



Autumn Ladies Tresses Orchid at Swaddyswell. Photo by D. Cotter

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Yesterday was the first dry day we'd had since the 21st September! The year of contrasts continues – and climate change is making itself felt.

This will be a short edition of Fieldfare, as we are putting in a November edition as an extra, and then another in January. After that we shall return to three monthly editions, so that we can fit in with the calendar year for recorders to make annual summaries.

We are busy confirming the 2020 programme and hope to have it with you with either the November or January posting of Fieldfare.

I look forward to seeing you all at our members evening and Dave Cromack's talk in December.

Do keep an eye on the website for the latest news.

**Linda Biddle, RNHS Chair**

## DIARY DATES

## RNHS INDOOR EVENING MEETINGS

*Indoor meetings are held at Rutland Community Hub (VAR), Lands End Way, Oakham, LE15 6RB, starting at 7.30pm. Visitors are asked for a donation of £2.*

**Tuesday December 3rd 2020**

### **Peterborough and around – a great place for birding**

**Dave Cromack** of the Peterborough Bird Club will talk about the local birding scene.

**Tuesday January 7th 2020**

### **Goshawks to Humpbacks**

**Richard Baines** is an experienced ornithologist and naturalist who has been studying ornithology and ecology, and working as a wildlife guide for many years. He will speak about the habitats and wildlife of the North Yorkshire Moors and coast.

**Tuesday February 4th 2020**

### **The Changing Flora of Northamptonshire**

**Brian Laney** is a self-taught botanist who for over 30 years has been passionately working to spread awareness and save some of the UK's rarest plants. In 2003 he rediscovered the Bee Orchid in Scotland, last seen in 1908. He is the Northamptonshire recorder for reptiles and amphibians.

## RNHS OUTDOOR FIELD TRIPS

*Full details of all these events appear on our website at [www.rnhs.org.uk](http://www.rnhs.org.uk). If the weather is bad, check the website or call the 'Queries' phone number for changes.*

**Sunday 12th January 2020**

### **A Winter Walk**

**Leaders Linda and Anthony Biddle.**

**Meet 10.00am** at the Trout Farm between Exton and Empingham, Map reference SK 951105.

Park on roadside verge, by the stile next to the Trout Hatchery. May be wet, cold and muddy, so wear appropriate clothing and footwear.

If you have doubts about the weather, contact 01780 762108, or 07749636919, or [abiddle21@talktalk.net](mailto:abiddle21@talktalk.net).

**Saturday 22nd February 2020**

### **Winter Birds at Vine House Farm**

**Leader Nicholas Watts, farmer and wildlife champion.**

Meet 10.00am at Vine House Farm, Deeping St Nicholas, PE11 3DG, off the A1175, Map Ref TF206150

Vine House Farm produces many different types of bird seed, and the main business of the farm is selling these seeds.

Nicholas has spoken to us on following the wild geese, and he promotes wildlife friendly farming techniques.

Park in the farmyard – beware of operating farm machinery.

Any queries contact Jayne Walker [jayne8586@hotmail.com](mailto:jayne8586@hotmail.com) or 07957 340545.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **\* ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS \***

Your 2020 subscription is now due – details are on the form enclosed with the November Fieldfare. Please get in touch with Margaret Conner either personally at an indoor meeting, or by cheque or bank transfer – instructions are on the form.

**DON'T FORGET** – You can take out a standing order for payment – forms are available on the website or from Margaret.

**If you gift-aid your subscription, that benefits the Society at no extra cost to yourself. Forms available on the website, or from Margaret.**

## RNHS 2020 CALENDARS

RNHS calendars are now available. They can be purchased at the indoor meetings for £8 each or if you are unable to attend the meetings, please contact Margaret (details below) to reserve one. Payment must be made in advance, including £1.75 postage. Email Margaret: [rnhsmembers@gmail.com](mailto:rnhsmembers@gmail.com)

## WANTED – NEW RECORDER FOR ‘OTHER INSECTS’

**Gill Chiverton** is retiring as recorder for ‘Other Insects’, and the Society is seeking a member to take her place. If you are interested please get in touch with Gill directly. If you need guidance she will give you some coaching/tuition to get you started. Her telephone number is 01780 753820.

## VACANCIES

There are still vacancies on the committee and recorders group for anyone who can offer their time, or are willing to learn about specific flora and fauna groups with view to taking over from retiring recorders. Please speak to Linda Biddle if you are able to offer help.

## WEATHER

### RECORDER Roy Lemmon

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### August 2019

**Atmospheric pressure and wind** Pressures this month ranged between 1000.5 mb on the 10th and 1027 mb on the 21st. Winds were generally SW–W and during a low pressure period, the 6–11th inclusive, there were strong gusts, notably up to 23 mph at 09.00 on the 11th.

**Temperature** The overall mean, 18.04 °C, makes this August the fourth warmest in the decade 2010–2019, after 2018 (18.52 °C), 2016 (18.43 °C) and 2013 (18.12 °C). The lowest night-time minimum was 8.4 °C on the last night of the month, and the highest day-time maximum, 33.6 °C, was on the 26th. During the period 24–27th inclusive, all maxima were above 30 °C.

**Rain** A total of 51.4 mm (2.13 inches) equates to 82% of the long-term mean for this station. A quick glance at August rainfall in the past indicates that the month can be relied upon for rain. There are no notable lows in the decade referred to above. The Augusts of 2010 and 2014 had rainfall of 173% of LTM.

### September 2019

**Atmospheric pressure and wind** There was a notable high pressure system from the 12–20th inclusive and the highest pressure fell during this period, 1035 mb on the 14th. This was in contrast to the 22nd–30th when they were much lower; the month’s lowest was 995 mb on the 29th. It was during this period that we experienced the remains of tropical storm Humberto on the 24th and 25th, followed by an Atlantic low to the end of the month. Winds were initially W–N and then E–SW from the 20th to the end of the month.

**Temperature** With an overall mean of 15.05 °C this was the fourth warmest September in the decade 2010–2019, but the mean minimum, 9.37 °C, was sixth equal with 2013, in the same decade. The highest day-time maximum was 25.6 °C on the 21st and there were two chilly nights, the 16–17th at 3.5 °C, and the 12–13th at 4.8 °C.

**Rain** A wet September with a total rainfall of 87.6 mm (3.45 inches) recorded here. This is 173.5% of my long-term mean of 29 years, and is the highest September rainfall in the above-mentioned decade. 91% of this fell in the last 10 days of the month.

### October 2019

**Atmospheric pressure and wind** From the 8–19th inclusive, pressures were low, winds were S–SW and there was considerable rainfall. The last five days of the month, pressures were high, 1023–1028 mb, winds were NW–NE and there was little rain. The remains of Hurricane Lorenzo on the 3rd and 4th were manifest here at least by 11.7 mm (0.46 inches) of rain.

**Temperature** This was a cold October, the overall mean temperature of 10.06 °C places October 2019 in 9th place in the decade 2010–2019, ahead of October 2012 at 9.44 °C. There were several ground frosts but only one air frost on the night of 26/27th when the minimum was  $-0.2$  °C.

**Rain** A very wet month saw a total rainfall here of 111.4 mm (4.39 inches) which equates to 178% of the long-term mean of 29 years. There were just 9 days without rain, although amounts ranged from a trace to 18.8 mm (0.74 inches) on the 24th. October 2013 was wetter with 115.1 mm.

**Earth tremor** At 07.22 on Wednesday 2nd, 2.4 Richter, with the epicentre about 5 km below Melton Mowbray. There were no reports of damage in the County.

## PLANT GALLS

### RECORDER Roy Lemmon

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### August 2019

A busy month with six sites surveyed yielding a total of 92 species, and unusually four new ones to add to the County list. A Society botanical survey of a footpath between Glaston and Morcott on the 8th turned up two of the new species, one caused by a downy mildew on Fat Hen and the other by a gall mite on the flowers of Ribwort Plantain.

Ketton Aldgate on the 22nd gave a total of 22 species, and a quick trip to Barrowden Road Ketton immediately after this produced another 3, one of which was a new one, a gall on Fat Hen caused by an aphid.

The fourth new gall turned up as one of 27 recorded between Snipe and Robin Hides at Rutland Water on the 29th. This area has several trees of Small-leaved Lime and the gall was one caused by mites along with along with two others, not new to us, also caused by mites.

*Thanks to: C Baxter, M Grimes, J Harris, R Lemmon and J Rodgers*

### September 2019

The month got off to a good start on the 1st with our joint annual meeting with the British Plant Gall Society (BPGS) at Burley Wood. A total of 12 people attended including 2 members of the BPGS and no less than five of our Society Recorders, thus ensuring that a broad spectrum of wildlife was monitored. The gall total for the day was 34 species including 10 on Oak; and although there were no new records for the County, one, caused by a gall wasp on Ground Ivy, is rarely recorded, a total now of 3 in our records, the previous one in 2015.

Lyndon on the 5th produced 28 galls, and a quick look at the surroundings of the Rutland Water Volunteer Centre on the 11th came up with another 10. Three days later on the 14th, the Seek saw a total of 32 galls of which 10 were on Oak. Members may be aware that there are cultivated fruit trees planted on this site, and the pear there had a rust gall on it. This is quite prominent and not often recorded, the only other records we have are from Ketton and Oakham.

Ketton Quarry in a follow-up visit on the 15th gave 8 species, Exton Park and Tunneley Wood on the 18th a further 20, and the month finished with some records from Horn Mill.

*Thanks to: M Grimes, T Higginbottom BPGS, and R Lemmon*

### October 2019

October is usually a good month for gall reports. Last year for example there were notices from eight sites around the County, this year just four. I am sure the galls are there, as reports earlier in the month gave good numbers, but the weather, in particular the high rainfall, has deterred observers from venturing out.



Ryhall Heath on the 2nd produced 34 reports including 7 rust galls and 12 caused by mites. In addition there was a midge gall on Small-leaved Lime, which is the only site we have for the county.

Yew Tree Avenue and Clipsham Park Wood on the 9th had a total of 26 galls including one, appropriately, on Yew, and it was noted that the promised sculpting of the Yews was under way.

The final report was a short one from Ketton Quarry on the 23rd of just 3 galls, which was, of course, a top-up for this site.

*Thanks to: M Grimes and R Lemmon*

## AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES **RECORDER Dr C H Gallimore**

*The Stone House, Reeves Lane, Wing LE15 8SD. Telephone: 01572 737343  
E-mail: chasgall@hotmail.com*

### August - October 2019

This report, even allowing for the extra month, is pretty sparse with no particularly noteworthy sightings.

Frogs were reported in a Langham pond on a number of occasions in August and froglets were seen at Prior's Coppice in September. A Common Toad was seen in the Langham garden in August also. Otherwise all other toad records were from Wing where two large live toads were on my drive in mid-August and five dead toads were found on the roads of Wing in the first two weeks of October.

A Smooth Newt was also a Wing road casualty in this period, and Great Crested Newts were reported from Belton again.

A large Grass Snake was observed on many occasions throughout August near the aforementioned pond in Langham. A large Grass Snake also appeared in my garden in Wing at the end of August.

*My thanks to P Bennett, L Clark, M Grimes, P Killips and M Markham who provided records.*

## BIRDS

### RECORDER Terry Mitcham

*30 Sutherland Way, Stamford PE9 2TB. Telephone: 01780 751268  
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These have been very busy months as wildfowl numbers have built up at the reservoirs and elsewhere and autumn migration has been underway. October was particularly rewarding at Rutland Water with a number of rarities – Lesser Scaup, Spoonbill, White-rumped Sandpiper, Arctic Skua, Yellow-browed Warbler and Snow Bunting – and a high count of Great White Egrets. Passage of winter thrushes and Starlings in the Pilton area was well documented and will be fully described in the annual report. My thanks to the following for their records:-

*T.Appleton, D.Ball, T.Caldicott, A.& J.Comber, Dr.C.H.Gallimore, M.& G.Griffin, P.Langston, LROS, S.Lister, I.Misselbrook, T.Mitcham, B.Moore, L.Park, P.Rudkin, RWNR.*

### August 2019

**Highlights.** Rutland Water had a Bittern (10th, 18th, 25th) and a Sandwich Tern (5th).

**Rutland Water.** There was a Garganey (11th) and three Scaup (1st-5th). The count (13th) produced 11 Wigeon, 783 Gadwall, a Pintail, two Red-crested Pochard, 2191 Tufted Ducks, 39 Little Egrets, six Great White Egrets, 436 Great Crested Grebes and 911 Coot. A Marsh Harrier was regular with two (9th, 11th). Two Avocets were

present, with seven Little Ringed Plovers (4th) and 11 Ringed Plovers (6th). There were four Curlew (1st) and two Black-tailed Godwits (6th). Turnstones were noted on four dates with five (24th) and there were three Knot (11th) with singles (13th-14th, 28th-31st). Nine Common Sandpipers and five Green Sandpipers were counted (13th) with a Spotted Redshank and a Greenshank (two on 31st). A Wood Sandpiper was present (27th-31st). Black Terns passed through from (10th) with ten (28th). There were 74 Common Terns (13th), an Arctic Tern (15th) and a Mediterranean Gull on three dates with a Little Gull (28th) and three Yellow-legged Gulls (8th). A juvenile Cuckoo was at Egleton (6th-12th) with a Wheatear on Lax Hill (12th).

**Other Sites.** Fort Henry Ponds had 44 Gadwall (20th) and a Green Sandpiper (25th) with one near Wing (3rd). Two Curlew were over Pilton (26th) and 13 Whimbrel flew over Luffenham Airfield (24th) where there were two Redstarts (23rd) with three next day, Whinchats on (11th, 24th) and three Wheatears (11th). Two Wheatears were at Cottesmore Airfield (25th) with one in Exton Park. There was a Redstart at Fort Henry (28th) and a Whinchat in Exton Park (25th) with two at Cottesmore Airfield (31st). Two Kingfishers were at Leighfield Fishponds (31st). Marsh Harriers were in Exton Park (16th, 31st) with a Peregrine at Fort Henry (31st). Single Tree Pipits passed over Pilton on eight dates between (2nd – 30th). Little Owls were at Pilton and Wing and there were four Tree Sparrows near Pilton (18th).

## September 2019

**Highlights.** Rutland Water had a Sandwich Tern (14th), a Wryneck (15th) and a Storm Petrel (30th). There was a Red-necked Grebe from (14th) and a Black-necked Grebe from (17th). Four Whooper Swans were at Eyebrook on (21st).

**Rutland Water.** The count (15th) produced 1176 Gadwall, 562 Teal, 44 Pintail, 197 Shoveler, 4599 Tufted Ducks, 960 Cormorants and 80 Little Egrets. There were 13 Great White Egrets (16th). There were five Red-crested Pochards (14th) and a Goldeneye (15th). Up to three Marsh Harriers and one or two Hobbies were noted to (27th). Waders included three Avocets (8th), two Grey Plovers (4th), a Little Ringed Plover (22nd), three Black-tailed Godwits (7th) and a Turnstone (2nd). Six Knot were present (11th) with five Ruff (12th) and Curlew Sandpipers (12th, 25th). 19 Green Sandpipers were counted (15th) with four Wood Sandpipers (1st), declining to one (12th). A Spotted Redshank was noted (3rd – 4th). A Caspian Gull was present (22nd) with two Yellow-legged Gulls (15th). There was an Arctic Tern (22nd) with Black Terns (1st – 28th) with ten (3rd). Whinchats were in north arm (12th) and Egleton (16th) with a Stonechat at Lyndon (22nd) and a Wheatear (16th), whilst a Tree Pipit flew over (22nd).

**Other Sites.** Fort Henry Ponds had 100 Gadwall, 53 Teal and 39 Shoveler (25th) with a Water Rail (14th) and a Green Sandpiper (21st, 25th). A Marsh Harrier was seen there (7th, 14th) and a Peregrine (25th) and two Peregrines over Manton (1st). Hobbies were at Wing, Manton and Ridlington to (23rd). Little Owls were at Barrowden, Leighfield, Ridlington and Braunston. There was a Redstart at Luffenham Airfield (22nd), a Wheatear at Fort Henry (14th) and a Stonechat at Ridlington (30th), where there was a Willow Tit (30th). Two late Swifts were at Wing (13th) and 47 Mistle Thrushes flew over there (6th). A tree Pipit flew over Wing (3rd) and migration also saw 227 Meadow Pipits and a Brambling over Martinthorpe (29th) and 76 Skylarks over Ridlington (30th).

## October 2019

**Highlights.** Rutland Water had a Lesser Scaup (10th-19th), Spoonbill (6th-15th), Cattle Egret (5th), White-rumped Sandpipers (15th, 28th), two Arctic Skuas (1st), Yellow-browed Warbler (19th, 20th) and a Snow Bunting (22nd). There was a Quail at Luffenham Airfield (14th) and a Yellow-browed Warbler at Fort Henry (6th).

**Rutland Water.** Nine Whooper Swans flew over (25th). There was a Garganey (15th, 20th) and five Red-crested Pochards (28th) with a female Scaup (12th-27th). The first Smew was present from (25th). The count (13th) produced 1405 Wigeon, 553 Gadwall, 101 Pintail, 112 Shoveler and 8870 Tufted Ducks. Three Goldeneye and five Goosander were also noted. Up to three Marsh Harriers frequented Egleton with Hobby to at least (12th) and a regular Peregrine. A Red-necked Grebe was present all month with a Slavonian Grebe from (18th) and Black-necked Grebe (15th, 18th). A Bittern was noted (15th) and there was a county peak of 17 Great White Egrets (28th) Waders included single Avocet (5th), Grey Plover (23rd), Knot (5th, 6th), four Ruff (6th), Woodcock (29th) and one or two Jack Snipe (12th-18th). A Common

Sandpiper was counted and there were two Green Sandpipers (13th). Mediterranean Gull roosted (22nd, 28th) and there was a late Common Tern (27th). Up to four Stonechats were near Egleton Centre all month and Rock Pipits were noted between (9th-22nd). There were two Bramblings on Hambleton peninsula (29th).

**Other Sites.** 52 Pink-footed Geese flew over Wing (29th). One or two Mandarin Ducks were in the Wing/Pilton area. Fort Henry had a Green Sandpiper (6th), 79 Gadwall, a Pintail and 18 Shoveler (12th) and a Hobby (17th). Woodcock were in Tunneley Wood (27th) and Wing (29th). Stonechats were at Luffenham Airfield (4th, 21st) with Wheatears there (1st, 20th). Tawny Owls were well reported from Pilton with five calling on (18th). Little Owls were at Pilton, Wing and Ridlington with a Peregrine over Ridlington (8th). Two Fieldfares at George Henry Wood (3rd) were the first with two Redwings over Ridlington on the same day. A Yellow Wagtail was over Ridlington (3rd), when 177 Meadow Pipits also passed through. 13 Bramblings were over Pilton (16th) with two at Normanton (29th).

#### Wildfowl Counts for August, September and October.

	Rutland Water			Eyebrook Reservoir			Fort Henry Ponds & Exton Park Lake		
	13.08	15.09	13.10	04.08	15.09	13.10	02.08	14.09	12.10
Canada Goose	681	426	245	298	269	85			
Greylag Goose	789	789	763	195	462	226			45
Mute Swan	419	496	338	120	176	101	6	15	17
Egyptian Goose	40	73	8		2				
Shelduck		1							
Ruddy Shelduck		1							
Shoveler	22	197	112			4	4	30	18
Gadwall	783	1176	553	204	116	10	35	78	79
Wigeon	11	531	1405		28	48		5	3
Mallard	606	809	548	40	502	53	194	192	162
Pintail	1	44	101		4				1
Teal	42	562	580		14	88		55	38
Red-crested Pochard	2					1			
Pochard	62	73	39		20	91			
Tufted Duck	2191	4599	8870		227	88	10	16	8
Scaup	3		1						
Lesser Scaup			1						
Goldeneye		1	3						
Goosander			5						
Little Grebe	89	130	152		3	11		4	1
Red-necked Grebe		1	1						
Great Crested Grebe	436	914	467	74	96	10			
Spoonbill			1						
Grey Heron	16	24	27	2	4	1	1	1	
Great White Egret	6	7	11						
Little Egret	39	80	27	10	2	1			
Cormorant	605	960	730	12	24	6		1	
Water Rail								1	
Moorhen	60	82	67		6	3	13	40	9
Coot	911	1622	3142	168	494	434	54	88	91
Kingfisher		2			1				
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7814</b>	<b>14340</b>	<b>18197</b>	<b>1123</b>	<b>2747</b>	<b>1261</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>526</b>	<b>472</b>

There were four Whooper Swans at EBR on 13.10.

	Holywell Lake		Banthorpe Gravel Pit		
	10.09	09.10	02.08	13.09	10.10
Canada Goose	5	55			
Greylag Goose	59	20			
Mute Swan		2	2		
Shoveler		1			
Gadwall	5	3			
Wigeon		1			
Mallard	48	81	2		9
Teal	3	16			7
Tufted Duck	5	4		1	
Little Grebe	14	16	1		
Little Egret	2	1	1	1	1
Moorhen	16	14	1		
Coot	2		2		
Grey Heron				1	1
Cormorant				1	
Kingfisher		1			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>18</b>

## BOTANY

### RECORDER John Rodgers

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Lots of autumn colour, yellows and reds, all about us and plenty of berries too, it seems. There are still plants in flower, Hogweed, Yarrow, Bristly Ox-tongue for example, but most plants have now seeded and are dying off. There's plenty to look forwards to, though. The next Fieldfare will be in January with spring not far ahead. We can just forget the winter nights and look forwards.

Numerous records have come in since the last Fieldfare with reports from a number of verges. It is good to see that there are still 9 verges which continue to be monitored. Ann Tomlinson who surveys verge 14 found 442 spikes of Pyramidal Orchid in July and 118 spikes of Knapweed Broomrape. Ann also looks at verge 10 which goes from Geeston, Ketton up to the junction of the bridleway called Barowden Road. Goldilock's Buttercup was one of the more unusual plants found there. Carolyn Baxter has been monitoring verges at Barowden and at Bisbrooke whilst Jane and Duncan Ball have recorded the plants on the long verge 9 from Greetham towards Thistleton. Roy Edwards, Roy Lemmon and Martin Grimes continue their sterling work on verges 4, 5, 6, and 16. Thank you all very much. There are verges that used to be recorded which are now neglected so more volunteers will be very welcome.

Some unusual plants turned up over the summer, mostly found by Martin Grimes, often accompanied by Roy Lemmon. Going south from Pickworth church Martin found Quinoa and Tansy-leaved Phacelia. The former, which originates from South America, is becoming a common staple in salads and is grown in a few places in England as a commercial crop. Phacelia is a garden plant which comes from California, but Martin suspects that both have arrived in wild flower mix sown in set-aside strips. White Melilot, which is similar to Ribbed Melilot apart from its colour and Bullwort (*Ammi majus*) were also found in the same location. Elsewhere Spotted Medick was found. This is a scare find according to Jeeves (the Flora of Leicestershire and Rutland) and previously recorded mostly from the Soar and



Wreake valleys. Other flowers that are not often recorded are Small Toadflax, Henbit Deadnettle and blue Scarlet Pimpernel. It pays to have a keen eye; many of these species are only slightly different from the more common plants.

**Merry Christmas and a great botanising New Year to all.**

*Thanks to C Baxter, J and D Ball, R Edwards, M Grimes, R Lemmon, A Tomlinson*

## BUTTERFLIES

**RECORDER Richard Brown**

*10 Victoria Road, Stamford PE9 1HB. Telephone: 01780 590707*

*E-mail: ribrow@hotmail.co.uk or rnhsfieldfare@gmail.com*

### LOCAL REPORTS

#### Local Annual Species Total

There have been no new species records for 2019 in August - October. The annual total for 2019 thus stays at 33 so far.

#### Clouded Yellow

A second and third 2019 observations of single specimens of Clouded Yellow were made at Pickworth Wood on 4th September, and at Exton on 18th September. Obviously 2019 will not be remembered as one of the mass immigration years for Clouded Yellow, which occur about once per decade. This year is a far cry from the 1940s, when one cross-Channel invasion was so great that it took the form of a giant golden ball, which the nervous military observers of the time thought at first to be poison gas!

#### Other Species

There have been no other exceptional records in Rutland over these months, though some species have been seen in good numbers. For example up to 19 Red Admirals were seen at any one time in September (on Buddleja of course), up to 12 Painted Lady in August, with good numbers through September and October, and about 30 Small White at one site in August.

### EAST MIDLANDS DINGY AND GRIZZLED SKIPPER PROJECT

The 2019 progress report (courtesy of Bill Bacon) shows little change for the Dinky Skipper in Rutland - just one new site. By comparison there has been continued growth in Derbyshire, which now has no less than 150 sites. For the Grizzled Skipper also little change in Rutland, though the species was again seen at Bloody Oaks Quarry, from where it has not been reported in several recent years.

*Thanks to the following for submitting their observations:- J and D Ball, R Brown, T Caldicott, M Grimes, R Lemmon, D Masters, D Needham, F Payne, and Jenny Pearce.*

## ORTHOPTERA

**RECORDER Phil Rudkin**

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*E-mail: phil.rudkin@talktalk.net*

#### Crickets

**Oak Bush Cricket, *Meconema thalassinum***

Pleasing to receive more sightings of this cricket! First records from Tim Caldicott: along the Oak- tree lined Road, outside Lyndon village.5, found dead on road, 11 August. 3, dead on Aug 18th. One, dead on 19th August. All on the road below the Oak trees! SK899048, New site.

One dead female, found in Linda Clark's garden, Wing, on 25 Sept, New site, SK891029. Each season, Clive Jones finds a dead specimen, in his wooded

garden, in Spring Back Way, Uppingham; and this latest one, was on 27 September. All these Oak Bush Crickets were deceased: this is a worrying trend indeed! There is currently much debate going on, in our world of wildlife, with the rise in insecticides, (particularly neonicotinoids), causing big problems for bees, (and other insects). Could this have an effect on Oak Bush Crickets? Or, is there any other reason? I would welcome members' views!

Because of this sad report, I am going to mention a message on email: that reached me on 29 August. A mile outside of Rutland, Ian Day, noted a beautiful green creature, resting on his kitchen window, in early August, and sent the image to me, for identification. It was a female Oak Bush Cricket, and it was alive! So, I think it deserves a mention. Great Easton, Leics. SP 84657 93251.

#### **Dark Bush Cricket, *Pholidoptera griseoaptera***

The new site (released by the owners), on 22 August: a large colony were observed, and identified; in rough herbage, at Luffenham Heath Golf Club, SK962029. The regular colonies were found in their old haunts; during the RNHS Field meeting, at Burley Woods, Oakham, on 1st Sept.

#### **Roesel's Bush Cricket, *Roeseliana roeselii***

New site: One, female, (Macropterous form), observed, and photographed: in rough grasses, on the track beside Stoke Dry Wood, SP849980. Although recorded at Luffenham Heath Golf Club in July 2019, I had large colonies in other areas of the Golf Club, on 22 August, so this constitutes new sites: SK962029, and SK960026. Regular haunts visited: with large colonies maintained: Ridlington, Wing Allotments, Wing Burrows Survey, Rutland Water Eggleton Survey, 25 August. Burley Woods, Quarry Farm Stamford.

#### **Long-winged Conehead, *Conocephalus fuscus***

New site: Female nymph, Wing Allotments, 15 August, and one adult male, on the 17 August, SK889029.

New Site: Large colonies in 'The Rough', Luffenham Heath Golf Club, On 22 August, SK962029, SK960026, and SK961028.

Regular haunts visited: Rutland Water, Eggleton Survey, 25 August. Quarry Farm, Stamford, 14 September. Wing Allotments, 18 September.

#### **Short-winged Conehead, *Conocephalus dorsalis***

Large colonies, in all the regular habitats; during the Rutland Water Survey, on 25 August. Several caught and identified, by Daniel and Rafial Kear.

#### **Speckled Bush Cricket, *Leptophyes punctatissima***

Only one new site, for this widespread cricket: at Luffenham Heath Golf Club, on 22 August: SK 962029, 960026, and 961028.

Regular haunts visited: Wing village survey, 20 August. Rutland Water, Eggleton Survey, 25 August. Burley Woods. Quarry Farm, Stamford, 14 September. Langham Pocket Park.

Barnsdale Gardens, 6 October. Horn Mill and North Arm, Exton, 10 October.

This species can be located, with the bat-detector at 35Khz. I followed up Marian Markham's July sightings (photos attached), and the detector picked their stridulating everywhere, in the Pocket Park area.

### **Groundhoppers**

#### **Slender Groundhopper, *Tetrix subulata***

Last recorded in this spot at Rutland Water, Eggleton reserve: July 2015. However, young eyes found them again, on 25 August 2019. Samuel and Daniel Kear caught 3 between them, at Fran's Pond, in the 'Wet Meadow'. For their efforts, I let them keep the 'Bug Pots', much to their delight!

### **Grasshoppers**

#### **Field Grasshopper, *Chorthippus brunneus***

New site: Small colony of circa 7 adults, in rough vegetation, Luffenham Heath Golf Club, SK960026.

New Site: Two adults in rough grasses, St. Peter and Paul, Church Yard, Pocket Park, Langham, on 22 August, and one adult, on 23 August. SK844111.

New Site: Two, in bare patches, on verge, next to plantation, Pilton, SK905026. Large numbers in the Wing Allotments, during September.

**Meadow Grasshopper, *Chorthippus parallelus***

New site: Large colony in 'The Rough' Luffenham Heath Golf Club, on 22 August, SK961030.

Regular Haunts visited: Egleton Reserve, Rutland Water Survey, 25 August. Burley Woods. Quarry Farm, Stamford, 14 September. Wing allotments. Wing village wildlife Survey, 20 August.

**Lesser Marsh Grasshopper, *Chorthippus albomarginatus***

New Site: Six, found in 'The Rough'. Luffenham Heath Golf Club, SK96103.

Regular haunts visited: Egleton reserve, Rutland Water Survey, on 25 August. Burley Woods. Quarry Farm, Stamford, 14 September. Wing village survey, 20 August.

*Many thanks to my reporters for their sightings: Carolyn Baxter, Tim Caldicott, Linda Clark, David Cotter, Ian Day, Clive Jones, Samuel and Rafial Kear, Marian Markham, Phil Rudkin.*

## MAMMALS

### RECORDER LINDA BIDDLE

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An **otter** was observed swimming in front of tufted duck Hide, on the South arm of RW in October. (and at the November meeting one member showed me several photos of otters singular and plural at Deeping lakes unfortunately not in Rutland). Signs of their continued presence at RWNr were found on mink rafts during September and October in Fishponds area, Pollards reedbeds, near Redshank Hide, both Heron and Manton Bays and at Lyndon centre. One report of a **weasel** in Rutland back in August, when one was observed hunting along the verge at Braunston, compares with 5 views of **stoat** this time, from Martinsthorpe to Oakham, Pilton and at RWNr and Deep water hide and Whitwell. A **badger** was seen at Pickworth wood in October at 10.00am one morning, but other reports concern road casualties, near Pickworth, A606 Empingham/A1, and on the Oakham bypass. Records of **foxes** from earlier in the year include one seen at Waderscrape hide RWNr, and one at Ketton Quarry, while more recently there were three visits in August to the trail camera at Langham. A fox was observed at Barrow and another in the spinney at Eyebrook. In September on Gypsy Lane in Uppingham a small fox has been seen on three occasions, and in the same area, another larger and with a black tail tip appeared near the end of the month.

Greetham valley golf club has a healthy population of **brown hares**, 11 seen together in August, and as the observer commented – some up to unseasonal shenanigans! The confusing weather could have been to blame I suppose – but maybe just high spirits! A single hare took shelter in miserable October weather behind the recently erected fence on top of the hill between lakes and village at Exton park, but was disturbed by foolish walkers, and ran for it across the fields. Other hares are reported from RWNr Lyndon centre, Pickworth, Burley, Barrow, Glaston- Morcott footpath, Market Overton and Prior's Coppice. **Rabbits** are recorded from Great Casterton, Pickworth Wood, Walk Farm plantation, Greetham valley golf club and Gypsy Lane Uppingham. **Grey squirrels** are still commonly reported, this time from Uppingham, RWNr, Barrow, Pickworth, Christian's Lodge, and Greetham valley.

On August 3rd two **hedgehogs** were observed courting in an Oakham garden between 9.15 and 10.15pm. In another Oakham garden members suspected visits by a hedgehog, and confirmed it on September 26th by purchasing and

installing a trail camera – so we can expect many more records from them!! On 9th August at 9.00pm a hedgehog ran from along Church street Langham and into the churchyard. During August either one or two hedgehogs were recorded almost daily on the trail-camera in Langham, sometimes a young one with an adult, on many occasions several appearances in one night. For example on 18th August there were 4 visits almost hourly from 1.35, by one adult – whether the same individual or different ones it is hard to say! In Reeves Lane Wing a small very active hog was found wandering in the road and shepherded to safety. No trace of it was found later, so hopefully it found its way to safety. Dr Gallimore has found hedgehog droppings in his garden, and in Whissendine in a member's garden two were seen on one occasion, and single animals observed a little more frequently. Only two reports of **mole** activity this time – both from the Willows in Barrow village. I do hope they have not all drowned in subsequent rain!

**Long tailed field mice** have been recorded throughout August at Bridge street Langham, and one was found dead on Walk farm track Pickworth. A **common shrew** was observed from Waderscrape hide, and another found dead on Teigh Lane Barrow. The only report of a **pygmy shrew** came from Deepwater Hide RWNr. At Ketton Quarry a **Short tailed field vole** was found sharing a metal shelter with a grass snake – possibly a less than sensible move! A dead **Bank vole** was found at Bridge Street Langham on 8th August, but on two following evenings one was recorded on the trail camera in the garden. At Barrow another bank vole was seen regularly feeding on birdseed dropped from feeders on the patio, and another under a box hedge. Earlier in the year **Water Voles** were regularly recorded from Waderscrape hide at RWNr, where evidence of their presence was also found in August September and October at Burley Fishponds, Badger Hide channel, Pollards reedbed, near Redshank hide, and at Oakham canal, both north and south of the road.

**Muntjac** were reported earlier in the year from RWNr Waderscrape and Shallow water hides. One muntjac was seen in August feeding on windfall apples in Dr Gallimore's garden in Wing, unaffected by the nearby tractor mowing, and another was seen there in October. Two September reports of **Roe Deer**, come from near Ridlington and in Burley Wood. Also in September one **Fallow deer** was seen at Exton, and another in Pickworth Wood, where hoofprints of several individuals were frequently seen during September and October. A fallow deer doe was found as a road casualty on Barnsdale hill in October.

*Many thanks for all records sent by: D+J Ball, Carolyn Baxter, A Biddle, T Caldicot, I Day, C Gallimore, M Grimes, P Langstone, J Harris, R Lemmon, M Markham, D Masters, D Needham, J+A Pearce, R Pitman RWNr, J + J Rodgers*

## BATS

### RECORDER Jenny Harris

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Weather for the three months August to October included several really hot spells and periods of heavy rain. Sudden changes in the weather usually brought a flurry of calls relating to grounded bats in many areas of VC55, although only three grounded bats were reported for Rutland. However, these included an unusual range of species (see species accounts). Leicestershire and Rutland Bat Group carried out a harp trapping survey, the second of the year, on part of the Lyndon Nature Reserve at RW for the National Nathusius' Pipistrelle Project (NNPP) on 31 August, and bat boxes in Burley Wood and around RWNr were checked on 30 September and 02 October (see species accounts for results).



Whiskered bat - Photo by Ian Nixon

**Whiskered bat**  
*Myotis mystacinus*

This is not a commonly recorded species, so the discovery of a juvenile male whiskered bat in the doorway of Murray's Letting Agency (SK861087), in Oakham, was a fairly unusual record. It had appeared in the recessed doorway of the building just before the sudden onset of a thunderstorm on 9 August at around 5.0pm and was still there the following morning. It was released in Oakham churchyard on 23 August. A whiskered bat was caught in one of the harp traps at Lyndon Reserve on 31 August.

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

A male Daubenton's bat was recorded in one of the traps at Lyndon reserve on 31 August.

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

The maternity roost at Whissendine church was not counted for the NBMP this year but the usual surveyor visited the church on 13 October; from the number of droppings inside he felt that the colony had contained roughly the same number of bats as in 2018 (39).

**Common pipistrelle**  
*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*

There were few common pipistrelle records for the period. A single bat was foraging in front of my house on 23 and 24 September, no doubt attracted by insects that were in turn attracted to the lit lounge window. A sub-adult (i.e. born this year but already full-grown) was found inside Edith Weston Primary School (SK923052) on 16 October. It weighed 4.0g, a little light to be going into hibernation but once it weighs 5.0g or more it can be released in suitable weather.

**Soprano pipistrelle**  
*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*

On a sunny day, 2 October, the seven bat boxes sponsored by RNHS in Burley Wood were checked by Joelle Woolley, myself and a Rutland Water NR staff member. All the boxes had evidence of use over the summer and four boxes contained bats, with a total of nine soprano pipistrelles present. Box BW1, on the deer hide, had a male in breeding condition; box BW4 contained a single female that had bred in 2019. In box BW5 a small mating group comprised one male and two females, that both weighing more than 6.0g. All these bats were torpid, so easy to handle. Four sopranos in box BW7 at the eastern end of the wood were already active; to avoid them leaving the box in daylight, putting them at risk of predation they were not handled but it was suspected this was also a mating



group. Approximately 50 boxes in Barnsdale Wood were checked on the same day, with more than 30 bats found, all soprano pipistrelle, with several small presumed mating groups. Bat boxes checked on 30 September at other sites around RWNr contained soprano pipistrelles: Lax Hill where 24 boxes were checked; boxes in a wooded area between L2 and L3; in Cherry Wood near VTC.

Several soprano pipistrelles were caught in harp traps during the NNPP survey at the Lyndon NR on 31 August. On 25 August a public engagement event took place at Braunston-in-Rutland for the Bats in Churches project, following work to retain the large colony of soprano pipistrelles in the south aisle, while keeping bats and their droppings out of the church interior. Around 120 people attended the event, including representatives from other local churches, organised by the Blue Ball pub, opposite the church. The pub laid on a buffet meal and later, talks by several church and bat conservation organisations were followed by the spectacle of the bats emerging.

**Nathusius' pipistrelle**  
*Pipistrellus nathusii*

A harp trapping survey for the NNPP was carried out on 31 August at Lyndon NR, an area not trapped before although small numbers of foraging bats have been heard on bat detectors there. Three traps were set up; one in woodland just east of Teal Hide (SK894056), one near the entrance to Gibbet Gorse (SK899057) and one roughly halfway between. A total of four Nathusius' pipistrelles were caught, all of them male, none of which had been previously ringed.

During the bat box checks at RW three Nathusius' pipistrelles were recorded in boxes at Lax Hill, one in a box on the AWBC at Egleton, two in boxes between L2 and L3, one in Cherry Wood and one in Barnsdale Wood. This is an unusually low number for Barnsdale where we have previously found small mating groups in the autumn check. Again, these were all male and none had been ringed.

**Brown long-eared bat**  
*Plecotus auritus*

Rutland was one of the few areas of VC55 where no grounded long-eared bats were recorded. However, I handled several bats from other locations and two have left a particular impression. On 9 October a male was found in outbuildings at Withcote Hall, just over the border. It was completely covered in thick black oil and was extremely emaciated; the poor creature died while I tried to clean off the oil. I impressed on the lady who found the bat that she should try to locate any oil-filled container that it could have fallen into and cover it immediately. I used olive oil as a gentle but effective solvent as detergent or other solvents are likely to be highly irritant and potentially toxic to bats. A female long-eared bat I am caring for had been accidentally covered in expanded polystyrene used to seal a gap in a wall. Luckily the bat was awake and was able to crawl out of the crevice before the polystyrene set into a hard shell on its fur and wings. The vet and I had to cut away much of the fur on its back to release it, although olive oil eased the wing membranes free. Without its furry coat it will remain in care until spring and is now fat enough to be torpid for most of the time.

On a cheerier note, droppings of long-eared bats were found on 6 October in several places within Wing Church, for instance beneath windows, near the pulpit and on the altar steps.

**Barbastelle bat**  
*Barbastella barbastellus*

On 12 October a dead adult female barbastelle was taken to AWBC at Egleton. It had been brought into a house in Market Overton (approx. SK889163) by the owner's cat, which was probably the cause of death, since the bat was in every other respect in good condition, with beautiful gold-tipped fur. This is a most unusual record, not only because this is a very rare species but also because the barbastelle is considered to be a woodland specialist, roosting mainly in trees and foraging in well-wooded areas. Market Overton is not the first place one would look for them. Previous records have come from woods in the Woolfox area; Ketton around Ketton Quarry; Morcott disused railway tunnel (hibernaculum), Burley Wood and in 1986 Barnsdale Hall stables before they were converted to a hotel. It will be worth setting out a static bat detector next year.

*My thanks for records and other help to L Clark, C Gallimore, J Harris, A Tomlinson, J Woolley and her colleagues at RW; members of Leicestershire and Rutland Bat Group. I am also very grateful to Oakham Veterinary Hospital for all their help and advice this year.*

## REPORTS ON RNHS FIELD TRIPS

5th October 2019

### Visit to Prior's Coppice

Under greyish skies but before the forecast rain arrived about 16 members met with Andy Lear for a walk around this LRWT reserve to learn something about the management of the wood and about its flora and fauna. After a lot of recent rain the paths were wet and somewhat boggy but we still had an enjoyable and interesting walk.

The wood is a remnant of the Royal Leighfield Forest situated, on a hillside, on chalk boulder clay for the most part but with a more acid soil lower down. This is well demonstrated by the flora, dog's mercury on the alkaline soil, wood sorrel on the more acid area. There are many ash trees in the more alkaline part, lots of them now subject to ash die-back, even the mature trees which are now about 70 years old. The majority of these trees were probably self-seeded after clear felling in the Forties, so there is not much genetic variation amongst them.

Management of the wood aims to maintain the rides, but not to widen them, so as to leave shrubby areas for summer birds. Areas are coppiced to create a balance between more shaded and more open areas and to thin out some of the more mature trees - especially in the area of ash trees, so as to allow self-regeneration, mostly with oak and hazel. There does not seem to be much damage caused by deer eating the young saplings. Andy suggested that the numerous hares cause more destruction than deer. Most of the diseased ash will be left to collapse and rot over time. The timber has no commercial value and the rotting trunks provide shelter and food for many different species.

Andy showed us one or two of the more unusual trees and plants as we walked round. There is a large Black Poplar, a native tree but uncommon in the area, which he discovered had been planted rather than occurred naturally. Further on is Goat Willow, a large and more mature tree than the usual bush-like examples around. There are a few native Crab Apple trees, an Italian Black Poplar, quite unlike the native tree and a stand of Wild Cherry. We also passed at least one Wych Elm. Much more numerous are Oak, Hazel, Field Maple, Hawthorn and an understory of Guelder Rose, Dogwood and much Bramble. He also pointed out to us Spurge Laurel, an epiphytic fern and a Hardshield fern. Guy Messenger, in his Flora of Rutland, says he only found one such plant in the whole wood whilst Andy has counted now at least 50 plants. We didn't go to find the specimens of Herb Paris which still grows in one part of the wood, but only in the one spot.

There were one or two plants still in flower, Creeping Buttercup, Red Campion, Herb Robert, Hogweed and Nipplewort, but there is much Dog's Mercury, Barren Strawberry, Wild Raspberry, Wood Sorrel, Meadowsweet, Spear and Marsh Thistle and Horsetail. Water Horsetail was seen in the small pond near the entrance, a rather uncommon plant in Rutland these days. We also found a few frogs, and heard Marsh Tit, Nuthatch, Raven and saw Red Kite and Brown Hare. There were many different Fungi, but nobody amongst us was confident in naming them.

We were all grateful to Andy for an interesting afternoon's walk.

## SPECIAL REPORT – WILLOW EMERALD DAMSELFLY



Willow Emerald Damselfly - Photo by Tony Clarke

This beautiful damselfly was reported for the first time in Vice Count 55 on September this year. It was seen in willows beside the Eye Brook inlet at the north end of Eyebrook Reservoir. Since the first individual was found up to five have been seen at the same site.

The discovery forms part of a westward spread across East Anglia by the species. Until 2007 the species had only been recorded twice in the UK. In 2007 one was found near Felixtowe, and since then it has spread to eight counties in the south east. You are most likely to find it between July and October, basking in sunlight on waterside trees, especially willow and alder.

There are three other emerald damselfly species to be seen in the UK. A common characteristic is that they sit with their wings partly open when at rest, unlike other damselflies which usually rest with their wings closed. One of the other species is common – the Emerald Damselfly. The other two species are rare, and of course the new Willow Emerald is scarce as well. The four species are all similar in appearance, so that it may be best to photograph any emerald you find, and then identify it at leisure at home.

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#### ***Fieldfare:***

Is published four times a year from August 2019. It is free to members, and available online or printed.

Printed at Lonsdale Direct, telephone 01933 228855

RNHS is a Registered Charity: Number 514693

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