



Adders, Dave Needham

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I know that normally we report on months March and April, and save May events for the July edition of *Fieldfare*, but I feel we should celebrate the lovely 50th celebration evening while the excitement is still buzzing around!

We had a really great evening of celebration, shared with many members, old and new, and friends of the society. Mike Dilger did all that had been asked of him, and performed with tremendous enthusiasm, sharing with us many fun moments, as well as demonstrating his obvious love for wildlife, both in the wider world and nearer home, and giving examples of those magical moments which stick in our memories for ever, and affect our lives for the better. His example of this was Bullfinches, watched feeding on dandelion seeds at close quarters, using skill and lots of energy to extract the valuable nutrients from the tiny seeds while hovering over the seed heads.

We hope that all of you who came enjoyed the evening, and thank all of you who contributed in any way to the planning and organisation. It was in many ways a 'BIG' event, and took lots of energy from many people to bring to fruition. The committee all hope that we will have raised the profile of the Society as a result of the publicity we sought and gained, and that we shall have encouraged more local people to come along to our meetings.

The May field visit to Burley Wood was also a magical morning! A Lesser Spotted Woodpecker kicked off the excitement within the first 15 minutes, but a report on this will follow later. The full and varied summer programme of field trips and workshops continues and we look forward to seeing lots of you there.

Linda Biddle, Chairman

## Natural History Museum: Orchid Observers Project

*Kath Castillo, Orchid Observers Project Officer, Natural History Museum London*



Pyramidal orchid, Peter Scott

Photograph wild orchids this summer and annotate museum specimens to contribute to climate change research at the Natural History Museum.

*Gathering new photographs of UK orchids and extracting data on flowering times from over 10,000 Museum specimens is a huge task, so we need your help, says Kath Castillo.*

**Orchid Observers** is a new project bringing together photography, biological recording and the online analysis of museum specimens to better understand the effects that climate change is having on the flowering times of UK orchid populations.

*By bringing these data together, we hope to develop a deeper understanding of the effects that climate change is having on this charismatic and much-loved group, some of which are declining – even in protected sites, which in turn may help inform how we can plan and protect key populations and areas.*

You can photograph orchids anywhere in the UK between now and September and upload your images to the website:

<http://www.orchidobservers.org> where you can also analyse flowering dates of museum specimens.

## The Lincolnshire Naturalists Union LNU

The LNU is the natural history society for Lincolnshire. Many RNHS members already receive the [free] LNU Bulletin on our next-door county. If you would like to add yourself to the mailing list, visit:

<http://www.lnu.org/wildnews.php>

## Millipedes on the march – look out for this one

*Steve Woodward & Helen Ikin, well-known Leicestershire naturalists*



*Polydesmus coriaceus*, Peter Sykes

Our visit to Egleton NR, Rutland Water, on 2 May 2015, was ostensibly a bird-watching outing ... but as invertebrate enthusiasts, we cannot get out of the habit of looking down rather than up! So it was that we noticed a millipede walking purposefully across one of the paths (SK8806). At a glance, we recognised it as one of the 'flat-back' group, order Polydesmida. A little later, we saw another doing the same, and then another - time to have a closer look. Having got one into a glass tube, we confirmed our initial impression. The animal lacked eyes and was shaped like an elongated aircraft-carrier on legs. Eventually, we counted eight millipedes with similar appearance, all behaving in the same way. Accurate identification of flat-backs requires microscope work, so SW took the specimen home to check. The specimen was an adult male, so his gonopods were examined closely. These are a pair of legs modified as hooks for coupling with the female – each species of *Polydesmus* has slightly different gonopods. I found the little internal spine that confirmed *P. coriaceus* (syn. *P. gallicus*) (Blower, 1985).

Why were they all marching around? – we do not know, but we imagine that they are males searching for females (presumably by scent, as they cannot see).

According to the local Atlas (Daws & Ikin, 2010) there are only four occupied tetrads for *Polydesmus coriaceus* in Rutland, but this animal may well be common and widespread – few people record millipedes.

Please send any records of this millipede to Gill Chiverton, RNHS Insect Recorder, who will pass them on.

## References

- Blower, J. G. 1985. Millipedes. *Synopses of the British Fauna* (New Series) No. 35. Linnean Society of London.
- Daws, J. & Ikin, H. 2010. The Millipedes of Leicestershire and Rutland. *LESOPS* 23.

## DIARY DATES

### RNHS field trips

*Full details of all these events can be found on our website at [www.rnhs.org.uk](http://www.rnhs.org.uk). If the weather is bad, please call the 'Queries' phone number in case of cancellation.*

- Saturday May 30, 10.00 am**    **Workshop: Botany**  
With John Rodgers, RNHS Botany Recorder, and Andy Lear, LRWT, at Merry's Meadows, one of the most diverse wildlife sites in Rutland. Meet at OS grid ref: SK 928155, park on the roadside at the beginning of the track.  
Queries: John Rodgers on 01572 757274
- Thursday June 4, 2.00 pm**    **Seaton Meadows Memorial Walk**  
Led by Joe Costley, Warden from Plantlife, to find wild flowers at this very special meadow (OS grid ref: SP 913979).  
Queries: Dawn Whitefield on 01664 454578
- Thursday June 11, 6.00 pm**    **Farm walk at Weldon House Farm, Caldicott**  
With farmer and environmentalist Andrew Brown. Weldon House Farm, 8 Uppingham Rd, Caldicott LE16 8RX. Farm talk and walk (choose short or long walk). (OS grid ref: SK 875944.) With the option of a meal and questions to Andrew afterwards at the Castle Inn, Caldicott, which must be booked personally.  
Queries: Dawn Whitefield on 01664 454578
- Saturday July 11, 11.00 am**    **Looking for butterflies at Ketton Quarry**  
Led by RNHS Butterfly Recorder Alistair Lawrence – meet in car park at Ketton Quarry reserve (OS grid ref: SK 978054). If you wish to stay into the afternoon, bring a picnic.  
Queries: Alistair Lawrence on 01572 770492
- Friday July 24, time tbc**    **Moth trapping at Clipsham Quarry**  
Led by RNHS Moth Recorder Jean Harvey and Leicestershire Moth Recorder Adrian Russell. Phone Jean in advance to book in and get details of timing. The gate will be locked behind us when we have all arrived. Turning from road, OS grid ref: SK 981156.  
Booking, to check time, and any queries: Jean Harvey on 01536 770259
- Sunday August 9, 11.00 am**    **Workshop: Insects, including Orthoptera**  
With RNHS Insect Recorder Gill Chiverton and RNHS Orthoptera Recorder Phil Rudkin. The morning session (about 2 hours) is in the Ketton Guide and Scout Hall, Pit Lane, Ketton, then after a picnic lunch (bring your own) the afternoon will be in nearby Ketton Quarry looking for the real things (OS grid ref: SK 978054).  
Queries: Phil Rudkin on 01780 762998.
- Thursday August 27, 7.30 pm**    **Workshop: Bats**  
With RNHS Bat Recorder Jenny Harris. At Lyndon Nature Reserve, a short introductory talk at the Centre followed by a walk to Gibbets Gorse, finishing back at the Centre about 10.00 pm for light refreshments. (OS grid ref: SK 894056).  
Queries: Jenny Harris on 01572 755274.
- Sunday Sept 27, 9.30 am**    **Workshop: Water birds**  
With RNHS Bird Recorder Terry Mitcham, at Fort Henry, Exton. Through the village, past the Buttercross and Home Farm onto the private estate road past Tunneley Wood (we have permission). Meet between the two lakes. (OS grid ref: SK 949 119)  
Queries: Terry Mitcham on 01780 751268.

**Note**    *The RNHS autumn programme starts on Tuesday 6 October, at Voluntary Action Rutland (VAR), Lands End Way, Oakham LE15 6RB, with a talk by Vin Fleming on fungi.*

## Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, Rutland Group

For events in Leicestershire and Rutland see [www.lrwt.org.uk](http://www.lrwt.org.uk) or phone 0116 262 9968.

### Sunday June 28, 2.00 pm **Bloody Oaks Quarry**

Always lots to see at this old quarry, SK 970108.

## Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, Bourne Group

For details of LWT Lincstrust events, see [www.lincstrust.org.uk](http://www.lincstrust.org.uk), or phone 01507 526677 in office hours.

### Sunday June 7, 10.30 am–4.00 pm **Deeping Lakes Open Day**

Come along to this stunning nature reserve. Located on the B1166, 1 km south of the automatic barrier level crossing in Deeping St James. Trust sales, refreshments, excellent home made cooking and locally grown plants will be on sale.

### Sunday July 11, 2.00 am **Guided walk – Lawn wood and Meadows Nature Reserve**

A gentle stroll around these secluded and very different nature reserves. Meet at the reserve entrance on Couthorpe Lane, between Castle Bytham and Creton.

## WEATHER

### March 2015



### RECORDER Roy Lemmon

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

**Atmospheric pressure and wind** For the first three days of the month and the last nine, pressures were low, but for the long middle period they were high. The highest I recorded was 1037.5 mb on the 5th. Wind direction as is often the case is much more difficult to summarise. From 1st–12th they were generally S–W, then NW–NE until the 27th, and finally SW–NW until the end of the month. Features of the month's winds were some high velocities and gusty conditions, especially noticeable in the first 10 days and also in the last four, with speeds often around or in excess of 15 kph at 09.00 hours.

**Temperature** This was another run-of-the-mill month as far as temperature was concerned, putting March 2015 sixth overall in the last 10 years. The figures were a mean night-time minimum of 2.42 °C, well behind March 2014 (3.3 °C) and a mean maximum of 11.25 °C this time, well behind 2012 (13.75 °C). There were 6 air frosts, the lowest being –2.3 °C on 7th–8th, which contrasts with the night of 27th–28th when the minimum was 7.6 °C. The highest daytime maximum was a balmy 16.1 °C on the 7th. The Central England Temperature for the month was 6.4 °C, some 0.27 °C above the long-term mean.

**Rain** Up to the 25th this had all the appearances of a very dry month, as only 1.1 mm of rain had fallen on the 1st and 2nd. This was redeemed by the remaining seven days in which a further 27.6 mm fell, giving a total of 27.7 mm (1.09 in) or 72% of my LTM of 25 years. There were 22 days in which no precipitation was recorded and a further 2 when 'trace' was all that could be put down as it was far too little to be measure.

Nationally the picture was rather different, averaged over England and Wales the total was 40.9 mm (1.61 in) which is 40% of the normal for the standard reference period 1981–2010.

**Sunshine** A sunny March, the total averaged over England and Wales was 146.2 hours or 134 of LTM; in the past 100 years only 10 Marches were sunnier.

### April 2015

**Atmospheric pressure and wind** Pressures started high and were maintained until the 24th when there occurred a period of instability which lasted until the end of the month. The highest pressure I recorded was 1036 mb on the 7th, and the lowest was 999.5 mb on the 30th. There was a preponderance of 'Northerly' winds

in the month and this produced some clear blue skies but, as one would expect, a considerable wind chill. In the last 3 days winds reverted to westerly and became noticeably gusty.

**Temperature** A cold month as indicated above. The mean minimum, 3.95 °C, was 6th in the decade 2006–2015, whereas the mean maximum at 15.93 °C was 4th. There were just 3 air frosts and among these of course was the lowest minimum for the month at –0.4 °C on the night of 18th–19th. There were 4 days when the maximum exceeded 20 °C and the highest was 21.1 °C on the 10th. Nationally, the picture is somewhat different; the CET was 9.0 °C (48.3 °F), just 1.28 °C (2.3 °F) above the average. There have been only two warmer Aprils in the last 100 years, 2007 and 2011.

**Rain** Another month when rainfall was well below the norm, the total I recorded was 16.5 mm (0.65 in) which is 38% of the LTM for this locale. Looking back at records for April for the last few years reveals a very erratic picture. Levels have been generally well below the LTM, April 2011's total was 2.3 mm, but then April 2012 saw 150.2 mm, nearly 6 inches of rain in a month!

This year there were 20 days with no detectable rainfall, and when it occurred amounts were small, the highest being 3.8 mm (0.15 in) on the 25th. Nationally the picture was similar, the total averaged rainfall was 23.1 mm (0.91 in), some 29% of the norm.

**Sunshine** A very sunny month, the total averaged over England and Wales was 233 hours or 149% of LTM. Over the last 100 years only 2 Aprils were sunnier, i.e. 2011 and 1984.

The national figures are from Philip Eden's Weather watch column in the *Sunday Telegraph*.

## AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES RECORDER Dr C H Gallimore

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

### March/April 2015



Smooth Newt, P Scott



Smooth Newt tadpole, P Scott

This is usually the most active month for amphibians. Frogs have spawned quite plentifully, although there were few reports from garden ponds. Toads spawned in an Oakham garden pond however. Some new sites for both species of newt were found on the Rutland Water Nature Reserve. There were no Slow Worm records and only one Viviparous Lizard record but plenty of Grass Snakes were found in the Nature Reserve and Adders were seen on a number of occasions at Ketton Quarry.

The first **Common Frog** spawn was reported from Oakham on 4th March, followed by frogs in Linda Worrall's pond in Barrowden on 7th March, and then by Exton and Rutland Water Nature Reserve on 8th. Over the next three weeks spawn was also found in Greetham, Oakham and Wing. Of the twelve records received only five were from garden ponds, the rest being in field ponds, ditches, Oakham Canal and golf course hazards – in the last of which it was reported that there was much less than usual. Garden ponds are considered to be an important habitat for frogs, so it is good that quite a number of records concern non-garden sites but cause for some concern that there are so few garden records.

There has been only one breeding record of **Common Toads** – in an Oakham garden pond, although toads were heard calling near one of the hides in Manton and active toads were reported from Tunneley Wood, plus singles on the road in Wing and on my back door step.

**Smooth Newts** were reported from gardens in Oakham and Wing. The maximum number in my garden pond was 28 on 23rd March before the pond became too turbid from mallard activity. Smooth Newts were found in 10 ponds in Rutland Water Nature Reserve out of 28 examined. In two ponds they had not previously been found.

**Great Crested Newts** reached their maximum of 19 on 23rd March in my garden before mallards made the torchlight counts impossible. One was also found in a garden in Clipsham. In Rutland Water they were found in 6 ponds, one of which was a new site.

There was a single record of a **Viviparous Lizard** on 7th March at Ketton Quarry.

I have only received one record of a **Grass Snake** on 11th April under a reptile sheet in Exton. However in early March I put down 90 corrugated squares as reptile shelters on five separate areas of Rutland Water Nature Reserve to find out if Grass Snakes were more widespread than the occasional casual record would suggest, and also to find out whether Slow Worms and Viviparous Lizards are present and have been overlooked, as there have been a couple of records of both species in the past. I have been checking the sheets each week. To my satisfaction Grass Snakes have been found in all five areas, under nine different sheets, usually single but three entwined on one occasion. A total of 14 snakes were seen in April, but as one was seen twice under the same sheet and another three times, this gives a total of 11 different snakes so far. The fact that the presumed same snakes continues to use the same sheets after two brief disturbances is reassuring that inspection does not adversely affect them. Most snakes have been relatively small – only one estimated to be over two foot long – which suggests a healthy breeding population.

Three different observers have seen **Adders** at Ketton Quarry, the first being on 1st March, three being seen on 25th March and 2nd April. (See also photo page 1.)

*My thanks to the following who have sent records: T P Appleton, P Bennett, R Edwards, M Grimes, A Hill, S Hope, P Langston, A L Lawrence, T Mitcham, D Needham, C Park, L Park, P Scott and L Worrall.*



Adder, D Needham

## BIRDS

### March/April 2015

#### RECORDER Terry Mitcham

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

E-mail: [joterpat@btinternet.com](mailto:joterpat@btinternet.com)

A Woodlark at Rutland Water heralded a series of rare spring visitors – Crane, Alpine Swift and Hoopoe. Scarcer migrants were also noted, especially Ring Ouzels but also Redstarts, Wheatears and Whinchats. The Egleton lagoons funnelled a variety of waders on to the reserve, the main reservoir being very full with little marginal mud. Some winter birds overlapped returning spring migrants – Black-necked and Red-necked Grebe and Great Northern Diver. One of the delights of spring bird watching is to see winter and summer birds on the same day, birds whose paths cross only briefly.

*My thanks to the following for their records: T Appleton, P Bennett, T Caldicott, J Chiverton, Dr C H Gallimore, B Galpin, M & G Griffin, J Harris, S Hope, T Land, P Langston, A L Lawrence, LROS, R Lemmon, M Markham, R Mills, I Misselbrook, T Mitcham, D Needham, C Park, J S & J Rodgers, P Rudkin, RWNR, L Worrall, J Wright.*

(See also Wildfowl Counts page 11)

Mute Swan	Pairs noted at KQ, Banthorpe GP, FHP and EBR.
Whooper Swan	On 10.03, there were ten at RWEg and six at EBR. 39 flew over Oak on 14.03 and 47 were at RWNA on 22.03.
Pink-footed Goose	One or two were at RW between 02 and 26.03. One was at FHP on 25.03.
Greenland White-fronted Goose	The juvenile remained at RW to at least 22.04.
Greylag Goose	A pair at Banthorpe GP had four young goslings on 17.04.
Shelduck	Nos at EBR increased from five on 11.03 to nine on 04.04. Four were at FHP on 30.03 with three on 26.04.
Mandarin Duck	There was a pair at Norm on 30.03 and a female near Pilt on 06.04.
Mallard	Two broods were at FHP on 19.04.

Pintail	Three were at RWEg1 on 18.04 and one at EBR on 21.04.
Garganey	A male was at RWEg3 on 24.04.
Shoveler	Two pairs were at FHP on 18.04.
Red-crested Pochard	A male was at RWSA between 19-21.03.
Scaup	Present at RWSA to at least 28.04, with a max of four on 06.03 and 21.03.
Common Scoter	Three were at EBR on 20.03, with six there on 16.04. At RW there was one on 23.03 and ten near the Dam on 26.04.
Smew	Noted at RWEg/SA from 02.03 to 24.03, with five on 19.03. At EBR there were three on 03/05.03, and one on 18.03.
Grey Partridge	Pairs were noted at QF on 06.03, near NLuff on 21.04 and Ext Park on 26.04.
Little Egret	One was at LFP on 08, 22 and 28.03. Two were at Banthorpe GP on 02.04, with three at EBR on 21.04 and two at FHP on 26.04. Three were at LFP on 19.04.
Great White Egret	One was seen at RWEg throughout March to at least 02.04.
Red-necked Grebe	The RWNA bird remained to 08.04, by which time it was in breeding plumage.
Little Grebe	A late pair was on top lake at FHP on 05.04, with an obliging pair nesting by the Eg Centre in April.
Great Crested Grebe	One at FHP between 05 and 11.04 was unusual.
Slavonian Grebe	One was in RWSA between 13 and 21.03.
Black-necked Grebe	Two wintering birds at RWNA were last reported on 20.03.
Red Kite	Pairs or threes were well reported. The largest numbers were seven near Mor on 09.03, with 14 in the same area mid-March.
Marsh Harrier	Single females were reported as follows: near Braunston on 15.03, RWEg on 24.03, 18.04 and 21.04 and EBR on 05.04.
Sparrowhawk	Noted in BarnsW on 15.04 and Stam, where a male tried unsuccessfully to subdue a very vocal Starling.
Buzzard	Numerous records of two or three. Eight were over Oak on 24.03 and four were over KQ on 08.04.
Osprey	First noted back at RW on 17.03. One flew east of Cold Overton on 20.03. At least three breeding pairs were established in Rutland. Singles visited Horn Mill trout hatchery regularly, with birds flying up the valley to FHP. See photos page 19.
Kestrel	Many reports with birds at RW, EBR, FHP, ExtPark, BarnsW and BW (breeding).
Merlin	One was reported near Upp on 01.03.
Hobby	One or two were at RWEg from 23.04.
Peregrine	One was over Oak on 20.03 with one at RWEg on three dates between 27.03 and 18.04. Singles were over Wg on 06, and at QF on 09.04.
Water Rail	One was at RWEW on 10/11.03; and on the RWLynd wader scrape on 17.03. One was at LFP on 27.04 – potential breeding habitat.
Crane	Six flew south over RWEg on 11.03.
Avocet	Singles were at RWEg on seven dates between 06.03 and 21.04. Two were at Eg on 29.04.
Oystercatcher	17 were at RW on 08.03, with 53 in mid-April. One was at EBR on 21.04.
Grey Plover	Singles were at RWEg4 on 04.04 and EBR on 23.04.
Lapwing	At RW there were 74 on 08.03 and 38 in mid-April with displaying birds noted there, at EBR, Banthorpe GP, Ext Park and GtCast.
Little Ringed Plover	First noted at RWNA on 21.03. There were four at EBR on 25.03, with three on 26.03 and two on 21.04. Three were at RWEg in mid-April.
Ringed Plover	Present at RW from 04.03, with seven on 08.03 and 10 in mid-April. Up to three were at EBR between 20.03 and 30.03.
Whimbrel	Two at RW on 15.04 were the first, with one or two at EBR between 18 and 22.04. 16 passed through RW on 26.04 and one was at Eg on 27/28.04.
Curlew	Two were displaying at Seat Meadows on 07.03. 16 were at RW on 08.03 and one was at Cott Airfield on 22.03, with three there on 26.04. One was near PC on 12.04.

Black-tailed Godwit	One or two were at RWEg between 26.03 and 26.04, with one at EBR on 23.04. On 27.04 a flock of 429 Icelandic birds dropped in at RWEg but did not stay long.
Bar-tailed Godwit	Three were at RWEg4 on 24.04.
Turnstone	Singles were at RWEg4 on 24 and 28.04.
Ruff	Up to three were at RWEg/NA between 18.03 and 24.04.
Curlew Sandpiper	One was at RWEg4 on 24.04.
Sanderling	One was at RWEg4 on 24.04.
Dunlin	Present at both reservoirs from 05.03 at EBR and 08.03 at RW. Peak March counts were 24 at EBR on 05.03 and 20 at RW on 08.03. In April there were 16 at EBR on 25.04 and 52 at RW the next day.
Common Sandpiper	First noted at EBR on 08/09.04 and at RW from 14.04. One or two were at both reservoirs to 28.04, with three at EBR on 25 and 27.04. One was at LFP on 27.04.
Green Sandpiper	Singles were at RWEg on 06 and 14.04, with two on 17.04. One was at EBR on 23.04.
Spotted Redshank	Two were at RW on 08.04.
Greenshank	One or two were noted on seven dates between 18.04 and 28.04 – at both reservoirs.
Wood Sandpiper	Two were at RWEg on 23.04, with one on 25.04.
Redshank	Eight were at RW on 08.03 and in mid-April, with one at EBR on 04.04.
Jack Snipe	One was at North Brook, FHP, on 05.04.
Woodcock	One was near Pilt on 01.03 with singles also at TunnW on 07.03 and Holywell Wood on 18.03.
Snipe	Eight were at RW on 08.03, with one on 24.04. A good spring passage saw up to three at FHP, Banthorpe GP and LFP into April with eight at LFP on 13.04, and the last there on 27.04.
Little Tern	Two were at RWEg and one at EBR on 23.04.
Black Tern	Up to three were at RWEg between 10.04 and 24.04.
Sandwich Tern	Two were at RWEg on 23.04.
Common Tern	First noted at RWEg on 06.04, with 66 present by mid-month. Three were at EBR on 10.04.
Arctic Tern	Reported from both reservoirs between 17.04 and 28.04, with six at EBR on 21.04 and c.15 at RW on 22.04.
Kittiwake	Three were in RWNA on 21.03.
Little Gull	Recorded at RW between 06.04 and 25.04, mainly one or two but six on 10.04 and 12 on 21.04. At EBR reported between 09.04 and 23.04, with 21 on the latter date.
Mediterranean Gull	Singles were at EBR on 18, 20 and 27.03 and at RWLynd on 17.03.
Common Gull	c.3000 were on pasture at Leigh on 05.04.
Turtle Dove	One sang in a Clips garden on 17.04 and was seen there on 27.04. A very welcome record.
Cuckoo	The first birds sang at Leigh and Greet GC on 13.04. Noted at RW from 14.04, PGW on 16.04 and BW on 26.04.
Barn Owl	Noted in both months and from an encouraging 13 sites, mainly singles but two at Leigh and west of Lang. One was dead by the A6003 near Prest on 21.03.
Little Owl	Reports were received from Burl, FHP, Ess, EBR and Lang.
Tawny Owl	Reports came from HambW, PGW and Ext Park.
Swift	One at Leigh on 15.04 was the earliest bird, with one or two noted at the reservoirs to 26.04.
Alpine Swift	One hawked insects over Barns for two hours on 14.04. This is the third Rutland record with others at RW in 1978 and over Oak in 2008.
Kingfisher	The only records were singles at FHP on 22.03 and 18.04.
Hoopoe	One was seen near Norm on 21.04, the first Rutland record since 2007 when birds were at Kett and Hamb.



Green Woodpecker	Well reported with birds at QF (breeding), FHP, TunnW, BW, BCF, KQ, BarnsW and Norm.
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Drumming birds were well reported: BW(5), BarnsW(2), TunnW(2), Ess, QF, WardW and PGW.
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	One called and drummed in BW for much of March and one drummed in BarnsW on 09 and 17.04. Presumably we have overlooked them in recent years !
Magpie	Groups of eight at KQ on 08.04 and six at QF next day were reported.
Jackdaw	c.1770 flew from a Pilt roost on 01.03, with 400 there on 06.03 and 500 from a Berrybutts roost on 10.03.
Carrion Crow	A remarkable incident was witnessed in BarnsW on 30.04 when, attracted by a calling Jay, observers saw a Carrion Crow holding down and dismembering a Jay in the top of a willow bush. The crow was mobbed by a second Jay, which pursued it after a further five minutes. The dead Jay was abandoned in the willow. Such episodes must be frequent but are rarely witnessed by naturalists.
Raven	Birds were reported from four probable/confirmed breeding sites. Six over RWSA on 13.03 was the highest count.
Goldcrest	One fed on fat balls at Upp to 05.04.
Willow Tit	Records came from RWGibbet Gorse, Pilt, LFP, Brooke, BCF and Braun.
MarshTit	Well reported with birds at RWSA, PC, LyndW, TunnW, Westland Wood, HambW, BarnsW(3) and BW.
Woodlark	One at RWEg on 07/08.03 was a most unexpected record.
Skylark	Five were in song at GHW on 13.04.
Sand Martin	First noted at EBR and RW on 08.03, the first double figure count was 20 at RW on 21.03. The first at FHP was on 05.04. c.40 frequented an old stone wall at Norm Gardens on 18.04, possibly prospecting for nest sites.
Swallow	Three at RW on 01.04 were the earliest birds with two at FHP on 05.04. Birds were back at a traditional breeding site in Bden on 13.04.
House Martin	First reported from RW and FHP on 10.04 with five at EBR on 12.04. Few records received – low numbers or late arrivals?
Long-tailed Tit	Garden records came from Oak in March (two birds) and Clips on 30.04 (four birds).
Chiffchaff	The first song was at RW on 08.03 with the next birds two days later at Ggorse. Along RW south shore 15 were in song on 25.03, and birds were widespread by early April. High counts included 21 at Leigh on 10.04 and 51 singing in BW on 18.04. Five were noted west of Upp on 12.04.
Willow Warbler	One singing at EBR on 08.04 was the first, with the next on 12.04 in TunnW. By mid-month song was heard at BarnsW, BW and Barns Gardens. Numbers were generally low but 25 sang around Leigh on 23.04.
Blackcap	Song was first heard in KQ on 08.04, with birds at six sites by mid-month and 27 singing in BW on 26.04.
Garden Warbler	First reported from Upp on 15.04, with the next at RWLynd on 17.04. Two were at Eg on 21.04 and one in BW on 30.04.
Lesser Whitethroat	Two exceptionally early birds were reported from RWEg on 02.04. If confirmed, this beats the previous earliest birds at RW by a full week. The next birds were at QF on 20.04 and Eg on 24.04, with five singing at Leigh on 30.04.
Whitethroat	One at Stoke Dry Wood on 12.04 was the first record, with the next at EBR on 14 and 18.04. Birds were generally distributed by 25.04.
Grasshopper Warbler	Two sang near Bushy Wood, Leigh, on 17.04 with three in the area on 30.04. One sang by EBR on 18.04.
Sedge Warbler	One at RWBarns on 09.04 was the first, with birds widespread on Eg reserve within five days. One sang at LFP on 19 and 21.04.
Reed Warbler	Birds were established in RWEg reed beds by 24.04.
Nuthatch	One visited an Upp garden feeder in March. Other records were from traditional sites at BarnsW and Gardens, BW, and HambW, CPW, FHP, WardW and Ext Park woodlands.

Treecreeper	Noted in most woodlands with a pair chasing around a likely nest tree in BW. Noted also at Kett.
Ring Ouzel	A notable passage began with one at PC on 10.04, with singles in the Leigh/PC area to 23.04, when one was singing. A male was in Ext Park on 11.04, there were three at RWLynd on 13.04 and two at FHP on 21.04, with two different birds there on 26.04.
Fieldfare	The largest March flocks were c.100 at HM/FHP on 06.03 and 80 in Ext Park the next day. April flocks included c.100 near Brk on 10.04, 21 at Westland Wood on 12.04, and 42 near NLuff on 21.04. The last birds were two near Ryhall on 29.04 and two at LFGP on 30.04.
Redwing	23 were at Norm on 15.03 and six were near Pilt on 06.04, the last birds.
Mistle Thrush	Birds were noted at Norm, FHP, BW (three in song) and Wg (bred).
Nightingale	Singles sang at RWEg and Greet Wood Far from 18.04 – our only records.
Redstart	Single males were at Oak on 12.04 and RWLynd and BCF on 13.04. A female was at Leigh on 15.04.
Whinchat	EBR had one on 16.04, two on 27.04 and three on 28.04. One was at Cott Airfield on 26.04.
Stonechat	Four were at EBR on 05.03, with one on 08.03. One was at RW south shore on 07.03.
Wheatear	One or two were noted between 01.04 and 28.04 at RW, Luff Airfield (three on 19.04), EBR, Cott Airfield (three on 26.04), Lang and LFP.
Yellow Wagtail	The first bird was in Ext Park on 08.04. Three were at EBR on 10.04 and 19 at RWDam on 14.04. Six were at EBR on 21.04.
Grey Wagtail	Singles were at FHP on 22.03 and 04.04.
Pied Wagtail	c.15 were at RWNorm in early March.
White Wagtail	One was at EBR on 15.03. RW passage was between 23.03 and 15.04, with a max often on 26.03. EBR had up to eight (16.04) with the last on 27.04. One was at Martinthorpe on 30.04.
Tree Pipit	Passage birds were noted over RW between 14/28.04 on four dates, mainly singles but four on 24.04. One was over Leigh on 15.04.
Meadow Pipit	A good passage was reported over RW between 13.03 and 06.04, with flocks exceeding 50 on ten dates and peaks of 220 on 24.03 and 170 on 06.04. 20 were at QF on 25.03, and six were on territory at GHW on 19.04.
Chaffinch	c.100 were at a Pilt roost on 01.03, and 145 at the Leigh roost on 14.03.
Brambling	Singles were heard over RWSA on 07/08.04.
Lesser Redpoll	30 were near Pilt on 06 and 09.03. One flew over Pilt on 06.04 and two were over RWSA on 07.04.
Bullfinch	Four were noted at KQ on 08.04.
Yellowhammer	There was a flock of 36 near NLuff on 21.04.
Reed Bunting	Three birds visited an Oak garden between 15 and 29.03. Breeding birds were noted at QF, FHP and RWEg/Lynd.



Little Grebe, D Cotter

## Wildfowl Counts March and April 2015

	Rutland Water		Eyebrook Reservoir		Ft Henry Ponds /Exton Park		Banthorpe Gravel Pit		Holywell Hall Lake	
	08.03	April	08.03	19.04	07.03	18.04	06.03	17.04	08.03	-
Mute Swan	140	169	65	56	17	14		2	1	
Pink-footed Goose	2									
Greenland White-fronted Goose		1								
Greylag Goose	324	190	11	24	329	20	23	32	18	
Canada Goose	119	108	40	6	2	2	2	1	27	
Barnacle Goose	3									
Egyptian Goose	17	30			11	4				
Shelduck	32	53	7	14	2	1				
Mandarin Duck	3									
Wigeon	2244	25	267		135				6	
Gadwall	112	117	44	39	78	20			48	
Teal	198	126	113	138	37	4	21		4	
Mallard	386	304	24	51	107	45	10		32	
Pintail	22	4		1						
Shoveler	33	46				4				
Pochard	19	3	72		5		23			
Tufted Duck	1062	807	301	3	55	44	9		23	
Scaup	4	1								
Goldeneye	258	4	37	3						
Smew	3		1							
Goosander	10									
Great Northern Diver	1	1								
Cormorant	159	143	16	11	5	1	1			
Little Egret	5	9	1	1			1			
Great White Egret	1									
Grey Heron	6	20	2	1	1			1		
Little Grebe	23	8			7				7	
Great Crested Grebe	180	143	18	30						
Black-necked Grebe	2									
Moorhen	87	61	1	4	8	14	3	1	19	
Coot	431	285	61	11	73	58	1	4	12	
Kingfisher						1			1	

## BOTANY

March/April 2015



Cowslip, R Edwards

**RECORDER John Rodgers**

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E-mail: rnhsbotanyrecord@gmail.com

Spring seemed to appear very rapidly about the beginning of March and continued to delight with what appeared to be bumper numbers of seasonal flowers. The first Cowslip record was on March 5 and since then they seem to have appeared all over the county, in profusion. One or two people have said that they don't remember so many cowslips before.

Did everybody notice what seemed like snow on many roadside edges in April? This was **Danish scurvy grass**, a plant originally adapted to tolerate salt in the environment and now spreading across the country, helped by the salting of roads in winter.

**Lesser Celandines** were well into flower by the middle of March and **Bluebells** in the woods around Rutland Water by early April. **Sloe** blossom covered the hedges in early March to be followed by **Hawthorn** blossom, as its other name suggests, just at the beginning of May. **Early Purple Orchids** were first reported on April 28 and now they can be found in several places. **Green-winged Orchids** too are in bloom.

A meeting to discuss and adopt a strategy for recording verges will take place in early June and this should give us a pattern to continue our efforts despite a falling number of verge recorders. It will also give us a basis to ask RCC to plan verge cutting to help the preservation of important flora. We need to work together to achieve this.

Please continue to send in records of what you observe around the county. Information about any flowering plants, no matter how mundane this may seem, is important to record. Our records will be valuable for environmental protection in the years to come.

*Many thanks to the following who have contributed records: P Bennett, L & A Biddle, G Chiverton, R Edwards, M Grimes, G Hall, H Ikin, A Lawrence, R Lemmon, J Mallett, D Needham, J Ostler, P Rudkin, J & J Rodgers, S Woodward.*

## BUTTERFLIES

March/April 2015



Orange Tip

**RECORDER Alistair Lawrence**

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On the warm sunny days of March and April, especially the latter month, butterfly activity has increased markedly, with 11 species recorded so far by members.

Reports of **Brimstone** come from a variety of sites, with pairs of males seen at Morcott and Pickworth during March. In April larger numbers were seen with 7 males and 3 females recorded at Ketton Quarry on 7 April, and 7 males at RW Egleton on the 15th.

A single **Red Admiral** was seen at Ketton Quarry on 7 March, ditto 4 **Commas**. Reports of Commas also come from Morcott, Quarry Farm, RW Egleton and Market Overton during March and April.

There have been abundant sightings of **Small Tortoiseshell**, mainly singletons in March, but 7 were seen at Quarry Farm on 20 April and 6 at RW Lyndon on 9 April. Other reports were of ones and twos from a variety of Rutland habitats.

The only record of a **Peacock** in March comes from Oakham, where a single specimen was seen on the 22nd. Substantial numbers emerged during April with 12+ at Ketton Quarry on 8 April and in excess of 10 at the RW reserves during the middle of the month. 7 were seen at both Langham and Quarry Farm on the 8th and 20th April respectively.

There have been 9 sightings of **Orange Tip** during April with 4 at Ketton Quarry on the 15th and 3 at Market Overton on the 26th. All other reports were of single specimens, mostly males.

Single **Speckled Woods** were seen at Ketton Quarry and RW Egleton, both on 15 April.

Three **Green Veined Whites** were seen at Quarry Farm on 20 April. Single specimens were also observed at Ketton Quarry and Oakham.

A single **Small White** was recorded in an Oakham garden on 18 April, and a **Large White** in an Uppingham one regularly during April.

A pair of **Holly Blues** were seen at Quarry Farm on 20 April, and single specimens recorded about the same time at Ketton Quarry and Oakham.

The first record of a **Green Hairstreak** came from Ketton Quarry where a pair were observed above Donkey Paddock on 18 April.

*My thanks to the following for their contributions: P Bennett, C Butterfield, G Chiverton, M Grimes, C Jones, P Langston, A Lawrence, R Lemmon, E & P Mann, D Needham, D Perril, J & J Rodgers, P Rudkin, P Simmonds, B & J Taylor, and L Worrall.*

## MOTHS

### March/April 2015

#### RECORDER Jean Harvey

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

Overnight traps were operated twice during April at Eyebrook reservoir with similar results to those noted at the same time in 2014. On our first visit on April 4 there were 97 moths of 16 species in four traps, a total with which we were well pleased for the time of year. However when we returned on April 18, the results were somewhat disappointing with 31 moths of only 6 species.

The garden trapping at Barrowden has been poor overall, with only odd moths being recorded. There was one highlight there, however, with a **Blossom Underwing** on April 3.

The Rutland Water reedbed trap was operated 14 times during April, resulting in a total of 613 moths of 27 species. The results of these sessions varied greatly from 102 moths of 11 species on the 15th to just 3 moths of 2 species on both the 27th and 29th. On the 7th a **White Marked** was the highlight. This species is similar to a Red Chestnut and comes to light and Sallow Catkins. The night-time temperatures were obviously what had such an effect on such a variation in numbers.

I have been very grateful to receive results from two woods in our area. These came from Stretton Wood on April 4, where an MV and two traps were operated for two hours resulting in 162 moths of 16 species. A White Marked was also recorded there and a **Yellow Horned** with its orange antennae giving the moth its name. On April 10 three traps were used in Wardley Wood for five hours resulting in 197 moths of 20 species. On this occasion two White Marked were amongst the other more common species.

Let us hope that we shall soon experience milder nights and there will be a flurry of activity for members to see with the emergence of more species.

*My thanks for the above information go to R Follows, A Russell and K Tailby.*

## ORTHOPTERA

### March/April 2015

#### RECORDER Phil Rudkin

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Email: phil.rudkin@talktalk.net*

Season 2014 was very productive for the Orthoptera, and bodes well for the coming summer and autumn. *British Wildlife* magazine, April 2015, pages 277–278 contains the Orthoptera news, with a reminder to recorders to make a final push into new squares, and to get their important contributions onto the maps in the forthcoming National Orthoptera Atlas.

Richard Brown has done excellent work on the Society's distribution maps, calculating some tiny corners in the tetrads that can be filled up. If anyone knows of a piece of land that looks promising for our grasshoppers and crickets (and that we have perhaps not covered), please could they let Clive Jones or myself know, then our team can plan a visit. Furthermore, if any one wishes to join us on our survey days, then you are most welcome.

It is pleasing to report one sighting for April, in Ketton Quarries, where a Slender Groundhopper was observed. This was in the same spot where one was found in June 2012. Ketton Quarries is a good location for this species; six were observed in 'The Cutting' on 3 May 2013.

#### GROUNDHOPPER

Slender Groundhopper *Tetrix subulata*

One found on rough stony ground next to the Bat Hibernaculum, Ketton Quarries, by Chris Butterfield, on 15 April, the same small area as one recorded in June 2012. Chris took a splendid photograph of this individual, and sent it to me by email (see photo page 20). The tiny groundhoppers do not stridulate, and are very hard to see. So, full marks to Chris for this find.

## OTHER INSECTS AND INVERTEBRATES RECORDER Gill Chiverton

*20 Victoria Road, Stamford PE9 1HB. Telephone 01780 753820  
E-mail: gill.chiverton@googlemail.com*

### March 2015

No records were received for the month of March.

### April 2015

More success in April!

#### HEMIPTERA

**Green Shield Bug** *Palomina prasina* – one insect in vivid summer colouration was noted at Barnsdale Woods.

**Squash Bug** *Corizus hyoscyami* – another record of this colourful insect from an Oakham garden (see photo page 20).

#### NEUROPTERA

**Alderfly** *Sialidae* sp. – one record from Barrowden village.

#### DIPTERA

**Common Bee-fly** *Bombylius major* – these insects were recorded as abundant on sunny days in an Uppingham garden. One insect also noted in Barnsdale Wood and two noted on Verge 7.

**Hoverfly** *Dasysyrphus* sp. – one specimen recorded on Verge 8.

#### HYMENOPTERA

Many bees, including honey bees, 'small' bumble bees and spring flower bees were recorded on comfrey flowers on a sunny afternoon in a Barrowden garden.

**Tawny Mining Bee** *Andrena fulva* – one noted in a Barrowden garden, 3 females recorded on sloe flowers on Verge 7 and one recorded on Verge 5.

**Solitary Bee** *Nomada goodeniana* – one recorded in Barrowden village.

**Spring Flower Bee** *Anthophora plumipes* – recorded in Barrowden churchyard and from a Barrowden garden.

**Solitary Bee** *Melecta albifrons* – recorded in Barrowden village and Barrowden churchyard. This bee is a cuckoo in the nests of *Anthophora* species.

**Honey Bee** *Apis mellifera* – noted in a Barrowden garden and 3 workers recorded on Verge 7.

#### BUMBLE BEES –

**White-tailed Bumble Bee** *Bombus lucorum* – one female noted Barnsdale Wood.

**Buff-tailed Bumble Bee** *Bombus terrestris* – recorded in Barrowden village and one female recorded Verge 7 and one female at Barnsdale Lodge Wood.

**Common Carder Bee** *Bombus pascorum* – 3 females noted on Verge 7.

**Red-tailed Bumble Bee** *Bombus lapidarius* – recorded in Barrowden village, one female noted in Prior's Coppice and one female noted Barnsdale Lodge Wood.

## COLEOPTERA

**Green Tiger Beetle** *Cicendela campestris* – a record from Ketton Quarry of a very large number (100+) of these insects with some mating pairs. The recorder returned to the same location the next day and then only <40 were noted. See photo page 20.

**Harlequin Ladybird** *Harmonia axyridis* – many individual harlequin ladybirds were recorded around an Uppingham house and garden, to the exclusion of other species of ladybird being observed so far this spring. Also large numbers of harlequin ladybirds, with many colour pattern variations, were noted emerging from around wooden window frames at Normanton. (See photo page 20)

**Two-spot Ladybird** *Adalia 2-punctata* – one specimen noted on a washing line at Clipsham!

## DIPLOPODA

**Bristly millipede** *Polyxenus lagurus* – one specimen recorded in Barrowden village.

**Common Centipede** *Lithobius forficatus* – one recorded in Prior's Coppice.

## GASTROPODA

**Garden Snail** *Cornus aspersum* – one recorded in Barrowden churchyard.

**Snail** *Candidula gigaxii* – two specimens noted in Hambleton Wood.

Many thanks to the following recorders: C Butterfield, G Chiverton, M Grimes, S Hope, H Ikin, C Jones, R Lemmon, D Needham, D Perrill, P Rudkin, S Woodward, L Worrall.

## GLOW-WORMS

### RECORDER Linda Worrall

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

E-mail: [worrall6redland@talktalk.net](mailto:worrall6redland@talktalk.net)

Photos on page 20.

Midsummer nights are with us, and the adult glow-worms! Could I ask intrepid noctilucophiles to do something special this year? It's been a long time since two areas in particular have been checked – Empingham and Fineshade. Current information would be extremely useful. Not suggesting you totally neglect your favourite spots of course, and even if you've never been out late before you might fancy having a go, especially if you live in or near Empingham or Fineshade. I'd be most grateful if you'd let me know if you see any (either there or anywhere else, as usual), and even if you go and don't find, please get in touch as well, for the record. Send me a card, phone call or email as above, please, soon as you can after your visit, with any numbers and location etc. Thanks.

**Timing:** Well after sunset – they should be glowing around 10.30 pm, after dark, roughly a fortnight either side of Midsummer Night, June 24th (i.e. June 10–July 8) but any time in June or July is feasible. A female stops glowing when a flying male finds her, but will glow in the same spot till about 1.00 am for 10 days or so otherwise, then die, as will the males. They usually don't all come out of pupation at the same time, so you've got about 4 weeks to live in hope. Occasionally, though, the whole group could be mated on the same night, so you might go the next night and see nothing. Perseverance is very important! The more visits the better. But at least, unlike a glow-worm, you don't have to hang about till the early hours. Rain won't stop a female glowing, though she may not climb as high up a grass stalk as she would on a dry night, and males don't usually fly far in rain or wind. Neither have mouthparts; both save all their energy for laying eggs.

**How to look:** Take a torch and walk (you could park and then walk). Don't keep your torch on, or you may not see the female's small bright neon-green glow. If you do, shine the torch on it in case a male is in attendance, do not touch, and don't actually walk on the verge as you could squash them.

**Empingham:** Love's Lane, between the village and the Exton to Tickencote road; its middle is around SK 955095: there were rather vague reports in the early 1990s but none found later. Also: any trackside, eg along the Hereward Way, Chapel Hill, the Exton-Tickencote road itself, the old Empingham Marshy Meadows: and villagers will probably know other places which they could check out – anybody fancy trying Bloody Oaks Quarry?

**Fineshade:** Just over the border in Northamptonshire, Top Lodge SP 980983; from the Duddington roundabout, at the Wakerley Woods-Top Lodge crossroads, take the left lane to Top Lodge and park. Recent planning applications for large holiday developments within the wood were turned down after a great many people, including our members, objected, but further attempts could happen. Glow-worms were reported by the developer in a limited environmental survey, and over many years Society members enjoyed counting numbers on easily reachable tracks at night, but not lately. We need current information – could you help? Try the lane past the houses near Top Lodge and carry on as far as you like, or go left down past the caravan site and carry on, or use the track to the right, down towards the old railway. You might also find paths into the woodland to explore further. You might even park in daylight and walk wherever you wish, then when it gets dark, walk back looking for glows.

My best wishes, I look forward to your records.

## PLANT GALLS

### March 2015

#### RECORDER Roy Lemmon

*87 Empingham Road, Stamford PE9 2SU. Telephone: 01780 662051*

As there is so little new plant growth in this month, any galls reported are likely to be hang-overs from last season, and so it proved this time. The first reports were of a gall on Ash caused by mites, which takes the form of small cauliflower-like terminal growths which stay over winter and have by now turned brown. These were seen on Verge 7 on the 13th and at Lyndon on the 14th. There were just two more reports this month, both from Ketton Quarry or thereabouts. On the 21st, in the valley at KQ, there was the rust on bramble which appears as little black tufts on the undersides of leaves. This is the overwintering stage and many have dispersed by now. The other report on the same date was of a Dog Rose in Pit Lane which had last year's Robin's Pincushions still persisting.

### April 2015

The above picture was continued this month but new galls were beginning to appear as well, especially towards the end of the month. Lyndon on the 9th had marble galls on Oak, these were caused by a gall wasp, probably last year, and may persist for 2–3 years. Verge 7 on the 10th had a mite gall on Cleavers on new growth, and this is very early, last season it wasn't reported until late in the summer. The Society's visit to Pickworth Great Wood produced just 3 records, old cherry and marble galls on Oak and the rust on Bramble. Verge 5 on the 16th gave the mite gall on Cleavers, and a Leicestershire Fungus Study Group meeting at KQ on the 19th produced just 1 record, the rust on Sweet Violet, rather unusual as it was on a sepal rather than the leaves.

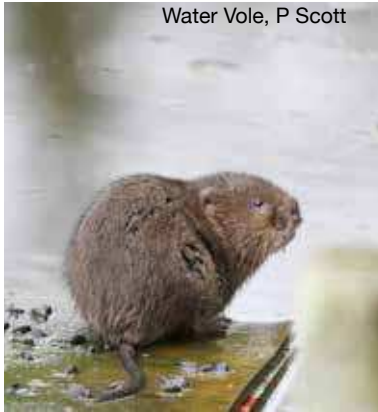
The penultimate reports for the month were all galling rusts and all this year's growth. Barnsdale Lodge Wood on the 23rd had another but different rust on Bramble, one that at this time of the year is prominent on the stems, and also the rust on Dog's Mercury. On the same day in Barnsdale Wood itself there was the rust on Bluebell, this doesn't seem to be widespread in the County but can usually be found here.

The final records were from Prior's Coppice on the 28th and comprised rusts on Dog Rose, Dog's Mercury, Meadowsweet and Lesser Celandine, all gallers. Whether this apparent abundance of rusts is due to a relatively mild winter is open to speculation.

*Thanks to M Grimes, R Lemmon for their reports.*



## March and April 2015



Water Vole, P Scott

There have been lots of very interesting mammals reported this month, from several new recorders, as well as the stalwarts. Trail cameras set up overnight in different locations have given rich rewards! **Otters** have been prevalent. In April a female with two young were recorded on a trail cam at Egleton, causing great excitement, and at a similar time one otter was seen in a Langham garden, again using a trail cam. Evidence in the shape of otter footprints on mink rafts was also found on RWNR on several occasions during March and April, so in spite of the road casualties last month they are still doing well. **Water Voles** have shown clear evidence for their presence in several areas; at Oakham Canal many food piles, latrines and runs were found in mid and late April, and at Dog Kennel stream and the channel in front of Snipe Hide, runs, droppings and lots of food piles were also found, showing high activity at present. At Wader Scrape Hide water voles have again been entertaining the Osprey viewers in between flybys and nest observations, and at the end of April we were lucky enough to see one passing across the righthand channel, then a few moments later crossing the centre channel, and finally traversing the left one, before later swimming down one channel towards us, and disappearing into the reeds.

**Badgers** have sadly been seen as road casualties in many parts of the county, but a live one was observed in early March near Pilton, and active setts were reported from several areas. Jenny Harris had problems in March from a badger digging in her garden. At Langham a webcam again revealed that a badger was a regular visitor to a garden, where on one night it was seen to attack a hedgehog, though unsuccessfully. **Stoats** have been seen at Greetham Valley Golf Club, at Braunston, and in March at Berrybutts Spinney one ran across the cycle track. In mid-March two **Weasels** were seen at Greetham Valley Golf Club, where one was observed the following week, and another was seen on the back road towards Caldecott.

**Foxes** are reported much less often than previously. One regularly visits the same garden in Langham as the badger and the otter (again recorded by trail cam), seen almost every evening in April, on the 21st trying to penetrate the defences of a hedgehog, happily for the hedgehog not successfully! One was flushed from gorse scrub at Beaumont Chase Farm in March, and a road casualty was found between Great Casterton and Ryhall near the entrance to the Walk Farm footpath.

**Brown Hares** were seen between Geeston and Tixover Grange in fields on both sides of the road, in singles, twos and threes throughout March, usually 8–10 in total, with highest number of 13 on 26 March, and the largest group of 6 together on 30 March. Six were seen at Chapel Farm Burley-on-the-hill on 25 March. Hares are also reported from Greetham Valley Golf Club, Donkey Paddock Ketton Quarry, Verge 8, Pickworth and Glaston Road, Wing. **Rabbits** have been reported from Quarry Farm Great Casterton, Wing, and Barnsdale Woods. **Moles** have been active between Pickworth and Great Casterton on Verge 7, and in fields N of Manton over 40 hills were counted. At Clipsham Park Avenue molehills were very numerous, and in Burley Wood some of the rides (obviously those not affected by the logging!) contained many hills.

At Barrowden the **Hedgehogs** have been regularly feeding at Linda Worrall's patio and carport, most nights in March and April she was visited by at least one and sometimes two hedgehogs. At Langham on the trail camera a single hedgehog has been seen almost every night, and on some occasions 3 were spotted. In mid-March a hedgehog appeared in a garden at Clipsham, and in April one was seen feeding in a garden in Station Road Oakham. In Aldgate up to 8 **Grey Squirrels** were feeding on the bird feeders every day in March, and they were also seen at Gibbet's Gorse and Greetham Valley Golf Club. In April they were reported from two areas of Ketton Quarry.

Only one report of **Roe Deer** was received this month, from Tunnely Wood where two were seen on 30 March. **Muntjac** have been seen in a field next to a house



Fallow Deer, H Ellis

at Normanton, and in Burley and Westland Woods. Reports of **Fallow Deer** come from Burley, Pickworth, Barnsdale and Westland Woods in groups of up to 23. On one lovely morning two or three emerged from Newell Wood, jumping over the fence one at a time. They went out into the field and started feeding, gradually being joined by more and more, and eventually 38 were observed feeding quietly in the field, where they remained for some time, and we left before they did!

Thank you to all who sent in reports. I am writing this on holiday on Dartmoor, so there may be more inaccuracies than usual in this report. Please forgive me if your report has been left out, and don't be put off from sending them to me!

*Thanks to: P Bennett, A Biddle, T Caldicott, D Carrier, G Chiverton, A & J Comber, C Gallimore, G & M Griffin, M Grimes, J Harris, S Hope, A Lawrence, M Markham, D McKenzie, T Mitcham, D Needham, P Langston, P J Rudkin, A Tomlinson, A Wickowski and L Worrall*

## BATS

### March/April 2015

#### RECORDER Jenny Harris

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These two months can be difficult times for bats, as they begin to come out of hibernation with depleted reserves of brown fat. I have read, but not really fully understood, the science of how brown fat works in animals that hibernate; it is the readily available 'fuel' that enables bats to rouse from deep torpor, warming all the muscles and vital organs. Every time a bat rouses, even if it doesn't fly, brown fat is metabolized. It is stored over the shoulders and hips, which is where I look to see if a 'grounded' bat is in good condition. Sunny days, warming roost sites may help bats to rouse without using up much brown fat, but sharply dropping temperatures at dusk will suppress insect flight and prevent bats replacing energy stores. This will particularly affect bats that are already thin, and this is probably the reason for the relatively higher than usual number of day-flying records this time.

#### Pipistrelle spp (*Pipistrellus* spp. – presumed)

On 2.4 Clive Jones recorded a small bat foraging round his garden at 2.0 pm on a sunny spring-like day; he used the word 'flittering', which described the purposeful but erratic flight of bats so much better than 'fluttering'. On 8.4 there were a few fresh droppings in Stretton Church, with one beneath a noticeboard where bats sometimes roost, though none was there on 8.4. Tim Caldecott saw pipistrelle-like bats foraging in the early morning at RW Gibbet Gorse (11.4), Manton (14.4); and at Gibbet Gorse and Berrybuts Spinney on 16.4 there were four sightings.

#### Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus Pipistrellus*)

Charles Gallimore's observations in his garden in Wing are the only March records, and all relate to day-flying bats. On 6.3 one was flying for 15 minutes from 11.30 am over his neighbour's garden; on 7.3 a bat was using the shelter of a Wellingtonia in a strong south-westerly wind at noon; and on 8.3 one was again flying at 11.30 am. In early April, a bat was again foraging in late morning on 2.4 and 7.4. On the latter occasion it was observed going back under eaves on the south side of the house. On 6.4, a bat was out at 5.0 pm, and a lot of droppings were seen under the west-facing exit to the roost. On 9.4, as I returned at about 9.30 pm from North Luffenham, I held my bat detector out of the car window and heard common pipistrelle in sheltered areas, i.e. with trees or tall hedges beside the road, between Edith Weston and the turn to Lyndon, and again on Lyndon Road, Manton. Usually no bats were heard where low hedges backed arable fields.

#### Natterer's bat (*Myotis nattereri*)

On 8.4 there were a few fresh droppings in Stretton Church, showing one or more bats were active. I have found Natterer's droppings in this church on previous visits. The medium-sized bat over Tim Caldecott's garden in Manton on 24.4 could have been a Natterer's, as he found a dead one there in September 2012.

*Thank you to the above members for records this time.*

No report this time, please continue sending in your records.

Osprey O3 (aka Mr Rutland Water) at Horn Mill Trout Farm, photographed by Dave Needham over a period of 1 minute 52 seconds. (The whole sequence of over 30 photos will appear on the new RNHS website and shouldn't be missed.)



First attempt.



Try again. And again. And again.



Success at last!

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Slender groundhopper, length 9–14 mm, C Butterfield



Squash bug, *Corizus hyoscyami*, D Perril



Harlequin ladybirds, M & G Griffin



Green tiger beetle, D Needham



Female glow-worm, P Scott



Female glow-worm, P Scott



Female glow-worm, P Scott



Mating glow-worms, P Scott