

## WILDLIFE IN THE BISHOP'S PALACE GROUNDS

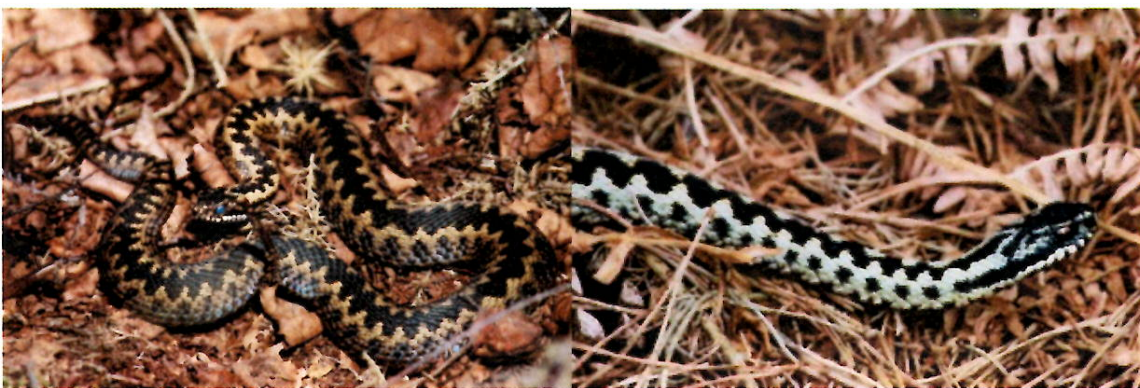
**GATE HOUSE** – **Lesser Horseshoe bats** roost in here and come out of slot over front gate, over the years guano has accumulated and at one time the ceiling collapsed. There are seven species of bat – Rob has seen **Pipistrelles** early in the morning. Also **Daubenton's** (the water bat) can be seen flying over the moat, **Brown Long Eared**, **Greater Horseshoe** and **Whiskered** bats can be seen around the grounds especially the orchard. **Noctules** and **Serotines** can sometimes be seen flying high above the spires of the cathedral.



**Pipistrelle bat**

Variety of wildfowl on the **MOAT**, including a Muscovy duck (that was in love with a swan), also **Mute Swan**, **Grey Heron**, **Little Egret**, **Mallard**, **Tufted Duck**, **Moorhen** and **Coot** (**Moorhens have red beaks**, **Coots have white beaks**) and **seagulls** – **Herring gull**, **Black-headed gulls** who have been known to swoop and take food from the swans mouths. **The Kingfisher** can be seen shooting along the moat and when the water is low **Dippers**, **Wagtails** and **Sandpipers** visit.

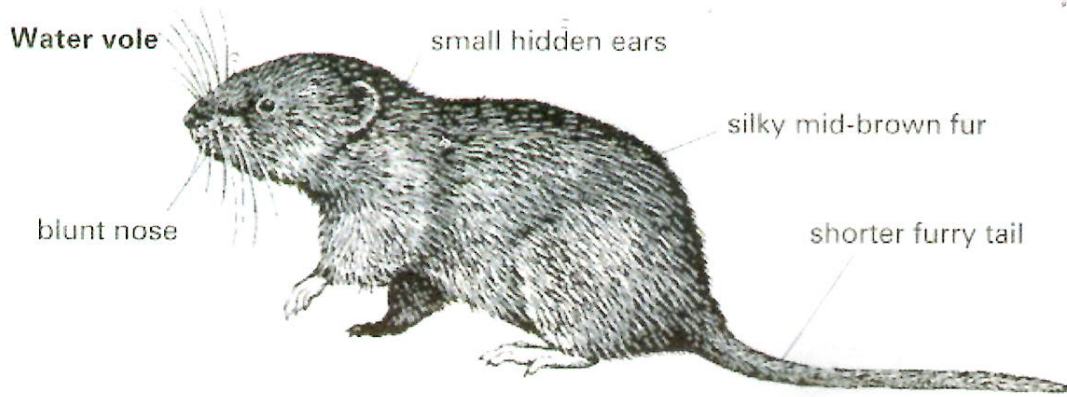
There is not a great deal of life in the moat and spring pools – probably due to the run-off from farms up on the Mendips. **Frogs** and **Toads** are seen in the grounds but there is no record of them breeding in the moat, **Adders** have been seen several times.



Female Adder

Male Adder

In 2008 an **Otter** and two cubs were seen but they were later seen dead by the side of a road outside Wells and **Mink** have also been seen here. **Wasps** nest in the banks and **Rats** are regular visitors – it's very likely that **Bank** and **Field Voles** are present in the long grass along with **Wood mice**. **Water Vole** have been seen occasionally but not for some time.



Water voles can be confused with brown rats which are often found near water.



**Dragonflies** and **damsel**flies are seen but no larvae was found in the moat when it was surveyed



Broad Bodied Chaser at Shapwick Heath

**Wasps** nest in the bank of the moat and Rob has seen **Hornets** catching bees. When the water is low **Dippers** and **Wagtails** arrive to feed.

**MOAT WALLS** – The Palace walls and the moat are the best site in Somerset for the rare **Maidenhair fern** – *Adiantum capillus-veneris*, especially on the wall overlooking Palace Fields and Palace Walk, also **Wall Rue** – *Asplenium ruta muraria*, **Maidenhair spleenwort** -

are regular visitors – **Magpie, Carrion Crow, Rook and Jackdaw. Starlings** were seen gathering in the grounds for the first time this year (2009/10). The allotment holders all wage a war against the **Wood Pigeons** who visit them when they fancy a snack. Incidentally there are no sparrows here.



**Goldcrest**



**Redwing**

The flowers throughout the grounds provide nectar and are a great attraction for **butterflies**; many species are seen, such as the common **Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell, Dark Green Fritillary and Comma**, along with migrants from the continent such as **Red Admirals** and **Clouded Yellows**. Moths are also regular visitors including the **Elephant** and **Hummingbird Hawk Moth** who are at the extreme north of their range.



**Hummingbird Hawk Moth**

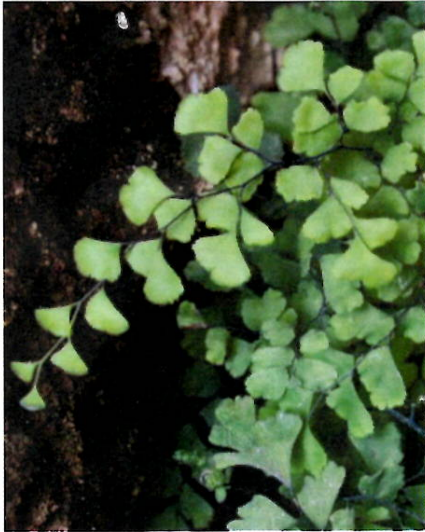


**Elephant Hawk Moth Caterpillar**

For many years there have been swarms of wild bees in the grounds.

The arboretum is gardened for wildflowers to encourage beneficial insects and the newly planted fernery in the inner gardens will attract beetles to lay their eggs in the rotten wood.

**Asplenium trichomanes, Harts- tongue fern- Phyllitis scolopendrum and Rustyback –  
Ceterach officinarum.**



**Maidenhair fern**



**Harts- tongue fern**



**Rustyback**

Lots of other plants, grasses, mosses and liverworts in the walls to look out for, gardeners regularly remove **valerian** and **toadflax**.

**Blue Tits** and **Great Tits** nest in the walls, along with several species of **spiders**, **snails** and **slugs**. A **Spotted Woodpecker** nests in the **Walnut** tree, the **Treecreeper** favours the willow tree on the bridge and the **Nuthatch** had a family in 2009.



**Treecreeper**



**Nuthatch**

**GROUNDS**, Many other birds have been seen in the grounds, several species of which are known to nest here; including the **Tawny Owl** and a **Little Owl** who can be seen resting in window of the ruins and **Goldcrests** (Britain's smallest bird), **Wrens**, **Robin**, **Blackbird**, **Song Thrush** and **Mistle Thrush**, which are joined in most winters by parties of **Redwing** and **Fieldfare**. Many birds of prey have been seen flying over and some are known to hunt in the grounds eg **Sparrowhawk**, **Buzzard**; **Kite**, **Peregrine Falcon** and a **Merlin** that was spotted by Simon King. The **Crow family**