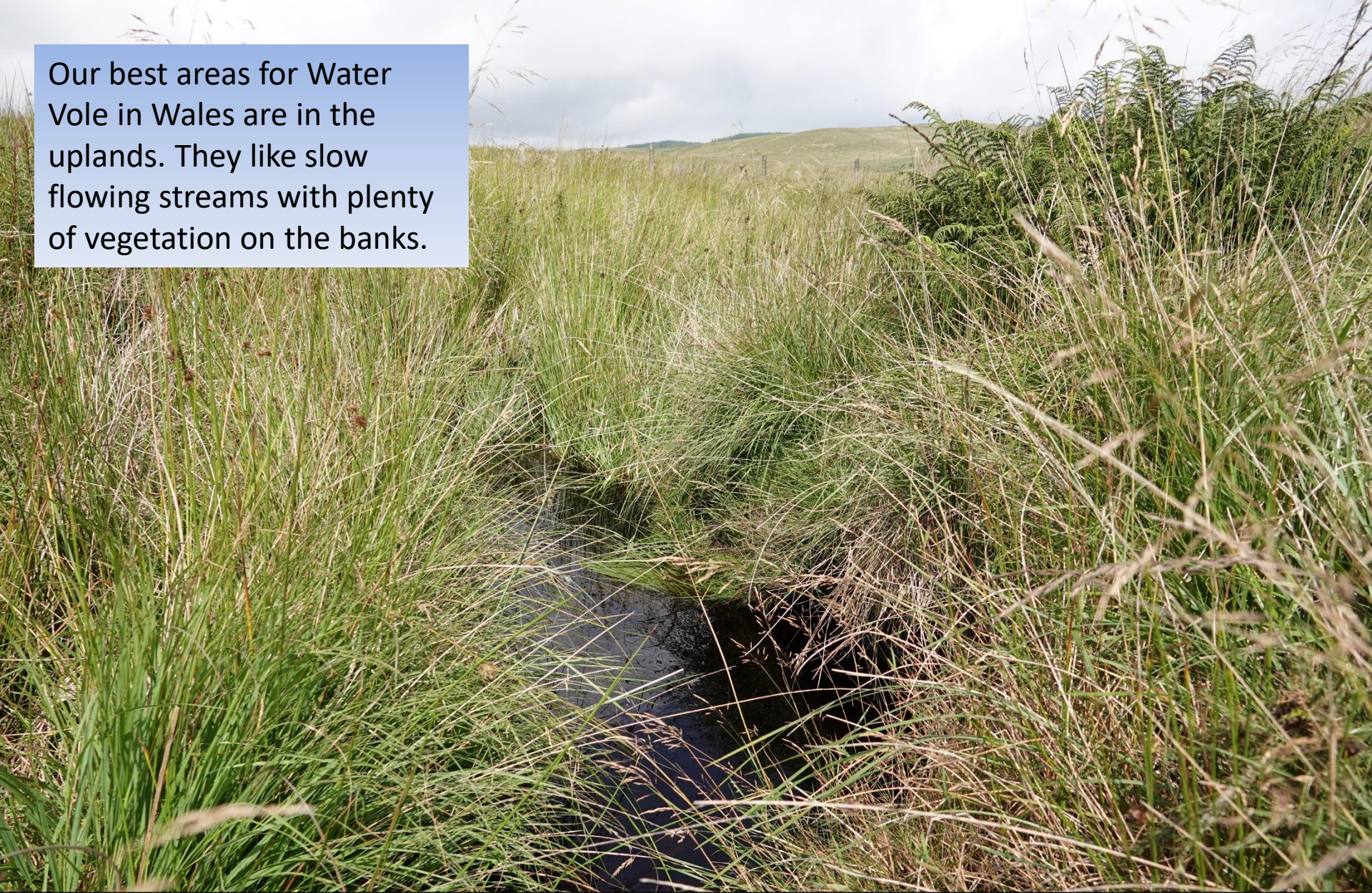




Thanks to John Driver for sending in this photo of a False Widow spider, seen, in the Amman Valley. There are six species of False Widow Spider in the UK. They don't like the cold so can move to homes during colder spells. They very rarely bite, especially if not provoked.

One species we have been looking out for, and we still need to do more looking is the Water Vole (*Arvicola amphibius*). They are our fastest declining mammal ever.

Our best areas for Water Vole in Wales are in the uplands. They like slow flowing streams with plenty of vegetation on the banks.

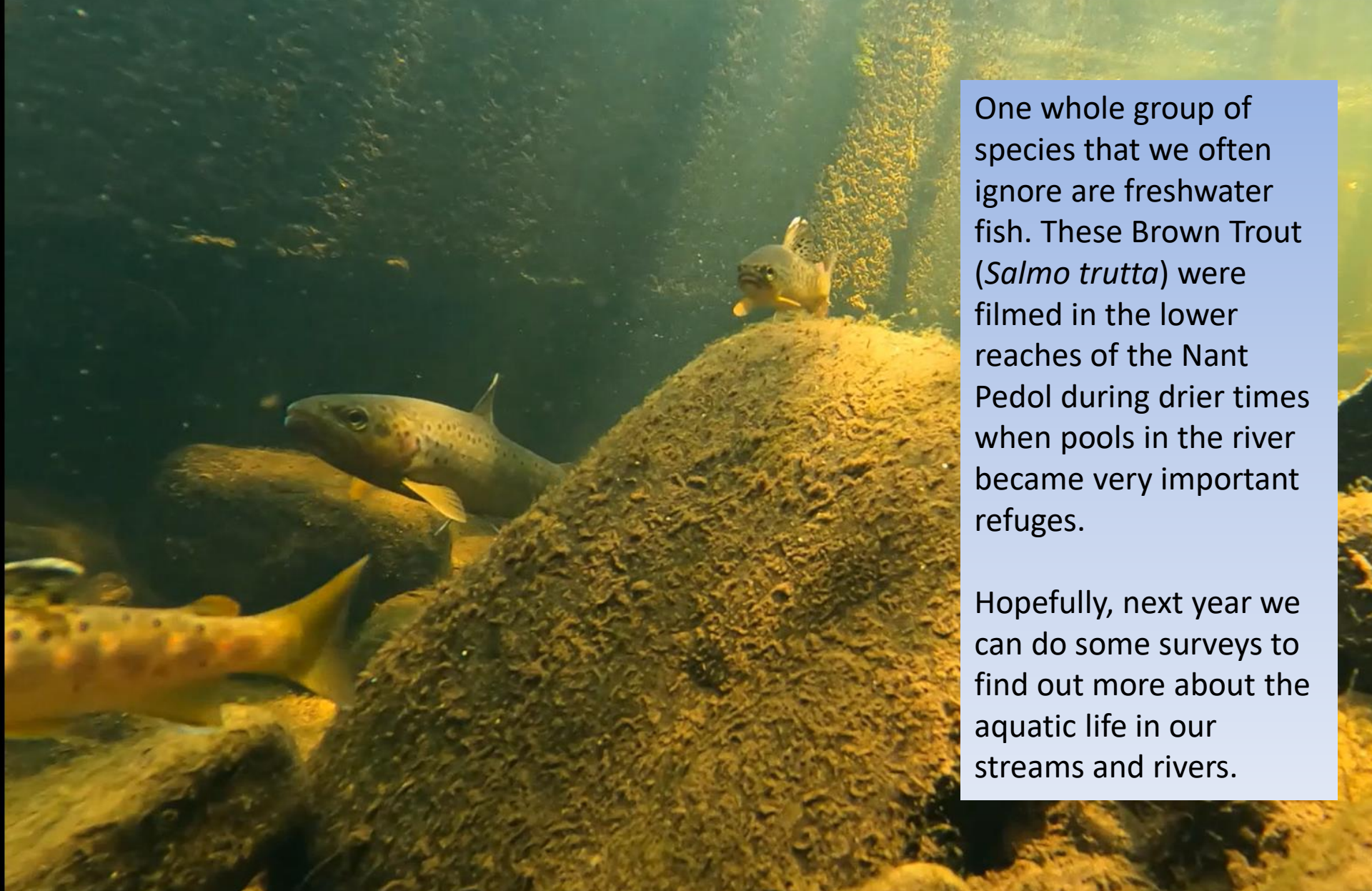


The best way of telling if Water Voles are there is by their droppings. They leave droppings in neat latrines. Each dropping is around 1cm in length and 5mm in width.





Other signs to look out for are burrows in the vegetation.



One whole group of species that we often ignore are freshwater fish. These Brown Trout (*Salmo trutta*) were filmed in the lower reaches of the Nant Pedol during drier times when pools in the river became very important refuges.

Hopefully, next year we can do some surveys to find out more about the aquatic life in our streams and rivers.

Big thank you to everyone for volunteering and supporting INCC.

If you want to book on to the bat walk on the 26th August, please do let me know by phone (07821397625) or email rob.parry@incc.wales

Thank you, Rob.

Also – if you would like a bat survey done on your garden, please do let me know or email Steve direct at - s.lucas543@btinternet.com