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## NOTICEBOARD



Photo, Phil Rudkin

### First outing of 2014!

The year started well with a damp, chilly but rewarding New Year Walk at Hambleton Peninsula. The Dragonflies talk by Ian Merrill a few days later included revelations about methods of recording, which people may be interested to follow up at the Wildlife Recording Conference on February 22 (see page 4). We have now settled comfortably into our new evening meeting venue at Lands End Way, and look forward to seeing you there and at the outdoor events in 2014.

Please don't miss Linda Worrall's Mycology notes on page 13 – elegant notes on 'ingenious fungi'.

# Fieldfare

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# RUTLAND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY AGM

Our AGM will be held on Tuesday 4th March 2014, before the talk for the evening.

All officers and other committee members automatically stand down at the AGM.

If you would like to nominate someone or offer to be nominated yourself, please contact the Secretary as soon as possible.

Also please let the Secretary know before 20th February if you have any other business to raise at the AGM.

## Minutes of RNHS Annual General Meeting 2013

The Annual General Meeting was held on Tuesday 5th March 2013, at the Church of England School, Burley Road, Oakham, with the President Mr J Hanbury in the Chair.

### 1 Apologies

Linda Biddle, Dr Clive Jones, Joan Levisohn, David Needham, Tim Newton.

### 2 Minutes of the previous AGM 2012

The Minutes were approved and signed. Proposed P Rudkin, seconded G Worrall.

### 3 Matters arising

Nil.

### 4 Treasurer's Report

The Society's accounts had been previously circulated. Martin Grimes commented on the satisfactory financial position of the Society. It was proposed by G Chiverton, seconded by R Lemmon, that the accounts be adopted and this was carried unanimously.

### 5 Re-appointment of Independent Examiner

It was proposed by D Whitefield, seconded by R Edwards, that Mr George Kirk be re-appointed as the Independent Examiner. This was carried unanimously.

### 6 Chairman's Report

The Chairman Ann Tomlinson gave her retiring report, commenting on 10 years as Chair of the Society. She praised the work of all officers and committee members who had supported her and had given their time and expertise to the Society. Her message to RNHS for the future was that it should embrace digital recording going forward, so that records could be more widely used to benefit wildlife and bring a wider range of members to the Society. J Harris proposed and A Biddle seconded that the Chairman's Report be adopted. This was carried unanimously.

### 7 Election of officers

The following officers having been duly proposed and seconded, they were elected unanimously:

*President:* Mr J Hanbury

*Chairman:* Mrs Linda Biddle

*Secretary:* Mr Roy Edwards

*Honorary Treasurer:* Mr Martin Grimes

*Programme Secretary:* Mrs Dawn Whitefield

*Fieldfare Editor:* Mrs Hendrina Ellis.

### 8 Election of committee

The following committee members having been duly proposed and seconded, they were elected en bloc:

Mrs Gill Chiverton

Mrs Jenny Harris

Mr Peter Scott

Mr Graham Worrall.

### 9 Any other business

1 P Rudkin thanked Peter Scott for running the Society's website and sound system.

2 On behalf of the Committee and Society, Jenny Harris presented Ann Tomlinson with a card and floral arrangement, thanking her for 10 years' service to the Society, which was unanimously supported by those present. Mrs Harris anticipated that the Committee would give further consideration to marking the Chairman's retirement in an appropriate way.

### 10 Date of next AGM

Tuesday 4th March 2014.

## Past President Sir David Davenport-Handley

A friend of Sir David Davenport-Handley has let the RNHS know that sadly, Sir David died in the early hours of the morning, Friday 10th January 2014, surrounded by his family, at his home Clipsham Hall.

Sir David was the second President of the Rutland Natural History Society, succeeding Sir Henry Tate, from 1981 to 2000. Phil Rudkin, who was RNHS Chairman during Sir David's presidency, writes:

*Sir David was a perfect President. He gave the Society regular permission to visit important private wildlife habitats on his land, including Clipsham Quarries and Pickworth Woods. He agreed whole-heartedly to the formation of the RNHS Clipsham Quarry Survey team, and the team's conservation work on the quarry banks, which still goes on to this day.*

*Sir David and Lady Leslie kindly allowed the use of their home to the Society, for fund-raising events, and also held a very entertaining evening social get-together for members, which was much appreciated.*

*Sir David endeared himself to the members with his personality and caring nature, and especially the firm and humorous way he conducted the Annual General Meetings; after the business was over he always stayed on, and sat down with the members for the rest of the evening to enjoy either a wildlife film or a lecture.*

*An abiding memory was his love of the Nuthatch, which often fed on his garden feeders. He would phone up in great excitement, and would often invite a few members to Clipsham Hall to join him, to observe this well-loved bird (from the adjacent parkland).*

*Phil Rudkin 15 January 2014*

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## Membership renewals

Many thanks if you have already renewed your membership.

If you haven't yet done so (£10.00 per adult for the year), please use this form and send it with your cheque (made out to the RNHS) to the Membership Secretary.

Please contact me if you have any queries.

*Margaret Conner, Membership Secretary*

### RNHS Membership Subscription 2014

Name(s):

Address:

Email:

Amount paid:

## Fish Recorder

Charles Gallimore was asked by the VC 55 Fish Recorder why we had no Fish Recorder for the RNHS. Any volunteers? Please contact Roy Edwards.

# Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Recording Conference 2014

Linda Biddle writes:

*I have attended the previous two conferences, and found them stimulating and fascinating. Many excellent speakers give comments on their recording work in the area, and the opportunity to meet and talk to them and others encourages and enthuses us with ideas of what is possible, and where we can go next with recording.*

*And this time we have our own Terry Mitcham and friends Steve Woodward and Michael Jeeves speaking! The conference is well worth attending.*

This event will be held on Saturday 22nd February 2014, at the Rothley Centre, Mountsorrel Lane, Rothley, Leicestershire (close to the village centre). The programme allows for long tea and lunch breaks so that those attending have plenty of time to view the various stands and talk to others. Also, as lunch is **NOT** provided, a long break will allow for those who do not bring their own food to venture out to the nearby fish and chip and other shops/pubs.

The event is **free**, but those wishing to attend **must** book a place. Contact Nathalie Cossa at the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust either by email [ncossa@lrwt.org.uk](mailto:ncossa@lrwt.org.uk) or telephone 0116 2487362.

## PROGRAMME

10.00 am	Welcome	Michael Jeeves
10.10 am	1000 species in a 1km square challenge	Mark Skevington
10.30 am	Recent activities of the Leicestershire Fungi Study Group	Richard Iliffe & Tom Hering
10.50 am	The Bradgate Park Estate and opportunities for recording of its fauna and flora	Peter Tyldesley
11.10 am	<i>Tea/coffee</i>	
11.40 am	Caddisflies in VC55	Ray Morris
12.00 noon	Watermead Country Park plant survey	Geoffrey Hall
12.20 am	The Rutland Bird Atlas	Terry Mitcham
12.40 pm	<i>Lunch (bring your own sandwiches or get food in the village)</i>	
2.00 pm	Butterfly Conservation's Grizzled and Dingy Skipper project	Bill Bacon
2.20 pm	Pushing up the daisies – the flora and fauna of Leicestershire churchyards	Steve Woodward
2.40 pm	Woodhouse and Woodhouse Eaves Bioblitz 2013	Maggie Morland, Cathy Schou & Kate Moore
3.00 pm	Questions and comments	
3.15 pm	<i>Tea/coffee and a last chance to view stands and talk to others</i>	
4.00 pm	<i>Finish</i>	

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# RUTLAND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY EVENTS

Full details of all these events can be found on our website at [www.rnhs.org.uk](http://www.rnhs.org.uk).

## OUTDOOR EVENTS

### **Saturday 22 February    AN OUTING TO THE RAPTOR FOUNDATION    11.00 am**

*An outing to the Raptor Foundation, The Heath, St Ives Road, Woodhurst, Cambs PE38 3BT (phone 01487 741 140, [www.raptorfoundation.org.uk](http://www.raptorfoundation.org.uk), grid ref: TL 336 758). Allow at least an hour to get there, aiming to arrive about 10.30 am for coffee. Programme as follows:*

- 11.00 am    *Tour of park*
- 12.00        *Indoor or outdoor flying display depending on weather*
- 1.00 pm     *Lunch*
- 2.00 pm     *Another flying display with a different bird.*

*Tour, flying display plus lunch and coffee, £9.00 per head if 12 or more people. Otherwise normal prices. Please phone Dawn Whitefield 01664 454578 by Friday 14th Feb if you wish to have lunch (or with any queries).*

### **Sunday 30 March            COLLYWESTON GREAT WOOD            10.00 am**

*Led by Chris Gardiner, we have permission to investigate this limewood belonging to the Cecil Estate. Park in yard off the A47 almost opposite the Collyweston turning. (OS Landranger 141 Grid ref: TF 005 017) Queries: please call Linda Biddle on 01780 762108.*

### **Saturday 19 April            WOODLAND BIRDS AT PRIOR'S COPPICE            9.30 am**

*Led by Phil Rudkin, RNHS, this should – weather permitting – be a wonderful morning to encounter spring. Meet at the entrance to Prior's Coppice, please park carefully. (Grid ref: SK 832 049) Queries: please call Phil on 01780 762 998.*

## INDOOR EVENTS

The venue for the RNHS indoor meetings is Voluntary Action Rutland (VAR), Lands End Way, Oakham, Rutland LE15 6RB.

### **Tuesday 4 February            A LOOK AT BEETLES            7.30 pm**

*By Tim Newton, RNHS, fanatical beetle expert who is sure to convert you to their charms (if you aren't already converted after the RNHS outing to the Natural History Museum on November 12).*

### **Tuesday 4 March            AGM FOLLOWED BY THE SECRET RIVER NENE 7.30 pm**

*By Sarah Lambert, a keen naturalist who spends a lot of time walking along the river and photographing the many species to be found there. On Saturday 17 May she will be leading a walk for us by the Nene.*

### **Tuesday 1 April            FOREST INVADERS            7.30 pm**

*A very topical talk on trees and problems with alien pests and diseases by Michael Biddle, who works for the Forestry Commission from Bristol, looking at the national spread of infections.*

## LEICESTER AND RUTLAND WILDLIFE TRUST RUTLAND GROUP

Rutland Group indoor events are held at the Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre, Egleton; admission £1 includes tea/coffee/biscuits. See [www.lrw.org.uk](http://www.lrw.org.uk), or phone 0116 272 0444 in office hours, for other events in Leicestershire and Rutland, including guided walks.

**Monday 17 February**      **WOODPECKERS**      **7.30 pm**

*A talk by RNHS Orthoptera Recorder and sound expert Phil Rudkin.*

**Monday 17 March**      **WATER, A PRECIOUS RESOURCE**      **7.30 pm**

*By Chis Gerrard of Anglian Water.*

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## LINCOLNSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST BOURNE GROUP

Bourne Group indoor meetings are held in the Methodist Church Hall, Bourne, and start at 7.30 pm. Refreshments are available at all indoor meetings. A donation of £1.50 as an admission fee is requested, children free.

For details of the LWT Bourne Group's events, see [www.freewebs.com/bournetrust/programme.htm](http://www.freewebs.com/bournetrust/programme.htm).

For details of other LWT Lincstrust events, see [www.lincstrust.org.uk](http://www.lincstrust.org.uk), or phone 01507 526 677 in office hours.

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## WEATHER SUMMARY Roy Lemmon

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

### November 2013

**Atmospheric pressure and wind** Pressures were relatively low for the first ten days and the month's lowest pressure of 990 mb was recorded at 0900 on the 5th. After this pressures were generally elevated to the end of the month with the maximum 1038 mb on 26th. Winds were rather variable in direction to the 18th, mostly SW-W with occasional days when they were NW, but from 19th to the end they were NW-N and correspondingly cool. Winds on 14th were gusting up to 17 knots at 0900 hours.

**Temperature** This was a cold month, my mean minimum, 2.69 °C, was the 8th coldest in the last decade; and the mean maximum, 9.54 °C, was the 9th equal lowest in the same period. The Central England temperature for the month was 1.1 °C below the long term mean and nationally only 27 Novembers in the last 100 have been colder. However I recorded only 3 air frosts in the month and these included the lowest night minimum of -2.2 °C on 18th to 19th. The highest daytime temperature I recorded was 14.2 °C on the 6th and the highest national figure, 16.5 °C, was recorded in Exeter, Devon, on the same day. Here the last 10 days of the month felt especially cold due to the wind chill.

**Rain** The total recorded here was 44.7 mm (1.76 inches) or 78% of my LTM and this compares with 152% of LTM for November 2012. 82% of the month's rainfall fell in the first 11 days and there was no recordable precipitation in the last 8 days of the month. Total rainfall averaged over England and Wales was 2.52 inches or 61% of LTM.

**Sunshine** A sunny month, averaged over England and Wales, the total was 86 hours or 123% of LTM. On the 19th Cottesmore and Wittering both recorded 7.5 hours which was the highest total in the country.

### December 2013

**Atmospheric pressure and wind** The month was split into two halves as far as pressures were concerned, the first half saw high pressures and the second half gave way to much lower ones together with the high winds and rain that characterize these cyclonic conditions. The highest pressure occurred on the 2nd at 1035 mb and the lowest, 977 mb, on the 24th; and while this is quite a low pressure it is by no means the lowest I have recorded – that distinction goes to 11th October 2000 and 14th November 2002 when 961 mb was reached on each day.

This month the lowest pressure nationally, 936.8 mb, was reached at Stornoway in the Western Isles and was the lowest in the UK since December 1886. Winds were almost entirely SW-W throughout the month and the second half saw gales on several days, including the 27th when I recorded gusts to 35 knots at 0900 hours. Rather unusually gusts of up to 32 knots were recorded on the 5th at the same time.

**Temperature** A warm December, overall the warmest in the last decade from my records. The mean minimum, 2.55 °C, was the third warmest in that period but the mean maximum at 9.39 °C was the highest, well ahead of 2006 (8.77 °C), and 2011 (8.53 °C). The lowest overnight minimum was -1.6 °C on 10th to 11th. On only one other night, 24th to 25th, did the mercury dip below 0 °C and then only to -0.1 °C. The highest daytime

maxima were 13.4 °C and 13.5 °C on 16th and 15th respectively. The Central England temperature for this month was 1.8 °C above the long term mean.

**Rainfall** At this station I recorded 46.0 mm of rainfall or 92% of my LTM. During the first half of the month just 2.9 mm or 6.7% of the month's total fell making the second half relatively wet. However we lived up to our reputation as a very dry part of the country and avoided the floods which were so devastating elsewhere. Over England and Wales the total averaged rainfall was 5.21 inches or 136% of LTM.

**Sunshine** Averaged over England and Wales the total was 60 hours, which is 114% of the LTM. On the 17th, Cottesmore was the sunniest place recorded in the country with 6.1 hours of sunshine.

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

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



### November and December 2013

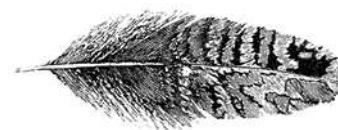
No records were received from members in these two months. However, Great Crested Newts were observed in the recorder's cellar in Wing in both months, three different individuals being seen. A rather surprising observation on 18th November in my garden pond whilst clearing out the excess gubbins was of a single tadpole. Tadpoles in

ponds in November are not that unusual, but it is four years since Common Frogs last laid spawn in my garden pond. Either spawn was laid without my realising it or it had reached my pond by some other agency such as birds' feet. Mallards certainly like my pond.

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## BIRD REPORT compiled by T. Mitcham

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



### November and December 2013

*An impressive variety of wildfowl was the focus during the final months of 2013 with scarce species at both reservoirs. My own favourite was a stunning and very approachable male Velvet Scoter at Eyebrook, where a Ring-necked Duck was also on show. A Green-winged Teal and up to three Long-tailed Ducks at Rutland Water restored the competition between the two reservoirs! There were also one or two very late summer migrants but garden birdwatching, by contrast, seemed less exciting with low numbers of most species and some food going uneaten. Dare we hope for colder weather to bring in more birds from the countryside (are they there?); perhaps not but some variety would be very welcome.*

*Please check the list of required records on our website when considering which species to report in 2014 – it will save us all time and effort.*

*Good birdwatching in 2014 and my thanks to everyone who has submitted records in 2013, including: P Bennett, A & L Biddle, T Caldicott, A & J Comber, Dr C Gallimore, M & G Griffin, J Harris, P Langston, LROS, R Lemmon, E & P Mann, I Misselbrook, T Mitcham, J Nourish, L Park, J S & J Rodgers, P Rudkin, A R & M A Thorp, M Winslow, L Worrall.*

- Bewick's Swan.** Three adults were at RW(Eg) between 11 and 13.11.
- Egyptian Goose.** Away from RW reports came from Martinsthorpe (up to six), LFP (three), Lynd and Ext Park (pairs).
- Ruddy Shelduck.** A pair were at EBR from early Nov to the end of the year.
- Mandarin Duck.** Three were at RW near Ggorse on 17.12.
- Green-winged Teal.** A male was at RW by the Sailing Club from 10.11 to 07.12.
- Pintail.** Three were at FHP on 02.11.
- Red-crested Pochard.** Noted irregularly at RW from 02 to 18.11 with a max of c.30 on 04.11. At EBR there were three on 01.12 with a pair on 13 and 27.12.
- Ring-necked Duck.** A female was at EBR from 03.11 to 17.11 and from 22 to 29.12.
- Scaup.** A female was at EBR on 13.11. At RW there were up to three between 03.11 and 15.12 (Dam and NA).
- Common Scoter.** Noted at RW (Dam and NA) with a max of four on 02 and 13.11.
- Velvet Scoter.** A male was at EBR between 09 and 26.12.
- Long-tailed Duck.** Two were at RW(NA) with three present there from 07.12 to the end of the year.
- Smew.** Three at RW(Eg and NA) on 21.11 were the first arrivals with birds at EBR from 23.11. Max counts were five at EBR on 26/27.12 and four at RW from 10.12.
- Red-breasted Merganser.** A female/imm was at RW between 20.11 and 04.12.
- Goosander.** A pair were at Martinsthorpe on 12.11. Two were at EBR on 16.11 and three were at LFP on 19 and 29.12.
- Grey Partridge.** One or two called at Rid, Prest and Pilt on two Nov and three Dec dates. A covey of 12 by Stoke Dry crossroads on 22.11 was a good record.
- Black-throated Diver.** One was at RW(Dam) on 25.12.
- Great Northern Diver.** One was at RW(Dam and Whit) from 07.12 to the end of the month.
- Shag.** An imm was at RW(Dam and BFP) between 05 and 17.11.
- Bittern.** Two were seen fairly regularly on Lagoon 3 at EG from 04.11 to the end of Dec.
- Little Egret.** One flew over Pilt on 29.11, and one was by the Gwash at Ryll on 13.12.
- Great White Egret.** One flew over at Martinsthorpe on 02.11.
- Little Grebe.** There was a max of 20 at FHP on 17.12.
- Black-necked Grebe.** Three were at RW(NA) from 02.11 to 15.12 with four noted from 17.12 to the end of the month.
- Water Rail.** Three were at RW(Eg) on 09.11 and one at LFP on 10.12.
- Red Kite.** Well reported. The max count was six feeding in a field near Pilt on 08.12.
- Marsh Harrier.** An imm male was at EBR on 29.12.
- Hen Harrier.** A ring-tail was reported at Greet Valley GC on 07.11.
- Sparrowhawk.** One tried unsuccessfully to catch a Blue Tit in a Lang garden on 29/30.11. A more successful bird caught prey near Horn Mill on 03.12.
- Kestrel.** Hunting birds were well reported with records from Borderville, RW, HM/FHP, EW, QF, Norm and Emp.
- Merlin.** One was at RW(Eg) on 10.12.
- Peregrine.** One was seen regularly at Martinsthorpe throughout Nov, and one was over the Centre at Eg on 29.11. One flew north over Man on 05.12.
- Ringed Plover.** One was at RW on 18.11.
- Golden Plover.** At RW there were 753 on 10.11 and 170 on 15.12. c.25 flew north at EBR on 16.11 and there were 30 there on 15.12. 85 were on stubble near Northfields Farm, Stam, on 29.12.
- Grey Plover.** One was at RW on 26.11
- Lapwing.** 700 were at RW on 10.11 and an impressive 2822 there on 15.12, when there were 450 at EBR. c.100 flew east at Martinsthorpe on 20.12 and 300 SW at Leigh on 29.12.
- Dunlin.** Present at both reservoirs in varying nos throughout both months. Max counts were 30 at EBR on 06.12 and 27 at RW on 15.12.
- Jack Snipe.** One was at RW(Eg) on 10.11.
- Snipe.** At RW there were 21 on 10.11 and 23 on 15.12. Four were flushed from an oilseed rape field near Upp on 23.11 and one or two were noted at LFP, Martinsthorpe and Wg in Dec.
- Curlew.** Six were at RW on 10.11 and nine on 15.12. Small flocks (possibly including the RW birds) were seen regularly over Martinsthorpe in Nov with a max of 15 on 04.11. Up to seven were noted there in Dec.
- Woodcock.** Three in Greet Wood Near on 09.11 were the first autumn birds. Two were in TunnW on 28.11 and 08.12 with singles seen at KQ and Leigh.



- Black-tailed Godwit.** One was at EBR on 10.11.
- Redshank.** At RW there were 18 on 10.11 and 12 on 15.12.
- Green Sandpiper.** One was at EBR on 01.11 and 23/24.11. One or two were at RW from 25.11 to 15.12 and one was on the stream at Greet Valley GC on 18.12.
- Black-headed Gull.** c.270 were at FHP on 02.11.
- Stock Dove.** A roost near Pilt held c.60 on 29.11 and c.100 on 08.12. Up to five scavenged at feeders in Norm during Nov and Dec.
- Woodpigeon.** 1700 flew south at Martinsthorpe on 04.11, 900 flew south over Berrybutts Spinney (RW) on 08.11 and there were 600 south at Leigh on 10.11. Migrants or local birds dispersing from roosts?
- Collared Dove.** Peak garden counts were ten in Oak on 18.11 and 12 in Stam on 06.12.
- Barn Owl.** A late brood of two was reported from Stoke Dry on 17.11 – our only one this year. Singles were reported from Leigh, RW and Pilt.
- Little Owl.** One at FHP on 02.11 was the only record.
- Tawny Owl.** Up to four called throughout Nov and Dec at Leigh, RW, Wg, Martinsthorpe, Man, and LyndW.
- Long-eared Owl.** One was flushed from a hedge on Beaumont Chase on 23.11, sadly just out of county!
- Kingfisher.** Singles were noted at RW(Dam), Ext Park, LFP and Wg.
- Great Spotted Woodpecker.** Up to three visited feeders at Norm in both months.
- Rook.** c.350 fed on pasture near GtCast on 22.12.
- Raven.** One or two were reported over Martinsthorpe, Leigh, Pilt, StretW, FHP, RW and Wg.
- Willow Tit.** One was at Greet Wood Near on 09.11. One or two were at LFP, Pilt and Martinsthorpe in both months.
- Marsh Tit.** Noted at RW(Gorse) [three], Wg [two] and TunnW [one], all in Dec.
- Sand Martin.** A very late bird was at RW(Eg) on 02.11.
- Cetti's Warbler.** One sang by Lagoon 3 at Eg on 15.12.
- Chiffchaff.** One was at LFP on 07 and 10.11 and near RW Sailing Club on 13.11, with one at Gorse on 17 and 26.12.
- Blackcap.** Singles were at LFP on 07.11 and at Man on 03.12.
- Lesser Whitethroat.** A very late bird was seen near Martinsthorpe on 01 and 06.11.
- Nuthatch.** Noted at feeders in TunnW and at Norm in both months.
- Starling.** Westward autumn passage was observed at Martinsthorpe between 06 and 25.11, with flocks of up to 1290 (14.11) on five dates.
- Fieldfare.** A rather belated arrival saw the first flock of 60 at FHP on 02.11, with 60 near Pick on 11.11, heralding a large movement with 1100 west at Martinsthorpe next day and continuing passage throughout the week, e.g. 1220 west on 16.11. Between 100 and 200 frequented North Brook valley near HM from 26.11 and 12.12, feeding on haws. Ten were in a Bden garden on 27.12.
- Song Thrush.** Full song was heard at Norm from 10.11 at Norm and at RW(Lynd) on 17.11.
- Black Redstart.** A female type frequented the south end of RW(Dam) from 11.12 to the end of the year.
- Stonechat.** A pair was at RW(Eg) throughout both months from 03.11.
- Tree Sparrow.** Two were noted near Whiss on 15.11 and c.20 were at feeders at EBR Fishing Lodge on 10.12.
- Grey Wagtail.** Two were at RW(Dam) on 09.11. A single was at FHP on two Dec dates and there were three at Greet Valley GC on 26.11.
- Pied Wagtail.** 15 were in a field by Oak Canal on 26.11.
- Meadow Pipit.** The only record was of two at QF on 29.1.2
- Chaffinch.** A roost at Leigh held large nos throughout Dec, with a max of 770 leaving it on 15.12.
- Brambling.** Two were on feeders at RW(Lax Hill) on 02.11 and two were at Greet on 08.11. Two were at a Man feeder on 12.11 and one or two were at RW(Berrybutts Spinney) in mid-Nov. The Leigh finch roost was occupied from 17.11 to the end of the year with nos increasing from 20 to an impressive max of 260 present on 29.12.
- Greenfinch.** c.80 fed on a game cover sunflower crop at Pick on 19.11.
- Goldfinch.** 30 fed in trees near QF on 29.12.
- Siskin.** 26 in alders by Heron Bay at RW on 19.12 was the only record.
- Linnet.** c.100 were at RW (Sailing Club) on 03.11 with 60 there on 28.11. Game crops north of HM attracted c.60 on 26.11.
- Snow Bunting.** One flew over RW(Eg) on 15.11 and one was at the Dam on 25.11.

**Yellowhammer.** Some encouraging flocks were reported: c.50 were near HM on 16.11, c100 at Martinsthorpe on 16.11 with 60 there on 27.11 and 42 on 09.12. c.80 fed on old pasture near

East Wood, GtCast on 22.12 and there were c.40 near Northfields Farmhouse on 29.12.  
**Reed Bunting.** c.10 were near HM on 03.12.

## Wildfowl Counts – Rutland Water and Eyebrook Reservoir

	Rutland Water		Eyebrook Reservoir	
	10.11.13	15.12.13	10.11.13	15.12.13
Mute Swan	275	187	154	119
Pink-footed Goose		1		
Greylag Goose	456	235	170	200
Canada Goose	429	689	190	157
Barnacle Goose	11	11		
Egyptian Goose	98	34		
Ruddy Shelduck			2	2
Shelduck	1	5		1
Mandarin Duck		2		
Wigeon	5310	2945	360	451
Gadwall	969	591	211	162
Teal	945	1495	312	181
Green-winged Teal	1			
Mallard	983	653	138	122
Pintail	59	69		
Shoveler	116	44		
Red-crested Pochard	22			
Pochard	37	90	123	108
Ring-necked Duck		1		
Tufted Duck	1699	1824	522	376
Scaup	2	3		
Long-tailed Duck		2		
Velvet Scoter				1
Goldeneye	52	237	4	46
Smew		5		
Goosander		24		
Great Northern Diver		1		
Cormorant	187	89	16	63
Shag	1			
Bittern	1	2		
Little Egret	6	7	3	3
Grey Heron	11	10	2	4
Little Grebe	155	87	3	
Great Crested Grebe	339	286	36	32
Black-necked Grebe	3	3		
Water Rail		1		
Moorhen	145	80	5	2
Coot	3540	644	195	305
Kingfisher		1		

## Wildfowl Counts: Banthorpe, Holywell and Exton

	Banthorpe Gravel Pit		Fort Henry Ponds and Exton Park Lake		Holywell Lake	
	08/11/13	14/11/13	08/11/13	14/11/13	10/11/13	15/11/13
Mute Swan	2	2	9	8	2	2
Greylag Goose	73		105	53	41	42
Canada Goose					114	81
Egyptian Goose			2	2		
Wigeon			30	113	2	
Gadwall			139	140	40	48
Teal	19	2	20	16	34	20
Mallard	42		71	158	108	166
Shoveler			5	1	6	3
Pochard		1				
Tufted Duck	12	7	50	69	32	26
Cormorant				1		
Grey Heron	1	1	1			
Little Grebe			12	13	8	9
Moorhen	4		31	18	12	14
Coot			58	67	22	15
Kingfisher				1	1	1

## BOTANY NOTES

*There are no Botany notes this issue. Until we have a new Botany Recorder, please send your Record Cards and other information to Linda Biddle, marking the envelope on the outside 'Botany record'.*

## BUTTERFLY NOTES compiled by Alistair Lawrence

11 Edmonton Way, Oakham, Rutland LE15 6JE. Telephone: 01572 770492



### November/December 2013

Despite the relatively mild autumn and lack of night frosts, the damp weather has caused butterfly activity to be minimal and only three reports have been received for this period.

Two **Peacocks** were seen at Rutland Water (Egleton Reserve) on the track to Lagoon 4 on 27 November.

A single **Red Admiral** was seen flying in the sunshine in Barrowden on 17 December whilst on the following day (18th) a **Small Tortoiseshell** came out of hibernation in Egleton Church and was observed on the flower arrangements.

*My thanks to A Biddle, R Burchnall and L Worrall for their contributions*

## MOTH NOTES compiled by Jean Harvey

4 Clarksdale, Great Easton, Market Harborough LE16 8SP. Telephone: 01536 770259



### November /December 2013

Firstly, I must apologise for not including the list of 18 Lepidoptera Leaf Miners found in Ketton Quarry in September, in my last moth notes. I received the records following the joint meeting with the British Plant Gall Society and subsequently forwarded them to Adrian Russell (County Recorder for VC 55). He was very interested and informed me that one, *Emmetia angusticoella*, has not been recorded in VC 55 previously. He was contacting Keith Palmer (BPGS) to discuss the list of results. I shall be including all these records in the next Annual Report. It is important that we should contribute even in a small way to National Records which are to the benefit of all.

News of other moths at this time of the year is obviously sparse but both November and December remained mild to enable a few species to continue on the wing. The garden trap at Barrowden was switched on three times but only attracted 8 moths of 5 species in early November. At Rutland Water reed beds, the trap was operated on 7 occasions, the highest totals being 51 moths of 13 species in mid November. Migrant Dark Sword Grass continued to be seen here and other species worthy of mention were Mottled Umber, Scarce Umber and even a Pale Brindled Beauty which usually flies from January to March. Finally, a Happy New Year to all and may 2014 bring some successful recording.

*My thanks for information from R Follows, R Lemmon, K Palmer and A Russell.*

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## ORTHOPTERA REPORT compiled by Phil Rudkin

10 Brooke Avenue, Stamford PE9 2RU. Telephone: 01780 762998

There were no orthoptera reports for these two months!

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## INSECTS AND OTHERS compiled by Gill Chiverton

20 Victoria Road, Stamford PE9 1HB. Telephone: 01780 753820



Despite the mild weather I have only one insect record to report – one 'over mature' female **Common Darter** (*Sympetrum striolatum*) was recorded in a garden in Oakham on 15th November.

*Thanks to Peter Scott for this observation.*

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## PLANT GALLS REPORT compiled by Roy Lemmon

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### November 2013

It is now virtually the end of the gall season and persistence is the name of the game. Not only does the observer need it to actually go out as the weather deteriorates but the remaining galls exhibit the same. Either the plants concerned are those that persist throughout the winter or the galls persist after the leaves have fallen. An example of the latter is the Marble gall on Oak which has been caused by a gall wasp much

earlier in the season and may stay on the tree for a year or two. The wasp of course is long gone.

Ketton Quarry woodland produced just two reports on the 7th, one caused by a mite on Beech and the other a gall wasp on Oak. Just two days later there were three reports from Bloody Oaks Quarry, all of them rusts, two on bramble and the other on Common Knapweed. At this time of the

year many rusts are in stage 3 of their life cycle, the one in which they over winter.

The final report of the month was from Eyebrook plantation, i.e. the Stoke Dry end of the reservoir, and contained a total of 5 records, 3 of them rusts and the others gall wasps. The rusts were on bramble, Ground Ivy and Common Mallow, and those caused by wasps were the aforementioned

Marble gall and the Common Spangle gall both on Oak. On the thesis of persistence it was noticeable that many trees seemed loath to shed their leaves, one Buckthorn bush had what looked like a full complement of leaves and all a healthy green. Sadly I couldn't find any galls!

No records were received for December.

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## MYCOLOGY NOTES compiled by Linda Worrall

6 Redland Close, Barrowden LE15 8ES. Telephone: 01572 747302

### October/November/December 2013

This is a brief comment on our 'ingenious' fungi, as scientists at Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut now call them. They have found shiitake mushrooms *Lentinula edodes* and oyster mushrooms *Pleurotus sp* can control their local weather. High speed filming techniques together with mathematical modelling show the fruiting bodies of these gill fungi releasing water vapour; this creates convection currents which generate miniature winds to lift their spores into the air, and away they go. Chances are that other gill fungi do something similar, and have been doing so for millennia. Not at all are they 'passive spore dropping' basidiomycetes at the mercy of breezes. I am not at all surprised.

Clive Jones and I have long been fascinated by a group of basidiomycetes such as the Field Bird's Nest *Cyathus olla*. Its method of spore dispersal relies on rain splashing into its little cupped 'nests' and bouncing out the small 'eggs' or peridioles full of spores, together with an attached sticky coil termed a funiculus. The egg and its funiculus can travel up to a metre, then the glue sticks the eggs to low growing vegetation such as field edge litter. The eggs split and spores fall just where they have a good chance of developing. Clive has already observed Field Bird's Nests on field edges between Preston and Ridlington, but in October and November 2013 he found a new site fairly close by, directly off the north side of the A47 about a mile from Ayston, with three separate areas of the fungi around the edge of a field with winter stubble. There's obviously a stronghold in this pocket of Rutland.

Outside my 35 year old house is a small island of grass with some ornamental trees. The grass appears to be part of Barrowden's ancient past, as once again this early winter it held a flurry of velvet black Hairy Earth Tongues *Trichoglossum hirsutum* and several clumps of pristine White Coral Fungus *Clavulina cristata* as well as a scatter of Snowy Waxcaps *Hygrocybe virginea*. These species are typical of unimproved pasture or old grassland. Being ascomycetes, the earth tongue and coral fungus actively shoot their spores from the fertile outside layer, triggered by small changes in air pressure. If you put an ascomycete in a jar for a while and then take the lid off, you can see this "puffing" take place. I once kept some King Alfred's Cakes *Daldinia concentrica* on a low shelf for several months; one day I walked quickly past them, and a black cloud of their ascospores immediately smothered the shelf.

The Snowy Waxcaps on the grassy island, being gilled basidiomycetes, presumably create their own weather as in the Connecticut study, as do the rather chunky small brown *Arrhenia rickenii* which live in moss over the thin tarmac in my carport. These tiny but enterprising mushrooms flourished again this year in February and April, and also in October and December. Unusual in our vice-County 55, I believe they are only known in two other places, which are in Leicestershire. I can't think my tarmac is their preferred substrate; must be the moss. But then, in the ingenious Kingdom Fungi, it seems more normal to expect the unexpected! Never underestimate a fungus.

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

41 Woodland View, Oakham, LE15 6EJ. Telephone: 01572 755274

### **November/December 2013**

It is usually accepted that bats hibernate in winter. At the end of 2013, however, November and December were quite mild, with temperatures often into double figures even after sunset, in spite of frequent overnight rain. It is therefore likely that bats have been much more active than usual, especially brown long-eared bats that not only take moths that are flying at this time of year but are also able to find and pick up hibernating butterflies, such as peacock and small tortoiseshell, if they find them. A static bat detector placed at Brown's Hill Quarry in mid-December recorded bat activity on most nights, especially that of long-eared bats.

Tim Caldecott is obviously an 'early bird' and reported bats on three early morning dates in November. On 6.11 he reports a rather big bat

seen flying near a hedgerow at Martinsthorpe at 6.25 am; a large bat flying high in the open could be a noctule, which have certainly been seen at this time of year over the Rutland Water NR. On 7.11 a smallish bat was seen flying at Ridlington in the early morning and on 29.11 a small bat was flying at 7.20 am between the railway and the river Chater near Pilton.

While checking dormouse boxes in Tunneley Wood on 29.11, Terry Mitcham found a small bat which was probably a pipistrelle. The nestbox was about 10 feet off the ground on an oak tree; it was two-thirds full of moss, an old tit nest, and the bat was clinging to the unoccupied space above the nest on the front of the box. Terry apologised to the bat and closed the box.

*My thanks to Tim and Terry for the records.*

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## **MAMMAL REPORT** compiled by Linda Biddle

21 Waverley Gardens, Stamford PE9 1BH. Telephone: 01780 762108

*Thank you to all who have sent in reports during 2013 – and please be encouraged to get out and about and send in your own reports during 2014 – the more the better!*

### **November/December 2013**

An **Otter** was seen swimming and diving in the River Welland close to the Wakerley Bridge in the last week of November. Lots of fresh spraint was seen on mink rafts on the foreshore of Lagoon 2 at RW and at Dog Kennel cottage in early November, where more fresh spraint was found at the end of the month. In early December fresh spraint was found near Badger Hide, and later in the month on two occasions under the brick bridge on North Brook at Fort Henry. Otters are certainly around regularly, with at least 2 or 3 at RW, and others moving along rivers and streams in the area.

Signs of **Badger** activity are clear at several setts near Pickworth, latrines and paths worn smooth in the soil around the sett, and diggings obvious from several holes. A record passed to me by Jenny Harris recently mentions an adventurous young badger trotting along the road between Ashwell and Oakham at 2.30 pm one afternoon

in June. It went into the verge, then reappeared close to Jenny, hissing as she approached it. Returning after going home for a cat box the badger was still there and in danger of being run over, and Jenny and David Duckett of the badger group tried to catch it. It was too quick for them, and disappeared into a garden, after forcing its way under a gate. Between the two of them they finally managed to corner it, and David caught it and put it into the basket. It was taken to Leicester Wildlife Hospital, examined and found to be 16 weeks old, but very small for its age. If it had not been caught it would have either been run over or starved to death. Happily it was put with a young female at LWH and gradually released at a sett near the hospital. By the time you read this the young badgers of 2014 will be being born, and a new set of youngsters will be embarking on their risky and adventurous lives!

Three **Stoats** were reported in December, one at Egleton Centre approached the bird feeders near to the water, and at the end of the month one was seen clearly from Woodpecker Hide, running near birdfeeders close to the Centre. The area around the Centre is well supplied with bank voles, as we found at the July Bioblitz, so a stoat having decided to spend time in the area is not surprising! A photographic record of a stoat swimming in pursuit of a water vole was also received this month – showing that not only do mink predate these watery animals, but also stoats, otters, foxes; and even a kestrel has been seen to carry off a water vole at RW!

In early November as we walked along a track in Holywell Wood, a **Fox** came out of the undergrowth, starting to approach us, then realising our presence it turned and ran away up the track and into the vegetation alongside. A fox was also seen at Dawn's Paddock in November. A large dog fox crossed the main ride in Pickworth Wood on 12th December, and again on 18th December, and at Exton Park on the 29th a fox was flushed from bushes between Rygate lake and pond.

Three **Brown Hares** were seen regularly during November at Greetham golf course, and at the end of December one was seen on the road between Barrowden and Seaton, where they have often been seen this season. On 29th December another hare was seen in Tunnely Wood, the first in the area for several months. Hares have been less frequently reported this season, so hopefully there will be an increase again in spring. The only **Rabbit** reported was the black one seen previously at Banthorpe Gravel Pit.

**Hedgehogs** kept Linda Worrall busy during early November, two small and one medium animal visiting patio and carport regularly, and eating nuts enthusiastically, so that she was continually replenishing supplies. Her hedgehog box was full of leaves and twigs which were moved around regularly. Hogs visited for most of the month, at least one seen every day. Later in December the two smaller ones stopped appearing, but a medium-sized one continued to visit, and then on 27th a small to medium one was feeding in the carport at 10.0 pm, probably the last recorded in 2013. In Oakham Jenny Harris rescued a small hedgehog which was feeding on bird food in her garden. It was put in a box with dog food and water and later handed over to Hedgehog Rescue, who examined it. It was found to have lungworm, fatal if untreated, so well done Jenny!

A **Grey squirrel** was seen in November in Pickworth Wood, and a dead one on the road just past Tickencote on the road to Crossroads Farm.

Thirteen **Brown Rats** were counted under bird feeders at Dawn's Paddock one day in November.

Several observers have reported many signs of **Mole** activity between Horn Mill and Fort Henry along the valley, many fresh molehills showing a healthy population in this area. They are also very active in the lower meadow of Dog Kennel Field next to the A606 near the Egleton turn.

At Exton Park six or maybe seven **Bank Voles** (very difficult to count when they move so fast!) dispersed from under a reptile shelter on a limestone bank in mid November.

**Short-tailed voles** were disturbed in two areas of Dog Kennel Field in December.

A **Pygmy shrew** was found dead on the path to Lapwing hide at RWNR.

On 6th November **Water Vole** droppings and footprints were found on mink rafts at Dog Kennel cottage, near the bird-ringing hut and near Badger Hide at RW. At the end of the month positive findings (i.e. droppings!) were found on rafts at most of the sites in the reserve, including Dog Kennel stream, Burley Fish Ponds, the Pollards, Far Reed beds (Fields 45, 46 and 47), and the Birch plantation (Field 44) on Lagoon 3. In early December activity was confirmed near Shoveler Hide (Field 43 Lagoon 3) and near Smew Hide. In Wet Meadow (Field 28) a real water vole stronghold has been established, while in Heron Bay signs of activity have disappeared, and the ponds at Field 16 are still showing signs of water vole presence.

A **Roe Deer** was seen in the field to the north of Bloody Oaks Quarry, in early November.

Two **Muntjac Deer** were seen on the Egleton Reserve, and footprints are regularly seen in many parts of the Reserve, from the Pollards behind reedbeds (Field 45) to the ponds at Field 16.

Our regular deer reporters, the Thorps, saw three **Fallow Deer** in Pickworth Wood in late November, and none in Rutland during December. They are spending more time over the border in Lincolnshire, where numbers are still high. In mid November one buck and 7 hinds crossed a green on Greetham golf course, and a few days later deer slots were seen alongside Holywell Wood. At Pickworth during December two or three deer were seen on several occasions, and on the 21st one crossed the road opposite

Taylor's Farm, two were seen to the west of Pickworth Wood, and 3 at the east end, running from the wood where shooting was taking place. On the 27th about 20+ fallow were seen

standing in the centre of a field to the east of the Tickencote–Crossroads farm road, in a tight bunch, looking confused and disturbed, again perhaps because of shooting nearby.

*Records received from: A Biddle, M Branston, C Gallimore, J Harris, P Langston, A Lawrence, R Lemmon, T Mitcham, B & E Nicolls, M Winslow, L Worrall.*

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Another photograph from the first RNHS meeting of the year at Hambleton Peninsula.