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NOTICEBOARD

We thought it would be useful for your planning to list **all** our summer outdoor events in this March issue, hence the longer list than usual. Watch out for an announcement for a summer visit to Dawn's Paddock, as the original March 23rd date was cancelled due to bad weather.

And don't miss the fascinating article on page 13, by Ivan Pedley, about the lichens that we are seeing in increasing abundance in the countryside.

Membership, Programme and Permit Card

This comes with your Fieldfare – please sign it NOW – family member/s under 18 should sign on your card/s – and carry the card when visiting Eyebrook or Burley Wood or if buying books at Uppingham Sports and Books. We very much hope you will join in and enjoy your outdoor visits this summer.

A message from Ann Tomlinson

At the March AGM, I stepped down as Chairman of the Society. It has been an honour to hold the post and a very interesting ten years, but it is time for someone else to guide the Society. In all organisations, a new person 'at the top' brings new ideas and a fresh approach, so a change is very much a good thing.

I am succeeded by Linda Biddle, who was voted in at the meeting. She is currently our Honorary Secretary and, of course, Mammal Recorder. She is a fine naturalist and knows the Society inside and out. I know she will make a wonderful Chairman, and I am sure you will all be giving her your full support.

We've done a number of things over the past ten years. A couple of projects remain incomplete, however, notwithstanding the amount of work the Committee has put in during my tenure. These involve moving the Society's recording activity towards digital media, and also encouraging more new members. I say more about this in my final report, which will form part of the *Annual Report* published later this year. But members will of course hear about developments via *Fieldfare* in the interim.

Right now, I'd like to draw your attention to the questionnaire on the next page of this edition of *Fieldfare*. Over the past couple of years we've started to notice a downward trend in membership numbers, coupled with lower figures attending

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both indoor and outdoor meetings. If we are doing something wrong, and it's discouraging members from re-joining, or attending events, we'd really like to know.

So have a look at the questionnaire and see if you have any thoughts you would like to raise with the Committee. They'd be very grateful for all feedback. You can comment via the website rnhscontact@btinternet.com, or bend the ear of a Committee member, via post, phone or just by ambushing them in the street!

One issue we thought might be causing people problems is the move to the new school hall. There were teething problems, certainly, but the Committee has done its best to tackle things like the seating configuration, keeping the heating on, and microphone systems. Also the car parking is far better, now. Although there are other events going on at the school all the time, you should be

able to find a space by 7.30pm. **But please note the deadly stinger device now in place at the far end of the car park. This is now the designated EXIT, so please don't wreck your tyres by coming in that way!**

So we hope our accommodation is better suited to us now, and if you had been put off attending because of the move, please do reconsider. Or let us know about any other problems.

Finally, thanks to the Committee, past and present, the Recorders, all the Society's many helpers, and to you, the membership, for your great support, both to me as Chairman, and to the Society generally, over the last ten years. It's been a fun ride! I look forward to seeing RNHS continue to play a significant part in the life of the county for years to come.

*Best wishes to you all,
Ann Tomlinson*

LET US HAVE YOUR FEEDBACK!

There has been a significant reduction in the number of members attending meetings. We would like to find out possible reasons for this. Have a think about these questions and let the Committee know your views, or anything else that you feel is relevant.

You can email the Society: rnhscontact@btinternet.com

Or write or phone to any of the Committee.

Thank you.

Indoor meetings

Do you consider the venue suitable for RNHS meetings?	Yes/No
Is the screen visible to members?	Yes/No
Can you hear the speaker when the sound system is being used?	Yes/No
Is the room sufficiently warm?	Yes/No
Is the subject matter appropriate to RNHS?	Yes/No

Outdoor meetings

Is the number of outdoor meetings appropriate?

Winter	Too many / Too few / About right
Summer	Too many / Too few / About right
Is the subject matter appropriate and appealing enough?	Yes/No
Is there a suitable mix of near and distant meetings?	Yes/No

Generally

Do you know of people who have given up their membership? If so, do you know the reason why?

Do you have any suggestions for improving outdoor or indoor events?

Identifying Green Lanes in Rutland

The Rutland Local Strategic Partnership Environment Group has been undertaking some work to identify Green Lanes across the county. The partnership is keen to progress this work this spring/summer. We are looking for **volunteers** to assist with some surveys. This involves walking each lane that has been identified as a green lane, and surveying the various species and landscape character that can be seen from the lane.

There are approximately 25 identified green lanes to survey, varying in length with a maximum distance of 3 miles. We would be most grateful for volunteers to get involved in undertaking as many or as few surveys as they wish. It is hoped that there will be three people per lane.

In each team we are looking for volunteers who can demonstrate any of the following requirements:

- ❑ Ability to identify tree, plant and hedgerow species
- ❑ Produce concise reports on what species can be seen in each lane
- ❑ Take photos of the landscape and species observed during each survey
- ❑ Computer literate to compile photos and text

The end result will be individual survey reports for each lane, to be presented to Rutland County Council planning policy team so that advice can be sought on what protection can be applied to these lanes.

To anyone who might be interested in volunteering, please use the following contact details:

Cliff Bacon (Chair of the LSP Environment Group) Email: clifford_j_bacon@yahoo.co.uk

Katy Lynch (Partnership Support Officer) Email: klynch@rutland.gov.uk

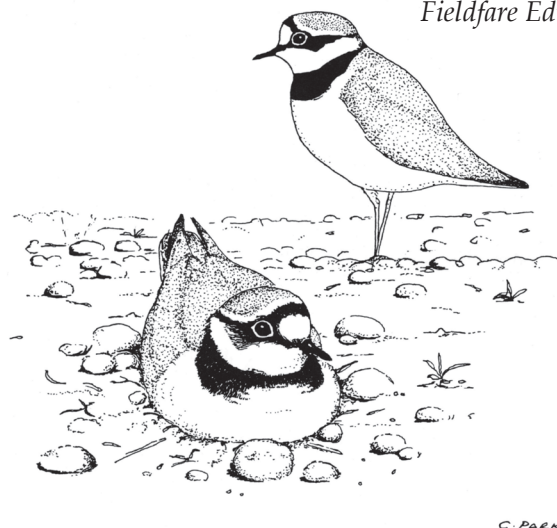
Wash birdwatching cruises from Boston 2013

Highly recommended for a special view of the UK's most important estuary for wildlife, and probably one of the least visited! The coastline has some of the best saltmarsh and mudflats in the country, supporting thousands of wildfowl and waders on their migration.

On the cruises, you will see the habitats from the seaward side and get close to the birds, which in 2012 included ringed plover, turnstone, dunlin, knot, redshank, black-tailed and bar-tailed godwit, as well as little egret, eider, marsh harrier, peregrine, terns, common buzzard, gannet and kingfisher. Seals are seen on most cruises, hauled out on the exposed mud banks. Each cruise is led by local guides.

For full details, go to: www.southlincsrspb.org.uk and download a leaflet from the 'cruise bookings' page; or phone me and I'll download, print off, and send you a leaflet. Booking, however, is handled by the South Holland Centre in Spalding, 01775 764 777.

Hendrina Ellis
Fieldfare Editor



HIGH TIDES IN NORTH NORFOLK

High tides for Kings Lynn. Times in BST.

April				May			
Sunday	7	05.18	17.20	Sunday	5	03.38	15.51
	14	09.29	21.49		12	08.33	20.56
	21	03.36	15.50		19	01.27	13.38
	28	08.48	21.12		26	07.48	20.15

RUTLAND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY EVENTS

Full details of all these events can be found on our website at www.rnhs.org.uk.

OUTDOOR EVENTS

Saturday 23 March SIGNS OF SPRING AT DAWN'S Paddock 10 am

This lovely piece of Rutland countryside belongs to Dawn Whitefield, our Programme Secretary, who is leading the meeting. Let's hope the weather cooperates! Directions: Meet at SK 841 074. Take the Oakham to Braunston in Rutland road and pull off at the big layby on the east side of the road.

PS The weather didn't cooperate at all, and the event was cancelled. Look out for notices in Fieldfare and the website for a later date.

Sunday 14 April SPRING BIRDSONG IN BURLEY Woods 9.30 am

A walk through Burley ancient woodland focusing on spring birdsong, led by Phil Rudkin, RNHS. Note the earlier start time. Remember to bring your Membership Card (came with this Fieldfare).

Directions: Meet at Explorer 234, SK 893 093, on the A606 between Stamford and Oakham. Pull off onto the verge on the north side of the road, where the main gate is visible. Please be especially careful of traffic on this busy road! Note also it may be necessary to climb the gate.

Queries: please ring Phil Rudkin on 01780 762998

Sunday 21 April BIRD-RINGING AT RUTLAND WATER 7.30 am for ringing 9.30 am for talk/demo

Join us on a bird-ringing session with Lloyd Park of Rutland Water Nature Reserve, to see how it's all done and what exciting species turn up – maybe some early Spring migrants if we are lucky! We will be based at the Reserve's bird-ringing facility, which will allow us to see in action some of the equipment recently funded by RNHS.

Directions: please note, this is NOT at the Egleton Centre. Take the Hambleton road, go past the right turn to Egleton, and take the next right turn onto a track with large green gates set back (the turn is before the unsigned left turn onto the old road). Follow track straight past workshop area and exit through gate, turn sharp left. After about a hundred yards, go round corner and meet by the wicket gate on left (SK 886 083). Parking on verge. It can get very muddy, so wear Wellingtons or stout footwear.

Queries: please ring Linda Biddle on 07749 636 919

Wednesday 15 May SPRING FLOWERS IN BARNACK HILLS AND HOLES 7.00 pm

A gentle evening stroll at this National Nature Reserve, focusing on the botany – we should hopefully be in time to see the Pasque flowers and other spring beauties for which this reserve is famous. Led by Peter Scott, RNHS.

Directions: from Stamford, take the B1443 and as you reach Barnack, take the first main right-hand turn into the village, and then first right again onto Wittering Road. The car park where we will meet is a few hundred yards down this road (Explorer 234, TF 074047).

Queries: please ring Peter Scott on 07535 508 932

Sunday 9 June SAUVEY CASTLE NEAR WITHCOTE 10.00 am

Those of us who attended the last visit to this site in 2007 will remember Sauvey Castle as a hidden gem in the Leicestershire countryside. Here the infant River Chater winds through wet meadows, with a wealth of flowers, amphibians and invertebrates on show. The whole scene is dominated by the remains of an ancient castle. Dr Clive Jones will lead us through this fascinating and delightful site

Directions: meet at Explorer 233, SK 787 056. Proceed for 6 miles from Oakham along the Leicester road through Braunston and heading to Tilton. After passing a road-turning to Launde on your left-hand side, you will then see Owston Woods on your right and then Withcote Hall on your left. Half a mile beyond this,

look out for the Bridleway sign on the left-hand side at the bottom of the dip. Park just before this on wide verges on either side of the road.

Queries: please ring Ann Tomlinson on 07889 192 694

Wednesday 19 June FARM WALK AT CHESTNUT FARM, TEIGH 6.30 pm

Enjoy an evening walk at Chestnut Farm, led by George Morley, an RNHS member. Barn owls and red kites are often seen.

Directions: as you enter Teigh from the Ashwell direction, take the first turn on the left (bridleway) and meet at Sycamore House (George's house) which is the first one on the left; and park in the paddock (SK 865158).

Queries: please call Roy Edwards on 07710 290 222.

Saturday 6 July FARM WALK AT HOME FARM, LAXTON 10.30 am

A summer farm walk of about two hours at Elizabeth and David Simpson's farm, to see conservation working with agriculture. This is a farm with a rich historical background, and our summer visit should allow us to see fields full of farmland birds and wildflowers.

Led by Elizabeth, with Linda Biddle/Ann Tomlinson.

PLEASE NOTE, THERE IS THE OPTION TO HAVE A DELICIOUS LUNCH FOR £10 PP AT THE FARM AFTER THE WALK. PLEASE RING DAWN WHITEFIELD (01664 454578) AT LEAST ONE WEEK IN ADVANCE TO BOOK A PLACE.

Directions: Home Farm Laxton is situated on the west side of the A43 going towards Corby. About half a mile after you pass the turning for Fineshade, take the turning on the right for Laxton Lodge Gates and Laxton Hall. Once off the main road there is an immediate left turn to take the track parallel to the A43 towards Home Farm (Landranger 141, SP 967 971).

Queries: please ring Ann Tomlinson 07889 192 694

Friday 2 August BAT EVENING AT THE FOX AND HOUNDS, EXTON 8.15 pm

Jenny Harris, RNHS bat recorder and leader, writes: Counting the soprano pipistrelles at the Fox and Hounds, Exton, is a true wildlife spectacle. We shall meet in the pub garden, where the count will start at 8.30 pm. It would be courteous to buy a drink on the way through. In fact, the pub serves very nice food so it is well worth coming early enough to have a meal first: I shall be. Booking for a meal is essential (phone 01572 812403).

Directions: the Fox and Hounds pub is by the village green in the centre of Exton village.

Queries: please call Jenny Harris 01572 755 274, 07754 141 785.

Sunday 8 September PLANT GALLS AT KETTON QUARRY 10.00 am

Seen these weird things in your garden and wondered what they are? Come for a wander around Ketton Quarry Nature reserve to find the varieties of plant galls decorating trees, shrubs and other plants and grasses, and learn about their amazing lifecycle! There will be experts on hand to identify them, as this will be joint meeting with the British Plant Gall Society (BPGS), and led by the Society's own Cecidology Recorder, Roy Lemmon.

Directions: We meet at the industrial units car park in Pit Lane, Ketton, which is off the A6121 just after the sign to Ketton Quarry (if coming from Stamford). Continue down Pit Lane past the roundabout to the industrial units, drive in and park beyond them by the geological trail (SK 978 055).

Queries: please call Roy Lemmon on 01780 762 051.

INDOOR EVENTS

RNHS indoor meetings are held at the Oakham Church of England School, Burley Road, Oakham; free tea and coffee afterwards. They will start again on October 1.

LEICESTER AND RUTLAND WILDLIFE TRUST RUTLAND GROUP

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

Sunday 16 June KETTON QUARRY

Led by Jenny Harris, more details in May Fieldfare.

Sunday 30 June BRENTONBY HALL FARM NEAR MELTON 2.00 pm

Led by Julia Hawley, more details in May Fieldfare.

LINCOLNSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST

See www.lincstrust.org.uk, or phone 01507 526 677 in office hours, for details of the LWT Bourne Group's events and other Lincstrust events in Lincolnshire.

WEATHER SUMMARY Roy Lemmon

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

January 2013

Atmospheric pressure and wind Pressure was generally high for the first nine days of the month – this included the month's high of 1035 mb on the 4th – and winds were generally SW-W during this period. From then on pressures were on the low side and winds were quite variable until the 25th, when the pressures continued on the low side but winds were SW-W again. The lowest pressure for the month was 990 mb on the 27th. Wind speeds were generally low except for the last four days of the month.

Temperatures The pattern outlined above was repeated for temperature. During the first eight days the lowest night-time minimum was 2.6 °C on the 8th and daytime maxima were in the range 9–11 °C. From then, up to and including the 25th, all but one of the night-time minima were below zero and daytime maxima ranged from –0.8 °C on the 17th to 4.3 °C on the 11th. This period included the month's lowest night-time minimum of –9.8 °C on the 15th–16th. For the rest of the month it was considerably warmer, with no frosts, and the month's highest daytime temperature of 14.0 °C was on the 29th.

The mean minimum for the month was 0.24 °C, the second coldest in the decade, only January 2010 was colder at –0.4 °C. By contrast the mean maximum, 8.37 °C, was in fifth position in the decade.

Rain The total for the month was 45.7 mm (1.8 inches) or 95.5% of my long-term mean. From 13th to 26th inclusive this fell as snow and persisted until the night of 26th–27th, when it melted abruptly and was all gone by the morning.

Precipitation was spread sparsely until the 25th and after that date some 59% of the total fell. Only on the 27th was none recorded. The average rainfall for England and Wales was also 95% of the LTM.

Sunshine This was some 50 hours, averaged over England and Wales, or 85% of the LTM. Once again the last week was the salvation, up to this point it was on course to be the gloomiest January since 1885 – but this last week raised it so that in the last 100 years 63 Januarys were sunnier while 37 were duller.

February 2013

Atmospheric pressure and winds This was predominantly a high pressure month and only once did the pressure drop below 1000 mb and then only by 1 mb. on the 5th. During the last nine days the pressures were well raised and this included the month's high of 1035.5 mb on the 27th. However there was a great deal of cloud trapped under this high during that period and hence the days were dull. Winds were generally variable up to 19th but even in this period the preponderance of winds were NW-NE. From the 20th to the end of the month the wind was a consistent north-easterly.

Temperatures A cold month, both the mean minimum (0.21 °C) and the mean maximum (5.98 °C) were eighth in the last decade, only warmer than the Februarys of 2010 and 2012. The lowest overnight minimum was -5.0 °C on the 12th-13th, although many night minima were only just below freezing and on twelve nights were actually above zero. The daytime maxima ranged from 1.3 °C on the 21st to 10.5 °C on the 14th. Nationally in the last 100 years 36 Februarys were colder and the rest warmer.

Rainfall Total precipitation this month, measured as liquid, was 34.2 mm (1.35 inches) or 95% of my LTM and 84% of this fell between the 9th and the 13th. The remaining 16% was spread over two

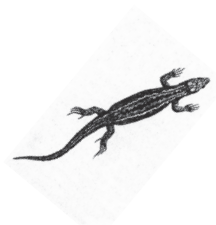
periods, one at the beginning and one at the end of the month and daily quantities in both cases were small. In addition, there was a period of nine days, the 14th to 22nd, when no precipitation occurred. The 9th to 13th saw a fall of snow of about 4 to 5 inches but on the morning of the 19th this had all gone. There was also a very light fall of snow on 23rd and 24th, which had gone by the 25th.

Sunshine Despite the above mentioned heavily overcast conditions towards the end of the month, the averaged figure for England and Wales was 100% of the LTM. It was also the sunniest February for five years.

I am indebted to the Philip Eden Weatherwatch column in the Sunday Telegraph for national information.

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

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



January/February 2013

There has been very little amphibian activity reported in January and February, not surprisingly as the weather has not been very amphibian friendly.

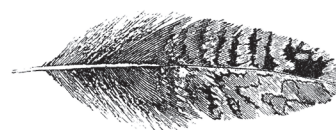
A frog was seen on 24th February in Dawn's paddock in Braunston, where newts were also observed. I found five male Great Crested Newts

in my cellar on 14th February and one in my pond on 15th. By 27th February there were four males in the pond, but still at least two in the cellar. Smooth Newts returned to the pond on 16th February, although they seem to have eschewed the cellar.

My thanks to D Whitefield for her record.

BIRD REPORT compiled by T. Mitcham

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



January/February 2013

Long-staying birds at Rutland Water were the Long-tailed Duck, Great Northern Diver and Slavonian Grebe, along with several Scaup and Smew. Wader numbers declined during the cold spell but a few Snipe, Redshank, Dunlin and Curlew weathered the snow and good numbers of Woodcock were reported. Garden birdwatchers benefited from sightings of Fieldfares, Blackcaps, Bramblings and Reed Buntings. In Stamford, a flock of Waxwings defied many attempts to find them but they remained to the end of the month. One lucky Ketton resident had a flock briefly in his garden. One or two Hawfinches remained at the Eggleton reserve, feeding with other finches.

My thanks to the following for their records: T Appleton, M Aspinall, P Bennett, A & L Biddle, R Brewster, T Caldicott, A & J Comber, R Edwards, Dr C G Gallimore, M & G Griffin, S Harris, P & J Harrison, P Langston, A L Lawrence, LROS, S Lister, I Misselbrook, T Mitcham, L & B Nicholls, J & M Nourish, G Panter, L Park, D & B Parker, J S & J Rodgers, P Rudkin, P Scott, A R & M A Thorp, R Wakeling, L & G Worrall.

Whooper Swan. Four were at RW on 18.02, and 35 flew west there on 20.02, with eight later in NA.

White-fronted Goose. One was at FHP between 02 and 05.02.

Greylag Goose. 442 were at FHP on 16.02.

Barnacle Goose. One was with Greylags at FHP between 27.01 and 16.02.

Egyptian Goose. Two or three were at Gun in Jan, with pairs at LFP and Pilt. Two were also at Pilt on 15.02.

Shelduck. One was at FHP between 11.01 and 03.02.

Mandarin. A pair was at RW(Norm) on 05.01 with three there on 12.01.

Teal. 30 were at Banthorpe GP on 25.02.

Green-winged Teal. One was at EBR on 07.01 and at RW(NA) on 30.01.

Mallard. Up to 50 were on Oak Canal during snowy weather in Jan.

Red-crested Pochard. A male was at RW(Lynd) on 22 and 26.01, and two were at RW(Eg) on 19.02.

Pochard. 31 were at Banthorpe GP on 25.02

Scaup. A female was at EBR on 08.01. Present at RW throughout both months with five at Eg on 08.02.

Long-tailed Duck. The female remained at RW during both months, mainly in NA.

Common Scoter. Single males were at RW(SA) on 11 and 25.01.

Smew. Present at RW throughout this period with a max of 16 on 19.02. Reported from EBR between 05.01 and 22.02, with a max of ten on 15.02.

Red-breasted Merganser. The RW female was present to at least 01.02.

Goosander. Seven flew over LFP on 06.01, with four over on 09.02, and two on 17.02. A pair were on Rygate lake in Ext Park on 09.02.

Grey Partridge. Six were near Mounts Lodge on 25.01 and one called near Prest on 17.02.

Great Northern Diver. The RW bird was present to at least 25.02, mainly off the dam.

Bittern. One or two were reported irregularly from RW(Eg) up to at least 19.02.

Little Egret. One was at Tole Mill on 02.01.

Grey Heron. One was on a garage roof in Bden on 17.01 checking a garden pond which was fortunately (unfortunately?) frozen.

Slavonian Grebe. Two were at RW on 01.01 with one present to at least 23.02.

Black-necked Grebe. One was at RW(EW) to 11.01 with one in NA from 19.02.

Red Kite. Well reported with a max of nine over Bden on 26.01.

Marsh Harrier. A male flew over RW(Eg) on 07.02.

Hen Harrier. A male flew through at RW(Eg) on 15.01.

Sparrowhawk. There were records from three Oak gardens and at Norm and Bden.

Kestrel. Hunting birds were noted at Upp, FHP, Emp and LCast.

Peregrine. One was regular at RW(Eg) in Jan. A male was reported from a Stamford garden on 17.01 – a remarkable record. A female was at FHP on 02.02.

Oystercatcher. One was at RW(NA) on 03.02 with two noted on 22.02.

Ringed Plover. Singles were at RW on 10 and 13-14.02, with four on 16.02.

Golden Plover. 120 were near Pilt on 13.02 and 27 were at Banthorpe GP on 25.02.

Lapwing. Despite the weather, there were some reasonable counts. At EBR there were 550 on 13.01 and 420 on 10.02. On the corresponding dates at RW, there were 332 and 368. 178 were at Banthorpe GP on 25.02.

Sanderling. One was at RW(NA) on 23 and 26.02.

Dunlin. Noted on four Jan dates at RW with a max of 30 on 03.01. 15 were present there on 14.02. At EBR there were 37 on 08.01 and 55 on 13.01.

Ruff. Three were at RW(Old Hall) on 03.01 and one was at EBR on 08.01.

Jack Snipe. Two were at RW on 10.02.

Snipe. At RW there were 20 on 13.01 and 22 on 10.02. Small nos were flushed at Man, LFP, EBR, Oak and Banthorpe GP and Beaumont Chase, with six at EBR on 10.02 the max.

Curlew. Noted at RW(Eg) between 13.01 and 28.02, when there was a count of eight.

Redshank. One or two were noted at both reservoirs with a max of eight at RW on 10.02.

Woodcock. Noted at the following sites, mainly single birds – Wg, RW, Oak, CPW (two), TunnW (three) and Little Haw Wood (four), Beaumont Chase Farm (four). An amazing twelve were feeding where snow had melted at Stoke Wood on 20.01.

Green Sandpiper. Noted at RW from 01.01 to 28.02, with three on 16.02. One was at LFP on 09.02.

Mediterranean Gull. A first winter bird was at RW on 01.01.

Iceland Gull. An adult roosted at RW on 08-09.02.

Glaucous Gull. A first winter bird roosted on 12.01, with an adult between 10-13.02 and another first winter on 17.02.

Stock Dove. A roost at Pilt held about 80 birds up to 13.02.

Woodpigeon. c.1,500 were estimated at the Pilt roost on 13.02.

Barn Owl. Birds were noted at an excellent ten sites, mainly singles with pairs at RW(Eg and Lynd).

Little Owl. One at FHP on 05.01 was the only record.

Short-eared Owl. One was at Mounts Lodge on 16.01. There were four at NLuff Airfield between 05-12.01, two there on 15/16.02 and one on 22.02.

Kingfisher. There were Jan reports from RW(Norm and Whit) and near Oak sewage works. One was at FHP on 09.02.

Green Woodpecker. Reports were received from Belt, FHP, Ext Park, Norm and BarnsW.

Great Spotted Woodpecker. Drumming was heard in Ext Park on 06.01 and at FHP on 16.02. Up to three visited feeders at Norm in both months and a pair were regular at an Oak garden in Feb. Other records were from RW and BarnsW.

Magpie. Six were noted at Oak on 22.01 and at Belt on 26.01.

Jay. Pairs were at an Oak garden in early Jan and a pair and a single in two Oak gardens in Feb.

Raven. Birds were at two likely breeding sites in both months. Overflying birds were at RW(Eg) on 24.01, RW (Lynd) on 31.01, Pilt throughout Feb, Barns on 15.02, and Ext Park on 24.02.

Willow Tit. Jan records came from Wg and Leigh with one near Wg again on 12.02.

Marsh Tit. One or two visited feeders at Man, TunnW and Beaumont Chase Farm. Others were noted near Belt and BarnsW.

Long-tailed Tit. This species seems to have survived the harsh weather quite successfully. Among the larger flocks reported were 20 at Norm (10.01), eight in two Oak gardens in Jan, and twelve at Beaumont Chase Farm on 12.01.

Chiffchaff. One was hawking midges at FHP on 05.01, and there were singles at LFP on 09.02, and RW(Eg) on 21.02.

Blackcap. Singles fed in four Oak gardens from 04.01 with a male at Man from 21-27.02. In Stam a female fed at fat balls on 21.01 and a male took apple and fat in another garden on 26.01 and 15.02.

Waxwing. There were 58 at Oak on 01.01 and c.35 at Ess on 06.01. A flock in Stam, first reported

on 24.01 was seen on six dates to 28.02 with a peak of 31 on 11.02, mainly in the Emp Road / Malcolm Sargent School area.

Nuthatch. Up to three fed at Norm feeders in both months with one or two at TunnW feeders. Also noted at CPW, Ext Park, FHP and EW.

Blackbird. Cold weather encouraged birds into gardens with eight and eleven in two Oak gardens in Jan and early Feb and eight in Belt on 26.01. c.58 were noted around Wg on 02.01 and 60 at Pilt on 10.01.

Fieldfare. No large flocks were reported but cold weather drove small nos into gardens at Oak, Stam and Bden between 16.01 and 13.02, with a max of eight in an Oak garden on 27.01.

Redwing. Two visited a Bden garden on 19.01 and c.40 foraged in woodland at Norm between 19-22.01.

Stonechat. A male was at RW(Eg) throughout Jan, often keeping company with the Dexter cattle around lagoon one.

House Sparrow. 31 were regular in an Oak garden in Feb.

Tree Sparrow. One visited Norm feeders on 18.01.

Grey Wagtail. Singles were at FHP on 05.01 and on the R.Gwash near Ryhall on 23.01.

Meadow Pipit. 15 were on fodder beet near Mounts Lodge on 07.01.

Chaffinch. A large roost at Leigh held c.1000 on 01.01 with c.680 still using it on 17.01. 40 were on game crops near FHP on 11.01, and full song was heard at RW(Eg) on 28.01.

Brambling. The Leigh roost had c.200 on 01.01 with 120 still using it on 17.02. Up to five fed on seed put out on the Egleton Meadows at RW to at least 22.02, and one or two were at feeders in Norm, Stam, Oak, Beaumont Chase Farm and Man.

Goldfinch. c.50 were near Stoke Wood on 22.01.

Siskin. c.80 were at RW (Man Bay) on 03.01. Six were at Beaumont Chase on 28.01, Oak Canal on 02.02 and BarnsW on 05.02 (not the same six, I imagine!). An Oak garden attracted up to ten between 08.02 and 28.02, with two in another Oak garden on 08.02. In a Stam garden there were two on 09.02.

Linnet. c.100 were on fodder beet near Mounts Lodge on 07.01, with 160 noted at Mounts Lodge on 11.01.

Lesser Redpoll. Noted on umbellifers near the Oak Canal at Oak on 02.02 – no number given.

Crossbill. Between 02.01 and 22.02 up to twelve were seen near Pilt. A pair were at Ryll Heath Cottages on 03.02.

Bullfinch. Up to four were noted at Belt, Bden, RW(Lynd and Eg) and Oak Canal. Eight were noted in BarnsW on 05.02.

Hawfinch. One or two fed on seed on Eggleton Meadows from 01.01 to at least 21.02.

Yellowhammer. 30 were on fodder beet near Mounts Lodge on 07.01 and 50 on game crops

near Gun on 23.01, when a male fed in a Stam garden.

Reed Bunting. During hard weather one or two fed in two Oak gardens and up to six (24.01) in a Stam garden.

Corn Bunting. There were singles at Mounts Lodge on 11.01 and 28.01.

January and February 2013 Wildfowl Counts

	Rutland Water		Eyebrook Reservoir		Fort Henry Ponds and Exton Park		Holywell Lake	
	13.01	10.02	13.01	10.02	11.01	09.02	13.01	15.02
Mute Swan	130	116	65	35	9	7	6	
Whooper Swan	11							
Greylag Goose	191	16	260	37	84	171	23	12
Canada Goose	703	522	26	75	2	3	97	92
Barnacle Goose	7	7						
Egyptian Goose	52	21						
Shelduck	16	29	2	3	1			
Mandarin Duck	3	2						
Wigeon	2314	2208	266	405	72	115		
Gadwall	397	193	22	15	96	144	38	50
Teal	599	552	705	273	5	9	17	42
Mallard	664	512	178	42	91	86	72	32
Pintail	1	3	3					
Shoveler	12	18						
Pochard	106	93	12	1			1	1
Tufted Duck	1276	1392	268	252	102	92	44	40
Scaup	4	8	1					
Long-tailed Duck	1	1						
Goldeneye	342	453	61	58				
Smew	11	6	4	11				
Goosander	26	8	1	3				
Great Northern Diver	1	1						
Cormorant	74	91	15	16	4	4		
Little Egret	16	8						
Grey Heron	17	8	3	2	1			
Little Grebe	36	36			13	6	9	11
Great Crested Grebe	112	133	9	6				
Slavonian Grebe	1	1						
Water Rail	10	12						
Moorhen	47	93	4	1	16	18	9	9
Coot	1089	1000	82	73	91	64	35	34
Kingfisher	3					1	1	1

BOTANY NOTES compiled by Graham Worrall

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January and February produced just 1 card for Lesser Celandine seen at the usual place near Seaton churchyard on February 1st, a month later than last year, undoubtedly due to the

poor weather. Let's hope that the weather in the coming months doesn't hold up members going to look for spring flowers.

BUTTERFLY NOTES compiled by Alistair Lawrence

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January/February 2013

With the cold bleak weather we have had for most of the start of this year, it is hardly surprising that few butterflies have been observed; in fact, only one species, the **Peacock**, and all single sightings,

The first was on 12 January when the insect was seen fluttering on the ground in an Oakham garden. On the 29 January a single specimen



was observed flying outside an office window in Manton, about midday when the temperature had reached 10 °C. The final record is of one coming out of hibernation, because of the heating in the church, and flying around during the service in Oakham on 17 February.

My thanks to the following contributors: T Caldicott, A Lawrence and D Perril

MOTH NOTES compiled by Jean Harvey

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January/February 2013

Having experienced some extremely low temperatures in the area during these two months, it is not surprising to have virtually no moth records for this issue.

The trap in the reeds beds at Rutland Water was operated weekly, with the exception of the period when snow was on the ground. The Chestnut was

the only moth caught on this site on two occasions in January. The Barrowden garden trap gave negative results on the two nights it was used when reasonable temperatures prevailed.

Conditions can only improve and I shall hope to hear of moth sightings by members in the coming weeks.

My thanks to Ron Follows for the information.

ORTHOPTERA REPORT compiled by Phil Rudkin

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January/February 2013

In the January 2013 *Fieldfare*, two maps were included in the Orthoptera Report, from the Final Distribution Maps for the Rutland Orthoptera. The maps were for Roesel's Bush Cricket, *Metrioptera roeselii*, and for Long-winged Conehead, *Conocephalus discolor*. These two

colonising species are common and widespread, and both first appeared in Rutland in 2001 and 2003 respectively.

I hope that the maps were well received by the membership. They give a clear indication of the location and status of the Orthoptera in Rutland. An important milestone for the society:

history being made. With no reports for January / February, this again gives me the opportunity to include more of the maps for your interest and knowledge. Therefore I am including four more maps, as follows:

Dark Bush Cricket, *Pholidoptera griseoaptera*.

Speckled Bush Cricket, *Leptophyes punctatissima*.

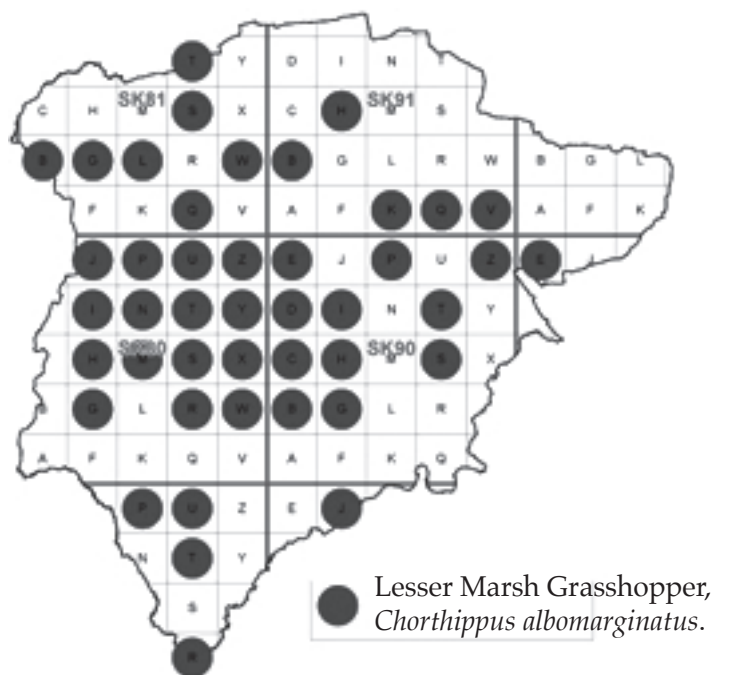
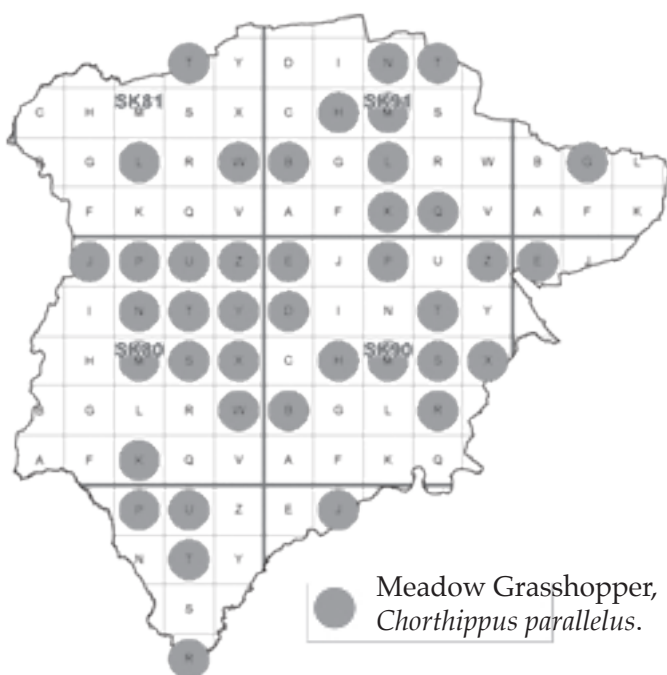
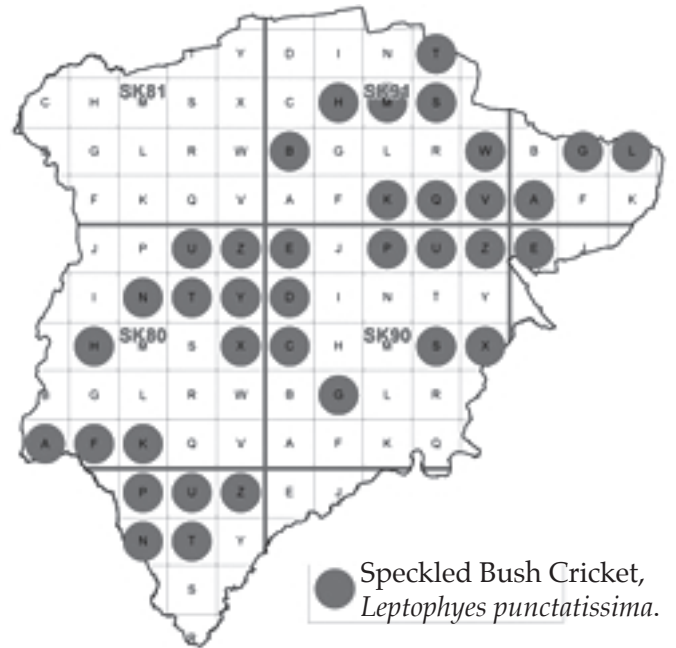
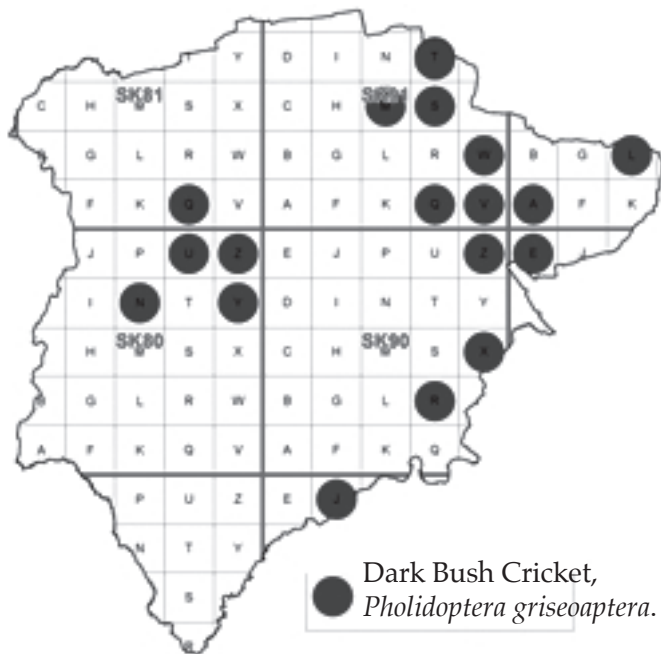
Meadow Grasshopper, *Chorthippus parallelus*.

Lesser Marsh Grasshopper, *Chorthippus albomarginatus*.

Of these four species, the first three are residents, and the Lesser Marsh Grasshopper is a colonist, first recorded in Rutland in 1997.

Looking at the maps, it can be seen that Dark Bush Cricket has a scattered distribution. Speckled Bush Cricket is widespread (with the exception of 10-km square SK81) and common. Meadow Grasshopper is common and widespread. Lesser Marsh Grasshopper is also very successful, being common and widespread.

Finally, let us hope that the orthoptera will have a better season in 2013!



PLANT GALLS REPORT compiled by Roy Lemmon

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January/February 2013

There were no reports this time, it would have been quite surprising if there were, but I will take this opportunity to mention a joint plant gall meeting between ourselves and the British Plant Gall Society. This will take place at Ketton Quarry on 8th September and has been advertised in the current issue of the BPGS magazine – we look forward to good weather. With this in mind I have purchased on behalf of the Society half a dozen of the FSC foldout charts on plant galls.

This chart covers some 69 galls and is illustrated with excellent drawings, thus avoiding written keys which can put some people off, especially when starting a new subject. It was written by the same team that produced the current reference book; and although the latter can be used in the field, the chart is a lot lighter and also more convenient. These charts are of course available to any member who would like to borrow one at any time, just let me know and I will get one to you.

INSECTS AND OTHERS compiled by Gill Chiverton

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

There were no insect reports received during the months of January and February 2013.

Looking out for lichens 2013

Recently I read an article in the Autumn 2012 Newsletter of the Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society. It was written by Ivan Pedley who is an expert lichenologist. In March 2008 RNHS members may remember an outdoor meeting at Belton in Rutland church led by Ivan Pedley to look for lichens. On recent outdoor meetings I've noticed how much more abundant lichens are becoming and all was explained when I read the article. I then thought that other RNHS members might also have wondered about the increase in lichen growth, so I got in touch with the Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society and Ivan Pedley generously gave permission for his article to be reprinted in Fieldfare. The article follows –

Empingham's 'Burning Bushes' by Ivan Pedley

Not even the most blinkered birder, whilst scanning the hedgerows for migrants, or the woodland backdrop when looking far out across the water for wildfowl, will have failed to have seen these remarkable sights. They come in to focus as trees and bushes ablaze with yellow and orange, and in the spring sunshine of late afternoon appear almost to be on fire. I am speaking, of course, of trees with their twigs and branches clothed in leafy lichens. Usually these trees are basic bark species, ash, willows and elder, and the lichens on closer examination are seen to consist of several species, not only the

leafy ones of yellow and orange but also more delicate tufted forms of grey and white. About ten species are constantly associated with these trees and are collectively known as 'The Xanthorion Community' after the dominant, most noticeable and attractive species, *Xanthoria parietina*.

A quarter of a century ago lichens would have been absent from the trees in the area – inhibited by a drizzle of sulphuric acid whenever it rained. Now, at least in terms of sulphur dioxide, air quality is superb throughout the Midlands and lichens are flooding back in to reclaim lands lost to industrial pollution 200 years ago.

Lichenologists, however, are a pessimistic lot and many are not completely overjoyed by the Xanthorion Community. Whilst these lichens are lovely to behold and can be spectacular they also indicate a darker truth – an environment awash with nitrogen compounds, mainly ammonia. This community is the 'vegetable patch' of the lichen world; offer it more nitrogen and, like a plot of prize cabbage, it flourishes to the point where all other lichens may be excluded from the twigs and branches.

For an optimist like me, however, the glass is half full. The Midlands has been a lichen desert for many years, so I rejoice to see them returning. I marvel at their beauty and I stand in awe of their resistance to everything the elements can

throw at them (other than acid rain!). And I also giggle at the collective name for this community which is so dependent on nitrogen compounds – ‘ornithocoprophilous species’ – which, if you

know a little Latin, translates as ‘Lovers of bird poo’ – always a useful phrase to trot out in a crowded hide when bird life is minimal and spirits are low!

A big thank you to Ivan Pedley for letting us reprint his amusing and very informative article.

MAMMAL REPORT compiled by Linda Biddle

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January/February 2013

The first record of 2013 was an **Otter** swimming near the small bridge at Leighfield fishponds, and as the recorder said, what a lovely start to the year! It returned in February, so hopefully will become a regular visitor. We have a number of reports of otters, which seem to be doing very well at present. At Greetham Golf course after the snow in January, an otter was seen swimming back and forth in the ponds. Spraint had been seen next to the ponds before the snow, so again it was a return visit. At Wing, Otter prints were seen in snow by the Chater at Crown Well bridge. Spraint and tracks were found at Burley Fishponds, near Dog Kennel Cottage (DKC) and Manton Bay in early January, and a little later in the month lots of tracks found in mud near Osprey hide, and a track through the ice along the shoreline. In February spraint was found on the mink raft at Manton Bay, and prints along the muddy stream at the south edge of Burley Fishponds.

The good news is accompanied by some less welcome evidence of **Mink**. Prints were found in January in mud near Osprey and Buzzard hide, and behind the Egleton centre car park, and a week later near Burley Fishponds, and in reed beds on Lagoon 3 of RWNR. The presence of mink is a threat to the survival of the **Water Voles**, active through the cold wintry weather. Signs of water voles (droppings or occasionally footprints!) were seen at BFP (Burley Fish Ponds) bridge, DKC, in the channel near Badger hide, and near Fishponds cottage in January, and in February in Wet meadow Lagoon 1, reed beds Lagoon 3, Heron bay, and immediately in front of the Egleton centre, so the little critturs are still there, and sneaking out when no-one is looking!

Two **Stoat** reports this month come from near Pilton in mid and late February. It's slightly surprising that there have not been any stoats seen in ermine this winter, as it seems to me to

have been a very cold winter. Two **Weasels** were also reported, one running across the road near Pilton, and the other patrolling the roadside verge in snow near Barnsdale lodge. A number of **Badger** road casualties are reported, from Normanton, Caldecott, South Luffenham, and two near Uppingham, but more positively, a live badger crossed the road over Wing Tunnel, and tracks were seen in snow at Lincolnshire Gate, with activity seen at several setts near Pickworth, and at RW. The snow has also made the tracks of **Foxes** more visible, and they were found at Manton Bridge, Lincolnshire Gate, and Pickworth Wood. A fox was seen as it crossed a frozen Lagoon 1 at Egleton in January, and in February a fox was observed in undergrowth behind the Pollards near Lagoon 3. Another was seen from Manor Farm Pickworth; and on two occasions in the centre of Holywell Wood a fox slid away into the undergrowth. At Barrowden a fox was seen near the duck pond (maybe eyeing up supper?) and another crossed Wakerley Road at the end of February.

Brown hares have been more obvious, a total of 14 reports, and some 30 plus individuals, seen near Little Casterton Road Stamford, Pickworth, Fort Henry, Lax Hill and 360 Hide RW, Greetham Golf course, Barrowden and Wing Tunnel. At Fort Henry in late February, 10 were seen in one field, and 8 in the adjacent one, as they met to compete and spar in their annual boxing bouts prior to mating. **Rabbits** remain widespread, records sent from Barnsdale, near the drought garden, where 5 were feeding on grassland, from the roadside verge at Gunthorpe and Empingham, and evidence in the snow at Lincolnshire Gate and the old Brickworks fields, Little Casterton Road, Stamford.

Unusually, and testament to the cold weather we have had, there have been no **Hedgehog** reports. **Moles** have however been extremely active,

explosions of molehills appearing at BFP and in fields near DKC, and Empingham Dam during February. Activity is also reported from Fort Henry, Lagoon 1 wet meadow RW, at Barnsdale next to the drought garden and at the Yew Tree Avenue Clipsham. A single **Brown Rat** was dead on the Seaton-Harringworth road. A **Common Shrew** was found dead in Exton village and one **Woodmouse** observed feeding in a Robin feeder in Church Street Wing.

Also at Wing, Dr Gallimore reports a **Bank Vole** feeding in his garden at the end of February and the following day at least 3 were seen in the garden wall.

One **Roe Deer** was seen in Tunnely Wood in late February, and 2 Fallow Deer in the same wood in late January and again in early February. Early in January, 4 **Fallow deer** bucks, with antlers, were seen in Clipsham Wood, and at the end of the month a total of 19 deer including one group of 8. In Little Haw Wood at the beginning of January 9

fallow, including one all white animal, were seen, and at the end of the month 20 deer with 2 bucks and including a group of 12. During February the numbers in both woods increased, to a maximum of 73, including 7 bucks, in Clipsham Park Wood, and 65, including 3 bucks, in Little Haw Wood, but by the end of the month only 26 were seen in Little Haw Wood, and none in Clipsham Park Wood. At least 20 were seen in Pickworth Wood on February 18th, 25 were close to Pickworth Wood on February 23rd, and a similar sized group was seen between Pickworth Manor Farm and the wood on the 24th. In January a **Muntjac** ran away from observers in the middle of Clipsham Park Wood, and two crossed the track between the A1 and Fort Henry. Two Muntjac were seen separately in Pickworth Woods in February, and at RW one was seen near the Lyndon centre, another north of the Eggleton BWC, and tracks were found behind the pollards at the reedbeds on Lagoon 3 and close to BFP.

*Many thanks to all recorders who braved the winter cold to make observations and send them in to me:
A J Biddle, M Branston, T Caldicott, C Gallimore, M Grimes, P & J Harrison, P Langston, A Lawrence,
R Lemmon, R Mackay, T Mitcham, P Rudkin & Toby Pink, P Scott, A R & M A Thorp, L & G Worrall*

BAT REPORT compiled by Jenny Harris

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November 2012 to February 2013

Only three records were received for the last two months of 2012, which is not too surprising as any healthy bat should be safely tucked up in hibernation then. However, on 13.11 three small bats were foraging together by oak trees north of Lyndon village at dawn, and on 26.11 one was seen near Manton church. During a visit to a soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* roost in Edith Weston on 6.12 it was a surprise to find a hibernating common pipistrelle *P. pipistrellus* in the roof void, although the roost contained no soprano pipistrelles.

The first part of 2013 was also a quiet period, but on 26.1 there was evidence of recent bat activity in Ayston church, although there does not appear to be a summer roost there. Two small bats (possibly pipistrelle sp.) were seen on 28.2 at dusk, foraging up and down the lane from Eggleton reserve car park to the visitor centre. An Anabat detector placed near the Rutland hibernaculum recorded bats in flight each night from 8th to 11th January

with 175 bat passes, and every night from 13th to 17th February with 227 passes. Common and soprano pipistrelles and *Myotis* bats (probably Natterer's or Daubenton's) were recorded, with a possible barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus* on the evening of 17th. Two surveys of the hibernaculum were carried out, on 13.1 and 10.2 (see table on the next page). The results were added to national data collected by the Bat Conservation Trust.

Results from Rutland hibernaculum (NBMP)

Species	13 Jan	10 Feb
Natterer's <i>Myotis nattereri</i>	6	6
Daubenton's <i>M. daubentonii</i>	1	1
Pipistrelle sp. <i>Pipistrellus</i> sp.		3
Time taken	105 min	90 min
Number of surveyors	6	5
External temperature	0.4 °C	4.9 °C
Internal temperature	0.7 °C	3.9 °C
Humidity	85%	75%

My thanks to Tim Caldecott, Jenny Harris, Lloyd Park, Jools Partridge of Leicestershire and Rutland Bat Group.

And finally, a challenge for the garden from the Friends of the Earth

NOTE: The closing date for entries is 30 May!

friends of the earth
see things differently

THE BEE CAUSE

Bees need flowers

Do you have a bee friendly garden?

Rutland Friends of the Earth are offering a prize for the best bee-friendly garden in the area.

To enter email grays.morcott@virgin.net with your name and contact address.
There is no entry fee!

**Judging by Adam Frost,
local gardener & veteran of
Chelsea Flower Show**