

## Positive Points. Observations. Recommendations. 2020.

1. Wonderful weather. Roy Lemmon our weather recorder wrote in the July issue of Fieldfare 'it has been generally reported to have been the sunniest April since records began. August has been the warmest in the decade 2011 - 2020. **Happy Christmas and thanks to Roy.**
2. Nature had a respite from relentless human 'interference'.
3. People realised how necessary and important nature and the countryside is to their quality of life and their wellbeing.
4. Media began to feature Climate Change more than previously with several excellent programmes and podcasts. Inventive ways were developed by Nature Conservation organisations to engage people and protect habitat.
5. Realisation that 'out there' a huge amount of work has been going on for decades in research resulting in a huge amount of 'new' knowledge and understanding which in turn has led to solutions to fix problems.
6. Young people's opinions are beginning to be taken seriously.
7. Plantlife and it's tactic of 'educating' County Councils about the importance of vegetation on verges may have had have something to do with Highways England changing their regimen of mowing verges and managing soil health to benefit biodiversity, and certainly has encouraged our local RCC to reduce verge mowing..  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/breaking-new-ground-with-eco-drive-to-bring-the-countrys-verges-to-life>  
Plantlife.org.uk

### **IMPORTANT NOTICE      Joint meeting for February**

Our February presentation meeting will be on Tuesday 2nd February, and we are invited to join Charnwood group of LRWT for a talk by DR ALAN CANN on "The Spiders of Leicestershire and Rutland". We hope that you will all be able to enjoy the meeting, but you need to book a place in advance by visiting the LRWT events website and following the instructions there to book a place. Please note that we shall be visitors at the Charnwood group meeting, so there will be no notices or RNHS business at the meeting.

### **Recommendations**

#### **Books.**

An older book published in 2011 '**Survivors**' by Richard Fortes. The animals and plants that time has left behind. ISBN 978-0-00-720986-6.

**Around the World in 80 Trees** by Johnathan Dori. Published 2018. ISBN 798-1-78627-161-7.

**Wilding** by Isabella Tree. ISBN 978-1-5098-0509-9

**Magazine. Positive News.** Also can sign up for a newsletter and get most of the information online. Environment Lifestyle. Sustainable Christmas. December 18th. One can sign up on line for a weekly newsletter. Free of charge. [positive.news](http://positive.news)

**On line publication.** Open Access Government. [openaccessgovernment.org](http://openaccessgovernment.org) This is a digital publication which gives in depth perspectives on key policy areas such as the environment from around the world. Environment - news - 8 Conservation Success stories of 2020 this is up to July this year.

**Website.** One Tree Planted. [onetreeplanted.org](http://onetreeplanted.org) a great idea and good projects.

**Podcast.** BBC Sounds 'What Planet are we on' Liz Bonin. Interesting topics and take away tips.

## Good news in Rutland

*Apologies to Terry, Jayne, John and Martin for any important omissions from the following 'lists' which were taken from this year's Fieldfares.*

**Bats.** Natterer's in Whissendine Church, these bats are more light averse than other bat species, the floodlights were switched off when the church was closed, this has helped the maternity roost no end. Over 60 bats were counted this summer. The bat count at Egleton Church revealed the largest count Britain from the National Bat Monitoring project. **Happy Christmas and thanks to Jenny Harris.**

**Glowworms.** Although Ketton Quarry has had glow worms recorded historically they have been around the car park. This year the new Recorder for Glow worms (Linda Clark) inadvertently found a new site, also at Ketton Quarry but at the opposite end of the reserve. This begs the question how many more sites will be discovered or rediscovered next year.

**Fungi.** Not in Rutland but 6 new species found in Britain. 3 in England and 3 in Scotland. All of the species *Cortinarius*. One found and named *C. heatherae*, (after the discover's wife) was found on the river boundary with Heathrow. For the RNHS new fungi recorders, Carolyn Baxter and Linda Clark it is just another one to add to the confusing world of fungi ID. But this newsletter is all about being positive so fantastic news. ([kew.org](http://kew.org)) **Happy Christmas and thanks Carolyn.**

**Galls.** The following are galls we don't often see. Mite and Midge galls on Lime and Mite galls on Elm. The Sawfly gall manifested itself as leaf curl on Grey Willow from Stratton Wood. **Happy Christmas (again) Roy.**

**Mammals.** Otters have been seen more often than ever at RWNR, and badgers have had a good year locally, lots of evidence being seen this autumn. **Happy Christmas and thanks to Linda B.**

**Birds.** Just some of the birds in Terry's reports. White Fronted Geese. Great white Egrets. Whooper swans. Merlin. Garganey. Bittern. Black Redstart. Kittiwake. Jack Snipe. White Tailed Eagle.

Ring Ouzel. Stone Curlew. Green Winged Teal. Cattle Egret. Temmincks Stint. Quail (call). Corn Bunting. Fulmar. Golden Oriole (sang at Ketton). Little Stints. Little Tern.

**Happy Christmas and thanks Terry**

**Orthoptera.** The Rutland Orthoptera Final Distribution Maps, have been up-dated to Season 2020.

Paul Willoughby-Ellis has done a magnificent/ professional job: finalising his original distribution maps, from 2017 to 2020. I am so grateful to Paul and Hendrina, because my proposed County Orthoptera booklet draft, is now complete for inspection (by Ray Morris), of the Leicester Entomological Society.

I am hoping that the 14 Maps will be published in the next 'Fieldfare'. In years to come, future distribution maps will be published by the RNHS; and comparisons can be made of the changes in populations.

Phil Rudkin. 23.12.2020.

**Happy Christmas and thanks to Phil.**

**Moths.** Tree lichen Beauty was one of the Top moths this year, good one to have. Tree Lichen Beauty as it's name suggests, thrives on lichen which is an indicator of clean air quality. 5 records in Rutland this year. **Happy Christmas and thanks to Paul Bennett.**

**Butterflies.** Essex Skipper one record. Large number of Whites this year. Purple Hairstreak and Purple Emperor at Pickworth Wood. The increase in Dark Green Fritillary numbers continued. Small Heath reported from 3 sites. **Happy Christmas and thanks to Martin Quinlan.**

**Botany.** Sanicle and Woodruff on Barnsdale Avenue. Star of Bethlehem, Moschatel (Townhall Clock) Ketton Quarry. Shining and Hedgerow Cranesbill growing in Wing Churchyard. Meadow Cranesbill along Roadside verges. **Happy Christmas and thanks to John Rogers.**

**Amphibians and Reptiles.** A Red Eared Slider, *Trachemys scripta*, was seen at Eyebrook reservoir in May. A Slow Worm was seen in Burley Wood in April the first sighting since 2015, and another in Uppingham the first since 1997. **Happy Christmas and thanks Charles**

**Insects and Invertebrates.** Just a few records this year; Greater Thorn-tipped Longhorn Beetle, Rufous-shouldered Longhorn beetle. Rhinoceros beetle. Common water boatman. Hairy-footed Flower Bee and Ashy Mining Bee. Wasp Nest/Wedge beetle. Tortoise Shieldbug instar at Ketton quarry and an adult Tortoise Beetle in a garden at Exton. Tawny Longhorn Beetle at Bloody Oaks which is stated as rare in Leicestershire and Rutland. **Happy Christmas and thanks to Jayne Walker.**

Happy Christmas and thanks also to other members of the committee. Peter Scott (Publicity Reports & Website). Margaret Conner (Membership/Treasurer). John Bristow (Safeguarding Officer). Derick Hill. Tricia Marston. Jill and Jeff Wilcox Smith.

Carolyn Baxter takes the publication 'British Wildlife' and saw a piece in the December issue of the magazine in the section 'Conservation News'. This is her comment below - another positive if it all works.

Nature Recovery Network (NRN) is a new 25 year environmental plan by the Government to bring over 600 organisations together, to hatch out a plan to enrich 500,000ha of land in England for the protection of wildlife and its habitats. Big Conservation bodies like RSPB, National Parks England etc, will come together to provide funding and land for this huge project. But this will all start from the bottom up, with the new Environment Bill, which will involve all Local Authorities in England setting out new strategies for Wildlife conservation in their areas. At the present time, 5 Local Authorities are already taking part in pilot studies to work out a Local Nature Recovery scheme (LNR) and see how this can be put together Countrywide. Additional funding by the Government will help to drive the Nature Recovery Network forward into the future.

Heard it all before??

2020 has forced us all to focus in a real way, on where we truly fit into our ever changing, dynamic, blue planet. Nature has bitten us where it hurts, locked us up and rubbed our faces in the mud. Nature has told us that we are a "part of the rules – not the makers of the rules".

Let us hope that this new perspective that has turned all of our heads, like a giant global Mexican wave, will have a lasting appreciation in people and Governments, way way into the future, of the power and beauty of our unique piece of the Universe.

[A ray of hope for our seas, biodiversity and recovery of marine mammals by a count of 58 blue whales in February 2020.](#)

[Blue whales increase in population in the Atlantic near South Georgia Nov. 2020 https://www.int-res.com/prepress/n01077.html](https://www.int-res.com/prepress/n01077.html)

[A new species of beaked whale has been discovered this year off Mexico's Pacific coast. ecowatch.com](https://ecowatch.com)

### **A winter phenomenon!**

It began as just an ordinary walk along the reservoir track. The weather was dull and damp, dry and still. Looking across between the branches of wayside bushes, we saw a large raft of dark birds on the water, too distant to identify without binoculars, but clearly consisting of a large number of birds. As we walked along the track there were occasional glimpses of the birds, which seemed to be following us along the shoreline. A sound then penetrated our consciousness – like a huge tidal wave was breaking across the water, and as luck would have it there was a gap in the trees close to the water, and we were able to see what was happening. The raft of birds was a congregation (commotion, collection, collaboration?) of coot, and they were skittishly changing position, the raft stretching out into a long ribbon, then back into smaller groups, then reforming a large raft. At one point we were able to count the long ribbon of birds, at least 1200 together on the water. Every few minutes the coot excitedly flapped and paddled and scooted across the water generating a mass of spray and making a sound like a wave breaking on the shore at each disturbance, eery in the quiet air of the morning, and a spectacular sight and sound! The disturbances continued every few moments, with the accompanying sound following us along the track. We stayed for a long time, fascinated by the activity, but eventually walked on, leaving the strange occurrence behind.

On our return perhaps an hour later the birds were still there, still excitedly milling around and moving in and out of formations on the water, each time accompanied by a huge whoosh of sound. One of those moments that makes us realise the amazing wonder of the natural world!

On looking this up later it seems that coot migrate south and west during the autumn and winter months, and then return north in the spring, so these birds had probably come from breeding grounds in Germany or from the Baltic further north. The occurrence of large flocks apparently happens periodically, but for a bird we commonly see bird this was an exciting new event for us.

Linda Biddle. 23.12.20.

### **Update from Jane & Duncan's Garden. More in January we hope.**

God's providence was again in evidence this year: It had long been an ambition of ours to line our pond, so that it didn't completely dry up during hot summer months. It is fed by some strange natural springs that seem to run when they feel like it – possibly due to airlocks within the rock strata. One of our neighbours gave us a carpet she was throwing out, and we stored it away in our garage as a future pond base. That must have been some 4 years ago. Last year was far too wet to attempt the work and this year also we were giving up hope, although we had ordered all the necessary materials. Then in September this year, 2020, during the time that our niece from France was quarantining with us, our gardener turned up on a routine visit, stood us in front of the pond and said "Right. We are going to get this pond done!" Before we had time to say it was too wet or to come up with any other excuse, she was cracking on with it, pumping out and clearing up, with us as "participating onlookers", if there is such a thing. Then, out came the carpet from the garage and before we knew what was happening the carpet had been laid over the old pond and within an hour there was a good foot of lovely clear water that had filtered through.

Now that the project was started, with lockdown preventing us from doing other things, and with the help of our niece, we managed to finish the workings of the pond, including liner, pump, rill and waterfall, and all before our niece returned to university some 10 days later. We are still in the process of putting in various plants, and then we shall see how nature deals with it all!



**Happy Christmas and New Year to all our members and we hope that 2021 will be a better one than 2020 for all. Stay safe and keep others safe as well. I**

