

Ewelme Watercress Beds and Local Nature Reserve

Update on results of wildlife surveys

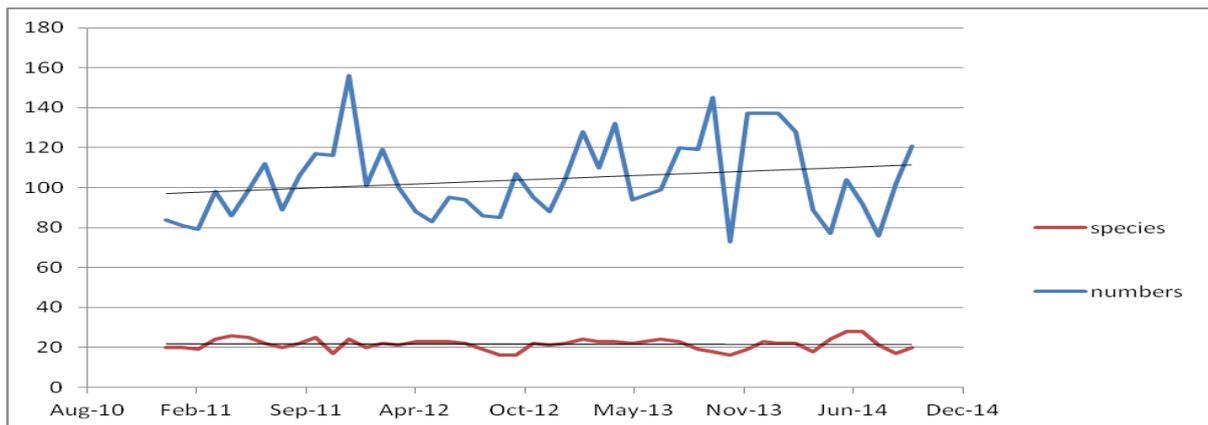
October 2014

Introduction

Regular carefully designed and undertaken surveys are vital to understanding long term trends and consequences of site management strategies. In an ideal world it would be good to survey a wide range of flora and fauna but with only volunteer staff being available there is a limit to what can be achieved. It is also important that surveys are carried out over a long period as short term effects of temperature, floods, droughts etc can significantly influence results.

Birds

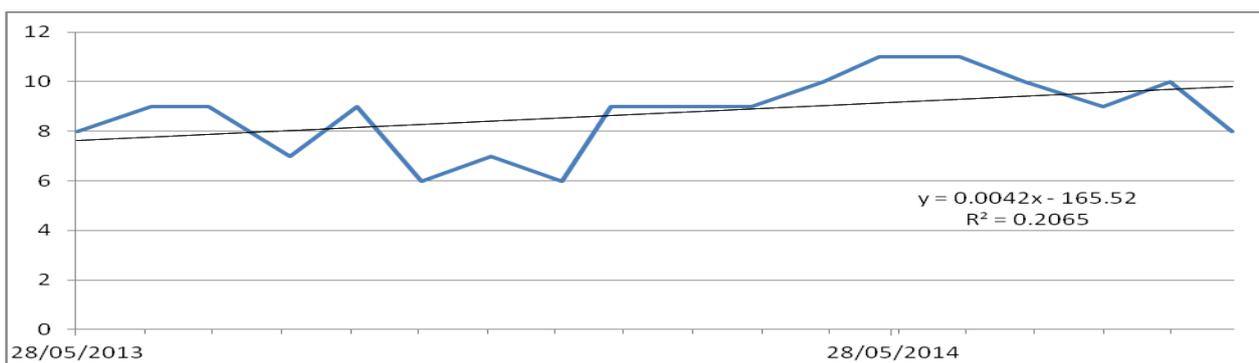
Although bird species on the beds have been recorded since October 2002 these were the results of casual observations during walks through the site and are not presented. The following results were obtained during monthly bird counts. The whole site was walked and every bird seen or heard noted. The straight line shows the trend based on least squares linear regression.



Over the period from December 2010 to date numbers of individual birds have shown a small rise and numbers of species have remained unchanged.

Riverflies

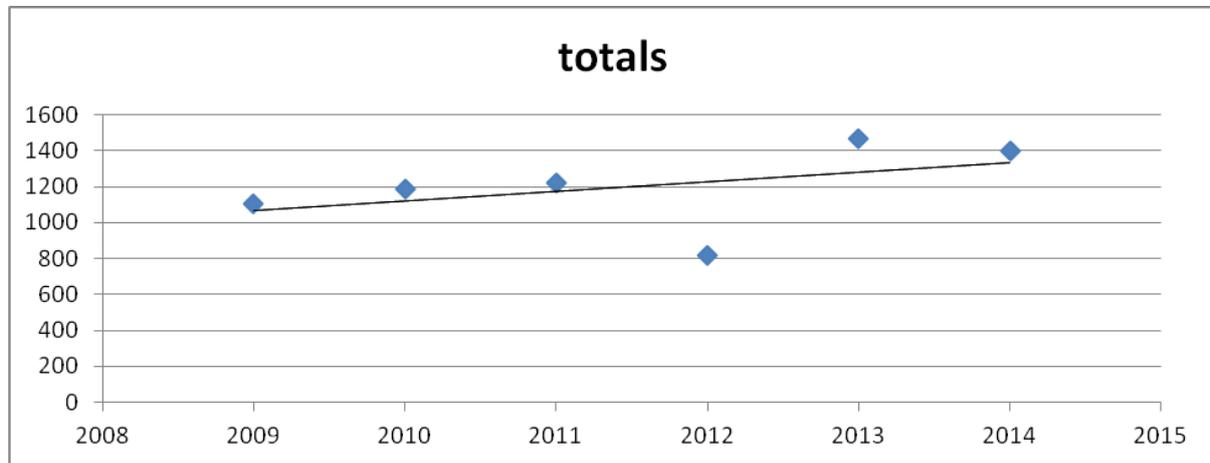
Four members of the team have been specially trained to carry out riverfly monitoring. The larvae of river flies are vital to the health of the brook as they form the main food source, both in their larval and adult forms, of many other creatures. The survey method involves timed "kick sampling" and the counting of the various species caught. Scores are allocated depending upon the numbers found.



Surveys have only been undertaken over the last year and a half so it is too early to draw conclusions but the data shows no significant reduction during that period and in fact a small increase.

Butterflies

Butterflies have been recorded since 2009 using The UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (UKBMS). This involves walking a transect round the site under carefully proscribed temperature and sunshine conditions recording all butterflies within 2.5 metres of your person. This is carried out weekly during the summer months.



It is worth noting that this year has been exceptionally good for butterflies with 5 species exhibiting their highest ever counts. (Small White, Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock, Speckled Wood and Ringlet)

Mammals

Unlike the survey results presented above the following list is simply based on casual observations and can only be considered evidence that the species has been seen on the site.

Wood mouse	House mouse	Bank vole
Field vole	Water vole	Harvest mouse
Brown/Common rat	Grey squirrel	Common shrew
Water shrew	Mole, European	Hedgehog, Eurasian
Rabbit	Fox	Badger
Polecat	Stoat	Weasel
Daubenton's bat	Pipstrelle, Common	Pipistrelle, Soprano
Roe deer	Muntkak Deer	Pygmy Shrew

Dragonflies

Best year ever for this family and considering they prefer slow moving or still water the total of 11 species is good.

Flowering plants

A few added this year bringing the total to 170.

Moths

Several species added – total now 311