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Welcome

For those of you who receive a printed copy of Fieldfare, you may find the feel and look of this issue a little different. Recently, there has been some debate about how we as a society, respond to the increasing demands on our environment. Many of our members receive the digital copy of Fieldfare, but we are aware that many still prefer the traditional paper copy sent round by our team of volunteers. To help lower our "carbon footprint", this issue and possible future issues, will be printed on "Eco-friendly" recycled paper. It would be good to know your response to your reading enjoyment of this April issue. Please do get in touch; you can message your valued response through the website.

Spring is here again! Thank goodness we can still rely on the rolling round of the seasons where life begins repeating itself all over again. Nature at work can be fascinating and absorbing. To see that other creatures no matter how tiny, have a whole lifetime of their own but share the same space and the same rules as us, can feel like a new discovery every time spring comes around. John Rodgers, our Botany recorder spotted a little reddish coloured bee near around 50 holes in the ground in his garden and was intrigued enough to investigate. These were Tawny mining bees, one of the earliest bees to visit in spring. Anthony Biddle, with Linda, our Mammal recorder, were out on a walk in Pickworth Great Wood with their dogs, when he spotted something interesting crawling beneath his feet. With mobile in hand, he took a photo of it and Tim Sexton subsequently identified it as a "sub-adult female" glowworm! To question why a glowworm was spotted out and about in early spring, you have to find out about it's life history.

Reading the reports in these pages often give us a clue to species behaviour, life history or habitat, but the real learning experience comes with getting outside and seeing these things for ourselves, and that is why we have our outdoor meetings. It is a chance to wave away those winter blues and reconnect with each other and with the life around us. Diary dates are on page two. It will be lovely to see you outdoors this summer!

DIARY DATES



RNHS Outdoor meetings.

The following events are correct at time of publication but may be changed at short notice, so it is important to book your place with the person who will be leading the walk. Phone numbers are beside the listing. Please make sure you are wearing appropriate clothing for the outdoor meetings and if the weather is bad on the day, check first by ringing the walk leader in case it needs to be cancelled. Full details of all these events appear on our website at www.rnhs.org.uk.

Saturday 26th April. 10.00am. Pasque flowers at "Hills and holes", Barnack NNR. Led by our Botany recorder John Rodgers. (01572 757278) A profusion of spring flowers including the nationally rare Pasque flowers just over the border in Lincolnshire. **Meet:** Park in the main car park off Whittering road. Nearest postcode PE9 3EQ. Grid ref: TF073 047.

Saturday 3rd May. Dawn chorus with Linda and Anthony Biddle. A front row seat and the tickets are free! For details of where and what time to meet, please book with Linda. (07749636919 or 01780 762108).

Saturday 17th May, 10.30am. Green-winged orchids at Cribbs' meadow SSSI. A change of lead from the programme. Jenny Harris will commence the walk with a brief history of this diverse SSSI meadow and what is to be found there. (Carolyn 07729298125). **Meet:** Situated 5km east of Wymondham. Grid ref: SK901 187. Park on the right-hand verge just past the junction on Fosse Lane. Nearest postcode: LE15 7RQ.

Wednesday 4th June, 7pm - 9pm. An evening walk around Beaumont Chase Farm with Joe and Mary Nourish. Take in the stunning evening views overlooking the beautiful Eyebrook Valley, as our hosts welcome us to their modern farm, worked with wildlife in mind.

Saturday 21st June, 10am. Visit to Glapthorn Cow Pastures with Dave Needham (01780 762559). This SSSI reserve is one of the few places left in the country to see the Black hairstreak butterfly - and Dave is a fantastic butterfly photographer! **Meet:** Access is via entrance from Glapthorn to Benefield road. Park down lane opposite entrance to wood. Grid ref: TL005 902. Nearest postcode: PE8 5BH.

Walk register cards (similar to LRWT volunteer cards) are now being used at all our outdoor walks. New ones can be obtained from the walk leader for you to fill in. If you have one already, remember to bring it with you as you will need to hand it to the walk leader at the beginning of each walk, and it will be handed back at the end.

RNHS Indoor evening meetings.

Indoor meetings take place every month from October through to April from 7.30pm to 9.30pm at the Volunteer Training Centre (VTC) LE15 8AD. Ref: SK883 083.

Next meeting will be Tuesday 7th October at 7.30pm - 9.30pm at the Volunteer Training Centre.

April notices.

Subscription renewals were due back in January and thank you to those who have already paid. If you have not yet renewed your membership and would like to continue, please pay now to avoid this being your last Fieldfare. If you are having problems with renewing, please get in touch with Tricia Marston - membership secretary. Details on back contacts page. **Our account number is 82992760, sort code 30 96 26.** The account name is Rutland Natural History Society. If you choose this method, please include your name in the reference field, and send an email to rnhsmembers@gmail.com to let me know you have done this.

Rutland Natural History Society 60th anniversary lunch.

Our special 60th anniversary lunch will be held at **Wing Village Hall on 20th September 2025** from 12.30 until around 4pm. After finalising the menu options with Sara Mcallister, who will cater for the event, we will be able to give you more details of how to book, who to book with, and importantly - the cost of the tickets, in the next June Fieldfare. We hope as many members as possible will be able to come together on this special occasion, and if you feel you would like to contribute by speaking a few words about what the society has meant for you, why you joined, or maybe something you especially remember, do get in touch with any one of the committee and we will put your name on the list.

Keep looking at the notices and on the website as we update you on the progress.

WEATHER

RECORDER Roy Lemmon

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January 2025

Atmospheric pressure and wind. During the first 10 days of the month pressures were low and as a result the weather was variable with winds W-NE but the month's lowest, 981.5mb, occurred on the 28th. From the 11th -19th pressures were high including the month's highest, 1040mb. on the 12th. but after this, to the end of the month, they were low again. This period included two named storms, Eowyn on the 24th. and Herminia on the 27th. The former carried a red warning which applied to Ireland and Scotland but both storm centres passed well to the west of us although we experienced high wind speeds and some rain on both occasions.

Temperature. This was a cold January with an overall mean of 3.29C placing it 9th. coldest in the decade 2016-2025 ahead of January 2021 at 2.94C. The first 12 days had 11 air frosts and included the month's lowest -5.1C on the 9th. and -4.8C. on the night before. The highest daytime maximum also occurred in this period and was 11.5C on the 1st.

Precipitation. A total of 61.1mm. (2.41 inches), measured as liquid, equates to 113% of my long term mean, and 62% of this fell in the first 10 days of the month, the stormy period referred to above. Snow fell on the 4th. but soon melted and on the next day there was sleet from 08.30. Storm Eowyn gave only 1.0mm. here but Herminia had more at 11.6mm.

February 2025

Atmospheric pressure and wind. This was, in non-meteorological terms, a miserable month with long periods of heavy cloud but the last few days were more cheerful as a high pressure system took over. The lowest pressure was 1012mb. on the 22nd. and the highest 1045mb. on the 6th. From the 7th. to the 19th. winds were E-NE and the rest of the month they were S-SW except for the last two days when they were NW. There were several periods of high

winds but no named storms.

Temperature. This was a cold month with a mean of 5.21C which makes it the 8th. coldest in the decade 2016-2025, just after 2021 at 5.22C. There were 8 air frosts the lowest being -3.0C on the night of the 16th-17th. The 7th.-16th. inclusive was of interest as there was relatively little difference between the nighttime minima and the daytime maxima. There were no air frosts and the mean figures for this period were 2.1C and 5.6C, the contributory factor was the dense cloud cover referred above.

Precipitation. The total was 36.3mm. (1.33 inches) which all fell as rain and represents 91% of my long term mean. Rain fell on 14 days and there were no large daily amounts, the highest being 7.5mm. on the 10th.

March 2025,

Atmospheric pressure and wind. The month started with high pressures until the 6th. and these included the highest for the month 1036mb. on both the 1st. and 2nd. There was then a period of lows, the 6th.-14th. during which there were some blustery days and this was followed by the coldest part of the month with winds SE-NE. Pressures were then high until the end of the month. There were no named storms.

Temperature. The mean for the month was 8.15C and this places March 2025, 4th. warmest in the decade 2016-2025 after 2019 at 8.54C. There were seven air frosts including the first three days and the lowest was -2.4C on the 16th.-17th.

Precipitation. A total of 14.1mm. (0.56 inches) which all fell as rain except for a brief hail shower on the afternoon of the 12th. This total equates to 35% of my long term mean of 35 years and is the 4th. lowest March total in that period, the lowest being 3.0mm. in 2007.

AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES

RECORDER Dr C H Gallimore

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January, February and March 2025.

Although records were few for this quarter there was evidence of thriving populations of toads at a number of sites and also of frogs in a few places. Just two garden records of frog spawn suggests significant under-reporting. There were no reptile records.

The first record of a **Common Frog** was on 24th January in Prior's Coppice. The next records were not until 5th March in Wing and 9th March in Ridlington. Spawning was first observed on 11th March in Wing and 12 March at two ponds at Quarry Farm. Thereafter to the end of the



Many frogs and spawn were seen in Jacky Morrell's garden pond in Ridlington.

month spawn was reported from Tunneley Wood in Exton, Ridlington and two sites in Pickworth

A dead **Common Toad** was seen at Fort Henry on 8 March. On 19 March a live toad was disturbed in an Uppingham garden. In Wing five road casualties were found on 21st and 23 March and many dead toads were reported from Sweet Hedges Farm, although this is actually in Leicestershire. However, many spawning toads were observed at Tunneley Wood on 22 March and they were also heard calling at Fort Henry, Quarry Farm and Banthorpe gravel pits.

The only **newt** record was of a male and a female in a pond in Ridlington on 20 March.

My thanks to the following who provided these records:-

C Baxter, A & L Biddle, T Caldicott, A Hill, M Markham, T Mitcham, J Morrell and D Needham

"Toad ball"
Pond between
Exton and Fort
Henry. Photo L.
Biddle.



BATS

RECORDER Jenny Harris

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January to March 2025

During the winter, bats are usually hibernating, unless an unusually mild, calm night lures them out, although the run of cold weather in January, and the continuing occurrence of cold nights will have meant there were very few insects on which they could boost their energy levels.

There were no bats in flight reported by members, and no grounded bats were recorded during the period January to March 2025. However, the east Rutland hibernation

site was surveyed as usual for the **National Bat Monitoring programme (NBMP)** in January and February. The January count was a record for this site, with the number of Natterer's bats particularly high. The survey was carried out during a cold spell, while the 2024 count had been carried out when temperatures during the period were quite a bit higher. Bats seek cool, stable temperatures (above freezing) during cold conditions, since rousing when there are no flying insect prey to replenish their energy, risks starvation or predation.

NBMP hibernaculum survey results 2025. (All figures in brackets show 2024 records)

Date	19 January 2025 (2024)	09 February 2025 (2024)
External temperature at start	2.8 deg. C. (9 deg.C.)	5.4 deg. C. (11 deg.C.)
Internal temperature at coldest point	3.3 deg. C. (5 deg.C.)	4.5 deg. C. (9.9 deg.C.)
Number of surveyors	three	seven
Species recorded		
Daubenton's bat	0 (0)	1 (1)
Natterer's bat	21 (8)	16 (5)
Brown Long-eared bat	0 (1)	1 (0)
Myotis sp.	1 (0)	1 (0)
Barbastelle	1 (0)	0 (0)
Total bats found	23 (9)	19 (7)

National Nathusius' Pipistrelle Project (NNPP)

Six sites were visited around Rutland Water and Stanford Reservoir by Tom Bennett and his team, under a formal trapping, ringing and bat box checking licence covering the National Nathusius' Pipistrelle Project. This project began at Rutland Water and Burley Wood in 2014, and the sites were included in the NNPP in 2015

Nathusius' Pipistrelle trapping at Barnsdale Wood and filming for BBC Countryfile **10.04.24** – 1 soprano pip.

Box checks at Barnsdale Wood and ringing Nathusius' Pipistrelles **13.04.24** – 94 soprano pips, 1 female Nathusius', 3 male Nathusius'.

Box checks at Laxhill and ringing Nathusius' Pipistrelles **13.04.24** – 10 soprano pips.

Box checks at Egleton Nature Reserve and ringing Nathusius' Pipistrelles **27.04.24** – 24 soprano pips.

Nathusius' Pipistrelle trapping at Stanford Reservoir, Leicestershire side, **05.05.24** – 23 soprano pips, 2 common pips, 2 Daubenton's, 1 female Nathusius', 1 male Nathusius'.

Nathusius' Pipistrelle trapping at Stanford Reservoir, Leicestershire side, **10.05.24** – 28 soprano pips, 3 common pips, 2 Daubenton's, 2 whiskered, 1 Natterer's.

Box checks at Barnsdale Wood and ringing Nathusius' Pipistrelles **18.05.24** – 3 male Nathusius' and 23 soprano pips.

Box checks at Laxhill and ringing Nathusius' Pipistrelles **18.05.24** – 3 soprano pips.

Nathusius' Pipistrelle trapping at Rutland Water **18.05.24** – 10 soprano pips, 2 common pips, 1 whiskered, 3 male Nathusius'.

Nathusius' Pipistrelle trapping at Rutland Water **24.05.24** – 7 soprano pips, 1 common pip, 16 Daubenton's, 1 Natterer's.

Nathusius' Pipistrelle trapping at Stanford Reservoir Leicestershire side, **02.08.24** – 8 soprano pips, 2 Daubenton's.

Nathusius' Pipistrelle trapping at Rutland Water **09.08.24** – 19 soprano pip, 2 common pips, 2 male Nathusius', 3 Daubenton's, 1 Natterer's.

Box checks at Laxhill and ringing Nathusius' Pipistrelles **31.08.24** – 3 soprano pips, 2 male Nathusius', 1 female Nathusius'.

Box checks at Barnsdale Wood and ringing Nathusius' Pipistrelles **31.08.24** – 37 soprano pips, 2 male Nathusius'.

Nathusius' Pipistrelle trapping at Burley Wood **31.08.24** – 24 soprano pips, 1 Daubenton's, 1 noctule.

Nathusius' Pipistrelle trapping at Rutland Water **06.09.24** – 37 soprano pips, 10 whiskered, 3 male Nathusius', 1 Brandt's, 8 Daubenton's, 3 Natterer's.

Nathusius' Pipistrelle trapping at Stanford Reservoir **02.08.24** (Northampton side) – 24 soprano pips, 1 Daubenton's, 6 common pips, 4 male Nathusius'.

Of the 27 Nathusius' Pipistrelles recorded during box checking and trapping in the 2024 season, only three were females. The Nathusius' females from around Rutland Water were ringed and also fitted with Motus transmitter tags. The RW Motus tower is part of an international network of Motus receivers aimed at tracking a range of different animals, in the case of bats to try to find where they are roosting and to discover their migration routes. Nathusius' Pipistrelles are known to migrate long distances, with bats captured in England having come from, or later being recovered as far away as Russia and Latvia. This small sample of females tagged in 2024 did not provide much information, but it is hoped more females can be tagged this coming year.

In addition to the Nathusius', soprano and common pipistrelle records, trapping and box checking also supplied records of Daubenton's, whiskered, Brandt's, and Natterer's bats, and one noctule caught in a harp trap in Burley Wood.

My thanks to Tom Bennett and his team for their work on the NNPP and for supplying records for the 2024 season.



**Harp trap,
safely used in
bat trapping.
Photo L.
Biddle**

BIRDS

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January 2025.

Highlights. Rutland Water had a Bittern (9th, 12th) and a Merlin (11th). A Short-eared Owl was near Langham (13th) with two there (16th). A Guillemot was a surprise sighting at Eyebrook Reservoir (8th).

Rutland Water. (See also Wildfowl count). There were 19 Whooper Swans (9th) with up to three Great Northern

Divers, and the Slavonian Grebe remained all month. Waders included two Oystercatchers (from 30th), 136 Lapwings (12th), c.200 Golden Plover (24th), a Green Sandpiper and seven Redshanks (both 12th). A Marsh Harrier was regular, and a Peregrine was seen (12th). A Blackcap was on Burley Fishponds feeders (4th) and there

were two Stonechats at Egleton.

Eyebrook Reservoir. (See also Wildfowl count). There were ten Whooper Swans (2nd) and a Scaup (2nd – 31st) with up to seven Smew (15th). There were 15 Golden Plover and 16 Dunlin (23rd and a Merlin was seen (2nd).

Other Sites. Fort Henry Ponds had 73 Gadwall (4th), 118 Wigeon (25th), 65 Tufted Ducks (25th) and a Great White Egret (11th, 18th). Two Goosander were in Exton Park (11th), Oakham Canal (25th) and the River Welland in Stamford (27th). Little Egrets were at Banthorpe GP (19th, 29th) and Exton Park (25th). Woodcock were in Tunneley Wood (4th – 31st) with 12 in Stoke Wood mid-month. A Redshank was at Banthorpe GP (19th). Barn Owls were at Empingham (25th) and Greetham (31st). Little Owls were at Belmesthorpe and Langham. A Chiffchaff was at Geeston STW (9th) and there were three Stonechats at Belmesthorpe (31st).

February 2025

Highlights. Rutland Water had four Common Scoter (1st), up to three Great Northern Divers, two Black-necked Grebes from (13th) and the Slavonian Grebe all month. A male Hen Harrier was near Lyddington (9th) and a Hawfinch was over Oakham (25th).

Rutland Water. (See also wildfowl count). Other wildfowl were two Barnacle Geese (23rd) and a male Smew (21st, 22nd). Some wader counts included two Avocets (18th), 14 Oystercatchers (16th), 768 Lapwings (16th), ten Curlew (28th), two Black-tailed Godwits (27th), a Green Sandpiper (16th, 27th) and five Redshank (18th). A Marsh Harrier was seen (15th) and Barn Owls were regular. Up to five Stonechats (25th) were at Egleton.

Eyebrook Reservoir. (See also wildfowl count). There was a Scaup (13th – 22nd) and up to five Smew all month. On (16th) there were 1480 Lapwings, 430 Golden Plover, a Black-tailed Godwit and 17 Dunlin with a pair of Stonechats.

Other Sites. Fort Henry Ponds had 52 Gadwall (13th), 117 Wigeon (22nd) and 45 Tufted Ducks (13th) with a Little Egret (9th). Banthorpe GP had a pair of Red-crested Pochard and two Little Egrets (27th). A Great White Egret was in Exton Park (1st – 23rd). Up to 35 Red Kites were in the Exton roost and ten were near Pickworth (20th). A Woodcock was in Tunneley Wood (23rd). A Barn Owl was at Exton (13th) and a Peregrine was on Oakham church. A Marsh tit was in Tunneley Wood (22nd). There were 250 Linnets at Banthorpe (11th). Two Siskins and a Lesser Redpoll were in an Oakham garden (26th).

March 2025.

Highlights. There were three White-fronted Geese at Banthorpe GP (6th) and three Whooper Swans over Quarry Farm (9th). Two Black-necked Grebes were at Rutland Water (1st – 2nd) with one at Egleton (18th – 20th). The Slavonian Grebe remained at Rutland Water to at least (22nd). A Goshawk was over a woodland site (1st) and the first Osprey returned to Rutland Water on (13th). A White-tailed Eagle from the Isle of Wight project was at Rutland Water (9th). Six Short-eared Owls were on Ryhall Heath (12th).

Rutland Water. (See also wildfowl count). Other wildfowl were a pair of Barnacle Geese (to 15th) and Mandarin Duck pairs (10th, 21st – 22nd). Some wader counts were 19 Oystercatchers (16th), five Avocets (9th), 28 Lapwings (16th), a Ringed Plover (15th – 16th) and a Little Ringed Plover (12th). There were 17 Curlew (4th), two Black-tailed Godwits (9th) and 15 Redshanks (16th). Marsh Harrier and Barn Owl were regular. Early migrants were Sand Martin (10th), Swallow (20th) and House Martin (28th).

Eyebrook Reservoir. (See also wildfowl count). A male Smew was present (1st – 2nd). There was a Slavonian Grebe (13th – 27th) with an Osprey (20th). Waders included a pair of Oystercatchers (30th), an Avocet (22nd, 23rd), a Ringed Plover (20th) Little Ringed Plover (8th) with two (29th), six Black-tailed Godwits (20th), a Curlew (29th), seven Dunlin (8th) and a Redshank (16th). There was a Barn Owl (29th) and early Willow Warbler and Yellow Wagtail (both 23rd).

Other Sites. Fort Henry Ponds had 47 Gadwall, 148 Wigeon, 48 Tufted Ducks and a Water Rail (all 3rd). A Great White Egret was seen (15th, 22nd, 29th). Displaying Lapwings were in Exton Park (22nd). Peregrines were at two regular breeding sites. Barn Owls and Little Owls were at Langham. Tunneley Wood feeders had a Marsh Tit (22nd). There were 150 Fieldfares over Tunneley Wood (3rd) and 40 at Banthorpe (23rd). A Tree Sparrow was in a Braunston garden (27th). Grey Wagtails were at Fort Henry (3rd) and Geeston (4th). There were garden records of Blackcap in Oakham, Siskin at Ridlington and Reed Bunting in Oakham.

My thanks to the following for their records:- T.P.Appleton, R.F.Baker, T.Barker, A. & L.Biddle, Viscount Campden, G.Chiverton, A.Comber, K.Fortune Jones, B.Fox, Lord Gainsborough, Dr.C.H.Gallimore, J.Harris, A.Lawrence, LROS, P.Lewis, M.Markham, I.Misselbrook, T.Mitcham, B.Moore, J.Morrell, C.I.Park, N.Parr, J. & J.Rodgers, RWNr, T.Sexton.

Wildfowl Counts – Jan., Feb. and March 2025.

	RW 12.01.	RW 16.02.	RW 16.03.	EBR 12.01.	EBR 16.02.	EBR 16.03.
Canada Goose	378	90	121	181	7	14
Barnacle Goose	2					
Greylag Goose	526	35	144	178	34	42
Mute Swan	168	110	146	105	49	36
Whooper Swan	15					
Egyptian Goose	29	5	7	4	2	1
Shelduck		10	12		2	3
Mandarin Duck	4	6				
Shoveler	71	102	155	22	1	
Gadwall	762	312	219	78	17	6

Wildfowl counts - Jan, Feb and March 2025 continued.

	RW 12.01	RW 16.02	RW 16.03	EBR 12.01	EBR 16.02	EBR 16.03
Wigeon	2669	1677	1524	1088	573	510
Mallard	594	259	268	209	73	33
Pintail	74	21	16	70	12	
Teal	672	280	200	1710	387	152
Red-crested Pochard	6	3				
Pochard	155	27	73	1	3	1
Tufted Duck	1221	599	987	140	133	95
Scaup	1	3	4	1		
Goldeneye	373	402	334	33	53	32
Smew				5	4	
Goosander	2		2			
Great Northern Diver	1	3				
Little Grebe	87	81	11		1	
Great Crested Grebe	135	63	69		29	75
Slavonian Grebe	1	1				1
Black-necked Grebe		2				
Bittern	1					
Grey Heron	3	10	3	1	1	
Great White Egret	6	7	5			
Little Egret		1	1		2	1
Cormorant	110	117	145	7	5	36
Water Rail	8	1	4			
Moorhen	50	28	37			2
Coot	1524	639	316	76	53	11
Kingfisher	4		1			
TOTAL	9652	4894	4804	3909	1441	1051

	FHP and Exton Park 11.01.	FHP and Exton Park 13.02.	FHP and Exton Park 15.03.	Banthorpe GP 10.01.	Banthorpe GP 14.02.	Banthorpe GP 14.03.
Canada Goose						2
Greylag Goose	101		12	72	68	23
Mute Swan	16	19	20			2
Egyptian Goose	2	2				
Shoveler	13	3		4		
Gadwall	63	65	33			
Wigeon	129	132	140		2	
Mallard	63	49	41	32	32	6
Teal	33	3	18	20	4	2
Tufted Duck	56	51	38	1	3	3
Goosander	2					
Little Grebe	10	8	1			
Grey Heron	1	1	1			1
Great White Egret	1	1	1			
Little Egret			1			1
Cormorant	4	1				
Moorhen	10	13	13	1	1	3
Coot	146	82	49		7	4
TOTAL	650	430	368	130	117	47

	Holywell Lake 13.01.	Holywell Lake 16.02.	Holywell Lake 15.03.
Canada Goose	2	22	25
Greylag Goose	17	1	2
Mute Swan	2	2	2
Egyptian Goose	2		
Gadwall	46	34	48
Wigeon		36	58
Mallard	82	22	16
Teal	10	20	18
Tufted Duck	14	19	8
Goosander			3
Grey Heron	1		
Little Grebe	10	17	8
Little Egret		1	1
Cormorant	2	2	
Moorhen	29	18	18
Coot	9	10	10
Total	226	206	217



Lapwing at the Eyebrook. Photo C Baxter



Grey heron andspot the Otter at Rutland water.
Photo P. Scott

BUTTERFLIES

RECORDER Martin Quinlan

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January - March 2025

There were no reports of any butterflies in January and February.

A single **ORANGE-TIP** was seen at Ketton Quarry (KQ) on 30th March.

An early **LARGE WHITE** was well seen at rest in a Ridlington (R) garden on 28th March.

A **SMALL WHITE** was seen at R on 29th March with others in Oakham (O) and Uppingham (Upp) on 31st March.

The first record of **BRIMSTONE** was in O on 3rd March with another there on 31st March.

The maxima were four at KQ on 6th and 8th March.

A **PEACOCK** was seen at KQ on 6th March with another there on 8th March.

A **SMALL TORTOISESHELL** was seen in a garden in O on 30th March.

Finally, two **COMMA** were at KQ on 8th March with one in R on 30th March.

I would like to thank Alistair Lawrence, Jacky Morrell and David Needham for sending in their records.

January to March 2025.

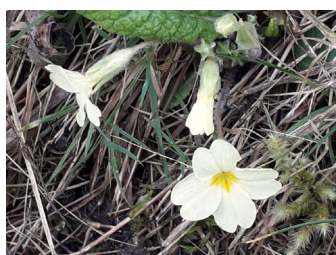
I started to write this piece by looking back at last April's report. What I had already written in my head for this year was almost the same as I wrote last year. I was tempted just to say, like they do in Parliament when answering a question, "I refer my honourable friend to my last statement" and leave it at that. But no. So here goes. The dry March doesn't seem to have put off plants. There is blossom everywhere, mostly **Cherry Plum** and **Blackthorn**, though I have found buds on Hawthorn. There are lots of Lesser Celandines and the road verges are white with **Danish Scurvy Grass**. There don't seem to be many Cowslips. Other years the verges have been covered with them. Is this a result of the weather pattern in the autumn or winter?

The first records of **Winter Aconites** and of **Snowdrops** came from Terry Mitcham who found them in Exton Park on the 11th of January. Winter Aconites were also reported by Dave Needham on the 15th of that month. **Lesser Celandines** appeared on the 22nd of February and at Manton on the 5th of March. There's only been two records of **Primrose** thus far, from Essendine on the 26th of March from Martin Grimes and only one record of **Cowslip**, in Empingham. There haven't been many reports of **Coltsfoot** either, at Wing on the 22nd of February (Tim Caldecott) and from Oakham Canal on the 8th of March. **Spurge Laurel** is an early flower. There was one at Essendine on March 31st. Martin Grimes, who reported this, also found **Ground Ivy**, **Dog's Mercury** and **Goldilocks Buttercup** in the same area. Finally, there are many violets around. There's a particular clump of **Common Dog Violet**, (*Viola riviniana*), in the spinney at the top of Ashwell Road in Oakham.

One more unusual flower. Carolyn Baxter found a Squill near Langham on the 22nd March. I thought it was probably *Scilla lucillae* which derives from Turkey and which has been cultivated for many years. We weren't sure whether it should be recorded as a presumed escapee, but Geoffrey Hall the County recorder said that it was more likely to be *Scilla forbesii* and that it should be recorded. It's a rather fine flower who's common name is **Glory of the Snow**. I thought I should have a look at the Squill that always grow in the Churchyard in Oakham which I've previously regarded as cultivated plants. These too are *Scilla forbesii* I think. They are beginning to go over now but always look a lovely sight in early spring.

There are two outings of the Society in the near future whose main subject will be botany. These are visits to Hills and Holes and Cribbs Meadows. They will be worth joining.

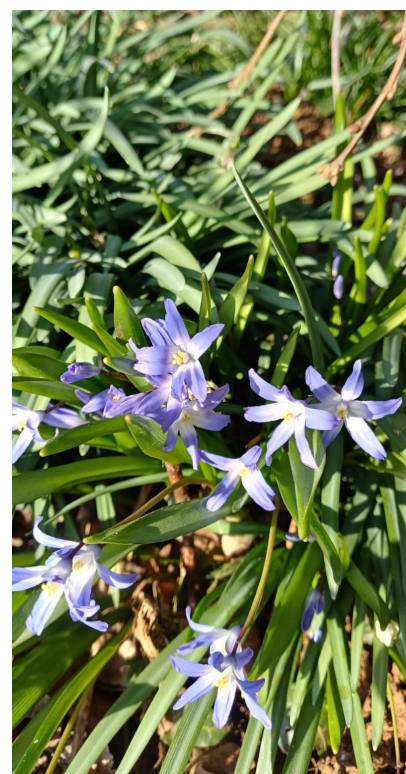
Thanks to the following recorders, C Baxter, L Biddle, M Grimes, R Lemmon, M Markham, T Mitcham and D Needham.



Left. Primrose.
1st March.
Ketton Quarry.
Dave Needham.



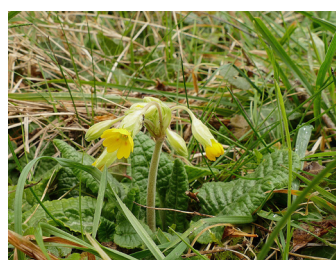
Above. Lesser celandine.
18th March. Priors
Coppice. S. Bedford.



Right. *Scilla
forbesii*.
20th March.
Langham. C
Baxter



Above. Winter aconite. January.
Uppingham. C Baxter



Left. Cowslip.
16th March on
Loves Lane
Empingham.
C Baxter

January to March 2025

The Winter season is often seen as a quiet, low key period for fungi, typically recorders brush up on their Bracket and Polypore ID's, hunt out Jellies and Cups, but things got a little more heated this year!

Beginning in January, with Tim Sexton's (Senior Species Officer at LRWT) extraordinary discovery of the super rare and seriously under-recorded **Willow Blister Fungus** (*Cryptomyces maximus*). Found on some regrowth of coppiced Willow near Lagoon 2 of Rutland Water. According to the London Zoological Society, it is listed in the Top 100 Most Threatened Species in the World. An amazing find which became a news worthy event with Tim and fungus appearing on the BBC East Midlands evening news. Since then, the Yellow and black spotted crust has been located in several other sites around the reserve – all on willow coppicing. Quite bizarre.

Not such blockbuster news but still an excellent find was the scarce and rather beautiful **Cobalt Crust fungus**, (*Terana caerulea*), which caused a modest flurry of excitement amongst mycologists and non mycologists alike. Found by the intrepid RNHS member and photographer Tim Caldicott and myself at Leighfield in Rutland, in a small damp wood, made up of a young decaying Ash plantation and maturer Oak and Willow. The fresh crust was a vivid velvety blue with golden specks and was quite prolific on one rotting oak in particular. Also known as Velvet Blue Spread it has been described as "blue velvet on a stick". It is a saprobic crust fungus and has rounded fruit bodies that coalesce to form resupinate (flat to the substrate) irregular patches and is often found growing in warm damp hardwood woods.

Another unusual semi-resupinate was the *Dichomitus campestris* found at the Lyndon reserve which I originally spotted in its young state back in October, also known as **Hazel Porecrust**. *Phlebia rufa*, a large whitish buff, intestinal-lining-like resupinate, was spotted on several occasions on rotting broadleaf wood.

It really is wonderful how many of the winter fungi are so fascinating on close inspection and deserving of close examination, to admire their often peculiar and intricate forms. Such a specimen is the small **Winter Polypore** which must be admired from underneath to see the beauty of its fanshaped tube structure. I find a small pocket mirror essential for this task- so the fungi does not need to be picked.

No mistaking the beauty of the dewy red buttons of the **Scarlet Elfcup** which I feel were incredibly abundant this year with great numbers being found at Great Merrible Wood, Ketton Woods and Gibbets Gorse. **Velvet Shank** also appeared to have had a decent year with a profusion of dense shiny, golden tufts sprouting from host timber.

A good number of interesting bracket fungi have been recorded over the winter months, including **Lumpy Bracket**, **Blushing Bracket**, **Willow Bracket** and two unusual specimens, the **Laquered Bracket** and the scarce **Red Banded Bracket**.

Winter mushrooms of typical stipe and cap type included

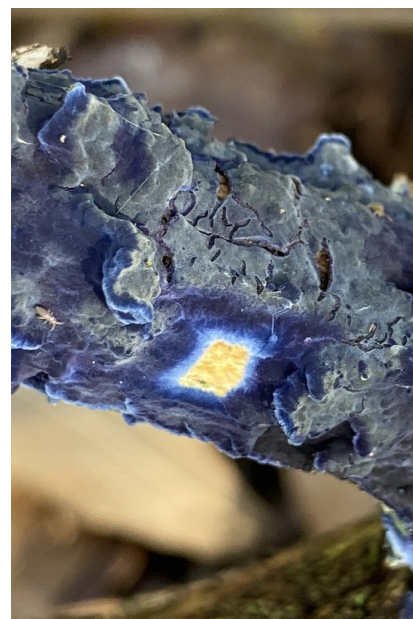
Scurfy Twiglet, **Funeral Bell**, **Fragrant Funnel**, **Non-pored Conecap** and **Spring Brittlegill** species were found – all which might be described as little brown jobs! The Non-pored Conecap found at Great Merrible Wood on the LFSG walk in March was a first county record. Many more interesting Cups, Jellies, Crusts and Brackets were recorded and just too numerous to list here.

To conclude I think it's fair to say that Winter fungi can be as bountiful and beautiful as the big showy Autumn fruitings and I'm going to need a bigger page to report it all!

My thanks to T Caldicott, C Baxter, and T Sexton for their contribution.



Very rare Willow Blister fungus Found by Tim Sexton. See text opposite. Photo K Fortune Jones



Not quite so rare, but very attractive Cobalt Crust fungus found by Tim Caldicott and Kate Fortune Jones. Photo K Fortune Jones.



Above. Hazel Porecrust. Photo K fortune Jones.

Right. Underside of Winter Polypore showing the tube-like pores. Photo K Fortune Jones.



Right. Laquered Bracket. Photo K Fortune Jones.



Right. Scarce Red-Banded Bracket. Photo T. Caldicott



MAMMALS

RECORDER Linda Biddle

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Tel: 01780 762108 Email: ajbiddle21@talktalk.net

Jan- March 2025

Thank you all for your records! There are quite a number of them, though mostly from the faithful few (now very few!). I am writing a very quick summary as we're about to go away, so hopefully I'll be able to fill in some of the gaps in the next Fieldfare.

It has definitely been a mole winter, lots of **Molehills** evident in much of the county, as I'm sure many of you will have spotted. It would be great if a few more of you would just email me with what you've seen over the late winter early spring, or what you see in the coming months.

There have sadly been quite a lot of dead **Badgers** on the roads during March, but there are also a number of very active setts too, and **rabbits** are numerous in the Little Casterton and Quarry Farm area. **Brown Hares** have often been seen at Pickworth, and the occasional **Fallow Deer**. On one occasion a group of 14 were disturbed but settled and continued feeding to the north of East Wood.

Roe Deer were seen at Exton running into Tunneley Wood, and three others were reported from Oakham Road Langham, running across the road and into a nearby field. Four Roe Deer also ran across the road between Brooke and Braunston at 9.00am one January morning, and near Stoke Dry wood, three grazed peacefully in a field at the end of March. It seems that Roe are becoming much more common locally, while there seem to be fewer sightings of Fallow.

The first, and only **Hedgehog** report comes from Barleythorpe, where a large individual was spotted on two evenings in March. If you have a Hedgehog, it would be good to hear from you, as I'm sure there must be more

about particularly in Oakham.

Otters are regularly spotted at RWNr and in March one was also seen at Eyebrook, fishing in the centre of the reservoir.

In Marian Markham's garden at Langham there have been the usual regular visits from **Wood Mice**, Badgers, Rabbits and **Muntjac**, and Marian is now sending in reports from a second camera in Langham where badgers are frequent visitors.

At RWNr the mammal camera trapping has moved into another phase, with grids now over the front of the boxes so that only Harvest Mice can enter, with the result that we now know there are far more **Harvest Mice** than previously thought.

Records have been received from: - A+L Biddle, Roger Favell, Charles Gallimore, Marian Markham, Terry Mitcham, Jacky and John Morrell, W Smith.



Mum and young Otter cub clinging to her back. Heron bay RWNr. Photo M. Markham

January to March 2025

A quiet start to the year which is to be expected, with caterpillars as likely to be seen as are adult moths on the wing. However a settled spell of weather at the beginning of March offered a rare opportunity of running a trap in the reasonable expectation of obtaining a good catch.

The main trap at Lyndon centre that was operated on the night of 7th March, produced 70 moths of 15 species which is comfortably the highest number recorded on that site from a single trap run at this time of year, and judging by the smart appearance of many of the moths, it coincided with fresh emergences triggered by preceding warm and sunny days. **Common Quaker**, **Small Quaker**, **Hebrew Character** and **Clouded Drab** all had double figure counts with good numbers of **Shoulder Stripe** (8) and **Oak Beauty** (5). A pair of **Pale Brindled Beauty** were present at the end of their flight period while 2 macros, **Dotted Border** and **Small Brindled Beauty**, were first

site records. The latter moth is nationally categorised as local rather than common and is rarely recorded in the county partly due to its preference for dense wooded areas in February and March, at a time of year when few traps would be set out in the wider countryside. Other records of adult moths were received, a **Spring Usher** at Pilton on 22nd February, Common Quakers and Hebrew Characters in an Oakham garden and a very early **Ruby Tiger** in Langham churchyard. **Scarlet Tiger** caterpillars were seen regularly in a Manton garden from January onwards, these feed on a wide range of herbaceous plants while in their final instar often reverting to deciduous trees making this attractive species one of the easiest caterpillars to spot in the winter and spring months. A probable **Angle Shades** caterpillar appeared in an Uppingham garden.

With thanks to the following for sending their records:-
C Baxter, P Bennett, T Caldicott, M Grimes, C Howat, M Markham, D Needham.



Common Quaker.
Photo C. Howat



Small Quaker.
Photo C Howat



Hebrew Character.
Photo C Howat



Oak Beauty.
Lyndon.



Spring Usher.
Photo T. Caldicott



Scarlet Tiger
caterpillar.
Photo M. Grimes

January to March 2025.

As we are short of an Insect recorder at present, we have been relying on the Naturespot RNHS downloads and a few from Social media reporting, to make up this report.

There were no reports of insect activity for the first two months of the year but warmer weather in March, brought out a few hardy queen bumblebees, solitary bees and ladybirds on the emerging flora and in gardens. Although no reports were sent in, **Buff-tailed bumblebees**, and possibly White-tailed bumblebees, are nearly always one of the first insects to be seen (and heard) on sunny days in early spring, and they have been spotted out and about, nectaring in many places and scouting the ground for a place to make their nests. **Honeybees** took advantage of the abundance of Creeping comfrey flowers in an Uppingham garden on the first really sunny, warm day on 6th March. A very torpid **Common carder bee** was found rolled in a ball on the Barrowden LWS road verge on 21st March. It was a sunny day, but the breeze was cool, so it may have succumbed to the cold. There were a couple more of these bees further along the verge, so had fared a bit better and were buzzing around Ground ivy

flowers on the verge. A male **Hairy-footed flower bee** was seen darting around Creeping comfrey in Uppingham in the early part of the month and some days later, the all black females emerged, hovering with their long tongues under the hanging bells of the creamy comfrey flowers.

Jayne Walker saw the first **Drone fly** of the year in her garden in Exton on 6th March. Again, these insects can appear very early, on warm days and their coloration can sometimes be mistaken for honeybees - the difference being with the shape of the eyes. The Drone fly has large forward facing eyes, typical of a fly, whereas most bees have eyes at the side of their heads, and they are more oval shaped.

Of the beetles, the ladybirds began emerging from their winter slumbers as the weather warmed towards the middle of the month, with **7-spot ladybirds** seen on a Barrowden LWS verge and an **Orange ladybird**, easily recognisable, spotted in Langham on 26th March. Thanks to Marian Markham and Jayne Walker for their contributions.



Buff-tailed Bumblebee.
C.Baxter



Common Carder Bee.
C. Baxter



Female Hairy-footed
Flower Bee.
C. Baxter



Drone Fly.
J. Walker

Sc.name	Common name	location	Numbers	Date	Observer
Bombus terrestris	Buff-tailed bumblebee	Uppingham	2	01/03/2025	C.Baxter
Eristalis tenax	Drone fly	Exton	1	06/03/2025	J.Walker
Bombus pascuorum	Common carder bee	Barrowden	5	21/03/2025	C.Baxter
Bombus terrestris	Buff-tailed bumble	Barrowden	1	21/03/2025	C.Baxter
Anthophora plumipes	Hairy-footed flower bee (Male)	Uppingham	1	06/03/2025	C.Baxter
Anthophora plumipes	Hairy-footed flower bee (Female)	Uppingham	3	21/03/2025	C. Baxter
Anthophora plumipes	Hairy-footed flower bee	Langham		26/03/2025	M. Markham
Halyzia sedecimguttata	Orange ladybird	Langham		26/03/2025	M Markham
Coccinella septempunctata	7-spot ladybird	Barrowden	several	21/03/2025	C.Baxter

Below are reports sent in by Roy Lemmon and Marian Markham from the Naturespot website under the RNHS dropdown menu.

Sc. name	Common name	Location	Date	Observer
Neuroterus albipes f. agamic	Smooth spangle causer. (wasp)	Ketton Quarry SK97740502	All on 26/03/2025	Roy Lemmon
Cynips quercusfolii f. agamic	Cherry gall causer (Wasp)	KQ. Ditto		RL
Cynips divisa F. agamic	Red-pea gall causer (Wasp)	KQ. Ditto		RL
Diplolepis nervosa	Sputnik gall wasp	KQ Ditto		RL
Diplolepis rosae	Robin's pincushion gall. (Wasp)	KQ. SK881075		Marian Markham
Diplolepis nervosa	Sputnik gall wasp	KQ. SK978052		MM
Diplolepis rosae	Robin's pin cushion gall. (Wasp)	KQ. Ditto		MM
Neuroterus albipes f. agamic	Smooth-spangle causer. (Wasp)	KQ. SK97740502		RL
Cynips quercusfolii f. agamic	Cherry gall causer. (Wasp)	KQ. Ditto		RL
Cynips divisa f. agamic	Red -pea gall causer. (Wasp)	KQ. Ditto		RL
Dasineura fraxini	Gall midge	Barrowden rd. Ketton		RL
Japiella veronicae	Gall midge	KQ (North glade)		RL
Dasineura urticae	Nettle pouch gall. (Midge)	KQ (north glade)		RL

FIELD TRIPS

Rutland Water Eggleton Bird Reserve, Saturday 15th February 2025.



We were greeted at the car park by singing Song Thrushes, a bird known for its singing throughout late winter and early spring, when it's a good time to monitor. The same bird is still singing there at the end of March. The BTO conducts the survey to monitor the population trends of this red-listed bird and understand its habitat use, residency, and migratory patterns, as well as food availability and behaviour. The old meadows provide excellent habitat for them and we heard 5 singing birds as we went round. Rooks were very local at the Rookery in the large Ash Trees to the right of the access track to the main birdwatching centre. These large social crows nest early to take advantage of the earthworm abundance in early March. It is always astonishing how much of our wildlife relies on the humble earthworm for food. Another sign of early spring is the drumming of a Great Spotted Woodpecker. After meeting the fellow members at the Egleton Bird Centre we scanned lagoon 1. As the water levels were high, there were only scattered ducks on a largely empty lagoon. However, one of the overwintering Great White Egrets was present. We moved through the Egleton meadows, where we heard a Green Woodpecker yaffling. Apart from the occasional Blackbird, the meadows were largely devoid of birds, as were the birch and alder trees, until a small flock of Redpoll and Siskin came to feed on the residual Alder cones, which were nearly exhausted of seeds. We also observed a Treecreeper. Looking out from Grebe Hide, we saw small parties of Gadwall and Wigeon surrounding diving parties of Coot where they would eat the small fragments of pond weeds brought up. Pairs of Shoveler swam in tight circles, filtering each other's wake for plankton. A lone Great White Egret was on the island.

We then walked along the summer trail to find the Willow Blister Fungi (*Cryptomyces maximus*), which Tim Sexton had found and listed as one of the world's top 100 threatened species. It was only the second record since 1876 and was confirmed by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. The fungi were found on coppiced willow along the summer trail.

This rarity made a nice contrast to the *Stereum hirsutum* on the log piles and the lichen Net-marked *Parmelia* *Parmelia sulcata*.

On lagoon 3 we picked out two Scaup amongst the Tufted Duck

To end the walk, the Lapwing and Golden Plover all took off high, the Golden Plover almost into the low cloud base. The culprit was a male Peregrine that flew from lagoon 2 across to 4.

Craig Howat



Common Shoveler at Egleton. C. Baxter

Species	No. Observed	Species	No. observed	Species	No. observed	Species	No. observed
Mute swan	24	Shelduck	6	Greater Scaup	2	Northern shoveler	32
C. snipe	6	Gadwall	20	Redshank	1	C. Goldeneye	10
Black-headed gull	11	C. woodpigeon	4	Little grebe	1	Eurasian wigeon	125
C. moorhen	2	Great crested grebe	8	Mallard	10	Eurasian coot	120
Great cormorant	11	E. Green-winged teal	32	Oyster-catcher	1	Gt. white egret	1
Golden plover	50	Pochard	16	Grey heron	2	Northern lapwing	250
C. Buzzard	1	Tufted duck	?	G. spotted woodpecker	1	Robin	4
Dunnock	5	Green woodpecker	1	Pied wagtail	1	Redpoll	4
Siskin	5	Kestrel	1	Peregrine falcon	1	Jackdaw	10
Rook	34	Carriion crow	3	Blue-tit	7	Great-tit	8
Long-tailed tit	7	Goldcrest	1	Tree-creeper	2	Wren	5
Song-thrush	5	Blackbird	2				

Bird watching at Fort Henry with Terry Mitchum. Saturday 8th March 2025



Twelve members assembled on a sunny spring morning by the higher of these attractive lakes dating from the 18th century. On the top lake were several **Gadwall**, **Tufted Ducks** and **Coot** plus a pair of **Mute Swans** and a **Grey Heron**. **Red Kites** were present overhead at the start of our visit, giving close views as they soared low overhead.

Making our way south on the footpath along the eastern side of lower lake A Barn Owl nest box on a large Beech tree was pointed out. This has been used by Kestrels

by Fort Henry, an 18th century stone-built summerhouse. Here we heard **Coal Tit** and **Chiffchaff** with a vocal **Raven**, seen in flight, and a singing **Treecreeper**, watched as it flitted from tree to tree. After a pleasant walk in unseasonally mild weather the group dispersed at 11.30am.

Terry Mitchum



Barn Owl box at Fort Henry. Photo C. Baxter

Greylag Geese. Fort Henry. Photo C. Baxter



in the last two years. More wildfowl were seen including **140 Wigeon**, **30 Gadwall**, several **Tufted Ducks**, **17 Mute Swans** and two pairs of **Greylag Geese**. A pair of **Little Grebes** played hide-and-seek, with everyone eventually seeing these delightful visitors. **Buzzard** and **Sparrowhawk** were added to the raptor list along with a **Kestrel**, perched on a dead tree brought down by winter storms. A singing **Reed Bunting** was found and several **Mallard** were flushed from the North Brook by the moat of the lost village of Horn.

Returning past a young plantation on the western side of lower lake, the extensive recent hedge planting across the estate was noted before we entered the mature woodland



Reed Bunting at Fort Henry. Photo C. Baxter



Summary of minutes.

The Meeting was opened and chaired by the Society's President, Mr Phil Rudkin, who thanked members of the society for attending.

A special presentation was made to Jenny Harris by the President, who awarded Jenny the highest honour the society can bestow, 'Life Membership,' for her many years of service to the Society. Jenny accepted a book token from the President along with her award.

Minutes of the previous AGM in 2024 were proposed and accepted by members, followed by the notices which were read out by the Chairman. She reminded us to put in our diaries, the 60th Anniversary Meal at Wing Village Hall on Saturday, 20th September 2025.

Summary, Treasurer's report by Peter Scott

I am pleased to be able to present a balanced set of accounts for the Rutland Natural History Society for the year ended 31st December 2024.

As many of you will be aware finding volunteers to take on roles within the society has been very difficult in recent times and I only agreed to do the Treasurers job on a temporary basis, that temporary basis has lasted a couple of years and covered a period of real transition within the Society.

During this period, we have relied heavily on the expertise of Martin Grimes who has done all the work with the Charities Commission and Gift Aid, which last year brought £355 into the Society account. I would ask therefore that our appreciation is minuted.

Also, I would like to thank Craig Howat for taking over as Treasurer with effect from the AGM, including the work previously undertaken by Martin Grimes.

The account operates under two signatories, so we still have checks and balances in place.

Income.

Subs for the year were **£2,125** about the same as 2023 but we received £202.00 early in respect of 2025. Gift Aid is **£355.00** which is a tidy sum and well worth claiming but is a bit convoluted.

Interest received relates to the Melton Mowbray Building Society and again this was a complicated process, as I explained last year we had to change the account we

had with them. One of the differences was that Interest then became payable annually. So up to January 2024 we received interest monthly, the account changed in January so in 2024 we only received interest for the period to March 2025 hence the drop in amount. The figure to March 2025 will reflect a full 12 months.

Expenditure.

There have been no exceptional outgoings, some of the variations reflect the number of Fieldfare publications during the year.

Insurance cost has gone up this year as we paid two premiums within the one calendar year, £101 in January and £131 in December. The actual cost would have been the same, but we had to improve the cover to include the fact we are now accepting younger people on our walks and because of events such as the Ketton Bug Hunt.

So, on the face of it we had a small surplus even allowing for extra income from subs of £202 and extra insurance costs of £131 within these figures.

Account balance wise we are in a healthy position and hold a nominal amount of petty cash, just in case, but as with all business type environments we must watch how much costs rise versus our income stream and we need to consider a nominal increase in subs to maintain the status quo.

Subs have not been increased since 2017 even allowing for inflation etc during that period.

So, your committee propose that we **increase the subs due January 2026 to £15.00** to prevent us having to raid our reserves which can then be used to benefit projects within the County as we have always done. Proposed: Anthony Biddle Seconded: Dave Needham

The motion was unanimously accepted on a vote by all the members.

(Report sheet on page 19, inside back cover).

Special thanks to Peter Grimes for auditing and claiming the gift aid of £355 last year.

Summary, Membership report. (Tricia Marston).

We currently have 168 members, with 29 yet to pay.

Reminders had been sent. We welcomed 22 new members

Summary, Chairman's Annual report (Carolyn Baxter).

The foundation stone of the Rutland Natural History Society was established 60 years ago, and today, the heart of this society is as we know, a community of people, who come together to share our appreciation of the diversity of life in all its forms, in Rutland and beyond. We are here this evening to vote anew and to thank those who have kept structure of our society together. I would like to thank the members of the committee who have offered their advice and patience throughout the year while I continue to learn the role as your Chairman. Some members of the committee have taken on dual responsibilities, to which we thank them enormously. However, we do still have vacancies. The committee together prepared the Annual programme for this year, but we would welcome anyone who can fill the vacancy for Programme secretary for next year. Linda Biddle – our former Chairman and Mammal recorder has filled the role of Annual report Editor. Nick Gibson has taken over as Website editor and Jacky Morrell as Fieldfare distributor.

We thank Jeff-wilcox smith for our excellent programme of indoor and outdoor events throughout 2024. The Indoor talks were varied and interesting, from bugs in a French back yard to the amazing world of eye mimicry and colouration in the animal kingdom. Dr Leake, CEO of the Allerton project, stood in for Joe Stanley and gave us a slightly different angle on the different farming practices and their effect on biodiversity. We learned about the beekeeping year from the secretary and chairman of the Beekeepers association and the following month we heard all about the White-tailed eagle project, a very well attended presentation by Dr. Tim Mackrill, our vice president. Another huge success, was an indoor coffee morning talk, our speaker, Sarah Lambert from the Langdyke Trust. Sarah entertained us with superb photographs of the fauna and flora of the John Clare countryside. We need to explore the possibility of doing more daytime meetings like this in the future. Of course, our indoor meetings would be somewhat "dry" without giving our thanks to Donnie and Steve, who quietly provide refreshments for our speakers and ourselves. We thank also, our President – Philip Rudkin, who has been a constant and welcoming presence to us all throughout our indoor and outdoor meetings. We had a full programme of events for our outdoor walks. Hambleton peninsula in January was bitter, but if we hadn't have been there, we wouldn't have seen the wonderful cavorting otter, feeding just off the shore line near the wood. With a Ramsar wetland literally on our doorstep, Egleton birdwatching centre in February has become almost a yearly pilgrimage for winter wildfowl watching, from the relative warmth of the various hides. Birds also featured for our March foray into Tunneley wood with Terry Mitchum, listening out for our woodland birds - the drumming of the Great spotted woodpecker and the demented laugh of the green woodpecker. As the spring weather started to warm, our attention turned to the lovely spring flowers we find in our woods at this time of the year. Launde Park Wood, in April was a joy, with the yellow flowers of Lesser celandine and blue wood forget-me-nots, not to mention our famous carpets of bluebells. By May, our early orchids were in bloom and a trip to Merry's meadows, especially to see the Green-winged orchids in their thousands was a real treat. More glorious weather was to come, and June found us stepping into lush limestone grassland at Roberts field, full of flowers and famous for many species of butterfly. In July we visited Swaddywell pit to meet Sarah Lambert

again, who took us round the quarry to spot the more unusual plants to be found there. As the year was drawing to a close, the weather took a spectacular turn for the worse with flooding and high winds everywhere, disrupting many outdoor events including our own and so, the last of our outdoor visits for the year unfortunately had to be cancelled.

In between our calendar of indoor and outdoor meetings, the society held other events to engage the public – an urban "Wildlife safari" in Oakham town centre, with Tim Sexton and of course our yearly bug and butterfly hunt at Ketton Quarry, this year joined by Fee Quebdani of the wildlife trust.

Our thanks and appreciation go to our recorders for all their hard work around the county and beyond, putting up moth traps, taking wetland bird counts, recording bats in our churchyards, and noting down anything that crept, jumped or slithered in our wood's, meadows and grasslands. They undertook surveys in Hebe's wood, camera trapping at Rutland water, glowworm spotting in our woods and on our verges. And they shared their knowledge with us on our walks and in our talks. We thank you, our members too, who sent in your sightings to the recorders throughout the year. I am reminded that as a society with a major role recording wildlife in the county, there wouldn't be much left to write about in our newsletters if the recorders had little to record. This year, we lost two of our recorders to retirement – our Gall recorder, Roy Lemmon and our Insect recorder Jayne Walker. We thank them too, for all the many hours and days they spent out in the field recording for the society.

As we continue to come up against governments and world leaders who put exploitation before the health of ourselves and our planet, we need to be vigilant. Technology has changed how we live our lives. Methods are evolving all the time and new technology is constantly adding to how we record and monitor our wildlife. Land and habitat continues to be lost at an alarming rate and Rutland is not without it's own challenges, with the reopening of old quarries, solarfarms swallowing up massive areas of our farmland and house building continuing to squeeze the life out of every green space left on the map. Let us continue to make a difference.

Appointment of Officers and Committee to RNHS Officers

Chair/Fieldfare editor Carolyn Baxter

Secretary and Treasurer Craig Howat

Membership Secretary Trisha Marsden

Programme secretary: Vacant

Committee Members

Jenny Harris

Tim Sexton

David Needham

John Rodgers

Joe Nourish.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 3rd March 2025.

Meeting was closed by the President

Talk by Craig Howat. "Gardening for wildlife his 50 years' experience".

Rutland Natural History Society
Income and Expenditure Account for year ended 31/12/24

2023		2024
	Income	
2,223	Subscriptions for Year	2,125
	Subs paid early for 2025	203
305	Gift Aid tax refund	355
1,028	Donations	61
380	Calendar sales	36
0	Events	94
438	2024 Subscriptions to new account	0
143	Interest Received	52
4,516	Total Income	2,925
	Expenditure	
304	Hall hire & refreshments	450
300	Speakers & visit leaders	380
144	On Line events (Zoom)	0
964	Fieldfare printing	896
222	Publications Postage	198
0	Sundry Publication Costs	27
463	Duplicate Subs Refunded	25
324	Website	344
50	Membership Fees	55
85	Sundry Expenditure	127
101	Insurance	232
493	Calendars production	0
3,451	Total expenditure	2,734
1,065	Surplus/Deficit	191

	Reserves	
9,900	Balance brought forward	10,965
1,065	Surplus for year	191
10,965	Balance carried forward	11,156

(includes £2000 Insurance Reserve)

Reserves include £145 (£245 - 2022) from legacy received
to be utilised for ornithological lectures over time £100.00 to Gary Prescott in 2023

5,769	Melton Mowbray Building Society	5,821
5,192	Lloyds Bank current account	5,324
4	Petty Cash	11
	Less Subs received in advance	
10,965	Total	11,156

Peter Scott
Date
31/12/2024



Coltsfoot. Photo Kate Fortune Jones.

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