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NOTICEBOARD

33 of us on an RNHS event saw a Camberwell Beauty, reproduced here life size! See page 10.

Note: Your next *Fieldfare* will be in July, not June as in previous years.

Joy Paterson retires – who can replace her?

Our talented Publicity Officer Joy Paterson has decided to take a rest from sorting out RNHS publicity. We are so grateful to her for all her dedication over the past years. Our Society has greatly benefited from her imagination and hard work.

The RNHS now urgently needs someone to take on the role of Publicity Officer. This is a vital role for the Society, as it is the way we spread the word about our indoor and outdoor meetings, and get reports of our activities into the local press. The role generally involves:

- Contacting local libraries, newspapers and Rutland Radio with details of the Meetings Programme;
- Co-ordinating the way that write-ups of indoor and outdoor meetings (produced by various members throughout the year) are sent to the Press;
- Co-ordinating the distribution of our indoor meeting posters.

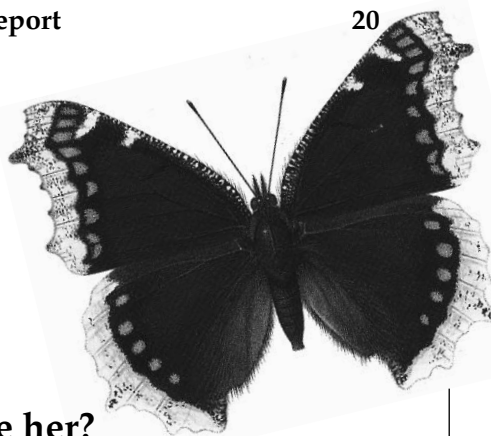
You will get plenty of help from members of the Committee, and the work involved should not be that onerous. It primarily needs an organised person to keep an eye on dates and deadlines. An important point to note is you need to have Internet access and be able to send and receive emails.

If you feel like embarking on a new media career, which should not impinge on your time too much, please contact me. You would be greatly assisting the RNHS!

Ann Tomlinson, Chairman

Verge Recorders

Regarding the recording of sightings of the brownfield species covered in the *Butterfly Conservation* packs, please ensure that any sightings from verge visits are sent to Jean Harvey in the usual way, and not direct to *Butterfly Conservation*.



Fieldfare

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▶▶▶▶ Derbyshire orchid trip – see details on page 3.

Rare brownfield butterflies and moths

The Society recently met with Butterfly Conservation regional officer Jane Ellis to discuss how RNHS could help in monitoring some priority species for the East Midlands. Our verge recorders have already received information about the specific butterflies and moths being targeted, so they can look for them when monitoring verges this summer. However members in general can help by looking out for these species as they walk through the countryside or over waste ground and other brownfield sites this season. We asked Jane to provide a simple guide:

Look out for rare Brownfield butterflies and moths in the Rutland area!

Butterfly Conservation needs the help of local naturalists to report sightings of rare species as part of a project on managing, restoring and reconnecting brownfield habitat for certain fast declining butterflies and moths. One of the key landscapes in this project focuses on the limestone area of Rutland stretching from North Luffenham to Stamford and from Collyweston north to Clipsham, where there are a number of active and disused limestone quarries, limestone verges, railway corridors and farm tracks. They have the sort of habitats suitable for a number of rare and declining species, such as the following:

- **Four-spotted moth** is a UK BAP species which occurs at Ketton Quarry and is often associated with active and disused railway-lines, farm tracks and road-side verges. The adult is day-flying, quite tiny (wing span approximately 2 cm), has a distinctive bold white spot on each forewing and is best spotted nectaring on Ox-eye Daisy. The foodplant is Field Bindweed, which is known to occur on a number of the protected limestone verges in Rutland. Look out for Four-spotted moth on the wing from **mid May to late June**. In some years there is a second brood from **Mid July through August**.



- **Dingy Skipper** is in national decline. Typical brownfield habitats are quarries, railway corridors and waste ground where it requires bare ground, with some taller vegetation for roosting and shelter and the main foodplant Bird's-foot Trefoil. This species is likely to appear early this year so look for it **throughout May**.



- **Grizzled Skipper** is again in serious national decline. Its black-and-white chequer-board markings make it quite distinctive. Again look out for it in quarries, railway corridors, limestone verges, embankments and cuttings where it utilises bare ground and lays its eggs on Wild Strawberry, Barren Strawberry or Creeping Cinquefoil. This species was on the wing in **mid April 2007 – but may still be flying until mid May**.



- Finally, if anyone is lucky enough to spot **Chalk Carpet** moth it will be the first record for the East Midlands since 2002 (at Clipsham Quarry). I would be thrilled!! This is a day-flyer of sparsely vegetated limestone quarries and embankments.



So happy recording – I look forward to hearing about your sightings!

Jane Ellis, Butterfly Conservation

Sightings to Jean Harvey as usual

In order to ensure that our Society records are maintained comprehensively, please send any sighting of these species to Jean Harvey in the usual way for all Lepidoptera records. This will allow Jean to make sure the Society's records are complete, and to then ensure that these records are passed to Adrian Russell, Recorder for Vice-County 55, as well as to Butterfly Conservation. Jean also points out that, with regard to the two very rare moth species mentioned in Jane's article, any sightings should be notified to her as soon as possible so that local Recorders can alert a national specialist to visit the site in order to obtain verification.

Roy Hunter, founder of the RNHS

From Gloucester came the sad news of **Roy Hunter**, who died on 6th April 2007, after being ill since Christmas 2006.

Roy Hunter was the man responsible for founding the Rutland Natural History Society. It is possible

that our society would not have existed today without his enthusiasm and foresight, and the twist of fate that followed.

Members will find the history of the first 25 years of the society, and Roy's role in it, in the silver

anniversary booklet. Briefly, Roy, a BTO member and expert ornithologist, who lived and worked in Oakham, had a vision of an active and important ornithological society in Rutland. He initiated a general meeting to find out the interest of local people for the venture, and this was held at the WI rooms in Gaol Street, Oakham, in February 1965.

The twist of fate was that naturalists who were at the time attending adult education classes on wildlife, at Ketton, heard about this meeting, and consequently turned up in force at Gaol Street and

strongly lobbied for a natural history society. The rest is history!

Roy played an active part in the new organisation, being the first secretary and ornithological recorder, until he and his wife moved to Gloucester.

The funeral took place at All Saints' church, Oakham, on 26 April. Mrs Jill Stapleton, joint secretary of the Society in those early days, represented the Rutland Natural History Society.

Philip Rudkin

Orchid trip Sunday 24th June

Please read this carefully if you have booked to go on the coach to Derbyshire.

Booking for our trip to Derbyshire is now closed and we have a full coach!

We can now confirm details, which are as follows.

Our coach (T Line of Melton Mowbray) will pick up at:

- 8.30 am at Church Road car park, Oakham
- 9 am at Danish Invader, Stamford

Will everyone who plans to get on at Oakham please ring **Mary Nourish** on 01572 823677 (or email BeaumontChase@farming.co.uk) before the day, so she can check that all who should do embark there. If you do not call her, we will assume that you are getting on at Stamford.

It is up to you to ensure you are there on time!!

Our coach will take us to Buxton Country Park and Parsley Hay, near Monyash. If there is time, we may also go to Monsal Station. This is a slight change to the advertised programme, as there would have been difficulty in getting a coach to the Bonsall Moor site. However the new sites are on more level ground, and so should be even better for participants.

The coach will return at 4 pm or thereabouts – to be confirmed on the day.

Do please wear suitable clothing and footwear suited to the conditions. You will also need to provide your own refreshments.

RUTLAND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY events

Wednesday June 12th, CHESTNUT FARM, TEIGH

7 pm

Enjoy an evening walk around George Morley's farm with Terry Mitcham as leader. Barn owls have nested here in the past and are often still seen, as are Red Kite and many other birds. Park in the paddock near Sycamore House where George Morley lives. As you enter Teigh from the Ashwell direction take the first turn on the left and the house is first one on the left. Refreshments will be served in the garden at the end of the evening.

Sunday 24th June, BUXTON COUNTRY PARK AND PARSLEY HAY

Note slight change of venue. See ABOVE for details of this all-day meeting. The coach is now full but those who are interested could make their own way and join us at Buxton Country Park car park (SK17 9DH). The coach should be arriving between 11.00 and 11.30.

Sunday 1st July, KETTON QUARRY

10.30 am

A walk around Ketton quarry, famous for flowers and butterflies, led by expert botanist Dr Andy Lear from RNHS and Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust. Meet in Pit Lane, Ketton. Off the A6121 in Ketton on the same side as Castle Cement (from Morcott just before the works entrance, from Stamford next on right after Works.) Go up Pit Lane to industrial units, turn left into them and through to the car park by the geological trail.

Sunday 29th July, OLD SULEHAY

10.30 am

A half day visit to this Northants reserve lead by Jane Pearman of Northants Wildlife Trust. A fragment of the ancient Rockingham Forest, the reserve is 'a mosaic of limestone quarries, grassland, woodland and wetland.' A wide diversity of habitats produces a wide range of wildlife such as the Green Tiger beetle, flowers rare in Northants and many butterflies. A possible route: take the A47 to Wansford. In Wansford take minor road past church towards Fotheringhay, Nassington and Yarwell. After 1 mile turn right at crossroads in Yarwell onto Sulehay Road. Park on the wide verge near sharp bend in Sulehay Road.

Thursday 23rd August, MOTHS AND BATS

8 pm

Prepare for a late night and get your torches ready as we go for a bat walk with Jenny Harris and moth trapping with the Moth Trapping team at Eyebrook reservoir plantation. More in next Fieldfare.

LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND WILDLIFE TRUST: Rutland group

See www.lwrt.org.uk or phone 0116 272 0444 in office hours, for other events in Leicestershire and Rutland.

Sunday June 10, WALK AT MERRY'S MEADOWS

2.00 pm

Join senior conservation officer Jenny Harris for a guided walk at this neutral grassland site. The reserve has a rich diversity of flora. It is 1.5 km north of Greetham (SK 938157). Please park near the T-junction directly opposite Great Lane (part of the Viking Way), then follow the track 400 metres to the entrance.

Sunday July 1 BLOODY OAKS

2.00 pm

Join Dr Anthony Biddle for a guided walk through this SSSI site where the principal habitat is the wildlife-rich limestone grassland (SK 970108).

Please park on the verge opposite the reserve entrance, which is on the minor road which leaves the A606 and passes through Empingham.

WEATHER SUMMARY John P Hollands, Wittering met.

March 2007

Surface wind March 2007 began with a mainly Westerly light to moderate surface wind. Later during the 4th the surface wind backed and freshened to become mainly South Westerly moderate to fresh with gusts strong to gale. This blustery spell persisted until the 7th when the surface wind veered and moderated to become mainly Westerly light to moderate. This run of wind persisted until the 18th. During the 18th the surface wind freshened to become mainly West North Westerly strong to gale with a maximum gust of 47 KT (54 mph). During the 19th the surface wind moderated and veered to become mainly Northerly light to moderate with gusts to strong. During the 24th the surface wind moderated further to become mainly Northerly light to moderate. This run of wind persisted until the end of the month.

Temperature March 2007 was another warm month with a mean day maximum of 10.9 °C as compared to the 50 year average of 9.5 °C. The warmest day was the 27th with an afternoon high of 15.5 °C, significantly cooler than the extreme

maximum for March of 23.1 °C recorded in 1968. The coolest day was the 20th with an afternoon maximum of only 5.9 °C.

The mean night minimum temperature for March 2007 was 3.1 °C, significantly warmer than the average of 2.4 °C. The coldest night was 21st/22nd when the mercury dropped to -2.5 °C, thankfully significantly warmer than the extreme minimum for March of -12.0 °C recorded in 1965.

There were 144.7 hours of bright sunshine, making March 2007 sunnier than the mean of 110.3 hours, but significantly less sunny than the brightest March in 1967 with 189.1 hours. The sunniest day in March 2007 was the 13th with 9.2 hours.

Rainfall March 2007 was very 'average' with regard to rainfall. There were 42.0 mm(1.65 ins) recorded as compared to the long-term average figure of 42.4 mm(1.67 ins). The wettest day was the 2nd when 21.2 mm(0.83 ins) of rain were recorded, just over 50% of the total for the month.

During **March 2006** the average day maximum was 7.7 °C, the average night minimum was 1.7 °C, rainfall 42.6 mm(1.68 ins) and there were 103.0 hours of bright sunshine.

April 2007

Surface wind April 2007 began with a mainly Northerly light surface wind. This regime persisted until the 18th when the surface wind backed to become mainly West to South West light to moderate. Later during the 25th the surface wind veered to become mainly North Easterly light to moderate. This North Easterly persisted until the end of the month.

Temperature April 2007 was a very warm month, indeed it was the warmest April record with a mean day maximum temperature of 16.2 °C beating the previous highest average temperature of 14.4 °C recorded in 1987. The warmest day was the 15th with an afternoon maximum of 22.5 °C, significantly cooler than the absolute maximum for April of 26.0 °C recorded in 2003. By way of a contrast the coolest day was the 3rd with an afternoon maximum of only 9.0 °C.

During April 2007 the mean night minimum was 6.3 °C, significantly warmer than the long-term mean of 4.0 °C. The coolest night was 4th/5th when the mercury dropped to 2.0 °C. This was significantly warmer than the absolute minimum for April of -5.5 °C recorded in 1968.

As you might have expected April 2007 was sunny, in fact the sunniest for over 10 years with 202.3 hours recorded at Wittering, well above the mean of 145.4 hours. The sunniest day in 2007 was the 30th with 13.5 hours. That is what is called wall-to-wall sunshine, or if you wish, dawn to dusk.

Rainfall If all of the foregoing wasn't enough, April 2007 was the driest on record with only 3.0 mm (0.12 ins) of rain recorded at Wittering. This is in stark contrast to the average of 48.9 mm (1.93 ins).

During **April 2006** the average daily maximum was 12.5 °C, the average night minimum 4.7 °C, rainfall 36.0 mm(1.44 ins) and there were 128.6 hrs of electronically recorded bright sunshine.

AMPHIBIAN & REPTILE REPORT

compiled by Dr C. H. Gallimore
The Stone House, Reeves Lane, Wing, LE15 8SD. Telephone: 01572 737343



March/April 2007

Frog spawning, having started at the end of February in Cottesmore and Barrowden, was drawn out throughout the whole of March and into early April. Indeed a late clump of spawn on 23rd April in the Worralls' garden at Barrowden was something of a surprise and meant that frogs had been spawning there for nearly eight weeks. Although garden ponds are very important for frogs, it is reassuring to note that frog spawn was found in seven field ponds. **Toads** were more elusive than frogs this spring, but strings of spawn were found at Leighfield on 31st March and at a new site in Ketton on 7th April.

Healthy populations of **Smooth Newts** were reported from Empingham and Wing and there was also a single one seen in Edith Weston. At Rutland Water Nature Reserve Smooth Newts were found in 12 ponds (of 24 examined). **Great Crested Newts** were found in 6 of the ponds examined round Rutland Water. They were also reported to be increasing in Empingham and one was seen in Edith Weston. It was hard to monitor the population in my pond in Wing thanks to a pair of Mallards that have taken up residence and keep on stirring up the water.

All four species of reptile were seen in March and April. A **Viviparous Lizard** was seen at Luffenham Heath Golf Course and a **Slow Worm** was seen in Burley Wood on 15th April. The first **Grass Snake** was at Rutland Water on 28th March and at Empingham on 5th April after which they were seen regularly. One was seen in Wing from 16th April until the end of the month. Finally two basking **Adders** were seen at Ketton Quarry on 14th April.

My thanks to the following who provided records: T Appleton, V Arnold, F & G Chiverton, V Hemsley, Dr C R Jones, P Rudkin, M Tyler, D Whitefield, L & G Worrall.

BIRD REPORT compiled by T. Mitcham

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



March/April 2007

March and April were very productive months with a wide variety of species reported, including Hoopoe, Green-winged Teal, Lesser Scaup and Ring Ouzel. Rutland Water's Great Northern Divers remained into April and there was the regular change-over of migrants, with some early dates for summer visitors. Low numbers of many garden birds were reported with only a single Siskin noted. Woodlands produced an interesting range of Woodpecker records and Woodcock sightings.

My thanks to the following for their records: J Ansley, T Appleton, V Arnold, A Biddle, A Burdett, T Caldicott, A & G Chiverton, J Dean, J Foster, Dr C H Gallimore, M & G Griffin, V Hemsley, M & S Iannatuoni, Dr C Jones, J Kendrick, T Land, A W Lawrence, F & D Lee, R Lemmon, T Mackrill, N Michelsen, T Mitcham, B Parker, D J Parker, K Potterton, P Rudkin, P Scott, Jill Stapleton, N Thurlow, D Whitefield, D Willett, G & L Worrall

Egyptian Goose. Singles were at Brooke on 16.03 and 26.04. A pair at Egleton had several goslings on 19.04.

Shelduck. One was at EBR on 04.03, with two pairs there on 26.04. A pair frequented Leighfield Fishponds from 10.03 to the end of April.

Mandarin. A drake was at FHP/Horn Mill on 15.04 and 27.04.

Wigeon. A flock was heard passing north-east over Stamford at 8.15 pm 29.03.

Green-winged Teal. A drake remained at EBR from 04.03. to mid-April – presumably last year's returning bird.

Mallard. A pair were on a small suburban garden pond in Stamford between 21.03 and 29.03.

Pintail. A pair remained at RW (Egleton) throughout April.

Garganey. A drake was at RW (Egleton) on 18.04.

Scaup. A drake was at EBR on 11.03.

Lesser Scaup. A drake was at EBR from 12–25.04.

Goldeneye. Two were still at EBR on 26.04.

Smew. A drake was at EBR on 01.03 and 03.03.

Goosander. There was a pair at EBR on 04.03. At RW up to three pairs remained to 23.03, whilst Leighfield Fishponds had six (two drakes) on 17th and 25.03.

Ruddy Duck. Single females were at Leighfield Fishponds on 10.03 and EBR the next day.

Red-legged Partridge. Reports of up to four came from EBR, FHP and Exton Park and a garden in Wing.

Great Northern Diver. Up to seven continued to frequent the dam area at RW during March. Numbers declined during April but two were still present at the end of the month.

Cormorant. c.20 were at EBR on 26.04.

Little Egret. Two were at RW on 18.03 with this pair remaining throughout April.

Red Kite. Well reported as usual with birds at both reservoirs, over Stamford and in the Exton Park/Horn Mill area. There were more records from the Wing/Glaston area during April.

Sparrowhawk. Regularly noted in Wing and Stamford with display noted over Burley Wood on 10.03 and 15.04.

Buzzard. Widely recorded over all woodlands with three or four commonly soaring over the same area. An impressive eight were noted over Horn Mill.

Osprey. The first RW bird arrived back on 26.03 and by the end of April two pairs had settled to breed, with a pair on the reserve for the first time. On 27.04, one was at Horn Mill trout hatchery, no doubt in search of a free meal.

Kestrel. Display noted at Wing from 02.03 and near Braunston on 07.03. Noted also at FHP and Exton Park near potential nest-sites.

Merlin. One was noted at RW (Edith Weston) on 06.03.

Hobby. First noted at RW on 18.04. One was at EBR on 26.04 and up to three over the Egleton lagoons by the end of the month.

Avocet. One was at RW (Egleton) on 16.04.

Oystercatcher. There were nine at RW on 18.03 with 3 or 4 on the lagoons throughout April.

Little Ringed Plover. One was at EBR on 16.04 with two there on 22.04.

Golden Plover. There were few spring reports – c.400 at RW (Egleton) on 02.03 and c.40 in flight over Exton Park on 17.03.

Lapwing. Only twenty remained at RW on 18.03 but displaying birds were noted at an increasing number of sites – both reservoirs, Exton Park, Wing, and Mounts Lodge. Please send in all breeding records.

Dunlin. At RW there were eight on 18.03 and three on 24.4.

- Ruff.** There were 18 at RW on 21.03 with up to eleven remaining at the end of the month. Two were noted there on 24.04.
- Snipe.** 55 were at RW on 18.03 with 28 on Lagoon one there on 23.03. Four were at Leighfield Fishponds on 25.03. and one or two remained at RW to the end of April.
- Woodcock.** One was flushed in Burley Wood on 04.03 with odd birds flushed throughout March in Tunneley Wood. One was roding at this site on 18.04, the first recorded here since 1999.
- Black-tailed Godwit.** A single was at RW on 18th and 21.03.
- Curlew.** Nos. at RW increased from five on 02.03 to eight on 18.03.
- Redshank.** Up to 25 were at RW in March with birds displaying around the lagoons in April. Display was also noted at EBR on 26.04.
- Mediterranean Gull.** One was on Lagoon one at RW on 26.04.
- Little Gull.** A second-summer bird was at RW (Egleton) on 19.04.
- Cuckoo.** First reported from Lyddington on 11.04, with the next at Leighfield Fishponds on 14.04. By the end of the month there were also reports from Brooke, Tunneley Wood, Uppingham and Wing.
- Barn Owl.** Singles were noted near Barrowden and in Exton Park in both months.
- Little Owl.** An excellent set of records noted birds at EBR, Beaumont Chase, Tickencote, Barrowden and near Wing Burrows.
- Tawny Owl.** Calling birds were noted at Brooke, Tunneley Wood (three on 18.04) and one in flight at Barrowden.
- Swift.** An early bird was over Wing on 15.04 with the next (six) over Oakham on 22.04. The first screaming birds were over Wing on 30.04, when two were seen over Stamford.
- Hoopoe.** An amazing two records of birds photographed in gardens – one in Ketton on 03.04 and one at Hambleton on 18.04. If these records are of the same bird, where was it in the intervening period?
- Green Woodpecker.** Regular reports from Exton Park, FHP, Beaumont Chase and the RW woodlands. Noted also at Wing Grange, Preston and Wing Burrows.
- Great Spotted Woodpecker.** Drumming birds were in Burley, Glaston and Tunneley Woods, and on Ketton Nature Reserve. Feeders were visited at EBR, Wing and Oakham.
- Lesser Spotted Woodpecker.** One was in Tunneley Wood on 4.3 and 31.03; drumming was heard in Burley Wood on 10.03 and 01.04.
- Skylark.** Noted in song at EBR and near Lyddington in both months – remains widespread on arable land but often in low numbers.
- Sand Martin.** Following the early February record passage did not begin until mid March with c.30 over the Egleton lagoons and local breeding birds back there by the end of the month. Small nos were noted at both reservoirs throughout April.
- Swallow.** One was at RW on 26.03, with five at EBR on 31.03 and 20 there on 02.04. Odd birds were noted at Barrowden to 07.04 and then, from 12.04, birds arrived at breeding sites in Wing, Lyddington, Barrowden and Cottesmore.
- House Martin.** First seen at EBR on 31.03, with a single in Wing on 08.04. Back at the Barrowden breeding sites on 14.04; noted in Stamford from 30.04.
- Meadow Pipit.** Song and/or display were noted at RW (Dam) and EBR in March.
- Yellow Wagtail.** One at RW (Dam) on 19.04 was our first record, with two at Leighfield Fishponds our only other record.
- Grey Wagtail.** Two were by the R. Gwash at Brooke on 05.03, one by Wardley Wood on 11.03, and two at Leighfield Fishponds on 17.03.
- White Wagtail.** Singles were at RW on 16.04 (Egleton) and 19.04 (the Dam).
- Nightingale.** First heard at Hambleton Wood on 21.04, with three in song there on 24.04, and birds noted there to the end of the month.
- Black Redstart.** A female was reported from on Oakham garden on 17.07.
- Redstart.** A male was at RW (Egleton) on 10.04.
- Ring Ouzel.** A pair on a Normanton lawn on 12.04 were chased away by the local Blackbirds.
- Fieldfare.** Significant March flocks included c.150 near Tunneley Wood on 4th, 60 near Normanton Lodge Farm on 11th, and c.250 near Leighfield Fishponds on 17th. There were April records from Lyddington, Horn Mill, Tunneley Wood, Priors Coppice and Leighfield Fishponds, where three were seen on 21.04.
- Song thrush.** An Uppingham member, who noted three singing along his road last year, reported an absence of Song Thrushes this year.
- Redwing.** March records came from Wing Tunnel Top, RW (Egleton), FHP and Beaumont Chase, with 80 at RW (07.03) and 50 at Beaumont Chase (24.03). The largest flocks, c.150, flew over Egleton on 04.04 and four were at Leighfield Fishponds on 07.04.

Mistle Thrush. Regularly heard at Edith Weston in both months and also at Exton, FHP, Ketton and Burley Wood.

Grasshopper Warbler. A very early bird was reported from RW (Eggleton) on 26.03. Two sang near Langham on 13.04. Birds were regular at Eggleton Reserve from 16.04, with up to four reported. Singles sang at Tunneley Wood on 18.04 and at the Seek on 27.04.

Sedge Warbler. Reported from RW (Eggleton) on 19.04 where four sang around Lagoon one, and Leighfield Fishponds where there were three on 28.04.

Lesser Whitethroat. Two were in song at Beaumont Chase on 16.04 and one near Wing on 22.04 whilst five sang near Brooke, on passage, on 26.04.

Whitethroat. Singing birds at Beaumont Chase and Langham on 22nd were the only April records.

Garden Warbler. First heard at FHP, Barnsdale Wood and RW (Eggleton) on 27.04.

Blackcap. A male was in an Oakham garden on 08.03 and one overwintered at Lyddington, being last seen on 05.04. A male was singing in Stamford on 16.03 and one at Wing Tunnel Top on 29.03. From 15.04 birds were widespread in woodland and scrub throughout the county.

Chiffchaff. Good numbers arrived in March with the first in song on 8th near Brooke and the next in Tunneley Wood on 10th. 13.03 saw birds singing at Clipsham Park Wood and subsequently there were records from RW, EBR, Uppingham, Priors Coppice and Wing.

Willow Warbler. Song was first heard at Leighfield Fishponds on 31.03 with the next at Priors Coppice on 07.04. Horn Mill had a singing bird on 09.04 and one sang in a Lyddington on 12.04.

Long-tailed Tit. An early completed nest was found in a Tickencote garden on 04.03 and a pair frequented a Wing garden during both months.

Marsh Tit. Regularly seen in Tunneley Wood during both months.

Willow Tit. Noted between 16.03 and 07.04 at RW (Burley Fishponds), Brooke and Leighfield.

Blue Tit. A desiccated specimen was removed from a Barrowden nest-box on 12.04 and a pair took the box over by 24.04, showing the benefits of refuse removal!

Nuthatch. Traditional sites at Burley, Tunneley and Barnsdale Wood provide records, as did Beaumont Chase and The Priory at Ketton (a new site).

Treecreeper. There were March garden records from Barrowden and Wing.

Carrion Crow. An aberrant bird with white wing patches was seen in Barrowden in April.

Tree Sparrow. There was an encouraging scatter of small numbers away from the regular RW and EBR with up to five noted at Wing, Preston, Brooke, and Beaumont Chase, mainly in March.

Chaffinch. The largest garden number noted was twelve in Barrowden on 11.03.

Goldfinch. Up to 24 roosted during both months near a nyger feeder in a Lyddington garden.

Siskin. The only record was of a male which fed briefly at the Eggleton Centre feeder on 23.03.

Lesser Redpoll. Six fed in larches in Exton Park on 17.03 and one flew over Gorse Close on the Eggleton Reserve on 28.03.

Bullfinch. One was found, dead, in a Lyddington garden on 02.03. A second bird (alive !) was in song.

Reed Bunting. A female fed in a Stamford garden on 01 and 04.03, with a male noted there on 27.03. A male also fed in an Oakham garden on 25/26.03. Not the same bird commuting?

Corn Bunting. The only record was of a singing male at Mounts Lodge on 18.04.

HIGH TIDES IN NORTH NORFOLK Nola Thurlow

High tides for Snettisham, for Titchwell add 5 minutes. All times are summer time.

| June | | | | July | | | |
|--------|----|-------|-------|--------|----|-------|-------|
| Sunday | 3 | 08.33 | 21.02 | Sunday | 1 | 07.43 | 20.14 |
| | 10 | 02.26 | 14.23 | | 8 | 12.41 | – |
| | 17 | 08.33 | 21.12 | | 15 | 07.39 | 20.18 |
| | 24 | 02.07 | 14.07 | | 22 | 12.08 | 00.50 |
| | | | | | 29 | 06.47 | 19.19 |

National Waterfowl Counts March 2007

| | Rutland Water | Eyebrook Reservoir | Fort Henry Ponds and Exton Park | Holywell Lake |
|---------------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| | 18 March | 18 March | 17 March | 18 March |
| Little Grebe | 4 | | 1 | 4 |
| Great Crested Grebe | 231 | 12 | | |
| Cormorant | 237 | 30 | 2 | |
| Grey Heron | 25 | 1 | | |
| Little Egret | 2 | | | |
| Mute Swan | 69 | 51 | 31 | 2 |
| Pink-footed Goose | | | | 1 |
| Greylag Goose | 100 | 12 | 29 | 3 |
| Canada Goose | 201 | 18 | 4 | 50 |
| Egyptian Goose | 23 | | | |
| Shelduck | 43 | 11 | | |
| Wigeon | 1937 | 80 | 73 | |
| Gadwall | 68 | 10 | 24 | 12 |
| Teal | 102 | 210 | 7 | 8 |
| Mallard | 474 | 14 | 47 | 36 |
| Pintail | 1 | | | |
| Shoveler | 91 | | | |
| Pochard | 13 | 12 | 3 | |
| Tufted Duck | 327 | 68 | 56 | 14 |
| Goldeneye | 223 | 22 | | |
| Smew | 2 | | | |
| Goosander | 12 | 3 | | |
| Water Rail | 1 | | | |
| Moorhen | 36 | | 13 | 12 |
| Coot | 370 | 22 | 52 | 14 |

BOTANY NOTES compiled by Graham Worrall

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March/April 2007

March was unseasonably warm and the botany records show it. I received 67 species reports for the month starting with the first **Colt's-foot** on the 1st at Uppingham.

After the first week of March it turned very dry until the last week in April and, perhaps as a result of no rain, the **Cow Parsley** on the verges did not flower until the end of April. The height of flowering was into May!

April was warmer and the observers and the flowers responded. 143 records were received for the month. **Wood Anemone** was over by the end of April and the early buttercups were in good show. **Bulbous Buttercup** was the first to flower, in the middle of the month, followed by **Goldilock's Buttercup** and **Meadow Buttercup** during the last week.

The only rain of magnitude was during our evening trip to Fox Covert, Barrowden, but we did not complain as it was much needed.

Thanks to M Branston, T Caldicott, G Chiverton, C Jones, R Lemmon, G Worrall, L Worrall, A Malcolm, J Mallett, D Whitefield, H Ellis, F Chiverton, P Rudkin, B Pochin, P Ennis, F Lee, D Lee.



LEPIDOPTERA NOTES compiled by Jean Harvey

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March/April 2007

Butterflies

These notes must begin with reference to the rare sighting of a **Camberwell Beauty** in Burley Wood compt.32b on April 15th. It was viewed by Society members who had joined the field meeting that day and was seen resting on low vegetation where it stayed for several minutes before flying off. It is thought to have over-wintered as several have been seen this spring in other parts of the country.

During March, our common over-wintering species were all seen. **Brimstones** were noted from the 6th and occurred in many areas with 8 in Clipsham Park Wood on the 14th and 12 in Ketton Quarry on the 27th. **Small Tortoiseshells** were seen in Empingham, Edith Weston, Ketton Quarry and in three places around Lyddington. **Peacock** records were mainly in the first few days of the month and two **Commas** were found in Ketton Quarry at that time. **Red Admirals** (now commonly over-wintering) were seen during the first half of the month only.

In April 2006 there were nine species on the wing and this year, due to the warmest April on record, we are happy to report on fifteen species and a greatly increased number of records. As mentioned above, **Brimstones** continued to appear throughout the county, mainly seen singly, but 16 were recorded in Burley Wood on the 15th. A female was observed egg-laying on Buckthorn in a field at Lyddington on the 28th.

Large Whites emerged in small numbers, the first being seen in Uppingham on the 2nd. **Small Whites** were reported from seven sites. **Green-Veined Whites** were found in four gardens and Burley and Stoke Dry Woods from mid-month onwards.

The first two **Grizzled Skippers** were noted at Clipsham Quarry on the 21st, which is a very early date for the species. Some members recorded their 'earliest ever' **Orange Tips** this year too, as these have been seen throughout the month of April whilst last year there were two records only on the 28th. Practically 20 cards have been received recently noting gardens, verges, woods and reserves.

It was good news to hear of **Small Coppers** at Lyddington once again. One was seen on the 28th and two on the 30th. The first **Common Blues** were found in mid-month at

Braunston, Lyddington and Oakham. 2007 will be remembered as a good year for the first generation of **Holly Blues**. These too emerged in mid-month and have so far been seen in a dozen areas.

Three April records for **Red Admirals** in Edith Weston, Lyddington and Stoke Dry Wood can be added to those above for March. **Small Tortoiseshells** were found in ten areas recently. The **Peacock** was a very well recorded species with many sightings in a variety of habitats. Several **Commas** were seen in the first week of the month. A large colony of **Speckled Woods** was located in a field near Lyddington. Records for this species occurred from the 5th onwards with more on the wing at the end of the month

Moths

Over-wintering **Humming Bird Hawk-Moths** have been seen in gardens in Langham and Lyddington. This type of record is becoming more common with warmer conditions.

At the end of April two moths were identified on Verge 8 near Walk Farm, Great Casterton, these were a **Scorched Carpet** and a micro *Adela reaumurella*.

Moth traps have been operated in several sites around Rutland with varying results depending on the night temperatures. Although daytime temperatures have often been higher than normal for the time of year, the evenings have been frequently chilly, especially during the period with easterly winds.

Trapping in the woods is always more rewarding in the Spring when sheltered sites are chosen. Three visits were made to Stoke Dry Wood with 37 species listed at the end of April, amongst which were **Frosted Green** and **Maiden's Blush**. A list from Pickworth Great Wood included the **White Marked**. Several other woods were monitored including Fox Covert and Coppice Leys.

Fortnightly visits to Eyebrook Reservoir have recommenced and two new species added to that ever extending list. These were **Blossom Underwing** and **Tawny Pinion**. A Blossom Underwing was also found for the first time at Beaumont Chase Farm where moth numbers have been fairly low so far this year.

The garden traps at Lyddington resulted in the longest list with 64 species during April. This included **Chocolate Tip**, **Lunar Marbled Brown** and another Blossom Underwing! This species was first recorded there last year and was then new for our area. Tawny Pinion was caught in the garden trap at Barrowden where numbers recorded have been down compared with the same period in previous years. Other garden records were received from Edith Weston and Barnsdale Gardens.

Thanks to: J Ansley, V Arnold, F Chiverton, G Chiverton, R & J Follows, C H Gallimore, J Harvey, M & S Iannantuoni, C R Jones, A L Lawrence, D & F Lee, R Lemmon, J Levisohn, D & B Parker, P Rudkin, A Russell, P Tomalin, M Tyler and G & L Worrall.

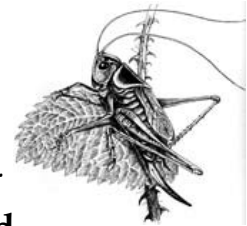
It is interesting to note that several species are emerging earlier than is normal, obviously following the very mild winter. In April we have even seen species that usually occur from late May onwards.

STOP PRESS We have just received a photograph of a pair of **Lime Hawkmoths** mating on a Silver Birch tree at Cottesmore on May 2nd. This tree is listed as one of the larval food plants for the species.

ORTHOPTERA REPORT compiled by Phil Rudkin

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Following on from his article in March Fieldfare, Phil introduces two newcomers to Rutland.



Long-winged Conehead and Roesel's Bush Cricket in Rutland

*'It has been clear for some time that a number of species are currently exploiting the incremental increases in average annual temperatures, and that certain formerly scarce species, such as Long-winged Conehead (*Conocephalus discolor*), have enjoyed significant expansion in recent years.'* (Sutton, 2006)

This certainly applies to the Long-winged Conehead and Roesel's Bush Cricket. In 2000 both of these were on the doorstep of Rutland, as confirmed by this information from the *Orthoptera National Recording Scheme* newsletters.

Long-winged Conehead (*Conocephalus discolor*):

Found in Cambridgeshire, VC29, 2000.
Found in St. Ives, Huntingdonshire, VC31, 2000.
Found in Leicestershire, VC55, Aylestone Meadows, 2001.
Found in Huntingdonshire, VC31, 2002.
(VC = Vice County)

For the Long-winged Conehead, it all started in Rutland on the 15th August 2003, when Roy Frost, orthoptera recorder for Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, visited the Bird Watching Fair at Rutland Water. Roy decided to go to the Roesel's Bush Cricket (*Metriopectera rosellii*) site, where he discovered a pair of Long-winged Coneheads, in the rough grasses along a path towards Fieldfare Hide. This proved to be the first Rutland sighting of this species.

Since that date, the Long-winged Conehead has had a remarkable range expansion in Rutland, and populations have built up quickly. The reason for this is that the species has a single-

year egg cycle, and the warmer summers have aided dispersal. They are now found all over the Egleton reserve, and in lesser numbers on the Lyndon reserve.

However, this species has also colonised sites away from Rutland Water. I made an exciting discovery on 22nd September 2005, at Wing Fishing Lakes, near Oakham (SK 890 022). A breeding colony was established on rough grasses and thistles, on the bank of the first lake. *This was the first Rutland record outside of the Rutland Water reserves.* Then, incredibly, to my surprise and delight, 17 days later on the 9th October, I discovered another breeding colony in a dense clump of wet rushes, in a private meadow in Lyddington, near Uppingham (SP 869 980).

In the 2006 season, the spread continued on the Nature Reserves. More exciting expansions in Rutland were located, when I visited a public right of way at Horn Mill, Exton (SK 952 106), on 8th August, where I found one stridulating (singing) male in an isolated nettle clump, and another in a wet ditch with vegetation, 100 yards away.

Four stridulating males, all in rough herbage, were found on 15th August, at the LWRT reserve, Bloody Oaks, near Great Casterton (SK 971 108).

On the 12th September, seven stridulating males were found in grasses next to a hawthorn hedgerow, bordering farmland, at Stockerston Hill (SP 842 984).

Finally, on 15th September, I carried out a survey on Joe and Mary Nourish's farm, Beaumont Chase (SP 838 989), and found nine stridulating males in several areas on the lower southern edge of the farm.

In addition, a single stridulating male in tall nettles, was found along the River Welland (just in Lincolnshire), near my home in Stamford. And just across the border in Northamptonshire, another survey at the farm of Elizabeth and David Simpson found two males. The expansion of this handsome green bush cricket can clearly be seen.

Roesel's Bush Cricket (Metrioptera roeselii)

This beautiful bush cricket also hovered outside Rutland, as follows:

Found in Ashton, Northants, VC32, 2000.

Found in Weldon, Northants, VC32, 2000.

Found in Cambridgeshire, ('well established over much of this county'), VC29, 2000.

Found in Kirby Underwood and Bourne, Lincs. VCs 53/54, 2000.

Roesel's Bush Cricket made its first appearance in Rutland, at the Egleton reserve, Rutland Water, on 1st August 2001. Wildlife artist and warden John Wright discovered one female on the path towards Fieldfare Hide. It was subsequently observed twice more during August. However, the species was searched for in 2002, but none were found. 2003 proved very successful, with sightings of two stridulating males at the Lyndon reserve, and two at the path to Fieldfare Hide, at Egleton. Away from Rutland Water, Richard Penson located a small colony in long grasses at the northern shore of Eye Brook Reservoir (SP 855 962), on 10th August.

The non-appearance of Roesel's Bush Cricket in 2002 is explained by the fact that this species has a two-year egg cycle; therefore populations are slow to build up from a new start. But, since 2003 they have gone from strength to strength in Rutland. 2004 saw a further colonisation of the Rutland Water reserves. In 2006, I discovered a large colony at Wing Fishing Lakes (SK 890 022). This was followed by sightings at Horn Mill, Exton (SK 952 106), Bloody Oaks Nature Reserve, Great

Casterton, and Beaumont Chase Farm.

I have received several excellent records (often photographs), of adult and nymphs, of both of the bush crickets, from the Society's treasurer, Derek Lee, in Lyddington, found on farmland behind his home. And much good advice from Roy Frost.

Discussion

It will be clear that the habitats mentioned are shared by both species, and in most instances they were stridulating side by side. Their preference is for rough grasses and thistles, along grass paths, and also wet ditches with vegetation.

The most probable reason for the expansion in range of these two orthopterans is climate change. Roy Frost (2006) stated '*in recent years certain species have been extending their range northward in England, which is believed to be a consequence of climate change, and Derbyshire has now gained two species as an apparent result*'.

Haes & Harding (1997) stated that Roesel's Bush Cricket was at one time restricted to coasts and estuaries, but had expanded its range in the previous years, and very considerably so since 1985.

The Long-winged Conehead was at one time confined to the south coast of England, before starting to spread northward around 1970 (Haes & Harding, *op cit.*).

Finally, it has been documented that in response to overcrowding due to climate change, individuals in both species under review grow extra long wings (Macropterous), and fly readily, thereby new colonies are set up by these pioneers.

References

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Sutton, P. (June 2006) *British Wildlife*, 17(5), p. 354.

Wydgery, J. (Editor) *Orthoptera Recording Scheme for Britain and Ireland*, Newsletters 26-2000, 27-2001, 28-2002.

The Bat Detector used for survey work was a Stag Electronics, Bat Box 111.

Map references for survey work were obtained using a Garmin GPS (Global Position Sensor).

The Rutland Natural History Society holds four Bat Detectors, and three Global Position Sensors for loaning out to members. Jenny Harris holds the Bat Detectors, and Andrew Lear the Global Position Sensors. Jean and Ron Harvey hold two very good field guides on the Grasshoppers and Crickets, plus an insect field guide that has an excellent input on the orthoptera. Also for loan to members.

Records received (which have contributed to the preparation of this article) from: Roy Frost, Derek Lee, Roger Penson, Philip Rudkin, and John Wright.

March/April 2007

This is the first report for sightings in this new Orthoptera section of Fieldfare. I thought that I would have no records for this early period of the year, but was surprised and delighted to receive the following for this issue.

Slender Groundhopper *Tetrix subulata*. Two, in field margin at top of garden, Lyddington, 5th April. Two, found in dry mud areas on ride, near entrance gate of Burley Woods, compartments 23/24; approx. twelve, found on grassy ride in lower area of Burley Woods, compartments 20/18; all during society field meeting, 15th April. Abundant, in two areas of damp, old pasture near stream, Spring Back Way, Uppingham, 28th April.

Common Ground Hopper *Tetrix undulata*. One found near moth light trap, in field margin, Lyddington, 28th March. One found in grass next to moth light trap, in garden, Normanton Road, Edith Weston, 27th April.

Both of the above species overwinter as adults or nymphs. These sightings represent good keen field observation, as they are so tiny, and need looking out for.

Many thanks to contributors: V Arnold, F & G Chiverton, C Jones, F & D Lee, P Rudkin.

GLOW-WORM NOTES compiled by Linda Worrall

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There may yet be a tiny glimmer of hope for the Barrowden Back Road colony, but nothing is certain (see March *Fieldfare* page 1).

Please send me your cards with as much detail as possible from nocturnal visits, whether to your usual sites or different ones, even if you find no glows. Snails and slugs were probably active enough in the early warm rainy months for glow-worm larvae to feed on their juices (glow-worms are beetles), but spring was particularly dry and warm and glow-worm larvae die if they dry out. Each year has its trials and opportunities, and each glow, the final act of a whole lifetime, is a triumph, considering the amount of natural and man-made pressures upon them.

If you want to try glow-worm hunting for the first time, there are three Roadside Verge Nature Reserves/Local Wildlife Sites in Rutland, with marker posts:

- At Essendine, both sides of the lane alongside the main line, left off the Stamford to Bourne road just before the railway bridge, and also **look** at the grassland towards the rail track - **BUT you must not enter the grassland for safety reasons because of the railway**;
- At Barrowden, both verges of the Luffenham Road (the middle one of the three roads off the A47 down to the village), look particularly halfway down, just above the 'Barrowden' sign, but on the verge opposite the sign;
- Back Road in Barrowden: go just further down Luffenham Road, past the grassy triangle to a small crossroads and turn right; both sides, but

look particularly in the entrance to the first field on your right (however, this is where they are under threat from development).

Please always park carefully so as not to obstruct passing traffic, but **don't park or walk on the verges** as you could squash the very thing you are looking for. You might have to park a short distance away from the verges. You need to be on foot to spot the green glows; take a torch for safety but don't keep it on all the time or you could miss them. **Never touch any glowing female**. You could shine a torch on one briefly, but you then can't see the glow.

Look for glows in May, June, July and early August, but Midsummer's Night (June 22nd) is often the high point. You cannot guarantee seeing a glow on any night, and several visits may be involved. Don't start looking until twilight (10.30 pm onwards) as the wingless adult female won't be glowing green until it's dark enough for a male to find her; he can fly but doesn't glow. She can glow for about 3 hours a night for up to 10 days, but switches off if and when mated, then lays eggs and dies, as does the male; neither adult has mouthparts and cannot eat, so they die whether mated or not. These adults will have just emerged from their short pupation. Glow-worm larvae don't glow; they hatch from eggs after about a month, and live for 2 years, potentially scuttling up to 120 m a night seeking snails to eat, or hiding under stones or down holes in very cold or hot weather. They pupate in summer when each one is fat enough, and what we call a 'glow-worm' is just the last stage, the final flourish, of a whole

life-span of the common or European glow-worm beetle *Lampyrus noctiluca*. *Noctiluca* means 'night-shining' and *Lampyrus* means 'Firefly', but our glow-worm is technically not a firefly any more than it is a worm. Research is showing how ignorant we have been about them in the past, and some reasons for their current decline are being discovered, not least that a glow depends upon the survival of a secretive larva.

People used to take glow-worms for granted as glowing was prolific in so many places. There are tales of them being collected and used to read by, or to fasten to croquet sticks for games on summer nights, or use as emergency cycle lamps. Barrowden villagers recorded that 60 years ago they used to walk between South Luffenham and Barrowden with verges glowing green all the way; now they are all gone except

for a few in Barrowden, and they are at risk. In the early 1990s eight Society members counted over 400 glow-worms in one night at the National Nature Reserve of Barnack Hills and Holes; they looked like a small city seen from an aircraft. A decade later, we were lucky to see 30. Loss can be due to insecticide, slug pellets, habitat loss or disturbance, loss of cover or sheep killing snails with their urine. Those glow-worms remaining need more, and informed, help.

In the past 15 years Society members have visited many Rutland verges where local people say they used to see glow-worms, to no avail. However, there is still a need to keep checking, so if you do look in hope at any other verge or place to which you have access, please send me a record card, even if you find nothing. Any sightings outside Rutland would also be valuable. Good hunting!

PLANT GALLS REPORT compiled by Roy Lemmon

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March/ April 2007

The growing season for plants is now under way and although it is early days there have been reports of fresh galls as well as a couple of relics from the past season. The first to be reported, early in March, was an old leaf gall on Elm in a garden in Lyddington, caused by gall aphids which make the leaf form a bladder-like structure and these can persist for some time. The last report the Society has for this gall was in North Luffenham in 1999 although it is likely that this is due to under-reporting rather than its rarity. There are still quite a number of elms in the County and as these are mostly young and small, they are ideal for this parasite.

Later, in April, leaf galls on Cleavers were noted on verge 7, Great Casterton to Pickworth, as well as at Fox Covert on the occasion of the Society's visit. In this case gall mites caused the leaves, most noticeably the terminal whorl, to become twisted and otherwise distorted. This seems to stunt the growth of the plant but it is doubtful whether it would kill it. A parasite that kills its host is a failure!

The final report, from the end of April, was of **Oak Apple Galls**, both last seasons and also new ones, from Leighfield Fishponds. These are caused by a gall wasp and in the case of the new ones, this season's adults will emerge between July and September.

I am heartened by the cards I have received and anticipate that as the season extends there will be many more.

My thanks to T Caldicott, F & D Lee, R Lemmon.

INSECTS AND OTHERS compiled by Gill Chiverton

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March 2007

An interesting and busy month for Entomology. The month started with snail records at Bloody Oaks Quarry. Many bee records were received this month – bees were working hard in Lyddington, Fort Henry, Barrowden and Oakham. **Bumble bee** species recorded were *Bombus terrestris*, *B.*

hortorum, *B. lapidarius* and *B. pascuorum*. Also seen were **Honey Bee**, **Tawny Mining Bee** and **Hairy-footed Flower Bee**.

Two species of Shield Bug were sighted, **Hawthorn Shield Bug** and **Juniper Shield Bug**. Our first wasp recorded for the year was a

German Wasp at Lyddington. There were good records for the **Bee-Fly** – *Bombylius major* – and sightings over the month came from Lyddington, Barrowden, Oakham, Priors Coppice and Edith Weston.

Ladybirds were also much in evidence and records were received of five ladybird species – **7-spot**, **Orange**, **2-spot**, **10-spot** and **Pine Ladybird**. In the Leighfield Fishponds area Orange ladybirds were still present in large numbers on the young Ash trees but the 14-spot ladybirds had dispersed. Two other species of beetle were recorded, *Pterosticus niger* and **Bloody-nosed Beetle**.

Two species of millipede were noted: a **Pill Millipede**, *Glomeris marginata*, which rolls up into a ball, and *Tachypodoiulus niger*, which curls up like a spring when alarmed (and did so when disturbed from under a log at Burley Wood). An early **Great Black Slug**, *Arion ater*, was noted on the RNHS walk at Fort Henry. On the same walk a **Velvet Mite**, *Entrombidium rostratus*, was found on the footpath (in Michael Chinery's *Guide to insects* it says that the Velvet Mite is 'often common on garden paths in Spring'). Near the end of March several **Water Boatmen** were noted on a pond near Braunston.

April 2007

The first day of April brought the sighting of an **Eyed Ladybird** in Burley Wood and then ladybird records continued steadily through the month. Other species of ladybirds recorded were **Orange**, **Kidney-spot**, **7-spot**, **14-spot**, **10-spot**, **16-spot** and **2-spot**. During April the Orange ladybird numbers at Leighfield gradually declined, so

only a 'handful' were left at the end of the month. The 14-spot ladybirds at Leighfield were also on the move, being recorded 'in dense clusters in stinging nettles, near to where they hibernated'. On a verge near Braunston 52 7-spot ladybirds were counted – all individuals – in a 5-minute walk. Also received was a photograph of a 7-spot ladybird and a 14-spot ladybird enjoying the sun together on a leaf.

Bee-flies were again recorded. Bee records continued with **Hairy-Footed Flower Bees**, **Honey Bees** and **Bumblebee** species *Bombus lucorum*, *B. terrestris*, *B. lapidarius* and *B. pascuorum*, also the first hornet record of the year.

On the RNHS walk in Burley Wood records came in of two slugs – the **Great Red Slug** *Arion ater* and the **Leopard Slug** *Limax maximus* – and two flies, the **Spotted Crane Fly** and an **Alder Fly**. A **Rounded Snail** was also found at Burley and a **2-toothed Door Snail** was found in a damp wooded area near Braunston.

Three beetle species were sighted – **Bloody-nosed Beetle**, an early soldier beetle *Cantharis livida* and interestingly three burying beetles, *Necrophorus humator*, came to a moth trap. A **Squash bug** *Coreus marginatus* was found in Edith Weston – Coreidae 'The family known as a whole as squash bugs because several are pests of squashes in North America' (Chinery, *Guide to insects*).

To end April, a first record of a **St Mark's Fly** actually on 25th April, St Mark's Day (they were so-called because they will usually appear around this date). Then two more sightings of St Mark's Flies on the 29th. Lastly, the first record of a damselfly for 2007 – on 30th April a **Large Red Damselfly** was sighted in a garden at Wing.

Thanks to the following people for records: V Arnold, T Caldicott, F Chiverton, G Chiverton, G H Gallimore, C R Jones, F & D Lee, R Lemmon, P Rudkin, P Scott, D Whitefield, L & G Worrall

A note on the **Bloody-nosed Beetle**, *Timarcha tenebricosa*

Bloody-nosed Beetles are very distinctive, being violet-tinged black in colour and our largest leaf beetle. When disturbed they exude red 'blood' from their mouths. If you are lucky enough to find a *Bloody-nosed Beetle* it will probably be walking slowly over the grass or feeding on bedstraw. I usually find them some time during the year on Verge 8 (Tolethorpe Road Verge) and I have seen one once crossing between verges on Verge 7 (Gt Casterton to Pickworth). There is also one place on private land near Braunston where they can almost be guaranteed to put in an appearance. There doesn't seem to be any pattern as to what conditions they prefer – it has been hot, nearly dark, early morning and damp, etc.

Surely there must be more of these spectacular beetles in Rutland. They do not rush about as so many beetles do, but stroll gently around, so are not hard to see. It would be interesting to find how many members of RNHS have seen them.

Hopefully people will read the March/April reports and say 'Oh, I saw one of those'. We can't write about things unless we receive your records!



GC

MYCOLOGY NOTES compiled by Linda Worrall

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March/April 2007

It is good to have sightings of fungi from anywhere in Rutland at any time; some sites have been carefully monitored over many years, but you never know what might turn up anywhere, and upon what! This time there are more intriguing species on Willow in less visited places, our smut and rust expert investigated erupting deer dung, and members spotted the glistening Slime Mould *Enteridium lycoperdon*, characteristic of spring, on Society outdoor events. Slime Moulds are 'honorary fungi' since they have similar habitats and spread spores, but research shows they are in a different Kingdom. There has been nothing on our log pile, nor, as you could expect from the dry weather, any Small Morels, and the few St George's Mushrooms on 25.4 were drought-ridden; so a Dryad's Saddle, Stinkhorn, Oyster Mushrooms and Hen of the Woods in April, and sporulating Willow Brackets in both months, were surprise treats. They would have benefited from the rains of January and February, but it seems the Dryad's and Stinkhorn thought it was summer while the Willow Brackets were still in winter, and for the Oysters and Hen it could even have been autumn (people were feeling the same way!)

RESERVES

Bloody Oaks Quarry: 1.3: Discomycete *Calloria neglecta* on dead Nettle stem. 22.4: Rust *Melampsora populnea* on leaf of Dog's Mercury. 25.4: 4 St George's Mushroom, all small, maggoty and suffering from drought.

Ketton Quarry Woodland: 8.3: Ascomycete *Nectria episphaeria* on old stromata of Common Tarcrust *Diatrype stigma*, Discos *Calloria neglecta* on dead Nettle stems and *Mollisia melaleuca* on decaying (probably Beech) wood, Elder Whitewash on broadleaved wood, *Peniophora cinerea* in contact with ground beneath fallen broadleaved wood, and just one lone, fresh, gill fungus *Panaeolus ater*.

Burley Fishponds: March: On Willow: Jelly Ears, a Blushing Bracket, Beech Barkspot (usually on Beech) on lying branch and one Willow Bracket *Phellinus igniarius*; plus Cushion Bracket *Phellinus pomaceus* on Blackthorn, Orange Jelly on debarked dead wood, Rusty Porecrust on standing wood, Hairy Curtain Crust on lying branch of Sweet Chestnut and a small fresh group of Winter Twiglet in grass.

Egleton Nature Reserve: 28 species in March, 18

in dry April. In both months: Waxy Crust on lying Oak branch, Smoky Bracket fresh early March, mature April, Beech Barkspot on several lying branches, Hairy Curtain Crust, Elder Whitewash, Jelly Ears on Elder in good numbers in March but dry in April, Candlesnuff Fungus mature in March, some left in April, several Blushing Brackets on Willow, Cushion Brackets on Blackthorn branches, mature Beech Woodwart, Netted Crust on lying Ash branches, Cinnamon Porecrust on old Hawthorn wood, Cramp Balls on old logs, Turkeytails, Glue Crust on cracked old Elder and Hoof Fungus *Fomes fomentarius* on large standing dead trunk. Also in March: Stump Puffballs (old), Yellow Brain, fresh Orange Jelly, Tripe Fungus on big lying Beech logs, Dead Man's Fingers on mossy log, Small Stagshorn fresh on old stump, Brittle Cinder on old large stump, Coral Spot, Black Bulgar on dead standing rotting Hawthorn trunk, White Brain fresh on old log, dry Splitgill on exposed log piles. Also in April: 12.4: Slime Mould *Enteridium lycoperdon* on large dead Oak branch; 16.4: One very large and fresh Dryad's Saddle on Sycamore stump (early sighting).

Hambleton Wood: 5.4: On old dead Nettle stems Asco *Leptosphaeria acuta* (at bases) and Disco *Calloria neglecta*, Powdery mildew *Erysiphe cynoglossi* on Forget-me-not, Smut *Entyloma ficariae* on Lesser Celandine and Rusts *Kuehneola uredinis* on Bramble, *Melampsora populnea* on Dog's Mercury leaf, *Uromyces muscari* on occasional Bluebells.

Barnsdale Lodge Wood: 1.3: Discomycetes *Calloria neglecta* on old dead Nettle stems, *Mollisia melaleuca* on decaying broadleaved wood and *Orbilia xanthostigma* on decorticated broadleaved wood, Witches' Butter, White Brain, good numbers of fresh Jelly Ear. RL also had fun with deer dung collected same date and kept: 8.3: Ascomycete *Thelebolus stercoreus*, Discomycetes *Fimaria theioleuca*, *Lasiobolus papillatus* and Phycomycetes *Mucor mucedo* and *Pilobolus crystallinus*; 16.3: Phycomycete *Absidia corymbifera*.

Barnsdale Wood: 5.4: Jelly Ears on Ash twig on wet soil and Rust *Uromyces muscari* on occasional Bluebells.

Prior's Coppice: 15.3: Cramp Balls on Ash, Common Jellyspot, Common Tarcrust on decorticated Ash, Hazel Woodwart on Hazel, fresh Turkeytails on sheltered part of Ash stump, Rust *Melampsora populnea* but on just one plant of Dog's Mercury. Also reported: 19 sp in March; 18 sp in April. In

both months: Cramp Balls on Ash logs, a few mature or old Candlesnuff Fungus, Blushing Brackets on Willow, Turkeytails on Ash stumps, Hairy Curtain Crust on lying and standing logs, Elder Whitewash, Beech Barkspot, Jelly Ears fresh in March and dry in April, Leafy Brain on standing old Hazel (nice!), Netted Crust on Ash twigs, Hazel Woodwart on dead Hazel branches and Waxy Crust on lying dead Oak branches. Also in March: Cinnamon Porecrust on old Hawthorn, Bleeding Broadleaf Crust on standing old Hazel, gone-over Stump Puffballs, Spring Hazelpup mature on standing Hazel (a 'ballflower' discomycete when young, but hard to see when old, split and flattened against the tree), Orange Jelly, Witches' Butter and two old Bay Polypores. Also in April: Small fresh tuft of Glistening Inkcaps at stump base, Glue Crust, dry and cracked on old Hazel wood, two mature Scurfy Twiglets, several dry Oyster Mushrooms on old mossy stump, a large fresh Hen of the Woods *Grifola frondosa* at base of Ash (unusual host for this root-rotting polypore, in Japan called Maitake and cultivated) and (yes!) a fresh white Slime Mould *Enteridium lycoperdon* on standing Hazel.

WOODS

Fort Henry Lake - Osprey Wood: 25.3: On Society's visit, Asco *Leptosphaeria acuta* and Disco *Calloria neglecta* on old dead Nettle stems, Common Jellyspot on fallen broadleaved log, *Stereum rameale* on fallen broadleaved branch, Violet Bramble Rust and Hyphomycete *Ramularia ari* on Lords-and-Ladies.

Burley Wood: 15.4: On Society's visit, Asco *Leptosphaeria acuta* on old dead Nettle stem bases, Disco *Micropodia pteridina* on last year's Bracken stems, Cramp Balls on fallen Ash branches, Common Tarcrust on fallen Ash logs, Rusts *Kuehneola uredinis* on Bramble stems, *Melampsora populnea* on Dog's Mercury leaf, Violet Bramble Rust, and *Uromyces muscari* on occasional Bluebell plants, Slime Mould *Enteridium lycoperdon* on living Hazel.

Barrowden Fox Covert: 26.4: After weeks of warm dry weather, heavy rain fell on the Society's evening visit. Underfoot was extremely dry, but 1 Stinkhorn was emerging from leaf debris, a silvery white Slime Mould *Enteridium lycoperdon* shone on a tree trunk and Silverleaf Fungus frilled on a broadleaf stump; smut *Entyloma ficaria* and

rust *Uromyces dactylidis* were on Lesser Celandine leaves.

FIELDS, GARDENS, VERGES

Brooke (River Gwash area): March: On Willow: A few Blushing Brackets, Netted Crust (also on Ash), *Exidia recisa* fresh after rains on small branch, two big old Willow Brackets, small mature tuft of Velvet Shanks, one area of *Hyphoderma praetermissum* on standing debarked Willow (unusual), Beech Barkspot, and after rain White Brain fresh on standing old Willow, and Orange Jelly. Also: Jelly Ears on Elder, Elder Whitewash, scanty Candlesnuff Fungus, Cramp Balls on Ash, Yellow Brain, Hairy Curtain Crust on stump, small tuft of mature Glistening Inkcaps near dead stump.

Barrowden: 16.3: Flourish of Glistening Inkcaps near stumps of dead Field Maple as if on root runs.

Leighfield area: March 25 sp, April 16 sp. In both months: Blushing Bracket, Jelly Ears on Elder (fresh after rain in March, dry in April), Elder Whitewash, Turkeytails on Ash and Willow, Cinnamon Porecrust on big old Hawthorn branches, Yellowing Curtain Crust on lying log near stream, a few Cramp Balls on old Ash, Waxy Crust on old Oak branches, one Shaggy Bracket ('Wet Carpet') old and black high on Ash, *Phellinus contiguus* on underside of big old Hawthorn branch, Witches' Butter fresh on Elder and Oak branches in March but dry on Oak in April, Hairy Curtain Crust on dead Willow, Glue Crust dry and cracked on Willow branches, Beech Barkspot on Willow branches, 4 large fresh yellow-brown pored Willow Brackets on old trunks and branches. Also in March: Orange Jelly, the odd Candlesnuff Fungus, discs of *Calloria neglecta* on old nettle stem and White Brain; on Willow: *Exidia recisa* fresh after rains only, Yellow Brain on small branches, Netted Crust on small lying Willow branches, a fresh tuft of Velvet Shank mid-month at base (also perhaps Flat Oysterlings and *Entoleuca mammata*, by little stream on dead branch, but they're being particularly enigmatic.) Also in April: Cushion Brackets on Blackthorn branches.

Roadside Verge Nature Reserve 7, Gt Casterton-Pickworth: 19.4: Rust *Coleosporium tussilaginis* on Groundsel.

A plea for specimens *Phlebia cornea* has been spotted in two areas of Exton Park at various times in the past - should you come across it again, could you take some and let me have it please? A sample of *Hyphoderma praetermissum*, which was at Brooke, would also be useful.

Many thanks to: T Caldicott, R Lemmon, L and G Worrall and members on Outdoor Events.

MAMMAL REPORT compiled by Linda Biddle

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March/April 2007

At the end of April fresh **Otter** spraint was seen under the bridge at Fort Henry Ponds, showing that we still have regular visitors! Sadly a total of seven **Badgers** were found as road casualties, a high number, perhaps indicating that they are having to travel further afield to find food in the dry conditions we have been experiencing. Luckily several local setts are showing signs of much activity, as cubs come out into the open to play. Badgers have been seen crossing roads near Wing Grange, and between Seaton and Barrowden animals were seen crossing the road on three separate occasions. In early March a **Fox** was seen strolling around fields near Wing Fishing Lakes, and another at Red Hill Barrowden. Later the same month a large dog fox ran between two new ponds near Shoveler hide at RW. At the end of April a young fox was disturbed at Bloody Oaks Quarry at about 7.30 one evening. A total of 7 foxes have been reported over the period from Pickworth, Burley (and Morkery) woods, and 2 road casualties.

A **Weasel** crossed the road just before the car park at Eggleton Birdwatching Centre in March. Also in mid March workings were seen in various parts of Prior's Coppice, and at the end of the month a lot of activity was found by the eastern side of the upper Fort Henry Lake near Osprey Wood.

In Barrowden **Hedgehogs** have been absent for the winter, nestboxes ignored, so it was pleasing that on 11th March one appeared in the Worrall's carport and was so busy eating peanuts that it took no notice of observers. On following evenings one visited, coughing, and later in the month one was seen (not coughing), but the very loud coughing was again heard under a bush at the end of March. In April 2 large hedgehogs were seen at the same time in the carport, and evidence of their presence found through the month, with occasional visits. A hedgehog was seen trotting down a road past a villager's house and others have been seen in adjoining gardens. The fashion for gravel gardens, and recent building work in what were previously large gardens, must have played at least some part in the reduction

of hedgehogs seen in the area over recent years. In Oakham 2 large adults were seen courting in a back garden late in April, and another was wandering on Wing road in Manton. A **Long-tailed Fieldmouse** was observed as it took peanuts occasionally from the Worrall's animal feeding station, and in early March 2 fieldmice were discovered in a large bag of garden debris in the garage, and stood looking, ears up and tails deployed, but soon disappeared.

A **Pygmy Shrew** was found dead on the reserve path about 15 yards from Lyndon Centre in late April, and 4 **Common Shrews** were seen fighting in the hedge bottom and watched as they dodged in and out of the vegetation for about 5 minutes on the Pickworth road near the Walk Farm footpath.

A **Field Vole** was found dead in the car park at the entrance to Prior's Coppice at the end of March, a nearby cat perhaps the culprit!

During March and early April a total of 8 **Grey Squirrels** were seen in ones and twos in Burley wood, 2 were seen together on the RNHS outing to Fort Henry at Osprey Wood, and another at Barnsdale wood. **Rabbits** were in evidence at Bloody Oaks Quarry at the end of April, and one large rabbit displayed his contempt for new 3-foot high rabbit-proof fencing by arriving in Dr Gallimore's vegetable garden, and jumping it with no difficulty, to escape. **Brown hares** have been seen, 3 in and around Barrowden, a total of 4 from Brooke Road Oakham, one crossing Pickworth Drift, 2 at Eyebrook, and another on setaside at Wing Hill.

Fallow deer have been reported in large numbers in Burley, Clipsham, Pickworth (and Morkery) Woods, in groups of up to 25 at a time and **Muntjac** also in the same areas. Muntjac are also reported from Prior's Coppice, where a lovely specimen was seen, and then barked as it ran into woodland. Another was seen at the side of the road between Seaton and Haringworth, and a dead baby was found on Lax Hill at the end of March.

Records were received this month from: J Ansley, A Biddle, T Caldicott, F & G Chiverton, C Gallimore, R Lemmon, M Markham, J & Js Rodgers, PJ Rudkin, Stevenson, G + L Worrall

Summary of records from June – December 2006

An **Otter** was reported at Rutland Water, clambering out of the water and then running for cover to nearby woodland *'in a very up and down fashion'* in August. Otter spraint was much in evidence on the Gwash at Belmesthorpe, and fresh spraint found on the North Brook in October and November near Fort Henry where a partly eaten **Pike** was left by the top Lake in December. The carcase remained for some time. Otter pawprints were seen on the bank of the Welland at Harringworth during October.

Three **Stoat** encounters were recorded, in July one weaving, dashing from side to side of the road near America Lodge, Brooke, in August one rushing in and out of flowerbeds in Dr Gallimore's garden, and at Egleton car park in October a **Rabbit** squealed loudly, bounding towards PJR hotly pursued by a stoat. The rabbit ran around Phil's car and disappeared; the stoat stopped, stood for a few seconds, then bounded off back into the bushes. Stoats crossed roads at Langham and between Thistleton and Cottesmore, and a dead stoat was found on the road in Wing. **Weasels** were reported crossing roads near Brooke, and Wing, one crossed a gateway at EBR, and at Lagoon 3 RW one was seen on the cycle track in August and another in October. (Unusually at the end of May a dead **Polecat** was found on the A6003 N of Gunthorpe.)

A total of 13 **Badger** road casualties were found, and three reports of badger latrines, containing faeces, in which cereals were much in evidence. Happily, live badgers were seen crossing roads, 2 near Seaton, 1 near Wing, and two reports of close encounters during June are quoted below (leaving out the exact locations).

From Terry Mitcham:

'Whilst checking a barn owl nest-box on a hedgerow oak I decided to look into a nearby ancient tree, hollow to the ground. On peering into a crack near the base a loud growl caused me some alarm (Rutland panther cubs?). Two half grown cubs peered back at me, growling loudly, the sound amplified by the hollow tree. One cub left by another exit fairly quickly, but the other stood its ground until I left. A memorable experience, more exciting for being so unexpected.'

From Phil Rudkin:

'As we neared the top of the hill, on the footpath we witnessed an amazing sight. In broad daylight, (9.20 pm) two badgers, one behind the other, came running along the path towards us. They took absolutely no notice of us. We stood still, and they ran between us...both were panting heavily. They disappeared into

the bushes, then incredibly came out and continued the chase over the stubble field and out of sight.'

Foxes are numerous in the area, having been reported in Pickworth, Burley and Clipsham Park woods, with **cubs** in June July, August and September. Others were seen by Rutland Water, below Jubilee Lodge, Ridlington, in Main Street Barrowden and another just in Rutland near old brickworks off Little Casterton Road, Stamford. In addition 6 dead foxes were seen: 4 road casualties, one dead by the deer tower at Pickworth Wood, and another in the middle of a field at Wing, sheep grazing around it.

Only 3 reports of **Mole** activity were received, the first wreaking havoc in Dr Gallimore's lawn between May and August, secondly 2 dead moles by Rutland water at Edith Weston, and thirdly, fresh workings in Prior's Coppice in December. **Hares** were not conspicuous during this period, being reported from Seaton road Barrowden in June and November, also South Luffenham, and Ridlington. **Rabbits** similarly, though not scarce, were only reported from Wing, where they further damaged Dr Gallimore's lawn, Edith Weston, Lyndon Centre RW, and Bloody Oaks Quarry. **Common Shrews** were found dead in Ketton Quarry, and at Edith Weston, and a live one was running around Dr Gallimore's greenhouse in August, where a **Bank Vole** was seen in a border in September. Another bank vole, curled in a patch of sunshine in Prior's Coppice, was thought to be dead, but when poked with a stick ambled away into the undergrowth. During June the Worralls in Barrowden observed a **Long-Tailed Fieldmouse** on several evenings, as it took peanuts from a feeding station on their patio, and in October two fell into bins, one in Oakham (must have thought s/he'd gone to heaven in a peanut bin though s/he was trying hard to escape) and another in a compost bin in Wing. A total of 6 **Brown rats** were recorded, 3 in Edith Weston, 1 in North Luffenham, at Red Hill near Barrowden, and on verge 5 between Pickworth and Essendine. Many **Grey Squirrels** were reported, from Hambleton, Pickworth and Barnsdale Woods, Gibbet Gorse, Edith Weston, Preston, Wing and Hinman's Spinney.

At Barrowden the Worralls were visited regularly during June and July by 3 or 4 individual **Hedgehogs** at different times, at least one most evenings. On one occasion one chivvied another into swimming across the pond before they went separate ways. In August hedgehogs disappeared from the village and were not reported again

before the end of the year. Elsewhere Hedgehogs were seen in Edith Weston, Preston and Essendine.

In July a **Roe Deer** and fawn were seen near the entrance to Bullimore's Quarry, Clipsham. **Muntjac** are commonly seen in most of our woodland areas, Pickworth, Burley, Morkery and Tunnely Woods, and were also reported from Gunthorpe, Empingham, Lyndon, Wing Grange,

Ridlington, Lax Hill and a male waited at a bus stop in Manton. **Fallow deer** were regularly and consistently recorded in large numbers from Pickworth, Burley, Morkery, and Clipsham Park Woods, and in October and December from Tunnely Wood. In December a group of eleven does crossed the entrance drive at Greetham Valley golf club, and a single female crossed the road near Woodhead Wood on the Pickworth road.

Thankyou for records from: J Ansley, V Arnold, A Biddle, T Caldicott, G Chiverton, Dr C Gallimore, J Harris, R Lemmon, M Lewin, P & E Mann, T Mitcham, G Panter, P Rudkin, AR & MA Thorp, P Tomalin, L & G Worrall.

BAT REPORT compiled by Jenny Harris

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March/April 2007

In spite of the mild weather, the only record for March was when Dr. Gallimore saw a **Brown Long-eared** *Plecotus auritus* bat in one of his outbuildings in Wing on 5.3.

The first April record was also from Wing, where Phil Rudkin reported that three small bats emerged from a roof in Church Street on 8.4. On 9.4, and on several evenings up to mid-month, Linda and Graham Worrall recorded droppings on their wheelie bin, likely to be those of a Brown Long-eared bat. The bin is under a sheltered car port, where bats hang up to eat larger moths (feeding perch). Two small droppings, probably those of pipistrelle species, were there on 12.4, and up to three small bats were seen on several nights in April hawking for insects round their garden.

On 11.4, a number of **Soprano Pipistrelles** *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* were seen in Compartment 15 in Burley Wood. The first one appeared about 20 minutes after sunset and activity continued for approximately 20 minutes, in spite of the large-scale removal of trees in this area. As it became darker, several *Myotis* bats, probably **Daubenton's** *Myotis daubentonii* were heard. From about 15.4, Dr Gallimore observed droppings on one of

his window-sills, indicating that bats, probably Long-eared, had returned to the maternity roost. Gill and Francis Chiverton reported seeing an amazing number of bats, including probable Brown Long-eared, among trees and swooping over the track to Hambleton Wood. They reported that the Landrover screen was covered in insects. The combination of trees, water and extensive sheep grazing has created one of the best areas in the county for foraging bats.

The only grounded bat was a male **Common Pipistrelle** *P. pipistrellus* found in the housing estate off Burley Way, Oakham on 11.4. The bat's right wing had a tear next to one finger bone (possibly the bat was a cat victim). This healed well and when the bat could sustain flight for several minutes round my lounge it was released on 27.4, where a small stream, flanked by tall willows, goes under one of the roads. This stream eventually flows into the sewage works, and it soon became obvious that it was a major commuting route for bats flying down from Oakham to foraging areas at the western end of Rutland Water. Funnily enough, there was a cat sitting on a wall next to the stream, at about bat height. I gently encouraged it to move on!

My thanks to those who provided records for this report.
