



Future events:

Walk and Talk

We will soon be meeting to plan future walks. If there is anywhere you would particularly like to go locally, then please let us know. You can read all about our March walk-and-talk in this newsletter.

In addition to the very informal walk-and-talk format, we could also organise expert led walks. Suggestions include a warden led walk at the Lower Otter, and a visit to Stantyway Farm under the guidance of the farmer.

Lower Otter walk-and-talk on Saturday 15 March

There were 14 people who set out to walk up to the very top of the site (across the low bridge) and back (past The Holt) to the seafront.



The site has matured since our last walk here at a very similar time of year (on 17 March 2023) although we saw quite a lot more birds and more species this time. There were redshank, teal, shelduck, curlew, mallard, a few wigeon and a small flock of black tailed godwit. We saw

moorhen, cormorant, black-backed gulls, herring gulls and black headed gulls.



Black tailed godwit, breeding plumage



Curlew

We also saw a variety of birds in the trees and hedgerows including greenfinch, goldfinch, robin, chiffchaff, dunnock, a very active rookery, a kestrel. And two buzzards circling above the field. Chaffinch and reed warbler. Were heard singing.

Spring was in the air despite the chilly breeze, and the sun shone on us. We found blackthorn blossom, pussy willow, and hazel catkins.



Exmouth Local Group

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2025



Hazel catkins with pink female flowers.

The male yellow catkins of hazel appear from mid-February and hang in clusters. The tiny female flowers are deep pink/red in colour and easily overlooked, but worth the effort..

Alexanders were in flower, as was sweet violet which we identified by its sweet scent (the later dog violet doesn't share this perfume), and celandines were still flowering under the hedgerow.

We had a discussion about a plant growing on one of the 'islands'. The Greater Tussock Sedge is a robust,



Carex paniculata, Gr. Tussock Sedge

hairless plant that forms dense tussocks in swampy areas. It is widespread in the UK, but is not expected to survive here because it is frequently inundated with salt water.

Sheena, who recently attended a lichen identification session, spotted a small grey lichen with eyelash-like hairs (cilia) which can be seen through a lens. It was growing on twigs along the enclosed path and is called Fringed Rosette Lichen *Physcia tenella*. Over lunch several of us examined a tiny piece of it with our lenses, and could clearly see the eyelash-like hairs that help to identify this species.



Physcia tenella, Fringed rosette lichen.

Beware of Wildlife Apps

Many of us use apps to identify species, and they are amazing, but it is important to be aware that many have a serious drawback because they are designed in America and often use the American vernacular for names in 'English'. This causes confusion for beginners and, frequently, me!



Exmouth Local Group

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2025

The article about the Bystock walk in the last newsletter included a picture labelled 'deer fern'. I had never heard of deer fern. I searched for it and *Struthiopteris spicant* but neither is mentioned in my guide books. On the web I discovered that the scientific name was changed from *Blechnum spicant* in 2016. This fern is abundant locally and it's common UK name is 'hard fern'. I guess that deer fern is the US name.



Hard Fern

I use several apps myself and they are stunningly clever, but I now exercise caution when using them.

Merlin (which is very popular for identifying birdsong) is excellent if you set it to English UK; (the default is USA).

The '**Obsidentify**' app which is Dutch, is worth trying as it is more aligned with we English.

PlantNet (French) works extremely well for flowers and it can be set to cover different areas, eg. Northern Europe.

I think that apps are wonderful tools for identification in conjunction with traditional guides and the internet for confirmation.

By Roger Hamlin

Annual Quiz in aid of DWT

The 2024 quiz was won by Carol Rowe, a long-term supporter who regularly gets several of her friends to enter – a thoroughly deserving winner.

The 2025 quiz comprises 100 anagrams of British wildlife - 10 species associated with fresh water, 20 trees, 20 wildflowers, 10 mammals, 15 butterflies and twenty-five birds. You have the whole year to complete it, and there will be a prize of £20 for the lucky winner. With the cessation of local group meetings, it is becoming

increasingly difficult to find a market, so this might well be the

very last quiz, hence its somewhat cosmopolitan nature, reflecting the quizzes that have gone before.

If you fancy trying to emulate Carol's achievement, you can get a copy of this year's quiz from Mike Tracey on 01395 260442 or at mikeanddeetracey@gmail.com

There is a suggested donation of £1 to enter, but what you pay is up to you. How you pay it is another matter – if you could include it in a donation to DWT that would be fine, but please let Mike know so that it



Devon
Wildlife Trust

Exmouth Local Group

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2025

can be allocated appropriately. Failing that, you could perhaps include the payment when you send in your entry. However you do it, Mike is happy to trust you to get it to him somehow, so don't delay – he is accepting orders NOW!!

If you are able to spread the word amongst friends and relations please do so - copies are available from Mike at any time.

Volunteering opportunities

For volunteering opportunities with **Devon Wildlife Trust**, check out their website for information at <https://www.devonwildlifetrust.org/volunteering-wildlife>

To volunteer with **Wild East Devon**, who have recently launched their new volunteering group 'Working Wednesday', check out their website at

<https://wildeastdevon.co.uk/news/new-volunteer-group-launched-to-support-east-devon-s-countryside/>

This group has been created in response to growing community interest in hands-on conservation work, and it will play a crucial role in habitat restoration and ecological enhancement, supporting the Countryside Rangers as they enhance and protect the district's natural landscapes.

Pebblebed Heaths

Conservation Trust are also looking for volunteers. If you would like to find out more about future 'Action For Nature' volunteering tasks and other events, click the link <https://www.pebblebedheaths.org.uk/whats-on/>

'Action For Nature' volunteering is for EVERYONE! Simply drop-in between 10:00 and 13:00 and volunteer for however long you would like to, all support is valued.

Follow DWT Bystock Reserve Volunteers on X (Twitter):



@DWT_ExmouthLG

The Bystock newsletter, issued quarterly, is full of updates and information about species to look out for at the reserve.



What's happening in and around Exmouth



Lympstone Environmental Action Day, 17th May

Wild About Lympstone is holding an Environmental Action Day on Saturday 17th May from 11am-3pm, in the church and on the meadow opposite.

WAL is working in collaboration with a number of village groups to offer a range of fun and interesting displays and activities focused on protecting and enhancing our local environment and wildlife for nature, health and wellbeing. These will include:

- **1000 plant giveaway:** this very popular event organised by Heathfield Allotment Trust is returning for its second year to provide villagers with free plants for pollinators.
- Top tips and advice from Devon Wildlife Trust (DWT) about 'Gardening for Wildlife' and their Award Scheme.
- Meeting our Water Guardians and Lympstone Water Quality Group to get hands -on with water testing and understand how they are working o protect the Wotton Brook
- Fun facts and activities with Brian and his bird stand (RSPB)
- Swift tours in the church – sign up to become a swift monitor
- Finding out about the work to help make the churchyard more wildlife friendly
- Contributions from our village school
- Beautiful nature-based art activities
- Recharging and connecting with nature on our wellbeing village walk
- Having your say on our developing vision for Lympstone's future as a place where nature and people can thrive
- A chance to bid in our silent auction for Louise Banks original artwork of the Lympstone Wildlife map.

Do please let us know about local events that may be of interest to our members, and we will try to include them in our newsletter.