

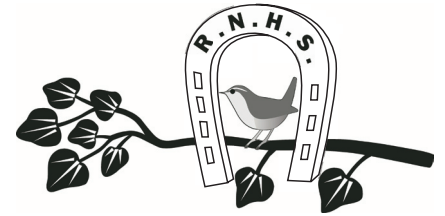
Journal of the  
**RUTLAND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

Registered Charity Number 514693

www.rnhs.org.uk

No 243 (255)

**March 2008**



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## NOTICEBOARD

### Your Summer Programme and Card

Please sign your new card NOW (juniors should sign on each parent's card) and bin your old one. The next card, with all the winter meetings, will come with the September *Fieldfare*. Enjoy your meetings!

### Annual General Meeting

76 members present elected Officers and Committee Members as follows: President Sir Clifford Boulton, Chairman Ann Tomlinson, Secretary Linda Worrall, Treasurer Derek Lee, Membership Secretary Graham Worrall, Programme Secretary Dawn Whitefield, *Fieldfare* Editor Hendrina Ellis, other Committee Members Linda Biddle, Gill Chiverton, Jenny Harris, Andrew Lear, Frances Lee and Peter Scott. Thanks were given to those standing down after dedicated service, including Mary Nourish retiring from Programme Secretary, Joe Nourish from Committee, Joy and Allan Paterson from the Rook Survey and Patrick Mann from Editorship of the Annual Report. We are grateful to those who have taken on responsibilities: Hendrina Ellis as Editor of the Annual Report as well as *Fieldfare*, Peter Scott for Publicity, and Dawn Whitefield as Programme Secretary, as well as all members who in so many different ways help the Society and appreciate wildlife.

As our Chairman Ann Tomlinson noted in her report, we all need to continue to be eagle-eyed in the interests of our natural environment.

### Farewell and welcome

As I write up the details for the summer programme it is with a tinge of sadness, as it will be my last. I have enjoyed being Programme Secretary, which has involved talking to many interesting people, both potential speakers and members of the Society. There have been highs and lows and despite my best endeavours some speakers who have let me down. The Committee have been very supportive and we have already made a good start with next winter's programme. I wish Dawn the best of luck and hope she gets as much pleasure as I have done from doing the job.

Mary Nourish

### Roadside Verge Nature Reserves

Jenny Mallett has already sent me a card for 'her' verge, where she found violets and daisies on 29th February. If you are happy to continue recording the same verge as last year, please let me know. **We still very much need new blood to carry on this work.** No-one came forward after the last *Fieldfare*, but I do hope it will be different this time. We would hate to have to leave some verges unmonitored.

Graham Worrall

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### Chairman

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## Bernard Thompson

We heard last month from Mr John Ruskin, a friend of the late Bernard Thompson of Lyddington, that Bernard had left the RNHS a bequest in his Will. Both Bernard, who died in November last year, and his wife Eth, who predeceased him, were keen walkers, cyclists and ornithologists, and enthusiasts for the great outdoors. They particularly loved the Eyebrook Reservoir. We have already received about £160 from Bernard's estate, and are likely to receive about £200 more when the estate is finally settled. It is extremely touching that Bernard saw fit to recognise the Society in this way. Mr Ruskin commented 'I know that Bernard and Eth would both have been more than pleased to know that the money was being put to good use in this way, and in their absence may I wish the Society well in all the work it does.'

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## RUTLAND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY events

### **Sunday 20 April**                      **OWSTON WOOD**    **10.30 am**

*We will be joined by a few members of the Wildlife section of the Leicester Lit. and Phil. for this walk around Owston Wood. Leader Andy Lear is familiar with this wood through his work for LRWT and will hopefully be able to show us spring flora and we will possibly hear early bird migrants. Please note the going can be quite rough in places so care is needed.*

*Meet at OS Explorer 233 grid ref SK797067, at the gate which is the entrance to the wood's main ride. A possible route from Oakham: bear left over railway crossing and take second left towards Braunston and Leicester. Continue through Braunston towards Tilton on the Hill and Leicester and take 2nd turning on the right onto Owston Wood Road. There is a wide verge at this junction where it is possible to park but please do so carefully as parking space is limited.*

### **Sunday 11 May**                      **PRIOR'S COPPICE**    **2 pm**

*Another joint meeting, this time with the Rutland Group of the LRWT and again led by Andy Lear. We hope to see later spring flora and more woodland birds.*

*Meet at OS Explorer 234 grid ref SK833048. A possible route from Oakham: bear left over the railway crossing and take 2nd left towards Leicester and Braunston. In Braunston take first left past the pub and follow the road towards Brooke. Near the top of the hill, turn right along rough road to wood entrance.*

### **Monday 19 May**                      **EYEBROOK RESERVOIR**    **6.45 pm**

*An evening walk with our bird recorder Terry Mitcham to see summer water fowl and hopefully migrants like swallows and martins.*

*Meet at OS Explorer 234 grid ref SP853964. A possible route from Oakham: take the A6003 through Uppingham on towards Corby. Take the first turning on the right to Stoke Dry, go through the village and park on the wide verge on the sharp bend next to the reservoir.*

### **Sunday 1 June**                      **BEAUMONT CHASE FARM**    **2.30 pm**

*An afternoon walk around Mary and Joe Nourish's farm to see the new woodland planting and other conservation measures, followed by tea and cake in the garden, weather permitting.*

*Please go in the farm gate and park in the farmyard. Meet at OS Explorer 234 grid ref SP847988. A possible route from Oakham: take the A6003 to Uppingham and then follow signs for the B664 to Market Harborough. The farm is one and a half miles from Uppingham on the right-hand side of this road.*

### **Sunday 22 June**                      **MERRY'S MEADOW**    **10.30 am**

*A walk around this SSSI with Jenny Harris. More details in next Fieldfare.*

### **Sunday 13 July**                      **RSPB RESERVE, FREISTON SHORE, LINCS**    **10.30 am**

*A day visit will provide a rare opportunity to take a walk on the saltmarsh, led by a qualified RSPB guide, exploring the form and natural history of this unusual and fascinating place. The morning walk is only about a mile long, but it is over uneven terrain and very muddy. It is timed to take account of tidal*

conditions and follows a planned route which minimises risk to participants. The saltmarsh is exposed and can be cold, even in July. It takes about an hour so appropriate clothing is essential.

Bring a picnic for lunch (brewing facilities available at the Living Classrooms centre, also toilets) and afterwards take a short walk to the hide to see the bird life of the saline lagoon – again, with an RSPB guide. Meet at the Living Classrooms centre, Freiston. A coach is planned but there are not yet enough seats sold to make it viable. For a coach place, please contact Mary Nourish, telephone 01572 823677, or e-mail [beaumontchase@farming.co.uk](mailto:beaumontchase@farming.co.uk) by **31 April**. The cost of the coach will be about £15 but is dependent on final numbers. If not enough people book, we will suggest arrangements for sharing cars in May Fieldfare.

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## WEATHER SUMMARY John P Hollands, Wittering met.

### January 2008

**Surface wind** January 2008 began with a mainly South South Easterly light surface wind. During the 2nd it backed to become mainly East North Easterly light. This run of wind persisted until the 4th when it slowly veered and freshened to become mainly South Westerly fresh to strong with occasional gusts to Gale Force. This stormy run of wind persisted until the 11th when it moderated to become mainly South Westerly light. This relatively light wind regime lasted for about 24 hours when it freshened from the South to become fresh to strong with occasional Gale Force gusts. After a lull on the 16th and 17th the surface wind once again freshened up to become mainly South Westerly moderate to fresh with gusts strong to Gale Force. This blustery run of wind persisted until the end of the month. The highest gust recorded at Wittering during January 2008 was 60 KTS (69 mph), this was recorded on the 8th at 2216 Z. The highest gust ever recorded at Wittering was in January 1976 when a gust of 94 KT (107 mph) occurred.

**Temperature** January 2008 was a mild month with a mean day maximum of 9.0 °C as compared to the long-term mean of 6.1 °C. The warmest

day was the 18th with a maximum-recorded temperature of 13.5 °C; this was close to the absolute record for January of 14.0 °C recorded in 1975. The coldest day was the 3rd with an afternoon maximum of 1.2 °C. Despite the high temperatures and rainfall January 2008 was relatively bright, with 57.9 hours of bright sunshine as compared to the long-term mean of 52.8 hours. The sunniest January on record was 2000, when 102.0 hours of bright sunshine were recorded.

The average night minimum during January 2008 was 4.2 °C, significantly warmer than the mean of 1.4 °C. The coldest night was 2nd/3rd with a minimum of -1.1 °C, thankfully significantly warmer than the absolute minimum for any month of -14.4 °C recorded in 1982.

**Rainfall** January 2008 was a relatively wet month with a total of 74.4 mm (2.93 ins) as compared to the long-term mean of 48.8 mm (1.92 ins). The wettest day was the 11th with 17.6 mm (0.69 ins). The absolute wettest January day on record was the 6th in 1959 with 34.8 mm (1.37 ins) of rainfall recorded.

*During January 2007 the average day maximum was 9.2 °C, the average night minimum 4.4 °C and the rainfall 61.0 mm (2.4 ins). There were 74.0 hours of bright sunshine.*

### February 2008

**Surface wind** February 2008 began with a mainly Westerly strong to Gale surface wind. During the 2nd the surface wind backed and moderated to become mainly South South Westerly moderate to fresh. This wind run persisted until the 10th when it backed and moderated to become mainly Easterly light. This period of light airs persisted until the 20th when the surface wind freshened and veered to become mainly South Westerly light to moderate, occasionally strong to Gale. This blustery run of wind persisted until the end of the month. The highest gust reported at Wittering in

February 2008 was 50 KT (59 mph) at 2347 Z in the 29th.

**Temperature** February was a mild month with an average day maximum of 8.9 °C, significantly warmer than the long-term (1955–2007) mean of 6.4 °C. As is often the case, the average does hide some interesting detail. The warmest day was the 9th with a maximum of 13.7 °C, whilst the coldest day was the 19th with a maximum of -0.5 °C. This low maximum was because of persistent freezing fog. There were 118.7 hours of bright sunshine in February 2008. The sunniest day was the 16th with

9.1 hours. The sunniest February on record was 1998 with 123.3 hours of bright sunshine and the long-term mean is 72.3 hours. Overall February 2008 can be described as a sunny month.

The average night minimum for February 2008 was 1.3 °C, just a little above the long-term mean of 1.0 °C. The coldest night was 17th/18th with a low of -6.4 °C, thankfully significantly warmer than the absolute minimum for February of -12.8 °C recorded way back in 1956. The warmest

night was 21st/22nd when 9.6 °C was recorded. That is quite a respectable maximum temperature for the beginning of March.

**Rainfall** February 2008 was a relatively dry month with 22.8 mm (0.90 ins) of rain. The mean is 37.1 mm (1.46 ins). The wettest day was the 3rd with 7.8 mm (0.31 ins). There were 15 days with no recordable rainfall but 1.0 mm of the recorded total was because of the accumulation of dew and the thawing of hoar frost.

*During February 2007 the average day maximum was 8.8 °C, the average night minimum was 2.8 °C, there were 73.8 hours of bright sunshine and the rainfall was 54.1 mm (2.13 ins).*

*It is of interest to note that, statistically, February is the driest month of the year and September is the wettest.*

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

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



### January/February 2008

As usual there was a smattering of amphibian records for these two months, both species of newt, frogs but no toads.

Frogs were first reported from Barrowden on 7th February. Amplexus was noted there on 22nd February, but no spawn until March. However in Cottesmore activity started a little bit later, but the

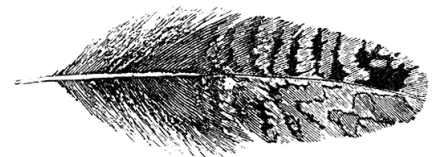
first spawn was seen on 26th February. Elsewhere there was a lone frog in Wing on 28th February.

Newt activity started in the second half of January. A dead Smooth Newt was found on the road in Edith Weston on 20th January and the first Smooth and Great Crested Newts appeared in my pond in Wing on 21st January. Numbers started to build up by the end of February for both species.

*My thanks to V Arnold, M & S Iannantuoni and L & G Worrall who sent in records.*

## BIRD REPORT compiled by T. Mitcham

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



### January/February 2008

The year began with garden birdwatchers stealing the limelight with Waxwings, Bramblings and Lesser Redpolls all reported. There were also Siskins and Blackcaps in several gardens. The reservoirs remained fairly quiet with Glaucous Gull and Green-winged Teal making brief visits. A good variety of raptors included many records of Red Kite and Buzzard with Merlin and Peregrine. The mild weather encouraged Stonechats to linger at some sites and Ravens were again reported in January.

*My thanks to the following for their records for these months: V Arnold, S Barnes, P & C Brown, T Caldicott, J Comber, Dr C Gallimore, A Hemsley, Dr C Jones, F & D Lee, R Lemmon, E & P Mann, T Mitcham, C Nelson, G Panter, K Potterton, J Rodgers, P Rudkin, Jill Stapleton, A R & M A Thorp, D Whitefield, D Willett, M Winslow, T Williams, G R & L Worrall.*

**Mute Swan.** 50 were counted at EBR on 15.02.

**Black Swan.** One was at FHP between 02.01 and 18.01 and one was at EBR on 15.02.

**Greylag Goose.** Up to 20 were noted at EBR in Feb. There were 35 at FHP on 24.02.

**Canada Goose.** c.100 were at EBR in Feb.

**Barnacle Goose.** One was at EBR on 09.01.

**Shelduck.** Pairs were noted at Leighfield Fishponds from 27.01 to the end of Feb., and at EBR on 15.02. One was at FHP to 17.02.

**Wigeon.** c.130 were counted on ponds at Priors Coppice on 27.01.

**Green-winged Teal.** What was presumably the same bird as appeared last year was at EBR from 26 to 29.02.

**Shoveler.** Six were at EBR on 15.02.

**Red-crested Pochard.** A male was at EBR on 29.01.

**Tufted Duck.** Nos at FHP peaked at 101 on 03.02.

**Scaup.** Five females were at EBR on 04.01.

**Long-tailed Duck.** The 2007 bird remained at RW (North Arm) throughout both months.

- Common Scoter.** A female was at EBR on 04.01.
- Goosander.** Noted regularly at Leighfield Fishponds from 06.01 to 27.02 with a max. of eight on the first date. There were five on lagoon one at Egleton on 13.01 and three at EBR on 29.01.
- Red-legged Partridge.** Reported from EBR, Wing Fishing Lakes and Exton/Horn Mill with 12 the largest covey at the latter site.
- Pheasant.** Two males were watched fighting in a field at Wing on 16.02. for five minutes. The defeated bird flew towards the kitchen door of the observer, hitting it hard on and stunning itself for five minutes, before staggering away. How fortunate that it chose the home of a true naturalist, who did not take advantage of its predicament!
- Little Grebe.** A max. of seven were at FHP to 18.01. Two pairs were at EBR on 15.02.
- Black-necked Grebe.** One remained at RW (North Arm) throughout both months.
- Cormorant.** A max. of 21 noted at EBR on 15.02.
- Little Egret.** One was seen on several dates at RW between 02.01 and 21.02.
- Grey Heron.** Only two noted at EBR on 15.02 – the removal of conifers from Stoke Dry Wood seems to have resulted in the abandonment of the site for nesting. One was perched in a tree overlooking a garden pond at Wing on 29.02.
- Red Kite.** Singles or pairs were widely reported; most regularly from Horn Mill, Barrowden and Burley. Pairs also noted in the Welland valley near Tinwell and Tixover, the latter birds perhaps from the Fineshade area. One was noted over Stamford on 10.02.
- Sparrowhawk.** Noted in a Stamford garden on several Jan. dates but few other reports with records from Wardley Wood, Exton, Ridlington and Braunston.
- Buzzard.** Again well reported with soaring parties of birds noted at several sites – 5 over Brooke on 09.01, 3 at EBR on 02.02, 5 over Pickworth Wood on 04.02 and 4 at Seaton on 15.02.
- Kestrel.** Singles or pairs noted regularly at Horn Mill, Exton Park, Braunston and EBR. One was seen mobbing a pair of Buzzards at Clipsham Park on 25.02.
- Merlin.** One was at Leighfield Fishponds on 03.02.
- Peregrine.** One stooped through the wader flock at RW(Egleton) on 12.01. and a male was in Exton Park on 27.01.
- Water Rail.** One was at FHP/North Brook on 04.01, 05.01 and 27.02. One was at RW (Egleton) on 13.01.
- Ringed Plover.** One flew west at Leighfield Fishponds on 01.01.
- Golden Plover.** At RW there were 115 on 13.01. and 108 on 10.02. c.250 were at EBR on 29.01 increasing to 300 on 14.02. c.120 were on Ryhall Heath on 17.02 and 250 were near Greatham on 23.02.
- Lapwing.** RW counts were 1977 on 13.01 and 1845 on 10.02. There were 300 at EBR on 15.02.
- Little Stint.** There were three at RW (Egleton) on 12/13.01.
- Dunlin.** At RW there were 97 on 13.01 and 35 on 10.02. EBR had 42 on 02.02 and 44 on 15.02.
- Ruff.** Four remained at RW throughout Jan. with seven noted on 10.02.
- Snipe.** 37 were at RW on 13.01 and 50 on 10.02. Up to 3 were at Leighfield Fishponds, North Brook and Gt. Casterton between 06.01 and 21.02.
- Woodcock.** The Leighfield/ Brooke area produced 3 or 4 birds throughout both months. Singles were noted at Shacklewell, Cottesmore Wood and Tunneley Wood between 20.01 and 17.02.
- Curlew.** One was at RW (Egleton) on 03.01.
- Redshank.** There were 32 at RW on 13.01 and 29 on 10.02. One was at EBR on 15.01.
- Green Sandpiper.** One was on the R. Gwash near Brooke on 05.01 and three were at RW on 13.01.
- Glaucous Gull.** A first winter bird was at RW on 14.01.
- Woodpigeon.** Large nos. were noted in the Horn Mill/FHP area with c.600 estimated on 12.01 and c.400 on 27.01.
- Barn Owl.** A dead bird was by the A606 near Langham on 08.01. Live birds were noted at Ashwell, Wing, Seaton, Brooke and Braunston.
- Little Owl.** Regularly heard and seen at Barrowden throughout both months. Others were noted at EBR, Beaumont Chase, Brooke, Leighfield Fishponds and Hambleton.
- Tawny Owl.** Calling birds were heard at Edith Weston, Barrowden, Barnsdale, Lax Hill, FHP. One was seen by the road at Manton on 10.01.
- Kingfisher.** Few reports in these months – one at EBR on three Jan. dates and one at FHP on 21.02.
- Green Woodpecker.** Well reported from sites across the county – Bloody Oaks, the Wing area, Braunston, FHP, Exton Park, Beaumont Chase and Barnsdale.
- Great Spotted Woodpecker.** Garden records came from Barrowden and Oakham with others visiting feeding stations at Tunneley Wood and Braunston.
- Meadow Pipit.** c.20 were at Gorsefield Wood on 28.01.
- Grey Wagtail.** Reports between 05.01 and 25.02 involved one or two at Brooke, FHP, a Stamford garden and sewage works at Empingham and Edith Weston.

- Pied Wagtail.** 66 were feeding on winter cereals near Empingham sewage works on 24.02.
- Waxwing.** Two were in a Langham garden on 19.02. Our first record this winter.
- Robin.** Up to ten frequented a rural feeding station near Braunston to 03.02.
- Stonechat.** A good winter for this species with singles or pairs noted at Fort Henry, RW (Egletton), Gorsefield Wood, Brooke, Turtle Bridge and Oakham.
- Blackbird.** Some excellent counts were received from rural and suburban sites: 44 near Brooke on 01.01, c.60 feeding on sultanas at Oakham on 30.01, 74 counted around Brooke on 03.02 and twenty at EBR on 15.02.
- Fieldfare.** Having mostly stripped berries from hedgerows before Christmas, flocks were feeding on pasture. 100 at Wakerley Bridge on 09.01 increased to 250 by 03.02 and there were 300 at Turtle Bridge on 22.02. 148 were in Exton Park on 03.02 and 106 near Glaston on 11.02.
- Song Thrush.** Ten were counted around Brooke on 01.01. One was a regular in an Oakham garden in Feb.
- Redwing.** Much less common than the Fieldfare, with 44 in Wing Burrows on 16.01 and 62 near Glaston on 11.02 the largest counts. Up to twelve were noted at Uppingham, Wakerley Bridge and Ridlington to 15.02.
- Blackcap.** Male and female Blackcaps were noted in two Oakham gardens between 18.01 and 20.02. Fat balls were the attraction at one site.
- Chiffchaff.** One was by the River Gwash at Brooke on 22.01.
- Goldcrest.** Good nos. were reported near Yew Tree Avenue at Clipsham on 20.01 and 25.02.
- Long-tailed Tit.** c.16 were counted at Wing on 07.01. Up to five fed at feeding stations in Oakham, Barrowden and Braunston. Fat balls were again favoured.
- Great Tit.** 20 were noted around Brooke on 06.02.
- Willow Tit.** Two or three fed regularly at a Braunston feeding station throughout both months. One was at RW (Egletton) on 19.01. Leighfield, Brooke and Gorsefield Wood provided records of 2 or 3 in both months.
- Marsh Tit.** A pair fed regularly at Tunneley Wood feeding station and several were regular at Braunston. Seven or eight were located in Priors Coppice in both months and one was in a mixed tit flock at Wing on 07.01.
- Nuthatch.** Birds were noted in Exton Park, Hambleton and Tunneley Wood, where one visited a peanut feeder regularly.
- Treecreeper.** Seven were noted around Brooke on 12.01. Singles were at Wardley Wood, Clipsham Park Wood and Wing, where one was using a roost in a Wellingtonia.
- Jay.** One or two fed occasionally at the Braunston feeding station during both months. Two were at RW (Lyndon) on 13.01.
- Raven.** In January, two flew north over Gorsefield Wood on 02.01 and three were on pasture near Leighfield on 27.01.
- Starling.** c.50 accompanied Fieldfares at Turtle Bridge on 22.02.
- House Sparrow.** A Lyddington garden maintained c.20 throughout Feb.
- Tree Sparrow.** Five were at Rowell's Lodge (Ridlington) feeding station on 15.02. There were ten in a mixed finch flock near Tickencote on 24.02 and two near Brooke on 29.02. Five were regular at Normanton during Feb.
- Brambling.** A flock of up to 20 fed on beechmast at Exton from 02.01 to at least 03.02. Singles were in a Stamford garden on 27.01 and 28.02, at Edith Weston on 14.01, at the EBR feeder on 15.02, at Normanton on 02.01 and in Feb, and at Lyddington on 28.02.
- Greenfinch.** The largest count was thirty on Hambleton peninsula on 24.01.
- Goldfinch.** 30 were at Gorsefield Wood on 02.01, c.50 roosted in a Lyddington garden in Feb. and 6 fed on marjoram seedheads in a Barrowden garden on 19.02.
- Siskin.** A much better winter for this species than last year. In the countryside, flocks of up to 35 were on alders at Brooke and RW (Egletton and North Arm) to at least 06.02. Nyger feeders in gardens attracted 8 at Barrowden, with other records from Oakham and Uppingham (peanuts) of up to five birds.
- Linnet.** Flocks of 65 near Mounts Lodge on 06.01 and 30 at Leighfield on 27.01 were noted.
- Lesser Redpoll.** 1 or 2 were at Brooke in Jan. with 2 near Woodhead on 06.01. Up to 5 took nyger in a Barrowden garden throughout Jan. and one was at a nyger feeder in Stamford on 22.02.
- Bullfinch.** Small nos. were widely reported in Jan. with feeding noted at the Braunston feeding station in both months.
- Yellowhammer.** There were c.35 near Brooke on 20.02 and c.20 in a garden hedge adjoining farmland at Lyddington on 26.02.
- Corn Bunting.** It was a relief to count a flock of 47 at Mounts Lodge on 19.01. This species is trying hard to hang on in Rutland.

## National Waterfowl Counts January/February 2008

	Rutland Water		Eyebrook Reservoir		Fort Henry Ponds and Exton Park		Holywell Lake	
	13.01.08	10.02.08	13.01.08	10.02.08	05.01.08	03.02.08	03.02.08	
Mute Swan	78	28	112	97	8	8	2	2
Greylag Goose	169	151	40	88	8	35	78	53
Canada Goose	720	547	170	134	1	5	12	83
Barnacle Goose	13	13						
Egyptian Goose	42	48		1				
Shelduck	13	25	1	3	1			
Mandarin	2							
Wigeon	2610	2773	240	190	63	62		
Gadwall	385	239	31	36	93	50	24	12
Teal	1091	285	176	224	13	17	16	23
Mallard	706	471	61	94	117	83	98	83
Pintail	13	2						
Shoveler	20	31		2	5		3	
Pochard	229	172	118	50	5	3		1
Tufted Duck	1178	808	301	300	74	104	10	18
Scaup	8	4	3					
Long-tailed Duck	1	1						
Goldeneye	325	349	36	28				
Smew	2	1	1	6				
Goosander	16	2	2	3				
Ruddy Duck		2						
Little Grebe	62	41	10	11	7	2	3	2
Great Crested Grebe	72	103	25	12	1			
Red-necked Grebe		1						
Slavonian Grebe	1							
Black-necked Grebe	1	1						
Cormorant	48	74	25	12	1	1		
Grey Heron	26	14	5	4	1			
Little Egret	1							
Water Rail	10							
Moorhen	128	119	4		23	22	23	16
Coot	2257	1020	205	131	81	62	18	14

## HIGH TIDES IN NORTH NORFOLK Nola Thurlow

High tides for Snettisham; for Titchwell add 5 minutes. All times in BST.

April			May		
Sunday	6	07.25 19.26	Sunday	4	06.13 18.15
	13	00.32 12.41		11	11.24 -
	20	07.22 19.28		18	06.19 18.27
	27	11.00 23.47		25	10.07 22.46

## BOTANY NOTES compiled by Graham Worrall

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### January/February 2008

The New Year Walk to Fort Henry produced just two flowers, **Groundsel** and **Pineappleweed**. Dog's Mercury was only in bud. January was mild so by the 10th things were happening: **Hazel catkins** were out at Manton, **Spurge Laurel** at Bloody Oaks, **Gorse** at Ketton Quarry and **Snowdrops** in Uppingham. **Aconites** were out five days later and **Winter Heliotrope** was in full flower either side of the 'old' A6003 on the southern edge of Oakham.

February continued mainly mild so that **Cherry Plum** and **Wild Plum blossom** and **Hawthorn leaves** were found in the hedgerows. **Dog's Mercury** was in flower in a number of sites by the end of the first week and in the second week **Common Dog Violet**, **Primrose** and **Wood Avens** were also in flower. The month ended with **Colt's-foot** being found in Wing Burrows and on the A47 Uppingham bypass on the 29th – in a normal year it would have started in March!

*Thanks to P Ennis, R Lemon, J Mallett, G Worrall.*

## LEPIDOPTERA NOTES compiled by Jean Harvey

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### January/February 2008

#### BUTTERFLIES

When the sun shone during the second week of February, hibernating butterflies ventured forth during the warmest part of the day. Between February 9th and the 12th single **Small Tortoiseshells** were seen flying in Barrowden, Langham and Oakham on two occasions at each site. On February 9th a **Brimstone** was also noted at Barrowden.

It is very interesting to look back to a year ago when no Small Tortoiseshells were recorded in February but we saw Peacocks and a Red Admiral on the wing instead.

#### MOTHS

A moth trap was operated at Lyddington in and around the garden and greenhouse when, during January, 3 micro-species and 7 macro-species were attracted to the light. These included a **Winter Moth**, an **Early Moth**, a **Satellite**, a **Chestnut**, 2 **Mottled Umbers** and 3 **Pale Brindled Beauties**.

During February, 5 micro-species and 7 macro-species were recorded, with larger totals. The maximum numbers seen on a single night were **Early Moth** (2), **The Chestnut** (2), **Pale Brindled Beauty** (2), **Hebrew Character** (2), **Clouded Drab** (3), **Dotted Border** (4), and **Common Quaker** (7).

The only other records received recently were for the evidence of Firethorn Leaf Miners at Edith Weston and Exton.

*Thanks to the following for the above information: V Arnold, T Caldicott, J Comber, J Follows, D & F Lee, P & E Mann, E Northen and G & L Worrall*

## ORTHOPTERA REPORT compiled by Phil Rudkin

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The current edition of *British Wildlife*, February 2008, dropped through the letterbox just in time to give me some thoughts for March *Fieldfare*. In the 'Wildlife reports' section, the Orthoptera news begins on page 206. There is an amazing correlation regarding the spread and expansion of two crickets with our species in Rutland.

Dr Peter Sutton, head of the National Orthoptera Recording Scheme, writes that a survey worker has reported an explosion of Long-winged Cone-

heads, *Conocephalus discolor*, and Roesel's Bush Cricket, *Metrioptera roeselii*, in Worcestershire. Long-winged Cone-heads were first recorded in Worcestershire in **September 2003**, and Roesel's Bush Cricket in **August 2005**, but both species had apparently remained relatively uncommon until 2007. One observer reports that he has now recorded one or both species at about 130 sites, and they are now 'all over south-west Worcestershire, with evidence of movement into Herefordshire'.



Dr Sutton goes on to say that Long-winged Cone-heads (first recorded in Cardiff in 1999, and Monmouthshire in 2004), have exploded into Monmouthshire, and are almost guaranteed to be found in any area of rank grassland in the south of the county. Roesel's Bush Cricket has just been recorded in Monmouthshire in 2007.

Comparisons are fascinating with our own two species! Roesel's was first recorded in Rutland in **August 2001**, and Long-winged Cone-head in **August 2003**, both at Rutland Water, Egleton. They are now both extremely common in Rutland. In Norfolk, the correlation is also

mirrored with the same species (David Richmond, Orthoptera recorder for Norfolk). And I must also mention the expansion into neighbouring Northamptonshire.

Finally, the Beds, Cambs, Northants, and Peterborough Wildlife Trust's 'Wildlife Training Workshops' programme for 2008 includes a one-day workshop course 'Grasshoppers and Bush Crickets' run by the director of the Trust, Brian Eversham. Details: Saturday, 6th September 2008, 10.0 am to 4.0 pm, at Old Sulehay. Unfortunately, I will be on holiday, but anyone interested should telephone: 01604 405 285 (Tues, Wed, Fri).

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## PLANT GALLS REPORT compiled by Roy Lemmon

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### January 2008

There were no gall reports this month.

I would like to suggest two books on the identification of plant galls, both by The Field Studies Council, Preston Montford, Montford Bridge, Shrewsbury, SY4 1HW, tel: 0845 3454072.

The most comprehensive is *British Plant Galls: Identification of Galls on Plants and Fungi*, Redfern et al., 2002, publication code 270, £18.00 plus £3.00 p&p. This I find quite easy to use and it has many line drawings as well as a series of well-illustrated plates at the back.

There is also a fold-out identification sheet, *Common Plant Galls*, publication code OP91, Redfern et al., 2004, £3.50 plus £1.00 p & p. One of a number of FSC sheets on different groups of organisms, it is also available from the Birdwatching Centre, Egleton; price £3.25. It will allow you to identify some 69 of the commoner galls, far more than we are currently identifying!! When at Egleton I noticed that one of the fold-out

sheets on offer is *A Guide to Common Churchyard Lichens* at £2.50 and it occurred to me that some members who went on the visit to Belton Churchyard on 9th March might find this useful.

### February 2008

Just one report this month, of an old gall that was found on a bramble stem in Bloody Oaks Quarry on the 7th. It consisted of two swellings, i.e. two galls which had originally contained the eggs and young of a gall midge and which, because of the nature of the stem, had persisted. The only other record as far as I can see for the County was in Clipsham Quarry in 1995 but it seems that this gall is often hidden in the middle of a clump of brambles so it may be that it is more common than we think and is under-recorded.

The new season's crop of galls will start shortly as soon as there is growth, so please keep your eyes open and don't hesitate to send in records, ALL are useful and much appreciated.

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## INSECTS AND OTHERS compiled by Gill Chiverton

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### January 2008

Our first record for this year came from an observation made on an RNHS walk at Fort Henry – a number of empty shells of the **Brown-lipped Snail** *Cepaea nemoralis* were recorded in the Osprey Wood area. Also on January 1st a **Honey Bee** was seen collecting nectar from a winter-flowering cherry in an Oakham garden.

On the 10th freshly dead and empty shells of the following snails were recorded at Bloody Oaks Quarry – **Garden Snail** *Helix aspersa*, *Monacha*

*cantiana* and **White-lipped Snail** *Cepaea hortensis*.

At the end of the month a solitary **Orange Ladybird** was recorded at Leighfield on a young ash tree. Also in the same a location a solitary **2-spot Ladybird** was observed. On the same day a **Bumble Bee** *Bombus lucorum* was seen enjoying the sun on a shed wall in Lyddington.

### February 2008

This month starts with a **Round Snail** *Discus rotundatus* which so far has managed not to

get eaten by wintering under a decaying log in Barnsdale Lodge Wood. Also under a log was a slug *Milax gagetes*. On the 9th more than a dozen Honey Bees were feeding in the sun on winter heather after an overnight frost in Barrowden.

Lastly an unusual record for this time of year – an Ichneumon Fly. This insect was disturbed when

a pile of bricks was moved in a garden at Wing. It moved about very sluggishly. although the recorder did not have an identification book to hand, the Ichneumon Fly *Amblyteles amatorius* fits exactly the very detailed drawing and description on the back of the record card. It is also noted in Michael Chinery's *Insects* that this species hibernates as an adult.

Many thanks to recorders: T Caldicott, G H Gallimore, R Lemmon, A R & M A Thorp, P Tomalin and G & L Worrall

## MYCOLOGY NOTES compiled by Linda Worrall

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### January/February 2008

A mild, wet January; drier February with some cold patches. We have fungi on Gorse from Gorsefield, on Black Poplar at Brooke, Aquatic Hyphomycetes from foam at Fort Henry Ponds, and Lichens, Velvet Shanks, Yellow Brains and Scarlet Elf Cups noticeable.

Did you know that in 2005 a yellow variant of the latter was found in North Wales, determined by Dr Brian Spooner at Kew as *Sarcoscypha austriaca* var *lutea* and a new British record? However, when forayers in Gloucestershire discovered Elf Cups both scarlet and white on the same mossy branch, and elsewhere in that county even an orange Elf Cup, these were all found to be the far rarer *S coccinea*, with round-ended spores and almost straight hairs on the non-fertile outer surface, compared with the more squared-off spores and curlier hairs of *S austriaca*. The germinating ascospores of *S austriaca* are the dead give-away between the two, apparently, as they produce two little legs, one at each end from which the conidiospores bud off, while this phase of *S coccinea* is hardly ever seen. Scarlet Elf Cups have been found only to be *S austriaca* in Leics & Rutland. I think our gorgeous red ones are spectacular enough, but if you should find colour variants growing alongside, pick one of each and let's sort them! They usually fruit from November to March.

Please look out for Morels, Semi-free Morels, Thimble Cups *Verpa conica* and Bleach Cups *Disciotis venosa* this Spring; maybe last year's rains will have helped them, but nothing is certain!

### RESERVES

**Gorse Field Wood: 16.1:** On old Gorse wood Yellow Brain *Tremella mesenterica*, Velvet Shanks *Flammulina velutipes*, Glue Crust *Hymenochaete corrugata* (thanks TC, records on Gorse most welcome); elsewhere Hairy Curtain Crust *Stereum hirsutum*, 4 Wood

Blewits *Lepista nuda*, a few Brown Mottlegills *Panaeolina foenisecii*, several Winter Twiglets *Tubaria hiemalis* and Common Jellyspot *Dacrymyces stillatus*.

**Ketton Quarry/North Glade: 10.1:** 3 groups of Velvet Shanks, 6 Scurfy Twiglets *Tubaria furfuracea*; Lichens *Chaenotheca ferruginea* (identified with Dr A Fletcher) and *Phlyctis argena* which appears to be extending its growth in other parts of the wood.

**Ketton Quarry/Woodland:** King Alfred's Cakes *Daldinia concentrica* fresh on Ash, Common Tarcrust *Diatrype stigma*, *Leptosphaeria acuta* on dead Nettle stems, Coral Spot *Nectria cinnabarina*; on fallen Beech branch *Peniophora cinerea* and Flat Oysterling *Crepidotus applanatus* on lower side; 12+ young fresh Velvet Shanks, Rust *Milesina scolopendrii* on Hart's-tongue and a few fresh Jelly Ears *Auricularia auricula-judae*.

**Rutland Water/North Arm: 24.1:** On Willow 100 Glistening Inkcaps *Coprinus micaceus* in fork of branch and a few Blushing Brackets *Daedaleopsis confragosa*; on Elder many Jelly Ears, Elder Whitewash *Hyphodontia sambuci*, Glue Crust. Turkeytails *Trametes versicolor* on Alder and a big growth of Yellow Brain on a dead twig.

**Hambleton Wood: 14.2:** King Arthur's Cakes on dead fallen Ash, anamorph state of Powdery Mildew *Erysiphe cynoglossi* on Forget-me-not, Asco *Leptosphaeria acuta* on dead Nettle stems, Disco *Mollisia melaleuca*, 2 large Scarlet Elf Cups *Sarcoscypha austriaca* (with coiled hairs!), rather dry Small Stagshorn *Calocera cornea* on lying Hazel and dry, rubbery Yellow Brain, 1 fresh Velvet Shank, 1 *Psathyrella obtusata* and Lichen *Chaenotheca ferruginea*.

**Barnsdale Lodge Wood: 7.2:** On Hazel old *Hypoxylon fuscum*, Coral Spot and Sycamore Tarspot *Rhytisma acerinum*, Jelly Ears fresh and small on fallen Ash and large near ground on fallen Elder, Common Jellyspot on decorticated wood, Turkeytails on ?Hazel and Hairy Curtain Crust; Rusts *Phragmidium violaceum* hypophyllous on Bramble, telia persistent and *Puccinia sessilis* infecting several Lords-and-Ladies.

**Prior's Coppice:** 12.1: *Ascocoryne cylichnium* on mossy old log, Dead Man's Fingers *Xylaria polymorpha*, on Hazel, 2 biggish clumps of Leafy Brain *Tremella foliacea* (nice find!) and Hazel Bracket *Skeletocutis nivea*; *Stereum rameale* on dead lying branch, Splitgill *Schizophyllum commune* on top of a log pile not looking fresh and 2 tufts of Oyster Mushroom *Pleurotus ostreatus*. 12: Netted Crust *Byssomerulius corium*, a few Blushing Brackets, Common Porecrust *Phellinus ferreus* on Hawthorn, 2 old Bay Polypores *Polyporus durus*, Splitgill on log pile, Bleeding Broadleaf Crust *Stereum rugosum* on cut log edge and Waxy Crust *Vuilleminia comedens* on Hawthorn; Yellow Brain and 3 fresh Velvet Shanks.

**Blood Oaks Quarry:** 10.1: 15+ Velvet Shanks fresh, group of 6 Scurfy Twiglets washed out, group of 8 ditto mostly fresh. 7.2: Disco *Calloria neglecta* (cylindrocolla state) on old dead Nettle stems, Larch disco *Lanchellula occidentalis* and disco *Phaeohelotium extumescens* on decaying ?Elder, Coral Spot on old Privet stump; small, fresh Jelly Ears on Elder and fresh Turkeytails on old Hawthorn stump.

## WOODS

**Fort Henry/Osprey Wood:** 01.1: On Society visit, large numbers of Sycamore Tarspot on fallen Sycamore leaves, Rust *Phragmidium violaceum* on Bramble leaves.

**Fort Henry Ponds:** 12.01: Aquatic hyphomycetes from foam between upper and lower lakes: *Alatospora acuminata*, *Anguillospora rosea*, *Clavatospora longibranchiata*, *Heliscus lugdunensis* (only a few seen), *Lemonniera cornuta*, *Mycocentrospora clavata*, *Pseudoanguillospora stricta*, *Stenocladia neglecta*, *Tricladium angulatum*, *Tetracladium furcatum*, *T marchalianum*, *T setigerum*. Many thanks, RL, for these remarkable records of leaf decomposers in the food web; looks like a healthy environment!

**Leighfield:** 27.1: On Willow: Several fresh Velvet Shanks, Netted Crust *Byssomerulius corium* under a

branch, a few Willow Bracket *Phellinus igniarius* on a big old Willow; several Winter Twiglets.

**Leighfield/River Chater:** 12: On Willow Blushing Bracket, Willow Bracket *Phellinus igniarius*, *P punctatus*; Cinnamon Porecrust on old Hawthorn, Elder Whitewash *Hyphodontia sambuci* and Jelly Ears on Elder, Waxy Crust on old Oaks, Winter Twiglet in grass and Candlesnuff Fungus *Xylaria hypoxylon*.

**Stoke Dry Wood:** 23.1: Yellow Brain on dead branch.

**Brooke/River Gwash:** 5.1: On de-barked Black Poplar: Small Stagshorn *Calocera cornea*, Smoky Bracket *Bjerkandera adusta*, Wrinkled Crust *Phlebia radiata*, Lumpy Bracket *Trametes gibbosa*, Oyster Mushrooms and Velvet Shanks. 12: on de-barked Black Poplar: Smokey Bracket, Lumpy Bracket, Oyster Mushroom, Wrinkled Crust, Jelly Ears and Common Jellyspot; Waxy Crust on dead Alder, Blushing Bracket and Netted Crust on Willow, Winter Twiglet in grass and King Arthur's Cakes on Ash.

**Burley Wood:** 29.2: Good news from CRJ: Scarlet Elf Cups on area of rotting branches on embankment below pool thriving well; Lichen *Graphis scripta* in C12 also thriving and spreading to nearby Hazels.

## FIELDS, VERGES, GARDENS

**Beaumont Chase Farm:** 1: More Scarlet Elf Cups than usual, damp under hedge.

**Barrowden:** 14.1: On old Field Maple and naturalised Firethorn stumps, 1 large and a surprising 14 small clumps of Velvet Shanks; 21.1 grew and expanded after mild wet weather; 26.1 all dry and wrinkled after cold, windy week; 26.2: milder after light rain and cold spell, large clump and odd ones in smaller clumps partly revived and looked operational. 14.2: Large group of Glistening Inkcaps *Coprinus micaceus* at base of Field Maple and Firethorn stumps; on log pile run of Variable Oysterling *Crepidotus variabilis* developing slowly.

Many thanks for records from T Caldicott, A Fletcher, C R Jones, F and D Lee, R Lemmon, G and L Worrall.

## MAMMAL REPORT compiled by Linda Biddle

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### January/February 2008

Fresh Otter spraint was found under the second bridge above the Trout Farm at Fort Henry in January. The largest number of records received this month has been for **Brown Hares**, which have been seen in many areas of the county, as they caper about before the breeding season. Three were reported on the RNHS New Year's Day visit, near Osprey Wood at Fort Henry, and two were seen nearby in February. Five others were reported from Pickworth, 2 near Mount's Lodge

farm, one near verge 7, one at Ridlington, 2 near Walk Farm track, 2 at Eye Brook, chasing before mating took place, and a grand total of twelve seen in three groups on stubble fields near Brooke. Only one report of **Rabbits** comes from Bloody Oaks Quarry. Many fresh **Mole** workings were found near Osprey Wood, Fort Henry on January 1st. Two **Grey Squirrels** have been recorded in January, one foraging on the ground of the spinney below Hambleton Hall, and another going up a trunk, close to the water's edge.



Many **Badger** setts are showing signs of activity, latrines close to the sett full, indicating young badgers present, and lots of digging apparent. In January a badger was seen in Wakerley road, Barrowden and later one was in Seaton Road Barrowden. A small badger crossed the A606 at Barnsdale hill safely at 11.00 pm in early February. Unfortunately there were eleven reports of badger road casualties, six at the top of Barnsdale hill. Sadly one also died as a result of being caught in a snare, though it had managed to struggle back to the sett first, and another young and apparently healthy badger probably died of poisoning, found on top of a different sett, with no signs of injury.

A **Stoat** was seen running across a field near Brooke and another ran across the path north of the Egleton centre RWNr, both in January, and in early February a stoat was seen jumping over logs next to the river Gwash near Brooke. Three **Weasels** are recorded – one crossed the Pickworth road between Mount's Lodge and the Walk farm track, another crossed the road opposite the Normanton car park at Edith Weston, and at the end of February a weasel was seen to take a blackbird which had been pecking the ground happily beside a log. The Weasel rushed out from the undergrowth nearby and caught the bird,

*Many thanks to all recorders: A J Biddle, M A Branston, T Caldicott, C Gallimore, P Langston, R Lemmon, T Mitcham, K Potterton, P J Rudkin, A R & M A Thorp, D Whitefield, M Winslow*

darting back into the greenery carrying its prey.

A **Fox** was killed on the A606 just outside Stamford, and much scent marking was noticed in Wardley Woods at the end of January. One fox was watched there for 20 minutes as it stalked prey in open pasture. It caught an item of prey, then sat and ate it, before wandering unconcerned around the field at the top of the Beaumont Chase valley. Two foxes were seen in Morkery Woods.

**Fallow deer** have been observed in Clipsham Park Wood on two occasions – in Jan, the first group queuing up to jump a fence out of parkland and into the wood close to the end of the avenue, the second, four does seen crossing the ride on the trail. Other groups of up to 30 were reported from Pickworth, Clipsham, Little Haw and Morkery woods, and a herd of 24 ran across pasture in Exton Park, north of Westland Wood. Three barking male **Muntjac**, and one female, were seen in woodland near Barnsdale car park entrance in early Jan and others in Morkery and Clipsham woods. Many slots were found in Wardley Wood and one was seen to jump over the river Gwash near Brooke. Two dead Muntjac were found next to the road side between Manton and Edith Weston, but did not look like typical road kill.

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## **BAT REPORT** compiled by Jenny Harris

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### **January/February 2008**

The weather during January and February was generally fairly mild with one or two more severe spells; it was during the mild spells that several members reported seeing bats foraging. There were fresh droppings in Preston church on 19.1. Graham and Linda Worrall report seeing a bat on two occasions in February, on 21.2 and 23.2; Vic Arnold saw single bats during the month at Edith Weston.

#### **Pipistrelle** sp.

Dr Gallimore saw a bat on 26.1, flying up and down his garden for five minutes near one of the roost exits, apparently foraging successfully catching small insects. On 7.2 one was flying in the garden at midday.

#### **Soprano Pipistrelle** *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*

A grounded bat was found by the front door of a house in Church Street, Langham on 16.1 at 12.30 p.m., which had not been there earlier in

the morning. It was under 4 gms, and had to be hand-fed. Its condition did not improve, and it lost weight, so it was euthanized in early March.

#### **Natterer's bat** *Myotis nattereri*

A hibernation site in eastern Rutland was surveyed for the National Bat Monitoring Programme. On the January count, 13.1, six Natterer's bats were found in various crevices, including one that was almost at ground level. When surveyed again on 24.2 only two Natterer's were found. Natterer's bats often come out of hibernation to forage in winter as they are able to take day-flying insects off quite low-growing foliage, and will also feed on spiders, so their absence from the hibernation site may reflect warmer weather in February.

#### **Daubenton's bat** *Myotis daubentonii*

There was a single Daubenton's bat identified in the hibernation site in January, but there were none present on the February count.