

Female Green woodpecker.  
Uppingham.



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## Happy New year and welcome to January 2025.

January newsletters are always about putting together the reports of the last few months of the previous year, when there are still moths, fungi and mammal sightings being recorded well into the last autumn season, as the reports in this issue show. It is also a time when we see the winter bird migrations start to arrive and winter thrushes and flocks of geese and swans fly in to our lakes and reservoirs, boosting the WeBS wildfowl counts.

Daylight and warmth are short in these winter months though, and the countryside seems to be asleep. There is a feeling of waiting, especially in the dark evenings which are long and seem to go on forever. But despite the cold, it is still possible to go out and find signs of life carrying on, especially mammals which are often difficult to spot in the summer months. With bare hedges around field margins, we might just spot a fox creep through a hole in a thorn bush or hear Muntjac rummaging in the ditch around a hedge bottom. Tracks in the mud and snow make us aware of the little creatures that still have to go out and forage for food despite the weather. And of course there are the molehills, very evident in the winter landscape. Marian Markham's photograph of a male fox (see Linda's mammal report ) proudly walking past Harrier hide (RW Lyndon) carrying a water-rail in it's mouth, goes to show what can be seen if you happen to be in the right place at the right time.

Some of you may know that the Rutland Natural History Society has hit another extraordinary milestone this year, clocking-up 60 years of "Exploring, Recording and Conserving nature in Rutland". What an achievement! Our thanks must go to all those pioneering "Rutland Nats" who had the vision and dedication to set up a new society from which we have all benefitted in so many ways over the years.

This January newsletter comes with a full programme of events for the coming year and whether you like birds, butterflies or botany, or simply like to get out into our special places to share the world with other nature-lovers, we hope there is something in there for you.

## DIARY DATES



### RNHS Outdoor meetings.

The following events are correct at time of publication but may be changed at short notice. Please book your place with the person who will be leading the walk; phone numbers are beside the listing. Make sure you are wearing appropriate clothing for the time of year and if the weather is bad on the day, please check first by ringing the walk leader. Full details of all these events appear in the Annual programme on the website at [www.rnhs.org.uk](http://www.rnhs.org.uk).

**Saturday 15th February, 10.00am. Bird watching at Egleton with Craig Howat (07926726055).** This is the time of year to take advantage of one of the most important wildfowl sanctuaries that Britain has to offer. Don't forget your binoculars! **Meet:** In the Egleton reserve car park. SK878 072. There is a charge unless you have an Annual permit.

**Saturday 8th March, 9.30am - 12.30pm. Fort Henry at Exton with RNHS bird recorder Terry Mitchum. (01780751268).** Beautiful views! These ancient fishponds attract many species of wildfowl including one or two rarities over the years. **Meet:** by the lakes at Fort Henry. Plenty of parking on the verges at Grid ref: SK948 119. Best access is along estate road from Exton village, entering Home farm (SK924 114) and keeping right, following the road past Tunneley wood and on to Fort Henry.

**Saturday 26th April, 10.00am. Pasque flowers at "Hills and Holes", Barnack NNR.** Led by our Botany recorder **John Rodgers**. One of the rarest plants in the country and it is still here blooming profusely on this National Nature reserve just over the border. **Meet:** Park in the main car park off Wittering road. Nearest postcode PE9 3EQ. Grid ref: TF073 047.

### RNHS Indoor evening meetings.

7.30pm – 9.30pm on First Tuesday of every month from October through to March at Volunteer Training Centre (VTC). LE15 8AD. Ref: SK883 083. Visitors are asked for a donation of £2.00.

**Tuesday 4th February, 7.30pm. Garden ponds and how to make them more wildlife friendly by Jack Perks.** Some may remember Jack's superb underwater talk in November 2020. As an excellent wildlife photographer mainly interested in amphibians, reptiles and fish, he is known as "The fish twitcher" by the BBC.

**Tuesday 4th March, 7.30pm. Join us for our RNHS 61st Annual General Meeting** followed by a talk "**Gardening for wildlife**" by **Craig Howat**. With wildlife tips for our ponds and gardens, we should be well prepared for a wildlife bonanza in our green spaces this summer.

**Tuesday 1st April, 7.30pm. Swift conservation in Leicestershire and Rutland. A talk by Jools Partridge.** Formally a wildlife officer for Leicestershire County Council, Jools is now a consultant specialising in wildlife and protected species.

**Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust.**  
See the events page on [www.lrwf.org.uk/events](http://www.lrwf.org.uk/events)

**Monday 17th February, 7.30pm - 9.30pm. VTC. 40 years of the Yaxley Nature Conservation project.** Reg Bingham will talk about the vision, development and current status of nature close to the village of Yaxley.

**Monday 17th March, 7.30pm - 9.30pm. VTC. AGM followed by Dormice re-introduction in VC55.** County mammal recorder Helen O'Brien will explain why dormice were introduced and how they are doing in their new woodland.

## NOTICES

**A reminder from our Membership Secretary** - If you haven't already sent in your subscription for 2025, this is a reminder that it is now due. Many thanks, Tricia.

**An early prompt.** If you would like to sign up to take part in some of our LWS verge recordings this summer, please get in touch with John our Botany recorder. (Details on Botany page).

We will be doing a glowworm survey again this summer and aim to extend into areas where glowworms have been sighted in the county in the past. Get in touch with Carolyn (Details back cover Contacts page).

## October 2024

**Atmospheric pressure and wind.** During the first 3 weeks, pressures were generally low with the month's lowest being 988.5mb on the ninth, and this period was also the wettest of the month, (see below). The last week saw higher pressures; the highest of the month was 1032.5mb on the 23rd. This latter period was also very dull due to heavy cloud trapped under the high pressure.

**Storm Ashley**, the first named storm of the new season occurred on the 20th but this part of the country was only minimally affected with light rain and raised wind speeds, I recorded a gust of 15mph at 09.00.

**Temperature.** An overall mean of 11.32°C, places October 2024 the 6th warmest in the decade 2015-2024, ie. there were 5 warmer Octobers in that period. There were ground frosts on the 3rd and the 11th where the minima were 2.4°C and 2.5°C respectively. The highest daytime maximum was 19.5°C on the 7th.

**Precipitation.** A total of 55.2mm (2.17 inches) which all fell as rain. The first 3 weeks, referred to above, saw 95% of the total and in the whole month there were 12 dry days.

## November 2024

**Atmospheric pressure and wind.** Pressures were high for the first 16 days, they were then low until the last 3 days when they rose again. The highest was 1038mb. on the 12th and 13th and the lowest 991.5mb. during **storm Bert (Met office naming)**. There was also another named **storm Conall (Dutch M.O.)** but this mainly affected the Channel coasts and manifested itself here as raised wind speeds and some rain. Wind direction were variable throughout the month and occasionally there were strong gusts, at 09.00 on the 24th; I recorded one of 25mph. and they were higher later that day. A feature of the month was the presence of heavy cloud each and every day and the appearance of the sun on the 10th. was very welcome.

**Temperature.** A mean of 7.33°C places November 6th. in the decade 2015-2024 and this means there were 5

Novembers warmer in that period. The highest daytime maximum was 17.1°C on the 24th. and the lowest overnight minimum was -3.1°C on the 19th.-20th; in addition there were 5 more air frosts in the month.

**Precipitation.** A total of 75.1mm. (2.96 inches) equates to 128% of my long term mean of 34 years. There were 3 occasions when precipitation was considerable, 18.0mm. on the 18th. fell mostly as snow and there was some melting but residual snow persisted until the 22nd. Storm Bert gave a total of 31.3mm. and storm Conall 16.1mm., both as rain.

## December 2024

**Atmospheric pressure and wind.** Mostly pressures were high but any low pressure periods occurred abruptly and were short lived and it was during one of these that the month's lowest, 985mb. happened on the 7th. during the named **storm Darragh**. The latter caused the Met. Office to issue a rarely used red warning of high winds and rain for the West Country and Wales whereas it was a yellow one for us. The highest pressure here, 1035.5mb. was on the 20th. and this last week of the month was generally of high pressure and winds were SW-W.

**Temperature.** This was the 2nd. warmest December in the decade 2015-2024 with a mean of 6.96°C, the warmest being December 2015 at 9.46°C, an exceptionally warm month. This year we were just warmer than December 2023 which was 6.95°C. There was one ground frost, -1.1°C on the night of 2nd.-3rd.

**Precipitation.** The total, which all fell as rain was 55.8mm. (2.2 inches) which is 101% of the long term mean. There were 11 days when no precipitation was recorded and daily amounts were low except for the 18th. when 23.0mm. (0.9 inches) was measured here..

**The total for 2024. This was 776.1mm.( 30.56 inches) and represents 125% of the LTM of 34 years.**

## October 2024.

**Highlights.** Rutland Water had a Brent Goose (17th), two Whooper Swans (27th), a Garganey (5th), a Red-breasted Merganser (2nd – 4th) and a Spoonbill (22nd – 26th). Between (4th – 18th) seven Yellow-browed Warblers were ringed at one site and two at Rutland Water with one at Fort Henry (6th). Black Redstarts were at Rutland Water VTC and Ketton (24th). At Eyebrook Reservoir there was a Long-billed Dowitcher (6th-7th)

**Rutland Water.** (See also wildfowl count.) There was a Great Northern Diver (27th) and single Slavonian (from 12th) and Black-necked (from 15th) Grebes. Other wildfowl were a Scaup (3rd) and six Common Scoter (31st). A Cattle Egret was at Egleton (17th). Wader counts included 1005 Lapwings (20th), 300 Golden Plover (18th), a Ringed Plover (6th), Black-tailed Godwits (12th, 24th), nine Curlew (20th), a Jack Snipe (10th), a Green Sandpiper (12th, 20th)

and five Redshanks (20th). There was a Caspian Gull (5th) and two Yellow-legged Gulls all month. An Osprey remained to (5th) and one or two Marsh Harriers were regular along with a Peregrine at Egleton. Stonechats were at Egleton all month and Burley Fishponds (12th) and there were Rock Pipits (3rd, 6th, 12th, 21st) with four on (3rd).

**Eyebrook Reservoir.** (See also wildfowl count.) There were 11 Whooper Swans (27th) and two Red-crested Pochards (27th). Waders included 118 Lapwings (20th), three Ruff (6th), four Dunlin (6th) and a Green Sandpiper (27th) with four Greenshanks (6th). There was a Merlin (11th) and Rock Pipits (6th, 13th).

**Other Sites.** Peak wildfowl counts at Fort Henry Ponds were 67 Shoveler (6th), 60 Gadwall (19th), 110 Teal (19th), 33 Tufted Ducks (19th), 141 Coot (19th) with a Pintail (13th, 19th), a Great White Egret (6th) and a Green Sandpiper (13th). There were seven Egyptian Geese at Banthorpe GP (11th). There was a Barn Owl at Fort Henry (13th). Tawny Owls were at Normanton and Tunneley Wood and Little Owls at Normanton. Peregrines were at a regular site and on Greatham church (13th). 810 Redwings passed over Luffenham Airfield (15th) and a Stonechat was in Exton Park (12th).

## November 2024

**Highlights.** Rutland Water had six Bewick's Swans (30th), eight Whooper Swans (8th, 12th), two Cattle Egrets (16th, 17th) and a Great Grey Shrike (10th). Single Hawfinches were at Clipsham (1st) and Exton Park (3rd) with two over Rutland Water (19th). A Brent Goose was at Eyebrook Reservoir (12th).

**Rutland Water.** (See also wildfowl count.) There were three Red-crested Pochards (5th), and three Scaup (30th) A Great Northern Diver and a Slavonian Grebe were present all month. Other wildfowl were overflying Pink-footed Geese – 26 (11th), 130 (12th) and 80 (28th) and two Common Scoter (1st – 11th). Some wader counts were 1149 Lapwings (17th), 600 Golden Plover (mid-month), eight Curlew (16th – 17th), a Knot (11th), three Green Sandpipers (17th) and 15 Redshanks (17th). Marsh Harrier and Peregrine were regular. Chiffchaffs were seen (16th, 30th) with seven Stonechats at Egleton (10th).

**Eyebrook Reservoir.** (See also wildfowl count.) A male Smew and two Black-necked Grebes were present (30th).

Carl Baggot of LROS recently got in touch with Terry to let him know about a House sparrow survey they are doing in the Leicestershire and Rutland area. He would like as many people as possible to contribute to the survey to gather as much information as possible about house sparrow distribution in our area and has sent a link that can be used to download the form. If anyone is interested in doing the survey, please get in touch ([rnhsfieldfare2@gmail.com](mailto:rnhsfieldfare2@gmail.com)) and I will send you the link to the form. Alternatively you can hold the camera on your phone to access the form by using the QR code opposite.

There was a Bar-tailed Godwit (7th), five Knot (6th) and 11 Dunlin (11th) with single Green Sandpipers (4th, 11th).

**Other Sites.** Wildfowl peaks at Fort Henry Ponds were 151 Greylag Geese (30th), 45 Shoveler (6th), 69 Gadwall (18th), 58 Teal (18th), 66 Tufted Ducks (26th) 73 Wigeon (30th) and 151 Coot (30th). Water Rails were present (6th, 26th). Six Woodcock were in Tunneley Wood (30th). 25 Red Kites roosted in Exton Park (6th) and a Marsh Harrier was at Banthorpe GP (15th). Little Owls and Tawny Owls were at Normanton. A Cetti's Warbler was at Fort Henry Ponds (6th, 11th).

## December 2024

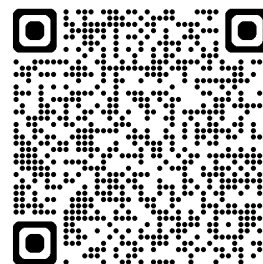
**Highlights.** Rutland Water had a Red-breasted Merganser (10th), a Red-necked Grebe (1st-19th), a Bittern (6th, 14th), a Hen Harrier (6th) and a Little Auk (10th).

**Rutland Water.** (See also wildfowl count.) Other wildfowl were 430 Pink-footed Geese over Egleton (15th), six Red-crested Pochards (14th, 16th), five Scaup (7th) and a male Smew (1st-20th) with two (16th) and a Black-necked Grebe (13th). Wader counts included 506 Lapwings, 250 Golden Plover, nine Curlew, eight Snipe and six Redshanks (all 15th) with a Jack Snipe and two Woodcock (17th). One or two Stonechats remained at Egleton and there were c.50 Siskins in the carpark there (15th).

**Eyebrook Reservoir.** (See also wildfowl count.) One or two Smew were present from (1st). Wader included 921 Lapwings, 866 Golden Plover, a Knot and a Redshank (all 15th).

**Other Sites.** Fort Henry Ponds had 16 Shoveler (9th), 54 Gadwall (21st), 82 Tufted Ducks (9th) and 155 Coot (21st). There were four Goosander and 75 Teal on Rygate Lake (29th). Great White Egrets were at Fort Henry (9th, 28th) and Rygate Lake (29th). 15 Woodcock were flushed in Stoke Wood (15th) and there were five in Tunneley Wood (29th). Barn Owls were at Whitwell and Normanton and a Great Spotted Woodpecker drummed in Exton Park (29th).

My thanks to the following for their records for this final quarter of the year:- T.P.Appleton, R.F.Baker, C.Baxter, B.Fox, Dr.C.H.Gallimore, M.&G.Griffin, LROS, N.Littler, M.Markham, K.Mathers, I.Misselbrook, T.Mitcham, J.Morrell, J.W.Nourish, B.Moore, H.O'Brien, C.I.Park, P.Robinson, RWNR, D.Scott, T.Sexton.



### Wildfowl counts October, November, December 2024

	RW 20.10.	RW 17.11.	RW 15.12.
Canada Goose	305	603	485
Greylag Goose	158	528	134
Mute Swan	351	303	199
Egyptian Goose	12	49	23
Shelduck		5	2
Mandarin Duck	2		
Shoveler	231	123	92
Gadwall	832	589	485
Wigeon	2205	2355	1729
Mallard	406	327	515
Pintail	148	98	57
Teal	618	749	749
Red-crested Pochard	6	2	
Pochard	7	17	9
Tufted Duck	780	1564	598
Scaup		2	3
Goldeneye	7	131	301
Goosander	7	9	2
Great Northern Diver	1	2	1
Little Grebe	147	89	107
Great Crested Grebe	239	104	107
Slavonian Grebe	1	1	1
Black-necked Grebe	1		
Grey Heron	13	13	8
Great White Egret	28	14	8
Little Egret	21	12	
Cormorant	679	248	105
Water Rail			2
Moorhen	59	39	13
Coot	1451	1410	998
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8715</b>	<b>9386</b>	<b>6733</b>

	Fort Henry Ponds and Rygate Lake 19.10.	Fort Henry Ponds and Rygate Lake 18.11.	Fort Henry Ponds and Rygate Lake 14.12.	Banthorpe GP 17.10.	Banthorpe GP 15.11.	Banthorpe GP 13.12.
Canada Goose		12	11			
Greylag Goose		7	60		1	71
Mute Swan	7	7	12			
Egyptian Goose	2	2	4			
Mandarin Duck	2	2				
Shoveler	46	23	4			2
Gadwall	65	76	45			
Wigeon	20	87	79			
Mallard	92	139	58	30	14	23
Pintail	1					
Teal	110	61	16	2	4	11
Tufted Duck	33	57	77			
Goosander						
Little Grebe	9	5	13		1	
Grey Heron	2	2	3	1	2	1
Cormorant	3	1	2	1	1	1
Moorhen	49	36	12	1	1	2
Coot	141	130	157	1		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>647</b>	<b>554</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>111</b>

	Holywell Lake 18.10.	Holywell Lake 18.11.	Holywell Lake 21.12.
Canada Goose	15		26
Greylag Goose	12	3	
Mute Swan	2	2	2
Shoveler	4	6	
Gadwall	8	28	26
Wigeon	8	31	32
Mallard	33	91	32
Teal	2	6	6
Tufted Duck	12	20	32
Little Grebe	14	13	18
Grey Heron		1	
Little Egret	2	1	1
Cormorant	1	2	3
Moorhen	17	31	27
Coot		6	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>213</b>

Wildfowl counts October, November, December 2024 continued.

	Eyebrook Reservoir 20.10	Eyebrook Reservoir 17.11.	Eyebrook Reservoir 15.12.
Canada Goose	104	8	72
Barnacle Goose		1	
Greylag Goose	33		48
Mute Swan	96	82	102
Shelduck	2		7
Shoveler	5	18	18
Gadwall	66	28	53
Wigeon	58	253	590
Mallard	308	260	299
Pintail	39	20	18
Teal	393	162	985
Red Crested Pochard	1		
Pochard	13	33	33
Tufted Duck	36	37	145
Scaup	2		2
Goldeneye		14	23
Smew			3
Little Grebe	2		6
Great Crested Grebe	53		46
Grey Heron	2		3
Great White Egret		1	
Little Egret	3		1
Moorhen		2	
Coot	13	79	194
Kingfisher		1	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1238</b>	<b>1084</b>	<b>2303</b>



Eyebrook at the bridge. C  
Baxter

## BATS

**RECORDER Jenny Harris**

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### October to December 2024

There were few records of bat activity, although the weather was mostly quite mild in October. A **common pipistrelle** (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) continued to be seen occasionally at dusk foraging on the north side of my house in Woodland View and on 11 October Jayne Walker observed a **noctule**

**bat** (*Nyctalus noctula*) feeding high up over Exton village from 4.30pm for around 15 minutes. The noctule is one of our largest species, and is fairly distinctive in flight, often foraging well before it is dark.

Date	Details
13 Sept.	<b>Barbastelle bat</b> <i>Barbastella barbastellus</i> . This record was received in early October via Annette Faulkner of Lincolnshire Bat Group. James Simpson, of Lincolnshire Bat Rescue, collected a male barbastelle bat found at 2 Meadow View Industrial Estate, Essendine, Rutland, PE9 4LT, possible map ref TF047125. The bat, one of the UK's rarest species, had a forearm length of 38mm, roughly the same as a brown long-eared bat, and weighed 7.4g. Sadly it appeared to be starved and dehydrated, and died within five to ten minutes of being collected.
18 Oct.	<b>Brown Long-eared bat</b> <i>Plecotus auritus</i> . Female, probable juvenile born 2024. JH collected the bat from Oakham Vet. It had been found in Witham Avenue, Oakham, in the back of a fireplace, where finder said it could have been for up to six days. Forearm 37mm; it looked thin. Its left elbow was broken, with swelling extending the whole of its upper arm, over the elbow, and along its forearm. There were two pinprick sized holes on the edge of its right wing membrane, usually a sign of cat strike. I took it back to the vet for euthanasia.

Other studies of *Nathusius' Pipistrelles* in the UK show that bats ringed in England have turned up in eastern Europe and Russia. Colonies of these bats have been studied for decades in Ireland, where they are known to be resident and breeding. Do they also migrate between Britain and Ireland?

My thanks to everyone who has sent in records over the course of 2024, to those who have helped with the National Bat Monitoring Project roost and hibernaculum counts and

to members of the Leicestershire and Rutland Bat Group who are currently looking after my bats in care until I can have them back in spring. My thanks also to Tom Bennet and Tim Sexton whose work with the bat box scheme at Rutland Water and the Motus Project may provide new insight into the activities of the *Nathusius' pipistrelle* population around Rutland. For instance, where do the bats roost, where are they coming from and going to, and are they breeding here? Please continue to send me bat records to fill in some of the gaps.

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## BOTANY

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### October - December 2024

Nothing much to report for this edition of fieldfare. The weather has not been kind for being out and about looking for flowers. The severe weather forecast for the New Year's Day BSBI Walk meant that this was called off. Our chairperson did a short interview for Rutland Radio whilst we were both waiting at the meeting point in case anybody turned up, but nobody did.

Although the Oakham Walk didn't take place, Martin Grimes, Roy Lemon and Paul Bennet found 27 species in flower in Stamford. They followed the same path as last year and found more or less the same plants in flower. I've heard that Sarah Lambert the county botany recorder for Lincolnshire, whom we met at Swaddywell earlier in the year recorded an impressive total. Further information will be reported by BSBI in due course.

One record has been received. Terry Mitcham found **Snowdrops** and **Aconites** at Exton when he was doing his regular Wildfowl count at the weekend. I hope that I'll be able to report many more finds in the next edition. Until then I'm awaiting the snowdrops appearing in my garden!



**Winter aconite.**  
**C. Baxter**

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## BUTTERFLIES

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### October, November, December 2024

The year ended with a total of seven species being recorded in the final quarter with nearly all of the records in October. Two species were recorded in November and none in December. These are also the identical sentences from the introduction to LAST year's report.

The only **BRIMSTONE** records in October were from Martinthorpe (MTH) on 7th and Ketton Quarry (KQ) on 7th and 17th. There was an unusually late record from Manton (M) on 24th November.

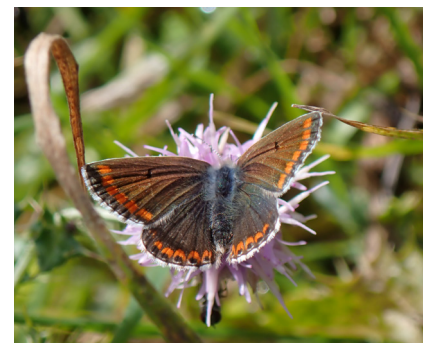
The last **LARGE WHITE** was at M on 11th October.

**RED ADMIRAL** was seen at MTH on 24th October and on 13th November.

A **PAINTED LADY** was at M on 4th October.

The only **PEACOCK** records were in October with two at KQ on 17th and one at Uppingham (UPP) also on 17th.

**Brown Argus on Creeping thistle.**  
**Photo Tim Caldicott**



The last **COMMA** was seen at MTH on 24th October.

Finally, a single **BROWN ARGUS** was seen at MTH on the unusually late date of 14th October. It was photographed on a Creeping Thistle flower.

I would like to thank Tim Caldicott and David Needham for their records.

## October, November, December 2024.

Following a wet summer and an equally damp autumn, conditions were promising for a bountiful fungi season. With my own foraging time limited this year, I wasn't able to complete as thorough a survey of all my usual sites through October to December as I would normally. However from the records I've received and my own findings, I still feel fairly confident to call it a good year. Fungi were numerous and of considerable size with grassland fungi being particularly abundant.

At Ketton an astonishing army of **Trooping Funnels** (*Clitocybe geotopa*), appeared with caps the size of dinner plates, standing in wide rings and meandering troops amongst the deep leaf litter of the beech wood. At Burghley Deer Park, a gathering of the biggest **Collared EarthStars** (*Geastrum triplex*), I've ever clapped eyes on, measured well over 11cm wide. Sixty plus of the chunkiest **White Saddles**, (*Helvella Crispa*), erupted around a single Oak Tree at Collyweston Deepes.

Of course size isn't everything and amongst the more diminutive species some lovely finds included a tiny colony of **Steely Bonnets**, (*Mycena pseudocorticola*) growing from a mossy trunk, many dainty **Parachutes** were observed by the keen-eyed with **Leaf, Twig, Bristled, Collared** and **Horsehair** identified, plus **Splitpea Shanklets** (*Collybia cookei*) and **Scurfy Twiglet** (*Tubaria furfuracea*) and a rare tiny hairlike **Club fungus**, *Typhula sclerotiodes*, were all recorded on the UK FungusDay walk with the LFSG, at Lyndon Nature Reserve and Gibbet Gorse Wood. The more generously sized **Warty Cavalier** (*Melanoleuca verrucipes*) was a **first county record**.

However it was the grassland fungi group, in particular the colourful **Waxcap** family, genus *Hygrocybe* that made the mycological headlines in Rutland and Leicestershire this season. Reports of these delightfully colourful little mushrooms came in thick and fast, alongside their fellow meadow allies the **Corals**, the **Earthtongues** and **Pinkgills**.

Ketton had **Meadow, Parrot, Blackening and Butter Waxcaps** along with Clipsham Yew Avenue's reliably impressive show of at least 7 Waxcap species with **Golden and White Spindles** present and **Grey, Ochre and Crested Corals**, plus a **Hairy Earthtongue**. At grassy pasture sites at Manton and Martinthorpe at least 7 but possibly 9 Waxcaps were recorded, which included **Slimy, Orange and Scarlet Waxcaps**, along with **Yellow and Apricot Clubs** and a number of **Pinkgills**. Collyweston Deepes also proved notable for its grassland fungi, with **Snowy, Honey and Glutinous** and the **robust Meadow Waxcaps** being most numerous, but also **Lilac Pinkgill** and possible other *Entoloma* sp. whose Ids need to be confirmed.

Still, it was the revelation of the well-loved Spring and Summer reserve Merry's Meadow, that proved the surprise Mycological discovery this season, boasting a staggering

15 different Waxcap species counted by LRWT recorders. Considering the rare and specialized flora that appear in this unimproved, old pastureland, it makes sense that accordingly this is a perfect site for the grassland fungi species in Autumn. The Waxcap list included **Scarlet, Crimson, Slimy and Nitrous, Golden, Parrot, Meadow, Snowy and Honey, Blackening and Spangle**, many of which I counted for myself in December. Six species of Club/Corals including **Smoky Spindles, Meadow Coral and Yellow Club** and two species of **Pinkgill** were also observed. The LRWT recorders visited MM in early November to carry out a **CHEGD** grassland survey. CHEGD is an acronym used to describe the different groups of grassland fungi and is used as a conservation tool to measure the diversity and significance of rarified semi-natural unimproved grassland. A habitat that has become seriously threatened throughout UK and Europe. I refer to LRWT:  
**Clavariaceae** – Fairy Clubs, Spindles and Corals  
**Hygrocybe** – Waxcaps  
**Entoloma** – Pinkgills  
**Geoglossaceae** – Earthtongues  
**Dermoloma** – Crazy Caps (and includes other key grassland species).

"For a site to be of international significance for waxcaps, 15+ species need to be identified and for national significance 11-14 species of waxcaps need to be found." I think its safe to say Merry's Meadow has once again proved itself an exceptional jewel in the crown of the county as a rich and precious site for conservation.

Around Rutland's borders notable sightings were the rare, **Coral Tooth** (*Hericium coralloides*), (see below) now being protected from sheep damage), the scarce **Silky Rosegill** (*Volvariella*) **Wrinkled Peach** (*Rhodotus palmatus*), **Deathcap** (*Amanita phalloides*) and **Snakeskin Grisette** (*Amanita ceciliae*) and the **Fenugreek Stalkball** (*phleogen faginea*).

I would like to thank all those who sent in records for this report.



The rare Coral tooth fungus found just outside the county. Photo Kate Fortune Jones



Some of the colourful waxcaps found at Merry's meadow Autumn 2024.  
 Photo's by Kate fortune Jones



Snowy waxcap



Meadow waxcap



Golden waxcap



Scarlet waxcap



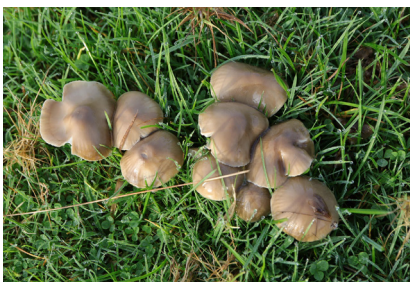
Pinkgill sp.



Parrot waxcap

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Notable fungi found at other sites in the county.



Slimy waxcap. Tim Caldicott



Orange waxcap. Tim Caldicott



Indigo pinkgill. Tim Caldicott

The photographs above found in grassland at Manton and Martinsthorpe



Clipsham. Apricot club. K fortune Jones



Ketton. Butter waxcap. K. Fortune Jones



Clipsham. White spindles. K. Fortune jones.

## OCT NOV Dec 2024

It has been a quiet time for wildlife recording, but it was reassuring to hear the exciting autumn sound of **Fallow deer** rutting on 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> October from Tolethorpe Oaks and Woodhead wood in Great Casterton parish. Three fallow deer were flushed from Tunneley wood in December, by Terry Mitcham who commented that they are less common now than previously. Three **Roe deer** were seen at Belmesthorpe in October. **Muntjac** appeared frequently on the trail camera at Langham, and also at RWNR, where a half-grown fawn was flushed at Field 16, and an adult crossed the track behind F16.

**Badgers** have been seen regularly during October and November on the trail camera at Orchard road Langham. Dead badgers have also been seen at the side of A6121 and A606 in early November. **Grey Squirrels** made regular visits to the trail camera and were often seen at RWNR particularly around Field 16 ponds. Unusually, there were no hedgehogs recorded on the trail-cam at Langham during October and November, but there were 10 records of visits by **Woodmice** in that period.

There have been very few **Brown hare** reports; one near the railway line at Wing, and another at Great Casterton, close to the Walk farm path. The one **Rabbit** report came from Preston lane in Ridlington.

A **Fox** was on the grass verge of Hambleton road on the Hambleton peninsula in November, and another one made 10 visits to the Langham trail- cam. (Marian Markham more recently spotted a male fox from Harrier hide, carrying a water rail on the ice.)

**Molehills** have sprouted up during the late autumn, particularly close to Sykes Lane and on verges at Empingham, near the cemetery at Exton Park, and at Uppingham.

At Eyebrook in mid-November an **Otter** was observed as it ate a largish fish after swimming along the middle of the Eye brook reservoir, and another report came from the raft at the outer end of Whitwell creek.

At Prior's coppice a **Weasel** was seen in October, but no stoats this time.

At RWNR the camera trapping project continued until early December. We were delighted when the floating raft succeeded in attracting a single **Water vole** on its first outing at Waderscrape hide in early October. The vole was followed by **Brown rats**, and amazingly a **Field mouse** swam out to it as well, appearing somewhat bedraggled as it climbed onto the platform from the water. Unfortunately, there were no more visits from the water voles. Fieldmice were photographed at Snipe Hide channel too, but didn't appear at Heron Bay. **Bank voles** were recorded at Waderscrape hide, Heron Bay, and Snipe hide channel. Brown rats were seen at most sites, including Waderscrape hide, Heron Bay pond and Snipe hide channel. **Common shrews** only appeared on the camera at Snipe Hide Channel, but **Pygmy shrews** appeared near Waderscrape hide. The delightful (well I think so!) **Water shrew** appeared on all five cameras

at Snipe hide channel, but not at the other sites.

In addition to the report above, a fox visited two of the cameras at Snipe hide channel, and an otter came to the floating raft and one other camera at Waderscrape.

Many thanks to those of you who take the time to contribute to RNHS records by sending me your sightings: C Baxter, A+H Biddle, C Gallimore, M Markham, T Mitcham, J+ J Morell, D Needham, P Rudkin and C Warman.

Photo M Markham.

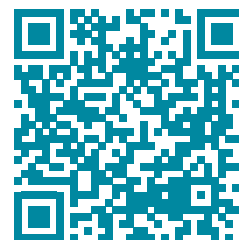


Linda has been sent an email from Helen O'Brien, Chair of the Leicestershire and Rutland Mammal group.

### Training opportunity - Bioacoustics. A two-part workshop starting Wednesday 12th March 18.00pm - 19.30pm.

This is a training opportunity on Bioacoustics that the Mammal Society are running. "Bioacoustics is an emerging science holding great potential to benefit wildlife monitoring, research and conservation." Cost will be £6 for members and £10 for non-members .

If you would like to know more about this workshop you can download the QR code below for more information or get in touch with Linda Biddle who will direct you further.



# MOTHS

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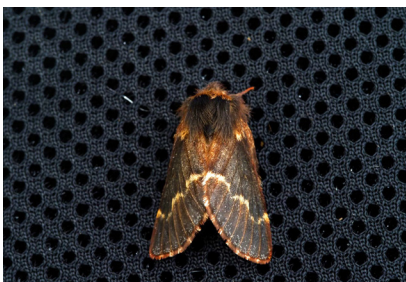
E-mail: p.bennett569@btinternet.com

## October to December 2024

Unsettled weather offered little opportunity for trapping and only one session was possible at **Lyndon**, albeit that this turned out to be a quite productive one with 51 moths of 13 species on the night of 1st November, which is above what would normally be expected at that time of year. A count of 8 **Feathered Thorn** was the highest total that have been recorded there from a single trap. Other late autumn species appearing in small numbers were **December Moth**, **Red-line Quaker**, **Yellow-line Quaker**, **Sprawler**, **Merveille du Jour** and a single **Dark Chestnut** which is less frequently recorded on site than most other autumn Chestnuts.



**Feathered thorn left, and Merveille-du-jour right. Lyndon. Roy Edwards.**



**December moth. Lyndon. Roy Edwards**



**Yellow-line quaker. Lyndon. Roy Edwards**



**The Sprawler. Lyndon. Roy Edwards**

A garden trap run in **Ridlington** on 8th November attracted a **Delicate** (see below) which is classified as an immigrant but abundant in some years. Although still seen as rare in the county, it has been sufficiently common in VC55 traps this year to be considered as a possible breeder in 2024. One unusual feature of this moth is that, taken from breeding experiments carried out on it, paler adults are more likely to be arrivals from a warmer climate with darker individuals being more likely to have emerged from cooler areas.



**Delicate moth.(Left). Photo Jacky Morrell. Ridlington**



**Mottled umber (right). Photo Tim Caldicott**

A male **Mottled UMBER** was seen presumably resting during the day in Gibbet Gorse on 29th December. They can appear in traps in large numbers on the rare occasions in winter when traps can be run, and can also be seen flying at dusk around mainly deciduous trees in search of the flightless females crawling along trunks. Humans can offer a helping hand with this by searching for them with a torchlight!

Another moth that appears to be expanding its range is **Toadflax Brocade**. It can be seen as an adult throughout the summer in various habitats including gardens and in late summer or early autumn, as an attractive caterpillar feeding mainly on Purple Toadflax. It has occasionally been observed on Red Valerian too and is therefore a species worth looking out for in these periods, especially as it is believed to be nationally under recorded.

**Toadflax brocade caterpillar. Photo Martin Grimes.**



Records were received of 2 other day flying moths, a late **Hummingbird Hawk-moth** was at Manton on 8th October and a **Red-green Carpet** was seen on the window in an Uppingham garden on 21st October.

Thank you to the following for their submissions:- C Baxter, P Bennett, T Caldicott, R Edwards, M Grimes, J Morrell.

Common pipistrelle. Not a recent sighting but found grounded near Catmose sinkhole late summer 2023.  
Photo C. Baxter. (SK851 093)



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