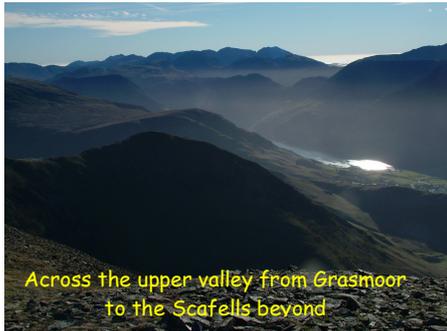


WILDLIFE IN THE VALE OF LORTON:  
INTRODUCTION  
Written by Alan Gane

The wildlife in the valley referred to here runs from Honister in the east to Loweswater where it is joined by a secondary one from Fangs Brow, the two joining to run northwards as Lorton Vale. It is bordered by fells rising to nearly 3000 feet. It encompasses Buttermere, Crummock Water and Loweswater, each of which is continually fed by countless becks running down from the tops, amongst which are notable features such as Warnscale Beck, Sour Milk Gill, Scale Force, and Holme Force.



Across the upper valley from Grasmoor to the Scafellts beyond

The surrounding fells include *Grasmoor*, *Whiteless Pike*, *Robinson*, *Haystacks*, *High Crag*, *High Stile*, *Red Pike*, *Melbreak* and *Low Fell*. There are woods too, such as *Lanthwaite Wood* and *Holme Wood*, both of which are important though neither is extensive. There are one or two ponds and marshy areas such as that at the western end of *Crummock Water* and, of course, there are many miles of hedges, roadside verges and stone walls.

Clearly therefore, the valley provides a wide range of habitats and, as a result, there is great variety of wildlife to be found from common lowland species to the far less common hardy alpine inhabitants which manage to survive the harsh conditions high above. The valley is thus a most profitable hunting ground for the casual observer, the dedicated naturalist and the many grades of 'watchers' in between.

Casual or unexpected sightings always add interest to a walk. For many, this is enough, perhaps followed by reference to a the occasional book for purposes of identification. For others, the more dedicated, walks planned to find particular species, when successful, provide the greater satisfaction. In either case, books are invaluable and, in this context, the current author's 'Lakeland walking with wildlife' may prove helpful.



The lower valley under snow

Combining such activities with photography adds another invaluable dimension giving a permanent record of sightings over the years. The 4 other articles in this short series may help to provide some clues as to what to look out for and where.