

Marlot Conservation Group (MCG)

Work report to Whixall Parish Council meeting 10 July 2024

Reporting Period 3 May – 8 July 24

Once again, the reduction in available volunteers, currently only Martin Spenser and Tim Lamb, has meant a limited amount of work has been carried out during this reporting period. Work has been restricted to strimming the pathways in the meadows and along the main pathway. Brush-cutting of the back meadow has also been conducted to reduce the growth of bracken.

At the end of May, Nicki and Tim Hunter took the opportunity to conduct a small newt survey. The pond area was still very wet and the mare's tails and mace reeds had encroached in all the ponds making it difficult to survey and place the traps in position. Twenty traps were placed around the ponds and disappointingly only 4 male Great Crested Newts were found. There were no signs of developing efts at all and this is most likely due to their sensitivity to any pollution on site. It was noted by Nicki that the standing water has not drained away and smells very foul. A final survey was carried out on 30 June and the results have been disappointing. The huge growth of mare's tails and the hot weather experienced over the month has now started to dry out the ponds which are now silty and shallow – making trapping difficult. Only one Great Crested Newt was caught and no smooth newts. It is the end of the breeding season for the adults but it was expected that some juvenile newts (efts) should have been found as in previous years but this was not the case. Hopefully any correctional work to the drain issue will provide better results next year.

Graham Turnbull

Marlot Conservation Group

8 July 2024