

# Bealeswood Common Wildlife

April 2025

as reported by the Bealeswood Wildlife Recording Group

## Flowers (DB)

The unusual spring weather of 2025 saw a very wet January and February followed by exceptionally dry March and April. Also, a mild December meant that the New Year's Day plant hunt yielded 5 species in flower on the Common. The mid-January frosts meant that these species were not joined by any other spring flowers during that month. Looking at the first flowering dates of our spring flowers through to end of April we now have just over 50 flowers in bloom. So how do these flowering dates compare with those in previous years? If we compare first flowering dates for 2025 with the average from our 17 years of weekly recordings we find that, on average, this year's spring flowers have come into bloom 1.5 weeks earlier. Despite the unusual weather conditions the flowers have fared well which appear to have had knock-on effects for our insect populations (below).

## Bees (AP)

The Common's varied habitats, with its mix of open grassland and sheltered thickets, provide ideal conditions for several bumblebee species.

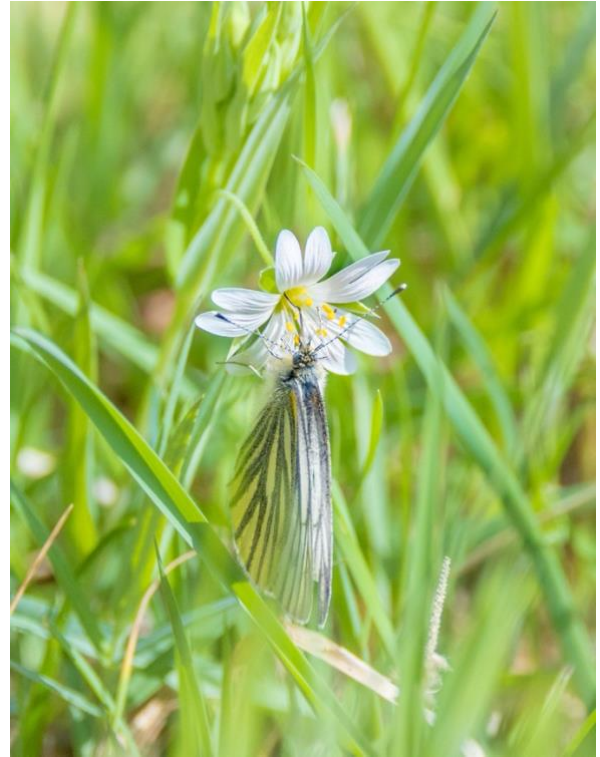


Long-tongued bumblebees, such as the Common Carder Bee (left, on Bugle) and the Garden Bumblebee (right) are adapted to feed on nectar from flowers with deep, tubular shapes. On Bealeswood Common, they visit the vibrant clusters of purple Bugle and native Bluebell whose deep, narrow flowers perfectly match their specialised feeding style. This reduces competition between the different bee species and ensures the pollination of these flowers.

## Butterflies (PH)

The butterfly transect season has started well, with temperatures high enough to enter records for each week in April, and with total butterfly numbers higher than the last two years. Orange-tips have done particularly well, with Green Veined-whites, Brimstones, Peacocks and Small Whites also recorded. However, there has been a noticeable absence of Speckled Woods and Holly Blues on the transect walks, both of which we would hope to record in April. These species have been seen in other locations and on other occasions,

This time of year, distinguishing between the females of Orange-tips and Green-veined Whites can be difficult, unless the underside of the hindwing can be seen, as they both lay on the same selection of wild crucifers such as Cuckoo Flower (or, Ladies' Smock) or Jack-by-the-Hedge (or, Garlic Mustard). Later in the year identification is easier as only Green-veined Whites have a second brood, while the single-brooded Orange-tips are unlikely to last beyond early June at the latest.



Orange-Tip (top left) with distinctive speckling on underside of wing laying eggs on Cuckoo Flower with purple Bugle flowers in background.

Green-veined White (top right) with strong veining on underside of wing feeding on Greater Stitchwort.

A vibrant Speckled Wood (bottom left) resting on Bramble leaf.

## Birds (AC, PC, AP, DB)

Seen on Bealeswood Common this month (\* indicates nesting pairs observed)

Canada Goose	Jackdaw	Nuthatch
Mallard	Carrion Crow	Treecreeper
Mandarin Duck	Coal Tit*	Song Thrush
Pheasant	Blue Tit	Mistle Thrush
Stock Dove*	Great Tit	Blackbird
Woodpigeon	Long-tailed Tit*	Robin
Sparrowhawk	Swallow	House Sparrow
Red Kite	House Martin	Dunnock
Buzzard	Chiffchaff	Chaffinch
Gt Spted Woodpecker	Blackcap*	Bullfinch
Green Woodpecker	Firecrest	Greenfinch*
Magpie	Goldfinch*	Goldfinch
Jay	Wren*	

Also heard from Common: Cuckoo, Tawny Owl.

First swallow recorded 8<sup>th</sup> April and first Cuckoo heard on 22<sup>nd</sup> April



Greenfinch on Hawthorn or May-tree/Mayflower



Treecreeper on lichen encrusted Oak

See also at [www.dockenfieldpc.org.uk/wildlife](http://www.dockenfieldpc.org.uk/wildlife) for previous month's and year's Notices.

## Bealeswood Wildlife Recording Group (BWRG)

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