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Bournemouth Naturally

The Bournemouth Naturally project aims to build up a picture of biodiversity in Bournemouth through creation of a database of your wildlife sightings. Each month will feature a species, if you have seen it in your garden or local greenspace then please let us know.

Species of the Month: **March**

Red Admiral

Vanessa atalanta



Photo: Lee Batchelor

Ecology and Conservation: The red admiral is amongst our most familiar butterflies. It is found across Britain in a variety of habitats. This species will readily visit gardens most often to be found nectaring on buddleias, brambles and thistles; it also has a taste for rotting fruit. The numbers of red admirals peak around May and June when a northward migration of individuals from North Africa and continental Europe reach Britain to breed. A second peak of adults is observed between mid-August and early October when the offspring of the migrant populations emerge. Recent indications are that some individuals in the South of England are overwintering in the UK becoming active on the warmer sunnier days; sightings of red admirals are often amongst the earliest recorded in the year.

Red admirals lay eggs on nettles that are in a sunny sheltered spot.

Identification: Red admirals are instantly recognisable as a large butterfly with velvety black wings intersected by striking red/orange bands with white spots near the wing tips. The underside is mottled; adults resting with closed wings on the ground or on a tree trunk can be well camouflaged.

Records: If you have seen a red admiral in your garden or your local park/nature reserve in Bournemouth then please let us know.

Please **email** Heather Dixon: heatherdixon@bnss.org.uk

(Or online for those of you who have joined **Living Record** - if you are interested in wildlife recording contact Heather for details of how to join Living Record.)