



Otters at Lyndon Reserve - Smew hide. Special thanks to Richard Adams for this photo.

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Welcome and Happy New Year!

Spring is still several months away but I was delighted to see flowering hazel catkins and the red female flowers in the hedgerow as we took our daily walk yesterday. It lifted my spirits in a way that few other things could. We may have lots of cold or wintry weather to come, but it's always reassuring to know that the natural world is preparing for the coming season. Early flowering as a result of this mild weather, may be due to climate change but let us see it as a sign of better things ahead! It is good to go out and about in the countryside, even when the weather gives little encouragement, and I always come back feeling more positive - proof that the natural world is good for our "wellbeing".

We are at the start of a new year with still no treasurer for the Society. If you are considering a new venture, give Linda a call. Details on back page. Jayne Walker stepped down as Insect (and others) recorder at the end of 2022 but Tim Caldicott is taking over from her. Tim has been a stalwart and knowledgeable contributor of records over several years. Jayne will remain as a member of the committee so will still be involved in the running of our society. We welcome Tim, and thank him for volunteering, and thank Jayne for her contributions over the last few years.

Some of you will already be aware that Luke Nelson is moving on from LRWT to return to Sheffield university to work on projects including investigations into the lives of Long-tailed tits! We shall miss him, but he will be back from time to time, so we look forward to hearing how the projects progress. Luke has not been here long, but has been a valuable member of our committee, and has helped in many ways, including assisting with technology when things were going awry, so we thank him for that! If any one of you can share your technological expertise, we would be delighted to hear from you! We shall soon be needing a secretary to take over from Linda Clark when she moves away from the area in spring, and we hope that one of you will be able to help.

The 2023 programme of events will accompany this edition of Fieldfare, so we look forward to seeing many of you at indoor and outdoor meetings this year. Please also remember that recorders are not solely responsible for recording what is seen in Rutland. Don't forget to note

down whatever you see -even rabbits or common plants are important- and send us your observations monthly. I wish you all a happy and healthy 2023, and good luck with wildlife spotting through the year!
Linda Biddle. *RNHS* Chair.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER



For those who have yet to pay their subscriptions for 2023, your January Fieldfare has come with a membership form with details of how to pay. If you have not received one, please get in touch with Tricia by emailing: rnhsmembers@gmail.com or at her address on the Contacts page at back of this newsletter.

Unfortunately, if we do not receive your payment, your membership will expire and this will be your last Fieldfare.

Many thanks to those members who have already paid.

Tricia Marston - *Membership Secretary*

DIARY DATES



RNHS Indoor Evening meetings.

First Tuesday of every month from October through to March. Venue is at the Volunteer Training Centre (VTC) LE15 8AD. Car park grid ref: SK883 083. Please book your place early with Jeff Wilcox-Smith (details back cover contacts page) as places are limited.

Tuesday 7th February. 7.30pm.

Peaks, Parasites and a few Penguins with Sarah Bedford. Sarah is a Conservation Officer at the LRWT and will relate her fascinating three-year journey from Alaska to Patagonia, travelling through challenging landscapes and encountering various wildlife - all on a bicycle!

Tuesday 7th March. 7.30pm.

Annual General Meeting of the RNHS followed by a talk by our Chairman Linda Biddle entitled "Nearby Nature". A year of wildlife surprises during lockdown.

Tuesday 4th April. 7.30pm.

The effects of farming methods on Wildlife and the environment with Joe Stanley, head of training and partnerships at the Allerton Trust. Joe is passionate about developing more sustainable and resilient farming systems and the Allerton Project researches the different farming methods on wildlife and the environment. Last year, he led a group of us on a fascinating trip to the project which is based at Loddington in Leicestershire. This should prove to be a lively and informative evening.

RNHS Outdoor meetings

It is **IMPORTANT TO BOOK YOUR PLACE** with Jeff, and if the weather is bad on the day, give him a ring beforehand as it may have to be cancelled. For all the meetings below, please make sure you wear appropriate footwear and warm clothing with waterproofs if needed.

Saturday 11th February. 10.00am.

Trip to Frampton Marsh led by Peter Scott. Frampton Marsh is the UK's most important estuary for wildlife. With a rich variety of habitats such as reedbeds, scrapes and wet grassland, there will be plenty of flocks of wintering wildfowl to see. **Meet:** RSPB Frampton Marsh, Roads Farmhouse, Frampton Roads, Frampton, Boston, Lincs. PE20 1AY. Grid ref: SK879 071. There is a small reserve entrance fee.

Saturday 11th March. 10.00am. A walk with nature at Rutland Water Nature Reserve, Egleton led by reserve officer Luke Nelson. Egleton reserve makes up the larger part of the Nature Reserve, with a network of lagoons, wetlands, meadows, hedgerows and woodlands. A chance to re-connect with the wildlife on your doorstep. **Meet:** Egleton reserve car park, Oakham. LE15 8BT. Grid ref: SK879 071. There is a small reserve entrance fee.

Sunday 23rd April 10.00am. Step back in time at Launde Big Wood led by Andy Neilson, Conservation Officer at LRWT. This is one of the largest and most important semi-natural ancient woodlands in the East Midlands. **Meet:** Postcode LE7 9XB (Launde Abbey). Grid ref: SK788 035. Situated between Launde and Loddington. Further details from Jeff when you sign up.

WEATHER

RECORDER Roy Lemmon

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October 2022.

Atmospheric pressure and wind. An unsettled month due to a preponderance of low pressure; the lowest I recorded was 1001 mb on the 24th and the highest 1028.5 mb on the 18th. Winds from the 1st to the 11th were mainly W–NW and then SE–W to the end of the month, and this is reflected in the temperatures recorded. There were no named storms but the period 21st–31st saw gusty winds and thunderstorms.

Temperature. With a mean of 12.81 °C this was the warmest October in the decade 2013–2022, just ahead of the same month in 2017 which was 12.77 °C. In the first three weeks minimum temperatures were what one would expect for October, with the lowest at 2.3 °C on 7th–8th, but from the 21st to the end of the month they were above the norm and helped to elevate the overall mean.

Precipitation. The total recorded here was 89.5 mm (3.52 in) and this equates to 141% of my long-term mean of 32 years. 85% of this fell between the 19th and the end of the month.

November 2022

Atmospheric pressure and wind. Another basically low-pressure month, the lowest, 981 mb on the 17th and the highest 1002 mb on the 30th. Wind speeds were often low or nil and there were several days of poor visibility, but no named storms. Wind directions were mostly SE–SW with a period, the 17th–22nd, when they were W–N, and another when they were NE in the last two days of the month.

Temperature. A warm month, the mean temperature was 8.85 °C, which is second in the decade 2013–2022 after the corresponding month in 2015 at 9.42 C. There was one air frost when the temperature was 0.0 °C overnight on the 19th–20th, and the daytime maximum was 16.3 °C on the 11th, with 16.2 °C on the following day.

Precipitation. A total recorded here of 110.4 mm (4.35 in) which is 190% of my long-term mean of 32 years. It is the wettest November I have recorded in those 32 years, just ahead of November 2000 which was 108.2 mm. There were 7 days with no precipitation. The two wettest days were the 16th with 21.0 mm (0.83 in) and the 21st, 25.4 mm (1.0 in).

December 2022

Atmospheric pressure and wind. The highest pressure of the month was 1031 mb on the first and it continued high for the first week. The rest of the time it was low and the lowest, 995 mb, was on the 30th. Winds, from the 1st to the 14th, were NW–E and generally of low velocity, with several days of low visibility including the 11th when it was 150–200 m all day. In the second half of the month winds were S–W and in the last 3 days were of higher velocity.

Temperature. This was the coldest December in the decade 2013–2022, with a mean of 3.63 °C, and was noteworthy for the period 7th–18th inclusive, when all overnight minima were below zero Celsius and the lowest, –6.4 °C, was reached on the 13th–14th. In addition, on two of those days the daytime maxima were –0.8 °C on the 11th and –1.4 °C on the 13th.

Precipitation. The total was 44.3 mm (1.74 inches) which is 83% of my long-term mean of 32 years.

Annual rainfall 2022 A total for the year of 549.9 mm (21.65 inches) which is 90.5% of my LTM.



Hazel catkins with female flowers. Photo L. Biddle.

AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES

RECORDER Dr C H Gallimore

Waterdown, Brooke Road, Braunston, Rutland LE15 8UJ.

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Oct - Dec 2022

The only record for this quarter was of a dead **toad** on the road in Wing on 5th October, for which I thank Tim Caldicott.



BATS

RECORDER Jenny Harris

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October to December 2022

There were no bat records from members for the autumn into winter quarter, nor did I record any bat activity myself. There were also no records of grounded bats in Rutland but an injured bat from Thrusington ended up at the Oakham Veterinary Hospital in mid-December. It had been a cat victim and was put to sleep.

Bats of all species are likely to have begun hibernation around the beginning of November, weather permitting, although bat workers around the country have been finding bats in hibernation sites that were awake or even active enough to be flying around. Milder weather during the winter months is not really beneficial to animals that hibernate, since the reason for hibernation is that their usual food is unavailable in sufficient amounts to replace the energy used up in arousal from deep torpor. The amount of energy used by bats to wake up and foraging for flying insects is considerable and needs more than a few moths and midges to replace it.

Bats in Churches Project

At Egleton Church, the gap in the ceiling boards beneath the bat roost was repaired in October and early November, and tiny gaps around the wall plate that had allowed

juveniles to enter the church and become trapped were blocked. This should not have affected the roost area, so the bat counts will go ahead in June to ensure that this is the case. Ecological survey work was completed at Whissendine, Greetham and Stretton churches, each of which contain Natterer's bats, and I hope to be involved during 2023 with various counts and public engagement events. Work under the Bats in Churches Project has also been completed at Braunston-in-Rutland church where it is planned to hold a 'batty' event again in summer 2023.



Long-eared bat in crevice. Photo Gary Gray.

BIRDS

Recorder Terry Mitcham

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October 2022.

Highlights. Rutland Water had a Black-necked Grebe (9th-22nd), a Bittern (28th), a Short-eared Owl (28th) and Bearded Tits from (22nd). A Yellow-browed Warbler was ringed at Luffenham Airfield (1st). Rock Pipits were at Rutland Water (8th, 14th, and 20th) and a Hawfinch was over Gibbet Gorse Meadow (18th).

Rutland Water. The count (9th) produced 724 Shoveler, 1478 Gadwall, 3873 Wigeon, 202 Pintail, 1995 Teal, nine Red-crested Pochards, 1135 Tufted Ducks and a Goldeneye. Also counted were 667 Great Crested Grebes, 48 Great White Egrets, 70 Little Egrets, nine Water Rails and 2254 Coot. Other wildfowl were five Whooper Swans (14th) with nine (19th), three Garganey (8th), a Scaup (13th) and a Goosander (16th, 27th). Six Grey Partridges were near Gibbet Gorse (24th). Two Marsh Harriers were at Egleton (14th) with a ring-tailed harrier (22nd). A Peregrine was over north arm (8th). Some peak wader counts included an Oystercatcher (8th), 670 Lapwings, 90 Golden Plover (both 9th), two Grey Plovers (22nd) and four Curlew (9th). There were 12 Black-tailed Godwits

(20th), four Little Stints (19th) and three Jack Snipe (4th). Three Green Sandpipers and seven Redshanks and seven Greenshanks were seen (9th) with two Spotted Redshanks (4th). Four Stonechats were present (8th) with two each at Egleton and Lyndon.

Eyebrook Reservoir. There was a Pink-footed Goose (1st, 29th) and a Whooper Swan (8th). A pair of Red-crested Pochards were present (29th). An Osprey was seen (6th, 8th). Wader counts included 179 Lapwings (16th), 146 Golden Plovers (16th), 14 Ringed Plovers (8th) and Ruff (13th). There were 12 Dunlin (19th), six Little Stints (1st), a Jack Snipe (30th) and two Green Sandpipers (13th). Two Spotted Redshanks were present (1st, 4th) plus a long-staying Wood Sandpiper (13th – 31st). A Peregrine and a Tree Sparrow were seen (8th).

Other Sites. There were six Mandarin Ducks in Exton Park (7th). On (30th), Fort Henry Ponds had 95 Shoveler and a Garganey. A Marsh Harrier was near Pilton (8th) when 19 Buzzards were in a field at Beaumont Chase. Three Green Sandpipers were at Fort Henry Ponds (2nd – 25th). Peregrines were at Pilton, Martinthorpe and Quarry Farm.

Marsh Tits were regular at Wing Hall, Martinsthorpe and Tunneley Wood. A late Swallow was at Manton (22nd). There was a Stonechat at Banthorpe GP (10th) with four in Exton Park from (15th). A Wheatear was at Luffenham Airfield (1st) and a Tree Sparrow at Pilton (13th). 93 Meadow Pipits flew over Preston (9th). One or two Bramblings were at four sites from (1st).

November 2022

Highlights. There were two Brent Geese at Rutland Water (30th) with four Bewick's Swans (20th) and an immature Shag (30th). Single Black-necked and Slavonian Grebes were counted (16th) and a Great Northern Diver was present from (3rd). A Bittern was seen (11th, 19th). A Garganey was at Fort Henry Ponds (20th).

Rutland Water. A belated count (16th) produced two Whooper Swans, 145 Shoveler, 1016 Gadwall, 3345 Wigeon, 233 Pintail, 2686 Teal (record count), 47 Red-crested Pochard, 945 Tufted Ducks, 85 Goldeneye and 14 Goosander. Ten Great White Egrets and 1145 Coot were present. Other wildfowl noted were 13 Whooper Swans south (4th), a Scaup (20th – 25th) and a redhead Smew (26th) with two (28th). Up to three Marsh Harriers roosted. Wader counts included an Oystercatcher, 1842 Lapwings, 783 Golden Plovers (all 16th), eight Curlew (24th), 11 Black-tailed Godwits, a Knot (20th – 22nd), 63 Dunlin (6th), two Green Sandpipers (12th, 16th) and 11 Redshank. A Mediterranean Gull and a Rock Pipit were at Normanton (19th). A Peregrine was at Gibbet Gorse (3rd) and Egleton (12th). Stonechats were regular at Egleton.

Eyebrook Reservoir. There was a Whooper Swan (30th), two Red-crested Pochard (25th) and a Scaup (25th, 28th). Smew were present from (23rd) with two (28th). Two Great White Egrets were seen (27th) along with 100 Lapwings and a Stonechat.

Other Sites. Fort Henry Ponds had 70 Shoveler (5th), 60 Gadwall (26th), 51 Teal (19th) and two Water Rails (5th, 19th) with three Green Sandpipers (5th). A Woodcock was in Pickworth Wood (14th) with two at Tunneley Wood (26th). A Peregrine was near Belmesthorpe (11th). A late Swallow was near Whitwell (22nd). A Cetti's Warbler was at Leighfield Fishponds (18th) and Marsh Tits were at Tunneley Wood, Martinsthorpe, Leighfield and Wing.

Two Stonechats were in Exton Park (19th) and five Tree Sparrows near Egleton village (12th). Six Bramblings flew over Martinsthorpe (30th) and there were 22 Lesser Redpolls at Manton (28th).

December 2022.

Highlights. There was a Pink-footed Goose at Rutland Water (4th) and a Red-breasted Merganser (3rd). A Ring-necked Parakeet was near Uppingham (5th). At Leighfield Fishponds there was a Willow Tit (22nd) and a Cetti's Warbler (20th, 22nd).

Rutland Water. The count (13th) produced 3611 Wigeon, 512 Gadwall, 1483 Teal, 129 Pintail, 175 Shoveler, 723 Tufted Ducks, a Scaup and 32 Goosander. There were also 81 Great Crested Grebes and eight Great White Egrets. Other wildfowl included 14 Red-crested Pochards (4th) and the Great Northern Diver to at least (4th). There were 599 Lapwings (13th), three Black-tailed Godwits (10th), 15 Dunlin (3rd) and eight Redshank (13th). Two Woodcock were at Lyndon (18th) with a Stonechat there (11th).

Eyebrook Reservoir. There were two Whooper Swans (3rd) with one on (5th). Smew were present from (3rd), peaking at eight (20th).

Other Sites. On (16th) there were 55 Shoveler, 24 Gadwall and 95 Wigeon at Fort Henry Ponds. Seven Mandarin Ducks were at Wing Fishing Lakes (26th). A Great White Egret was in a Teigh paddock (2nd) with two over Martinsthorpe (15th). Two Woodcock were in Tunneley Wood (3rd) with singles at Martinsthorpe and Wing. Barn Owls were at Manton, Leighfield Fishponds and Wing and Little Owls at Martinsthorpe and Wing. Marsh Tits were at Tunneley Wood, Martinsthorpe, Wing and Leighfield Fishponds. Blackcaps were noted in three Oakham gardens. There were 13 Bramblings at Martinsthorpe (2nd) and 175 each of Chaffinch and Linnet at Lyndon (27th). 25 Lesser Redpolls were at Manton (1st) with two in an Oakham garden (16th).

My thanks to the following for their records for this period:- T.Appleton, R.F.Baker, D.&J.Ball, A.J.&L.Biddle, T.Caldicott, L.Clarke, T.Collins, A.Comber, P.Langston, A.Lawrence, LROS, A.Mackay, J.Maddox, I.Misselbrook, T.Mitcham, B.Moore, G.Morley, L.Nelson, J.W.Nourish, C.I.Park, T.Sexton.

Best wishes for good birdwatching in 2023.



Smew at Eyebrook. Photo Peter Scott

October/ December 2022 Wildfowl counts.

	RW 09.10	RW 16.11	RW 13.12	EBR 09.10	FHP/ Ext. 07.10	FHP/ Ext. 19.11	FHP/ Ext. 16.12	BGP 10.10	BGP 11.11	BGP 08.12	H.well 09.10	H.well 10.11	H.well 10.12
Canada Goose	813	508	476	10							103	41	
Bar-nacle Goose										2			
Greylag Goose	305	451	116	121	185		2			130	78	32	10
Pink-footed Goose	1												
Mute Swan	524	480	381	131	24	13	15	2	2	2	2	2	2
Whooper Swan		2		1									
Egyptian Goose	96	17	8	1									
Shelduck	2	8	2	4									
Mandarin Duck		2	2		6								
Shoveler	724	145	175	2	43	36	55					5	6
Gadwall	1478	1016	512	13	37	59	24			2		7	20
Wigeon	3873	3354	3611	142	2	6	95				1	18	52
Mallard	1610	1002	506	280	112	176	103	70	17	7	34	75	92
Pintail	202	233	129	6									
Teal	1995	2686	1483	384	79	51	52	26	30	18	11	6	3
Red-crested Pochard.	9	47	2										
Pochard	4	29	21	5									

October/December 2022 Wildfowl counts continued.

	RW 09.10	RW 16.11	RW 13.12	EBR 09.10	FHP/ Ext 07.10	FHP/ Ext 19.11	FHP/ Ext 16.12	BGP 10.10	BGP 11.11	BGP 08.12	H.well 09.10	H.well 10.11	H.well 10.12
Tufted Duck	1136	2686	723	199	2	38	22	1	1	1	7		18
Scaup			1										
Golden-eye	1	85	77			1							
Goose-ander		14	32										
Little Grebe	171	154	90		4	8	9	1			20	8	24
Great crested Grebe	667	361	81	118									
Slavonian Grebe		1											
Black-necked Grebe	1	1											
Grey Heron	41	15	6	4	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1
Great White Egret	49	10	8										
Little Egret	70	4	3	7	1			1	1	1	4	2	
Cormorant	649	359	125					2		2	1	1	
Water rail	9	1				2							
Moorhen	103	37	34	2	68	31	15			3	23	11	18
Coot	2254	1145	240	242	49	63	63				3	2	4
Kingfisher	2	1									4	1	1
TOTAL	16786	13113	8844	1672	613	485	455	104	52	168	292	212	251

BOTANY

RECORDER John Rodgers

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Oct – Dec 2022

The last few months of the year aren't the best flowering times, so there haven't been any records since September. No records of sprigs of Holly or Mistletoe and I didn't really expect anybody to find bits of Reindeer moss. The start of the New Year did produce something. Several members took part in the New Year Plant Hunt organised by BSBI; an event we have joined now for the last three years. This time 10 members made five separate outings to see what was in flower. A total of 25 species were found. Last year we found 39 species, covering more or less the same areas. Presumably this is due to the weather. There was a cold period which probably retarded flowering of those plants which were ready to bloom.

The same flowering plants cropped up as last year and as were found nationally; Groundsel, Daisy, Dandelion, Shepherd's-purse, Red Dead Nettle and Annual Meadow Grass. We didn't find any Ivy-leaved Toadflax, Feverfew or any of the Sow-thistles which were flowering last year. Instead, we found Cow Parsley, three different species of Speedwell and Cut-leaved Dead Nettle which was a plant new to the three members who found it in Oakham. It is similar to Red Dead Nettle, though a rather more delicate a plant with very deep toothed leaves. Nationally there were 953 surveys, and 474 species were found. I think all those who took part locally enjoyed their searching.

In last time's Fieldfare I mentioned the book "More than meets the eye". This is the book detailing the natural history findings of the Loughborough Naturalists Group at Grace Dieu Priory to the west of the town, where surveys have been carried out for the last 50+ years. It is a beautifully produced and interesting book with lots of photographs and species detail. It's very well worth getting hold of and reading.

Thank you to Carolyn Baxter, Linda Clark, Jenny Harris and Donnie Smalley in Oakham and Uppingham, Marion Markham in Langham, Douglas and Jane Ball in Market Overton and Roy Lemmon and Martin Grimes in Stamford for their contributions to the New Year Plant Hunt



Oxford ragwort in flower at Oakham New Year Plant Hunt. Photo J. Rodgers.

BUTTERFLIES

RECORDER Martin Quinlan

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October – December 2022



Painted lady. Photo by Jayne Walker

The year ended with a total of eight species being recorded in the final quarter, with nearly all records from October. Only one species was recorded in November and none in December.

The only **BRIMSTONE** records were all from Wing (W) on 6th, 11th, and 18th October.

The last **LARGE WHITE** was also at W on 11th October with a **SMALL WHITE** there on the 9th.

There were two Small White and two **SMALL COPPER** in Ketton on 10th October.

The last Small Copper was seen in Uppingham (Upp) on 13th October.

RED ADMIRAL produced the most records with singles at Ketton Quarry on 10th, Egleton on 16th, Upp on 21st, W on 22nd and then the maximum of six on an Abelia bush in an Oakham garden on 31st.

The final records were singles in November at Stretton Wood on 2nd and Barrow on 16th.

A single **PAINTED LADY** was seen at Manton on 4th, 7th, 8th, and 9th October with a **SMALL TORTOISESHELL** also there on 17th.

The last Small Tortoiseshell was in Upp on 22nd October. Finally, a **SPECKLED WOOD** was seen at W on 9th October.

I would like to thank Marian Markham, Duncan and Jane Ball, David Needham, Roy Lemmon, Martin Grimes, Tim Caldicott and Diana Masters for their records.

Oct. Nov. Dec. 2022

Nearly 100 fungi species were reported from 18 Rutland locations for October November and December. The bulk of these were seen at Rutland Water nature reserves Egleton and Lyndon.

Candlesnuff/Stag's Horn fungi *Xylaria hypoxylon* can usually be seen in most months of the year but was conspicuous by its absence up until the end of September. However, after a few days of precipitation and some dews it began showing itself everywhere. All the fruiting bodies need, is a drop of water to show themselves.

Yellow Fieldcap *Bolbitius titubans* was plentiful this season as was **Brown Roll Rim** *Paxillus involutus*. Numerous specimens of a large chestnut brown, funnel shaped, gilled fungi were spotted on the Oakham bypass in October by Carolyn Baxter. One specimen's cap measured 22cms across which far exceeded the maximum size stated for a Brown Roll Rim; this put into question a positive identification. Further specimens were gathered later from the same area and these were, 12cms and 12.5cms just within the normal size range for Brown Roll Rim cap up to 12cms. This is awaiting a positive identification. About 20 Brown Roll Rim, appeared over a couple of weeks in my garden and several reports of the same fungus came in from other locations.



Brown roll rim. Mature specimen. Photo Linda Clark

The first **Velvet Shank** *Flammulina velutipes* of the year was reported by Tim Sexton on Willow stumps near the Anglian Birdwatching centre. This winter fruiting species, favours colder weather and can withstand frosts.

Waxcaps are to be found especially, on unimproved grassland. **Snowy waxcap** this year, was found in a couple of different fields and a garden in Wing. Reports of **Meadow/yellow waxcap**, **Parrot** and **Blackening waxcap** were also received. One report looked like an Orange waxcap, but this couldn't be verified. From photographs only, the Meadow, Orange and Yellow waxcaps look similar, so identification is difficult. Other notable finds were **Magpie Inkcup** *Coprinopsis picacea* in Barnsdale Wood, **White Saddle** *Helvella crispa* in Pickworth Woods and **Parachute fungi** *Marasmius limosus*, found on reeds, found by Tim Sexton at Rutland Water NR Egleton; only 39 records of this species found in the UK.



White Saddle. Photo Linda Biddle.

Honey fungus, *Armillaria* sp. was widely seen this year; a parasitic fungus that is associated with and harmful to both deciduous and coniferous trees and shrubs, whether living or dead, and strikes fear into the hearts of keen gardeners and foresters alike. The fungus spreads by means of rhizomes which look like black bootlaces and can be found under the bark of the affected plant along its roots and in the soil, where it may travel considerable distances. The mycelia show themselves as a dense white covering and causes white rot, ultimately killing the tree or shrub on which it feeds. It is usually the fungus fruiting bodies which are noticed first, appearing on dead wood and alerting people to its presence. Look out for it in late summer to early winter. The genus **Armillaria** contains several species of Honey fungus, and all are honey coloured with tiny scales on the cap and all have a ring on the stipe (stem) which can be persistent or short-lived. The species are - Honey fungus *Armillaria mellea*, Ringless Honey fungus *Armillaria tabescens*, Bulbous Honey Fungus *Armillaria gallica/lutea* and Dark Honey Fungus *Armillaria ostoyae*. Other notable features include white coloured gills with a white spore print and most species form large spectacular clusters although some may be solitary or form smaller clumps.

In around the year 2000, a specimen of Dark honey fungus *Armillaria ostoyae* was found in Oregon USA. DNA testing showed that this fungus encompassed 2,200 acres (note the year 2,000 and the acreage of 2,200 - call me a cynic!). It is thought to be the largest living organism on the planet. Interestingly its age is calculated to be 2,500 years old which is about the same age as the Giant Redwood in Sequoia NP. California.



Honey Fungus. Photo L. Clark.

My thanks to Jane & Duncan Ball, Carolyn Baxter, Linda Biddle, Margaret Conner, Gay Griffon, Roy Lemmon, Jacky Morrell. Jane Peach and Tim Sexton.

Aug – Dec 2022

Otters are increasing and commonly seen at RWNR. In September two reports were received; 3 otters seen by observers on the south arm of RW while doing the Webs (wetland breeding birds) survey, and the second on the same morning by other Webs observers who saw 5 otters on lagoon 8. They are unlikely to be the same animals, so the otter population is obviously growing! In October one was photographed on lagoon 2, having caught prey and taken it onto an island, and in November, 3 were observed on Lagoon 3. In Oakham, a trail camera was set up to find out what was taking fish from a garden pond, and – you guessed – an otter was on camera at 6.00am swimming around the pond, having scaled a 6 foot fence around the garden, and used the stream which flows down under the A606 at Dog kennel field as an access route.

A **badger** has been a regular visitor to Marian Markham's garden during the months until November when the animal, probably the same individual, stopped appearing. Only one road casualty has been recorded, (not near Langham) though it's likely that more have been killed.

A **stoat** was seen crossing the Ashwell – Cottesmore road in August. Another was seen near Fort Henry Ponds in September, and a third report came from Pilton near the railway in October. One **weasel** was observed in the garden of The Willows, Barrow, the only record of the species for the period August to December.

In Gibbets gorse meadow a vixen alarmed one of our members by her screaming. He said he thought someone was being murdered! Luckily the **fox**, trapped in a wire fence, managed to free herself and went on her way. At Langham a single fox was an occasional visitor in August and October, more regular in September and very frequent in November. He or she makes only one visit per night, as compared to the several foxes who came and went each night in previous years.

Hedgehogs have been fewer in number this season, making only 4 visits to the Langham garden in Aug-September, with others seen at Cottesmore and Wing village. Only two reports were received between Oct and December, both of which were in Oakham, the first in Barmstedt Drive from 11-14th October, and the second was still coming out to feed in the cold on 10th December, obviously too hungry to hibernate.



Hedgehog. Photo
L.Biddle

A dead mole was found at Pickworth wood during very dry weather in August. Other reports were of hills, evident at Top street Wing, RWNR snipe hide meadow, field 16 ponds, and more hills in an allotment plot at Wing Hill.

Water voles have had a difficult time in summer 2022, the lack of water restricting their habitat, and this was apparent in the smaller number of rafts showing evidence of their presence in summer and autumn surveys. We hope that the population will recover in 2023.

During September, one or sometimes two **Bank voles** have appeared in the gardens of Jane and Duncan Ball in Barrow, and Linda and David Clark in Wing. At Ridlington a **Common shrew** was seen in November, and Jane and Duncan found a dead one on Teigh Lane, Barrow in September. **Wood mice** put in occasional appearances each month on the trail camera at Langham.

Grey squirrels regularly visited Orchard Road Langham, and were reported from the Willows garden Barrow, but these are very commonly seen, and under reported, so this does not indicate their true population level.

At Langham also during September and October, there were occasional appearances of a **Brown rat** on the trail camera, and a dead one was found on the RW perimeter track in December.

Reports of **Brown hares** have been received from Wing, Glaston, Ryhall heath and Langham in Aug/Sept and from Exton, Pickworth, Langham and Ridlington during Oct and Dec. Few **Rabbit** reports are sent in; 3 only from Aug to Dec at Great Casterton, Wing and Ridlington but this indicates that members think they are so common that recording is not necessary! Please do record what you see – even the humble rabbit!!

A **Fallow deer** report was received from Banthorpe gravel pits where 6 were observed in September, all male with superb antlers, one albino, and the others with a slightly different coloration to the normal fallow- mid-brown on the flanks, with heavy cream spotting and a black or very dark dorsal stripe. Other reports came from Pickworth. Groups of up to 6 were seen on 5 occasions during Oct and Nov and in December 3 were seen at Exton Park.

Muntjac appeared on the Langham trail camera 9 times in August, 9 in September, 8 in October, and 5 in November. Others were seen between Wing and Glaston, Walk Farm Pickworth, and at RWNR where prints were found in many locations. There were 4 sightings of **Roe Deer**, all in September. Three, a female with two half-grown young were in Exton Park south of Tunnely wood, 2 south of Pickworth wood, one in Burley wood, and another at the junction of Manton and Preston road Wing.

Thanks to reporters

D+J Ball, A Biddle, T Caldicott, D+L Clark, Charles Gallimore, Diana Masters, Marian Markham, Jacky Morrell, Terry Mitcham, Tessa Mitchell, Luke Nelson and Peter Scott

MOTHS

RECORDER Paul Bennett

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Oct – December 2022.

Trapping took place on 2 nights in October at Lyndon reserve with both November and December being unsuitable. There are a number of moths that can be on the wing in the right conditions over the late autumn and winter period with some species only flying at this time of year but nights free from all the impediments of cold, damp and wind are rare.

On 3rd October, 79 moths of 26 species were identified and released from the traps set out (one meadow trap 125watt mains operated and one woodland trap 20watt battery operated, both mercury vapour). Highlights were a **Merveille du Jour**, **Small Blood-vein** and 3 species of Chestnut moths including a very early and first site record for **Dark Chestnut**, a species more often seen in winter and that only comes to light in small numbers. There were also good counts of **Lesser Yellow Underwing** (11), **Barred Sallow** (9) and **Beaded Chestnut** (7). 30th October produced 24 moths of 18 species with, on this

occasion both traps being run from the meadow power-point. **Brick**, **December Moth**, **Feathered Thorn**, **Rush Veneer** and **White-point** were all seasonal and single records with the latter being of interest as this is a species showing both a size and range expansion in recent years with its national status changing from regular immigrant occurring mainly in southern coastal areas to a colonist over the southern half of England up to the Yorkshire coast. The expansion now partly masks its immigrant status and this Lyndon record is probably a second generation one of a moth that now most likely breeds in Rutland.

One other record of interest was received. This has been a year of regular sightings of **Hummingbird Hawk-moth** with one still being seen in a Manton garden on 7th November, an indicator of how mild this autumn has been and of our changing climate.

Thank you to the following for submitting their records:
P Bennett, T Caldicott.

ORTHOPTERA

RECORDER Phil Rudkin

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October 2022

Only one report for this period, but what an exciting one! This concerns yet another Rutland report of the sighting of the third only Southern Oak Bush Cricket. Members will remember the very first sighting in Rutland on 21 September 2019, courtesy of the photographer Andrew Dejardin. This appeared in 'Fieldfare' in January 2020, pages 11 and 12. Moreover, it was also entered in my book 'The Orthoptera of Rutland' March 2021. This was followed by another Southern Oak Bush Cricket report from member Diana Masters; a male, photographed on her car windscreen in Oakham on 29 August 2022.

Then, 'lo and behold' the third sighting for Rutland of a Female Southern Oak Bush Cricket, occurred on 16 October 2022. This time, photographed just on the western edge of Hambleton Woods. The credit goes to member Tessa Mitchell, who asked me to identify the creature, when we met at a recent indoor meeting of Rutland Natural History Society.

It is worth noting that this species does not fly and is known to be spreading fast in our area, by 'hitching' lifts on Cars and Lorries. I am sure that 2023 will produce more reports of this fascinating cricket. Keep your eyes open!

Bush Crickets

Southern Oak Bush Cricket, *Meconema meridionale*

One female, found on friend's coat, at the western edge of Hambleton Woods. Only the third record of this cricket in Rutland! 16th October 2022. New site, SK906069

Many thanks to Tessa Mitchell for this report. Happy New Year to everyone.



Southern Oak bush cricket. Photo P. Rudkin

INSECTS & INVERTEBRATES

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October – December 2022

The Winter weather over the last few months has been very mixed, with record breaking temperatures in October, to a prolonged period of sub-zero temperatures in the run up to Christmas. Regardless of these topsy-turvy temperatures, insects have still been seen and the records for this period, are tabulated below.

October

Southern Hawker	<i>Aeshna cyanea</i>	Wing hill
Common Darter	<i>Sympetrum stryolatum</i>	Lagoon 5, Rutland water
Migrant Hawker	<i>Aeshna mixta</i>	Manton
Migrant Hawker	<i>Aeshna mixta</i>	Rutland water
Blue Shieldbug	<i>Zicrona caerulea</i>	Wing hill allotment



Hawthorn Shieldbug. Photo D. Masters



Marmalade hoverfly. Photo C Baxter

November

Hawthorn shieldbug	<i>Acanthosoma haemorrhoidale</i>	
Common wasp	<i>Vespa vulgaris</i>	
Garden bumblebee	<i>Bombus hortorum</i>	
Honey bee	<i>Apis mellifera</i>	
Buff-tailed bumblebee	<i>Bombus terrestris</i>	
Marmalade hoverfly	<i>Episyrphus balteatus</i>	



Garden Bumblebee. Photo C Baxter



Honeybee. Photo C Baxter

PLANT GALLS

RECORDER Roy Lemmon

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No records for last quarter of 2022

FIELD TRIPS

Unfortunately, the outdoor walk at **Bradgate park** last October, had to be cancelled due to bad weather, but Linda Biddle had by good luck, already been there the weekend before and taken this lovely photo of the Red deer rutting in the park.



Deer rutting. Photo Linda Biddle

Attenborough NR Visit 12/11/22

Our outing to Nottingham Wildlife Trust's (NWT) Attenborough Nature Reserve was blessed with what seemed like the first fine days for weeks. Having Tim Sexton to lead us was an added bonus. Tim had worked here for 14 years before taking up his post at Rutland Water NR and so knew the reserve like the back of his hand. The reserve was purchased by the NWT in 2019 but has been managed as a wildlife site since the 1960's after a fight to save the area from infill and development. The flood waters caused by ice melt from the last ice age about 10,000 years ago, formed wet meadows and oxbow lakes, with sand, gravel and organic and mineral deposits, creating different habitats for flora and fauna. Large scale sand and gravel extraction begun in the 1930's has created deep lagoons and islands which continue to provide habitats of different structures and ages. Our walk around the reserve, which is 220 hectares, revealed many lagoons edged with woodland and grassy areas providing a variety of habitats. Tim pointed out one wooded area called 'The Delta Sanctuary' which is a no-go area for visitors, and which provides a haven for wildlife

including otters. We didn't see any otters, but we did see a good variety of both waterfowl and woodland birds some fungi and for a lucky few, brilliant views of Kingfisher. One highlight was a good sighting of a Willow Emerald Damselfly, this species has been making its way north and west across the country and has an extraordinary life cycle. Naturally, a city reserve such as Attenborough comes with accompanying problems. Well used by people with dogs, (not always on leads), the reserve was busy but not unduly so and people were out enjoying themselves and surely benefitting from the experience. I am sometimes forgetful of how lucky I am to live in Rutland and to be able to enjoy the relative quietness and benefits of the countryside. Not everyone is so fortunate, so places like Attenborough NR and similar 'city' reserves provide a valuable service to the community. Tim recounted a story about when he first started at Attenborough and was leading a group of schoolchildren. The class descended from the coach and one little girl burst into tears. Tim was understandably worried. Was it that her shoes would get



**Attenborough Nature Reserve.
Photo Linda Clark**

muddy? On further questioning the girl replied that she was crying because "it was the first time she had ever seen a swan". A wonderful outing and a lesson to us all about the importance of 'City' reserves.

Thanks to Tim Sexton and all those who made the journey to Nottingham

Visit to RWNR Lyndon Jan 7th, 2023

The forecast was appalling, heavy rain and strong winds! We hesitated whether or not to call off the meeting altogether, but decided that if the weather was really bad, we could all shelter in the reserve centre at Lyndon, and drink coffee and eat cake! In the event, when we arrived on Saturday morning the car park was already filling up and a group of members were waiting for us. The rain had eased, and by the time we were ready to set off along the path 21 members had gathered. Looking out of the centre in front we saw a group of 10 or so moorhen feeding on the grassy area, and sparrows and tits were feeding on and under the bird feeders. At Teal hide we were lucky to see a brightly coloured grey wagtail, mallard, teal, tufted duck, gadwall, cormorant and out in the bay not only great crested grebe, but also a group of goldeneye which included one handsome male already displaying, throwing back his head and reaching his bill to the sky. As the rain still held off, we continued through the woodland, seeing a few goldfinches, and then things went quiet, but a robin, redwing, duncock and wren were heard announcing their presence. At the front of the group one member flushed a woodcock much to the delight of those members who were lucky enough to see it.

Not only were some of the birds anticipating spring, but many of the hazels along the pathway were displaying yellow catkins in profusion, which lifted our spirits on such a damp dark morning. Despite plenty of encouragement, no-one managed to spot a red female hazel flower, so luckily, I didn't need to fulfil my promise of a free coffee to the first observer!

At this point someone spotted an interesting looking fungus, which made a pretty picture on a stump with ferns around it, and from then on a plethora of fungi were found, many of which we couldn't identify there and then, but this one was, we think yellow curtain crust fungus, and was very prevalent among the dead wood and moss in Gibbet's gorse.



Yellow curtain crust. Photo L. Biddle

Other species tentatively identified were lemon disco- a tiny spot of yellow on the dark wood, turkey tail, an oysterling - possibly peeling oysterling, the squashy yellow brain fungus, jelly ear and also a hairy curtain crust, and finally candlesnuff fungus – a white tiny finger-like fungus. The group became widely scattered as some pored over tiny fungi, and others pressed ahead to see what other species could be discovered.



Yellow brain fungus. Photo L. Biddle



Common Jelly spot fungus. Photo C. Baxter.



Root rot fungus. Photo C Baxter

A few more birds were spotted; chaffinch, pheasant, crow and blue, great and coal tits completing our list for the morning.

Amazingly we didn't get wet at all, and gathering back at the Lyndon centre, the noise level grew while coffee and cake were happily consumed. Thanks to Duncan Ball who collected the species list for us, and to Libby, John and Lynne at the centre for their welcome and who coped with the influx of visitors. It was good to see so many members willing to brave the unpromising weather and to welcome in 2023. We hope that many of you will join us at our planned events during the coming year!

Indoor talk by John Tinning. Jan 10th 2023

We held our first indoor meeting of the New Year with a superb talk by wildlife photographer John Tinning. The talk centered on his adventures through Extremadura, an important wildlife and birdwatching destination in the Western part of the Iberian Peninsula. Accompanying his talk were breathtaking photographs of the venture.

And talking of photographs . . . on the same evening our President Phil Rudkin took some snaps of his own!

Luke Nelson and Linda Clark {opposite}. Luke has been helping with social media links and Linda has been our Secretary/Fungi/ Glowworm recorder and lately - stand-in Treasurer.

We wish both Linda Clark and Luke Nelson all the best for 2023 and beyond!



Luke and Linda

The Rutland Natural History Society have been recording and conserving the wildlife of our County for 58 years now. Hundreds of thousands of records have been sent to centralised databases via our recorders, from you, our members, and the information they contain have almost certainly been vital, {along with countrywide records from other sources} for furthering all kinds of research to deepen our knowledge of the state of nature in our Country today. As the years have progressed and concerns have grown, we now have greater access than ever before to information and understanding into the decline in biodiversity that now face us and the climatic effects on the fellow creatures we live alongside. We have all been part of that understanding.

The first Fieldfare went off to members in February 1965, not unlike the one below, a laboriously hand typed newsletter, detailing outdoor field trips, recorders reports and other news. In the first year alone, there were 111 members.



The start of our recording, and our newsletters to members, started 58 years ago and kept us in touch with each other, provided important information to the National databases and equally important - has kept us talking and carried along the impulse to change for the better.

The Rutland Natural History Society has not stood still. We have moved along with the times to keep people informed. We ditched the typewriter and moved on to professional printed copy.. We set up a website. www.rnhs.org.uk. which keeps you up to date with events, outings, bioblitzes, information on how to make and send those all important records - and more.



And we are moving on still . . .



Download now for another way to share . . . We will soon be here!



Siskin at Eyebrook reservoir. Photo Peter Scott

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