

# March 2026

Community Update

## MARCH 2026

### PREAMBLE



Wildflower of the month: Daffodil/ Flower of the month: Jonquil

Tree of the month: Up to 17<sup>th</sup> March is the Ash, followed by Alder till 14<sup>th</sup> April

Full Moon this Month: SAP Moon

*"To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often."*

Winston Churchill

## March 2026

Welcome to our March update.

It's hard to believe we are already stepping into March and the first day of meteorological spring. While the calendar says spring, David and I both sense that winter may not be quite finished with us yet – more on that in the Forecasts section.

Still, this is a meaningful turning point in the year. Longer days, brighter mornings, emerging buds and hopefully, a little more warmth ahead.

### **Team Update**

After much reflection, I've come to an important realisation: for Indigenous UK Weather to truly thrive, it must grow sustainably.

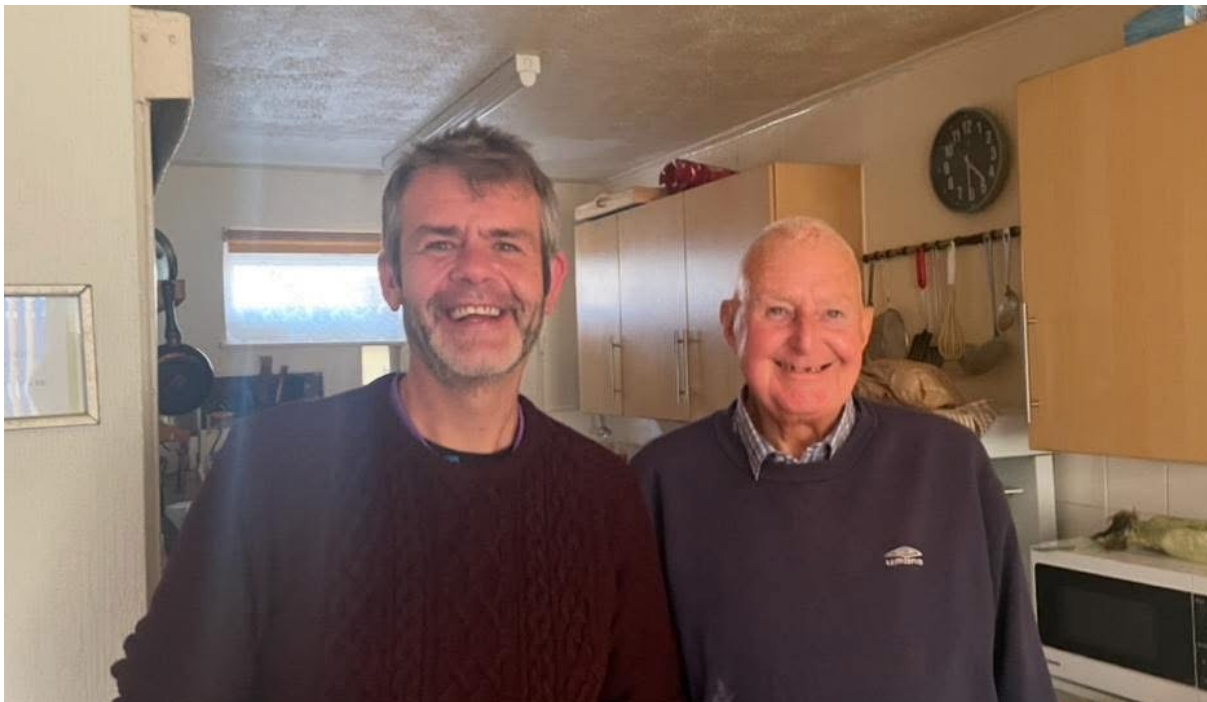
While Dave was able to dedicate his full retirement to this project, my world is a little busier. Family life, work, community commitments, and this legacy deserves more than survival. It deserves momentum.

So I am incredibly pleased to introduce David Andrews, who will now be working alongside me as we carry this project forward.

Two perspectives, one shared commitment to honouring what was built.

There is something rather poetic about this too. David joined Dave and me on our final walk together. In many ways, this next chapter feels like a natural continuation.

Below is a photo from that special day.



This has always been, and will always remain, a community project. We feel honoured to carry the baton forward on Dave's behalf.

## Website Updates

The website refresh is now largely complete (thank you for your patience while this took shape).

You'll notice updates are now organised across clearer sections. Long-standing readers can head straight to the forecasts, while newer members of our community can explore wider updates and features.

As this project has grown, so too have the monthly updates, and rather than one very long document, you can now dip in and out of what interests you most.

With David now on board, I'm also hopeful to dedicate more time to the children's section of the site, something Dave and I both felt strongly about: inspiring the next generation to reconnect with the natural world.

If you spot anything that needs attention, please do let us know.

## Country Signs Series

February's episode was postponed due to flu (February never fails to keep us on our toes!). We are arranging a new filming date shortly.

In the meantime, do subscribe to our YouTube channel so you're notified when the next episode drops:

<https://youtube.com/@indigenoukweather>

Subscriptions are completely free and genuinely help us grow – thank you for your support.

## Photographer of the Month

This month's accolade goes to Kayleigh Taylor for her stunning photograph of a Sahara dust-infused sunrise.

It's an extraordinary capture and we're delighted to share it with our community. Thank you, Kayleigh.

## Join Our Community

Our Facebook group remains the heart of Indigenous UK Weather.

To join, simply email [indigenoukweather@outlook.com](mailto:indigenoukweather@outlook.com) and we'll send you the link.

## Notes from Nature Podcast

After a brief technical wobble, our latest monthly episode went live!

You can listen here:

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/0mZQBYgQBt9TCfaNXG7CFE?si=qA0o5TNaRbW0o21jbQD8iw>

## **365 Days of Dave**

Don't forget to follow along with #365daysofdave on Instagram and Facebook.

If you create your own posts, remember to include the hashtag so we can share and celebrate them too.

As always, thank you for being part of this journey.

Stay well, soak up the longer light, and we'll see you next month as spring unfolds.

With best wishes,

*Lesley & David*

## Photographer of the Month – Kayleigh Taylor

### “Red Sky In The Morning”



Kayleigh Taylor managed to capture this incredible photograph of a sunrise. Thanks so much for sending this in Kayleigh! definitely are well deserving of the title of our “March Photographer of the Month”.

## March Spotlight: Jim Bishop

This March, I am re-spot lighting the amazing work Jim Bishop put together for us this time last year. Our newer readers will have never seen it, and it's too good to miss. Thank you so much once again Jim. Your insights were and are truly appreciated.

### **FINDING AND IDENTIFYING BUTTERFLIES AND DAY FLYING-MOTHS**

I will attempt to introduce you to the more common butterflies and day-flying moths, you are likely to see when you are out and about, or if you are lucky, visiting your garden. I am not a scientist; any theories I have are based on observation and my logic (which may well be different to yours).

For each butterfly I have tried to indicate the best places to look, but nature is unpredictable so you may have to search an area more than once to find your quarry. The best days for butterfly hunting are sunny and still; early and late in the day will normally see butterflies less flighty and posing for photos. If I mention a food plant, this is what their caterpillars eat, so will be where the eggs are laid. I have described butterflies as either; Large, which have a 60-70 mm wingspan such as a Red Admiral, think 3 x 10p coins side by side, medium, which have a 40-50mm wingspan, such as a Speckled Wood, think 2x 10p coins side by side and small, which have a 25-35mm Wingspan such as a Common Blue, think 2 x 5p coins side by side.

#### **Butterflies to see in March**

The first 5 Butterflies to appear are those that hibernate over the winter in the adult (Imago) form; **Brimstone, Comma, Peacock, Red Admiral** and **Small Tortoiseshell**. When the temperature rises above 13°C they will start to emerge from the shelter of hedgerows, trees and outbuildings and take to the wing. This can be earlier than March if you get local 'hotspots' where the sun warms up an area, such as a hedgerow, above the magic number.

#### **Brimstone (March to October)**

A flash of yellow signals the arrival of the Brimstone. This medium-sized butterfly can be seen flying along verges, the edge of woodland, the churchyard and in gardens, as they hunt for nectar and a mate. The males (bottom Left) have the incredible brimstone yellow colour whilst the females (bottom right) are a pale green (almost white). They will always rest with their wings closed so are best identified by their distinctive leaf shape. Although they only produce one batch of young each year, they are a very long-lived butterfly, so can be seen for most of the year. Their food plant is buckthorn or alder buckthorn; the adults enjoy purple or mauve flowers. They are very fast fliers so you may only just catch glimpses of these yellow beauties.



### **Comma (March to October)**

Named after the comma shaped white mark on the underwing (bottom left) rather than the distinctive ragged wing shape, this medium-sized butterfly is instantly recognisable. It uses Common Nettle, Elms, Hops and Willows as food plants so is often found around the edges of woodland; the adults aren't fussy and will nectar on a wide variety of flowers. Take a walk along the footpaths with hedges and wildflowers; they feed early in the morning and again in late afternoon and in between will spend their time hunting for a mate.



### **Peacock (March-October)**

The beautiful colours of the Peacock (below) and their glorious eyespots are in stark contrast to the almost pure black underwing. This large butterfly will often be seen in gardens as well as along verges and hedgerows where they will feed and bask in the sun. They lay eggs on common nettles, you might want to consider a patch of nettles for them in your butterfly-friendly garden or Wild Space (more of that later). The adults will take nectar from a wide variety of plants, but you will often see them on Buddleia and Lavender.

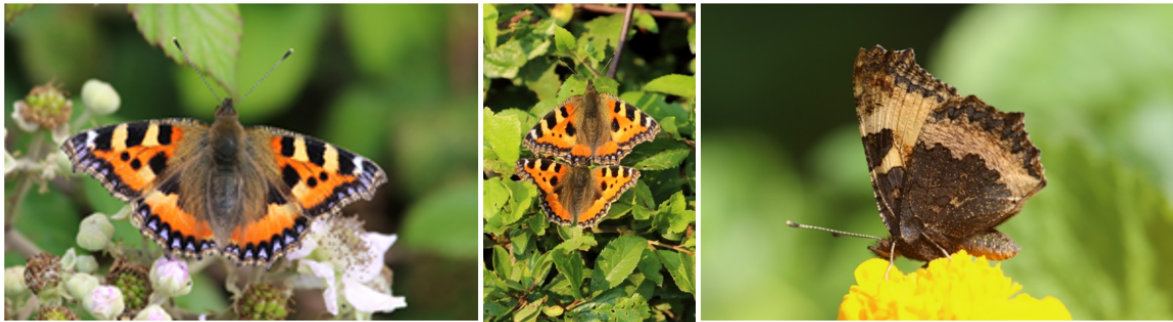


### **Small Tortoiseshell (March to October)**

The Small Tortoiseshell (right), a medium sized butterfly, used to be a common sight in our countryside but have been on the decline for years now. Whilst climate change has a part to play a new species of parasitic fly called *Sturmia bella* was discovered in the 1990s. These flies lay their eggs on nettles which the caterpillars eat, the eggs then hatch inside the caterpillar and feast. Parasitic flies are common predators of butterflies and moths and the huge numbers in which insects reproduce normally allows for a balance to be struck eventually as it is never in the interests of a parasite to destroy the host species. However,

the introduction of a new species inevitably knocks things out of kilter and it will take time for a balance to be struck or not – that's evolution I guess.

In case you were wondering, yes there is a Large Tortoiseshell but they are very rare visitors to these isles having become extinct in the last century. A few are spotted on the south coast each year but it is unknown whether these are migrants from Europe or are being released by local captive breeders. There are more conspiracy theorists in the butterfly world than you would imagine!



### **Red Admiral (March to October)**

Although some successfully hibernate here, the majority of this large butterfly, migrate from mainland Europe each year. Those you see in March and April have overwintered here, from May onwards the migrants start to appear to lay their eggs on common nettles. With 4 out of the 5 early butterflies using the common nettle as their food plant, please bear this in mind the next time you are clearing 'weeds' and leave some - you won't regret it! The adults have a very sweet tooth and can be attracted to feed on rotting fruit. They will also feed on tree sap and can congregate in large numbers in the autumn around these food sources.



So those are the 5 to keep your eyes peeled for in March, if you like a bit of citizen science then why not download the 'I-Record butterflies' App if you want to find out more click [here](#) .

The other thing you can do is create your own little (or large) Wild Space, click [here](#) .

**There be Dragons and Damsels**  
**(A short guide to common Dragonflies and Damselflies by Jim Bishop)**

I have found that as a result of spending time hunting for butterflies, I have discovered lots of other creepy crawlies and fluttering things too. By far the most impressive of these are Dragonflies, which have been on this earth for over 300 million years and once reached impressive wingspans of up to 70 cm, and Damselflies, their beautiful smaller cousins. Over the next few pages I hope to introduce you to our more often seen *Odonata* (meaning – ‘toothed jaws’).

Dragonflies and Damselflies are truly fascinating creatures and well worth doing your own research on. Their life cycle can take 1-5 years depending on the species with the majority of it spent in water as eggs and larva before they emerge as winged adults to reproduce. If 4 wings are stretched out wide when at rest it's a Dragonfly, if they are held along the length of the body it will be a Damselfly (which are also generally smaller than Dragonflies). You most often see Damselflies amongst the reeds and vegetation in and along the side of ponds, ditches and streams whereas dragonflies range much further and are often seen in hedgerows, hunting along roads and paths or just hanging around in trees. However they are at their most spectacular when hunting and mating over ponds

The ones I have most frequently seen and photographed around my local area are pictured below with their names and flight periods.



Emperor (Male)  
Flying late May to September



Broad-bodied Chaser (Male)  
Flying early May to August



Blacked-tailed Skimmer (Male)  
Flying late May to September



Emperor (Female)  
(Ovipositing) in water



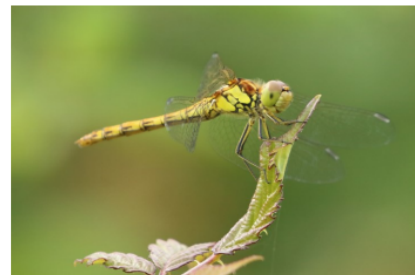
Broad-bodied Chaser (Female)



Blacked-tailed Skimmer (Female)



Common Darter (Male)  
Flying April to October



Common Darter (Female)

Dragonflies mainly eat flying insects which they hunt on the wing. Larger species like the Emperor and the magnificent Gold-ringed Dragonfly (left) will also eat butterflies, moths and also other smaller Dragonflies



Migrant Hawker (Male)



Southern Hawker (Male)  
Flying June to October



Ruddy Darter (Female) very similar to the  
Common darter except for it's all black legs



Flying July to November



Migrant Hawker (Female)



Southern Hawker (Female)  
Laying eggs in marginal plants.



Ruddy Darter (Male)  
Flying June to September



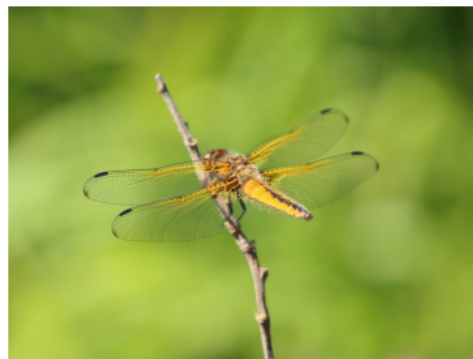
Four-spotted Chaser (Male)  
Flying April to August



Scarce Chaser (Male)  
Flying May to early August



Four-spotted Chaser (Female)  
Named after the 4 spots on each pair of wings



Scarce Chaser (Female)

Damselflies, being smaller and usually different shades of blue can be very difficult to tell apart. The 3 most common ones I tend to see locally are the Common Blue, Azure and Blue- tailed. The Male Azure and Common Blue are very similar in appearance but can be distinguished by the different markings on the 2<sup>nd</sup> segment of their abdomen.



Azure Damselfly (Male)  
Flying May to September



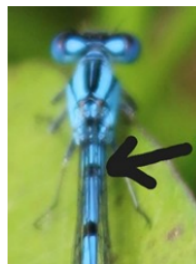
The male Azure Damselfly has a black **U** shape here on its abdomen.



Azure Damselfly (Female)



Common Blue Damselfly (Male)  
Flying May to October



The male Common Blue Damselfly has a black circle or club shape here on its abdomen.



Mating Common Blue Damselflies

The Blue-tailed Damselfly is perhaps the easiest of the 3 to identify with a distinctive blue band on the end of the abdomen.



Blue-tailed Damselfly (Male)  
Flying May to September



Blue-tailed Damselfly (Female)

Perhaps the most stunning of the Damselflies are called Demoiselles. The Banded Demoiselle, inhabits slow flowing muddy bottomed water whilst the Beautiful Demoiselle prefers faster flowing gravel bottomed streams. Both can be seen flying between May and September.



Beautiful Demoiselle (Male)



Banded Demoiselle (Male)



Beautiful Demoiselle (Female)



Banded Demoiselle (Female)



Face to face with a Beautiful Demoiselle



The detail and geometric shapes on the wing of a Beautiful Demoiselle (like all Dragonflies and Damselflies) is quite stunning and is well worth taking a close look at next time you are near one.



So there you have it, a few more things to look out for on your travels around the countryside and some fantastic reason to think about introducing a Wildlife pond into your garden. It's not too late to create a Wild Space, it will attract more than butterflies!

Magic Sightings waiting to happen in March are:

- Badgers
- Bitterns
- Brown Hares
- Butterflies
- Crocuses
- Curlews
- Dippers
- Fieldfare
- Frog & Toad Spawn
- Frosted Spiderwebs
- Golden Plovers
  - Goshawks
- Great Crested Grebes
  - Lapwing
  - Mistletoe
  - Otters
- Oyster Catchers
- Red Squirrels
  - Robins
  - Snipe
- Snowdrops
- Stoats
- Tawny Owls/ Short Eared Owls



Short eared owl: Credit to Trevor Eldridge

March is a great time to start growing peas.

Peas love cool temperatures! They thrive in the mild, moist conditions of early spring and struggle in the heat of the summer.

Planting in March will give them time to establish deep healthy roots.

Sowing in March means you'll enjoy fresh peas by June.

For best results soak seeds overnight before planting to speed up germination.

- Dandelion
- Gorse
- Stinging Nettle
- Wild Garlic

**IF YOU ARE UNSURE OF IDENTITY DO NOT EAT. WE HAVE A SURPRISING NUMBER OF POISONOUS SPECIES IN UK.**

## THE SKIES: MARCH 2026

### THE SKIES

- 3<sup>rd</sup>: Full SAP Moon (Blood Moon, Lunar Eclipse)
- 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>: See Saturn half hour after sunset
- 31<sup>st</sup>: See Venus half hour after sunset



Full Moon:  
3<sup>rd</sup> March @ 11:37  
Cold & High Winds



3Q Moon:  
11<sup>th</sup> March @ 09:38  
Cold Rain if wind NW



New Moon:  
19<sup>th</sup> March @ 01:23  
Frost unless wind SW



1Q Moon:  
25<sup>th</sup> March @ 19:17  
Fair & Frosty if wind N or NE



**PERIGEE @ 11:43 ON 22<sup>nd</sup> March**

**APOGEE @ 13:43 ON 10<sup>th</sup> March**

