



Where have all the insects gone this summer?

The insect population in the UK has declined by as much as 60% in the last 20 years, a survey by conservation charities Buglife and the Kent Wildlife Trust found in 2022. Sadly the downward trend shows no sign of improving, says East Finchley resident and retired biologist **Linda Dolata**, and this year could be one of the worst years yet for insect numbers.



I am terribly concerned about the complete lack of insects, pollinators or otherwise this summer. I spend much of my time outdoors, on various natural history projects and have always monitored the wildlife that I encounter.

Whilst many of our indigenous plants seem to be doing better than average, given the mild winter and excessive rainfall, there seems to be a



complete dearth of arthropods in general, particularly insects.

Pollinator projects local to us here in East Finchley are commendable efforts to increase the flowers in a 'corridor' to help the pollinating insects, but the many types of bees, butterflies, moths and hoverflies are hardly to be seen. Even aphids are very few in number.

This obviously has a huge knock-on effect on anything that would normally rely on insects as a source of food. Omnivores, pigeons, crows etc are fine so far, but insectivorous songbirds, swallows and swifts (especially) which we would expect to see right now, are just not here.



Sadly, it's not just London where this decline is apparent. It's far more widespread. Of course, climate change, loss of habitat, use of chemicals in gardening, and in flea treatments for pets all have disastrous consequences, but I still would not have anticipated such a sudden plunge in numbers.

I can only hope that perhaps it is also a result of the very rainy winter and spring, that may have flooded the soil and drowned the pupae which would have emerged this summer, and that the numbers can therefore recover... but I am fearful that they will not.

Photos © Buglife, Katie Waddington and Ed Phillips



In a spin: Young DJ Albie Whur-Stewart with his high-tech DJ controller

DJ Albie is on the decks

By Julia Lawrence

The deck-spinning skills of Martin School pupil Albie Whur-Stewart have earned him a coveted Blue Peter badge. Ten-year-old Albie, who lives in Richmond Road, N2, was awarded a Music badge, specially designed by the musician Ed Sheeran, for his prowess and passion as a DJ.

The badge is given by the BBC children's programme in recognition of a special achievement and allows holders free access to a number of attractions around the UK.

Albie, who's in Year 5, got a taste for the disc jockey craft in a course run at his school by the Barnet Educational Arts Trust, and has performed a set for fellow pupils, with more

planned in the new term.

Albie uses a high-tech Smart DJ controller to mix and perform his playlists with no need to carry around heavy vinyl. Some traditions remain,

however, and Albie says he has incorporated some of his dad Paul's 'old' music, like Abba and Duran Duran, alongside more modern artists like Dua Lipa.

Green flag flies over the Pasture

Long Lane Pasture, opposite Finchley Fire Station in Long Lane, Finchley, N3, has been recognised by the Green Flag Award Scheme. The volunteer-run Pasture is among a record-breaking number of UK parks and green spaces that have receive the mark of a quality park or green space



for being well maintained with the highest possible environmental standards. Donald Lyven, chair of the Long Lane Pasture Trust, said: "Our team of dedicated volunteers are absolutely delighted to receive a Green Flag Community Award for the 13th year running."

Did you know?

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