

NEWS RELEASE

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There goes summer....

July and August are particularly busy months on the reserve, peak season for butterflies/moths/bird breeding coincides with enormous numbers of visitors.

The Rangers work over this period involves maintaining the reserve (paths, fences etc), keeping the Head tidy (litter picking/refuse collection) and patrolling to see where we can help prevent any issues arising from incidents involving drones, barbecues, camping and disturbance of wildlife.

We also need to ensure to monitor how the wildlife populations are doing – this gives us an indication of the health of Hengistbury’s habitats, we have a team of student placements (mostly from Bournemouth University) who assist with these surveys – checking our daily moth trap, walking the weekly butterfly transect or counting the eggs produced by our natterjack toads.

Our new Shetland bull, Arwel, arrived earlier in 2019 and we are going to be watching closely throughout the next few months to see if we are welcoming any new arrivals – the warmer winters have extended the growing season and we need more livestock to eat the grass down. Less grass means greater opportunities for wildflowers – which are the cornerstone to Hengistbury’s diversity.

Now the bird nesting season has passed, our attention will pass from monitoring wildlife and visitor management – to helping wildlife via habitat management. You may hear the engines of brushcutters, chainsaws and tractors as we look to decrease scrub, such as gorse and broom, to ensure that the grasslands, heathlands, woodland and reedbed are in the best condition for when wildlife starts to emerge again next spring.