



Godwits. Frampton Marsh. Photo by Peter Scott

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**Well - here we are – another new year and decade!** The rainfall of the last three months seems to have abated somewhat, and we are at last beginning to dry out a little! Great tits have already been heard belling, and thrushes singing to welcome the slightly longer daylength. This morning three red kites were displaying together, with two buzzards also showing their aerial prowess. Not a bad start to the year!

Our society is also in a better position than it was last year. We now have both a programme secretary, Jayne Walker (whose work you will see in the excellent 2020 programme to accompany your January edition of Fieldfare) and a society honorary secretary, Linda Clark who has kindly stepped in to the vacancy. It will certainly be a pleasant change to share some of the responsibility during the coming year! The new editorial team for Fieldfare is Carolyn Baxter and her daughter Sophie Widdowson, who produced the November edition without a hiccup! We thank all of them and wish them well and I'm sure you will want to support them as they continue to work for our society.

Many thanks are also due to our hard-working committee and recorders, who have supported us during the last few years, especially Margaret Conner, for her reliable efforts as honorary treasurer and membership secretary. Together they have managed to keep the society running in an effective way, and now we can look forward to continuing to work for our local environment in the new decade.

A happy new year to everyone, and good wildlife watching! Lets all get out there and see what's around! Don't forget to send your observations in to our recorders!

**Linda Biddle, RNHS Chair**

## DIARY DATES

Feb 4th 7.30pm

Tuesday 3rd March 7.30pm

Tuesday 7th April 7.30pm

## 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.*

### **Brian Laney Northamptonshire's changing Flora**

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

### **Lloyd Park Bird Migration and Ringing and The Society's AGM**

Lloyd is reserves officer at RWNR. Well known to many members, he is an experienced licensed bird ringer and the youngest person to become a bird ringing trainer.

### **Meadows. By Joe Costley of Plantlife**

Joe is reserves officer for Plantlife and has visited us before to tell us about the work of the organisation. He also introduced and supervised our annual botany surveys of Seaton Meadows, until nesting curlews prevented us from continuing.

## 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.*

**For all meetings listed below, please wear good footwear and warm clothing with waterproofs when appropriate.**

**Saturday 22nd February 10.00am Winter Birds at Vine House Farm. Leader Nicholas Watts**

Keen environmentalist farmer and producer of bird foods on a large scale. Meet at Vine House farmyard, main entrance, off the A1175, Main road, Deeping St Nicholas, Spalding. PE11 3DG. Map Ref: TF206150. Beware of farm vehicles. Queries, Jayne Walker 07957340545. [jayne8586@hotmail.com](mailto:jayne8586@hotmail.com)

**Saturday 14th March 10.00am**

### **Birds at RW. Leader Lloyd Park (see above)**

Meet at Anglian Birdwatching Centre Egleton. Map Ref: SK879071. LE15 7RT. Anglian Water Permit may be needed. £5 for LRWT members. Perhaps early migrants will be ringed and residents too. Queries. Linda Biddle 07749636919 [abiddle21@talktalk.net](mailto:abiddle21@talktalk.net)

**Sunday 19th April 9.30am - 12.30pm Migrant Birds of Tunnely Wood. Leader Terry Mitcham**

Meet at the NW corner of Tunnely Wood and park on the verge or area of hard standing just west of corner (Map Ref. SK 931124). Members can drive up and need not walk in from Exton Village. Queries Terry Mitcham (see bird report) or Jayne Walker as above.

**Saturday 2nd May. 3.45am**

### **Dawn Chorus. Booking essential**

Meeting place and Map ref withheld until leaders contacted. Leaders. Linda and Anthony Biddle. Warm clothing, suitable footwear and a torch essential. A picnic chair, hot drink and breakfast also recommended! Contact L Biddle at 07749636918 or 01780762108 if you wish to come. If the weather forecast is really bad then it may be postponed until the following morning.

## **LRWT Local group meetings all held at 7.30pm. VTC Hambleton Road Oakham**

**Monday 17th February**

### **Hugh Bunker Environment Agency**

Speaking on River Management for Biodiversity.

Also Leics and Rutland Recorders conference will be held on Saturday 14th March 10.00am -4.00pm at Mountsorrel Memorial Centre 105, Leicester Road Mountsorrel Loughborough.

(Note that this clashes with our Rutland water Meeting!! It's usually on a Sunday)

## WEATHER

### RECORDER Roy Lemmon

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### November 2019

**Atmospheric pressure and wind.** A markedly low-pressure month ranging between 981.5 mb to 1018 mb except for the 30th, when it rose rapidly to 1024.5 mb, giving textbook high-pressure winter conditions – clear blue skies, very low or nil wind speed and frost and fog. Wind directions during the month were very variable, reflecting

**Temperature.** The passage of a series of depressions, but wind speeds were generally low. A cold November with the overall mean at 6.12 °C, was seventh equal with 2013 in the decade 2010–2019. The mean maximum 9.0 °C was however, ninth in the decade, and on the last day of the month the maximum was 2.5 °C. There were five air frosts, the lowest being –3.0 °C on the night of 28th–29th.

**Rain.** A total of 95.5 mm (3.76 inches) was recorded here; this is 162% of my long-term mean (29 years). The previous highest November total was in 2016 at 100.9 mm and there were others in 2002 and 2000. Nationally, the wettest November since records started being kept in 1766, was in the Thames valley in 1852, with 203 mm (4.99 inches), when the valley was described as 'one big lake'.

**Autumn Rainfall.** Meteorologically this comprises September, October and November, and nationally that of 2000 was the wettest since records started being kept in 1766, with a total of 502.7 mm (19.79 inches). During this November it looked as if this could be exceeded for 2019, but at the time of writing it is too early to know. Here, 2000 autumn rainfall totalled 300.1 mm (11.8 inches) and that of 2019 was 294.5 mm (11.59 inches); whether this will be projected nationally remains to be seen.

### December 2019

**Atmospheric pressure and wind.** Pressures were high for the first five days of the month and also from the 25th to the end, thus there was a substantial period of 19 days when they were low. During this cyclonic period, winds were predominantly SW–W and there were often strong gusts. At 14.45 on the 10th I recorded gusts of up to 36 mph. This was the tail end of Storm Atiyah, the first of a series of named storms. These are now being named by a consortium of the Met. Office, Met. Eireann and KNMI, the Dutch national weather forecasting service. The highest pressure of the month was 1034 mb at 09.00 on the 31st.

**Temperature.** With an overall mean of 5.76 °C, this was the fourth highest December in the decade 2010–2019, after 2015 at 9.40 °C. There were 6 overnight air frosts, mostly at the beginning of the month, with the lowest being –1.5 °C on the 1st.

**Rain.** The total for the month was 59.8 mm or 2.35 inches, which is 118% of the long-term mean of 29 years, and not surprisingly 86% of this fell in the low-pressure period referred to above.

### 2019 Annual Rainfall

The total for the year was 779.7 mm (30.7 inches), which is the third wettest year I have recorded since I began in 1991. The wettest was 2012, 35.7 inches; and second was 2004 with 31.00 inches. 2019 represents 117% of LTM for this series.



## AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES RECORDER Dr C H Gallimore

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### November - December 2019

Apart from a **Great Crested Newt** in my cellar in Wing on 2nd and 15th December there have been no other herpetological records in these two months.

## BATS

### RECORDER Jenny Harris

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From early November, depending on the weather, most bats enter hibernation, a state of deep torpor from which it takes time and mobilization of 'brown fat' to become sufficiently warmed up to fly. Unplanned arousal can use up vital fat stores, reduction of which may cause serious problems at the end of winter. Indeed, bats can die of starvation in early spring if fat stores are depleted. Even my bats in care may become torpid and cold to the touch. Although not quite in hibernation, in cool conditions in the house, they remain aware enough to know when there are mealworms in their dish to wake up for, although if they are nice and fat they will not always bother. Bats seen flying in the wild at this time of year may have been disturbed or were perhaps thin when the ambient temperature dropped and days shortened, prompting hibernation. The Bat Group have dealt with several thin bats, although none in Rutland. Some pipistrelles *Pipistrellus* spp. weighed as little as 3.4g, Brown Long-eared *Plecotus auritus* bats down to 5.5g or less. If they are also dehydrated, they are unlikely to survive. However, species such as Natterer's *Myotis nattereri* and Brown Long-eared bats that eat winter-flying moths are known to forage at quite low temperatures and even pipistrelles may forage if the temperature is above 6°C to 8°C, so long as it is not raining or very windy. For bats, the secret to being able to forage lies in being able to find mild, sheltered spots where insects of a wide range of sizes are flying, such as in the lee of hedgerows and around trees. Even the much-maligned *Leylandii* hedge can provide welcome sheltered habitat for insects and those that feed on them.

Barbastelle at Brock Hill.  
Photo by Gary Grey





Brown long-eared in crevice.  
Photo by Gary Grey

**Small bats:** On 26 November Tim Caldecott saw two small bats in flight at dawn near the cycle track at Gibbet Gorse on the Lyndon NR (approx SK899057), while on 31 December Ann Tomlinson saw a small bat flitting between hedgerows next to the gateway into the old quarry next to Barrowden Road, Ketton (SK981036) at 4.45pm, its fluttering flight looking like that of pipistrelle spp. We have recorded pipistrelles and Brown Long-eared bats previously in this area of the village.

**Soprano Pipistrelle** *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*: A Common Pipistrelle *P. pipistrellus* rescued in Edith Weston in October was ready for release by 24 November, so I took him to a section of Weston Road (SK923053) lined with trees and hedges. At 4.15pm at least two Soprano Pipistrelles were seen and heard on the bat detector, clearly hunting over the road and adjacent gardens.

The temperature was 9°C and feeding buzzes were regularly heard. With barely a moment's hesitation my bat took off and began foraging too, which was a very satisfying result.

**Bats in Churches Project:** In addition to the church at Braunston-in-Rutland, several other churches have been identified in Rutland and east Leicestershire as requiring help, mainly with issues relating to bat droppings inside the church. The Project is a partnership between the Bat Conservation Trust, The Church of England and several other Church organisations. I shall be helping the Bat Group, who have been asked to help with surveys and public engagement over summer 2020. I hope that some members of RNHS may like to help too and later in the year information on how to join in will be available.

My thanks to Tim and Ann, and to Linda Clark, who has helped with caring for some of my rescued bats.

## BIRDS

### RECORDER Terry Mitcham

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### Breeding Curlews in Rutland

Members will be aware of the dramatic decline of the Curlew as a breeding bird in Britain. Reasons put forward for this have included changes in farming land-use and increased predation of eggs and chicks. Curlews nest in long grass; hay meadows or ley grasses in lowland areas. Hay meadows are now very scarce, often quite small and often managed as nature reserves. Ley grass fields may be large but early cutting for silage renders them dangerous places for Curlews to breed.

The 'Rutland Breeding Bird Atlas 2008 – 2011' found breeding Curlews in six tetrads with birds also present in a further eight. Favoured sites were Cottesmore and Luffenham Airfields, the Welland valley (especially Seaton Meadow) and the area between Barrow and Teigh in the north of the county. It would be useful to know that the birds are still present at these key sites – whether they have been lost or perhaps expanded into other areas.

Breeding Curlews are summer visitors, arriving from late March and displaying over nesting areas through to April and May. Adults with young have been seen in June with breeding sites abandoned by late July. Members are invited to check the sites mentioned above, and any others which 'fit the bill' and submit their records in the usual way, with details of the location and the habitat where the birds were seen. It would be good to know that Rutland still supports a population of this enigmatic wader.

My thanks to the following for their records for these months:- T.Appleton, D.Ball, A.Biddle, T.Caldicott, Dr.C.H.Gallimore, T.Land, P.Langston, LROS, D.Masters, I.Misselbrook, T.Mitcham, B.Moore, J.S. & J.Rodgers, RWNr

**Highlights.** Rutland Water had two Brent Geese (5th), a Red-breasted Merganser (17th-24th) with two (24th) and a Great Northern Diver (14th) plus four Bearded Tits (2nd-3rd). A Waxwing was at Ketton (13th) and there was a Hawfinch at Leighfield (18th).

**Rutland Water.** There were three Pink-footed Geese (12th) with four (24th). Two Whooper Swans were present (11th) and nine (29th). Two Ruddy Shelducks were at Egleton (29th). Eight Red-crested Pochards were seen (8th). The count (17th) produced 1632 Wigeon, 412 Gadwall, 559 Teal, 21 Pintail, 2999 Tufted Ducks and 282 Goldeneye. There were also 46 Little Egrets and seven Great White Egrets. Scaup peaked at four (10th) and single Common Scoters were noted (4th-10th, 17th). Smew were noted from (3rd) with four (24th-26th). A Red-necked Grebe and two Black-necked Grebes were present all month with a Slavonian Grebe (5th-7th, 19th-30th).

Two Marsh Harriers were around Egleton all month. Waders (17th) included 770 Lapwings, 231 Golden Plover, three Green Sandpipers and six Redshank. There was a Turnstone (23rd), a Knot (9th) and a Jack Snipe (9th). A Barn Owl was seen (17th-18th) and a Peregrine (29th). A Willow Tit and two Tree Sparrows were at Lyndon Centre feeders (16th) and one or two Stonechats were by Egleton Centre.

**Other Sites.** 293 Greylag Geese were at Fort Henry Ponds (1st). 130 Pink-footed Geese flew west over Horn Mill (10th). There were Mandarin Ducks at Fort Henry Ponds (10th) and eight near Pilton (24th). Garden Sparrowhawks were at Stamford, Oakham and Barrow. Eyebrook Reservoir had 201 Lapwings, 17 Dunlin, two Jack Snipe and 60 Snipe (17th) with an impressive 170 Snipe (19th). Woodcock were noted at Pilton, Martinsthorpe and Burley, Tunneley and Pickworth Woods from (3rd). Three Green Sandpipers flew over Martinsthorpe (11th). Peregrines were at Fort Henry (1st) and Martinsthorpe (9th, 12th). Marsh Tits were at Tunneley and Pickworth Woods. Willow Tits were seen at Martinsthorpe (13th) and Leighfield (22nd). A pair of Stonechats were in Exton Park (9th). One or two Bramblings were at Oakham, Pilton, Martinsthorpe and Wing from (3rd) and c.90 Greenfinches were at RW(Hambleton) on (11th).

**Highlights.** Rutland Water had two Bewick's Swans (31st) and a Short-eared Owl (16th). A ring-tail Hen Harrier was on Ryhall Heath (24th) and a Ring-necked Parakeet at Ridlington (18th, 25th) with a Crossbill there (18th). A juv Red-throated Diver was at Eyebrook Reservoir (1st-16th) and a Merlin was near Stoke Dry on (12th)

**Rutland Water.** Two Ruddy Shelducks were present (23rd). Scaup peaked at four (7th, 27th). A female Common Scoter was at the dam (27th-31st) and there were ten Smew at Egleton (20th). The escape Bufflehead was seen on several dates. The count (15th) produced 1959 Wigeon, 124 Gadwall, 346 Teal, 3278 Tufted Ducks, 370 Goldeneye and 30 Goosander. There were also ten Great White Egrets, 17 Little Egrets and 1850 Coot. The Red-necked Grebe remained all month as did the Slavonian Grebe and two Black-necked Grebes, with a third present from (24th). Up to three Marsh Harriers were at Egleton. Waders included an Oystercatcher (15th-24th), two Green Sandpipers (3rd), seven Curlew (15th) and ten Redshanks (15th). A Peregrine was regular at Egleton. A Chiffchaff was in Berrybutts Spinney (27th, 29th) and one or two Stonechats were at Egleton Centre all month.

**Other Sites.** Eyebrook Reservoir had a female Scaup (19th) and single Smew (1st-16th). There were 400 Lapwings (15th) and 25 Dunlin (8th) with Mediterranean Gulls (1st and 8th) Mandarin Ducks were at Fort Henry Ponds (4th) and Pilton/Wing (11th-29th). There were 63 Gadwall at Fort Henry Ponds (14th) and 46 Wigeon were on a flooded field at Cottesmore (15th). Ten Red Kites and a Peregrine were over Horn Mill (8th) with a Peregrine at Leighfield (7th, 11th). Water Rails were at Leighfield Fishponds (7th) and North Brook next day. One or two Woodcock were in Exton Park woods (1st-3rd) and a Green Sandpiper was at Leighfield Fishponds (16th). Two Little Owls were at Pilton (28th). On (18th) a flock of 120 Yellowhammer near Ridlington contained eight Tree Sparrows and there were 350 Linnets on game crops near Pilton (27th-28th).

## Wildfowl Counts for November and December 2019

	Rutland Water		Eyebrook Reservoir		Fort Henry Ponds & Exton Park Lake	
	17.11.19.	15.12.19	17.11.19.	15.12.19.	18.11.19.	14.12.19.
Canada Goose	227	557	7	37		
Greylag Goose	468	588	162	73	38	64
Mute Swan	222	194	201	117	14	14
Egyptian Goose	15	24				
Shelduck		3		4		
Shoveler	48	9	36	11	1	4
Gadwall	412	124	137	141	28	63
Wigeon	1632	1959	383	713	23	71
Mallard	392	443	197	192	93	139
Pintail	21	9	9	30		
Teal	559	346	595	557	19	6
Red-crested Pochard	4					
Pochard	35	80	298	161	1	1
Tufted Duck	2999	3278	698	483	28	44
Scaup	3	2				
Common Scoter	1					
Goldeneye	282	370	45	9		
Smew		7		2		
Goosander	5	30				
Red-breasted Merganser	1					
Red-throated Diver			1	1		
Little Grebe	127	104	1	2	2	7
Red-necked Grebe	1	1				
Great Crested Grebe	429	300	20			
Slavonian Grebe	1	1				
Black-necked Grebe	2	2				
Grey Heron	24	15		2		
Great White Egret	7	10				
Little Egret	46	17	2	1		
Cormorant	281	330	21	20	1	
Water Rail	4	2				
Moorhen	43	45	8	5	5	6
Coot	2441	1893	363	553	89	70
Kingfisher	1					
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10733</b>	<b>10667</b>	<b>3184</b>	<b>3113</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>489</b>

	Holywell Lake		Banthorpe Gravel Pit	
	17.11.19.	13.12.19.		11.12.19
Canada Goose		1		
Greylag Goose		53		42
Mute Swan	2	2	1	1
Mandarin Duck				2
Gadwall		6		
Wigeon	26	46		
Mallard	85	119	65	54
Teal	4		4	44
Tufted Duck	21	18	2	2
Little Grebe	35	18		
GreyHeron			4	2
Little Egret	1	1		
Cormorant			1	1
Moorhen	14	4		1
Coot	2			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>149</b>

## BOTANY

### RECORDER John Rodgers

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Despite what the calendar shows, there are already signs of spring, the bulbs are growing in the garden and hazel catkins appearing in the hedgerows. Complex processes govern how and when plants restart growth after lying dormant. These are explored in “Seasons of Life” by Russell Foster ( neuroscientist in Oxford ) and a collaborator, which is a very interesting book. All living creatures seem to have innate circadian and circannual rhythms which might be influenced by external factors. I found this a fascinating subject.

Only a few records since the last Fieldfare, reporting flowers that might have persisted from last season, or be newly arising. Daisy, Dandelion, Groundsel, Cow Parsley and Hogweed might be in the first group, whilst Winter Heliotrope is certainly a new starter. One unusual flower was found on a pavement edge in Oakham a yellow flower with a basal rosette of black spotted leaves. According to my Blamey and Fitter only two plants fit this description, both uncommon. Geoffrey Hall, the VC55 botany Recorder, identified it as *Hieracium maculata*, Spotted Hawkweed, but this then divides up into at least three different subspecies and the one found was probably *H spilophaeum*.

The Society’s records, of all taxa, are passed on to national bodies and form part of an important record of distribution and abundance in the United Kingdom. This was recognised in the report “State of Nature 2019”, a report produced by a “collaboration between the conservation and research organisations acting together”. This states that there has been a decline in abundance and distribution of all organisms over the last 50 years and acknowledges that these conclusions very much depend on the work of volunteers, estimated at 70,000. It insists that this valuable activity of recording and reporting must continue. We need no more to justify the work of the RNHS.



# BUTTERFLIES

## RECORDER Richard Brown

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## LOCAL REPORTS

**Rutland reports for Nov - Dec 2019** There have been no butterfly records submitted for these last two months of the year, so that this report merely contains a summary tabulation of the observations throughout the rest of the year.

**Rutland annual species dates and total** 33 species have been recorded in Rutland during 2019. This is the highest number of species since 2013, when the annual count was also 33.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Peacock		13th	X	X	X		X	25th				
Small Tortoiseshell		14th	X	X	X	X	X	X		10th		
Brimstone		20th	X	X	X	X	X	X	13th			
Comma		23rd	X	X		X	X		X	9th		
Red Admiral		24th	X		X	X	X	X	X	30th		
Small White				1st	X	X	X	X	20th			
Orange Tip				1st	23rd							
Speckled Wood				8th	X	X		X	15th			
Holly Blue				16th	X		X	4th				
Green Hairstreak				17th	X	2nd						
Green-Veined White				17th	X	X	X	X	20th			
Large White				18th			X	X	13th			
Grizzled Skipper				21st	X	2nd						
Clouded Yellow				21st					18th			
Dingy Skipper				30th	X	2nd						
Brown Argus				30th	X		X	30th				
Small Heath				30th	X	X	X	X	13th			
Small Copper					12th	X	X	12th				
Painted Lady					23rd	X	X	X	X	17th		
Common Blue					23rd	X	X	X	13th			
Meadow Brown					23rd	X	X	28th				
Dark Green Fritillary					23rd	X	22nd					
Large Skipper						3rd	29th					
Marbled White						14th	X	1st				
Ringlet						15th	29th					
Silver Washed Fritillary						25th	X	23rd				
Black Hairstreak						25th						
Small Skipper							5th/23rd					
Gatekeeper							14th	25th				
Essex Skipper							16th					
Purple Emperor							22nd					
Purple Hairstreak							23rd	11th				

Table shows the first recorded date for each species, then the subsequent months in which the species was recorded (shown by an X), then the final record date of the year.

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The wet dark weather at the end of 2019 was no encouragement to anyone to go out and spot any sort of nature, so thank you to those members who sent in reports as usual!

Unusually there were no reports this time of any **badger** road casualties, the only reports being an active sett and nearby, very extensive badger “rootings”, looking very much like wild boar had been searching for tasty morsels. In early November an **otter** was seen in Stretton wood going towards the fishponds, and late in December 3 otters, including one juvenile were observed from Waderscrape hide at RWNr. Lots of signs of otter activity were found on mink rafts at RW during November, and the otter near Fishponds was up to the old trick of digging out the clay! A **stoat** was seen as it raced across the meadow near Badger hide early in December and another seen near Pilton at the end of December. On 4th December a **weasel** crossed the Oakham bypass, on the 9th one ran cross the road near Wing Grange and on the 18th a third was seen, appearing twice next to Holygate Road in the Ridlington area.

At Langham the trail camera recorded a large **male fox** with dark tail tip on 10 occasions during November and December, while a female with a large white tail tip appeared only twice, once each month. In Wing a large fox crossed the road in early November, and in mid-December at Deep Water Hide, one was observed pouncing on and catching a small mammal.

Two or three **hedgehogs** were regular visitors to a garden on Barmstedt Drive in Oakham during the autumn, and the last was seen on October 16th – quite early in the season. At Wing a hedgehog walked up Reeves lane on 10th November, and was reluctant to be shooed to a safer place. Hedgehogs were very regular visitors to Marian Markham’s garden at Langham too. Most nights they were adults but often juveniles as well, and Marian weighed those that she saw in daylight looking particularly small. A small one – only 260g, was taken to Oakham vets for care. Many hedgehogs had late litters in 2019 and there were therefore a number of young hogs which were not sufficiently large to be able to survive the winter without help. Feeding them always helps, so if you have hedgehogs in your area then putting food out for them is a good idea.

Fox. Photo by Dave Cotter



The very wet weather has shown us that **moles** are active, many fields with lots of hills, but we have received only one mole report this month, from The Willows garden in Barrow.

**Brown hares** were seen at Barrow, Pickworth and Exton. **Grey squirrels** are numerous, reported from Langham, Pickworth and Barrow, and **brown rats** are very regularly seen in Marian Markham's garden at Langham. The **bank vole** still puts in regular appearances on the patio of the Willows at Barrow and a **pygmy shrew** made a nest in the woodpile, where he or she was seen peeping out. At Langham too a bank vole is a regular visitor, and **long-tailed fieldmice** have been seen both in the garden and occasionally in the attic, having ventured inside, out of the wet as they often do at this time of year!!

**Water voles** are still active at RWNr, evidence in the form of droppings being found at many of the regularly surveyed sites, but disturbance at the S end of Oakham canal has severely restricted activity there, although they are still active at the N end.

**Muntjac** were seen on two occasions in Wing, and their dainty footprints seen in many areas of RWNr. A **fallow deer** buck was seen in Walk Farm spinney in December.

*Thank you to all contributors: J & D Ball, AJ Biddle, T Caldicot, Dr. C Gallimore, P Langstone, M Markham, D Masters, T Mitcham, J & J Rodgers.*

## MOTHS

### RECORDER Paul Bennett

90 Kesteven Rd, Stamford PE9 1SR. Telephone: 01780 754569  
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No reports at this time

## ORTHOPTERA

### RECORDER Phil Rudkin

10 Brooke Avenue, Stamford, PE9 2RU. Telephone: 01780 762998  
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Rutland has a new orthopteran species!

There are no sightings at this season of the year, therefore this gives me the opportunity to tell the interesting/frustrating story of the Southern Oak Bush Cricket, *Meconema meridionale*.

The last new species to appear in Rutland was in the summer of 2007, the Short-winged Conehead, *Conocephalus dorsalis*. We have long been on the look-out for another new-comer but, unfortunately with no luck at all!

I have a close association with NatureSpot, a wildlife recording website which covers Vice County 55. They send the end of season spreadsheets to those who contribute their sightings and it was when I received a correspondence from NatureSpot on the 5th November 2019 that I noticed a Southern Oak Bush Cricket, *Meconema meridionale* was listed and found in Empingham.

Details: Recorded on 23rd September 2017, 3rd August 2019, and 24th October 2019. Location: Empingham Shop, grid ref: SK95030845.

When receiving the massive spreadsheets for VC 55, in 2017, I failed to notice this record of the Cricket in Rutland.

Which takes me to the next position. NatureSpot is one of many organisations who "promote and celebrate the wildlife and wild places of their respective counties", in our case, Vice County 55 (Leics and Rutland). There are also other on-line wildlife bodies that receive the same records from VC 55.

Furthermore, I have noted (with surprise), that some members of this situation can confuse contributors as to, "Who do I send my reports to?" Society's send in their records to NatureSpot and do not send them to their own County Recorders. I know that this has caused some friction between Leics and Rutland wildlife associations and NatureSpot!

Having explained the above, I will now inform members of the outcome concerning the Southern Oak Bush Cricket and Rutland Natural History Society. This species is a rarity, first discovered in September 2001 in Thames Ditton, Surrey. Since then, it has been rapidly expanding its range, i.e. recently found in Northamptonshire.



Photo's by Andrew Dejardin.

Left: Southern Oak bush cricket. Female.

Right: Southern Oak Bush cricket. Male.

The Southern Oak Bush Cricket was recorded in Empingham by a non-member of Rutland Natural History Society who works alone and sends in his wildlife species to NatureSpot for identification. When this is verified, the records are then entered into their data base. The rules are, that anyone sending in their records to NatureSpot and are accepted, agree to their reports being in the public domain and accessible to anyone.

My next step to get this species on to the RNHS records was to telephone the finder, Mr. Andrew Dejardin (who is a friend) and ask for approval to use his record. Andrew readily agreed and sent me some of his images of the Cricket. Thank you, Andrew!

So, at last, a new species is now listed in the archives of the Rutland Natural History Society.

## Crickets

### **Southern Oak Bush Cricket, *Meconema meridionale***

Males and females found on the garden wall and the brick wall of the house at the Empingham village shop: Barbaras Store, 15 Church Street, Empingham. This cricket is a close relation to our resident Oak Bush Cricket, *Meconema thalassinum*, but the Southern Oak does not fly and has reduced wings, forming only a small pad.

Records: 23.9.2017. 3.8.2019. 24.10.2019. New species: SK95030845. Photographs supplied by A. Dejardin.

Many thanks to Andrew Dejardin and NatureSpot.

## OTHER INSECTS AND INVERTEBRATES RECORDER Gill Chiverton

20 Victoria Road, Stamford PE9 1HB. Telephone: 01780 753820  
E-mail: [gill.chiverton@googlemail.com](mailto:gill.chiverton@googlemail.com)

### August 2019

**Migrant Hawker**  
*Aeshna mixta*

**Emperor Dragonfly**  
*Anax imperator*

### **Odonata. DRAGONFLIES & DAMSELFLIES**

One noted at Wing

One noted at Wing



**Woundwort Shieldbug**  
*Eysarcoris venustissimus*

**Nettle Ground Bug**  
*Heterogaster urticae*

**Eyed Ladybird**  
*Anatis ocellata*

**Hoverflies**  
*Chrysotoxum verralli*  
*Volucella inanis*

**Red-tailed Bumble Bee**  
*Bombus lapidaries*

### September 2019

**Tree Bumble Bee**  
*Bombus hypnorum*

### October 2019

**Common Hawker**  
*Aeshna juncea*

**Common Darter**  
*Sympetrum striolatum*

**Hawthorn Shieldbug**  
*Acanthosoma haemorrhoidale*

**Green Shieldbug**  
*Palomina prasina*

**Dock Bug**  
*Coreus marginata*

**Hoverflies**  
*Episyrphus balteatus*  
*Eristalis tenax*  
*Melanostoma scalare*  
*Syrphus ribesii*

**Hornet**  
*Vespa crabro*

**Garden Bumble Bee**  
*Bombus hortorum*  
*Bombus terrestris*

**Honey Bee**  
*Apis mellifera*

### Hemiptera BUGS

<100 noted on allotments at Wing

<100 noted on nettles on Wing allotments – many nymphs

### Coleoptera BEETLES

One noted near conifers in Pilton

### Diptera FLIES

One noted at Wing

One on 20th and two on 21st noted near Pilton

### Hymenoptera ANTS, WASPS, BEES & RELATIVES

Workers noted nectaring near Glaston

### Hymenoptera ANTS, WASPS, BEES & RELATIVES

One noted in Manton garden

### Odonata DRAGONFLIES & DAMSELFLIES

2 noted at Ryhall Heath – one female

2 noted at Pilton

### Hemiptera BUGS

One noted on spinach in garden at Wing

One noted at Ryhall Heath

One noted at Ryhall Heath

### Diptera FLIES

One noted in Pilton  
Two noted in Pilton  
One noted in Pilton  
One noted in Pilton

### Hymenoptera ANTS, WASPS, BEES & RELATIVES

One noted near Pilton

One noted in garden at Manton

Five noted in garden at Manton

## November 2019

### Green Shieldbug

*Palomena prasina*

### Ichneumon Wasp

*Echthrus reluctator*

## Hemiptera BUGS

One noted on the 2nd on house wall at Wing

## Hymenoptera ANTS, WASPS, BEES & RELATIVES

One noted trapped in window at Wing

## NO RECORDS RECEIVED IN DECEMBER

Many thanks to the following recorders: T. Caldicott, G. Gallimore, M. Grimes and R. Lemmon.

**I am “retiring” as insect recorder. In 2020 rnhs insect recorder will be Jayne Walker - jayne8586@hotmail.com.**

I would like to say a special thank you to everyone who has sent in insect records since I have been typing up for fieldfare. I've really enjoyed all the interesting records and special notes about your recordings. Do keep your records coming in for Jayne, whom I am sure will enjoy them as much as I have.

## PLANT GALLS

### RECORDER Roy Lemmon

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

E-mail: roy.lemmon@yahoo.co.uk

## November/December 2019

A combination of leaf-fall and inclement weather has resulted in no reports for this period.



## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We are planning a curlew and some botanical surveys for this Spring – just the thing to get the blood circulating again after a long dark winter!

If you would be interested in taking part in either of these exciting projects, please contact either Terry Mitcham (Birds) and/or John Rodgers (Botany) to volunteer. Contact details on back page.

## CALENDAR COMPETITION

The calendar competition will be running again this year – so all you happy snappers – get those trigger fingers moving! Full details in next Fieldfare.

Also, we need to have committee nominations in, ahead of the A.G.M which is on Tuesday 3rd March, 7.30pm. See website for more details.

## \* MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER \*

For those who have yet to pay their subscriptions for 2020, November's Fieldfare came with a Membership form. You can use this to send with your subscription or send a cheque with your details. **IF WE DON'T RECEIVE YOUR FEES, YOUR MEMBERSHIP WILL EXPIRE AND THIS WILL BE YOUR LAST FIELDFARE.**

Thankyou to all who have already paid.

Margaret Conner. Treasurer/Membership

## REPORTS ON RNHS FIELD TRIPS

Outdoor Meeting  
10th November 2019

### RSPB Frampton Marsh



A visit to RSPB Frampton Marsh is always worth the drive into Lincolnshire and is rewarding at any time of year. A November visit still brings the possibility of passage birds as well as some long staying winter visitors.

Our visit began with a good number of members gathering in the car park to examine the birds to be seen on the flooded meadow next to the car park. Here we located large numbers of Wigeon enjoying the landscape generated by the work of the RSPB, along with Godwits, Curlew, Lapwing and on the more distant ponds/scrapes, Teal, Mallard and Shoveler.

Before setting off down the road towards the embankment, we visited the small centre and made contact with an old friend of the Society, Dr Chris Andrews who we know well from his time at Fineshade on the Red Kite project.

This brief stop gave us time to view the feeders, with Goldfinch, Greenfinch, House Sparrow, Great Tit and Blue Tit being observed, whilst out on the water were many common species, plus a small party of Whooper Swans alongside a solitary Greenshank.

We then took a leisurely stroll down the road examining the fields and drains as we went, finding more Godwits and Lapwings, plus Curlew, Redshank and Golden Plover. There was a section which had been planted with Sunflowers earlier in the year and they were still providing a food supply for many finches.

Whilst taking in these birds we heard, but did not see Cetti's Warbler in the reeds along the drain and then to our great delight, we became aware of a Merlin sitting on a raised bit of ground surveying the prospective food sources, mainly, we suspected, Pipits and perhaps Starlings.

After a while the Merlin took off, harassing the bird flocks and giving chase to some of the smaller birds.

Eventually we decided to finish our walk to the seawall and here we came across numerous Brent Geese and Redshank. By then though, we were overdue for some lunch, so after visiting the two main hides and adding a few more common species to our list, we headed to the visitor centre and settled at the tables, watching the birds coming and going on the feeders and taking in the view of the water in front of us.

We finished our visit with more time in the car park examining the wet meadow but nothing new was found, so we all set off home, having had an enjoyable morning at this premier reserve.



Photo's by Peter Scott.

Top: Frampton Marsh.

Bottom: Merlin. Frampton Marsh.

Brent geese. Frampton Marsh.







Photo's by C. Baxter

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