

Camlad Valley Community Wildlife Group

Annual Report 2024

Introduction

This is a short report on what has been a largely quiet and uneventful year; however, the group does still exist and further activity will be planned for the next 12 months. We welcome suggestions from members.

The survey of curlew and other bird species at risk was carried out in 2024. A summary of the report is included here and Leo's full report will be uploaded to the website later. More surveyors are needed and details of the meeting about this year's survey are included in the summary.

Members of the group are also involved in the annual butterfly survey conducted by Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust at Roundton Hill and again, more volunteers would be welcome. Please contact Tammy Stretton at MWT if you are interested.

A small number of members enjoyed 'bird walks' with Leo Smith and Dave Pierce. Others attended Plant Group events in other Community Wildlife Group areas.

Thanks are due to all the committee members and in particular to Steve Wright who in his role as Treasurer has shown the patience of a saint in his dealings with HSBC!

We look forward to the coming year and hope for rather kinder weather conditions than 2024, to the benefit of all wildlife and our own efforts at helping conserve and enhance the biodiversity of the Camlad Valley area.

Mary Napper-White, Chair, CVCWG

Treasurer's Report from Steve Wright 2024-2025

Camlad Valley Community Wildlife Group 2024/25

Monies Carried forward from previous year as at 30/3/24 £768.60

Payments In

There were no payments in during the last financial year

Payments Out

Date	Cheque No	Payee	Amount
3/4/24	100046	CSCRA (Hall Hire)	£45
14/4/24	100045	Dave Pearce (Late Spring Walk)	£80
Bank Charges			£51.6

Total Payments In £0

Total Payments Out £176.6

Monies in bank as of 24/1/25 £592.00



Bird Survey 2024

Summary Report

The Camlad CWG Bird Survey was carried out again in 2024, mapping the distribution of Curlew, Lapwing, Kestrel, Cuckoo and Red Kite. The area covered is shown on the attached map (with full report.)

4-6 pairs of Curlew, 0 pairs of Lapwing, 2 Kestrel territories, 2 male Cuckoo territories and at least 22 individual Red Kites in 9 of the 20 tetrads covered by the survey were found. No Kite nests were found in 2024, but a few have been found in previous years, and there must be several now.

Eleven members contributed to the survey: Simon Boyes, Tony Coatsworth, Jude Duffy, Martin Fenn, Peter Fenner, Simon Grantham, Ian Kidd, Andy Knight, Huw Prole, Chris Radford and Neil Willcox. Their help is gratefully acknowledged.

The survey has been carried out annually since 2014, when the Curlew population was estimated at 11 pairs, and 8 pairs were found in 2020, so the population has declined substantially in the 10 years since monitoring started.

A draft of the full report of the survey, including distribution maps for the target species, will be sent out to members shortly, seeking additional records of the target species. An updated version will be discussed in detail at the Bird Group meeting at the Horse and Jockey, Churchstoke, at 7.30pm on Tuesday, 11th March. All welcome.

The final report will be distributed to members, and posted on the website www.ShropsCWGs.org.uk

The Bird Survey will be repeated in 2025, and more helpers are needed, please. It only involves three half days, around 1 April, 1 May and mid-June. please. If you can help, come to the Bird Group meeting, or email Leo Smith (leo@leosmith.org.uk)

COMMUNITY WILDLIFE PLANT GROUP REPORT 2024

These events took place within the areas of the Camlad, Rea Valley and Upper Onny Wildlife Groups and were open to anyone interested in plants, whether a complete beginner, an experienced botanist or somewhere in between.

A leaflet was produced with the help of Cassy Clayton from Natural England. These were distributed as hard copies and electronically and the events were advertised through the various Community Wildlife Groups and the Shropshire Hills National Landscapes.

Species Action Plans (SAPs) have been **produced by Natural England and the Stepping Stones Project for 12 species that rely on particular habitat types that we are trying to connect across the landscape.** Following on from that we concentrated on the three plant species in that plan: cowberry, devils bit scabious, mountain pansy – and also marsh violet as the food plant of small pearl bordered fritillary butterfly.



Our first walk of the year in April was to visit the wood pasture called **Old Moores Wood** near Linley. This is a hillside area of ancient oaks which were revealed some 10 years ago upon felling after having been hidden in a spruce plantation for 50 years. Some had died due to being shaded out but many survived and form a remarkable and unusual habitat.

In the middle of May the group spent the day mapping cowberry on Nipstone and The Rock.

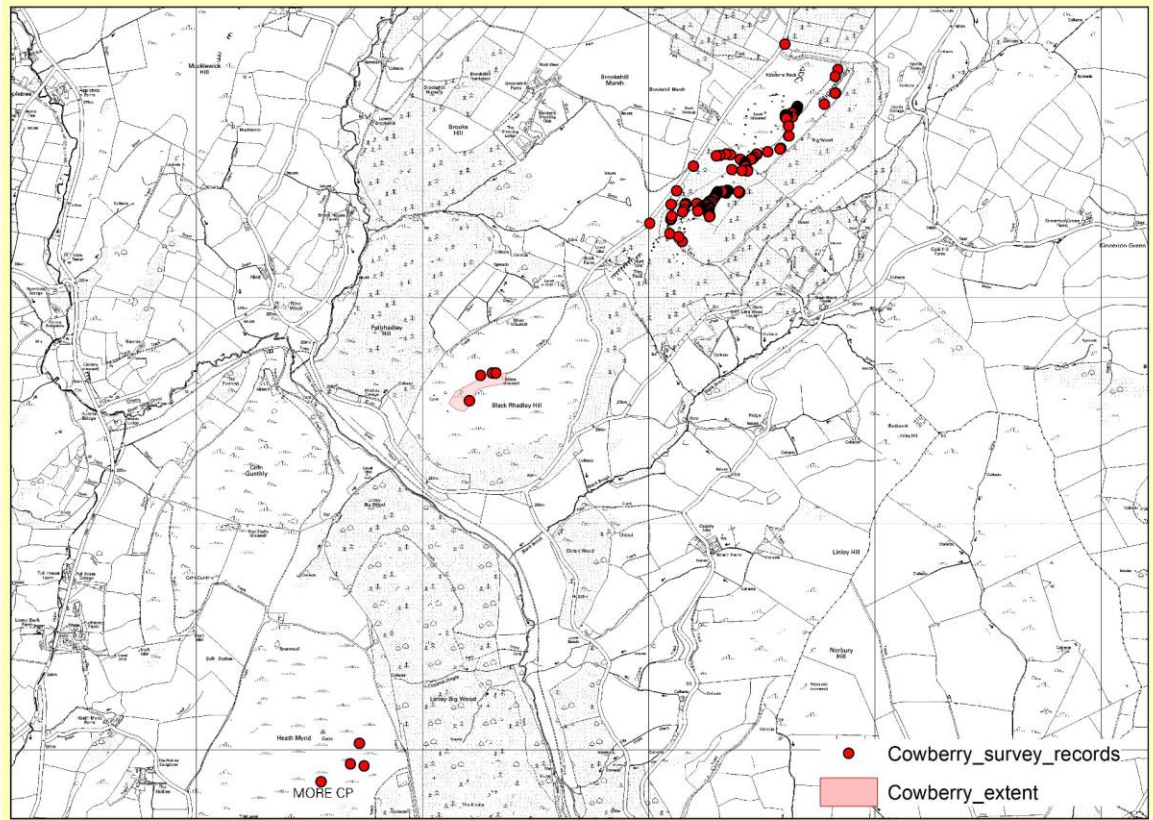
On several other days volunteers found and mapped cowberry on Black Rhadley and Heath Mynd, which was a new site for cowberry. We searched on Cefn Gunthlow but although we found heather bilberry and crowberry we did not find cowberry there.



Cowberry



Crowberry



Hope Valley SSSI 5th June

Stepping Stones volunteers have been clearing scrub and bracken for the last two years.

This is a fairly small but species rich grassland site on the side of the Hope Valley. A species list was made of 77 species including many axiophytes (indicators of good habitat) such as dyers greenweed, twayblade orchid and quaking grass.

Ritton Valley Local Wildlife Site 13th June



Having walked in from The Bog the group descended into the valley down quite a steep slope to a very species rich site varying from wet rushy areas to dry banks formed from mine spoil, in all giving way to a rich botanical site, with the highlight at the one end being northern marsh orchid.

Barnes Farm Local Wildlife Site 26th June

Since the last visit by the plant group this LWS has changed hands and the whole of Barnes Farm is now owned by the National Trust. Most of the LWS has now not been grazed for



some years and it is becoming quite rank in places and in need of cutting and grazing; quite an expedition through alder woodland and head-high grasses and rushes! We eventually found the marsh cinquefoil leaves and some of the beautiful carmine-coloured flowers.

Slender St John's wort was growing in profusion amongst the gorse.

Although some plants could not be found from previous surveys it is still a rich site.

The Monastery Stiperstones 9th July



For the first time for 20 years there was no grazing as the ponies had been removed. The large amount of goose droppings showed how much one large family of Canada geese could do! Although the paddock was grazed short it was a sea of ox-eye daisies and on closer examination showed many species including lady's mantle

The main part of the site was still very rich with devils bit scabious just starting to flower This was the first of two visits to map this species: one of the SS 12 action plan species.



In 2004 this was probably the best site for Small pearl bordered fritillary butterfly. Now they are only occasionally seen here. The exact reason is not known but we were on the lookout for marsh violet, the food plant of the caterpillar, which we found in reasonable quantities. Many other plants of interest were found such as marsh arrow grass and lesser skullcap

Stapeley Common Local Wildlife Site 17th July

This a large area of common ground comprising many different habitats including large areas of wet and dry heath. The site is grazed by cattle and sheep.



We were looking at the south-eastern corner near the old mine tower adjacent to the A488 as there were records of devils bit scabious there. Eventually we moved to a small area up toward Mitchells Fold stone circle where there were some rich flushes and where we found a couple of tiny leaves of devis bit scabious.

Grassland Fungi with Marches Meadow Group 5th October

Walking from The Bog northwards along the public footpath then across the base of the Stiperstones where there are some of Natural Englands fields which are very good for grassland fungi.



Ballerina waxcap



Golden spindles

Woodland Fungi Identification, Snailbeach 26th October

After meeting at Snailbeach village hall we made our way up through the spoil heaps which have been colonised with birch and goat willow.

We were fortunate in having the ID skills of Jo Weightman who is the recorder for Hereford fungi group and has many decades of experience.

35 species were recorded.

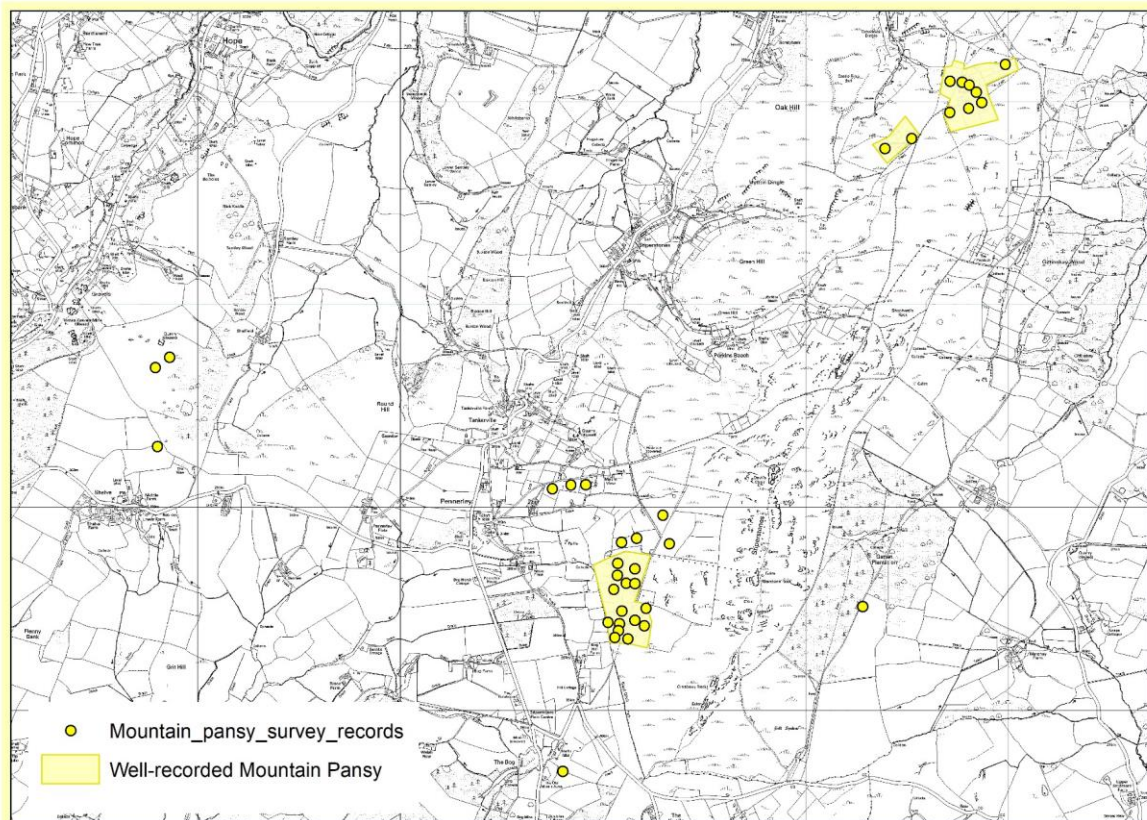


Collared earthstar



Girdled knight

A few new mountain pansy records were collected.



Thanks to...

Cassy Clayton and myself ran the group together and I am very grateful for her help with organisation and mapping. Also to all those who gave their time and expertise.

Most of the surveys lasted all day and in all 29 different people attended the groups and approximately 200 hours of volunteer time was recorded on the survey days and 25 hours at other times, particularly looking for cowberry and mountain pansy.

I am very grateful for the support from the Shropshire Hills National Landscape Conservation Fund.