



Great Crested Grebes, Rutland Water: D Cotter

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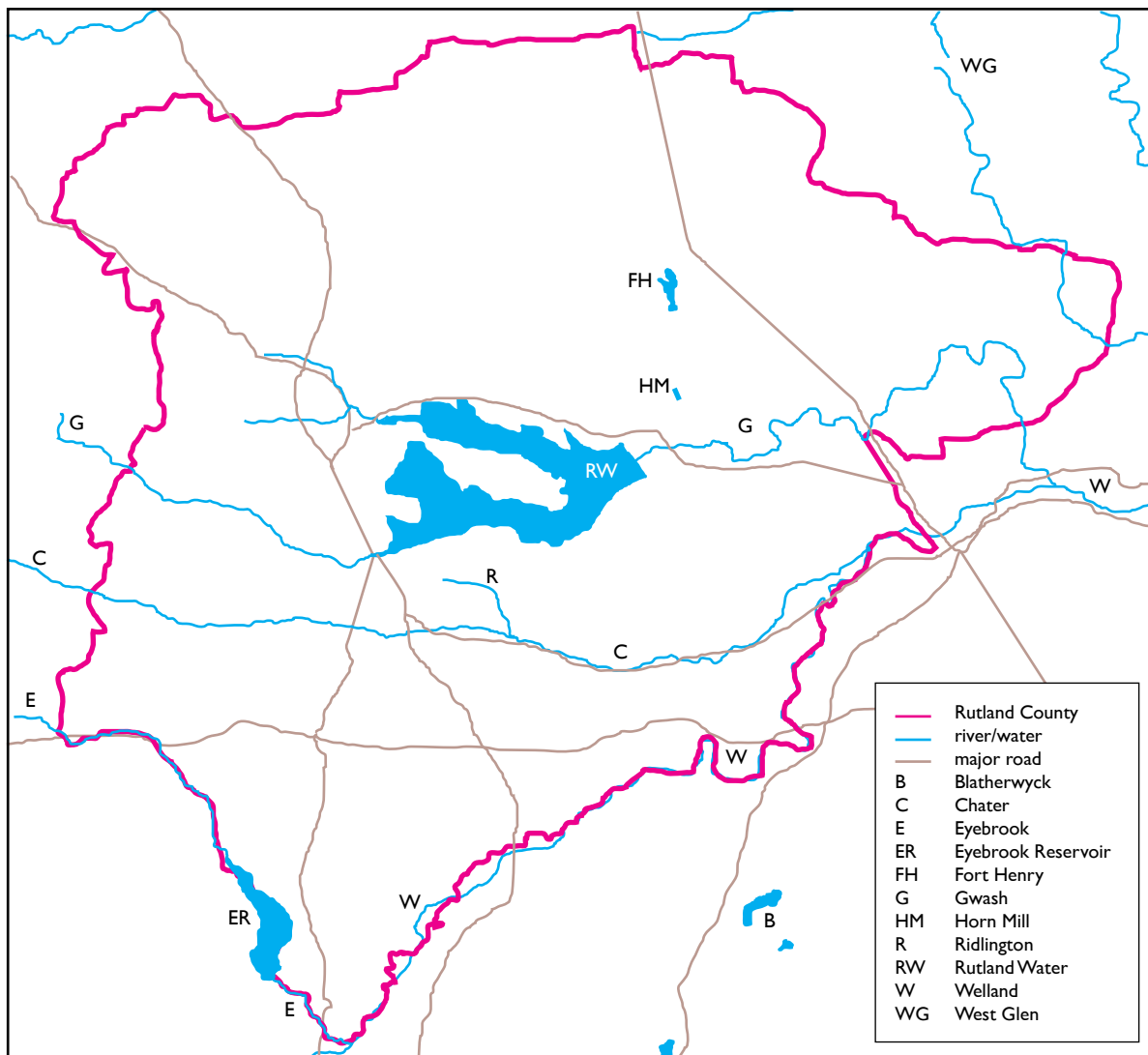
It was great to see so many of you enjoying yourselves at the AGM and Recorders evening! We all appreciated the chance to hear from various of our Recorders, and find out what's been happening in the countryside over the last few years. Several members commented that we should do more of the same, so we'll bear that in mind when planning next winter's programme.

We do hope that lots of you will come along to the next indoor meeting on April 7th and continue to celebrate our history – with longtime members Phil Rudkin and Dave Needham. (You can also purchase tickets for the 50th Anniversary lecture.)

Our next big event is our 50th Anniversary lecture in Oakham on May 8. There are pre-talk refreshments, and then Mike Dilger the TV naturalist is talking on *The trials and tribulations of a wildlife presenter*, which promises to be a real treat – do invite your friends to come too. All the details are in the poster on the back page of this *Fieldfare*. Please help us by using it to advertise the event locally – in your pub or post office or even your own window – so that we cover the area with posters and publicise the RNHS!

The 2015 outdoor season started well with a lovely if cold morning at Eyebrook Reservoir led by Warden Phil Rogers. And at the visit to Rutland Water with Tim Mackrill we saw displaying Smew (see photo page 2) and Goldeneye and lots more. As the weather improves we hope you will join us to enjoy the spring/summer programme, including our special Workshops (see pages 4 and 5).

Linda Biddle, Chairman



Our new River Recorder

There has never been an RNHS River Recorder before, so we are delighted to welcome David Roome to our body/phalanx/corps/... of Recorders. His first report appears on page 14, and gives an overview of the rivers in Rutland. The map above shows the rivers and lakes of Rutland in blue, main roads in brown – a challenging ‘riverine’ view of Rutland.

This should lead to interesting records and many new field trips. Welcome, David!

Hendrina Ellis, Fieldfare Editor



Smew, Rutland Water: D Cotter

Photography Competition

Have you taken some great shots of the wildlife and wild places of Leicestershire and Rutland? Would you like to be part of our first ever Wildlife Calendar for Leicestershire and Rutland?

The Wildlife Trust has just launched a photographic competition to find the best images of wildlife and wild places in Leicestershire and Rutland to feature in a Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust calendar for 2016.

We are looking for images that best depict the beautiful landscape and wildlife to be found in our two counties at different times of year; images of your favourite places or species that inspire you to get out and about and explore the natural world. The images can be taken at any time and from anywhere within Leicestershire or Rutland – not necessarily on our nature reserves.

Local wildlife photographer and artist John Wright will be one of the main judges choosing the 12 winning images – one for each month – and an overall winner for the cover.

The closing date for the competition will be 30 June 2015 and the calendar will go on sale at the Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre from 1 October 2015 and will also be available to purchase from our website www.lrwt.org.uk. Runners up images will also be shown in future editions of *Wildlife News* and on our website.

For full terms and conditions of entry to this competition please see our website www.lrwt.org.uk/get-involved/wildlife-photography-competition/

Karen Lowiss, LRWT

New permissive footpaths

Members may be interested in two new permissive footpaths near Pickworth. They both start from the road north of Pickworth, just south of Lincolnshire Gate, where there is a wide verge for parking (grid ref SK 9988 1462) and clearly marked gates.

One path goes westwards along the County boundary and by the edge of Pickworth Great Wood. It then joins the footpath to Pickworth.

The other goes southwards by the edge of Newell Wood, crosses a minor road and joins The Drift which leads back to Pickworth.

Martin Grimes, Treasurer

Verge Alert

We would like to get together a group of members and helpers to reassess the conservation verges, and hopefully encourage more of you to enjoy the wild flowers and life of the roadside. This way we may be able to cover several verges in one day. It is now some years since the verges were classified as conservation verges, and with the help of Andy Lear and the LRWT we hope to reassess them on a rolling programme.

We have continued to monitor verges since John Rodgers took over as botany recorder, with the help of some stalwart members, and we are grateful for your dedication. If you already monitor a verge and want to continue to do as you have been doing, this is great, but please do join the group if you wish.

If you are interested in joining us, whatever your experience and botanical knowledge, please contact either myself, or John Rodgers, soon, as the growing season is almost upon us.

I stress that you don't need to be an expert!

Linda Biddle



Chris Park

DIARY DATES

RNHS indoor events

Tuesday April 7, 7.30 pm **Celebrating 50 years of the RNHS**

Voluntary Action Rutland (VAR), Lands End Way, Oakham LE15 6RB
Phil Rudkin, longtime member, Vice President, ex-Chairman, birdsound expert and Orthoptera Recorder, with PowerPoint images by Dave Needham, birder, photographer and world traveller, are excellent people to give us a history of the Society! Also, you can buy your ticket for the Anniversary lecture at this meeting.

Friday May 8, 7.30 pm **50th Anniversary Lecture**
Trials and tribulations of a wildlife presenter by Mike Dilger



Wilson Auditorium, Oakham School, £12.50 (including pre-talk refreshments)
Tickets are obtainable at meetings; from **Music and More**, Grosvenor House, Melton Road, Oakham; **Uppingham Sports & Books**, 9 High Street East, Uppingham; and **Stamford Arts Centre**, 27 St Mary's Street, Stamford.

Queries: Jenny Rivett, email jenny_rivett@hotmail.com, phone 01572 821 388

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.

Sunday March 29, 10.00 am **Whisby Nature Park, Lincoln**

Leader Phil Porter. Meet in reserve car park which is located off the A46 just after the North Hykeham roundabout (OS grid ref: SK 915661). Car parking charges apply.

Queries: Linda Biddle on 01780 762108

Sunday April 12, 10.00 am **Pickworth Wood**

Leader Linda Biddle, RNHS Chairman and Mammal Recorder. A spring meeting, starting near Quarry Farm. (OS grid ref: SK 987156)

Queries: Linda Biddle on 01780 762108

Sunday May 10, 10.30 am **Woodland birds and summer migrants**

At Burley Wood, led by Linda Biddle, RNHS Chairman and Mammal Recorder, and Ann Tomlinson (OS grid ref: SK 892093)

Queries: Linda Biddle on 01780 762108

Saturday May 30, 10.00 am **Workshop: Botany**

With John Rodgers, RNHS Botany Recorder, and Andy Lear, LRWT, at Merry's Meadows, one of the most diverse wildlife sites in Rutland. Meet at OS grid ref: SK 928155, park on the roadside at the beginning of the track.

Queries: John Rodgers on 01572 757274

Thursday June 4, 2.00 pm **Seaton Meadows Memorial Walk**

Led by Joe Costley, Warden from Plantlife, to find wild flowers at this very special meadow (OS grid ref: SP 913979).

Queries: Dawn Whitefield on 01664 454578

Thursday June 11, 6.00 pm **Farm walk at Weldon House Farm, Caldicott**

With farmer and environmentalist Andrew Brown. Weldon House Farm, 8 Uppingham Rd, Caldicott LE16 8RX. Farm talk and walk (choose short or long walk). (OS grid ref: SK 875944.) With the option of a meal and questions to Andrew afterwards at the Castle Inn, Caldicott, which must be booked personally.

Queries: Dawn Whitefield on 01664 454578

Saturday July 11, 11.00 am Looking for butterflies at Ketton Quarry

Led by RNHS Butterfly Recorder Alistair Lawrence – meet in car park at Ketton Quarry reserve (OS grid ref: SK 978054). If you wish to stay into the afternoon, bring a picnic.
Queries: Alistair Lawrence on 01572 770492

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 894056).
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.

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

Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, Rutland Group

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

Sunday May 17, 2.00 pm Launde Big Wood

Meet at cross roads, SK 795035.

Sunday June 28, 2.00 pm Bloody Oaks Quarry

Always lots to see at this old quarry, SK 970108.

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, Bourne Group

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

Sun, 26 April, 10.30 am/4.00 pm Dole Wood Open Day

Bluebells and other wild flowers in this lovely local wood. Trust sales, refreshments, excellent homemade cooking and locally grown plants will be on sale.

Sunday 3 May, 5.00 am Dawn Chorus, Morkery Wood

We will be up with the birds! Guided walk and lots of listening.

January 2015

Atmospheric pressure and wind This month started with a period of high pressure which lasted until the 11th. The month's highest pressure, 1034 mb, occurred on the 4th. There was then a period of low pressures until the 21st, when there were 5 days of high pressure. The month ended with 4 days of depression during which time the month's lowest pressure, 981 mb, occurred on the 30th. Winds were predominantly S-W until the 23rd, then W-NW to the end of the month. On several days the winds were gusty and there was a gale overnight on 14th-15th.

Temperature The overall temperatures were the seventh highest in the last decade, from my records. The mean minimum was 0.88 °C, and the mean maximum was 7.64 °C. The lowest overnight minimum was -6.0 °C on the 18th-19th, and this was part of a period of 9 days when all minima were below freezing. The highest daytime maximum was 15.1 °C on the 9th, and the overnight minimum (8th-9th) was 9.5 °C. This was paralleled by the result from Exeter for that night which was 12.8 °C. The lowest daytime maximum here was 2.2 °C on the 20th, forming part of the cold spell referred to above. The Central England Temperature for the month was 4.8 °C, just 0.17 °C above the average. In the last 100 years 64 Januaries were colder, one had the same mean temperature and 35 were warmer.

Rain Total precipitation here was 34.8 mm (1.37 inches), some of which fell as snow on 29th-31st, although snow amounts were light and didn't persist. This figure represents 70% of my long-term mean of 25 years and thus it qualifies as a dry month. Daily amounts were light and none was detected on 11 days. Nationally, averaged over England and Wales, the total was 99.57 mm (3.92 inches), which is 101% of the normal for the standard reference period, 1981-2010.

Sunshine Averaged over England and Wales the total was 77.4 hours, which is 163% of the LTM.

Earth tremor At 22.22 hours on Wednesday January 28, an earth tremor measuring 3.8 Richter was recorded at the epicentre near Cottesmore, at a depth of 8 miles. This was the 5th recorded in the last 12 months and is regarded as normal.

February 2015

Atmospheric pressure and wind After a low pressure start to the month there was a period of high pressures from the 4th to the 12th inclusive, and then the rest of the month was generally low with just 2 days, the 17th and 18th, during which the month's highest pressure, 1037 mb, occurred. The month's lowest was 990 mb on the 23rd. Wind direction falls neatly into 2 halves this month, the 1st-15th generally NW-NE and the second half SW-W. On many mornings, especially towards the end of the month, these winds were both strong and gusty and in these conditions wind chill can be significant.

Temperature A mean minimum of 1.05 °C and a mean maximum of 7.45 °C put February 2015 in the 5th position in the decade 2006-2015. There were 8 air frosts and the lowest overnight minimum was -2.9 °C on the 1st-2nd. Daytime maxima, as one might expect, were higher towards the end of the month, the highest being 11.6 °C on the 25th followed by 11.0 °C on the 26th. The Central England Temperature for the month was 4.3 °C, some 0.22 °C below the average. In the past 100 years 37 Februaries were colder and 4 had the same mean temperature.

Rain The total here for the month was 33.5 mm (1.32 inches) which equates to 92% of my LTM of 25 years. Daily amounts were small, as is often the case, the highest being 8.3 mm (one third of an inch), which fell on the 16th, and on 14 days there was no measurable precipitation. At the beginning of the month, on 2nd-4th, there was a slight covering of snow which went fairly quickly as daytime temperatures were well above freezing. Averaged over England and Wales the total was 61.7 mm (2.43 inches) or 61% of the mean for the standard reference period 1981-2010.

Sunshine A sunny month, the total averaged over England and Wales was 95.3 hours or 117% of the LTM. In the past 100 years only 10 Februaries were sunnier.

National figures are taken from Philip Eden's Weather Watch column in the Sunday Telegraph.

AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES RECORDER Dr C H Gallimore

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January/February 2015



There are only a few records of amphibians in these months as is usual. Frogs are beginning to be active and so are both species of newt.

Common Frogs were only reported from two sites. They were first heard calling in Linda Worrall's pond in Barrowden on 19th February and on subsequent days. On 26th February they were calling vociferously at Dawn's Paddock in Braunston. There were no reports of spawn yet.

The only newt records were from my garden and cellar in Wing. A single **Great Crested Newt** was found in my cellar on 8th January and two were present on 13th February and again on 16th. A male and a female **Smooth Newt** were found in the cellar on 14th February and one on the 19th. Smooth Newts are far less frequent visitors to the cellar and, interestingly, the one on the 19th was seen at 5 pm, when it was still light, whereas I do not recall seeing Great Crested Newts except by artificial light.

A Great Crested Newt was first observed in my pond on January 16th and the number had risen to 5 by February 26th. Smooth Newts did not appear until February 21st and there were 5 by February 26th.

My thanks to D Whitefield and L Worrall who sent records.

BIRDS

RECORDER Terry Mitcham

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January/February 2015

There was a low key start to 2015 with most of last year's key birds still present – White-fronted and Pink-footed Geese, Great White Egret and Red-necked and Black-necked Grebes. Raptors included several Peregrines and a Merlin, whilst Barn Owls were well reported. Drumming Great Spotted Woodpeckers were an early sign of spring, though, as were returning Oystercatchers and Ringed Plovers to Rutland Water. Garden records were not exciting with few Blackcaps or Lesser Redpolls; Reed Bunting providing a highlight in a Stamford garden.

My thanks to the following for their records: T Appleton, V Arnold, P Bennett, A & L Biddle, T Caldicott, M Collins, A & J Comber, Dr C H Gallimore, G & M Griffin, P Langston, S Lister, LROS, T Mitcham, I Misselbrook, B Moore, P Rudkin, J S & J Rodgers, P Scott.

(See also Wildfowl Counts page 10)

Bewick's Swan	Two were at RWEg on 23.01.
Whooper Swan	Groups of five and seven were at RW on 19.01.
Pink-footed Goose	Two remained at EBR throughout Jan to 04.02. One was at RW from 02.01 to the end of Feb and two were at FHP on 15.02.
Greenland White-fronted Goose	The RW juvenile remained throughout both months and was at FHP on 15/16.02.
European White-fronted Goose	The two RW birds were last reported on 17.02.
Greylag Goose	There was a peak count of 288 at FHP on 15.02.
Barnacle Goose	One was at EBR on 30.01.
Brent Goose	A dark-bellied bird was at RW from 21.01 to at least 24.02.
Egyptian Goose	Two pairs were in the Lyndon area on 11.01 and two were near Martinsthorpe on 17.01. Five were in Ext Park on 15.02.
Gadwall	154 were at FHP on 01.02.
Red-crested Pochard	Six were at RWNA on 01.01 and four at RWLynd on 23.01, with three at EBR on 26.02.

Scaup	Present at RW to at least 21.02 with a max of six in SA on 06.02.
Smew	Present at both reservoirs throughout both months with max counts of eleven at RW on 22.01 and seven at EBR on 08.02. (See photo page 2.)
Goosander	Three were at RWLynd on 12 and 20.01.
Grey Partridge	Pairs were near Mor on 30.01 and Banthorpe GP on 06.02.
Great Northern Diver	Present at RW throughout both months with two noted on four dates, latest on 17.02.
Bittern	Singles were noted at RWEg from 02.01 to 21.02, and EBR between 06 and 09.01.
Little Egret	One was at FHP/North Brook between 16.01 and 01.02.
Great White Egret	One remained at RW throughout both months, visiting EBR on 04.01 and between 09 and 11.02.
Grey Heron	One visited a Wg garden on 27.02 – possibly checking out the availability of newts – and two were on roofs on Brooke Ave, Stamford, on 20.02, presumably for the same nefarious purpose.
Great Crested Grebe	c.200 were estimated in RWSA on 22.01.
Red-necked Grebe	One remained off Hamb peninsula, RW, throughout both months.
Black-necked Grebe	Two remained in RWNA throughout both months, with a possible third bird at the Dam on 14.02.
Red Kite	Three were noted in the same tree near Mor on 19.02.
Sparrowhawk	One was in an Oak garden on 06.01 and a pair displayed over Wg on 26.01. Noted also in Ext Park on 07.02.
Kestrel	Well reported with birds at RW, FHP, Ext Park, Hot Hollow Farm (Emp), and Shacklewell. The Wg bird roosted on the purlieu of a house throughout both months.
Merlin	One was at Turtle Bridge on 27.01.
Peregrine	Noted at FHP on 01.02, RW on 02.02, Man on 05.02 and Pilt on 25.02.
Water Rail	Singles were at FHP on 04.01 and RWEg on 17.01.
Moorhen	23 were on ponds at Greet GC on 16.01.
Avocet	An early bird visited RWEg on 19.02.
Oystercatcher	Three were at RWEg on 08.02 and two on 17.02.
Golden Plover	c.30 were in flight over Ext Park on 02.02 and 24 at RWEg on 23.02.
Lapwing	c.400 were near Mor on 13.01. RW counts were 722 on 18.01 and 461 on 08.02, whilst EBR had 250 on 18.01 and 230 on 08.02. Other good counts were 160 in Ext Park on 01.02 and 178 at Banthorpe GP on 06.02. 130 flew south west at Leigh on 03.02 and 400 flew west at Pilt on 22.02.
Ringed Plover	Five were at RWEg on 23.02 with six there on 27.02, one bird display flying.
Curlew	12 were present on counts at RW on 18.01 and 08.02.
Dunlin	Noted fairly regularly at EBR from 02.01 to 10.02, with 35 on the last date. The peak RW count was 23 on 18.01.
Green Sandpiper	One was at RWEg to 18.01.
Redshank	At RW there were 19 on 18.01 and ten on 08.02.
Jack Snipe	One was at RWEg on 17/18.01.
Woodcock	Reported between 04.01 and 15.02 from TunnW, Leigh, Pilt, Man and Westland Wood, mainly one or two but five in TunnW on 24.01.
Snipe	Double figure counts were 26 at RW on 18.01, 13 at Banthorpe GP on 06.02 and 27 at RW on 08.02.
Mediterranean Gull	One was at RWeg on 01.01.
Stock Dove	88 left a Pilt roost on 16.01.
Collared Dove	Seven in an Oak garden was the peak number reported – are there no larger flocks out there?
Barn Owl	Birds were noted at a healthy ten sites, all singles and mainly in the west.

Little Owl	One at EBR, in the usual oak tree, was the sole record.
Tawny Owl	Three were calling at CPW on 14.02.
Kingfisher	One was at RWEW on 24.01.
Green Woodpecker	Reports came from FHP, RWEg, KQ and Norm.
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Drumming birds were heard in TunnW (16.01), Norm, PGW and Ext Park. Up to three visited feeders at Norm in Jan.
Jay	One visited an EW garden on 04.02.
Jackdaw	c.3000 were noted during January, leaving a roost in the Glast area and flying over Pilt – ‘an amazing sight and sound’. c.3500 were estimated in this flock on 07.02, with 1700 still present on 27.02.
Raven	Birds were reported from a remarkable eleven sites throughout both months, many in pairs, including a pair in a Wg garden briefly on 21.02. Four over RW on 12.02 was the max. count.
Goldcrest	Five were hawking insects in a hedge at RWLynd on 08.02.
Willow Tit	Noted at RWLynd, Ggorse, Pilt (song), LFP, Rid and Man (song).
Marsh Tit	More widespread than the previous species, with pairs or singles at EBR, PGW, TunnW, RWLynd, Gun, Berrybut Spinney and Ggorse. Three were near Wg on 09.02.
Skylark	Three areas at QF each had four singing birds on 28.02.
Long-tailed Tit	Noted only from one Oak garden with four in Jan and two in Feb.
Chiffchaff	One was reported from RWLynd on seven dates between 04.01 and 08.02.
Blackcap	A female was at Norm on 04.01, a male in Oak on 06.01 and an unsexed bird in another Oak garden on 14.01. Are milder winters reducing the numbers of European birds wintering in Britain?
Starling	c.750 flew west at LFP on 03.02, with 2500 north-west near Wg on 06.02 and 1000 there on 09.02.
Nuthatch	Recorded at TunnW, Ext Park, CPW, FHP and KQ (a new site?).
Treecreeper	One roosted in a Wellingtonia in a Wg garden on 21 and 26.02.
Blackbird	48 were noted around Pilt on 16.01 and 75 at Wg on 19.01.
Fieldfare	The largest flocks reported were 120 in Ext Park on 01.02, 450 on RWDam on 25.02 and 130 at QF on 28.02.
Redwing	56 were at Norm on 18.01 and 40 in Ext Park on 01.02.
Stonechat	One was at EBR on 20.02.
Tree Sparrow	14 were near Pilt on 15.01, and four were with finches and buntings in Ext Park on 07.02.
Meadow Pipit	25 flew north-east near Man on 22.02 – early spring passage ?
Chaffinch	c.100 were noted at a Pilt roost on 18.01 and 07.02. The Leigh roost had c.500 on 25.01 and 400 on 08.02. Full song was heard at CPW on 14.02.
Brambling	One was at the Pilt finch roost on 13.01. Three were at Leigh on 25.01 with two on 08.02 and one on 15.02.
Goldfinch	Eight were in an Oak garden on 07.02 – our only record. Few seem to have been visiting gardens this winter.
Siskin	c.12 were in alders at Greet GC on 16.01 and two were at Berrybut Spinney on 17.02.
Lesser Redpoll	15 were at RWLynd on 05.01, with c.20 near Pilt on 20.01. Three or four fed at feeders in a Clips garden throughout Feb and one was in an Oak garden on 01.02. Present at Pilt throughout Feb, with seven on 11.02, and 25 were at QF on 28.02.
Bullfinch	Noted at FHP, EBR and BarnsW, where there were five on 29.01.
Yellowhammer	Game crops in Ext Park attracted 110 on 25.01 with 81 counted there on 07.02.
Reed Bunting	c.20 were in Ext Park game crops on 25.01. One was in an Oak garden between 01 and 15.01 and birds were regular in a Stam garden throughout both months with a max of ten on 31.01.

Wildfowl Counts January and February 2015

	Rutland Water		Eyebrook Reservoir		Ft Henry Ponds /Exton Park		Banthorpe Gravel Pit		Holywell Hall Lake	
	18.01	08.02	18.01	08.02	16.01	07.02	16.01	06.02	18.01	08.02
Mute Swan	182	166	73	87	11	11		3	2	2
Geese										
Pink-footed			2							
European White-fronted	2	2								
Greenland White-fronted	1	1								
Greylag	773	237	140	53	185	37	19	20	5	89
Canada	545	623	142	138	8				25	85
Barnacle	2	2								
Egyptian	59	34			5	2				
Shelduck	13	25	2	4		1				
Mandarin Duck	3	4								
Wigeon	2681	2891	445	552	112	72			6	
Gadwall	344	375	72	41	151	125			24	20
Teal	1445	1083	708	610	11	24	32	41	2	13
Mallard	672	487	194	158	141	75	6	7	72	71
Pintail	63	78	3	2						
Shoveler	26	25		2	4	4				
Red-crested Pochard	1	2								
Pochard	90	88		42	1	3	3	20		
Tufted Duck	2738	2122	36	185	70	103	7	9	15	26
Scaup	5	3								
Goldeneye	345	213	59	63						
Smew	11	8		7						
Goosander	21	15								
Great Northern Diver	1	1								
Cormorant	116	127	38	37	3	2		2		
Little Egret	8	2	1	5	1					
Grey Heron	20	24	4	5		1	1	1	1	2
Little Grebe	95	66			21	23			12	12
Great Crested Grebe	294	392	23	42						
Red-necked Grebe	1	1								
Black-necked Grebe	2	2								
Water Rail	10	2								
Moorhen	91	82	1	5	11	10	1	2	20	11
Coot	1950	1680	72	229	91	127			5	8
Kingfisher	2								1	1

BOTANY



Coltsfoot, P Scott

RECORDER John Rodgers

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E-mail: rnhsbotanyrecord@gmail.com

A memory came back to me that each year Graham Worrall would go to see if the **Lesser Celandines** by Seaton church were in flower. Today, Tuesday 17 March, there are many flowers and more to come – a satisfying feeling of continuity.

The anticipated early flowering plants have been reported from the East of the county; **Winter Aconite**, **Snowdrop** and **Coltsfoot** at the end of January; **Primrose** and **Field Speedwell** in early March.

Many thanks to Linda and Anthony Biddle

BUTTERFLIES



Red Admiral, A Lawrence

RECORDER Alistair Lawrence

11 Edmonton Way, Oakham, Rutland LE15 6JE. Telephone 01572 770492

Despite the cold and unsettled weather of the past two months there have been a couple of butterfly sightings.

A pristine male **Brimstone** was seen at Ketton Quarry on 25 February. On 27 February a **Red Admiral** was observed fluttering in an Oakham garden.

My thanks to P Langston, D Needham and P Rudkin for these records.

MOTHS

RECORDER Jean Harvey

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Due to the weather in January and February only the occasional moth has been seen on the wing so, as in 2014, I am not submitting the usual notes this time.

Let us hope for lots of records in two months time when Spring has really sprung.

ORTHOPTERA

RECORDER Phil Rudkin

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Why not come to the **Workshop: Insects, including Orthoptera** (we had some problems with the name!) for some in-depth information on these fascinating insects? Sunday August 9, more details, see page 5.

OTHER INSECTS AND INVERTEBRATES

RECORDER Gill Chiverton

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As I write this report it is about halfway through March, and even now in sheltered places there are still not many insects to record. So the lack of records for the previous four months will not come as a surprise. You will notice that we have changed our title to 'Other Insects and Invertebrates'. 'Other Insects' because preceding this report we have reports for Moths, Butterflies and Orthoptera – all insects. Invertebrates because 'Others' sounded somewhat random and undefined.

As reported in January's *Fieldfare*, no insect records were received. However, later we did receive two records for that period – one of a **Leopard Slug** in Barrowden and one of **Great Pond Snail** shells at the Eyebrook Reservoir.

The only record received for the period was for 25 February, when a solitary **Honey Bee** was noted in a Manton garden.

Lots of records for March/April please! And mark August 9 in your diary for the **Workshop: Insects, including Orthoptera** (see page 5).

Many thanks to recorders T Caldicott, R Lemmon and L Worrall

January/February 2015

PLANT GALLS

RECORDER ROY LEMMON

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No report for this issue, please continue sending in your findings.

MAMMALS

RECORDER Linda Biddle

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January/February 2015



Stoat, P Scott

It's strange how mammal records seem to come in lumps! This time we have two lovely reports of **Stoats** in ermine, a sign that the winter has been fairly cold for a few months. Stoats change colour according to the temperature and day length, in some cases turning completely white, and others only partly so. One stoat in ermine was seen at Langham crossing a track; and another at Tickencote was hunting along the verge, and slipped into the hedgerow on our approach. Other stoats seen, though not in ermine, were at Pilton, and near Gibbet's gorse at RWNR. The reason why some stoats change colour and others do not is not clearly explained, though it may be to do with genetics and origins. Animals which have colonised from the north will carry genes enabling colour change, as a result of adaptive camouflage encouraging success in the north. Other animals originating further south will not have needed this benefit, so do not carry the same genes. There have been no reports of **Weasels** during January and February.

Generally **Moles** are very under reported. They are very common, but remain below the observation threshold of many of us most of the time! Last season must have been a very good year for moles, as this winter we have seen many, many molehills in lots of locations. Arable fields are not good environments for them, though molehills are not easy to see against ploughed or cultivated land, and often go unnoticed. In grassland however they are easy to see, particularly in winter, when the grass is relatively short. On January 1st at Fort Henry, numerous molehills were seen and photographed along the valley between the trout farm and the lower lake. At Eyebrook reservoir on the January RNHS visit, molehills were seen between the water and the hedgerow, and also along the roadside verge. The verge between Empingham and Barnsdale is covered in hills which appeared during January, and the meadows around RWNR, particularly those around the Burley Fishponds, are obviously very well populated. Imagine, the whole time we carry on our lives thousands of little moles are busy, busy – excavating tunnels and burrows and feeding on whatever worms, slugs and minibeasts they can find!

I usually begin my report with the **Otter**. This month we have a total of 10 reports, mainly evidence in the form of spraint and footprints found on mink rafts at RWNR. When I took on recording mammals in 1977, there were no reports of otters! The RNHS visit to RW in February saw evidence of otter presence in the form of spraint and an otter slide going into the water on the bank of the reed bed at Pollards. Footprints were also seen, showing that the otter uses the slide to climb out of the water. An otter was seen, clearly, swimming at Manton Bridge, where the clay on the mink raft is always well imprinted with the otter's footmarks. Very sadly a young male otter was found as a road casualty on the verge of the A606 at the Egleton turn in the middle of February. This was possibly one of the young otters from RW trying to find a niche after being pushed out by parents prior to the new breeding season. A resident of Oakham had previously reported hearing a commotion in their garden, and looked out to see a scrabble going on between two otters. Even more sadly, a fully grown Otter was a road casualty on the A1 close to the Welland bridge between Stamford and Tinwell. This was seen right at the beginning of March, but may have been killed earlier, so I include it here. The only small consolation is that road casualties are an indication of an increasing population locally. As has been said, there are those who think that there are already too many for local waterways to sustain, and blame them for falling fish stocks.

The increasing number of otter reports contrasts with a falling off of **Foxes**. We have one report only of a Fox, seen slinking along the hedgerow near Mount's Lodge Farm on the Pickworth road, and two reports of evidence, scats found at



Molehills, L Biddle



Pickworth Wood and Heron Bay. **Badgers** have been active at setts in Exton Park and Pickworth; a dead badger was found in the brook near a sett at Exton Park.

A **Hedgehog** was reported on 3 occasions in January in Linda Worrall's garden, eating nuts kindly provided in the car port. 20 minutes after the earthquake it was there again, at 10.45 pm, tucking in busily! **Rabbits** have a large warren in a hedgerow between Tolethorpe and Ryhall, and are active along the banks of the Gwash. A **Brown Hare** was observed in a grassy area next to Eyebrook Reservoir on the RNHS outing in January, and several were reported from Greetham Valley Golf Club in January. 7 were seen in Exton Park on winter cereals in early February. **Grey squirrels** have been reported from Greetham Valley Golf Club, and near Heron Bay. Two **Bank Voles** were seen feeding on dropped nuts and seeds under bird feeders from the bridge at the end of Eyebrook Reservoir in early January, and on the RNHS visit we found a little bank vole struggling unsteadily across the track through the plantation, and placed it in a nearby bramble patch, in the hope that it might survive. A **Water Vole** swam across the education pond next to the Egleton Centre at RWNR in January, and footprints and droppings were found on mink rafts near Badger hide, and in the reed beds. A **Water Shrew** was found dead by the outfall of the lower lake at Fort Henry, and photographed for identification.

Two **Roe Deer** ran across in front of Greetham Valley Golf Club, near some badger diggings, and 4 more were glimpsed as they ran down a path into the wood at Barnsdale. **Muntjac** have been seen at Little Casterton, Greetham Valley Golf Club, Heron Bay, Manton, Lyndon, and Wing. 14 reports of **Fallow Deer** have been received, the largest group numbering 20 at Lincolnshire Gate at the end of February. A group of 9 were resting in a hollow on top of the hill between the lakes and the crossing of paths at Exton Park. They ran off when we approached, but cleverly only down the hill until they were out of our sight, and they hid under the slope there until we had passed. Others were seen at Clipsham Park, Pickworth Woods, and Greetham Valley Golf Club.

Thank you for records from: A Biddle, R C Brown, T Caldicott, Dr C H Gallimore, M & G Griffin, M Grimes, P Langston, D McKenzie, T Mitcham, P J Rudkin, L Worrall.

BATS

January/February 2015

RECORDER Jenny Harris

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There has only been one record for the period which came from Charles Gallimore, who reports that a bat was seen circling and hunting over his neighbour's garden at 11.45 am. It was echo-locating at 45 kHz, so identified as Common Pipistrelle. Charles watched it intermittently for about 20 minutes, a very unusual sighting.

During January and February, Leicestershire and Rutland Bat Group carried out visits to five hibernations sites around VC55, one of which is in eastern Rutland. The number of bats found may reflect the fact that there were seven or eight people involved in the search for bats, which are adept at hiding in holes and crevices, some of them very high, others almost at ground level. One of the Natterer's bats recorded in February was hanging free from the roof of the site, and was covered in fine moisture droplets so that it shone in the torch-light. However, it was still possible to see that the bat had very pale ventral fur, with no hint of buff, confirming it as Natterer's. The results are set out on page 14. The count on 8th February was the highest ever recorded at this site, which I hope reflects a good autumn and winter for the *Myotis* species recorded there. It was very pleasing to find a barbastelle after a year when the species had not been found in this hibernaculum.

For the first time for several years there have been no grounded bats in the county, and again I feel this is because last autumn the weather remained suitable for bats to feed well into October enabling them to enter hibernation with a good store of body fat.

With mild spring evenings returning, please look out for bats when out and about at twilight in our local habitats.

Bat counts

Rutland	Natterer's	Daubenton's	Myotis	Whiskered/Brandt's	Brown long-eared bat	No ID: only foot seen	Pipistrelle ? species	Soprano pipistrelle	Barbastelle	Total
25 January	10	-	1	-	1	2	-	-	-	14
8 February	11	1	-	-	1	2	1	-	1	17

I have two amendments to make to the notes in the last issue. The back view photograph of the soprano and Nathusius' pipistrelles on the back page of *Fieldfare* shows the Nathusius' on the left, soprano, with attitude, on the right. The three possible Brandt's bats caught at Egleton on 24.8 and Hambleton Wood on 13.9 all proved to be whiskered bats, determined by DNA from droppings collected by Matt Cook and sent to Ireland for testing. The Brandt's identified by Joelle Bryan in 2013 is therefore still the only Brandt's bat recorded in Rutland.

RIVERS

Rutland's rivers and their fish

RECORDER David Roome

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Rutland's largest river is the Welland, of which the Gwash, Chater and Eye Brook are its main tributaries. In all cases these feeder streams rise in the Tilton/Owston/Withcote area of 'High' Leicestershire, with the Chater joining the Welland at Tinwell, the Gwash east of Stamford and the Eye Brook at Caldicott. Another river which is partly in Rutland is the West Glen, which flows through Essendine. It is mostly in Lincolnshire, and also flows into the Welland at Surfleet.

Healthy fish stocks are the barometer of how a river is faring. What is needed for fish to do well (or importantly even to survive) is good water quality/quantity and flow. The rivers above get their water from a combination of springs, land drainage and rainfall, which varies greatly in different seasons of the year and indeed year by year. In addition, habitat and bankside trees/vegetation are extremely important. To give fish a chance, an ideal river will have a variety of depths/flow rates, clean gravel for fish to lay eggs, and a combination of open pieces of water to allow sunlight in for weed growth, and overhanging vegetation, trees and bushes to give fish somewhere to shelter. The healthy river will also need plenty of invertebrates and fly life for fish to feed on.

The rivers above have all in various degrees been managed by man, starting with water mills and moving on to the construction of the Eyebrook and Rutland Water Reservoirs. Water abstraction for agriculture, although licensed, can have a detrimental effect. Changing farming practices, different land usage and better land drainage has also had detrimental effects.

Another negative effect on fish stocks and small water-loving mammals is predation. Up to about 30 years ago a fish in our local streams would only have had to watch for Kingfishers and Herons. However the irresponsible and illegal release of Mink, the migration of Cormorants from the East coast and the successful introduction of Otters (although very welcome) have reduced fish stocks.

In a perfect world a river would never suffer from pollution, would not have had its meanders taken out, and would not be dredged, thus removing the vital gravel needed for fish to breed. It would run through unimproved pasture and be fenced off to stop livestock poaching the banks. The good news is that there are still places like this on our local rivers. Very importantly, the last few years have seen the Environment Agency, together with landowners, conservation groups and angling interests, taking steps to improve and put life back into the various streams with degraded habitats.

In my next account I will report on what fish I catch and observe in local streams.



L Biddle



January in Pickworth Wood, L Biddle



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Wildlife Recorders
Names and contact details appear at the head of their respective reports; and are also listed on our website and in the Annual Report.

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