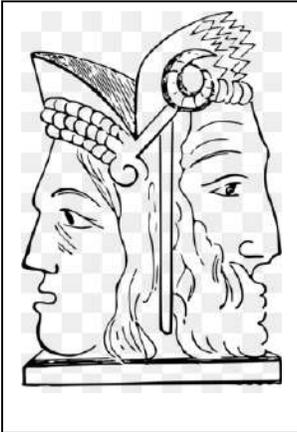




# Wild About Barrow

December 2022/January 2023

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Janus, the Roman god of transitions, seems an appropriate way to begin these notes. We can look back at what we have achieved for nature and look forward to more delights and successes in 2023.

I wonder what you delighted in and did for nature? For me, the beautiful crab apple blossom at the top of Fishpool Way, the Meadow brown butterfly in Millennium Park and the shaggy ink cap mushroom in a field near Poppyfields were my top three.

## Achievements and Plans 2022/2023

Wild About Barrow has installed 5 bat boxes and 11 bird boxes around the village in 2022. Also, a new wavy wildflower strip was sown to great success in Millennium Park. In the coming year we hope to sow more wildflowers so if you would like to help create new beautiful wildflower areas for nature let **Wild About Barrow** know.

Nature is in trouble. There has been no let-up in the net loss of nature in the UK since 1970 according to the latest Government State of Nature report. This is mainly due to agricultural practises, pollution, and climate change. The World Wildlife Fund's Living Planet Report 2022 showed a 69% global drop on average of vertebrates since 1970. We need to live in harmony with nature: we need to improve our village for wildflowers and animals. There has never been a more urgent time to help nature.

On a positive note, there are thousands of volunteers all over the country delivering inspiring results. For example, the large blue butterfly and bitterns have been saved from extinction. Scroll down to 'What to Do' for ideas for all of us.

We have some exciting new projects in the pipeline and will be revealing these once they are given the go ahead.

Help us – what ideas do you have to help nature? Email: [wildaboutbarrow@gmail.com](mailto:wildaboutbarrow@gmail.com).

## Cop15 Agreement Gives Hope

At the COP15 UN Biodiversity Conference a deal has been agreed to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 with the aim of putting nature on a path to recovery for the benefit of all the world's people. That's just 7 years away. But we do need to act fast as in 2019 (the latest data available) scientists estimated that a million plant and animals species are at risk of extinction.

Two of the most important targets are one dubbed '30 by 30', with the aim of protecting 30% of land and sea by 2030 and another is recognising the rights of Indigenous Peoples. This is crucial, as science shows that these people are the most effective way of protecting the planet. Indigenous peoples make up around 5% of the world's population but they protect 80% of its remaining biodiversity.

There continues to be disagreement and underfunding but a step in the right direction has been taken.

## Wild Celebration



Redwing  
(*Turdus iliacus*)



Greater spotted woodpecker  
*Dendrocopos major*



Starling  
(*Sturnus vulgaris*)



Lichen



Golden Waxcap  
*Hygrocybe chlorophana*



Shepherd's-purse  
*Capsella bursa-pastoris*

Have you spotted any nature delights around the village? Send your photos to [Wildaboutbarow@gmail.com](mailto:Wildaboutbarow@gmail.com) or just let us know where you saw it and we'll take a snap.

## Redwings

All the birds were spotted in my garden. It was thrilling to see a crowd of 8 redwings resting from their long migration from Iceland, The Faroes and Scandinavia. They recharged on my holly berries for a few weeks before moving on.

## Greater Woodpecker

The greater woodpecker has increased in numbers by 300% since the 1970s, helped it is thought by the decaying trees of Dutch elm disease. They hammer tree trunks or branches at a staggering 40 times a second. Apes would have serious brain injury with all that pecking but woodpeckers' smaller brains can withstand the hammering. Scientists now believe their skull does not cushion the blow, as once thought, since this would be disadvantageous to pecking. However, it is likely to be why they do not have larger heads and neck muscles.

## Lichens: a joint effort

Lichens are beautiful and varied life forms. Here are some fun facts about them:

- They are a composite of an algae or cyanobacteria which lives in the filaments of various fungi species.
- They grow slowly on almost any surface and as they can photosynthesise, do not harm the trees they are found on.
- They do not indicate clean air but many species do not tolerate pollution and will not grow where there are high levels of pollution.
- There are over 20,000 known species world wide of which around 1,800 live in the UK.

## Shepherds Purse

Have you ever stopped by a crack in the pavement or at a patch of weeds to see this little beauty? It is a common plant that has been used as a food over the centuries and gets its name from the dainty seed pods or 'purses' that contain the seeds or 'coins'. These seeds, though tiny, have been used as an ingredient for bread by being roasted and ground into a flour.

The younger, fresher leaves can be eaten raw or cooked, while flower tips can also be eaten as a snack when out walking.

When leaves and flowers are dried it makes a tea which is said to be good for stopping internal and external haemorrhaging and during the Great War it was used for this purpose.

## What to See

1. **How many kinds of lichen can you spot** around the village? We'd love to know!
2. **Look at the small things in nature** that might otherwise go unnoticed. Take a magnifying glass on walks: look close, look underneath, look again at the ordinary and find the extraordinary. Living things have taken millions of years to solve problems and become precisely adapted to survive in the natural world. It's amazing!

## What to do

1. **Take part in the RSPB annual Big Garden Birdwatch survey** for one hour between 27 – 29<sup>th</sup> January.

It informs us about how our birds are coping with the changing climate and the evidence can be used to persuade the Government to introduce stronger protections for nature.

2. **Consider which way/s you would like to support our natural environment this year:**
  - Write to our MP, Jane Hunt, urging action to improve our environment. Plenty of issues and campaigns highlighted by groups named below and others
  - Support groups such as WWF, Greenpeace and RSPB (which aims to protect our environment, not just birds)
  - Join our local wildlife trust – LRWT and, of course, **Wild About Barrow!**

*Alison Rushton*

***Think global: Act local***

*All photographs by A. Rushton*