



Lye Valley Wildlife News

What to see in the valley in Summer

Judy Webb (Friends of Lye Valley)



2023 has been the best year ever for Beautiful Demoiselles up and down the Lye Brook. This exotic looking damselfly was never seen in the valley before recent years.

The photo shows a male on Hemp Agrimony.



Our Marsh Helleborine Orchids flowered in July very well, especially on the fen on the west side of the valley, which is a new site for them, made suitable by cutting and raking. In the north fen we counted a total of **1689** flower spikes, our best ever population.



Our tiny but fascinating carnivorous (insectivorous) Butterwort plants also had a good flowering this year on the east (Peat Moors side) fen. However the spring/seepage water flow they depend on here did not recover all winter from the 2022 drought, meaning the area is getting too dry. In an attempt to mitigate this effect of Climate Change we have been translocating as many as we can find to the wetter west valley (Churchill) side.

In September we were pleased to find reasonable numbers of the valley's tiniest and rarest snail, the dinky Marsh Whorl Snail. This is an annual species, with adults measuring only just over 1mm.

Droughts and heat are bad news, but the wet summer this year really helped.



Grass of Parnassus (our logo flower and an Ice Age relic species) had its best ever flowering year. In the North Fen we estimated **6,172** flowers in late August. Finding another **1,297** in the private South Fen was also our best ever, giving a stupendous total of **8,075**. Considering this flower count has been increased solely by conservation cutting and raking and seed spreading from the (near extinction) 22 flowers in the South fen in 2006, this is a big success story!





Our Viviparous Lizards have had a very good year with plenty of all-black juveniles seen after observation of fat (gravid, full of eggs) females basking on wood. This year we helped a student from Brookes Uni to study our Slow-worms.

Photos: Judy Webb and Tony Gillie **Contact:** friendsoflyealley@yahoo.co.uk

Don't forget to look at our website <http://www.friendsoflyealley.org.uk/> where you can see more wildlife in our **Facebook** and **Twitter**.