

Summer wildlife walks in Gedling Country Park

The first two of these wildlife walks led by Brian Cluff and Mark Tyler have proved highly successful. Together with Rod and Jenny Fillingham, the Park's dawn chorus on April 6th drew 19 local enthusiasts out at 6.00 am to hear robins, chiff-chaffs, blackbirds, thrushes and greenfinches and others.

For the second walk on May 22nd we set out to find mainly butterflies, especially the green hairstreak and dingy skipper, both uncommon, small and difficult to see. But within minutes, there's a tiny but beautiful green hairstreak warming itself into activity.



Green Hairstreak

Everyone had a view whilst it gently turned. Along the wild-flower area by Spring Lane, hoverflies were the main sightings then. The day before, this area had



Downlooker
Snipe Fly

surprised us with a new species for the Park—a downlooker snipe fly, then a bright wasp beetle and several dingy skippers, small heath and speckled wood butterflies. Here we had to be content with a pair of kestrels circling closely.



Jenny points out a hoverfly



Wasp beetle



Speckled Wood



Kestrel hovers



Dingy Skipper

A narrow path in the trees made by the Friends Group led to a patch of bright buttercups, but the singing garden warblers of the day before were silent.

On the path down through the silver birch copse we could just hear the great tits' chicks faintly chirping in their nest, not far from this bright yellow-marked hoverfly that we'd



Iris Flags

seen the day before. Down at the reed pond a coot family called from the rushes. Part-clearing these reeds has already attracted more bird-life. Yellow iris flags stand proudly on the bank. Down past the pit memorial, by the path, abundant ox-eye daisies, red campion, bird's-foot trefoil, buttercups, forget-me-nots, and cow-parsley hid bees, hoverflies and the occasional dingy skipper. Beside the path, dried mud revealed roe deer foot-



Helophilus Trivittatus



Broad-bodied chaser

prints. The shallow pond on the corner boasted a huge broad-bodied chaser dragonfly powering up and down, whilst a male common blue fluttered low over the ground. Past the pond, the wide area with new soil had sported skippers and hair-streaks before, but not now. So the day's most exciting new find was two hairy dragonflies, *new to the Park*, cruising majestically over clear water in the reed pond. A secret hope for Mark that day—and it happened. We made our devious ways back to the Visitor Centre, very satisfied with what we had seen. The next walk is June 4th at 10.00 am, hoping to see orchids and butterflies. Visit gedlingcounrypark.org.uk for details.



Male Common Blue



Hairy dragonfly



Dawn Chorus Group



A close view