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NOTICEBOARD

Micro fungi at Barrow-on-Soar

The Spring/Summer issue of The Wildlife Trust journal *Wildlife News* notes that a visit to Leicestershire County Council's Collections Service at Barrow-on-Soar alerted the Trust to Roy Lemmon's phenomenal collection of micro-fungi that is stored there. Many of these specimens were obtained on Trust nature reserves in Rutland such as Ketton Quarry, Bloody Oaks Quarry and Rutland Water, and the Trust thanked the staff at Barrow for forwarding the records to them, and for ensuring that the specimens are kept safely. The Society has been very aware of Roy's expertise and enthusiasm on the micro-fungi front for many years, and they often provided more than half the Mycology reports in *Fieldfare*!

Linda Worrall

RUTLAND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY EVENTS

Full details of all these events can be found on our website at www.rnhs.org.uk.

OUTDOOR EVENTS

Sunday 10 June **HERBERT'S MEADOW** **10.00 am**

As a follow-up to his talk on Ulverscroft Nature Reserve, Steve Woodward will take us around the adjacent Herbert's Meadow. Please feel free to bring a packed lunch and make a day of it.

Meet at OS Map 129 Grid Ref SK 489124. There is limited parking along Whitcroft's Lane adjacent to the reserve.

corrected date

Wednesday 27 June **COLLYWESTON DEEPS NR** **7.30 pm**

An evening walk to look at the important botanical species in this Nature Reserve, and possibly bats and glow-worms, if you are still awake by then.

Meet in the lay-by on the A43 at Easton on the Hill. OS Map 141 Grid Ref TF 004034.

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Saturday 30 June **SEATON MEADOWS NATURE RESERVE** **2.00 pm**

An afternoon visit to Seaton Meadows. A joint meeting with the Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society, to look at the array of meadow plants and associated wildlife. Bring your wellingtons if conditions have been wet. To be led by Graham Worrall.

Meet at OS Map 141 Grid Ref SP 915979. From Morcott turn left on the B672 towards Caldecott. Park under the viaduct.

Sunday 8 July **CASTOR HANGLANDS** **10.30 am**

A morning meeting at this excellent reserve led by Dr Duncan Sivell, who gave the indoor talk on December 6, 2011, on 'Friendly flies'.

Meet at OS Map 142, Grid Ref TF 125016.

Sunday 12 August **NORTH BROOK/HORN MILL** **11.00 am**

A morning meeting with leader Phil Rudkin, RNHS, our Orthoptera Recorder, who will take us around North Brook to find crickets and grasshoppers.

Meet at OS Map 130, Grid Ref SK 951106, at the footpath entrance next to Horn Mill. As usual, if you wish to linger into the afternoon bring Sunday lunch with you.

INDOOR EVENTS

RNHS indoor meetings will start again in October. They are held at the Oakham Church of England school, Burley Road, Oakham. The new car park is in full working order.

LEICESTER AND RUTLAND WILDLIFE TRUST RUTLAND GROUP

Indoor events, starting again in October, are held at the Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre, Egleton; admission £1 includes tea / coffee / biscuits. See www.lrwt.org.uk, or phone 0116 272 0444 in office hours, for other events in Leicestershire and Rutland, including guided walks.

Sunday 17 June **BLOODY OAKS RESERVE** **2.00 pm**

An afternoon visit to Bloody Oaks Reserve. Meet at OS Map 130 Grid Ref SK 970108. Park carefully on the wide verge opposite the reserve.

Sunday July 22 **GREAT MERIBEL WOOD** **10.30 am**

Arrangements to be announced (see website, or phone).

LINCOLNSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST

See www.lincstrust.org.uk, or phone 01507 526 677 in office hours, for details of the LWT Bourne Group's events and other Lincstrust events in Lincolnshire.

HIGH TIDES IN NORTH NORFOLK Nola Thurlow

High tides for Kings Lynn. Times in BST.

June				July			
Sunday	3	5.56	18.15	Sunday	1	4.38	17.03
	10	11.17	-		8	10.10	22.52
	17	5.55	18.11		15	4.29	16.56
	24	10.03	22.38		22	9.08	21.39
					29	3.04	15.41

WEATHER SUMMARY Roy Lemmon

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

March 2012

Atmospheric pressure and winds This was essentially a high pressure month – I recorded ‘lows’ of 1013 mb on two occasions but mostly pressures were well above this, the highest was 1038 mb recorded on six separate occasions. Consequently winds were of low velocity and clear skies were a feature of the month. Wind directions were generally S-SW up to the 18th and NW-NE after that.

Temperatures A warm month, overall the warmest in the last decade from my records and nationally only five years have been warmer in the last 100. The mean maximum, 13.75 °C, was 0.7 °C above the two previous warmest years, 2005 and 2007, and the mean minimum, while not a record, was also elevated. There were air frosts on only three nights, 25th, 26th and 31st, and the highest daytime temperatures were also all in the last 10 days, with the highest, 22.1 °C, on the 28th.

Rain I recorded a total of 24.1 mm (0.95 inches) which is 79% of my LTM for this month; and which for once is at odds with the averaged figure for England and Wales at 1.21 inches or 43% of the LTM for the standard reference period, 1981 to 2010. Of my total 14.9 mm or 62% fell on the 4th and there were 23 days in the month when no measureable precipitation occurred. In March 2011 just 4.0 mm of rain was measured.

Sunshine As intimated earlier this was a sunny month and averaged over England and Wales the total was 187 hours or 160% of the 1981–2010 mean; and this was the sunniest March since 1929. The mean figure for RAF Wittering is 112 hours.

I am indebted for the national figures to Philip Eden's monthly column in the Sunday Telegraph.

April 2012

Atmospheric pressure and winds This was a cyclonic month, i.e. one in which pressures were generally low and associated with a series of depressions that tracked across the country. The lowest pressures I recorded were 985 mb on both the 18th and 19th, preceded by the month's high of 1028 mb on 16th, but this latter was a notable exception this month. Winds were accordingly very variable and difficult to summarise, there were however some 17 days when winds were NW-NE.

Temperatures Correspondingly this was a cold month with a mean minimum of 3.86 °C and a mean max of 12.88 °C; and, although both were depressed, the mean max was depressed more than the mean minimum making it the coldest April in the last decade. Nationally only 19 Aprils in the last 100 years were colder but interestingly only on two occasions, the 5th and 15th, did the night temperature drop below 0 °C at this station.

Rain The total I recorded was 150.2 mm (5.91 inches) or 425% of my long term mean of 22 years. This is by far the wettest April I have recorded, the next wettest were 1998 and 2000 with 105.4 mm and 106 mm respectively, and it contrasts with April 2011 when I recorded 2.3 mm. There were only 5 days this month when no rain was recorded at this site. Again nationally since reliable records began in 1727 only the Aprils of 1756 and 2000 were wetter.

Sunshine A dull month, averaged nationally the figure was 136 hours or 87% of the 1981-2000 mean.

I am indebted to my neighbour Chris Holt for making the observations when I was on holiday.

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

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



March/April 2012

The great majority of records for this report concerned March sightings, with very few April records due presumably to the unfavourable weather.

For the third consecutive year frogs began spawning significantly later this year. The first spawn was seen in an Oakham garden pond on 11th March, which, apart from in 2010, is the

equal latest ‘first’ date in the past 25 years. The next record was from Barrowden on 18th March. It would seem that most spawning occurred in the following week, as later records were of old spawn. Subsequent records were from field ponds and other non-garden ponds.

Toad records were mainly from Exton, where clasping was observed, and from the east of the county, where calling was heard at two further

sites. Calling was also heard in the Manton Bay area of Rutland Water where breeding has occurred in the past. All these records were between 25th and 27th March, although there were records of single toads at Stocken and Exton earlier in March.

Smooth Newts were seen in Barrowden, Stocken and Wing in both months. They were also found in 13 of the ponds examined round Rutland Water Nature Reserve, three of which are new sites for Smooth Newts. Great Crested Newts were found in 6 of the ponds round Rutland Water, one of which is a new site. Good numbers were also observed at Empingham and Wing. A newt was

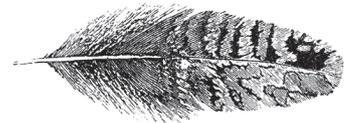
seen by the pond at Robin Hide at Lax Hill being consumed by a Grass Snake. Unfortunately the observer was unable to identify the species of newt. As Tim Appleton and your recorder were unable to locate any newts in the pond, it merely confirms that Grass Snakes are much better at finding newts than humans, but they have had many millions of years to hone their skills. (Unless, of course, the snake had eaten the last one).

Other Grass Snakes were seen on 25th March at Oakham Canal and Exton Park, where four were seen together. The only other reptile recorded was an Adder at Ketton Quarry on 8th March.

My thanks to the following who sent records: T Appleton, J Crosby, J Harris, T Mitcham, J & J Rodgers, M Tyler, D Whitefield and L & G Worrall.

BIRD REPORT compiled by T. Mitcham

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



Two months of unsettled weather certainly had their effect on our birdlife, with lots of waders at the reservoirs but a slow arrival of smaller migrants during a soggy April. Despite this, a large number of species was recorded, with lingering winter wildfowl and a real bonus in the leggy form of a Black-winged Stilt at Rutland Water. Short-eared Owls and Fieldfares remained into April at several sites and Barn Owls were well recorded. Chiffchaffs arrived in good numbers in March but other warblers and hirundines were seen in only small numbers. Scarcer arrivals included Ring Ouzels, Redstart and Whinchat. Please send in records of breeding wildfowl – there is certainly plenty of habitat for them now!

My thanks to the following for their records: T Appleton, V Arnold, R Baker, P Bennett, T Caldicott, D P Cole, A Comber, J Crosby, Dr C Gallimore, M & G Griffin, M Grimes, T Land, P Langston, S Lister, I Misselbrook, T Mitcham, B & L Nicholls, K Potterton, J & J Rodgers, P Rudkin, P Scott, Jill Stapleton, A R & M A Thorp, D Whitefield, L & G R Worrall, J Wright.

Bewick's Swan. The four RW birds left Egleton on 01.03.

Whooper Swan. Six were at EBR on 17 and 23.03, and singles were at RW on 24/25.03 and 25–27.04.

Egyptian Goose. Two were at Manton Junction by the R. Chater on 01.03.

Shelduck. Two were at FHP throughout both months and 4 were at EBR on 03.04, with 6 on 17.04.

Mandarin Duck. Pairs were at FHP/North Brook on 03.03 and 01.04. A female was at Wakerley Bridge on 24.03, whilst a male was at a pond at WFL on 20.04 with three there on 27.04.

Pintail. Two were at EBR on 03.03.

Garganey. Single males were at RW(Egleton) on 08 and 28.04.

Shoveler. Five were at FHP during March with a pair to 10.04. A male was at LFP on 14.03 with three on 17.03 (two males).

Scaup. Up to ten were at RW to 20.03, with single females on 06 and 10.04.

Long-tailed Duck. The RW female was last seen on 08.04.

Common Scoter. Four females were at RW(North Arm) on 27.04.

Goldeneye. One flew over Manton Junction on 21.03. Four were at EBR on 03.04.

Smew. Two redheads were at EBR on 16.03.

Goosander. A female was in RW(North Arm) on 13.04.

Grey Partridge. A pair on the edge of Greetham Valley Golf Course on 23.04 was the only record.

Little Egret. This species continues to expand its range with one or two noted at Tinwell Pumping Station, Belmesthorpe, Banthorpe Gravel Pit, Wakerley Bridge and Manton Junction during this period. 19 were at RW in mid-April.

- Little Grebe.** There were March records of pairs at Clipsham Ford and Chapel Farm, Burley-on-the-Hill.
- Slavonian Grebe.** One in breeding plumage was at EBR on 01.04.
- Red Kite.** A max count of six was made at two sites in March – well reported from all wooded areas.
- Marsh Harrier.** Juv./females were at RW (Eggleton) on 06 and 10.03, and 13/14.04. A male flew through at Exton Park on 31.03.
- Sparrowhawk.** Gardens in Uppingham and Oakham were visited regularly, with one or two at Stocken in both months. Display was noted over Pickworth and Wardley Woods.
- Buzzard.** There were numerous reports of up to four birds with seven on two dates at Stocken but the peak count was a remarkable 17 over BW on 01.03.
- Osprey.** The first bird returned to RW on 19.03, and by the end of April three pairs were established. Two visited ponds at Greetham Valley Golf Course on 30.03, with a female at EBR on that date and also on 17.04.
- Merlin.** A male was at Luffenham Airfield on 16.03; and a female was at Cottesmore Airfield (now Kendrew Barracks) on 30.03.
- Kestrel.** Well reported across the county – sites will be forwarded to LROS.
- Hobby.** Singles were at RW on 18.04 and over Manton on 26.04.
- Peregrine.** One overflowed Manton on 07.03 and one was at RW on 28/29.03. Two were over Oakham on 03.04.
- Oystercatcher.** At RW there were 22 on 11.03, increasing to 28 in mid-April.
- Black-winged Stilt.** One was at RW(Eggleton) on 13.04, the first locally since 1945 when two were at EBR in May.
- Avocet.** One at RW on 14.03 was joined by others throughout the month and into April with 11 present on 25.04. Three were at EBR on 28.03.
- Little Ringed Plover.** Two at EBR on 20.03 were the first arrivals. There were six at RW on 11.03 and seven in mid-April.
- Ringed Plover.** Six were at RW on 11.03 and 02.04, with ten in mid-April.
- Golden Plover.** Singles were at RW on 11.03 and 27.04.
- Grey Plover.** Two were at RW(Eggleton) on 29.04.
- Lapwing.** 79 were at RW on 11.03 and 32 in mid-April, with the first chicks seen on 27.04. Four pairs were in Exton Park in April and display was noted at Banthorpe Gravel Pit on 13.04.
- Sanderling.** One was at RW(Eggleton) on 26/27.04.
- Dunlin.** Singles were at EBR on two March dates. 34 were at RW on 06.03 with 18 on 11.03 and c.20 on 27.04.
- Ruff.** Present at RW throughout both months with a max of nine on 01.04.
- Snipe.** Seven were at RW on 11.03 with eight at LFP on 08.08. One or two were at these sites on several dates to mid-April.
- Jack Snipe.** Two were at RW on 11.03.
- Woodcock.** Singles were flushed in TW on 09.03 and in Morkery Wood on 22.03.
- Black-tailed Godwit.** Present at RW throughout both months with large flocks of Icelandic birds noted on passage. There were 92 on 19.04, 29 on 23.04 and 56 on 25.04. One was at EBR on 29.04.
- Bar-tailed Godwit.** Singles were noted at RW on four dates between 19 and 24.04.
- Whimbrel.** One at RW on 05.04 was the first, with four between 23/25.04. Four were at EBR on 24.04.
- Curlew.** Ten were at RW on 11.03. Two pairs were at Kendrew Barracks on 01.04 with a pair also at Luffenham Airfield. One flew over Stocken on 01.04.
- Common Sandpiper.** One was at EBR on 05.04 with one or two at RW from 07.04 to 27.04 and one at LFP on 28.04.
- Green Sandpiper.** Four were at RW on 06 and 11.03, with singles on 16.03 and 02.04.
- Spotted Redshank.** Singles were at RW on 27/28.03 and 16.04, with one at EBR between 09–11.03.
- Greenshank.** One was at EBR on 21.04 and two at RW on 23.04.
- Redshank.** Two were at EBR on 03.03 and eight were at RW on 11.03, with seven in mid-April.
- Turnstone.** One was at RW(Eggleton) on 27.04.
- Kittiwake.** One was at RW Dam on 16.03, with three there on 13.04.
- Little Gull.** Noted at RW between 17.04 and 30.04 with six on the first date.
- Common Gull.** c.1000 were estimated on pasture at Leighfield on 14.03
- Herring Gull.** c.350 flew south over Manton Junction on 06.03.
- Lesser Black-backed Gull.** 57 were noted flying east over Stocken on 23.04.
- Glaucous Gull.** The same first winter bird was at EBR and RW on 10.03.
- Iceland Gull.** Two roosted at RW on 20.03, with singles there and at EBR the following evening.
- Little Tern.** One was at RW(Eggleton) between 26–30.04.

Black Tern. Three were at RW(Egleton/North Arm) on 27.04.

Common Tern. First noted at RW and EBR on 10.04. Two were at EBR on 21.04.

Arctic Tern. Nine were at RW on 17.04. A strong passage on 24.04 brought 70+ to RW and 50 to EBR; there were 70 at RW the following day.

Stock Dove. Regularly noted at Beaumont Chase Farm, Stocken and FHP in both months.

Turtle Dove. A pair at RW(Egleton) on 27.04 were the first arrivals, followed by a remarkable record of a pair in an Oakham garden between 28/30.04, where they fed beneath seed feeders.

Cuckoo. One at RW(Lax Hill) on 12.04 was the first bird, with one singing at WFL on 14.04 the next. By 27.04 birds had been heard at Oakham, Greetham Valley Golf Course, LFP, Ridlington, Stocken and Wing.

Barn Owl. Very well reported especially from the RW area, with birds also at South Luffenham, Barrowden, Leighfield and Exton Park.

Little Owl. Reports came from FHP, EBR, Morcott/South Luffenham, Lyndon and Wing Burrows.

Tawny Owl. Birds were noted at nesting boxes in PW, Stoke Dry Wood and TW (two young in mid-April) and also at CPW, Seaton, Stocken (three calling on 01.04), Morkery Wood and LFP.

Short-eared Owl. Three were at RW(Egleton) on 10.03 with two on 16.04 and one to at least 25.04. There were singles at Leighfield on 13.04 and Holygate Road on 16.04.

Swift. On 25.04 there were c.20 at RW with 50 on 27.04. Two were over Barrowden on 28.04 and one was over Stamford on 30.04.

Kingfisher. Noted regularly at Manton Junction in March, at RW and LFP with two on the R.Chater near Wing on 02.04.

Green Woodpecker. There were many reports of calling birds with three at FHP on 16.03. One or two were at Clipsham Quarry, Woodhead, TW, BW near Lyddington and Stocken .

Great Spotted Woodpecker. Rather little drumming was reported with birds performing only at Quarry Wood, TW, FHP, PW and PC. Feeders were visited at Park House, Normanton, Oakham and Stocken.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker. A single bird was heard calling in PW on 11 and 28.03.

Raven. One was over RW(Gibbet Gorse) on 05 and 22.03, with one over Leighfield on 13 and 16.04.

Willow Tit. Reports were received from RW (Gibbet Gorse), Wing, Leighfield and Beaumont

Chase Farm. Singing birds were at Manton Junction and Wing.

Marsh Tit. Well reported with singing birds noted at Ketton Quarry, TW, PW and PC. An occupied nest was found in Barnsdale Wood in early April and one was ringed nearby on 14.04. Other records came from Berrybut Spinney, Manton, Beaumont Chase Farm and Clipsham Quarry.

Sand Martin. One at RW on 09.03 was the first record but birds were slow to arrive. 100+ were present there on 01.04. The first at FHP was not seen until 10.04.

Swallow. One was at RW Dam on 30.03. There were c.30 at EBR on 05.04 with the first at Stocken on 13.04 and Barrowden on 16.04. c.400 were over RW(South Arm) on 18.04.

House Martin. One at Stocken on 15.04 was our first record, with two at EBR and Barrowden on 17.04.

Long-tailed Tit. Eight were on a feeder at Dawn's Paddock on 03.03 and two in an Oakham garden on 10.03. An almost completed nest was found in Barnsdale Wood on 11.04.

Chiffchaff. The first song was at RW(Gibbet Gorse/Berrybut Spinney) on 16.03. On 20.03 six sang in PW and ten around Gibbet Gorse. There were double figure counts from many woodlands by the end of March, with singles also in Barrowden and Stamford gardens on 22/23.03. and 02.04 to 06.04. On 03.04, 32 were singing in BW and there were 26 at Leighfield on 08.04.

Willow Warbler. Not noted until 31.03 at RW(Burley Fishponds). On 08.04 two sang in CPW and in a nearby spinney, with four in TW on 10.04. Throughout April low nos were noted at all sites.

Blackcap. Singles were in gardens at Manton on 01.03 and 25/26.03. and Oakham on 15.03. Song was first heard at Berrybut Spinney on 26.03, with six in the area the next day. Three sang in PW on 28.03. A passage bird was in a Stamford garden on 13.04. A female took ivy berries in another Stamford garden on 22/23.04, and a male was at Barrowden on 24.04. There were c.17 singing in BW on 23.04.

Garden Warbler. Singles sang at RW(Egleton) on 22/27.04 and Berrybut Spinney on 30.04.

Lesser Whitethroat. One at WFL on 20.04 was the first, with one at RW(South Arm) and two at Leighfield on 28.04.

Whitethroat. One singing in Steadfold Lane, Ketton on 21.04 was the first, with one in TW the next day.

- Grasshopper Warbler.** One sang at RW(Eggleton) on 11.04.
- Sedge Warbler.** First noted at RW(Eggleton) on 06.04.
- Reed Warbler.** The first one sang at RW(Eggleton) on 17.04.
- Nuthatch.** There were reports from traditional sites in TW, PW, PC, BW, Woodhead, FHP and Exton Park.
- Treecreeper.** Very well reported from several woodland sites and a Wing garden. Ten were noted in BW on 03.04 and a probable nest site was located in a Wellingtonia at Park House, Normanton on 28.03.
- Wren.** A violent fight between two Wrens on the ground was witnessed in Oakham churchyard on 25.03, the birds returning to the fray after a brief separation. They eventually parted, presumably having defined their territorial boundaries. 33 were noted in song in BW on 27.04.
- Ring Ouzel.** Males were at FHP on 14.04 and RW(Edith Weston) between 15/17.04.
- Blackbird.** c.35 were noted around Leighfield on 14.03 and c.52 around Wing on 23.04.
- Fieldfare.** Some large flocks were reported during both months as birds were presumably held back by the weather on their migration to northern Europe. The largest March flocks were c.200 at Stocken (15th), 150 at Hinman's Spinney (16th), 200 at Wakerley Bridge (19th) and 275 in Exton Park (25th). In April there was a huge flock of c.1200 at Leighfield on 1st with 300 on 8th and 100 at Greetham Valley Golf Course on 16th. The last birds were five at Wing Burrows and seven at FHP on 27.04.
- Song Thrush.** Four were heard singing from a Barrowden garden on 22.03 and 12 were noted around Wing on 11.04.
- Redwing.** Small nos were with the Fieldfare flocks noted above, with two at RW dam on 30.03 the last reported.
- Mistle Thrush.** Singing birds were noted at PW, TW, RW, Exton Park and Barrowden.
- Redstart.** A female was at RW (near Edith Weston) on 30.04.
- Whinchat.** Two were at RW(Edith Weston) on 30.04.
- Wheatear.** The first birds were at RW and Luffenham Airfield on 16.03, and these 2 sites provided the bulk of the records to the end of April with max counts of 20+ at Luffenham on 16.04 and 18 around RW on 30.04. Elsewhere there were singles at Greetham Valley golf course on 26.03, LFP on 22.04 and EBR on 24.04.
- House Sparrow.** A pre-breeding flock of 20 was at Stocken on 11.03.
- Tree Sparrow.** 20 were at RW(Lyndon) on 11.03, and small nos were noted west of Uppingham on 18.03.
- Yellow Wagtail.** One at RW(Eggleton) on 03.04 was the first arrival. One or two were at EBR between 07 and 11.04, and there were c.150 at RW Dam on 29.04.
- Grey Wagtail.** The only record was one by the R.Chater at Manton Junction on 13.03.
- Pied Wagtail.** Two nests were located at Stocken on 23.04, one of them in a gang mower – for the third successive year!
- White Wagtail.** Noted at both reservoirs between 23.03 and 17.04, with ten at RW and five at EBR on 10.04.
- Meadow Pipit.** 21 were at RW(Old Hall) on 02.03. There were 32 near Berrybut Spinney on 12.03 and 40 flew north over Manton Junction on 18.03, with 40 north nearby on 12.04. Display was noted at GHW and RW (South Arm golf course).
- Rock Pipit.** Singles were at RW (South Arm and Dam) on 06.03 and 20.03.
- Chaffinch.** c.146 flew from a roost at Leighfield on 11.03.
- Brambling.** Two were at RW(Heron Bay) on 21.03 and two at Leighfield on 27.03. Singles were in BW on 03.04, Berrybut Spinney on 12.04 and over Gibbet Gorse on 21.04.
- Siskin.** Very few were recorded. Two were on feeders in Edith Weston on 13.03. Two were at RW(Eggleton) on 11.03 and three at Beaumont Chase Farm on 13.03. Two were also at RW(Eggleton) on 27.04.
- Linnet.** 16 were at Stocken on 26.03. c.50 were at RW(South Arm) on 21.04 and 50 near Wing on 27.04.
- Lesser Redpoll.** Six were at CPW on 25.03 and one flew north over WFL on 17.04.
- Crossbill.** One flew over RW(Manton Bay) on 19.03 and birds were heard at FHP on 29 and 31.03.
- Bullfinch.** Up to four were noted at RW, Hambleton and PW and there were seven in Barnsdale Wood on 22.03. 15 were noted around Wing on 11.04.
- Reed Bunting.** A female fed in a North Luffenham garden to 04.03, and up to three fed in a Stamford garden to the end of March with one staying to 06.04. Ten were at LFP on 11.03.
- Corn Bunting.** One flew over RW(Manton Bay) on 19.03.

March/April 2012 Wildfowl Counts

	Rutland Water	Eyebrook Reservoir	Fort Henry Ponds and Exton Park		Holywell Lake
	11.03.12		11.03.12	09.03.12	14.04.12
Mute Swan	212	54	5	5	7
Greylag Goose	115		16	15	13
Canada Goose	145	9		7	32
Barnacle Goose	2				
Egyptian Goose	25	1			
Shelduck	58	9	2	2	
Wigeon	1771	105	107		
Gadwall	223	4	81	23	2
Teal	636	101	10	2	15
Mallard	535	25	64	30	36
Pintail	8				
Shoveler	5		2		
Pochard	18	1	3		
Tufted Duck	633	249	107	47	30
Scaup	9				
Goldeneye	452	36			
Smew	2				
Goosander	3				
Little Grebe	27		6		11
Great Crested Grebe	101	5			
Cormorant	152	16	1	3	
Little Egret	6				
Grey Heron	10	3			
Water Rail	10				
Moorhen	44	3	13	10	12
Coot	446	8	71	45	37

BOTANY NOTES compiled by Graham Worrall

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March/April 2012

As a result of the warm month, spring flowers such as **bluebells**, **sweet violets** and even **cowslips** kept company with the more usual March flowers of **lesser celandine**, **colt's-foot** and **blackthorn** (sloe).

April was very wet and much colder, but sloe and a full flowering of **wood anemones** was seen. The area of **green hellebore** was in good order in Clipsham Park Wood – the only known example

in Rutland. **Opposite-leaved golden saxifrage** and **wood sorrel** were reported from Prior's Coppice and **cowslips** were in large numbers on neutral to alkaline verges in the east of the County. Along the main roads where salt is spread, **Danish scurvy-grass** was in great abundance where bare soil conditions occurred.

Thank you particularly for the first records of Verge visits. The pleasure of these verges can only increase in the next few months.



Sightings, with thanks, are from B & D Parker, P & E Mann, J Myers, M Grimes, G Worrall, R Edwards, D Whitefield, G Chiverton, R Lemmon, J Mallett, J Crosby, C Jones, T Mitcham, P Rudkin, A Lawrence.

BUTTERFLY NOTES compiled by Alistair Lawrence

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March/April 2012

The warm dry weather of March, especially in the second half of the month, saw a surge of butterfly activity which came to an abrupt end with the cool unsettled conditions that arrived in April. Reports of butterflies in April have been sporadic, mirroring the very limited number of warm sunny days amongst many wet ones.

Most reports received during this period have been of **Brimstones**, with many single sightings but 10 were seen at Clipsham Park Wood on 11 March and 8 were observed in Pickworth Wood on the 28th. Uppingham, Ketton Quarry, RW Lyndon and Egleton Reserves provided several records. At the latter reserve a mating pair was observed on 30 April.

Three records of single **Large White** come from Lyndon reserve on 22 April and from RW Egleton and Stocken on 30 April. The earliest reported sighting of **Small White** comes from Oakham on 30 March. There were three further sightings in April from Oakham, Ketton Quarry and RW Egleton Reserve.

The end of March (viz 28th and 29th) saw a number of sightings of **Orange Tip**, both male and female, in Uppingham. There have been seven other records of this species being seen in

our area during April, with 8 males recorded at Egleton reserve on 30 April.

The only record of a **Holly Blue** comes from Uppingham on 29 March during the very warm spell of weather.

Peacocks were observed in a number of locations during March, mostly single sightings but three were seen at Clipsham Park Wood on 11 March and four at Ketton Quarry on 27 March. Records for April come from Ketton Quarry, Stocken and RW Egleton reserve, with 9 being seen at the latter on 30 April.

The first record of a **Comma** is a single sighting at Stocken on 1 March. Other reports come from Uppingham and the reserves, with four being seen at Clipsham Park Wood on 11 March and at Priors Coppice on 21 March respectively, and three at Ketton Quarry on 28 March. The only report received for April is two at RW Egleton on the 30th.

There are three reports of single **Small Tortoiseshells**, the first on 11 March at Clipsham Park Wood and then later in March from Ketton Quarry and Oakham. On 3rd March a single **Red Admiral** was seen at Barrowden. The first and only record for **Speckled Wood** comes from RW Egleton reserve on 30 April.

My thanks to the following contributors: J Crosby, M Grimes, C Hillyer, C Jones, A Lawrence, A Malcolm, P & E Mann, J Myers, D Needham, E Northen, B & D Parker, D Perril, P Rudkin, P Scott, L & G Worrall

MOTH NOTES compiled by Jean Harvey

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March/April 2012

Only one record card has been received in recent weeks. This was for a Twin Spotted Quaker, which was discovered by an Oakham member in his lounge on March 23rd.

At Rutland Water, the trap in the reed beds was operated on alternate nights during both March and April. There were periods of good weather in March and on two occasions, approximately 1,000 moths of a dozen species were caught! In April, with much colder conditions generally, the nightly average fell dramatically to 50 moths of 6 species. At Eyebrook Reservoir, a similar situation was noted. We made one visit on March 23rd and recorded 331 moths of 14 species from three traps

left over-night. Two visits in April on the 10th and 24th yielded an average of only 30 moths of five species from the same traps. This illustrates how the weather and especially temperature can make such a difference despite the season.

Members may be interested to hear of the latest 'first' for VC55, which was a Dotted Chestnut trapped in a Leicester garden on March 21st. This species is spreading its distribution, so we hope it will visit Rutland before too long. Another was found recently just over the border in Northamptonshire so perhaps next year? This Nationally Rare species over-winters as an adult, can be found in woodland or thick hedgerows, and visits the flowers of ivy and blackthorn.

Many thanks for the information given above to: A Comber, R Follows and A Russell.

PLANT GALLS REPORT compiled by Roy Lemmon

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March/April 2012

As is usual at this time of the year there were no reports for March and just three for April. Two of these were rusts, on Common Mallow on Verge 7 on the 5th and on Lesser Celandine in Priors Coppice on the 15th, the occasion of the Society's visit. The third also in PC on the 15th took the form of a large stem swelling on Hazel and the best one can do in recording the gall causer is 'probably bacterial'. In reality it is very difficult to know the cause of this sort of gall, if it is indeed a gall and not just an abnormal physiological growth, and in addition to bacteria there are also viruses and phytoplasmas which are known to cause this sort of galling.

I will use this occasion to mention again the recent (2011) publication of No. 117 in the Collins New Naturalist Series, *Plant Galls* by Margaret Redfern. At 562 pages this is no mean achievement and represents what must be the most up-to-date information on the subject. It is not an identification manual, that is dealt with by other publications, one of which is also in part by M. Redfern, but it does include a considerable amount of background information on galls and their many causers, as well as chapters on the geography, evolution and uses of galls. Not exactly bedside reading but an excellent publication.

INSECTS AND OTHERS compiled by Gill Chiverton

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March 2012

HEMIPTERA Common Water Boatman *Corixa punctata* – by torchlight at Barrowden (!) 3 pairs of insects noted swimming together. Later in month 2 pairs noted in the daylight.

DIPTERA Common Bee-Fly *Bombilius major* – several insects noted at Barrowden and 7 recorded at Stocken. **Marmalade Hoverfly** *Episyrphus balteatus* – one recorded at Stocken. **Drone Fly** *Eristalis tenax* – seven recorded at Stocken. **Yellow Dung Fly** *Scathophaga stercoraria* – were recorded as numerous at Stocken.

HYMENOPTERA Common Wasp *Vespula vulgaris* – 4 queen wasps were noted stripping wood from a fence post at Stocken. **Early Mining Bee** *Andrena haemorrhoa* – >10 insects were recorded at Stocken. **Red Mason Bee** *Osmia rufa* – one recorded in Oakham. **Honey Bee** *Apis mellifera* – 19 were recorded at Stocken. **Bumble Bee** *sp.* – one large bumble bee was noted at Dawn's Paddock. **White-tailed Bumblebee** *Bombus lucorum* – ten were recorded at Stocken. **Buff-tailed Bumblebee** *Bombus terrestris* – 4 were noted at Stocken. **Early Bumblebee** *Bombus pratorum* – 4 were recorded at Stocken. **Common Carder Bee** *Bombus pascorum* – one was recorded at Stocken. **Red-tailed Bumblebee** *Bombus lapidarius* – 4 were noted at Stocken.

COLEOPTERA 7-spot Ladybird *Cochinella 7-punctata* – >2 were noted at Clipsham Park Wood, 4 were

recorded at Oakham and >200 were counted at Stocken at the beginning of the month and then were again noted as abundant at the end of the month. **10-spot Ladybird** *Adalia 10-punctata f. decempunctata* – one insect was identified and recorded at Stocken. **Water Beetle** *Dytiscidae* / **Whirligig Beetle** *Gyrinidae sp.* – one was noted at Stocken.

April 2012

DIPTERA Common Bee-Fly *Bombylius major* – ten+ insects were recorded at Ketton Quarry, one was noted at Priors Coppice.

HYMENOPTERA Early Mining Bee *Andrena haemorrhoa* – ten+ were noted at Stocken. **Spring Flower Bee** *Anthophora plumipes* – these insects were noted early in the month at Barrowden with numbers increasing a week later. **Early Bumblebee** *Bombus pratorum* – two were noted at Stocken. **Common Carder Bee** *Bombus pascorum* – 3 were recorded at Priors Coppice and two noted at Stocken. **White-tailed Bumblebee** *Bombus lucorum* – 5 were recorded at Stocken. **Buff-tailed Bumblebee** *Bombus terrestris* – 4 recorded at Stocken. **Red-tailed Bumblebee** *Bombus lapidarius* – one was recorded at Stocken.

Bumblebees *sp.* – three were noted at Ketton Quarry and single insects were noted throughout the month at Oakham.

COLEOPTERA 7-Spot Ladybirds *Cochinella 7-punctata* – up to 100 were noted around a garden

in Oakham, one was recorded at Ketton Quarry, eight were noted at Priors Coppice and they were

noted as abundant at Stocken.

Thanks to: M Branston, G Chiverton, J Crosby, A Lawrence, R Lemmon, D Needham, D Whitefield, L & G Worrall.

BAT REPORT compiled by Jenny Harris

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January to April 2012

There have been very few records of bats for the first four months of the year. A surprising occurrence was the appearance, outside Egleton Visitor Centre, of a Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii*, flying round at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Its reddish brown colouring and extraordinarily large feet were clearly visible as it flew fairly low in broad daylight. It seemed to be catching a few insects, but also appeared to be in some distress, landing repeatedly on the large ash tree outside the centre and plucking at its wings. It was flying round for more than 1.5 hours. On 17th March, it was again seen, this time flying over Lagoon I near the centre in the late afternoon. This time however it was attacked by a pair of jackdaws; they forced it into the water, where it was seized and killed by a carrion crow, a sad end to a beautiful creature. Starving bats may often hunt in daylight, but they are terribly vulnerable as these observations show.

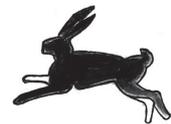
The only other record, apart from those from the hibernaculum visits, was of a dead common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* found in Foxhill, Whissendine, in March. This male bat was found hanging low down on a house wall, but was already dead when I arrived.

The usual two visits were made to the east Rutland hibernaculum. In January a single *Myotis* of unknown species was found but in February 11 bats were recorded: one Daubenton's, five Natterer's *Myotis nattereri*, two brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus* one which could not be identified and two of the rare barbastelle bats *Barbastella barbastellus*. This is the highest count for the site and the only time that more than one barbastelle has been found; it is possible the presence of seven counters might be relevant.

There are still a couple of roosts that need counters for two counts in June. These are Braunston-in-Rutland church and Egleton church. Please contact me if you can help.

MAMMAL REPORT compiled by Linda Biddle

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January/April 2012

This has been a very interesting and very busy period, with lots of reports from members, and additionally lots of mammal activities seen as a result of the Water Vole surveying done regularly at Rutland Water Nature Reserve, with help from Judith and Peter Harrison. In consequence the mammal notes will necessarily be a summary of all the records received. Please do keep sending in your observations, as all of them are used to compile the report, even if specific sightings are not all mentioned here.

Water Voles. For those who do not already know, we floated some small rafts (about 100 of them, 10" square) in various water courses around the reserve back in October 2011. We are monitoring them, fortnightly, checking to see whether they have been used as latrines – territorial markers – by the voles. The good news is that in several areas the voles have survived the winter, and are making use of the latrines provided, in spite

of some very inclement weather. Even during the snow of February quite a lot of activity was seen, and of course the recent rainfall is to their advantage – though some water courses have become raging torrents, and washed our rafts up onto the bank. Several water voles have been seen swimming in reed beds, streams or ditches. Distinct 'plops' are heard, followed by ripples among the vegetation. The population will now be breeding, so are likely to spread out more in the reserve, and outside it, along water courses, so please keep your eyes open for water voles, or signs of their activity, during the coming months!

Otters. Otters have been very evident in many parts of the reserve, leaving tell-tale spraint on or near the rafts. At one point an otter slide was found, again marked by spraint, and remains of prey nearby. This slide has been used for most of the spring, and cameras caught sight of at least 4 separate animals, probably male, female and two almost fully grown young. In another area

runs were found, and a bridge was covered with many droppings, indicating that the female and probably the two cubs were using it as a regular haunt. In April, sadly, a young otter in very poor condition was found at Langham Brook, the first time for many years that an otter has been seen in Langham. It was taken to the RSPCA, but subsequently died. The female may well be ready to breed again, and may have mated with another male, pushing out her almost fully grown cubs. If they are not able to catch sufficient prey, then sadly they do not survive.

Weasels. Only one Weasel was seen, in March near the small pond at Lyndon visitor centre.

Stoats. Nine reports, including in January two harassing two Egyptian geese at Barnsdale Hall country club. In February two were seen chasing each other between Wing and Glaston, in partial ermine, showing more white than usual on their coats. One in April at Lyndon Visitor Centre, showed the black tip to its tail.

Badger. 13 road casualties have been recorded, but many signs of active setts and latrines around the whole of Rutland show a healthy badger population. One live animal was seen crossing Wakerley Road Barrowden at 10.15 pm on February 17.

Foxes. 11 reports have been received including one road casualty. One was seen in Wardley Wood, walking along the western edge, others in Burley, Pickworth and Little Haw Woods, and another heard calling at Stocken. At RWNr the remains of a large mirror carp, prey of an otter, were carried by a large fox along the ride close to reed beds, and dropped unceremoniously when faced with a bird ringer, the fox disappearing into the undergrowth. Just outside the reserve a large fox was glimpsed as it crossed a spinney in the snow in February. In the same spot we came face to face with him/her two weeks later, as he tried to slink off along the fence. He stopped before entering the bushes and turned to face us. We froze, and he stood there looking at us for what seemed like ages, at least a minute or two, turning his head this way and that as if trying to work out if we were really there. Eventually he slipped away into the hawthorns.

Moles. Two reports of mole activity, from verge 5 Pickworth Road Essendine, and verge 7 Great Casterton to Pickworth.

Hedgehogs. Lots of reports from Barrowden, where the Worralls' first record in 2012 was a

small hedgehog eating nuts on 16th January. More reports continued to the end of the month, and even in the snow in February footprints were seen. The hedgehogs were busy through March and April too, sadly the eviscerated remains of one were found in the garden in April. It had not been there the day before. Another was seen in Stamford in Phil Rudkin's garden in February, one at Stocken in garden of G wing, and droppings found in Oakham at Woodland View in March.

Rabbits. One report only, from west of Hambleton village where a large warren was found by a pond. **Hares.** Twenty six records, one of 50 individuals seen in fields around Manton and Brooke, another of 15 in fields around Gunthorpe, 11 on grass by main runway at Cottesmore, as well as many at RWNr, Egleton, Pickworth and Seaton and Barrowden

Bank Voles. 4 reports. Regularly seen in Dr Gallimore's garden in Wing, one in Ketton quarry in March, two under separate reptile shelters in Tunnely Wood and another in a logpile in a copse near Heron Bay RWNr. **Short-Tailed Vole.** 5 reports. One seen running along a muddy log under a small bridge at RWNr near wet meadow, another in Dog Kennel fields, and the third evidence of runs found under an oak tree in the gardens at Stocken. Many runs were found in fields near Gunthorpe, near Shoveler Hide RWNr and near Burley Fish Ponds.

Long-tailed Fieldmouse. Two reports. One taking nuts from the hedgehogs' remnants in the Worralls' garden at Barrowden in January, and another underneath the bird table at Stocken.

Brown rats. Seven reports. Rats seen regularly in the gardens at Stocken, and subsequently several found dead as a result of poisoning

Grey Squirrels. 7 reports, 12 individuals.

Roe Deer. 3 reports, 2 from Dawn's Paddock, and the third at Greetham Valley golf club. **Fallow Deer.** Many reports from woods around the county, including Woodhead, Clipsham, Little Haw, Burley, Pickworth. Regular recorders the Thorps commented in January that numbers were down greatly in local woods, due to much disturbance, felling activities and shooting. The only area where numbers are still high is in Fineshade Woods, which are large enough to hold the deer with areas unaffected by the disturbances. **Muntjac.** Seen and recorded in many areas, including Prior's Coppice, Clipsham, Wing, Turnpole, RWNr, Manton and Hambleton.

Many thanks for records to: T Caldicott, J Crosby, C Gallimore, M Grimes, J Harris, P Langston, R Lemmon, T Mitcham, P R Rudkin, P Scott, A R & M A Thorp, D Whitefield, R Williams, G & L Worrall