Report to FFOG on Pollinator survey activity.

On Saturday 9th July 2022, the NLWG held a pollinator survey teaching exercise at the Flora ponds area of the reserve.

About 20 people attended on the warm, sunny afternoon with an occasional slight breeze. The principle was to introduce an App and a method for recording the number and types of insects visiting the flowers in the field margins. The app is available as FIT Count and is run by the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. Their website is UKPoMS.org.uk. They want to record at as many places around the UK (and internationally) as possible, throughout the summer seasons. A list of target flowers species is provided, and the insect groups made as simple as possible. The insect groups were: Bumblebees, Honeybees, Solitary bees, wasps, Hoverflies, Other flies, Butterflies and Moths, Beetles, Small insects, and other insects.

The group of volunteers carried out 9 surveys, each of 10 minutes and all have been added to the national database for the site. This can be viewed by opening the UKPoMS.org.uk website.

Our results gave a total of 63 insects visiting the 2.25m^2 area of flowers in the 90 minutes surveyed producing an average of 9 insects per survey. This is similar to the national records but much depends on the local conditions at the time.

The most frequently visited flower was the Bramble (12 insects per survey) followed by Wild Carrot (8 per survey), Thistle (6.5 per survey), Knapweed (5.7 per survey) and Cornflower (5per survey). Nobody chose to sample the Buttercups, Yarrow, Bird's Foot Trefoil or White Clover which were also flowering in the area.

The insect groups recorded were: Honeybees 37%, other flies 21%, Beetles 13%, Small insects 11%, Hoverflies 6%, Bumblebees 5%, Wasps 3%, and Solitary bees 2%. The honeybees were mostly recorded on bramble, knapweed and thistles. Red Soldier beetles were noticeable on the Wild Carrot umbels (3 insects per survey). There were too few other recordings for further analysis.

It is hoped that the training given will allow all participants to record other flowers and at other places so records can be improved to assess the long-term increase or decline in insect populations of the reserve and in nationally.

Chris Workman

19 July 2022.