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## NOTICEBOARD

### Rook survey

For the past ten years the Society has been surveying known rookeries in the area and has built up a considerable body of information about rook breeding success in Rutland. Allan and Joy Paterson's final rook report is on page 8.

As many of the key members of the rook team are no longer able to carry out the annual survey, your Committee has decided that 2007 will be the last year of the survey as a continuous exercise. Subject to volunteers being available, periodic resurveying could usefully be resumed after a gap of a few years to see if there have been any significant changes.

This has been an important piece of natural history research for the Society, and the detailed records will be made available on request for further study. On behalf of the Committee and the Society as a whole I should like to thank Allan and Joy and their volunteers, named in the final report, for their professionalism, dedication and hard work in carrying out this valuable research.

*Ann Tomlinson*

### Subscriptions for 2008

Thanks to everyone who has renewed, and to those who have taken out Standing Orders. Renewals were due on 1st January 2008 and this will be your last *Fieldfare* unless you have renewed, so please renew immediately if you haven't already done so. If you do not wish to renew, it would be very helpful if you could let me know now. Everyone who renews will receive their new Membership/Permit card with the March *Fieldfare*.

*Graham Worrall*



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### RUTLAND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

#### SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL FOR 2008 NOT USING STANDING ORDER

To *G R Worrall, 6 Redland Close, Barrowden LE15 8ES*

I/We wish to renew membership and enclose cheque for £

*£10 for each adult, 50p for 16s or under*

Name/s \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Post code \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Verges Survey

HELP IS REQUIRED with the Verges Survey in 2008 and onwards. Most of the verges are to the east of a line from Morcott to Thistleton, excellent for finding limestone flowers!

If you and a friend could pair up (for safety reasons as well as help with identification) and give your names to Graham Worrall or phone him on 01572 747302 (after 10.30 am and before 10.00 pm) before the end of February, it would be a great help.

We monitor 12 verges (for flowers, insects, nesting birds and anything else of interest, e.g., bad fly-tipping or destroyed verges) by visiting three times between mid/late March and mid/late August. PLEASE HELP!

*Graham Worrall*

## BTO Winter Atlas Update

Many thanks to everyone who is surveying tetrads for the Winter Atlas. I hope that your pre-Christmas walks went well and that you are now completing the late winter walks which are due by the end of February.

Survey work of this kind often takes us into areas not often visited by birdwatchers, providing some interesting records – in my own squares I have recorded Chiffchaff, Little Owl and flocks of Linnets and Skylarks, whilst Buzzards have been seen in all four, a good measure of just how widespread they now are. I hope that you have had similar success and thanks again; perhaps you will be keen enough to survey the same tetrads for the Breeding Bird Atlas?

If anyone else would like to contribute to this project please see me at a meeting or give me a ring – it is ongoing for four years. Completed Winter Atlas forms can be passed on to me at the March meeting or posted (but do check that you have put on enough stamps!).

*Terry Mitcham*

## Have you a Natural History talk?

If, like members Clive Jones, Alastair Lawrence, Phil Rudkin and Roy Lemmon, to name but a few, you feel you have a talk about Natural History that is bursting to be heard, please contact one of the Committee members.

## Bats in colour!

To see the bats on pages 18–20 in colour (and some other species), look for January *Fieldfare* on the RNHS web site: [www.rnhs.org.uk](http://www.rnhs.org.uk)

## From the Eyebrook Fishery

The Trout Fishery team sent '*Season's Greetings to All at the RNHS*' so we're passing on their good wishes. We are grateful to be able to visit Eyebrook and hope they too have a good year.

## Annual General Meeting

If you would like to be nominated to join the Committee, or would like anything raised under 'Any Other Business', please have a word with the Chairman or Secretary as soon as possible.

The Minutes of last year's AGM are on page 20.

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## RUTLAND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY events

**INDOOR MEETINGS** are held at Burley Road School, Oakham. There is a charge of 40p for tea/coffee/biscuits.

### Tuesday 5 February      WILDFLOWERS OF LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND      7.30 pm

*Andy Lear, member of RNHS, conservation officer with the LRWT and expert botanist, will illustrate some of the flora that can be found on reserves both in Leicestershire and Rutland and remind us of warm summer days to come. Hopefully we'll be able to follow this up with a summer visit.*

### Tuesday 4 March      AGM followed by FLOWERS, FORESTS AND GEOLOGY IN THE CANARY ISLANDS      7.30 pm

*Following the example of other RNHS members who have been willing to share their experiences of natural history overseas, after our brief AGM, geologist Dr Clive Jones will give a talk about the Canary Islands which he has visited five times. Clive will give a brief outline of the islands' geological background as well as information about the forests and its flora, and those of the sub-alpine zone and dry areas.*

**Tuesday 1 April                      DRAGONFLIES OF LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND                      7.30 pm**

*Ian Merrill runs the Leicestershire Dragonfly website and his talk will cover general dragonfly anatomy, the reproductive cycle, dragonfly recording and the identification of every species in the area, plus the sites at which they occur.*

**OUTDOOR MEETINGS**

**Sunday 17 February                      WAKERLEY WOOD                      9.30 am (NB Earlier time)**

*Our very own prize-winning sound recordist and Woodpecker expert **Phil Rudkin** will lead a walk around Wakerley where we should hopefully hear Woodpeckers drumming plus other bird song. Meet in the car park SP960987. From the Duddington roundabout, take the A43 towards Corby for about 2 miles and carefully turn right towards Wakerley at the Fineshade Top Lodge/Wakerley crossroads. Car park is on the left after about half a mile or so down lane.*

**Sunday 9 March                      BELTON CHURCHYARD                      10.30am**

*Following on from November's indoor meeting, we will go in search of lichens in the company of **Ivan Pedley**. Meet at the Churchyard gates. Please park carefully on the streets of Belton.*

**Sunday 20 April                      OWSTON WOODS                      10.30am**

*Led by **Andy Lear**, who is very familiar with this wood, we will go in search of spring flora and perhaps hear some early migrant birds. NB: Please note the going can be very rough.*

**Sunday 13 July                      RSPB RESERVE, FREISTON SHORE**

*We are planning a coach trip to Frieston Shore, on the Lincolnshire Salt marshes. A teacher naturalist from the RSPB will guide us around the marshes to look closely at the flora unique to this area and we will also visit bird hides. Just in case it's very wet (like last year!) we will have use of a portacabin which is used as a school room, where we can look at plant specimen under microscopes, also use a kettle to make hot drinks, and there are toilets. It is expected that the cost will be £15 but it is still dependent on final numbers. The RSPB can take a maximum of 30 and we will need to confirm soon so please book early. If you are interested please contact **Mary Nourish**, telephone 01572 823677 or e-mail [beaumontchase@farming.co.uk](mailto:beaumontchase@farming.co.uk)*

**LEICESTER AND RUTLAND WILDLIFE TRUST: Rutland group**

*Meetings are held at the Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre, Egleton. Admission £1, includes tea/coffee/biscuits. For other LRWT events in Leicestershire and Rutland, see [www.lwrt.org.uk](http://www.lwrt.org.uk) or phone 0116 272 0444 in office hours.*

**Monday 18 February                      LOCAL ECOLOGY                      7.30 pm**

***Henry Stanier** will give an account of the work done with local ecology groups, including conservation methods such as species surveying.*

**Monday 17 March                      AGM AND COSSINGTON MEADOWS                      7.30 pm**

*A talk by the Trust's Head of Conservation, **Michael Jeeves**, on developments at Cossington Meadows nature reserve. The talk will be preceded by a short AGM.*

**LINCOLNSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST: Bourne group**

*See [www.lincstrust.org.uk](http://www.lincstrust.org.uk) or phone 01507 526 677 in office hours, for details of the Bourne group's events and other Lincstrust events in Lincolnshire.*

## WEATHER SUMMARY John P Hollands, Wittering met.

### November 2007

**Surface wind** November 2007 began with a mainly Westerly light to moderate surface wind, but occasionally moderate to fresh with gusts to near Gale from the 8th. This run of wind persisted until the 11th when it veered to become mainly North Westerly moderate to fresh. The North Westerly persisted until the 16th when it moderated and backed to become mainly South Easterly light to moderate. After a period of light and variable surface winds from the 20th to the 21st the surface wind settled down to become mainly Westerly light to moderate. This wind regime persisted until the 27th when it backed to become mainly Southerly light to moderate before veering to South Westerly light to moderate on the 28th. This South Westerly run of wind persisted until the end of the month.

**Temperature** November 2007 was a relatively warm month with an average day maximum temperature of 10.2 °C as compared to the long-term mean of 9.2 °C. The warmest day was the 1st

with a maximum of 16.9 °C, close to the absolute maximum of 17.5 °C recorded in 2005. By way of contrast the coldest day, which indeed it was, was the 23rd with an afternoon maximum of only 5.3 °C. There were 74.9 hrs of bright sunshine. This compares to the mean of 71.5 hrs and an absolute maximum of 113.9 hrs recorded in 2006.

The average night minimum for November 2007 was 4.3 °C, very close to the long-term mean of 4.0 °C. The coldest night was 23rd/24th when the air temperature fell to -2.7 °C. This was significantly less cold than the absolute minimum for November of -7.6 °C recorded in 1978.

**Rainfall** November 2007 was dry with only 39.2 mm (1.54 ins) of rain recorded as compared to the mean of 53.4 mm (2.1 ins). The wettest day was the 18th with 16.4 mm (0.65 ins). The wettest November day on record occurred in 2000 on the 5th with 34.5 mm (1.36 ins) of rain recorded at Wittering.

*During November 2006 the average day maximum was 11.0 °C, the average night minimum was 5.0 °C, rainfall 58.4 mm (2.30 ins) with a total of 113.9 hrs of bright sunshine recorded electronically.*

### December 2007

**Surface wind** December 2007 began with a mainly West to South Westerly moderate to fresh, gusting strong to Gale surface wind. This blustery run for wind persisted until the 9th when it veered and moderated to become North Westerly light to moderate. This run of wind persisted until the early hours of the 13th when it backed to become mainly South Easterly light. During the 16th the surface wind backed again to become mainly North Easterly light to moderate. This wind regime persisted until the early hours of the 21st when it 'dropped out' to become light and variable. These light airs picked up during the late evening of the 23rd to become mainly West to South Westerly light to moderate with gusts fresh to strong. This run of wind persisted until the end of the month. The highest gust recorded in December 2007 was 58 KT (66 MPH) at 02.45 on the 7th.

**Temperature** December 2007 was warmer than the mean with an average afternoon maximum of 7.3 °C as compared to the long-term mean of 6.6 °C.

The warmest day was the 6th when a maximum of 14.3 °C was recorded at Wittering. This was not far short of the absolute maximum for December of 15.4 °C recorded in 1974. The coldest day was the 21st when the mercury struggled to 1.7 °C. There were 53.2 hrs of electronically recorded sunshine which compared favourable with the mean of 54.8 hrs. The sunniest December on record occurred in 1999 when 85.4 hrs of bright sunshine was recorded.

The average night minimum was 2.6 °C, just a little warmer than the long-term night minimum of 2.1 °C. The coldest night was 19th/20th with a minimum of -3.4 °C, almost balmy compared to absolute minimum of -10.4 °C recorded in 1964. It might be interesting to note that the warmest night was 4th/5th with a 'minimum' of 12.0 °C.

**Rainfall** December 2007 was a dry month with only 38.0 mm (1.5 ins) of rain as compared to the mean of 52.1 mm (2.05 ins). The wettest day was the 6th when 8.0 mm (0.31 ins) was recorded.

*During December 2006 the average day maximum was 8.4 °C, the average night minimum was 4.5 °C and the rainfall 54.0 mm (2.13 ins). There was a total of 52.6 hrs of electronically recorded sunshine.*



## HIGH TIDES IN NORTH NORFOLK Nola Thurlow

High tides for Snettisham, for Titchwell add 5 minutes.

February			March				
Sunday	3	03.39	16.00	Sunday	2	01.19	13.55
	10	08.29	20.30		9	07.20	19.31
	17	02.37	15.19		16	01.00	13.31
	24	08.23	20.26		23	07.23	19.27
					30	12.25 (BST)	–



## AMPHIBIAN & REPTILE REPORT compiled by Dr C. H. Gallimore

The Stone House, Reeves Lane, Wing LE15 8SD. Telephone: 01572 737343



### November/December 2007

Although amphibians and reptiles are usually pretty torpid during these two months, a few have been active.

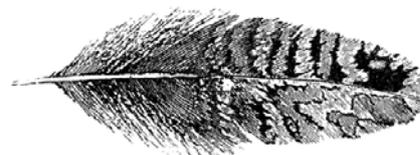
Frogs were heard croaking in the Worralls' pond in Barrowden in both months up until 6th December. Single frogs were also observed on the road in Seaton on two separate occasions in late November. The only other amphibian record was a report of a Great Crested Newt in Barrowden in early November.

A rather late record for Grass Snake was one observed sunning itself at Leighfield on 2nd November. Another late record concerned a dead mangled snake found at Fort Henry pond on 22nd December.

*My thanks to T Caldicott, T Mitcham and L & G Worrall who sent in records.*

## BIRD REPORT compiled by T. Mitcham

30 Sutherland Way, Stamford PE9 2TB. Telephone: 01780 751268



### November/December 2007

There was plenty to interest bird watchers at both reservoirs and elsewhere in the county during these months. Gardens provided records of Great Spotted Woodpeckers, Blackcaps and Fieldfares among the more regular visitors. Smew and Scaup appeared at both reservoirs with Bewick's Swan and a common Scoter at Eyebrook. Ravens were noted again at two sites, whilst Stonechats were also well reported and Bramblings appeared at several localities. My thanks to the following for their records and good birding to everyone in 2008.

*My thanks to the following for their records: V Arnold, S Barnes, P & C Brown, T Caldicott, J Comber, C H Gallimore, N Gordon, M & G Griffin, J Harris, S Hope, J & R Hutton, M & S Iannantuoni, C Jones, A Lawrence, F & D Lee, R Lemmon, A Malcolm, I Misselbrook, T Mitcham, C Nelson, B & L Nicholls, J & M Nourish, P Rudkin, C Scott, P Scott, P Stancey, A R & M A Thorp, J Wansley, D Willett, G & L Worrall*

**Mute Swan.** 80 were at EBR on 5.11, increasing to 120 on 16.12.

**Bewick's Swan.** 12 were at EBR on 15/16.12.

**Whooper Swan.** One dropped in at FHP on 09.11 but was quickly driven off by the resident Mute Swans.

**Greylag Goose.** c.60 were feeding on cereals near FHP on 15.11.

**Brent Goose.** Singles were at RW dam on 04.11 and Egleton Reserve on 25.11.

**Egyptian Goose.** A pair were at Leighfield Fishponds between 4 and 25.11.

**Mandarin.** A male was at FHP on 16 and 22.12.

**Wigeon.** c.120 were on ponds near Priors Coppice on 03.12.

- Gadwall.** December numbers at FHP peaked at 100 on 22.12.
- Pintail.** 16 were at FHP on 02.11.
- Tufted Duck.** c.250 were noted at EBR on 05.11 and there were 113 at FHP on 28.12.
- Scaup.** See also wildfowl counts. Four were on lagoon 2 at Egleton on 21.12.
- Long-tailed Duck.** An immature male, first seen at RW dam on 04.11 remained at the Reservoir until the end of the year.
- Smew.** Four males and two redheads were at EBR on 16.12.
- Goosander.** Regular at Leighfield Fishponds in both months with a maximum of seven on 21.11. A redhead was at FHP on 01.12.
- Ruddy Duck.** Only small numbers now visit the reservoirs. Three were in East Creek at RW on 27.12.
- Red-legged Partridge.** Quite a few managed to avoid the guns at EBR and c.40 were noted on 05.11. Seven were near Horn Mill on 15.11 and c.20 near Edith Weston sewage works on 27.12.
- Grey Partridge.** 3 were at Wing Burrows on 21.11.
- Little Grebe.** Numbers at FHP increased to seven by the end of December.
- Great Crested Grebe.** At EBR on 16.12 a pair in non-breeding plumage were watched performing the head-shaking courtship display.
- Red-necked Grebe.** One was at RW (North Arm) on 23.12.
- Slavonian Grebe.** One was at RW (North Arm) on 01.12.
- Black-necked Grebe.** One was noted at various locations at RW from 16.12 to the end of the year.
- Cormorant.** At EBR there were 28 on 05.11 and 32 on 16.12. One was at Leighfield Fishponds on 09.11.
- Grey Heron.** Odd birds were noted at EBR, Leighfield, Wing (perched on a roof) and FHP. There were seven at RW (Burley Fishponds) on 29.12.
- Red Kite.** Well reported especially in the Barrowden and Horn Mill areas where two or three were regularly noted. Three were over Stamford on 05.11 and one flew over a member's garden there on 29.12. Others were noted in woodlands at Pickworth, Clipsham, and near Wing.
- Hen Harrier.** A ring-tail was at RW (Egleton) on 17.11.
- Sparrowhawk.** Birds were reported from EBR, Uppingham, Stamford and Oakham.
- Buzzard.** Singles were seen at Wardley, Stoke Dry and Tunneley Woods with others near Morcott/Wing and South Luffenham.
- Kestrel.** Encouraging reports of three at EBR (05.11), two at Normanton in November and two at Leighfield on 09.11. A male again roosted on the purlieu of a house in Wing from mid-Nov.
- Peregrine.** A juvenile was at RW (Egleton) on 11.1, and one, carrying prey, was at Leighfield Fishponds on 16.12.
- Water Rail.** Up to four were present in the FHP/North Brook area between 17.11 and 02.12. And there were three at RW (Burley Fishponds) on 20.11.
- Moorhen.** One was seen eating sloes about ten feet above the ground at Wing on 14.11. When disturbed it climbed higher in the bush before flying off.
- Golden Plover.** 25 were at EBR on 05.11 and there were 74 there on 29.12. 23 were on arable land near Greetham on 17.11 and there were 1800 at RW on 09.12.
- Lapwing.** At RW there were 76 on 11.1 and 1161 on 09.12.
- Little Stint.** Present at RW from at least 11.11 with a maximum of three on 09.12.
- Dunlin.** There were 56 at RW on 11.11 and 172 on 09.12. At EBR 23 were counted on 29.12.
- Ruff.** Seven were at RW on 11.11 and three on 09.12.
- Snipe.** Very few are now reported – one was at Leighfield Fishponds on 09.11 and at RW 7 were counted on 11.11 and only 3 on 09.12.
- Woodcock.** Quite widespread this winter and in good numbers. One or two were flushed regularly in Tunneley Wood from 18.11, singles were at Ketton Quarry reserve and FHP on 28.11, there were 3 near Brooke on 27.12 and 6 were counted in Pickworth Wood on 31.12.
- Black-tailed Godwit.** One was at RW(Egleton) on 10.11, with 2 the following day and 7 on 09.12.
- Curlew.** Six were at RW (Egleton) on 10.11, declining to three there on 09.12.
- Redshank.** There were 24 at RW on 11.11 and 29 on 09.12.
- Green Sandpiper.** A max of 3 were at RW between 10.11 and 09.12. One was at FHP on 28.11.
- Arctic Skua.** A juvenile was at EBR on 05/06.11.
- Common Gull.** c.350 were feeding on pasture at Leighfield on 21.11 and 26.12.
- Woodpigeon.** Flocks of c.60 were near Ayston and Bancroft Lodge on 14.12 and there were 300 at Leighfield on 19.12.

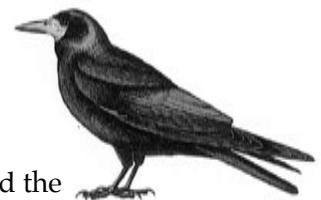
- Barn Owl.** Singles were reported as follows: the north end of the Oakham bypass (06.11); RW (Burley Fishponds) on 15.11; Glaston (22.11) and Brooke (27.12).
- Little Owl.** There were two at Greetham Quarry on 17.11 and calling was often heard in Nov at Normanton and at Barrowden in Dec.
- Tawny Owl.** One was at Normanton on 27.11. Heard regularly at Barrowden from 11.12 to the end of the year.
- Kingfisher.** Records were received for the whole period with singles noted at RW (Eggleton, Hambleton and Edith Weston), Leighfield Fishponds and FHP.
- Green Woodpecker.** All reports were for Nov with singles at Leighfield, Wardley, FHP and Normanton. Two were at Oakham on 21.11.
- Great Spotted Woodpecker.** There were garden records from Oakham (two in two gardens), Wardley, Tunneley Wood and Leighfield. One was drumming in New Wood near Normanton on 24.12.
- Grey Wagtail.** A widely reported species during these months with birds noted at Greetham, Empingham sewage works, Normanton, Beaumont Chase, RW and an Oakham garden (between 25/29.12).
- Stonechat.** An excellent series of reports noted birds at RW (Eggleton) (three), Gorsefield Wood (two) and FHP (two).
- Blackbird.** A marked increase in numbers during Nov produced a count of 40 near Wardley on 23.11, and 25 taking windfall apples at Lyddington in Dec.
- Fieldfare.** Flocks were attracted to hawthorns in Nov and there were c.80 at Leighfield on 09.11, 180 near Glaston on 21.11 and 204 near Barleythorpe on 21.11. Birds then transferred to pasture (50 near Ridlington on 14.12) with one or two coming into gardens by the end of Dec in Oakham and Stamford. Ten fed on windfalls at Lyddington in Dec.
- Redwing.** Noted across the county during both months with the largest flocks thirty at Leighfield on 09.11, 131 near Wing on 14.11, and 48 near Glaston on 21.11.
- Mistle Thrush.** Up to ten fed in a rural garden near Normanton during both months.
- Blackcap.** A male was in an Edith Weston garden on 09/10.12. The end of Dec saw singles in gardens in Clipsham (30/31) and Oakham (30).
- Chiffchaff.** One was at Brooke on 06 and 12.11, one was at Empingham sewage works on 30.11 and one was at RW (Burley Fishponds) on 20.12.
- Long-tailed Tit.** 12 were noted near Wardley on 23.11.
- Willow Tit.** Present at Leighfield throughout both months, with up to 3 reported.
- Marsh Tit.** Fed regularly at a Tunneley Wood feeder throughout both months. One was near Wardley on 09.12 and one began visiting a Wing feeder on 23.12.
- Raven.** One or two noted at Leighfield between 30.11 and 26.12. There was a pair at Burley Wood on 09.12.
- Starling.** c.900 passed west at Leighfield on 12.11.
- Tree Sparrow.** Two or three visited feeders at Normanton and Rowell's Lodge. Odd birds were noted in a finch flock near Lyddington on 01.12.
- Chaffinch.** c18 gathered at a feeding station in a Barrowden garden on 07.12.
- Brambling.** One or two were seen regularly at Leighfield during both months. Up to 8 fed on beechmast at Exton in Nov and early Dec, and there were 10 in a large Greenfinch flock near Glaston on 21.11.
- Greenfinch.** c.100 roosted at Leighfield during both months and there were 112 near Glaston on 21.11.
- Goldfinch.** Garden numbers were generally low but one Oakham garden attracted up to 20 in Nov. A flock of 100 was at RW (Lyndon) on 09.12 and 50 roosted in a holly in a Lyddington garden in Dec.
- Siskin.** Up to 20 were noted at Leighfield and RW (Eggleton) in both months. There were 75 at RW (Lyndon) on 09.12. Two fed on sunflower hearts in Clipsham on 30/31.12.
- Linnet.** Flocks of c.50 were noted near Glaston on 21.11 and near Shacklewell Hollow on 24.12.
- Lesser Redpoll.** Two or three were seen at Leighfield from 8.12 and both RW reserves. One fed on nyger in a Stamford garden on 24.12.
- Bullfinch.** Small numbers were noted in the Wardley and Ridlington areas on 30.11 and 14.12. A flock of 12 was seen near Brooke on 03.12.
- Yellowhammer.** Song was heard at Beaumont Chase on 02.11. Although not in the regular song period, Witherby's Handbook notes 'occasional' song at this time. The largest flock reported was of only 10 at Horn Mill on 08.11.

## National Waterfowl Counts November/December 2007

	Rutland Water		Eyebrook Reservoir		Fort Henry Ponds and Exton Park		Holywell Lake	
	11.11.07	09.12.07	11.11.07	16.12.07	09.11.07	09.12.07	17.11.07	08.12.07
Mute Swan	389	249	110	107	10	10	2	1
Bewick's Swan				12				
Whooper Swan					1			
Pink-footed Goose							1	
Greylag Goose	78	206	76	140	106	81	23	1
Canada Goose	821	276	180	142	1	1	150	
Barnacle Goose	14	13						
Egyptian Goose	53	24						
Shelduck	6	7						
Wigeon	1410	1469	214	340	100	78	2	2
Gadwall	562	401	46	42	95	88	60	60
Teal	756	664	255	212	37	13	24	29
Mallard	1068	787	93	80	141	140	104	148
Pintail	77	25	3		8	3		
Shoveler	150	42	6	3	53	10	13	8
Red-crested Pochard	2							
Pochard	207	291	125	231		1		
Tufted Duck	2887	3127	154	391	56	83	12	6
Scaup	8	10		4				
Goldeneye	225	320	10	43	1			
Smew				6				
Goosander	9	24		1				
Ruddy Duck	5	2		4				
Little Grebe	93	70	3	8	6	6	6	3
Great Crested Grebe	323	190	16	47				
Cormorant	190	140	21	30				
Grey Heron	17	14	2	6	1			
Little Egret	1	1						
Water Rail	6							
Moorhen	79	152	3	1	51	31	20	17
Coot	4284	3963	150	99	78	78	11	11

## ROOK SURVEY REPORT 2007 compiled by Allan Paterson

34 Redcot Gardens, Stamford PE9 1DL. Telephone: 01780 766 197



This is our final Rook survey report. More information will be available in the **Annual Report (2007)**.

It is an incomplete record as we only have partial figures for one area, but the information overall suggests that the total numbers of nests and

rookeries has stayed around the same figures as last year's total.

Again, only those rookeries that showed some activity in the last three years are included, with inactive sites deleted from the count. Year by year, rooks appear to relocate to various new sites

or rejoin large sites without their being any large swing to pre-existing rookeries.

Some suggested reasons for these changes are:

- Change of land use – not enough food available because of change from spring sowing to autumn seeding and planting;
- Possible later building of nests – up to July was suggested by Paul Green in the BBC *Wildlife* magazine for January 1995;
- Climate change – earlier leaf burst caused by earlier warm weather. NB: near heat-wave conditions in April created especial problems for counters whose rookeries are in horse-chestnut trees, as such nests can be obliterated by foliage almost overnight;
- General decline of rook populations throughout the whole of the country.

Probably only a nationwide survey would show some of the causes for changing numbers.

*Here is the list of the volunteers at Spring 2007:*  
*Barbara and Don Parker*  
*Shirley Hope, Carol Needham and Ann Tomlinson*  
*Allan and Joy Paterson*  
*Patrick and Enid Mann*  
*Kath Potterton*

*Graham Worrall and Mark Branston*  
*Max and Eileen Winslow*

This year we are saying goodbye to two teams: Don and Barbara Parker (Area 1) and Patrick and Enid Mann (Area 4) have been involved since 1994, when a small group of volunteers set up the original survey, later enlarged to the existing seven teams. We owe them a special debt of gratitude for all their devotion and expertise over the years and we offer them, on behalf of the Society, our grateful thanks.

Anno Domini has caught up with your collator so this will be my final report to the Society on Rutland's rooks; also, Joy and I have decided, with much regret, that this will be the end of our counting days.

Special thanks also go to Max and Eileen Winslow, who, with the assistance of Phil Rudkin, have spent a great deal of time identifying and reassessing their very large and unwieldy area. Using their work as a starting point, this might be an appropriate time for a total reappraisal of the survey, if it is decided to carry the work forward.

For the last time, Joy and I would like to thank, on behalf of the Society, all of our 'counters' for their dedication and hard work over the years.

*Allan Paterson, October 2007*

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## **BOTANY NOTES** compiled by Graham Worrall

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### **November-December 2007**

Considering it is said that 2007 is the second warmest in the decade and we certainly have not had an autumn drought, not many flowers were out in November and December.

Only four records were received for November. Tim Caldicott recorded **Musk Mallow** still in flower at Leighfield Fishponds and Terry Mitcham reported **Musk Thistle**, **Yarrow** and **Bramble** on the footpath from the east end of Empingham up Chapel Hill on the way to Tickencote.

December was better with 12 species reported by Roy Lemmon from the Rutland side of Eyebrook Reservoir, which included **Cut-leaved Crane's-bill**, **Smooth Sow-thistle** and **Dandelion**, along



with **Shepherd's-purse**, **Small Toadflax**, **Creeping Cinquefoil** and **Cat's-ear**. Clive Jones reported a wheatfield with lots of flowering weeds – quite a rarity in itself. **Red Dead-nettle** and **Field Penny-cress** were in abundance near Holygate Road in Ridlington. Graham Worrall reported the first **Lesser Celandine** of the spring flowering on Christmas Eve on the verge next to the south gate of Seaton churchyard. This is the second earliest flowering in over 15 years of observation. The earliest was about the 15th December (the latest was in the third week of February!)

Thanks for the records and let us hope for a more fruitful new year.

*PS – Please see the urgent request for help with the Verges Survey in Noticeboard on page 2.*

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## LEPIDOPTERA NOTES compiled by Jean Harvey

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### November/December 2007

#### BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS

This time last year I reported that five butterfly species had been seen during November and that Red Admiral records had been received from four areas in early December. What a difference a year can make as recent butterfly records have been restricted to single specimens of **Red Admiral** and all in November. These were noted in Langham, Leighfield Fishponds, Oakham and on five dates in Edith Weston.

A **Hummingbird Hawkmoth** was observed feeding on Verbena on November 2nd in a garden at Cottesmore. This is an interesting record as it is in recent years only that this species has appeared in winter months.

Leaf mines were found on Bramble at Edith Weston caused by *Stigmella aurella*. The mines of the Firethorn Leaf miner were identified on *Pyracantha* near Ryhall Church.

The garden traps at Lyddington were operated on nine nights during November with totals of 7 micro species and 19 macro species for the

month. Amongst these were single specimens of **The Gem** and **Dark Sword Grass** which are both immigrants. Most moths appeared in very small numbers with the exception of 19 **November Moths** and 17 **Feathered Thorns** on November 1st and 10 **December Moths** and 10 **Winter Moths** on November 27th. These traps were used twice in December with one micro moth and five macro moth species taken. There were 12 **Winter Moths** on December 4th.

Other trapping records have included a few winter species at the garden trap in Barrowden. A **Sprawler** was caught amongst nine species at Barnsdale Gardens at Exton on November 11th and the trap operated in Edith Weston on two occasions were both noted as nil catches.

Another year has ended and will be remembered as a very poor one owing to the weather conditions. We must now look forward to a new season with hope and with this in mind I thank all members who have continued to submit their records and wish everyone who reads this a very happy New Year.

*Recent contributors are as follows: J Ansley, V Arnold, T Caldicott, R Follows, D & F Lee, E Mann and C Nelson*

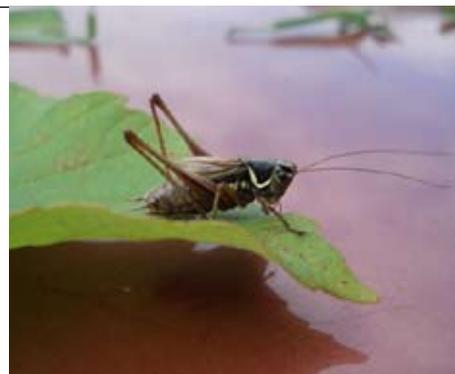
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## ORTHOPTERA REPORT compiled by Phil Rudkin

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The orthoptera season ended effectively at the end of October. Therefore, this gives me the opportunity to muse over the 2007 season.

We are all aware of the conditions, the excellent warm and sunny April, then one of the wettest summers on record, Slow Worms seeking warm refuges because of the poor conditions. The Society's moth trappers report low catches during 2007. Butterfly recorders had high expectations for July and August, but this turned out to be disappointing, with the dismal wet weather ending their hopes. Reports came from the BTO of many nest failures, including flooding of ground nesting waders and even nest boxes filling with water of species such as Tree Sparrows. Some of the tit family also suffered, with the prey items washed off the leaves to add to their problems.



Roesel's Bush Cricket

So, what of the fortunes of the grasshoppers and crickets in Rutland!

Members will be pleased to know that these insects coped very well with the poor weather in 2007. The most important factor is the hatching of the eggs, and this slightly varies each season depending on the temperature. Grasshopper eggs hatch in early spring, and the crickets in May. Here is the critical point: it was the warmest April recorded in the UK. It was also sunny and dry.

The first few days in May were similar, but after that the poor weather set in. The fact that such good numbers of the orthoptera were observed during the latter part of the season suggests that the nymphs took full advantage of the warmth of April and early May.

However, it was noticeable that the **Lesser Marsh Grasshopper**, *Chorthippus albomarginatus*, was slow in developing, and stridulating was not prolific until the autumn. Also sadly, the **Common Green Grasshopper**, *Omocestus viridulus*, numbers were well down. Interestingly, this species is one of the earliest to mature into an adult, and in previous years has even been heard stridulating in late May. Could they have perished in the cold and wet of summer?

The spread and expansion of the **Roesel's Bush Cricket**, *Metrioptera roeselii* and the **Long-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus discolor*, continued to excite, and many new squares were filled and habitats occupied. Then, on 13th September, a brand new species arrived, and the **Short-winged Conehead**, *Conocephalus dorsalis*, made its first appearance in Rutland on the verge at the lower end of the Hambleton Peninsular Road (full story in November *Fieldfare*).

Much interest centred around the large numbers of the macropterous (long-winged forms) of the Roesel's and the Long-winged Conehead, which were found in Rutland (males and females), and also in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire.

It was fascinating to read that the macropterous males' stridulations do not alter the frequency of the sounds.

I had a learning curve on 7th October, which was a dull, cool day, 12 °C. The rate of the stridulations of the Long-winged and Short-winged Coneheads, and Roesel's Bush Cricket were very much slower, making me think for a moment that further new species had arrived. But I then realised that it was the cool conditions that had caused this. I read in *British Wildlife*, October 2007, page 54, that the females have the ability to recognise the songs at this slower delivery. Amazing!

I received an email from Jenny Harris, Senior Conservation Officer for the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, informing me, that during grass cutting at Merry's Meadows nature reserve on 2nd October, the Trust volunteers observed a male Roesel's Bush Cricket crawling out of the cut grass – he was moved to safety. Later, a female was found in long grasses nearby. This is

old grassland, with the speciality being orchids, particularly Green-winged Orchids. Jenny asked me if the population of Roesel's would suffer because of the mowing.

I gave this some thought, and remembered the time years ago, of traditional farming methods with plenty of hay fields. The hay was usually cut in July, and in that era, the orthoptera were plentiful, so I reasoned that they had somehow survived this cut at Merry's Meadows on 2nd October. However, to ease my mind I contacted Dr Peter Sutton, head of the National Orthoptera Recording Scheme. Peter's reply was 'My immediate reaction is "keep the best mowing regime for the orchids". They are far less adaptable than the orthoptera. The eggs will survive the mowing regime, and if the orthoptera suffered temporarily because of it, they would have no problem recolonising.'

Regarding the appearance and spread of the orthoptera in Rutland, it may be of interest to note the distribution of the following species from David Ragge's wonderful work, *Grasshoppers, Crickets and Cockroaches of the British Isles* (1965).

**Roesel's Bush Cricket:** *The distribution in this country is much influenced by its liking for flat estuarine localities. Thus it occurs in the region of such estuaries as the Solent, the Thames and the Humber. Apart from the counties mentioned, there are records from South Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Surrey.*

**Short-winged Conehead:** *In England this bush cricket is known principally from the southern and eastern counties. Its only known occurrence north of the Wash is at Spurn Head, East Yorkshire, and the only inland counties where it has so far been found are Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire, where it occurs in the Fenland, and Bedfordshire. It has been recorded from a few Welsh vice-counties, but there is no record for Ireland, Scotland or the Isle of Man.*

**Long-winged Conehead:** *Known only from Dorset, South Hants, West and East Sussex, East Kent and the Isle of Wight. Though sometimes occurring a few miles inland, it is seldom found far from tidal water.*

To compare these quotes from 1965 with the current situation, read the Orthoptera Report in May *Fieldfare* for Roesel's and the Long-winged Conehead. For Short-winged Conehead, refer to the November edition.

Finally: Due for publication around October 2008, is a new provisional distribution atlas for the orthoptera in the UK. I am delighted to inform members that Dr Peter Sutton will be including our Society's contributions.

# GLOW-WORM NOTES compiled by Linda Worrall

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## Barrowden Back Road Update

I am sorry to find that a biodiversity management plan has apparently now been formalised for the development in the field behind the Wildlife Site on the north verge and that building will take place.

The plan is based on the ideas of the Consultant Entomologist eventually appointed by the developers, only after planning permission had been given. He surveyed the verge and field edges one night last July looking only for glowing females, but, importantly, did not survey for larvae, which do not necessarily live in the same places that glows are seen, and without which there would be no glows.

It seems it is intended during construction to prevent parking on the verge; I cannot believe it will not happen subsequently. It appears that a form of landscaping will be used with a wish that glow-worms might integrate with the houses: research shows this does not happen. Lighting restrictions will be devised with the purpose of preventing males being confused and lured to lights instead of flying to the static glowing females in June and July: vital, but awkward to implement and risky; houses are far too close to usual glowing places. A brief follow-up survey is intended sometime this year, and perhaps another one before 2011: also vital, but if there are problems the causes cannot be undone.

Meanwhile, building work will destroy any larvae on the site hibernating under stones or foraging for snails. There was a long flourish of glows last summer, but these adult females were probably glowing night after night until they died, waiting in vain for mates. Any resulting larvae, plus those surviving from 2006 and due to pupate this year, need extra protection, not intrusion.

Glow-worms have used strategies against natural disaster for aeons, but have not had to face massive human onslaught as well until very recently. Barrowden was very special, thanks to refuges in the ancient features of the old grass closes forming the verges along Back Road and the ditch and hedge running north to the A47 in the same field as the development, and

also the limestone grassland verges along the very old road formerly called The Drift, now Luffenham Road. Grassland strips in the fields behind the roadside hedges are also valuable habitats. However, Luffenham Road's glows are increasingly erratic and Back Road is now being invaded.

For the past year, after environmentally interested bodies actually found out about the imminent planning application, trying to protect Back Road glow-worms has felt like trying to stop rainforest being cut down or clearing up after a nuclear accident. The biggest problem has been the usual assumption that human concerns should take precedence over wildlife and not be inconvenienced by it, even where it is rare and iconic enough to be specially recognised and publicly marked, could easily be irretrievably lost and where guidelines exist to protect it. The full implications of the presence of glow-worms needed to be properly assessed well in advance of any planning application, but the matter seems to have been thought trivial.

Once this site had been earmarked as suitable and preferable for 'low-cost housing' over any other, the powers that be seemed to tear ahead like bolting horses lest any perceived advantage should disappear. Furthermore, people logically in a position to have a considerable input have for various reasons indicated their inability to become involved, and one sadly died. All attempts to prevent the use of the site or at least grant land in lieu to compensate for the effect on the colony were cut off. The management plan went ahead without our knowledge.

There is no doubt that in the current political climate all wildlife legislation needs a great deal more strength. In spite of their huge material preoccupations it is well known that people benefit from experiencing a sense of wildness. By choosing to spoil their own extraordinary natural advantage in Back Road, both Barrowden and Rutland have scored spectacular own goals. Put delicately, it's a shame.

# PLANT GALLS REPORT compiled by Roy Lemmon

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## November 2007

In line with the general running down of the year, this month produced just 12 records, all but one caused by fungi. This exception was noted at Eyebrook Reservoir, the Rutland shore of course on 8th as yellowish green patches on Alder leaves and is caused by a gall mite of the genus *Eriophyes*. The others from that date were 3 rusts, on groundsel, dog rose and ground ivy respectively along with a smut which produces galls on leaves of creeping buttercup. As I mentioned in the September report this smut is a late developer and eventually the galls will ripen and open up to discharge the spores as a darkish powder, hence the reason it is called a smut.

Four reports came from Horn Mill on 15th, two of them rusts on sun spurge and white clover and also a fungus called 'White blister' on shepherd's purse. This is quite common and appears as a white infestation on stems and leaves, causing distortion which is especially noticeable on the stems. The other member of this quartet was a fungus which galls ground elder. The latter is not my favourite plant especially if it appears in one's garden so it is refreshing to find that it too is not without its problems. The fungus produces galling both on leaves and leaf stems but it is unlikely that it will do more than curb the plant's growth; it is after all in its own interest not to kill the host plant.

The final reports for this month were just two from Ketton Quarry on 22nd, one a rust on wild marjoram and the other the smut on creeping buttercup referred to above. As on the 8th the smut was still immature and galls it produced were still intact.

## December 2007

I was pleasantly surprised to receive one report this month, especially as I had not found anything myself. It was in the form of a swollen stem on creeping thistle, by now of course dry and brown in appearance, but originally green and containing one or more chambers in which the larvae of the gall fly develop. This was noted in Gorsefield Wood on 5th and is a species which occurs fairly frequently in the County, so well worth looking for.

From now until the new growth starts will be a quiet or even a silent time for gall reports, but this record reinforces the point which I made last year that there are some galls which persist and which are well worth seeking out and reporting. One of the examples I quoted then was the moss gall, aka Bedeguar gall or Robin's Pincushion, and I should be happy to receive any reports you have of this or any other persistent gall.

*My thanks to T Caldicott, R Lemmon*

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## INSECTS AND OTHERS

compiled by Gill Chiverton



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November and December are naturally quiet months for insects in our part of the world. However, they are all out there somewhere in various forms, waiting, and we will be enjoying them again soon.

## November 2007

The **Harlequin Ladybird** was again in evidence this month. One harlequin ladybird was observed and photographed in the Leighfield area and another single one was seen on a bedroom wall at a house in Wing. Three harlequin ladybirds were

also seen on bramble plants at Barnsdale Lodge Wood. From Uppingham we received a report of an 'explosion' of harlequin ladybirds, mainly red but occasionally dark forms. These were seen over a period of time from the end of October into the first few days of November, both in the observer's garden and also entering the house. Harlequin ladybirds were also reported from Edith Weston – over the first week of November a total of 32 were observed in a garden there. In the Leighfield area 60 **Orange Ladybirds** were noted hibernating in an Ash tree.

At the beginning of the month some dragonflies were still on the wing at Leighfield Fishponds. Still active were five **Common Darters**, three **Southern Hawkers** and three **Migrant Hawkers**. The last dragonfly to be noted was a solitary Migrant Hawker on the sixth of the month. Apart from the ladybirds only one beetle record was received this month – a **Lily Beetle** was noted at a garden in Edith Weston.

## December 2007

One beetle record for this month – a Lily Beetle was found dead in a water tub in a garden at Edith Weston. One other report for the very last day of the month of the species of **Bumble Bee**, *Bombus lucorum*. A queen and one worker were observed feeding on winter honeysuckle flowers in Barrowden. The weather reported at the time was warm, 10 °C, but overcast.

*My thanks to all recorders: V Arnold, T Caldicott, C Gallimore, C Jones, A Lawrence, L & G Worrall*

## MYCOLOGY NOTES compiled by Linda Worrall

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### November/December 2007

I was pleased and surprised to see in the New Year's Honours that Professor Brian Kerry, Head of the Nematode Interactions Unit at Rothamsted Research, was awarded an MBE for services to science. Nematodes ('eelworms') are tiny, many millions of years old with many species. Possibly the most abundant animals on earth, they live not only in soil but also in, for example, brackish water. They can be a crop pest, but much more needs to be known about their contribution to the web of life. They eat and are consumed by fungi, too!

November was mainly dry, cold, milder towards month end with a few gill fungi but lots of other interest; December very cold and dry. Roy Lemmon once more drew and identified fascinating *Ingoldian hyphomycetes* in the foam at Eyebrook Reservoir, as they recycle leaves into nutrients which will eventually provide food for fish, and also investigated algae and diatoms in North Brook. Earthstars arrived in Normanton. Christmas week produced gifts of an intriguing lichen in Wardley Wood and a list of fungi on a dead Black Poplar. Thanks!

### RESERVES

**Ketton Quarry:** 22.11: Carpark/RIGS area: Rust *Puccinia menthae* on Marjoram. Valley area: Discomycetes *Leptotrochila ranunculi* on Creeping Buttercup, *Pseudopeziza trifolii* on White Clover; Sycamore Tarspot, fresh Candle-snuff Fungus. North Glade: Purple Jellydisc *Ascocoryne sarcoides* on sawn stump of ?beech, old Turkeytails with alga *Pleurococcus sp* on top of them, rust *Puccinia glechomatis* hypophyllous on Ground Ivy. Woodland: On fallen beech, *Ascospore Hypoxylon cohaerens* and good numbers of Dead



Man's Fingers; several fresh Jelly Ears, moderate numbers of Small Stagshorn *Calocera cornea* on decorticated beech; one Variable Oysterling; in beech leaf litter: two smelling Iodine Bonnets *Mycena filopes*; smut *Entyloma microsporium* on Creeping Buttercup and Hyphomycete *Ramularia calcea* on Ground Ivy.

**Rutland Water, Burley Fishponds:** 14.11: On willow, Splitgill *Schizophyllum commune* on cut log and fresh Blushing Bracket. 22.11: Common Bonnet on lying rotting sweet chestnut wood, 4 Golden Waxcap *Hygrocybe chlorophana* fresh in grass, on willow Orange Brain *Tremella mesenterica*, 6 Glistening Inkcap *Coprinus micaceus* at base of old hawthorn. Remarkably, on an old straw bale there was a fresh eruption of what appeared to be Oyster Mushrooms – this is most unusual, as these are usually on wood, but their hyphae below ground lasso nematode worms (see introduction above), probably to gain nitrogen. Were the right nematodes in the straw? Need to know more!

**Hambleton Wood:** 29.11: On fallen decorticated broadleaved log, 3 Layered Cups *Peziza varia* and 4 Angel's Bonnet *Mycena arcangeliana*; Candlesnuff Fungus and hyphomycete *Penicillium expansum* on fallen, bruised Crab Apple ('blue-green, powdery-velvety').

**Eyebrook Reservoir, Rutland Shore:** 8.11: Sycamore Tarspot with large stromata; anamorphs of powdery mildews *Erysiphe aquilegia var ranunculi* on Creeping Buttercup, *E cichoracearum var cichoracearum* on Smooth Sow-thistle, *E cichoracearum var fischeri* on Groundsel, *E cynoglossi* on Forget-me-Not, *E galeopsidis* on Hedge Woundwort and White Deadnettle,

*Sphaerotheca fusca* on Dandelion; teleomorph (sexual) stages of powdery mildews *Microsphaera sparsa* on Guelder Rose, *M tortilis* on Dogwood, *E heraclei* on Cow Parsley and there were many tiny cleistothecia of *M alphitoides* on Oak. Dessicated gill fungi: 10 Tawny Funnels, 15 Velvet Shanks. Smut *Entyloma microsporium* on Creeping Buttercup. Rusts *Phragmidium mucronatum* epiphyllous on Dog Rose, *Puccinia arenariae* with telia hypophyllous on Chickweed, *P glechomatis* hypophyllous on Ground Ivy, gall former *P lagenophorae* on Daisy and Groundsel and *Phragmidium violaceum* hypophyllous on Bramble with hyphomycete *Hainesia rubi* hyperparasitic on that rust. Ingoldian hyphomycetes from foam: *Alatospora acuminata*, *Articulospora tetracladia*, *Lemonniera aquatica* and *Tetracladium marchalianum*.

**Horn Mill:** 15.11: 'White blister' *Albugo candida* had infected many plants of Shepherd's-purse, teleomorph states of powdery mildews *Erysiphe depressa* on Lesser Burdock, *E heraclei* on Cow Parsley, *E sordida* on Greater Plantain; rusts *Melampsora euphorbia* hypophyllous on Sun Spurge, *Phragmidium violaceum* ditto on Bramble, gall former *Puccinia lagenophorae* on Groundsel, *P tanacetii* on Mugwort, *Uromyces trifolii* hypophyllous on White Clover with heavy infection. Rust *Puccinia graminis* var *graminicola* was tentatively identified on Cock's-foot as telia were not present.

**Horn Mill Bridge:** 15.11: *Protomyces macrosporus*, an ascomycete forming galls, was on Ground Elder leaves and petioles. **Northbrook, nr**

**Horn Mill:** 15.11: Alga *Tribonema* sp, possibly *T bombycinum*, seen as a brownish 'fuzz' on the submerged stems of Water-cress in the brook, the alga is yellow-green, filamentous and unbranched; diatoms *Meridion* sp and *Synedra* sp were associated with the same alga.

## WOODS

**Gorsefield Wood:** 5.12: A good number of Scurfy Deceivers *Laccaria proxima* (= *L laccata* var *proxima*), several fresh Wood Blewits under oak and 2 Brown Mottlegills *Panaeolina foenicisecii* in grass.

**Wardley Wood:** 26.12: Yellow Brain *Tremella mesenterica* glowing orange on lying dead branch

of Field Maple. A stunning lichen was on the bark of a hazel bush close to Deepdale Brook, which was photographed and looks like *Graphis scripta*, rare, and this would be the second location in Rutland. Just might be *G elegans* however, and we need to confirm.

## FIELDS, VERGES, GARDENS

**Tunneley Wood:** 1.11: A ring of Trooping Funnels *Clitocybe geotropa*.

**South Luffenham:** 12.11: A Shaggy Ink Cap on verge of Barrowden Rd by stable entrance.

**Tixover:** 18.11: Field Blewits in tree avenue.

**Normanton:** 25.11: 2 'Rosy Earthstars' *Geastrum rufescens* (*vulgatum*) were seen for the first time under Berberis shrubs alongside conifer hedge in garden by Rutland Water (as their name suggests they are pinker than other earthstars).

**Barrowden:** 27.11: Small clump of Velvet Shanks on old Field Maple stump. 17.12: The Velvet Shanks dried before maturity; 3 clumps of Glistening Inkcaps at the base of the same stump also dessicated.

**Ridlington, Red Way:** 27.12: Beardy lichen *Ramalina farinacea* on windswept ash trunk.

**Brooke, River Gwash:** 27.12: On elder, a few Jelly Ears and Elder Whitewash; on willow Blushing Bracket, Velvet Shanks, Yellow Brain on twigs and an orange jelly; White Brain on lying dead wood; Candlesnuff on mossy log; Variable Oysterling, Winter Twiglet. One large de-barked dead Black Poplar at least 6 species: *Ascocoryne cylichnium* in moss, small group of Small Stagshorn *Calocera cornea*, good area of Wrinkled Crust *Phlebia radiata*, Lumpy Bracket *Trametes gibbosa* with centre stained green with algae, Turkeytails, and the deep blue-grey caps of Oyster Mushroom.

**Leighfield, R Chater:** 30.12: On willow: Blushing Bracket, Willow Bracket, Velvet Shank, Yellow Brain, Netted Crust *Byssomerulius corium* and *Exidia recisa* (bless it!); on elder: Jelly Ears and Elder Whitewash; Cinnamon Porecrust *Phellinus ferreus* on dead Hawthorn branch; Winter Twiglets in grass and Oyster Mushroom.

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Many thanks to: A & L Biddle, T Caldicott, Dr M Griffin, G Griffin, Dr C R Jones, R Lemmon, G & L Worrall

## MAMMAL REPORT compiled by Linda Biddle

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### November/December 2007

A happy New Year to everyone, and let us hope for good wildlife sighting in 2008. There have been very few reports of mammals this month, which perhaps reflects the poor weather we have had since November.

The first really miserable day was when the RNHS held a mammal trapping visit at Ketton Quarry, led by **Harry Ball** and his team from Leicester Entomological Society. Eight intrepid members met on a cold, wet and thoroughly unpleasant morning in November (several others were willing to join us but unfortunately did not find us in time). We had a fascinating time, looking at a total of 30 traps which had been set the previous evening. Most of the animals caught were **Long-tailed field mice** and these were interesting because they were at various stages of development, many being juveniles. We also saw two **Common** or **Short-tailed Voles** and a **Bank Vole**. It was a valuable learning experience for us all, and well worth the effort. We are grateful to Harry and his team of for turning out to show us the animals.

The **Otter** has been visiting his/her usual haunts at Fort Henry. Fresh spraint was found on Nov 5th and 9th and removed, and a recorder noticed more on 15th in the same spot, so visits have been quite regular, though no more was found up to the end of the year.

**Badger** latrines were actively being used in Hambleton Wood at the end of November, and similar signs of life at Pickworth Wood were noted. A **Stoat** was reported from Wing in Dr Gallimore's garden on Nov 3rd, 14th and 18th, and on Nov 29th it was seen to catch a bank vole, running up a tree with it, presumably stashed it away, and then carried on hunting. Bank voles have been seen on several occasions in the garden since then. The stoat was later seen chasing a

**Rabbit** with myxomatosis. The rabbit nearly ran into Dr Gallimore, which distracted the stoat from the chase, but it almost certainly caught the rabbit shortly afterwards. Another stoat was observed at Rutland water on the boardwalk approaching the wader scrape at Lyndon in October, and in November one ran along Barrowden Road, Ketton, crossing from side to side apparently hunting each verge. Fresh **molehills** have been seen alongside the Eyebrook reservoir, between Horn Mill and Fort Henry Ponds and in Hambleton Woods. A total of four **Fox** reports have been received, all from Morkery wood, 2 in November, and 2 in December.

A **Water Shrew** was found dead on 12th November, in Ketton Quarry near the adder basking area. The animal may have been a juvenile as the demarcation between upper dark fur and white under fur was not very distinct.

**Grey Squirrels** are very commonly seen, two reported from near Ayston, where they were foraging among trees, one on the ground in Hambleton Wood. They are often seen crossing the road in Ketton, near the cement works entrance, and also at Tickencote, alongside the A1 on the road to Crossroads farm.

**Brown Rats** have been reported as road casualties from Xroads farm, Red Hill and Wakerley Road Barrowden, and live ones seen on two occasions at Red Hill Barrowden.

**Fallow Deer** were reported in large numbers from Pickworth, Morkery and Clipsham woods early in the period, but numbers declined sharply towards the end of December, probably because of increased tree working and pheasant shooting being carried out. A total of 6 **Muntjac** were seen, 5 at Pickworth Wood and one at Morkery, all during December.

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*Many thanks to all recorders for sending in your notes, and please continue to do so in 2008!: A Biddle, C Gallimore, J Harris, J & R Hutton, R Lemmon, P J Rudkin, P Scott, L & G Worrall*

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## BAT REPORT compiled by Jenny Harris

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### July/December 2007

The persistently wet weather in June and July had a profound and detrimental effect on bat-breeding activity; bat workers all over England said they had never had a summer like it. Pipistrelles were naturally the species that most of us see grounded or abandoned, and there is a more detailed analysis below. From September onwards, however, the weather may have allowed bats to feed up and gain weight for hibernation, if there were sufficient insects around for them, and there were an unusual number of flight records right up to the end of October.

*My thanks for records and assistance on bat surveys to A Beaumont, Dr C Gallimore, F & D Lee, P J Rudkin, A Tomlinson, D Whitefield, G & L Worrall.*

During the period most records were assigned to species by our increasingly knowledgeable members, but in October Linda and Graham Worrall report seeing one or two, and occasionally more, bats flying round their garden on a number of occasions. This gave pleasure to the man painting the outside of their house who, often working into the dusk, felt 'buzzed' when up his ladder. At the end of October, from 29th to 31st, Andy Lear saw a number of small bats foraging along the hedgerow next to Wood Lane, Braunston.

#### Pipistrelle species *Pipistrellus* spp.

Pipistrelle bats were seen on several dates in a Barrowden garden, and on 12.7 at least 15 crossed the garden between 9.50 pm and 10.0 pm in quick succession. A few pipistrelles were foraging in Little Casterton on 7.7 and 21.7, where they were active a good 10 minutes before the long-eared bats emerged. In August, pipistrelles were regular in Barrowden; both **soprano** and **common pipistrelles** *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* and *P. pipistrellus* were very active at Eyebrook Reservoir on 10.8 and 23.8, while at Hambleton Wood on 23.8, both species were foraging among trees near the fishermen's car park in the early evening and over the grassland and shoreline after dark.

In September, it was noted that there had been fewer bats all summer in a Lyddington garden. At Hambleton on 14.9, as we watched the Daubenton's bats, numerous pipistrelles flew very close to our heads, no doubt catching insects attracted to the torchlight. This was not so obvious on 22.9, which was a bright moonlit evening, and the bats seemed to be foraging closer to trees.

Records came from seven roosts in the county, five of which were newly discovered this year. In June, a colony of soprano pipistrelles was recorded by the owner, who counted 251 bats on 18.6. In July a number of young babies appeared over



Pipistrelle. Hugh Clark, Bat Conservation Trust (Go to the RNHS website to view this *Fieldfare* with the bat photos in colour)

several days, and seemed to be climbing down inside the cavity wall, to emerge on a ventilator duct, where they were collected and replaced in the roost entrance. There were still no bats at the Manton and Braunston soprano roosts, but at an Oakham roost, 133 bats returned in July after spending June elsewhere. There were 82 common pips at Dr Gallimore's roost in Wing on 12.7. On 13 August, Jon Russ discovered a soprano pip roost with roughly 200 bats in Hambleton, and two further roosts were found in Oakham during August, both situated at the gable end where bats entered under fascia boards. No counts were carried out at these two sites.

Pipistrelles bats were very much affected by the bad weather in June and July, and the appearance of abandoned infants was spread over a much

longer period than usual, with quite tiny babies still being found in the first week of July, when in normal years many would be expected to be flying by then.

The last flight records for pipistrelle were made by Dr Gallimore, who saw four or five bats flying round his garden on 28.10, two or three on 31.10 and the very last, two flying round his house at dusk on 1.11.

#### **Nathusius' Pipistrelle** *Pipistrellus nathusii*

Following information from members of RNHS, on 22.7 I visited a potential bat roost, with another member of the Bat Group, in Burley Wood. At about 9.35 pm loud buzzing social calls began coming from the roost, registering at approximately 25 to 35 KHz on the bat detectors, and a few minutes later the bats began to emerge. However, instead of flying off to forage, the bats circled the roost in an agitated manner, flying repeatedly to and from the entrance. This seemed to encourage others, perhaps juveniles, to emerge and by the time activity ceased at 10.15 pm, 20–25 bats had flown out. As we listened to them it was soon obvious that these were Nathusius' pipistrelles, that this was probably a maternity roost and therefore a very important site. To date there have been approximately 300 records of Nathusius' pipistrelles since 1940, with four maternity roosts in Northern Ireland but only two other roosts in mainland Britain, one in Lincolnshire, one in Norfolk. The status of both these roosts is uncertain, and all other records have been of single bats only. It is therefore very important that both the roost itself and its location are carefully protected.

During the period, further recordings were made of the species on 13.8, 23.8, 14.9 and 22.9 at Hambleton village and along the south shore of Hambleton Peninsula near the wood, by Jon Russ (the national expert on this species) and the Bat Group. Ecologists working at Egleton heard Nathusius' pipistrelles foraging over Lagoon 3 on 12.9 and 8.10. In 2006 Jon Russ also recorded them at the bottom of the hill leading down to Barnsdale Wood, and in large numbers near the church in Hambleton, on 30.9.

#### **Brown Long-eared bat** *Plecotus auritus*

During July, additional counts were carried out at two roosts for the National Bat Monitoring Programme (NBMP); the Little Casterton roost held 11 bats on 7.7 and 21.7, while there were 25 at The Stone House, Wing. I believe that long-eared babies may have been born late this year, as a colony visited (in Eastwell) on 24.7 contained a



**Brown-long-eared.** R E Stebbings, Bat Conservation Trust

non-furred juvenile, which was probably only a week old.

Probable brown long-eared bats were flying in the Worralls' Barrowden garden, mainly in the latter half of the month, and from remains in the car port were preying on at least seven species of moth. Bats flying like long-eared, but not heard on detectors, were seen on the eastern edge of Eyebrook Reservoir plantation, and near the track between the reservoir edge and the trees on 10.8. A small number of bats were recorded in Hambleton Wood on 23.8 and 14.9. Consultants surveying Egleton nature reserve observed four long-eared bats emerge from an isolated oak tree in late August. The last flight record was of a single long-eared bat that flew past me, quite close, at about 5.30 pm as I stood in my Oakham garden on 31.10.

In October, a new maternity roost was discovered between Whitwell and Oakham on 13.10, from which 8–10 bats emerged on 14.10.

There were four grounded long-eared bats during the period. A male found on the floor of Market Overton church on 29.8 died the same day; an under-weight juvenile male found outside Uppingham School chapel on 5.10 was released after care on 18.10; a female found on curtains inside a house in Uppingham on 24.10 also died. The last bat of the year was a long-eared bat inside a house on 27.12. It refused water and the opportunity to fly out through an open window, and died the next day.

#### **Whiskered bat** *Myotis mystacinus*

Records in Rutland this period have all been 'possibles' and 'probables'. A probable whiskered bat was recorded at the entrance to Hambleton Wood on 14.9, while a bat foraging at Sinc Bridge, Aldgate, Ketton, on 11.10 was possibly this species. Their echo-location signals are difficult to tell from those of other *Myotis* bats, even when

analysed on BatScan. The only grounded bat was from just over the border, a thin male picked up at the Ryhall Road Hospital, Stamford. When released, it flew off north-west without any hesitation.

**Daubenton's bat** *Myotis daubentonii*

There were few records this period, but possible Daubenton's bats were recorded leaving Burley Wood, where we think they may roost in trees, on 22.7. During three visits to the south shore of Hambleton Peninsula, many bats were seen foraging over the reservoir, both close to shore and far out over the water; the bats were visible in the light of a high-powered torch on 23.8, 14.9 and 22.9. Consultants surveying at Egleton nature reserve have recorded Daubenton's bats on several occasions in August and September over Lagoon 3. Bats were foraging over Eyebrook reservoir on 10.8 and during the bats and moths RNHS visit on 23.8. A waterways survey for the NBMP was carried out in August on North Brook, where Daubenton's bats were recorded at several of the 10 survey points on the 1 km route, but especially at Fort Henry and over lakes at Greetham Valley Golf Club. A NBMP survey was also carried out on the River Chater in Ketton, and bats were observed on 11.8 and 24.8 on a stretch from Mill Bridge to the bridge by Fishponds Cottage in Ketton.

**Noctule bat** *Nyctalus noctula*

There were records from several areas of the county, although the majority of these were associated with Rutland Water. On 21.7, three



Noctule. Hugh Clark, Bat Conservation Trust

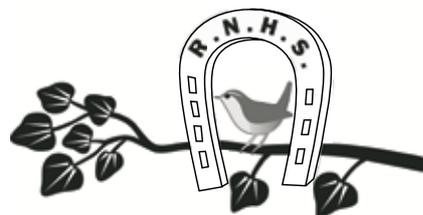
passes were heard, and one bat seen, over the village of Little Casterton. Several bats were seen flying along the main east-west ride at Burley Wood on 22.7, with foraging activity very evident. They may have been emerging from a nearby roost, as they were seen regularly over a twenty minute period from 9.35 pm, although never more than two in view at the same time. Bats were heard on 23.8, 14.9 and 22.9 over Hambleton Wood and the reservoir, with most activity seen on 22.9. Two passes were heard near the Barnsdale Country Club on 14.10 and on 23.10 a probable noctule was flying round Harrier Hide, Egleton Reserve, at about 5.45 pm. Consultants have recorded noctules on several occasions near Lagoon 3 at Egleton NR.

Bats will spend most of their time hibernating now until the end of March, but on warm evenings may be tempted out for a spot of foraging, so please look out for them wherever you may be.

# RUTLAND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

## Minutes of Annual General Meeting 2007

The AGM of the Society was held on March 6th 2007 at the Church of England School, Oakham, with 63 members present and the President in the Chair.



### 1 Apologies

A Tomlinson, H and B Bakker, D and B Parker, P and E Mann.

### 2 Minutes of AGM 2006

Circulated at the meeting, proposed J Mallet, seconded D Lee, approved and signed.

### 3 Matters Arising

Nil.

### 4 Treasurer's Report

D Lee noted another good year. A small reduction in membership was offset by increased revenue through Gift Aid. Insurance had risen and would be monitored. Proposed L Biddle, seconded J Harris, the report was adopted.

### 5 Appointment of Independent Examiner

Canon R Tovey, proposed G Kirk, seconded G Worrall, was reappointed and thanked.

### 6 Chairman's Report

A Tomlinson was absent through illness and her report was read by the President. Wildlife sightings in a hot year after a cold wet spring were noted. Numbers at Outdoor Meetings had been good and consistently high at Indoor ones; thanks were given to M Nourish and all involved. The Website had been taken over by D Lee from J Paterson, and Editorship of *Fieldfare* by H Ellis from L Worrall. Recorders for Entomology changed at the year's end, with J Harvey retaining the Lepidoptera and new Recorders appointed for Orthoptera (P Rudkin), Plant Galls (R Lemmon), Glow-worms (L Worrall) and Other Insects (G Chiverton). The Society aimed to continue to use its influence to ensure as far as possible the safeguarding of Rutland's natural heritage; its 300 members were vital in spotting and reporting wildlife, trends or problems, and were urged to be eagle-eyed. Proposed L Worrall, seconded P Rudkin, the Report was adopted.

### 7 Election of Officers and Committee

Proposed A Paterson, seconded J Hutton and declared elected: President: Sir Clifford Boulton; Chairman: Ann Tomlinson; Secretary: Linda Worrall; Treasurer: Derek Lee; Membership Secretary: Graham Worrall; Programme Secretary: Mary Nourish; Fieldfare Editor: Hendrina Ellis; other Committee Members: Linda Biddle, Jenny Harris, Andrew Lear, Frances Lee, Joe Nourish, Gill Chiverton.

Society badges were presented to the new Recorders and Committee members.

### 8 Any Other Business

The Committee were looking into obtaining a lectern for Indoor Speakers at the suggestion of M Winslow. Sir Clifford was thanked for chairing the meeting.

### 9 Date of next AGM

Tuesday March 4th 2008.