



Swollen-thighed Beetle, Dave Cotter

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The Society is having a very good summer. The weather has smiled on all our events so far, and following our lovely visit to Burley Wood in early May we were treated to an inspirational and educational morning at Merry's Meadows, near Greetham, ably led by Andy Lear. The Green Winged Orchids were a picture among the other spring flowers (see report page 00).

At Seaton Meadows (a Plantlife reserve), Joe Costley guided us in the area to the west of the viaduct – the rest being out of bounds due to a nesting curlew (sign of another successful conservation area) with beautiful stands of Greater Burnet and Meadow Rue. We continued on to another reserve, Lyddington Meadows (LRWT), just down the road towards Caldicott. It was good to explore a less well-known reserve with an expert guide.

We are fortunate to have such lovely areas close to us – there is no need to go further afield when our local meadows and woodlands are so beautiful!

The farm walk at Caldicott proved very interesting, looking at the farm and its community woodlands and finding out more about farming for conservation in today's difficult and changeable political situation.

For the rest of the summer, look out for Moth trapping at Clipsham Quarry, and workshops on Insects at Ketton, and Bats at Lyndon. A workshop on Water Birds at Fort Henry lakes with Terry Mitcham will bring the summer activities to a close, shortly before the winter programme begins on October 6 with a talk on Fungi by Vim Fleming.

Linda Biddle, Chairman

Marbled White, Dave Cotter



Ringlet, Dave Cotter



Comma, Dave Cotter



Small Skipper, Dave Cotter



Dark Green Fritillary, Peter Scott



Silver Washed Fritillary, Peter Scott



BUTTERFLY ALERT

In July with Alastair Lawrence at Ketton Quarry, we were able to see a great variety of butterflies – see above. The Dark Green and Silver Washed Fritillaries are very recent additions to Rutland's butterfly list, and it is well worth a visit to the Quarry to see them – they should be there through August. A fuller report will appear in September's *Fieldfare*.

VERGES UP-DATE

As many of you will have read in the local press, there have again been problems with inappropriate mowing of conservation verges. After several years of working with Rutland County Council (RCC) to promote a good understanding of the conservation verges, and help to implement a sympathetic regime of mowing, we feel that we have made significant progress and have a good relationship with RCC. Unfortunately there are areas where these efforts are less than successful, and the verges are suffering as a result. In particular the verge at Luffenham Heath has been mown at just the wrong time for the third year in succession. We shall continue to liaise and do everything we can to conserve the verges, including trying to bring them to the attention of the wider public.

Our small group of dedicated verge monitors has so far looked at two conservation verges, Exton and Thistleton, with a view to making sure that they still satisfy the criteria for local nature reserves. We were reassured that they are both still good, and plan to visit another in early August before the flowering season ends.

Everyone is welcome to join us on these outings, whether botanists or not. We need to consider whether it would be a good idea for members to be 'Verge Sentinels', looking out for damage to verges, which can come from many quarters, road works, water and sewerage contractors, cable laying etc. and does not require botanical expertise, but just fairly regular drive-bys – something to ponder over next winter!

Linda Biddle, Chairman

OUR NEW WEBSITE

Here at last is our new, brighter, more dynamic website. If you haven't had a look yet, browse over to it. It's easier to navigate and has wonderful illustrations. On the first page there's a news flash for anything interesting that's current and you're welcome to send these in – look for 'Get in touch' on the menu on the righthand side from page 2 onwards.

'Events' now has a location map so there is no need to decode the grid references.

We have added a 'Sightings' page where casual observations of species can be placed on a map, with no need to look up grid refs – the computer does that automatically. This is designed to supplement our existing system and is for newcomers to recording and for non-members – we welcome your contributions.

To encourage communication with a younger audience, we have Facebook, Twitter and Flickr links on the top righthand corner of the front page of the website. The Facebook page has already been posted with feedback on RNHS events and observations from the field. This is designed to be a forum for members to post what they see, while out and about or online, including their photos.

At the moment Twitter has been used to publicise our events and also create the news banner on page one.

A Flickr link gives members an opportunity to upload photos to share with others. We have already had contributions and are looking forward to many more. (By submitting photos you agree to the Society using them in its own publications.) They may be used in *Fieldfare* and the website.

The new website with its linked social media is designed to be interactive and 'live' so that we all know what is going on right now. For example, you may have first seen 'Look out for Fritillaries, they're at Ketton Quarry' (see page opposite) on the website, giving you a few extra days to look out for these wonderful butterflies.

Let us know what you think of our efforts, using 'Get in touch' on the website.

Roy Edwards, Website sub-Committee member

DIARY DATES

RNHS field trips

Full details of all these events can be found on our website at www.rnhs.org.uk. If the weather is bad, please call the 'Queries' phone number in case of cancellation.

Friday July 24, time tbc

Moth trapping at Clipsham Quarry

Led by RNHS Moth Recorder Jean Harvey and Leicestershire Moth Recorder Adrian Russell. Phone Jean in advance to book in and get details of timing. The gate will be locked behind us when we have all arrived. Turning from road, OS grid ref: SK 981156.

Booking, to check time, and any queries: Jean Harvey on 01536 770259

Sunday August 9, 11.00 am

Workshop: Insects, including Orthoptera

With RNHS Insect Recorder Gill Chiverton and RNHS Orthoptera Recorder Phil Rudkin. The morning session (about 2 hours) is in the Ketton Guide and Scout Hall, Pit Lane, Ketton, then after a picnic lunch (bring your own) the afternoon will be in nearby Ketton Quarry looking for the real things (OS grid ref: SK 978054).

Queries: Phil Rudkin on 01780 762998.

Thursday August 27, 7.30 pm

Workshop: Bats

With RNHS Bat Recorder Jenny Harris. At Lyndon Nature Reserve, a short introductory talk at the Centre followed by a walk to Gibbets Gorse, finishing back at the Centre about 10.00 pm for light refreshments. (OS grid ref: SK 894 056).

Queries: Jenny Harris on 01572 755274.

Sunday Sept 27, 9.30 am

Workshop: Water birds

With RNHS Bird Recorder Terry Mitcham, at Fort Henry, Exton. Through the village, past the Buttercross and Home Farm onto the private estate road past Tunneley Wood (we have permission). Meet between the two lakes. (OS grid ref: SK 949 119)

Queries: Terry Mitcham on 01780 751268.

Saturday October 10

Fungus Foray at Clipsham Yew Tree Wood

A search for fungi in the wood at the end of Yew Tree Avenue. Dr Vin Fleming, professional mycologist and Chairman and Wildlife Records Officer of the Bourne Group of the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, is leading this field trip. He is also giving the first autumn lecture of the season on October 6, on Britain's fungi, see below.

RNHS evening events

The RNHS autumn programme starts on Tuesday 6 October, at Voluntary Action Rutland (VAR), Lands End Way, Oakham LE15 6RB.

Tuesday October 6, 7.30 pm

Earthstars, brittlegills and puddockstools – a look at Britain's fungi.

The first talk of the autumn season is by Dr Vin Fleming, and is followed on October 10 by a Fungal Foray at Clipsham Wood (see above).

Tuesday November 4, 7.30 pm

Lichens

British Lichen Society expert Ivan Pedley gives the second RNHS talk of the season, followed later by a field trip.

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, Bourne Group

For details of LWT Lincstrust events, see www.lincstrust.org.uk, or phone 01507 526677 in office hours.

Saturday August 22, 7.30 pm

Guided walk – Deeping Lakes Nature Reserve at dusk

We hope to include a moth-trapping session and to pick up the sounds of any bats we encounter. Bring a torch, and something warm to wear for later in the evening.

Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust, *Rutland Group*

For events in Leicestershire and Rutland see www.lrwt.org.uk or phone 0116 262 9968.

There are regular Badger-watching events and Osprey Cruises at Rutland Water, and also Family events during the summer holidays – see their website.

Friday 21–Sunday 23 August

Birdfair

Jointly organised by LRWT and RSPB, Birdfair encompasses the whole spectrum of bird and wildlife watching. You can indulge in some wildlife celeb spotting (regulars include Chris Packham, Simon King, David Lindo and Mike Dilger); choose from an amazing range of lectures; shop till you drop on equipment and art; or book your holidays at home and abroad. For up to the minute details and to book tickets online go to www.birdfair.org.uk.

Monday October 19, 7.30 pm

Managing woodland for nature conservation

Talk at the Bird Watching Centre, Egleton, entry £1. Andy Lear will talk about the general principals of woodland management for nature conservation and show examples of the work the Trust has been doing in their East Leicestershire and Rutland woods.

WEATHER

RECORDER Roy Lemmon

87 Empingham Road, Stamford PE9 2SU. Telephone 01780 762051

May 2015

Atmospheric pressure and wind

The month opened with low pressure and stayed that way until the 14th, with the lowest for the month being 987.5 mb on the 5th. After this pressures were generally elevated with a high of 1026 mb on the 23rd. A feature of this second period was several occasions when the pressure rose or dropped abruptly from one day to the next, an example being the 17th, 1025 mb, and the 18th, 1005 mb.

Wind direction was extremely variable this month and there was a marked number of days when there were very gusty winds or gales. An example of this was at 17.00 hr on the 5th when I recorded 28 knots in an exposed situation nearby. This is 7 on the Beaufort scale, described as 'near gale'. On the same day gusts reached 75 mph on the Isle of Wight.

Temperature

This was a cold May; the mean minimum was 6.77 °C and the mean maximum 17.72 °C, both figures being at position 8 in the last ten years. May 2013 was markedly lower in both measurements. There were no air frosts this month, but the overnight minimum on April 30–May 1 ran it close at 0.5 °C. The highest overnight minimum, 11.1 °C, occurred just 3 days later on 3–4 May, and the highest daytime maximum was 22.0 °C on the 21st.

The Central England Temperature was 9.6 °C, some 0.78 °C below the average, and in the last 100 years three Mays were colder and 97 were warmer.

Rain

The total I recorded was 57.8 mm (2.04 in), which equates to 105.5% of my 25-year mean for this month. Some 53% of this fell between the 2nd–8th inclusive and there were 11 days in the month when no precipitation was observed. Averaged over England and Wales, the total was 102.9 mm (4.05 in) which is 157% of the normal for the Standard Reference Period 1981–2010.

Sunshine

The total, averaged over England and Wales, was 192.2 hours or 95% of the long-term mean.

June 2015

Atmospheric pressure and wind

Pressures were generally average for the month, the lowest, 999 mb, occurred on the 2nd; and there was a high-pressure period between the 7th and 11th during which time the maximum for the month, 1034.5 mb, was reached on the 9th. Winds were SW-W until the 7th, then generally NW-NE until the 24th and then S-SW to the end of the month. Winds were gusty in the first week, up to 16 knots on two occasions at 09.00 hr.

Temperature

A cold month, the mean minimum was 9.01 °C, the lowest in the decade 2006-2015, just a little colder than 2011 at 9.06 °C; and the mean maximum was 22.02 °C, which was fourth in the same period. The overall mean was 15.52 °C or 6th in the decade, hence it was the mean minimum which pulled the month down. There were no frosts, the lowest overnight minimum was 4.0 °C on 8th-9th, and the daytime maximum was 31.1 °C on the 30th. The provisional mean temperature for England for the month was 15.3 °C, or 0.1 °C below the long-term mean.

Rain

A very dry month with a total recorded here of 17.0 mm (0.67 inches) which is 35% of my long-term mean of 25 years. June 2006 was lower at 9.6 mm and June 1995 was very low at 8.0 mm. The England average of rainfall over the month was 56% of the 1981-2010 average.

Sunshine

The mean amount averaged over England was 125% of the LTM.

The national figures are from Philip Eden's Weather watch column in the *Sunday Telegraph*.

AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES **RECORDER Dr C H Gallimore**

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May/June 2015



Apart from Grass Snakes, this has been a very quiet two months as far as other reptiles and amphibians are concerned.

The only records of **Common Frogs** concerned plentiful tadpoles in a pond in Greetham in May and a tadpole being taken by a Grass Snake in a Wing pond in June. There were only two **Common Toad** records also, one being a live toad on the road in Morcott at night on May 1st and toadlets were seen at Leighfield on 24th June. There were no newt records.

A **Viviparous Lizard** was observed on a rock in Ketton Quarry on 4th May.

All other records were of **Grass Snakes**. In May two were seen under a shelter at Exton and a large one was seen in a Wing garden. The reptile squares at Rutland Water Nature Reserve also harboured quite a few – a total of 21 being seen on four separate days. There was an unexpected record of a Grass Snake in a corner of Tufted Duck hide on May 5th. In June they were seen at Leighfield on two occasions, in Manton and in Wing. In addition they were seen in Heron Bay and behind Harrier hide at Rutland Water. There were not as many under the reptile squares at Rutland Water.

*My thanks to the following who provided me with records in a variety of formats:
T P Appleton, L Biddle, T Caldicott, J Davis, A Hill, P Langston, R Lemmon, M Markham, T Mitcham and J Taylor*

BIRDS

RECORDER Terry Mitcham

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May/June 2015

An interesting two months saw a resurgence of interest from Burley Wood with a singing Redstart, a roding Woodcock, a drumming Lesser Spotted Woodpecker and a flock of Crossbills. This previously well-watched site clearly deserves close attention in the future. Receding water levels at the reservoirs encouraged a good variety of waders to stop off on their northward migration, with Temminck's Stints

the highlight. Avocets nested at Egleton and Ringed and Little Ringed Plovers were at both reservoirs. There were plenty of Red Kites, with birds regular over Stamford and many congregating at silage fields. Scarcer visitors included at Cattle Egret at Lyndon and a seasonal Quail near Great Casterton.

My thanks to the following for their records: T Appleton, P Bennett, A & L Biddle, T Caldicott, R Castle, T Davis, Dr C H Gallimore, M Grimes, J Harris, Dr C R Jones, P Langston, T Land, LROS, R Lemmon, T Mitcham, D Needham, J Nourish, L Park, P Rudkin, S Rudkin, RWNR, T Williams, J Wright.

Mute Swan	In May, occupied nests were at RWEg and Lynd, FHP, Ext Park and Banthorpe GP.
Pink-footed Goose	Two were still at EBR on 30.05.
Greenland White-fronted Goose	The RW bird was still present on 16.06.
Egyptian Goose	Bred in Ext Park – five goslings on 09.05.
Shelduck	Up to four were at FHP in both months, with a brood of five ducklings on 06.06.
Mandarin Duck	A male was on a pond near PC on 22.05.
Wigeon	A drake remained at LFP to 15.05.
Garganey	Singles were at RWEg on 09.06 (male) and 27.06 (female).
Shoveler	A pair was at FHP between 05.05 and 13.06, with four on 27.06.
Red-crested Pochard	A male was at RWEg between 10 and 16.06.
Pochard	Bred at RWEg – a female had seven small ducklings on 29.05.
Scaup	A male was in RWNA between 12 and 15.05.
Goldeneye	A male was at RW to at least 16.06.
Quail	One sang from a strip of sanfoin near GT Cast on 23.06.
Grey Partridge	One or two were in Ext Park, RWEg and Man between 12.05 and 27.06.
Cattle Egret	One was at RWLynd on 16.06.
Little Egret	Four were near LFP on 04.05, with two on 22.05, and three near Man on 12.05. One was near HM on 25.05.
Great White Egret	One flew over Upp on 25.05.
Red Kite	Regular over Stam. On 08.06, one was found dead in BW and 14 were over a field being cut for silage near Prest with six at an oilseed rape field at QF on 10.06. Two fed on leveret roadkill near Wg on 20.06.
Sparrowhawk	A female found dead in Upp on 02.05 was thought to have flown into an obstacle – it was donated to Upp School Science Dept.
Buzzard	Three quartered an oilseed rape field at QF on 10.06. Young were ringed at two successful nests at RW and an occupied nest with two large young was found at FHP on 28.06.
Osprey	Singles were at LFP on 07.05 and 12.06. Two flew north at Leigh on 15.05.
Kestrel	Noted at KQ, FHP and QF, with two pairs using nestboxes in Ext Park.
Hobby	Between 01.05 and 26.06, singles were noted at FHP, EBR, Mounts Lodge, BCF, Upp and Man. Regular at RWEg with three on 26.06.
Peregrine	One was over Man on 09 and 13.05.
Water Rail	One called at RWEg on 12.05.
Avocet	One was at EBR on 18.05 with two on 04.06. An adult had two chicks at RWEg on 27.06.
Oystercatcher	There were three at EBR on 17.05. RW had 32 in mid-May and 27 on 16.06, with a pair and a juvenile on 26.06.
Little Ringed Plover	Present at both reservoirs throughout both months with six at EBR on 17.05 and a similar number at RW in mid-May and on 16.06.
Ringed Plover	There was an excellent spring passage at both reservoirs with peak counts of 32 at RWEg on 13.05 and 33 at EBR on 26.05. There were 11 at RW on 23.06.
Golden Plover	An early migrant was at Martinsthorpe on 24.06.
Grey Plover	One was at RW on 04.05 with two there next day and one at EBR.

Lapwing	Display was noted at Banthorpe GP, EBR, Ext Park, SM and Brk. Bred at RWEg. At RW there were 36 in mid-May and 198 on 16.06, with 51 at EBR on 24.06.
Whimbrel	Noted at RW between 01 and 12.05, with three on 05.05. Singles were at EBR on 06 and 10.05 and one was back at RWEg on 25.06.
Curlew	Presumed breeding birds were at SM on 26.05 and Cottes Airfield on 31.05. One was at LFP on 10.05, with two NW there on 07.06, and three NW over Ward Wood on 24.06. Two were at EBR on 25.06 and one at RWEg on 26–28.06.
Black-tailed Godwit	Two were at RW on 03.05 with one on 10.05 and nine in mid-May. One was at EBR on 05/06.06 with one at RW on 23.06.
Bar-tailed Godwit	One was at RW on 06.05, and six were at EBR on 13/14.06.
Turnstone	Noted at both reservoirs between 04.05 and 03.06, with peak counts of six at EBR on 09.05 and three at RW on 12.05.
Ruff	One was at RWEg on 28.05.
Temminck's Stint	Singles were at RWEg on 08/09.05. and 17/18.05, with two from 27.05 to 01.06.
Sanderling	Passage was between 03.05 and 14.06, with peak counts of ten at RW on 29.05 and 17 at EBR on 31.05.
Dunlin	Noted at both reservoirs, mainly in May, with c.50 at RW on 05.05, and 22 at EBR the same day. Three were at EBR on 02.06 with singles there on 05.06 and at RW on 23.06.
Little Stint	One was at EBR on 31.05.
Common Sandpiper	Five were at EBR on 01.05, with up to four at both reservoirs on seven subsequent May dates. One was at LFP on 04.05 and a returning bird at EBR on 27.06.
Green Sandpiper	A spring bird was at RWEg on 03.05. Autumn birds were noted at RWEg from 09.06 and EBR from 21.06, with a max of four at RW on 27/28.06.
Spotted Redshank	Singles were at RWEg on 08/10.06 and 27/30.06.
Greenshank	One was at EBR between 05/10.05, with one at RWEg on 28.06.
Wood Sandpiper	Two were at RW on 04.05.
Redshank	Seven were at RW in mid-May with six there on 16.06.
Woodcock	One roding in BW on 03.06 was the first possible breeding record since one was at CPW in June 2010.
Little Tern	One was at RWLynd on 02.06. Two were at EBR on 15.06 and RWEg on 28.06, with one there next day.
Black Tern	One or two were at both reservoirs between 09 and 15.05, and at RW between 08 and 11.06 and on 24.06.
Common Tern	Breeding was confirmed at both reservoirs. At EBR there were 14 on 12.05 and 20 on 14.06. RW had 88 in mid-May and 109 on 16.06. Two were at LFP on 04.06.
Arctic Tern	Three or four were at RW between 06 and 19.05.
Little Gull	Two were at EBR on 03.05.
Common Gull	One remained in the Leigh area throughout June.
Mediterranean Gull	Singles were at RW on 23 and 27.06.
Herring Gull	Two flew through at RWNA on 12.05 and one at FHP on 31.05.
Yellow-legged Gull	Two were at RWEg on 26.06, and three on 28.06.
Cuckoo	Singing birds were heard only at RW, Upp, Leigh, BW, Man, Martinthorpe and Wg to 27.06. A marked decline on previous years. A presumed migrant flew over Stam at 21.00 hr on 25.06.
Barn Owl	Records were received from Belm, Leigh, RW, Pilt, Martinthorpe, Lynd, Wg and near Emp.
Little Owl	Breeding at Cow Close Farm, Burl and heard at RWLynd on 27.06.
Tawny Owl	Three called in TunnW on 04.06 and two noted in BW on 27.06.
Kingfisher	Breeding at HM with singles, presumably from there, at FHP on 10.05 and 27.06.
Green Woodpecker	Reported from KQ, FHP, Ext Park woodlands and BW. Breeding was confirmed at a well-watched nest at QF and at Emp.

Great Spotted Woodpecker Records came from BW, TunnW and BW, where a family party was seen on 20.06. None were present on the CBC plot at BCF, for the first time since 2000.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker A drumming male was heard in BW on 10.05 – a very welcome record from a former traditional site.



Raven Present at five breeding sites with two broods of three and one of four fledged. Between 04.05 and 04.06 up to 22 fed on lamb afterbirths and a dead lamb at one site – by far the largest number noted in the county. One shared roadkill with two Red Kites near Wg on 20.06.

Willow Tit Noted in May and June at Leigh and at Brk in June. Bred at BCF CBC plot, where a family party was seen on 07.06.

Marsh Tit Reported from Westland, Wardley and Burley Woods with nine at BW on 27.06.

House Martin c.200 were at RWMan Bay on 02.06, with 120 at Leigh on 10.06.

Cetti's Warbler c. eight males were on territory at RWEg in May.

Chiffchaff A record seven held territory on the BCF CBC plot, 34 were singing in BW on 08.06 and three at Emp on 30.06.

Willow Warbler 23 were in song around Leigh on 10.05, with 26 in the same area on 12.06.

Blackcap 31 were in song in BW on 08.06.

Garden Warbler A max of five singing males were noted in BW in May.

Lesser Whitethroat Singing males were noted at BCF (three), Martinsthorpe (five), Leigh (six) and singles at QF and LCast.

Whitethroat Singing males were well reported from many sites.

Grasshopper Warbler Up to three sang in the Leigh area throughout May to 18.06.

Sedge Warbler Singles sang at Leigh on 04.05 and LFP on 07.05. This species remains well distributed at RWEg, its key site in the county.

Reed Warbler Good numbers noted at RWEg with three at Geest in late May and singles at LFP between 30.05 and 29.06, and FHP on 31.05.

Treecreeper c.50 noted around BW on 09.05. One fed at fat and nut feeders at Upp on 10.06.

Fieldfare Late birds were at LFP on 02 and Leigh on 10.05.

Spotted Flycatcher Two in Ext Park on 10.05 were the first arrivals. Subsequent records came from LFP, RW(Berrybutts Spinney), Eg church, Lynd church, Man, Pilt, BW, BCF and Upp. At Upp the birds had been absent for several years and they were not present at BCF last year.

Nightingale One sang at RWEg throughout May and one at a second NE wood on 18.05.

Redstart A singing male in BW between 23.05 and 06.06 was our first record there since 1999. There was no sign of the bird on 10.06 or 20.06. Have Restarts been overlooked, is this a 'one off' or the start of recolonization ?

Whinchat One was at RW tertiary treatment works on 07.05.

Stonechat A very unseasonal male was at EBR on 21.06.

Wheatear The last spring birds were two in Ext Park on 12.05.

Yellow Wagtail Only one was noted at Ext Park in May, a decline on previous years. One or two were noted at RWEg, Martinsthorpe, EBR and GCast.

Grey Wagtail Bred at FHP with a bird carrying food noted between Glast and Seat on 21.05. One was at Tin Pumping Station on 12.05.

Tree Sparrow Four were at RWLynd Centre feeders on 12.05.

Chaffinch There was a significant decline in the number of territories on BCF CBC – down to eight from 18 in 2014.

Siskin Singles were heard over LFP/Leigh on 13.05 and 29.06.

Linnets Four pairs noted at QF on 13.05, with nest building in progress.

Common Crossbill In BW two were noted on 08, seven on 15, and 15 on 27.06.

Wildfowl Counts – May and June 2015

	Rutland Water		Eyebrook Reservoir		Fort Henry Ponds /Exton Park		Banthorpe Gravel Pit	
	May	16.06	17.05	14.06	15.05	13.06	15.05	12.06
Mute Swan	220	253	55	72	12	14	2	2
Greenland White-fronted Goose		1						
Pink-footed Goose			1					
Greylag Goose	249	726	17	83	8	2	11	
Canada Goose	121	772	17	133			2	
Egyptian Goose	39	88			4	2		
Shelduck	27	11	10	4	2	4		
Wigeon	3	8						
Gadwall	97	233	27	48	18	68		
Teal	6	23		3				
Mallard	318	644	66	159	51	64	5	3
Pintail	2							
Shoveler	9	26				2		
Red-crested Pochard		1						
Pochard	3	11						
Tufted Duck	239	349	4	15	14	19		
Goldeneye	1	1						
Cormorant	54	194	1	6	2	3	1	
Little Egret	4	20	1	3				
Grey Heron	20	15		2	1		1	2
Little Grebe	8	4						
Great Crested Grebe	130	162	12	19				
Moorhen	57	56	4	1	6	7	2	1
Coot	291	706	8	3	30	38	6	2



Great Crested Grebe, Peter Scott

BOTANY

May/June 2015



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Orchid season arrived in mid-May, and by mid July it's beginning to disappear again. There were 4000+ spikes of **Green-winged Orchid** at Merry's Meadows by the end of May. Reports of **Common Spotted Orchid** at Bloody Oaks, Pickworth Wood and Clipsham Old Quarry were received, with **Bee Orchid** at Exton Park and **Pyramidal Orchid** at Ketton Quarry. There were **Greater Butterfly Orchids** at Clipsham Old Quarry together with **Common Twayblade** which was also seen at Ketton Quarry. Other notable reports included **Grass Vetchling** at Pickworth Wood and on the bank of Lagoon 4 at Egleton Reserve. **Yellow Birdsnest** appeared at Ketton Quarry, and at Edith Weston in Glebe Field there were many more **Cuckoo Flowers** (Lady's Smock) than last year.

I hope everybody read the Chairman's letter in the Rutland Mercury complaining to the County Council about excessive verge cutting, and particularly the destruction of orchids by Foster's Bridge close to Luffenham Golf Course. There seem to be few roadside verges in Rutland which have not had at least a metre-wide cut. Our work of defining which verges have valuable plant populations continues, and we will be discussing this whole issue with the County Council and others in the next few months

Please keep sending in records.

Thank you to P Bennett, A & L Biddle, R Edwards, M Grimes, W Halford, R Lemmon, J Mallett, T Mitcham D Needham, J S & J Rodgers

BUTTERFLIES

May/June 2015



Small Skipper, D Cotter

RECORDER Alistair Lawrence

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The weather over the past two months has been changeable, with temperatures often cooler to what might be expected (see Weather report page 00). As a result, while all the various species to be found at this time of year have been observed by members, the numbers reported were often lower than usual. However, on the warm sunny days of June, especially during the last week, many species emerged in good numbers with some surprisingly large counts.

The first report of **Small Skipper** comes from Clipsham Quarry, when 7 were seen on 30 June; and 12 **Large Skippers** were recorded the same place and day. The latter butterfly has been seen at other quarries and Egleton reserve during June.

Reports of **Dingy Skipper** came from the quarries, with 12 recorded at Clipsham Quarry on 26 May. Eight **Grizzled Skippers** were seen at the same site on 7 June and reports also came from Ketton Quarry during May and June.

Brimstones were observed at many locations during this period, mostly in twos and threes but 10 were counted at Ketton Quarry on 21 May.

Sightings of **Large White** have been only of singles at Lyndon reserve, Uppingham, and Bloody Oaks Quarry, during May and June, while four **Small Whites** were reported at the last site in late May.

Green Veined Whites have been seen in a variety of habitats, mostly in ones and twos, with a mating pair observed at Eyebrook on 3 May.

Orange Tips have been recorded at Lyndon reserve in threes and fours, as well as at the woods, quarries and verges.

A **Green Hairstreak** was seen at Clipsham Quarry on 6 June, whilst the first record of a **White Letter Hairstreak** came from the same location on 30 June, when 5 were counted in one area.



Small Copper, Dave Cotter

Single sightings of **Small Copper** came from Ketton Quarry and Lyndon reserve during May and from Egleton reserve on 4 June. A **Brown Argus** was seen at Ketton Quarry on 27 June.

Numbers of **Common Blue** climbed as the weather warmed up, with reports from the quarries and reserves. The highest count to date is 49 on the clay bank at Clipsham Quarry on 7 June. **Holly Blue** sightings come from Oakham and Egleton reserve.

Single sightings of **Red Admiral** came from Clipsham and Ketton Quarries, Egleton reserve and Oakham.

Painted Ladies have been reported from Manton, Martinsthorpe, Leighfield and the Rutland Water reserves – all single sightings in June.

Records of **Small Tortoiseshell** came from Bloody Oaks, Clipsham and Ketton Quarries and also the Rutland Water reserves, mostly of single specimens.

Reports of single **Peacocks** come from Barnsdale and Ketton Quarry.

The only record of a **Comma** during this period is of a single specimen at Clipsham Quarry on 7 June.

Dark Green Fritillaries have reappeared in good numbers – 2 at Bloody Oaks Quarry on 24 June, 8 at Ketton Quarry on 27 June, while on 30 June a total of 39 were counted at Clipsham Quarry.

Numbers of **Speckled Woods** have risen in recent days with 10 counted at Egleton Reserve on 25 June and 9 at Burley Wood on 27 June. Earlier reports of this species came from various sites in the county and mostly in ones and twos, though 7 were recorded at Clipsham Park Wood on 21 June.

Marbled Whites were first observed at Ketton Quarry on 15 June, where numbers rose to in excess of 25 on 27 June. A hundred were counted at Clipsham Quarry on 30 June.

Meadow Browns have been seen in high numbers – in excess of 60 counted at Leighfield on 29 June and 35 at Clipsham Quarry on 30 June. Other sightings come from the woods and reserves.

Seventeen **Small Heaths** were noted at George Henry Wood on 21 May and records for this species also come from Merry's Meadows and all the quarries.

There were in excess of 15 **Ringlets** at Ketton Quarry on 27 June, and 20 at Clipsham Quarry on 30 June. This butterfly was also seen at Bloody Oaks Quarry, Clipsham Park Wood and Egleton reserve.

My thanks to the following: P Bennet, C Butterfield, T Caldicott, G Chiverton, M Grimes, J & R Harvey, A Lawrence, R Lemmon, P & E Mann, S Merriman, T Mitcham, J Myers, D Needham, E Northen, J Ostler, B & D Parker, S Proud, P Rudkin, B & J Taylor, and B Webster.

MOTHS

May /June 2015

RECORDER Jean Harvey

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The cool, wet and windy weather in May meant that very few moths were on the wing and what there were, appeared to be emerging one or two weeks late.

We visited Eyebrook Reservoir on three occasions, namely May 3rd with 9 species, May 16th with 10 species – and May 31st was particularly poor with only 7 moths of 5 species in the four traps left overnight! June saw a distinct improvement and by the 13th, 164 moths of 40 species were recorded BUT when we returned on the 27th we caught an overall total of 700 moths of 110 species. On this occasion we operated a Robinson trap in the Plantation in addition to the four usual traps around the Dam area. The totals for the Plantation trap were 19 micro-species and 42 macro-species and for the remainder it was 29 micro-species and 67 macro-species.



With this good weather and milder nights in the second half of June, migrant moths from Europe appeared in the UK and some reached Rutland. A **Small Mottled Willow** was recorded at Luffenham Heath on 24th of June in a catch of 995 moths of 135 species, and other species such as **Pearly Underwing**, **Silver Y** and **Diamond backed Moth** were recorded elsewhere in the County. There also appeared to be a movement of moths within the UK; a **Beautiful Snout** appeared in a garden trap in Barrowden, the last local record for this species being at Eyebrook in 2008.

The Red Data Book species, the **Concolorous**, seems to have had a good year, as a wanderer from the local colony was recorded at Eyebrook on June 27th. The **Obscure Wainscot**, which is a new species for Rutland, was caught at Rutland Water reed beds on June 30th, this being a wanderer from the south of England.

If we have more mild and humid weather in July, let us hope that the excellent mothing sessions undertaken at the end of June may continue for a while.

Casual daytime sightings by members have included some **Hornet moths** in Pit Lane Ketton. On June 15th one member saw a couple on a Poplar tree and another record mentions a mating pair in the same vicinity with a singleton seen on the 18th. **Humming Bird Hawk moths** were in gardens in Manton and also in Uppingham in mid June. A micro-moth *Spatalistic bifasciana* was observed in Burley Wood on June 21st. Other records from Ketton Quarry were for **Burnet Companions**, **Mint moths**, **Cinnabar** and **Six-spot Burnets**.

My thanks for all the above information go to: C Butterfield, T Caldicott, R Follows, C R Jones, A Lawrence and D Needham.

ORTHOPTERA

May/June 2015

RECORDER Phil Rudkin

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April records followed the expected pattern with only one record received. The May/June period was an improvement, with more sightings, all reports featuring nymphs.

The first orthopteran sightings for May occurred during the RNHS field meeting to Burley Woods on 10 May. Members had penetrated part of the south-east of the wood (Compartment 27), when Ann Tomlinson spotted a large number of tiny nymphs of the **Dark Bush Cricket**, on a large patch of Dog's Mercury *Mercurialis perennis*. On 25 May, Tim Caldicott reported one tiny nymph of the **Speckled Bush Cricket**, near Manton. The remaining sightings were all nymphs of various sizes, during June. It is interesting to note that all the records for May/June were of nymphs of the crickets, and one grasshopper.

As always, we are looking forward to the main peak for the orthoptera (July to September), when we are still on the look out for any uncovered areas to survey; and hopefully to add a new species for Rutland.

Bush Crickets



Dark Bush Cricket Nymph, Phil Rudkin

Dark Bush Cricket *Pholidoptera griseoptera*

First sighting: large numbers of tiny nymphs, observed on a large patch of Dog's Mercury leaves, Burley Woods, Compartment 27, on 10 May. Interestingly, the nymphs were still on the same patch of leaves on 16 May, the nymphs being slightly larger.

Roesel's Bush Cricket *Metrioptera roeselii*

First sighting: two small nymphs, observed in the Chater Valley, Martinthorpe, on 23 June.

Speckled Bush Cricket *Leptophyes punctatissima*

First sightings: one tiny nymph observed at Crown Bridge, Manton, 25 May. Followed by c.40 nymphs, in shrub layer, Compartment 16, Burley Woods, 15 June. One nymph, near small pond, west of 'The Lodge', Leighfield Fishponds, 16 June.

Lesser Marsh Grasshopper *Chorthippus albomarginatus*

First sightings: six nymphs (various sizes), observed in the Chater Valley, Martinsthorpe, 20 June. Three nymphs, located near small pond, west of 'The Lodge', Leighfield Fishponds, 24 June.

Sincere thanks to Tim Caldecott for his on-line records, featuring the nymphs of the various species. This is an important time of the season to record nymphs, which gives an indication of the forthcoming adults to survey.

Contributors: T Caldecott, A Tomlinson, P Rudkin.

OTHER INSECTS AND INVERTEBRATES**RECORDER Gill Chiverton**

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MAY 2015**EPHEMEROPTERA** Mayflies

Two **Mayflies** were noted in a Barrowden garden on 23rd after a report the day before of a large hatch of Mayflies on the river Welland.

ODONATA Damselflies

Large Red Damselfly *Pyrhosoma nymphula* – a single insect was noted at Ketton Quarry and 12 were observed near the Chater at Crown Well Bridge.

Red-eyed Damselfly *Erythromma najas* – 2 females observed at Leighfield Fishponds.

HEMIPTERA True Bugs

Forget-me-not Shieldbug *Sehirus luctuosus* – several noted on a sunny bank at Ketton Quarry.

Green Shield Bug *Palomena prasina* – recorded at RWLyndon.

Hairy Shield Bug *Dolycoris baccarum* – recorded at Ketton Quarry.

Red and Black Frog hopper *Cercopsis vulnerata* – noted on majoram at Bloody Oaks Quarry.

DIPTERA True Flies

Mosquitos and Midges *Culicidae* – a midge hatch was observed over the water at Barnsdale.

St. Mark's Fly *Bibio marci* – good numbers were observed at Burley Wood and were also noted at Barnsdale.

Common Bee-fly *Bombylius major* – good numbers were observed at Burley Wood and were also noted at Barnsdale.

Drone Fly *Eristalis tenax* – several noted at Burley Wood.

COLEOPTERA Beetles

Cardinal Beetle *Pyrochroa coccinea* – one insect observed at Ketton Quarry.

Fungus Weevil *Platyrhinus resinosus* – one insect observed at RWLyndon.

HYMENOPTERA Bees, Wasps, Ants

Hornet *Vespa crabro* – two queen hornets were recorded in Burley Wood (one hiding in bracken and one flying along a ride), one hornet was noted at Ketton Quarry.

Grey-haired Mining Bee *Andrena cineraria* – one observed at Oakham School.

Tawny Mining Bee *Andrena fulva* – one recorded at Barnsdale.

White-tailed Bumble Bee *Bombus lucorum* – workers of this species were noted at Barnsdale.

Buff-tailed Bumble Bee *Bombus terrestris* – one was recorded at Burley Wood.

Common Carder Bee *Bombus pascuorum* – one noted at Ketton Quarry and two observed at Clipsham.

Red-tailed Bumble Bee *Bombus lapidarius* – specimens were noted at Bloody Oaks Quarry, Burley Wood, Barnsdale and Verge 7.

OTHER ARTHROPODS**Millipedes** *Diplopoda*

Snake Millipede *Cylindroiulus punctatus* – one specimen was found under bark in a rotting log in Burley Wood.

Woodlice *Isopoda*

Woodlouse *Oniscus asellus* – one found under bark in a rotting log in Burley Wood.

Snails and Slugs *Gastropoda*

White-lipped Snail *Cepaea nemoralis* – one specimen was seen at Bloody Oaks Quarry.

JUNE 2015

ODONATA Damselflies



True Dragonflies

Banded demoiselle *Calopteryx splendens* – males were noted at Seaton Meadows and Oakham Canal.

White-legged Damselfly *Platycnemis pennipes* – one recently emerged insect was recorded at Seaton Meadows.

Common Blue Damselfly *Enallagma cyathigerum* – good numbers were observed at Oakham Canal and several noted at RWEgleton.

Azure Damselfly *Coenagrion puella* – <10 noted at Leighfield Fishponds.

Red-eyed Damselfly *Erythromma najas* – noted on 5 separate days (highest individual count 7) at Leighfield Fishponds.

Broad-bodied Chaser *Libellula depressa* – a pair of insects (m.& f.) noted at RWEgleton.

Four-spotted Chaser *Libellula quadrimaculata* – two males noted at Oakham Canal, five recorded at RWEgleton and three records of single insects at Leighfield Fishponds.

Black-tailed Skimmer *Orthetrum cancellatum* – one noted at Burley Wood and 8 noted ('enjoying the cycle track') near new lagoons at Rutland Water.

Ruddy Darter *Sympetrum sanguineum* – one recorded at Leighfield Fishponds.

HEMIPTERA True Bugs

Hawthorn Shield Bug *Acanthosoma haemorrhoidale* – one recorded at Barrowden (disturbed during gardening).

Common Froghopper *Philaenus spumaris* – two insects recorded on Verge 8.

MECOPTERA Scorpion Flies

Scorpion Fly *Panorpa* sp. – one specimen noted at Clipsham Quarry.

DIPTERA True Flies

Bumble Bee Mimic Hoverfly *Volucella bombylans* – one insect of the red-tailed form noted at RWEgleton.

HYMENOPTERA Bees, Wasps, Ants

Hornet *Vespa Crabro* – two recorded at Clipsham Quarry.

Tree Bumble Bee *Bombus hypnorum* – specimens of this bee noted in a Barrowden Garden during the month and other sightings noted in Barrowden village near disused nestboxes. Also a very active nest in a swift nestbox was recorded at Normanton.

Grey-haired Mining Bee *Andrena cineraria* – one noted on Verge 8.

Common Carder Bee *Bombus pascuorum* – four observed on Verge 8.

Red-tailed Bumble Bee *Bombus lapidarius* – records came from an Oakham Garden and at RWEgleton.

COLEOPTERA Beetles

Cockchafer *Melolontha melolontha* – three specimens were noted in Barrowden.

Soldier Beetle *Cantharis rustica* – several recorded at Seaton Meadows.

Soldier Beetle *Rhagonycha fulva* – several recorded on Verge 8.

Harlequin Ladybird *Harmonia axyridis* – these ladybirds were reported from 3 sites in Barrowden with two gardens noted as being 'infested', and also noted in an Oakham garden.

Swollen-thighed Beetle *Oedemera nobilis* – one male specimen noted on Verge 8.

Cardinal Beetle *Pyrochroa coccinea* – one insect noted at RWEgleton.

Longhorn Beetle *Grammoptera ruficornis* – one recorded on hogweed at entrance to Bloody Oaks reserve.

Longhorn Beetle/Wasp Beetle *Clytus arietis* – one specimen noted in an Oakham garden.

Lily Beetle *Lilioceris lili* – recorded in an Oakham garden.

OTHER ARTHROPODS

Slugs and Snails *Gastropoda*

Snail *Monacha cantiana* – several noted on verge near Horn Mill and one noted at Seaton Meadows.

Large Black Slug *Arion ater ater* – one observed at RWEgleton.

Many thanks to: J Ansley, P Bennett, M Branston, C Butterfield, T Caldicott, G Chiverton, M & G Griffin, M Grimes, R Lemmon, D Needham, J Ostler, D Perril, P Rudkin, P Scott, L Worrall.

GLOW-WORMS

RECORDER Linda Worrall

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There are definitely glow-worms in Barrowden, Essendine and Tixover and certainly some at Fineshade, because reports are being made. Unfortunately, no-one has yet discovered any brand new sites, and numbers generally are not good. I'm still hoping though! If you have looked anywhere and not seen any, please do let me know, as this is useful for future hunts. More next time.

Thank you Phil, for your July exploration of Bloody Oaks Quarry.

PLANT GALLS

May 2015

RECORDER Roy Lemmon

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Again, plant galls at the beginning of this month have been mostly caused by rusts. Yew Tree Avenue Clipsham on the 7th had them on Groundsel, Bramble and Betony. The Society visit to Burley Wood on the 19th produced rust galls on Bluebell, Dog's Mercury and Bramble again, the latter being one of three that occur on Bramble, and this one is usually on the bark earlier in the year.

Towards the end of the month galls caused by other organisms began to appear. There was just one on Verge 7 on the 25th and this was caused by a gall wasp on Ground Ivy. This is a quite obvious gall but has not been reported here since 2013. Bloody Oaks Quarry on the 28th gave rust galls on Dog's Mercury, Dog Rose and Buckthorn as well as mite galls on Marjoram, Common Hawthorn and Spindle. The one on Marjoram is very prevalent in this reserve but varies in quantity from year to year.

The Society visit to Merry's Meadows on the last day of the month produced just 3 records, a fungal gall on Shepherd's Purse (not a rust!) and mite galls on Common Hawthorn and Crab Apple. Generally speaking, grassland seems to harbour fewer galls than other habitats, but I'm not sure why.

June 2015

This has been a quiet month for plant galls. There was a report for both Apple and Marble galls on Oak from Barnsdale, and then just 3 others from Horn Mill, Lyddington Meadow and Rutland Water.

The Horn Mill reports arose during the Verge Recorders' meeting held there on the 2nd, and were the fungus Choke on an unidentified grass and two mite galls, one on Sycamore and the other on Spindle.

From Lyddington Meadow, a LRWT grassland reserve, came a report of a midge gall on Meadowsweet; and then the last of the month was a bumper bundle of 23 records found on a walk from the Egleton Centre to Lagoon 4. These comprised 6 rust galls, 11 mites, 1 psyllid on Oak, 3 midges, 1 sawfly and a gall-wasp gall on Oak. The sawfly gall was on Birch and as far as I know has not been found elsewhere in the County. I would love to be proved wrong!

Thanks to M Grimes, R Lemmon and J Ostler for their reports.

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May/June 2015

We have no records of **Otters** being seen this month! Evidence for their presence is as usual plentiful at Rutland Water, where the usual resident at RW North Arm scratches out clay from mink rafts regularly, and spraint and footprints are found. Other otters have territories around the reserve. It still seems amazing to me that after many years with no otters at all, we now expect to see them every month.

Perhaps the same may be true for other species in future. In June a dark animal moving in a sinuous catlike way, was reported from Pickworth Wood, by two separate observers. The conclusion drawn by them both was that it was probably a mink on the move. However, two days later a dead **Polecat** (ferret?) was seen on the A1 less than a mile away. Unable to stop and investigate, it's impossible to make a judgement and definitive record, but driving by twice it looked much more polecat than ferret!

A **Mink** was seen at RW during June, but it seems to have moved on, leaving the **Water Voles** in peace for the present. The water voles are active again at Waderscrape Hide, entertaining the osprey watchers, and evidence for their activity is found at several sites over the reserve, as well as at Oakham Canal.

Badgers have been reported, one live, crossing the road to cover in scrub at Coach Bridge, near the viaduct on Barrowden Road. At Langham the trail camera reveals mystery guests in the garden of Marian Markham, and a badger has been a regular visitor during both May and June. A **Fox** and **Hedgehogs** have appeared regularly, on two occasions interacting. The hedgehog went up to the fox on one dark night, then rolled up into a ball until the fox went away, and on another night the fox just sniffed the hedgehog then walked away! The trail camera has brought a new dimension into life in Langham, as none of this was predicted when the camera was set up – ‘possibly a few local moggies’ being the expected outcome! Another fox was reported from Sykes Lane turning on the A606.

Stoats too have been of interest. One visitor to the Sand Martin Bank at RW was seen feeding on an adult sand martin, and on subsequent investigation was found to have nested and produced kits in an adjacent hole – handy source of food for the youngsters! The family was safely relocated away from the area, so more active hunting would be required. Another stoat carried one kit onto the road near Pickworth, followed by another youngster, a moment's hesitation, turned back, but then continued safely across. Others were seen at RW Golf Course, jumping about, and near Lyndon at RWNr.

A young **Weasel** visited the garden of one member and was photographed for identification purposes looking very perky!

Hedgehogs at Barrowden have been very active through May and June, up to 5 per evening visiting Linda Worrall's garden, with courting and snuffling on several occasions. One was found running along the roadside in daytime and returned to the safety of the garden, another was found foraging under a car at 10.30 am near the glow-worm verge.

At RW Charles Gallimore has been surveying for reptiles beneath metal sheets, and has reported a number of small mammals found there, including **Bank Voles**, **Common Shrews**, **Short-tailed Field Voles**, and one **Long-tailed Field Mouse**. A bank vole was seen at Pickworth Wood, dead common shrews were found near Badger Hide at RW, and a short-tailed vole was also found in Charles' garden at Wing.

Brown hares have been seen regularly at Greetham Valley Golf Club, Pickworth and at RWNr. One dead leveret was being scavenged by two red kites and a raven – another report which would have been greeted with disbelief 15 years ago! **Grey Squirrels** are reported from Langham, Pickworth and Tickencote.



Water vole, Liz and Brian Nicholls

Muntjac are numerous, being reported from Barnsdale Wood, Burley, Tunnely Wood, Pickworth, Exton, Langham and Hambleton, where 2 adults and 2 young were seen in May. 12 **Fallow Deer** were seen in Burley Wood on the RNHS visit, and later seen and heard, calling to protest at the presence of Phil Rudkin. Fallow were also seen at Pickworth Wood. Four reports of **Roe Deer** were received, 4 in a line at Barnsdale in early May, one at Lyndon, a male resting in a ride in Tunnely wood, Exton, and the outing to Burley Wood in May was lucky enough to see a roe deer crossing a ride.

Records received from: T Appleton, A & L Biddle, M Branston, C Gallimore, M & G Griffin, P Langston, M Markham, T Mitcham, B & E Nicholls, L Park, P Rudkin, M Rumbelow and L Worrall

BATS

RECORDER Jenny Harris

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No report this issue, please continue sending in your records.

RIVERS

Still waters in Rutland

RECORDER David Roome

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In 'Rutland's rivers and their fish' (*Fieldfare*, March 2015) I explained a little about our rivers and streams – this account is about the county's 'still waters', which are equally important to the ecology and wildlife.

Almost all still waters in this area have been created as a result of farming and economic activity. The 'jewels in the crown' are Rutland Water Reservoir and Eyebrook Reservoir (see map on page 2 of March *Fieldfare*). Rutland Water officially opened in 1976 to provide water for the expanding populations and industry of the south east of England. Eyebrook Reservoir was constructed in the 1930s to provide water for Corby's iron and steel industry, and now looks as if has been there for centuries. Possibly because of its original purpose and ownership, it has escaped commercial developments and remains a haven of peace and tranquility.

Rutland Water, despite skilled and sympathetic landscaping in its construction, still looks bare in comparison to Eyebrook. To my mind, its various commercial enterprises (although of great benefit to the local economy, and providing leisure activities enjoyed by many people) do not give the same visual pleasure as Eyebrook – but this is subjective!

However Rutland Water has been extremely professionally managed for the benefit of all forms of wildlife since its inception. The zoning to keep boats out of certain areas and the construction of the lagoons to compensate for fluctuating water levels are just two examples. Who would have thought before its construction (or for years afterwards) that they would have the chance to see an Osprey, Otter or a Water Vole in Rutland! And of course a myriad of other species. The opportunities and facilities for visitors to look and learn about wildlife are superb – and the volunteering opportunities – and cater for both the knowledgeable and the not so.

The indigenous coarse fish species of Roach, Rudd, Bream, Carp, Perch and Pike, which were present in the feeder streams of the Gwash and Eyebrook, did not take long to thrive in the Reservoirs and some now reach record sizes. In addition, many thousands of non-native Trout, both Brown and Rainbow, are stocked each year. Both waters are considered to be two of the very best fisheries in Europe. Anyone walking round the bankside as the light fades on a summer evening will see trout rising almost under their feet, taking advantage of flies and insects. Both Brown and Rainbow Trout now stocked are *triploid*, which means they are bred in the fish farms to be incapable of breeding. Up to a few years ago they were *diploid*, which meant that in theory they could spawn but in reality very rarely did. However some fish did follow their breeding instincts and entered the Gwash and Eyebrook feeder

streams early in the year at times of high water and good flow. They could be found as far upstream at Braunstone and East Norton. Another non-native species, Zander, is thought to have entered Rutland Water with water pumped in from the Welland and Nene when the level needs topping up.

Rutland's other still waters vary from lakes on estates, Fort Henry at Exton being a notable example of an older lake, to the enlargement of original ponds at Leighfield – a modern example. In addition, the county has clay/stone/gravel pits where the water table has been breached, resulting in time in some very good and attractive habitat for wildlife. Farm land still has ponds of various sizes. Many were created originally to water livestock, some were for sporting use. Unfortunately, some have been lost for a variety of reasons, including being filled in or, most commonly, being neglected so that they become clogged with bullrushes, lillies, get silted up and subsequently revert to a boggy area with scrub taking over. Those ponds which were constructed by 'puddled clay' in a similar way to the 'dew ponds' of the South Downs tend to leak with age and unless there is a very heavy year of rainfall the level can drop by about 30% by the autumn. If a pond is filled by a stream/ditch or by land drainage, that is a big plus.

If you look at old OS maps, in particular pre-Rutland Water, you will see many ponds indicated by some quite large areas of blue. If you look for some of these now, they no longer exist for the reasons above. However, others have been created, often for angling, a good example being Sweethedges between Allextion and Stockerston.



Photo, Linda Biddle

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