

Our Vision:

A Parish and its people that are enriched by wildlife, where people enrich the natural world and help to safeguard it for the future.

Our aims are to:

Share knowledge of the wonderful wildlife in the Parish of Chudleigh.

Raise awareness through events and activities that involve and motivate the community.

Encourage positive action by local residents to attract and sustain more wildlife in the town and Parish of Chudleigh.

Conserve and enhance our existing wildlife and local habitats, features and species populations, through working together and with others.

Survey & record what we have, holding and sharing our wildlife records with others.

Advise groups and individuals on biodiversity and land management for wildlife.

Monitor development proposals that may result in damage to important wildlife.

Be environmentally and socially aware and responsible in what we do.

Interested in joining us?

If you would like to be added to our mailing list, are interested in joining the committee, or would like to volunteer, please contact

info.chudleighwild@gmail.com

SWIFT NIGHT



Thursday July 2nd

Join us at the entrance to the Car Park to check how 'our' Swifts are doing at their traditional nest sites at the Town Hall and The Globe.

Meet at 7.30 pm in the car park

Our annual BAT EVENING
will take place on

Saturday September 5th

At 7.30pm

in the Oldway Bat Fields

We will remind you nearer the time





GARDENERS' Q&A



£6

ENTRY

**DOOR AND
BAR OPEN
FROM 7pm**



**\$1.00
TICKET**

**GRAND
RAFFLE**

IN THE CHUDFEST MARQUEE

THURSDAY 9TH JULY AT 7PM

A panel of experts can answer your question from 7.30

**Tickets available from Chudleigh DIY and Dandelion
or on the door**

**This is a fund raising event for
Chudleigh Garden Show on 29th August**



Chudleigh Open Gardens 2026 was an outstanding success!

It was a wonderful sunny weekend for Open Gardens this year and a record 325 tickets were sold for the event, raising an amazing £1950!

Thanks go to Mary and Emma Rush and Jayne East for their amazing organisation of this years event.

Money raised for charities from the share of ticket money and the wonderful cakes and other goodies, as well as various arts ad crafts were:

Guide Dogs - £883

Red Earth Opera, South Devon Singers - £860

Force - £200

R D & E Kidney Development Fund - £396

Ectodermal Dysplasia Society - £375

Chudleigh Wild - £192

and details of donation are still coming in for:

Alzheimer's Society

Chudleigh Parish Church

Rainbow Living

Rowcroft

Devon Air Ambulance

Rowcroft Hospice at Home

Thanks to everyone who contributed to this wonderful event.



Teignbridge now has 168 voluntary Wildlife Wardens, all using their various skill to raise awareness of the many issues affecting our wildlife and helping people to understand and enjoy our wild spaces.



A small group of wardens met at Deer Park Farm to host members of Teignbridge District and Devon Conty Council and to update them on what they are trying to achieve and enjoy a walk around the wildlife rich meadows at the farm.

The wardens invited to speak gave an account of their achievements over the last few years. Ther councillors were suitably impressed and will try to actively support them.

Wildlife Warden, Val Compton, made this impressive daisy, each petal describing each of th individual initiatives presented on the day.

Chair's Chat

Spring 2026 was weird! It's a wonderful time of year, with vegetation growing visibly by the day, insects appearing and migrant birds arriving. **Swifts** arrived early, with reports from 21 April, when Chudleigh's earliest ever was over the Town Hall. **Swallows** and **House Martins** arrived earlier in the month, and a few **Willow Warblers** sang as they paused on their migration north. As we have come to expect in recent years, several **Red Kites** passed over – immature birds taking a brief holiday in the South-west before returning up country.

The first generation of **Holly Blue** butterflies was noticeable, with males commonly seen flying through gardens, investigating Holly and other potential larval foodplants.

Holly Blue



With a hot airflow from the south came **Painted Lady** butterflies, with a steady northward movement apparent on some days (but nothing compared with the 15 per minute flying north up Harcombe Valley on 8 June 1996 or even the 30 on Buddleias at Pottery Court on 13 August that year!). A few **Hummingbird Hawk-moths** have been reported, another migrant and often seen hovering around Red Valerian flowers.



Red Kite



Painted Lady



Exciting news has been released recently of **Black-veined White** butterflies that have been reared in a licenced re-establishment project in Britain, where it last seen about a century ago. Once common and widespread, tens of thousands of Black-veined Whites will be reared and released over five years into specific areas of Devon and Sussex. Fourteen females were imported from Normandy in 2025 and kept at a captive breeding facility in Chudleigh. Thousands will be needed for the first large scale releases planned for 2027, though some have been released this year as a trial to monitor their behaviour and dispersal within the landscape.

Black-veined White caterpillars and pupa

***Black-veined White caterpillar (still alive!)
with parasite grubs***



A Black-veined White at large in Chudleigh



***Emperor Moth caterpillars
(Mandy Griffiths)***

Residents at Biddlecombe were astonished to find the impressive **Emperor Moth**, because this species is typically associated with heathland and moorland. It does not appear to have been recorded in the Parish previously. The males have huge, feathery antennae with which they can detect the pheromones from a female from afar, but this was a female that had clearly already mated, because she produced a batch of eggs that have subsequently been reared on a diet of Hawthorn leaves. As a member of the silk-moth family, the caterpillars spun silky cocoons in which to pupate.



***Emperor Moth cocoon
(Mandy Griffiths)***



Another apparently new moth species for Chudleigh, although less welcome, is the **Box-tree Moth**. An Asian species, it was first recorded in Britain as recently as 2007, having been introduced accidentally on imported Box plants (the horticulture industry has a lot to answer for – don't get me started!). This spring 'my' House Sparrows have been attracted to my two very sick-looking Box bushes, where they have exercised some degree of biological control on the caterpillars, but not before the damage was done.



*House Sparrow
with Box-tree
Moth caterpillar*

Which brings me neatly on to dragonflies, the soft-bodied, newly-emerged adults of which are a good protein source for hungry nestlings. Just before writing this, I witnessed a House Sparrow catch a **Southern Hawker** that was taking its maiden flight away from my pond. Tough wings and spiny legs were bashed until they fell off, then the sparrow took it up to a nestbox. I know insects are vital dietary components for many chicks, but I wish they would go easy on the dragonflies! Sparrows know that ponds can provide lots of insect food and search mine systematically in fine weather. (Once, while leading a group of dragonfly enthusiasts, I encountered a Great Spotted Woodpecker that waited until we had finished ogling and photographing emerging dragonflies and then moved in for the kill!) This Southern Hawker was the 17th to emerge from my pond in the previous three weeks and a few days earlier I found the remains of two that had also been 'sparrowed'.

Newly-emerged Southern Hawker



House Sparrow with Southern Hawker



Southern Hawkers normally emerge under cover of darkness, so it's been surprising to see several adults waiting to take off during the mornings. One morning I was pleased to see a larva that had climbed up a Yellow Iris stem – it has been about 30 years since I witnessed this one night and took a series of slides, so I set up my gear to repeat the sequence with my modern digital camera. From the first few images I noticed that several tiny flies were 'photobombing' the larva, including one mating pair rather rudely perched on its head! I'm not sure why the flies were so keen on the larva, but maybe it's because I finally realised that the larva was dead!



*Southern Hawker larva
with mating flies*



When a dragonfly successfully emerges from its larval skin, or exuvia, through the top of its thorax, it leaves behind not just an exit hole, but white strands, which are the linings of the dragonfly's 'lungs': they are clearly visible on these images (**Large Red Damselfly** on the left, **Southern Hawker** on the right).

Two brief visitors to my garden were a recently-emerged **Broad-bodied Chaser** (below left), with its wing-veins still glistening with haemolymph, and a **Beautiful Demoiselle** (below right), which wander far from the fast-flowing waters where they breed.



Green-winged Orchids put on a good show at Deer Park Farm in May, but only two could be found beside one of the A38 lay-bys. The regular Chudleigh Wild counts of the orchids flowering at the Harcombe A38 junction produced 63 Early Purple, 685 Greater Butterfly, 695 Common Spotted and 38 Pyramidal Orchids, together with 10 Twayblades and 3 Bee Orchids. The numbers were generally good, although we have concerns about one area that National Highways have neglected to cut in recent years, becoming quite impenetrable.

Here are some more images taken in recent weeks:



Collared Dove eating *Pittasporum* flowers – eyes closed for eating!

Male **drone fly** hovering, on the lookout for rivals and females; note that it keeps its front legs tucked up behind its head.

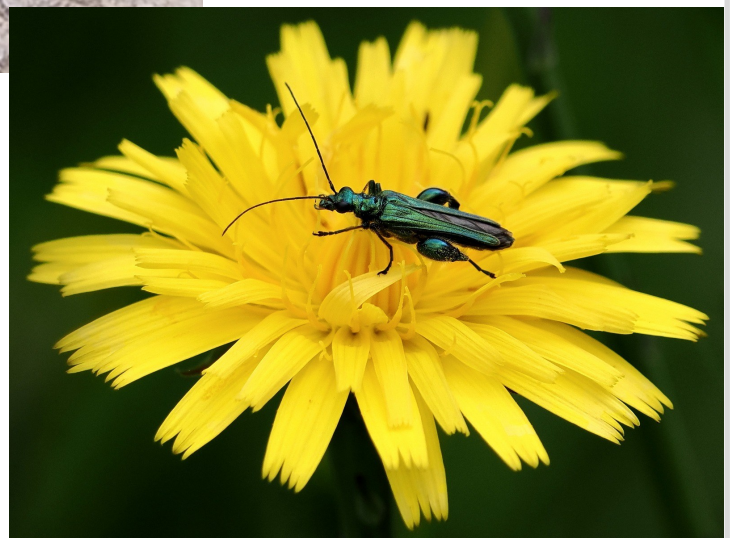


Dark-edged Bee-fly



Lesser Stag Beetle at Chudleigh Rocks (Charlotte Waymouth)

Thick-legged Flower Beetle (rather unkindly also known as Swollen-thighed Beetle)



Solomon's Seal Sawfly larvae (Geoff Upward) – sawfly larvae will reverse quickly if poked!



What is the Biggest Problem for Hedgehogs? A Prickly Predicament

Hedgehog lovers in Chudleigh have found several dead Hedgehogs recently. Although they are worried about pesticide poisoning, there is no evidence that this is the cause - but this has prompted me to research whether in fact this could be the case.



Sickly hedgehog in
Palace Meadow 2025

photo: Dave Smallshire

This took me to a very interesting research project compiled by Helen Taylor and Jamie Copsey (members of the IUCN Conservation Planning Specialist Group). With a large group of contributors, they looked at all the factors effecting the species. Their summary is:

Hedgehogs in Britain threat analysis report

A preliminary threat ranking exercise firmly identified increased vehicle collisions, decrease in available food, lower hibernation survival rates, toxin accumulation, and needing to travel further for food as top priority threats for hedgehogs in Britain. Some of these threats (e.g. road accidents and decrease in food) have a relatively decent evidence base, whereas others (e.g. lower hibernation survival and toxin accumulation) have seemingly little data available to support them.

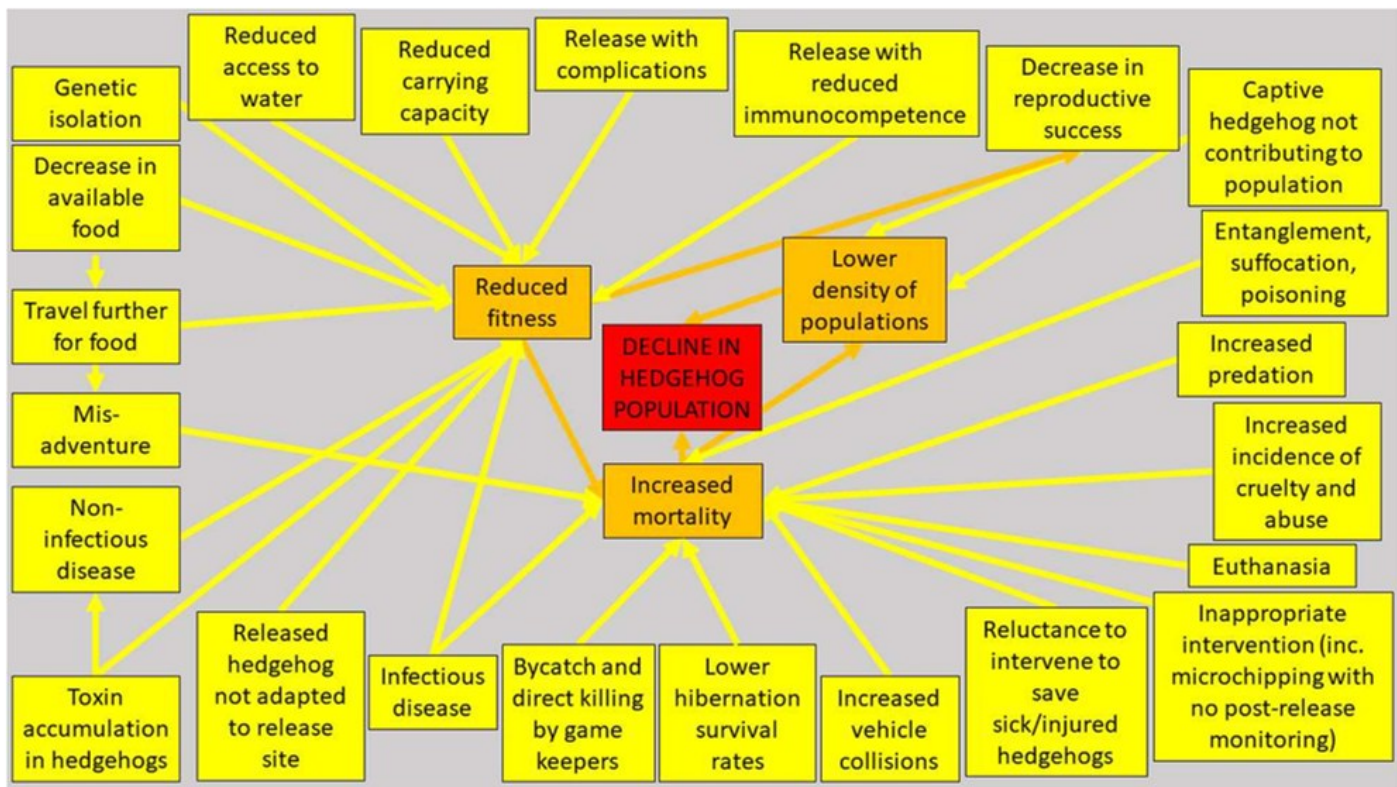
The preliminary threat ranking exercise also identified differences of opinion on the importance of threats such as entanglement in litter, genetic isolation, and reduced access to water (driven by climate change). This preliminary ranking assessment will provide a useful starting point for wider discussions at the strategic workshop at the end of April 2023. It also provides a basis for identifying the most significant knowledge gaps and so inform research priorities.

The direct threats identified in this threat analysis do not exist in a vacuum and are driven by multiple indirect threats (e.g., supplementary feeding and increased transport infrastructure) that, in turn, are driven by a variety of overarching factors (e.g., agricultural intensification and climate change). The number of drivers for each direct threat vary and thus the pathways to each direct threat vary in complexity.

The threat diagrams presented in this document analysis (see next page) are intended to demonstrate this variance in complexity and the multiple points where action could be taken to mitigate a given threat to hedgehogs.

continued





The scale of the threats facing hedgehogs within Britain varies geographically and temporally. The status of rural populations is especially concerning as monitoring does suggest that Hedgehogs in rural landscapes are faring worse than their urban relatives. Roadkill extrapolations indicate a potentially significant impact on hedgehogs, particularly compounded by the effects of reductions in foraging and nesting habitats through temporal land use changes in both rural and urban environments. The socio-economic push for more housing, busier and extended road networks, and intensification of agriculture are likely to put the species under increasing pressure.

Cases of suspected poisoning of wildlife, pets and beneficial invertebrates is investigated under the Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme (WIIS). This is the route whereby, following post mortem examination and toxicology samples, the true effects of pesticides (rodenticides, insecticides, molluscicides and herbicides) can be proven. It's worth remembering that most wildlife dies of natural causes, many of which are not evident externally, and we shouldn't assume that animals have been poisoned.

If you have however a good reason to suspect that a Hedgehog or other animal has been poisoned, report this via the HSE helpline: 0800 321600.

To read further information in the report visit:

www.hedgehogstreet.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Hedgehogs-in-Britain-threat-analysis-report.pdf

Sue Smallshire

