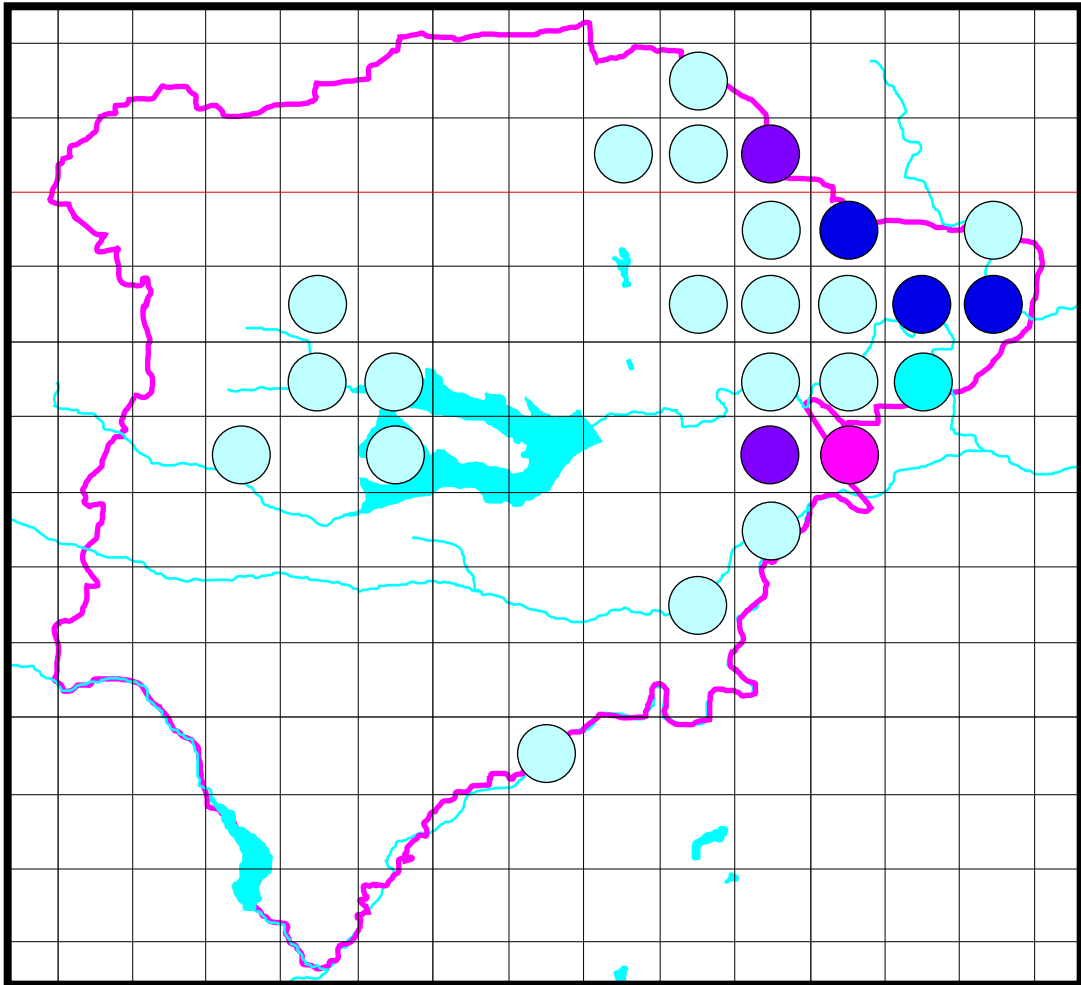




RUTLAND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY



OVERVIEW

2016 ANNUAL REPORT

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2016 OVERVIEW

Editor's foreword

As with previous years our Report contains information about Rutland's natural history. This year there has also been a limited attempt to analyse aspects of these data and use colour and mapping to improve presentation and, hopefully, understanding. An exemplar being Amphibians and Reptiles.

As long suspected, our maps show that for tracts of Rutland we have little or no significant natural history recording – a situation the Society might seek to address by making field trips to these under-reported areas. This year's Orthoptera Report shows how this approach has yielded rich returns.

These changes have significantly increased the size of the Report and the use of colour means that printing it would be much more costly. Therefore, reflecting a societal trend, this and future Annual Reports are only being published in full on the Society's website.

This OVERVIEW is intended to signpost readers to the website, and act as a placeholder for Institutions that need a paper record.

Anyone needing a paper copy of the Report should contact the Chairman.

ABBREVIATIONS & MAPPING

OVERVIEW OF CONTENT

an eight page report can be found on the RNHS website

Table

1 Rutland letter-code abbreviations, with grid references

Mapping

1 Rutland tetrad letter-code

2 Burley Wood rides, compartment numbering & extent of Society's permissioned access

3 Rutland Water, hide numbers and names

WEATHER

OVERVIEW OF CONTENT

a three page report can be found on the RNHS website

The winter of 2015/16 was the warmest since national records began. Despite Atlantic gales in the last week of January and early February both months were relatively warm. March was very wet with high winds and April was the eighth coolest since 2007. June was also cool and wet with nine days of Northerly and/or Easterly winds.

July was both warm and dry, as were August and September. A persistent high over Scandanavia resulted in a cool October and the coldest November for a decade. Storm ANGUS (19-21 /11) produced 53% of November's rainfall making it another 'wet' month. December was relatively warm with high atmospheric pressure and the lowest rainfall I have recorded in 26 years of observations.

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AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES

OVERVIEW OF CONTENT

a nine page report can be found on the RNHS website

The numbers of frogs and toads were not significantly different from recent years, but records of both newt species were down as there was no specific survey of Rutland Water Nature Reserve this year. There were no Slow Worm records from Rutland, but they are found in Edmondthorpe which suggests that they may occur in Market Overton. The Grass Snake survey at Rutland Water Nature Reserve was disappointing compared with 2015, with only 6 snakes observed despite an extra 36 shelters being laid. This was possibly due to a combination of factors, observations not being made at a critical time, unfavourable weather and vegetation smothering the shelters.

Mapping

1 The distribution of 2016's species reports for Rutland

Maps 2~9 plot reports received for individual species over three time periods: sightings before 1981, reports 1982~2002, and reports 2003~16. Supporting comments only refer to 2016.

2 Common Frog

Recorded from 14 sites, with breeding at 10. At Barrowden the first frog was seen 25/01, first spawn 01/03, and the last sighting 02/10.

3 Toad

Recorded from 12 sites with breeding confirmed at 2 (possibly 2 others). The first active individual was seen 20/01 (Little Casterton), and the last live record 07/10.

4 Smooth Newt

Recorded from only 2 sites because this year there was no Rutland Water lagoons survey. First sighting (Wing) pond 11/01. An active female was found in a Wing garden 07/12.

5 Great Crested Newt

Recorded at two sites, first seen 11/01, last pond sighting 03/08, both from Wing

6 Viviparous Lizard

At Ketton Quarry in May and August

7 Slow Worm

No records

8 Grass Snake

Recorded from 23 sites, first seen 30/03 (Ketton), last sighting 23/10 Hambleton. Mating observed (Greetham) 16/05. The *Reptile Survey* at Rutland Water Nature Reserve was expanded with a further 36 shelters placed, with most being visited 12 times. Snakes were found in 2 of the new areas, a significant number of small mammals were observed using the shelters (see also Mammals).

9 Adder

Recorded on 5 occasions at Ketton Quarry between 13/03~08/06. Mating observed 17/04.

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BATS

OVERVIEW OF CONTENT

a seven page report can be found on the RNHS website

During 2016 bat activity was recorded in every month from April through to a single grounded bat 29/12. A cool, wet spring was thought to have delayed parturition, at least in pipistrelle species, but warmer weather from July to September inclusive could have aided juvenile survival.

Two visits to the hibernaculum (January/February) identified 4 species; in total 14 bats (Daubenton's, Whiskered/Brandt's, Pipistrelle sp. and Natterer's).

Ten known roosts were each visited twice in June (and later), 8 had bats present, 6 roosts were counted. Soprano pipistrelle (3 counted roosts), Common pipistrelle (1 roost), Whiskered (uncounted), Natterer's (2 roosts – one uncounted), Brown Long-eared (1 roost). Soprano numbers at Egleton church (506) were about half 2015's count. Unsympathetic renovations at Exton's Fox and Hounds pub has totally cleared the roost previously there. The site has been deleted from the National Record.

Hibernaculum and roost counts were sent to the Bat Conservation Trust's *National Bat Monitoring Programme* (NBMP).

A third consecutive year of surveying for *P. nathusii*, using mainly harp traps, was carried out at Rutland Water under licence from Natural England. Five trapping sessions (Burley Wood and Hambleton) involved a total of 22.25 trapping hours. In addition to 14 Nathusius' pipistrelle (after accounting for 3 re-trapped individuals) a further 73 bats seven other species (Common pipistrelle, Soprano pipistrelle, Daubenton's, Brandt's, Whiskered, Natterer's and Noctule) were caught.

Through this trapping effort six species have been proved to be breeding at Rutland Water or nearby: Common pipistrelle, Soprano pipistrelle, Daubenton's, Brandt's, Whiskered and Natterer's bats and Noctule. Local breeding by Brown Long-eared bat already known.

During the year nine bats were found grounded (6 Common pipistrelle, 1 Soprano pipistrelle, 1 Pipistrelle sp., 1 Brown Long-eared). Two pipistrelle were released, one Common pipistrelle was retained, the other six died or were euthanased.

Species reports

Includes notes about bat sightings for:

Daubenton's

Brandt's

Whiskered

Natterer's

Noctule

Common pipistrelle

Soprano pipistrelle

Nathusius' pipistrelle

Brown Long-eared

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BIRDS

OVERVIEW OF CONTENT

a nineteen page report can be found on the **RNHS website**

2016 was an exciting year for local bird watchers with several rarities at Rutland Water – Surf Scoter (a County first), Long-billed Dowitcher and Roseate Tern. Other notable birds were Great Skua, Great Grey Shrike and Yellow-browed Warbler.

As usual wildfowl and waders featured prominently at the reservoirs, with high counts of wildfowl and an impressive list of 31 passage and breeding waders. Woodlands provided much of interest with winter (and roding) Woodcock, Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers and Nightingales at Rutland Water, where habitat management is paying off for many species and not only birds. Counts at the Beaumont Chase Farm CBC continue – now in its 25th year.

Bird reports for 2016 were mapped and showed that these were received from 57 of Rutland's tetrads, but with notable gaps in coverage towards the north-west of the County.

Tables

Survey findings from seven locations are tabled:

Banthorpe Gravel Pit: 12 surveys recorded 18 species

Fort Henry Ponds and Exton Park Lake: 12 surveys of these two stretches of water recorded 21 wildfowl species

Holywell Lake: 12 surveys recorded 15 wildfowl species

Rutland Water: 12 surveys recorded 41 wildfowl and 22 wader species

Eyebrook Reservoir: 10 surveys recorded 24 wildfowl and 12 wader species

Beaumont Chase Farm CBC Farmland Survey: 10 surveys recorded nests, territories and on-the-wing birds, a total of 63 species.

Species reports

Tables are supported by species notes about location, dates seen, behaviour and observation history.

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BOTANY

OVERVIEW OF CONTENT

a nine page report can be found on the RNHS website

A mild if wet winter saw some very early records; Lesser Celandine, Red Campion, Red and White Deadnettle and Winter Heliotrope all appeared within the first fortnight of January. Sweet Violets were flowering in the middle of March and Bluebells, Primroses and Cowslips were reported in early April, though there didn't seem to be as many of the latter as in 2015. Moschatel and Wood Anemone were found in Barnsdale Wood and elsewhere, but there were no records of Winter Aconites unlike other years. Late April saw Cuckoo Flower in Clipsham Park Wood and Common Spotted Orchid there by mid May. There were a few Pyramidal Orchids reported from other sites but on the verges around Luffenham Heath Golf Club Anne Tomlinson counted 484 spikes. No Butterfly Orchids have been seen but there was one record of Southern Marsh Orchid at Ketton Quarry in June. One uncommon flower was Flixweed, one of the yellow crucifers, found on a Great Casterton verge. Guy Messenger, in his *Flora of Rutland* (1971), says he has no recent record in Rutland.

We haven't got an easy means of comparing year by year to see if plants have newly appeared or have disappeared. Perhaps that is something to work on. I have looked up the Annual Report for 1976, 40 years ago, to see what was commented on then. Unfortunately there isn't a full list of records but it is interesting to see that there were Butterfly Orchids, and two specimens of Bird's Nest Orchid though apparently one was 'dug up and removed, by some unprincipled person', as Mrs Buchanan records it. There were several findings of Common Star of Bethlehem but not of another member of the Lily family, Yellow Star of Bethlehem, which was recorded in 1985 in the Stocken area. Two colleagues from Leicester and the local BSBI looked for this plant earlier this year but without luck.

Botany reports were received for 29 of Rutland's tetrads from 20 individuals. A total of 291 species were recorded in 2016, with records being submitted by 20 individuals. This was a few more than in 2014 (202) but fewer than the 402 received in 2015 (although this figure was helped by two surveys conducted by the local BSBI branch).

The number of verges surveyed also fell again, which is a shame, but we rely on the keenness and willingness of a small number of people: we need more reports!

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BUTTERFLIES

OVERVIEW OF CONTENT

a three page report can be found on the RNHS website

Undoubted highlight of the year occurred during the Society visit to Ketton on 6 August, when a single specimen of the *valesina* form of the Silver Washed Fritillary was seen by many members. This is the first recording of this form in Rutland, though not a great surprise as in recent years it has been reported in counties to the north of its southern England stronghold.

Both Grizzled and Dingy Skipper remain recorded only from their traditional sites in the three quarries, though Grizzled Skipper was not recorded from Clipsham in 2016. And there was no record this year from the new site for these two species found at Essendine in 2015.

A disappointment this year is the lack of records of Chalkhill Blue. The first recent record for this species was in 2013 at Bloody Oaks Quarry. A maximum of six specimens were recorded in that year, then five in 2014, then just a single specimen on one occasion in 2015. With no records at all this year is the colony lost? All observers on deck next July/August please.

After the excitement of the finding of a Purple Emperor at Egleton in 2014 two seasons have now passed without any records to the RNHS. However a report on another website from a highly experienced observer hints that Stretton Wood might be a good place for members to search for this species next year.

In 2016 there were a total of 30 species reported with 686 records received. A map shows that 44 Rutland tetrads had butterflies recorded with a large variation in the frequency of species, one tetrad reported as having 28 species.

A further table summarises the first and last dates each species were observed flying, the number of sites they were observed and some comments on behaviour and trends.

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INSECTS

OVERVIEW OF CONTENT

a three page report can be found on the RNHS website

There were no reports for the months of January, February, November & December. For each species there is note about the month of sighting and sometimes additional comment, as with the Ant Woodlouse:

Ant Woodlouse	<i>Platyarthrus hoffmannseggi</i>	May	Bloody Oaks Quarry (in a nest of Yellow Meadow ants)
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Species reports

ODONOTA	<i>Damselflies</i>	8 species 26 locations
	<i>Dragonflies</i>	10 species 27 locations
HEMIPTERA	<i>Bugs</i>	5 species 7 locations
	<i>Lacewings</i>	1 species 1 locations
	<i>Beetles</i>	15 species 27 locations
DIPTERA	<i>Flies</i>	7 species 11 locations
TRICOPTERA	<i>Caddis Flies</i>	1 species 1 location
	<i>Bees</i>	16 species 42 locations
	<i>Woodlice</i>	3 species 5 locations
GASTROPODA	<i>Slugs</i>	3 species 5 locations
	<i>Land Snails</i>	11 species 33 locations

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MAMMALS

OVERVIEW OF CONTENT

a twelve page report can be found on the RNHS website

The total number of reports in 2016 was broadly in line with previous years. A garden trail-cam at Langham supplied a large number of records with Fox, Grey Squirrel, Muntjac and Hedgehog appearing most nights, and somewhat less frequently – Badger. Small mammals, including Bank and Short-tailed Voles, Long-tailed Fieldmice and Shrews, have been reported more commonly this year, often being found under reptile sheets (mapped in the full report) at Rutland Water (RWNR). It would be interesting to repeat such a survey, say at Ketton or Bloody Oaks quarries. Some records also came from Autumn trapping in a Barrow garden.

A Polecat report last year suggests that they are maintaining a local presence finding sufficient prey to survive. Otters continue to be successful, resident at RW through much of the year.

The Water Vole survey has continued, and confirms the success of the RWNR re-introduction programme. At Oakham canal they disappeared in the winter, leading to fears for their survival. However an October count, found abundant droppings on rafts at the southern end of the canal – evidence of a successful breeding season. It is likely that the north-end population, lacking a local shelter reed bed, was pre-dated and did not survive to breed.

There were no records of Water Shrew. A project investigating their distribution did not materialise. Given enough resources this may be remedied in 2017.

Species reports

Hedgehog	65	mapped with comments
Mole	46	mapped with comments
Common Shrew	10	RW location mapped, comments
Pygmy Shrew	4	RW location mapped, comments
Rabbit	20	comments
Brown Hare	30	mapped with comments
Grey Squirrel	127	organised shoot reason for high counts
Bank Vole	28	RW location mapped, comments
Water Vole	44	comment, 8 locations
Short-tailed Field Vole	18	RW location mapped, comments
Long-tailed Field Mouse	10	RW location mapped, comments
House mouse	3	–
Brown Rat	16	comment
Red Fox	165	mapped with comments
Stoat	8	mapped with stoat
Weasel	2	comment
Polecat	1	2015 late report
Badger	38	mapped with comments
Otter	55	mapped with comments
Fallow Deer	32	mapped
Muntjac Deer	86	mapped
Roe Deer	11	mapped

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MOTHS

OVERVIEW OF CONTENT

a seven page report can be found on the RNHS website

A cool and damp spring/early summer saw low moth totals, but by contrast late summer/autumn often provided ideal conditions with high counts. Totals for the year ended up below the average from previous years. The moth-highlight was a spring invasion of continental *Diamond-back* which arrived both early and in large numbers (two counts of 50+, and another of 20+ in June) – terrible news for allotments! The only 200+ moth-count was *Setaceous Hebrew Character* at Eyebrook Reservoir. Three macro-moths, *Currant Pug*, *Vapourer* and *Small Purple-barred*, had not also been recorded in 2015.

The main list includes reports from two Oakham gardens. My (excluded) out-of-County Stamford garden, trapped twelve times, recorded 67 macro and 21 micro-moths. Two traps set in countryside, at Essendine Railway Banks (July/August), and Stretton Wood (May) yielded macro/micro moth counts of 57/53 and 12/3 respectively.

This is my first annual report as your moth recorder and I have revised the format – splitting the moths into family groups, indicating their most likely season of occurrence, and giving the highest count recorded in one trap or field session. The flight season can only be a guide because so much depends on weather conditions, and some moths are also multi-brooded emerging anytime from spring onwards.

There is also a movement towards the greater use of common names for micro-moths, so, using Mark Cocker's book *Claxton*, I have added a number that are not usually mentioned in standard reference books.

I hope that the two training courses held at Rutland Water in the year, will increase the number of local recorders. I would also encourage anyone wishing to find out more about moths to explore the *NatureSpot* website which also has useful onward links.

Species reports by family

Macro-moths

Hepialidae	2
Zygaenidae	1
Drepanidae	1
Geometridae	44
Sphingidae	6
Notodontidae	4
Lymantriidae	5
Arctiidae	6
Nolidae	1
Noctuidae	69

Micro-moths

Plutellidae	1
Oecophoridae	2
Chimabachidae	1
Blastobasidae	1
Elachistidae	1
Cosmopterigidae	1
Tortricidae	16
Alucitidae	1
Crambidae	12
Pyralidae	4
Pterophoridae	1

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ORTHOPTERA

OVERVIEW OF CONTENT

a fifteen page report can be found on the RNHS website

The cold and wet Spring and early Summer meant that Rutland's orthopterans got off to a slow start, but by mid-June species strongholds all held good populations.

As before we specifically set out to sweep parts of the County where species had not previously been reported, and by the season's end, a further 23 tetrads had been 'coloured-in'. A map plots known occupation density by species, two Rutland Water tetrads each having 11 of Rutland's known 13 orthoptera. Two adjacent tetrads are similarly rich having 9 and 10 species.

Apart from happen-chance finds two full surveys were undertaken of the Egleton Reserve. Areas around the Volunteer Training Centre, Lagoon 4 banks and Skylark Meadow (a private field on the Reserve) all being surveyed for the first time. Huge numbers of Roesel's Bush Crickets, Long-winged Coneheads were found, together with Lesser Marsh and Meadow Grasshoppers. Nearby very large numbers of Speckled Bush Crickets were detected.

Maps plot by tetrad, where individual species colonies were found. Supporting notes give more detail about new sightings.

Mapping

Bush Crickets

Oak Bush Cricket

Dark Bush Cricket

Roesel's Bush Cricket

Long-winged Conehead

Short-winged Conehead

Speckled Bush Cricket

House Cricket

Groundhoppers

Common Groundhopper

Slender Groundhopper

Grasshoppers

Common Green Grasshopper

Field Grasshopper

Meadow Grasshopper

Lesser Marsh Grasshopper

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PLANT GALLS

OVERVIEW OF CONTENT

a five page report can be found on the RNHS website

After a warm winter, the Spring and early Summer were cold and wet, and while this may have delayed growth it meant that when it did get under way it was relatively luxuriant. This may account for the 30 percent increase in the number of records for 2016, a total of 344 covering some 135 species of gall. A total of 23 sites were surveyed, some more than once.

On the 4 September we hosted a joint meeting with members of the British Plant Gall Society at Prior's Coppice, and this gave us a total of 59 species for the day including several not recorded previously in the County I. Among these were 5 Wasp galls on Oak.

We are grateful to the BPGS members for their expertise.

Species reports

Kingdom/Phylum/Class	Order	Family(s)	species/locations
CHROMISTA	O Albuginales		1 sp/host, 2 locn
FUNGI			
Phy Ascomycota	O Erysiphales: <i>Powdery Mildews</i>		1 sp/host, 2 locn
	O Taphrinales		3 sp/host, 7 locn
Phy Basidiomycota	O Microbotryales: <i>Smut-like Fungi</i>		2 sp/host, 5 locn
	O Pucciniales: <i>Rusts</i>		30 sp/host, 73 locn
FLOWERING PLANT		F Visaceae	1 sp/host, 1 locn
Phy Arthropods	O Acari	S-F Eriophyoidea: <i>Gall Mites</i>	31 sp/host, 85 locn
Class Insects	O Hemiptera	S-F Psylloidea: <i>Jumping plant lice</i>	4 sp/host, 16 locn
	O Sternorrhyncha	S-F Aphidoidea: <i>Aphids</i>	4 sp/host, locn
		S-F Coccoidea: <i>Scale Insects</i>	1 sp/host, 1 locn
		F Anthomyiidae: <i>Whiteflies</i>	3 sp/host, 3 locn
		F Cecidomyiidae: <i>Gall Midges</i>	25 sp/host, 61 locn
		F Tephritidae: <i>Gall Flies</i>	3 sp/host, 15 locn
	O Hymenoptera	F Tenthredinidae: <i>Sawflies</i>	5 sp/host, 8 locn
		F Cynipidae: <i>Gall Wasps</i>	23 sp/host, 57 locn

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