



Clipsham Bioblitz. Photo P. Rudkin

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WELCOME

At last, we are enjoying warmer temperatures and some much-wanted sunshine; a relief for the breeding wildlife of all groups with the cold temperatures and lack of insect food making it a difficult season for them all.

The partial relaxing of lockdown has meant that we have been able to enjoy the late spring and time seems to have flown since the last edition of Fieldfare! The nightingale walk and dawn chorus were much enjoyed by those who were able to join us. During a short break in the poor weather that typified April and May this year, our Bioblitz at Clipsham Yew Tree Avenue was a great success with at least 167 species so far recorded with more to come, and lots to interest us all. Our links with Luffenham Heath Golf Club were continued with a dawn chorus for their members, and we had a lovely evening visit to Beaumont Chase Farm, thanks to the hospitality of Joe and Mary Nourish. Cribbs meadow looked beautiful in the sunshine on Saturday, still some green winged orchids in flower and the common spotted just beginning! As usual a busy time for the RNHS!

Do come along and join us for the July activities – there is lots to see and experience out there, both near to home and slightly further afield! If you are not able to join us on our wanderings, then there are lots of local nature reserves to see, and we would be interested to hear of your experiences! The LRWT has a newly published handbook of their reserves, which explains where they are and what you may see.

The RNHS is now the proud possessor of the newly published “Orthoptera of Rutland”, thanks to the generosity of its author, our very own Phil Rudkin, former Chairman and stalwart naturalist of our society! We congratulate him on his achievement and applaud his dedication and expertise. Let us all hope we can use it and become experts ourselves. Details of how to purchase a copy are to be found later in Fieldfare.

I hope you all enjoy the remaining summer months!

Linda Biddle, RNHS Chair

RNHS NEWS

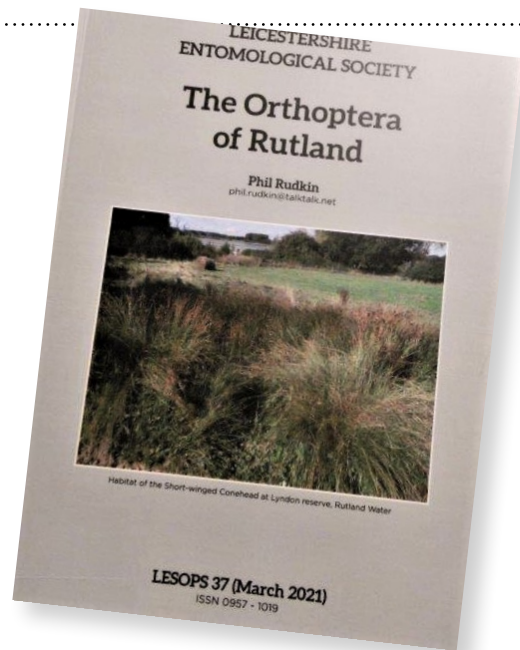
The Orthoptera of Rutland

As mentioned in the Chairmans intro, Phil Rudkin has written a book "The Orthoptera of Rutland", with already some great reviews received. Here are a couple:-

Dr Clive Jones. "A wonderful achievement. The page presentation, excellent and the text, maps and illustrations superb!"

Roy Frost. Derbyshire and Notts recorder. "Fabulous production. It is a treasure trove, a very useful account of recent changes, with detailed and very interesting notes on how to find the various species. The maps are beautifully clear and photographs superb".

There are only limited copies available, so if you would like more information or would like to reserve a copy, (£12.00 + £2.93pp), please email Phil at: phil.rudkin@talktalk.net.



DIARY DATES



RNHS Indoor Evening Meetings

Evening meetings at VAR will resume in October

RNHS Outdoor field trips.

Details of the following events will appear on our website www.rnhs.org.uk. We have now relaxed the procedure for booking into outdoor visits since the Covid restrictions have lessened (and hopefully we have all been double vaccinated), so there is no need to fill in forms in advance. However, if you are able to come to either of the visits listed below, it would still help us greatly to know in advance, how many members to expect, so we would be grateful if you would continue to notify either Jeff Wilcox-Smith or Linda Clark. Their phone numbers are on the back cover contacts page.

Saturday 3rd July 10.00am.

Cossington meadows Nature reserve.

Leader Chris Hill, LRWT conservation officer. A walk around this wetland reserve to hear about the conservation project that has been going on there. **MR SK595113.**

Saturday 31st July 10.00am.

Great fen meeting at Woodwalton Fen.

A National Nature Reserve, Ramsar site and a Special Area of Conservation. NR leader Henry Stanier to show us dragonflies, butterflies and a huge variety of invertebrates seen there. **MR TL234848**

Other society meetings.

LRWT events. Both these events are online zoom talks. Go to the events page on LRWT website to book your place.

Monday 12th July 7.30pm – 8.30pm. A journey through Cloud Wood nature reserve with photographer Martin Cooke.

Wednesday 28th July 7.30pm – 8.30pm. Searching for Ospreys in Senegal and the Gambia with Ken Davies.

WEATHER

RECORDER Roy Lemmon

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April 2021

Atmospheric pressure and wind. Apart from the last four days this was a high-pressure month, and consequently had clear skies, low wind speeds and rainfall. High and low pressures were 1034 mb on the 15th and 1008 mb on the 28th. Winds were persistently W-NE and consequently temperatures were low, exacerbated at night by clear skies.

Temperature. A very cold April with 14 overnight air frosts, the lowest being -2.6 °C on 15/16th. The mean minimum was 0.78 °C, tenth in the decade 2012/2021, with the next coldest minimum April 2013 at 2.45 °C. Nationally this is likely to be the coldest April for 99 years. The mean maximum here was 13.77 °C, eighth lowest in the same decade, and the overall mean, 7.28 °C, the lowest.

Precipitation. The total recorded here was 3.5 mm (0.14 inches) which is 8.5% of my long-term mean. Of this 2.8 mm fell as a mixture of rain and snow on the 11th. This was not the least rainfall I have recorded, Aprils of 2007 (3.0 mm), and 2011 (2.3 mm) being lower. April 1998 rainfall was 105.4 mm (4.15 inches).

May 2021

Atmospheric pressure and wind. A low-pressure month up to and including the 26th and then high to the end. The lowest I recorded was 995 mb on the 4th and the highest 1030 mb on the 30th. A succession of lows produced very variable winds both in terms of direction and speed but there were no appreciable gales.

Temperature. There were no air frosts, but it was a cold May, the overall mean, 11.53 °C, placed it ninth in the decade 2012/2021, just ahead of May 2013 at 11.44 °C. The lowest temperature recorded was 0.8 °C on the night April 30/May 1. The highest was 24.8 °C on May 31st.

Precipitation. A total of 71.4 mm (2.81 inches) was recorded, being 145 % of my monthly long-term mean. There were just seven days with no precipitation, but daily amounts were often small and included a hail shower on the afternoon of the 5th. The largest daily amount was 11.1 mm on the 3rd. By comparison, the monthly total for May 2020 was 1.7 mm.

AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES

RECORDER Dr C H Gallimore

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

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April & May 2021

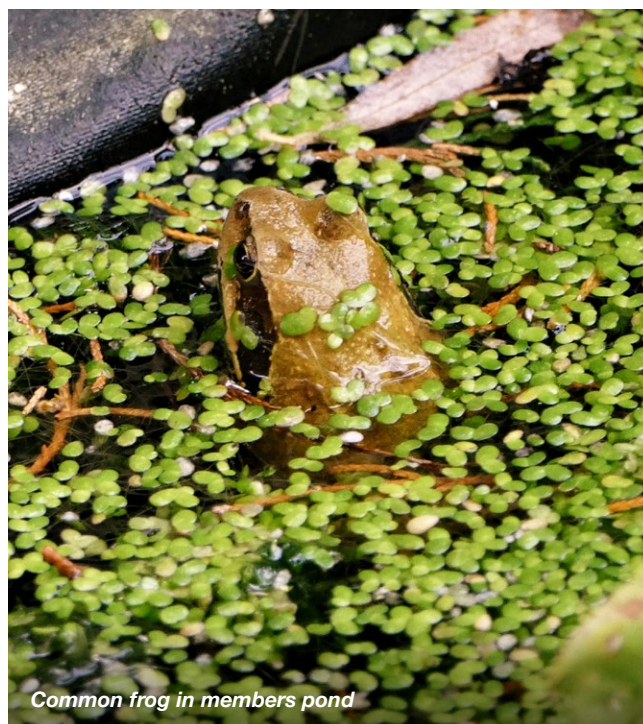
I had hoped that the Bioblitz at Clipsham might yield some herpetological results, but the previous unpleasant weather put paid to that, although Martin Grimes did see a Viviparous Lizard there about a week later.

The only record of Common Frog was of a large frog in the recorder's temporary garden in Oakham on 30 April. Common Toads were recorded in several places in Wing between 3rd and 30th May. There were no newt records.

There were no other lizard records apart from the Clipsham record on 28 May. However, a Slow Worm was seen at Barnsdale on 20 April.

A Grass Snake was seen at Rutland Water on 7 May and a small one on Wing allotments on 30 May. Finally, Roy Lemmon saw a male Adder at Ketton Quarry on 9 April.

My thanks to the following for their records: - T Caldicott, L Clark, M Grimes, R Lemmon and T Sexton



Common frog in members pond

BATS

RECORDER Jenny Harris

41 Woodland View, Oakham LE15 6EJ.

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April & May 2021

The weather was not conducive to bat activity during this period, especially in April when there was a frost on every night of the month somewhere in Britain, most of them in Rutland too. It was therefore not surprising that I had few records from members, although Linda Clark recorded pipistrelles (mostly soprano Pipistrellus pygmaeus) and the occasional noctule, Nyctalus noctula in Wing village. The first record of bat activity was from Diana Masters, who saw a single bat circling in her Oakham garden, SK863095, on 9th and then 29th May. I didn't hear any in my Oakham garden. Cold, damp weather on 22nd May meant the cancellation of the bat walk for the Clipsham Bioblitz, but an SM4+ static detector was put on the garage wall of The Lodge, facing the woodland edge and Yew Tree Avenue, and left in place for four nights. Recordings will be analysed by Nathalie Cossa of the Bat Group when she has time.

Bats in Churches Project

Egleton, Greetham, Stretton and Whissendine churches are being surveyed by the Bats in Churches Project (Bat Conservation Trust and Church of England) and provided with detailed plans for managing any bat problems. At Whissendine church the ecologist found the Natterer's bats, Myotis nattereri, are roosting in the apex of the nave and 61 bats emerged at the end of May (Matt Cook, Jim Whiteford).

At Egleton and Greetham churches, survey work will be carried out by the same ecologist and at Stretton church some work is to be done inside the church; they also plan to put up some Kent-style bat boxes, which are open at the base for easy checking.

Grounded bats

There were no grounded bats in Rutland during this period. Monty, the Brown Long-eared bat from Manton is now regrowing his fur and will soon look like any other well-groomed long-eared bat. He is flying well for short periods round the lounge and will soon be ready to release after being in care since the beginning of September.

Bat box checks, Burley Wood

Seven bat boxes in Burley Wood were checked on 30th April, with thanks to Joelle Woolley and Tim Sexton from RWNR. The Kent-style woodcrete box, BW1, had been moved from its position on the deer hide at 6-Riding and placed on a nearby tree when the deer hide was rebuilt during the winter. It was empty and as it is open at the base it was not possible to tell if it had been used. From evidence of droppings, all the six other boxes (woodcrete 2F-DFP style) had been used by bats. BW2 had a fresh blue tit's nest in the box, while BW5 had a blue tit's nest with eggs and a very anxious parent nearby. BW3 had 1cm of droppings in the base of the box, BW4 had 3cm of droppings in the base and 15-16 soprano pipistrelles in the domed top. One torpid bat dropped out when the door was removed for inspection, and we were then able to confirm it was a female. None of the other bats were disturbed. BW6, never a particularly popular box, had 0.5cm of droppings on the base, while BW7 at the eastern end of the main ride had 2cm of droppings. The use of these boxes by bats and blue tits suggests that there is a lack of natural roost and nesting opportunities.

In June we carry out emergence counts of the maternity roosts of several species in the churches of Rutland. Results will be in the next Fieldfare.

My thanks to L Clark and D Masters for bat records and for help with the bat box check to J Woolley and T Sexton.

BIRDS

Recorder Terry Mitcham

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E-mail: joterpat@btinternet.com

April and May proved to be excellent months for local birdwatchers with a new bird for Rutland in the shape of a Bonaparte's Gull and an excellent wader passage topped by a Kentish Plover and Temminck's Stints. Long staying Whimbrel were a feature of mid-May. Many passerines seemed late in arriving and easterly winds may have reduced their numbers passing through the county, particularly Wheatears and Whinchats. It was good to record Ring Ouzels and Black Redstarts, the icing of the cake for many. Cuckoos were not widely reported and still seem to be on the decline, as do Nightingales which were noted at only two sites. My thanks to the following for their records: -

T.Appleton, D. & J.Ball, L.Burger, T.Caldicott, A.Clarke, T.Collins, A. & J.Comber, M.Dixon, Dr.C.H.Gallimore, G.&M.Griffin, J.Griffin, T.Land, P.Langston, LROS, D.Masters, I.Misselbrook, T.Mitcham, J.&J.Rodgers, T.Sexton

April 2021

Highlights. Rutland Water had a 1st. winter Bonaparte's Gull (13th-24th), a Kentish Plover (21st), a White Stork (18th), Spoonbill (12th), c.107 Little Gulls (23rd) and 80 Arctic Terns (27th). Merlins were near Braunston (14th) and

at Quarry Farm (26th). Black Redstarts were at Luffenham Airfield (11th), Uppingham (15th) and Rutland Water dam (30th). and Ring Ouzels passed through Barrow (9th), Rutland Water Egleton (24th), Bisbrooke (two on 24th) and Normanton (27th-29th).

Rutland Water. The count (13th) produced 91 Gadwall, 1 Pintail, 151 Shoveler, 2 Common Scoter and 48 Goldeneye. There were also 8 Little Egrets. Garganey were present from (12th) with 6 (21st), a single Red-crested Pochard (20th) and Scaup (17th-28th) were noted, and up to two Great Northern Divers remained til at least (27th). An impressive wader passage produced over 20 species. Some key totals included 14 Avocets (13th), 21 Oystercatchers (13th), Grey Plover (24th-25th), 4 Ringed Plovers, 6 Little Ringed Plovers, 16 Whimbrel (29th), 11 Bar-tailed Godwits (23rd), 2 Turnstones (25th-27th), a Knot, 3 Ruff (15th, 24th), Sanderling (25th), Spotted Redshank(23rd) and 7 Greenshanks (23rd, 28th). Little Gulls were regular from (2nd) all month. The first Common Tern arrived (11th) with Arctic Terns passing from (13th). Single Black Terns were seen (23rd, 29th).

A Cuckoo was heard (18th) with Swifts from (24th) and Grasshopper Warblers from (15th). A Redstart was present (8th) and a Nightingale sang from (19th) with four Whinchats (30th). One or two Bramblings were noted (3rd-16th).

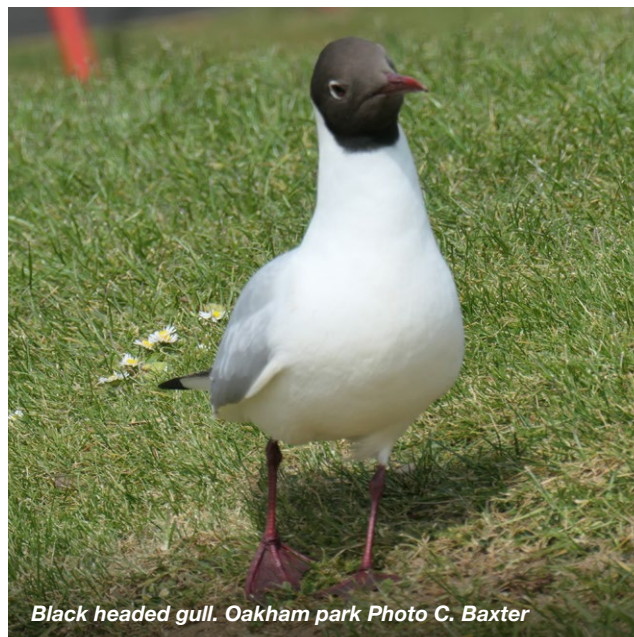
Other Sites. 3 Mandarin Ducks were seen around Bisbrooke (18th-26th). There were 3 Shoveler and 31 Gadwall at Fort Henry Ponds (10th). Grey Partridges were in Exton Park and at Quarry Farm. A Great White Egret was at Geeston (8th). 57 Golden Plovers were at Glebe Farm (9th) with c.120 near Bisbrooke on (18th) and 80 there (29th). Little Owls were at Edith Weston and Bisbrooke. A Ring-necked Parakeet flew over Oakham (20th). 3 Nightingales were at one site from (21st) and Wheatears were in Exton Park (11th, 18th), Bisbrooke (20th), Manton (22nd) and Martinshorpe (two on 24th). 250 Fieldfares at Leighfield (30th) was the latest record. Lesser Redpolls were in an Oakham garden all month with 6 on (9th).

May 2021

Highlights. A Quail called near Exton (25th-28th). An immature White-tailed Eagle was at Rutland Water (29th) with Temminck's Stints there (8th-9th, 16th) and a Roseate Tern (2nd).

Rutland Water. Pink-footed Geese were present (5th, 18th). There were 2 Whooper Swans (29th) with a Pintail and Goldeneye on (8th). A Marsh Harrier was seen (8th). 11 Water Rail territories were noted at Egleton. Notable waders included Grey Plover (8th), 28 Ringed Plovers (19th), 16 Whimbrel (1st-4th) with 18 (2nd), a Black-tailed Godwit (7th-8th), 10 Turnstones (18th), a Knot (8th), 14 Sanderling (8th) and 85 Dunlin (8th). Also recorded were a Little Stint (9th), a Spotted Redshank (13th-14th) and three Greenshanks (8th). Little Gulls were noted (1st-4th, 7th-10th). Arctic Terns peaked at 80 (4th) with Black Terns (9th, 15th-16th). A late Redwing was reported (1st) and a Fieldfare (6th). A Spotted Flycatcher was seen (14th) and a Wheatear was at the dam (10th-20th).

Other Sites. A pair of Barnacle Geese were at Banthorpe GP (18th-22nd). 2 Mandarin Ducks were near Pilton(13th),



Black headed gull. Oakham park Photo C. Baxter



Lesser Whitethroat Rutland Water 7 May 21. Photo P. Scott

with 2 Shoveler and 20 Gadwall at Fort Henry Ponds (23rd). A probable Merlin was briefly in an Oakham garden (21st), 50 Golden Plover were still near Bisbrooke (3rd) and three Curlew flew over Wing (24th). A Ring-necked Parakeet was at Langham (from 15th). Raven fledged young at three sites. Spotted Flycatchers were at eight sites from (12th) at Lyndon. Barn Owls were at Manton and Burley Wood and Little Owls at Wing, Pilton and Glaston. 40 Fieldfares were over Leighfield (1st) and 16 Lesser Redpolls flew over Wing (6th).

Eyebrook Reservoir. There was a White-fronted Goose (4th-6th) and a Garganey (2nd), with three Little Egrets (12th). A male Hen Harrier was an excellent record on (1st). A Water Rail was heard (12th). Waders included an Oystercatcher (1st), Ringed Plover (3rd, 7th), Whimbrel (1st), three Dunlin (1st), Common Sandpiper (1st) and two Wood Sandpipers (1st-3rd). A Kittiwake was seen (4th) and a Little Gull (3rd). A 'Channel' Wagtail was seen (1st-2nd).

Wildfowl Counts – April & May 2021

	RW 13.04.	RW 25.05.	FHP and Exton Park 10.04.	FHP and Exton Park 23.05.	Banthorpe GP 10.04.	Banthorpe GP 22.05.	Holywell Lake 16.04.
Canada Goose	104	131				2	9
Barnacle Goose						2	
Greylag Goose	211	252	22	8	22	42	10
Mute Swan	132	195	8	5	2	2	2
Egyptian Goose	28	37					
Shelduck	14	8		1			
Mandarin Duck	2						
Shoveler	151	3	3	2			
Gadwall	91	140	31	20			7
Wigeon	58	2					
Mallard	247	226	60	48	17	16	25
Pintail	1						
Teal	92	1			7		2
Pochard	23	9					
Tufted Duck	829	204	27	34	2		20
Common Scoter	2						
Goldeneye	48	1					
Great Northern Diver	3						
Great Crested Grebe	102	125					
Grey Heron	4	3					1
Little Egret	8	11	1				
Cormorant	142	167	1		1		
Moorhen	23	21	11	5	1	1	10
Coot	105	107	23	25	8	4	6
Kingfisher	1						
TOTAL	2421	1643	190	148	60	69	92

BOTANY

RECORDER John Rodgers

8 Summerfield, Oakham LE15 6PZ. Telephone: 01572 757278

E-mail: rnhsbotanyrecord@gmail.com

Is there more May blossom around this year than in recent years? Every hedgerow seems to be white with Hawthorn flowers. There is lots of Cow Parsley along the verges with Daisies and Dandelions keeping it company. Bluebells in Barnsdale and Hambleton Woods looked spectacular; more so as most of us missed them last year because of the lockdown. I'm not sure which wood has the best display; any suggestions for the first prize? Grasses are growing well, with the brown pollen of Meadow Foxtail explaining the name of the plant. After the strange weather of April and May we now seem to be in old fashioned summer, with the plant life to match.

Plenty of records have come in since the last Fieldfare. Amongst the many different flowers to be expected in spring, such as Red Campion and Greater Stitchwort, both of which mingle with the Bluebells in Barnsdale Woods, we also have records of Dames Violet in its usual place between Wing and Lyndon, Green Alkanet in various places in Uppingham including the churchyard and Leopard's-bane by Oakham Canal. (This could be a garden escapee). Opposite-leaved Golden Saxifrage was found at Prior's Coppice and in Stoke Dry woods and Sanicle in Clipsham Park Woods. Early Purple Orchids were first reported from Prior's Coppice on the 23rd



Star of bethlehem in verge at Lyndon. Photo L. Biddle



Adders tongue. Cribbs meadow

April and from Clipsham on the 22nd May. These were found together with the leaves of Common Spotted Orchid during the Bioblitz at Clipsham Yew Tree Avenue. Toothwort was growing in its usual place in the Avenue and Green-winged Orchids were in flower in Merry's Meadows by the 30th April.

The Bioblitz day at Clipsham Yew Tree Avenue attracted some 20 or more people to a botany walk, which proved quite successful, with some 50 species of flowering plant identified, though we were too early for some of its specialities, such as Betony. I hope that it has inspired some visitors to take up an interest in botany.

The visit to Cribb's Meadow, led by John Bristow on Saturday the 5th June, was very interesting (See John's write up in the Field trip reports). John explained the management of the meadows (a LRWT reserve) and showed us how this affected the flora and fauna of the fields. About a dozen or so members were there and amongst the swathe of buttercups and yellow rattle we found the leaves of Pepper Saxifrage (not very common) and Adder's-tongue Fern and in the southern field, spikes of Common Twayblade, together with

some impressive fairy rings, (later identified as St. Georges mushrooms) and Dingy Skipper butterflies.

I managed to find a flower that I've been looking for, for some years, Town Hall Clock (Moschatel). I knew it grew in Barnsdale Woods and this year, with advice from Roy Lemmon and Martin Grimes, I found it near to the eastern end of the wood. I was expecting a much taller plant. It isn't very tall, perhaps I missed it in other years because I was looking for something much bigger. Herb Paris was in its usual place in Prior's Coppice, whilst there is quite a good-sized plant of Greater Celandine along Churchyard Passage in Oakham. There is quite a lot of Hedge Mustard there and as always, Ivy-leaved Toadflax. There is also a grass with a rather pretty flower, Hare'sfoot Grass, a specimen of which has gone to the experts for verification. Plants growing in the pavements and along the walls in our towns and villages are not weeds!

Thank you to Carolyn Baxter, Linda Biddle, Linda Clark, Martin Grimes, Jenny Harris, Roy Lemmon, Dave Needham, Phil Rudkin, Donnie Stevens and Jayne Walker for sending in their records.

BUTTERFLIES

RECORDER Martin Quinlan

4 Bayley Close, Uppingham, Rutland LE15 9TG

Telephone: 01572 820337

April was the 4th driest on record and the sunniest ever! There were 16 frosts here in Uppingham including the last 2 days of the month. Records started on 12th April with a Peacock at Barnsdale Gardens. May was depressingly cool and very wet until high pressure finally brought some good "butterflying" weather from Friday 28th until the months' end when temperatures reached over 20 degrees!

The beautiful ORANGE-TIP is always a delight to see after the long winter. The first record was at Barnsdale on 13th April and then it was seen regularly throughout the months with maxima of 5 at Ridlington on 19th April and 5 at Egleton on 26th April (not the same 5!)

As usual Ketton Quarry (KQ) and Bloody Oaks Quarry (BOQ) provided the only records of DINGY SKIPPER and GRIZZLED SKIPPER. DINGY SKIPPER was seen at BOQ on 29th May

and at KQ on 31st May. GRIZZLED SKIPPER was first seen at KQ on 30th May and then Alistair and I recorded 5 at KQ on 31st May.

Only 2 records of LARGE WHITE were received. one at Whissendine on 17th April and another at Rutland Water on 23rd April. SMALL WHITE was first seen at KQ with 2 on 19th April and then a flurry of records in the final - warm - days of May at KQ, BOQ, Oakham and 3 at Exton on 31st May.

GREEN-VEINED WHITE was first seen at Egleton with 5 on 26th April and the last at KQ on 31st May. The sight of the BRIMSTONE is always a welcome lift to the spirits and was first seen at Oakham Arboretum (OA) on 13th April. KQ had 8 on 19th April including 3 females. Finally on 31st May at KQ there were 15 including 2 females.

SPECKLED WOOD was widely recorded. The first was from KQ on 19th April followed by records from Barrowden, Rutland Water, Exton, Lyndon, Egleton, BOQ and the last were 2 at Exton on 31st May.

As mentioned, the PEACOCK kicked off Spring at Barnsdale Gardens on 12th April (when I was 65!) with the last seen on 2nd May at Oakham.

SMALL TORTOISESHELL was recorded regularly from 17th April until the end of May.

The COMMA was only recorded in April at KQ, Egleton and OA.

The only SMALL COPPER was seen at the tip of Hambleton peninsula on 7th May.

GREEN HAIRSTREAK is best seen at KQ where it was first seen on 30th May and 5 were recorded there on 31st May.

The HOLLY BLUE is another welcome Spring sighting, first recorded in my Uppingham garden on 16th April. It was then seen regularly at various sites until the final 2 at OA on 15th May.

The only BROWN ARGUS was seen at KQ on 31st May by Alistair and myself.

Finally, there was only 1 record of COMMON BLUE which was at Exton on 26th April.

So, to summarise there were a total of 19 species of butterfly recorded in Rutland between April and May 2021.

I would like to thank the following for their records:

A Lemmon, A Lawrence, J Rodgers, S Smalley, J Morrell, R Ingall, D Masters, D & J Ball, J Pearce & J Walker

FUNGI

RECORDER Linda Clark
14 Top Street, Wing LE15 8SE

The weather in April and May hasn't been ideal for fungi so it's surprising that we have had a few good finds for this time of year.

At the beginning of May I received an identification request from a member who had found a peculiar looking organism on a gate post (see photo) and several e-mails, discussions and photos later, a conclusion as to the ID was made. A slime mould - *Reticularia Lycoperdon* or False Puffball was almost, a certainty. Slime moulds previously thought to be fungi are now placed in the Kingdom Protozoa. Indeed, these are strange life forms and ingest bacteria and fungi by an amoeba like action. A few days before the above request, a group of members went for a socially distanced walk in Prior's Coppice where a lump of white 'gum' was spotted on an old branch. The item was bright white, soft, springy when touched and looked rather like a marshmallow or expanded insulation foam. In retrospect I believe that this was also the same species of Slime mould. Slime moulds were not over yet, and the Bioblitz at Clipsham Yew Tree Avenue threw up yet another. This one wasn't such a headache to identify

as it was spotted by Tim Sexton's (Monitoring and Survey Officer at Rutland Water) young son. Tim was able to give a name to this as Wolf's Milk slime mould (don't ask!) - *Lycogala epidendrum*.

Other finds at Clipsham were Glistening Inkcap *Coprinellus micaceus*, Yellow Fieldcap *Bolbitius titubans*, Willow Shield *Pluteus salichus* and two *Peziza* sp.

Peziza are cup fungi; the genus is thought to contain 60 to 100 different species and are notoriously difficult to identify. A *Peziza* sp. was found at Pickworth Great Wood which is thought to be *Peziza badia*. On April 4th a cup fungus was spotted on an allotment and this might be Vinegar Cup *Helvella acetabulum* but has not been positively identified.

An outing to Beaumont Chase Farm added to the May list with Dung Roundhead *Stropharia semiglobata* growing next to a cow pat, very apt for a farm visit and good to know that suitable habitat is being provided by friendly farmers.

Brown Mottlegill *Panaeolina foenisecii*, also known as Mowers Mushroom or Brown Haycap has been springing up frequently in



Wolfs milk slime mould. Clipsham bioblitz. Photo L. Clark



False puffball slimemould

different areas and is a common fungus. Luckily, this fungus has a very dark spore print by which it can be identified, and the cap colour alters too, ranging from darker to lighter brown as it dries out (hygrophanus). When totally dry the cap is pale beige in the centre with a darker edge, and when wet this fungus is a much darker brown.

Roy Lemmon continues to monitor and send in records of the microfungi. Rusts, Smuts, Downy and Powdery Mildews and my sincere thanks to Roy for doing this.

Thanks also to Carolyn Baxter. Linda Biddle. Gay Griffin. Martin Grimes. Jayne Walker. Tim Sexton and Tim Sexton's Son.

INSECTS & INVERTEBRATES

RECORDER Jayne Walker

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Well after a horribly cold and wet start to spring, finally some warmer and settled weather has arrived. This doesn't seem to have deterred the insects going about their business which has provided us with lots of records, which have been boosted by the brilliant Clipsham Great Park BioBlitz, on the 22nd of May.

The weather looked like it would create problems running up to the Bioblitz with unseasonably cold and very wet weather. However, it went ahead and what a great day it was, with 45 people attending throughout the day and some amazing insects being recorded. Sadly, I was unable to be there on the day, so thanks so much to everyone who worked hard to make the insect session a success, especially Linda Clarke and Tim Sexton, who is the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, Species and Recording Office.

A number of survey methods were used including, sweep netting, vegetation checks, bubble wrapped tree trunks, pitfall traps, fruit traps, leaf litter sifting and general grubbing about.

Tim, did on-site identification of the insect species and also took some home along with samples of leaf litter to sift through. Linda Clarke collected insects found in the afternoon for identification. The Bioblitz added 36 records to the Society's data for the area, which is fantastic.

The leaf litter Tim took home, revealed four species of Springtails as follows, *Orchesella villosa*, *Pogonognathellus longicornis*, *Dicyrtoma fusca*, *Orchesella cincta*. These are the first records of springtails we have received so far this year. It would be interesting to undertake more surveys for this under-recorded group of insects.

A total of seven spiders were recorded, these included the Nursery Web Spider, *Pisaura mirabilis* and a Buzzing spider *Anyphaena accentua*.

A total of eight *Chthonius ischnocheles* (Pseudoscorpion), were recorded in the leaf-litter. These little creatures are only 1.5mm in length, so are very hard to see. Tim has kindly provided a photograph of one for us.

There were a good number of *Hemiptera* records on the day, which included the very distinctive Red and Black Froghopper, *Cercopis vulnerate*. Others included the Parent Bug, *Elasmucha grisea*, Scarab Shieldbug, *Thyreocoris scarabaeoides*, Birch Catkin Bug and Woundwort Shieldbug, *Eysarcoris venustissimus*.

Beetles were recorded after much grubbing about was done. Sadly, nothing was recorded in the pitfall traps or the fruit

traps (although the slugs loved these!), but the bubble wrap round the tree trunks did result in one record.

A 'notable' beetle was recorded, *Acalles ptinoides*, along with nine other beetle species, and two *Diptera* the St Mark's Fly, *Bibio marci* and the Ensign Fly, *Sepsis sp.* Several species of Woodlouse and Millipede were also recorded during the day.

In addition to the BioBlitz there has been 67 records submitted by society members which is brilliant, although we don't have any Odonata records yet. Maybe the cold weather has held these back?



Chthonius Clipsham



Common Springtail- Notiophilus biguttatus.
Photo T. Caldicott

Records received for *Hemiptera* include the Thistle Tortoise Beetle *Cassida rubiginosa* and Common Springtail-stalker, *Notiophilus biguttatus* which were recorded in Wing. As seen by the records from Clipsham Great Park, leaf litter appears to be the ideal hunting ground for this insect. Never having seen these beetles before, photographs have kindly been sent by Tim Caldicott, so we can all have a look.

Coleoptera records include Cockchaffers, *Melolontha melolontha* which were attracted to garden moth trap in Exton, with a total of 18 being found after a night's trapping, with other beetle species including a Black Sexton Beetle, *Nicrophorus humator*.

Diptera records include the White-footed Hoverfly, *Platycheirus albimanus* and the Chequered Hoverfly *Melanostoma scalare* both which were recorded at the Fox Covert area at Martinthorpe.

There has been a total of 39 records for *Hymenoptera*, with the majority of bee records attributed to the Red-tailed, *Bombus lapidarius* and Buff-tailed Bumblebee, *B. terrestris*. Numerous other bee species have been recorded including red mining bee, *Osmia rufa* at Bloody Oaks Quarry and Tree Bumblebee, *B. hypnorum* at Manton. A hornet, *Vespa crabro* was seen in Burley Woods and a Five Spotted Club Horned Wasp, *Sapyga quinquepunctata* was found in Exton.

A Kentish snail *Monacha cantianawa* was seen at Barrowden Road, Ketton; a total of three records for different snail species have been received in May.

There has been a total of 114 records received for April to May (including *Gastropoda*, *Isopoda* and *Diplopoda*) and I would like to thank the following members, for their records for these months: *Tim Caldicott, Dave Needham, Roy Lemmon, Linda Clarke, Carolyn Baxter and Tim Sexton.*

MAMMALS

RECORDER Linda Biddle

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Thankyou to all my regular – and some not so regular-reporters. Apologies! I have received your reports, but unfortunately other things have delayed writing up the mammal report this time, so you will get a bumper report next time.

The last two months have flown by, but two memorable points in my own mammal sightings have been baby badgers. On the morning of the dawn chorus at 3.45am, on approaching Pickworth Wood, we disturbed a young badger which looked as if it had not long been allowed into the wide world. It was a bundle of badger coloured fluff, like a cuddly toy, and it scampered up the hill in front of us and regained the safety of its sett in the verge. It reminded me very much of a Thelwell cartoon animal! The other encounter

at the end of the month, mid-morning, was a much less cheerful affair. Again, near Pickworth, we walked along a track, passing some remaining large puddles of water, and out of the hedgerow stumbled another badger cub, about 18 inches long. It sensed our presence and continued across the track to come to rest with its nose and the front part of its body pushed into the verge, leaving its tail end sticking out. Whether it could see us or not, I am not sure, but I would guess it was desperate for a drink of water. We hurried past, hoping that it would find the water and regain the safety of its sett, but not convinced of its survival.

Please do continue to send in your reports. They are welcomed and valuable to us.

MOTHS

RECORDER Paul Bennett

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A much shorter report than would usually be the case for spring due to a very cold April and a wet and windy May, both conditions that are unsuitable for moth activity. This meant that for the first time since 2012 we were unable to trap any of our sites during the reporting period (we even managed a session in early March last year before covid restrictions took hold).

Garden records included Angle Shades, Orange Footman and Green Carpet, all seen in Exton in May while the latter species also appeared near Manton where Silver Y's were seen on 19th May. By the end of the month Cinnabar Moths were starting to emerge which are hopefully a sign of warmer weather to come.

Thank you to the following for their records: - P Bennett, T Caldicott, L Clark, J Walker.



Green carpet moth. Photo J. Walker



Angle shades moth. Photo J. Walker



Orange footman moth. Photo J. Walker

ORTHOPTERA

RECORDER Phil Rudkin

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May 2021

With heavy rain recorded this month, there were very few reports of the orthoptera. Usually during this period, it is the nymphs that feature and as always Tim Caldicott's sharp eyes have located nymphs of four species.

Groundhoppers

Slender Groundhopper, *Tetrix subulata*

One, found in usual habitat, in the Wing Village Allotments. SK889028. 28 May 2021.

Crickets

Dark Bush Cricket, *Pholidoptera griseoaptera*

One nymph, in usual habitat, Burley Woods, Compartment 25. SK892098, 27 May 2021

Roesel's Bush Cricket, *Roeseliana roeselii*

One nymph, observed in Wing village plantation (east), May 29.
Two nymphs, observed in Wing village plantation (east), May 31.
Both at SK905702.

One nymph, found in ride of Fox Covert, Manton, new site, SK868042. 31 May 2021.

Speckled Bush Cricket, *Leptophyes punctatissima*

One nymph, observed in shrubs, Wing village allotments SK889028. 28 May 2021.

Many thanks to Tim CALDICOTT



Macropterous form of the Roesel's Bush Cricket. Male



Speckled Bush Cricket. Photo S. Widdowson

PLANT GALLS

RECORDER Roy Lemmon

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April 2021

The season is getting started but as there are few leaves on the trees, they are mostly rusts on herbs or relics from last year, the latter easier to see with few leaves. The first report was from Burley Wood on the 13th, which was of marble galls on Oak and the rust on Bluebells.

Clipsham Park Wood on the 18th yielded a gall caused by a gall fly on Bramble, which is only the second record we have for this species.

Yew Tree Avenue on the 20th had a rust on Betony and another on Bluebell. This one on Betony is the only one we have for the County.

Prior's Coppice on the 23rd yielded rusts on Dog's Mercury and Bluebell and a smut on Wood Anemone, which is a first for the County.

The final report, Stretton Wood on the 28th, was of four rusts, two different ones on Bramble, the one on Dog's Mercury again, and the final one on Common Dog Violet.

Thanks to Martin Grimes, Roy Lemmon, Dave Needham and Phil Rudkin.

May 2021

The gall season is now well under way with reports from 13 sites, yielding a total of 61 species. Naturally, the commoner species appear several times in the total but there are always a few new ones as well. On the 4th there was photographic evidence of a Ramshorn Gall on Oak caused last year by a gall wasp that had lasted throughout the winter.

The Viking Way at Whitwell on the 6th had a Midge Gall on Bramble stems, only the third record we have of this species. Shacklewell Hollow on the 14th had 'choke' on Rough Meadow Grass together with the Rust Gall on Hollyhock. This, being a member of the Mallow family, shares its rust.

From the 22nd onward we have seen a small number of new galls on Oak and in particular the Currant Gall which forms on the male flowers, and which is not seen every year. Pickworth Great Wood on the 27th and Ketton Quarry on the 30th both had this, amongst others.

Thanks to Linda Clark, Martin Grimes and Roy Lemmon.



FIELD TRIPS

Clipsham Yew Tree Avenue Bioblitz

When asked by Sue Thomas, daughter of RNHS former president, Sir David Davenport Handley, and member of the recently formed Clipsham Yew Tree Avenue Trust, if we had any records of the species present at the avenue, your society searched and passed on what we had. However, when one member of your committee came up with the idea of a Bioblitz, it was quickly agreed, and planning began!

All committee and recorders were asked for their ideas, and Sue Thomas did her part too, making sure we had the necessary facilities to be able to stay all day. We also arranged with Adrian Smith who lives at the end of the avenue, for us to use his garden for the moth trap and static

bat detector overnight. It seemed a good way for us all to get together as the lockdown eased and enjoy the outdoors and wildlife as a group.

All would have been easy had not the weather in the preceding week been appalling! On the day before, the weather was so bad that we almost called it off completely. The moth trapping was scrapped, as hardly any moths would have ventured out on such a miserable night. Similarly, we cancelled the evening bat walk, fearing that the weather would prevent any bats appearing. However, believing the forecast that Saturday would be better, we went ahead with the remainder of the programme. Refugia (sheets of corrugated material) for reptiles



Clipsham Bioblitz. Photo A. Biddle



Botany walk with John Rogers. Clipsham Bioblitz

and small mammals had been laid down during the previous weeks despite the bad weather, as had Longworth mammal traps and bubble wrap around trees for insects.

The day began at 7.30am, grey and cool, but not raining! Terry and his birdwatchers had a pleasant time seeing and hearing 30 species in all, including the cuckoo which called later in the day too. This was followed by a wander through, looking at the small mammals – and I for one did not expect to find much at all. To our delight we found two short-tailed field voles and three fieldmice (woodmice) out of 9 traps, a very good percentage trap! Botanists also had successful investigations, early purple orchids and toothwort livening up the list and even fungi, rusts and galls were found. The weather was kind and eventually a few flashes of sunshine brought out the only butterfly of the day – a green veined white.

As a result of our Bioblitz day, the Avenue was visited by a total of 45 people apart from the regular dog walkers. Botanists, and insect enthusiasts came from far and near! The insect of the day was a scarab shieldbug, and popular were the nursery web spider and white legged snake millipede.

All recorders and committee did their bit – recording, manning the stand, putting out notices on the website and emailing members. Your secretary bravely became insect walk leader for the afternoon! We were supported all day by representatives of the Yew Tree Avenue Trust, who really appreciated our efforts, and stayed right until the end, helping us to pack up the gazebo and tables. Several new members joined us as a result of the day, and though it was very tiring, we all felt it had been successful and well worthwhile.

The total species found with information presently at hand was 167! This may increase, as we hope perhaps to hold a bat walk and a moth trapping session later in the summer.

Thanks are due to all those who put in a mammoth effort to make everything run smoothly, members of committee and recorders, Tim Sexton of LRWT who came on his Saturday off and brought friends and family, and particularly the members of the Avenue Trust for their support.

Shall we do it again? We have learned a lot and would love to if the opportunity arises. Watch this space!!



Clipsham Bioblitz. Bugle



Clipsham Bioblitz. Orthoptera walk with Phil

Evening walk at Beaumont Farm, Stockerston.

Not surprisingly, there was a good turn out for the 8 o'clock walk at Beaumont chase farm. The evening was balmy and cloudless as 14 of us met our hosts, Joe and Mary Nourish in the back yard, where Joe immediately took us over the road to a new woodland, planted back in 2003. The young trees were lined either side of a wide grassy ride, where the Great Yarmouth to Birmingham gas pipe cuts through underneath, preventing more trees from being planted there. Blackcaps, willow and garden warblers, a thrush in full song, all accompanied us along a green carpet dotted with colourful spring flowers. Joe pointed out the variety of trees planted and at the same time, reminding us of the calamity of the ash die-back disease that has ravaged our countryside woodlands in recent years. Oddly enough, he pointed out a perfectly healthy young ash tree standing next door to sick leafless one. Joe's decision not to fell the whole plantation was made in the hope that some of the trees would resist the disease, and the strange sight of a healthy ash standing right next door to a diseased one, brought a glimmer of hope to what seems like a repeat of the great Dutch Elm catastrophe in the mid 1970's. Amongst the oaks (some seeded naturally) and ashes were dogwood, hazel, birch, hawthorn, with spindle bushes exploding with masses of yellow/white flowers, alive with bees. As we came to end of the ride and rounded a corner towards the fields, a muntjac barked in the undergrowth, adding to the orchestra of birdsong. Someone spotted the puffed-up tail of a squirrel as it corkscrewed up a tree and a bit further along,

little groups were peering at the ground, naming the variety of wildflowers - meadow and creeping buttercup, greater stitchwort, common vetch, thyme-leaved speedwell. At the end of the ride, we came to the set aside field where Mary and Joe sow red and white millet, triticale, linseed and other seed to feed the winter flocks of yellowhammers, linnets and other birds on the farm in the winter months. Making our way back up the hill to the farm, Mary and Joe treated us to tea and biscuits and a spectacular view of the setting sun glowing softly over the valley in front of us.



Evening walk at Beaumont chase. Photo C. Baxter

RNHS visit to Cribb's Meadows SSSI 5/06/21.

On a warm sunny afternoon in early June our small group of avid nature hunters met by the entrance to the larger 'North' meadow of Cribb's Meadows SSSI to take a short tour and see what species we could find. After finishing our 'hellos' which to me felt that much more special, as we could do without the medium of 'ZOOM', I began the tour with a short potted history of the nature reserve, nearly forgetting to explain how the site was named! However, a quick 'nudge' from a knowledgeable attendee brought the memory back to me and for those unaware, the name relates to a chap called Tom Cribb, a 19th Century bare-knuckle prize-fighter whose last fight took place just south of the reserve in 1811.

As Cribb's Meadows is designated for the species rich grassland, our focus was upon the botany and within a few minutes we had already clocked up several records including the last flourishes from the few remaining Green-winged orchids which were in abundance just a few weeks earlier. In fact, the annual count undertaken by LRWT volunteers recorded over 1680 earlier this year, a record for the reserve! We continued to meander across the north meadow in a loose 'zig-zag' pattern through a sea of buttercups (mostly Bulbous and Meadow with the occasional Creeping hiding away) and emerging stands of Bird's-foot trefoil, common knapweed and Common Spotted orchids that would soon add to the colour palette as summer draws on.

As we headed towards the North Meadow pond, a quick time check showed we had already spent nearly an hour just perusing the first field which is so easy to do when 'botanising' (I have heard stories of botany groups not even making it out of the car parks during site visits before time was called!). The pond didn't disappoint, we all saw a wonderful display of flying by a resident Four-Spotted Chaser and the less aggressive, floating flight of Common Blue Damselfly.

With time ticking on, we left the meadow to walk the relict railway embankment that was rudely cut through what was once a single meadow in the late 19th Century. Now sporting a welcome cover of scrub and mature trees much used by local birds, the lime stone used in the embankment's construction also supports flora such as Wild Strawberry a key larval food plant for the scarce Grizzled Skipper that has been recorded onsite previously but sadly not seen recently. As we trekked along the ridge of the embankment, we also spotted patches of Mouse-ear Hawkweed along with the delicately tiny, Parsley Piert taking advantage of the bare, stony ground.

Our final foray of the day saw us head down the embankment steps into the smaller 'South' meadow in search of more orchids but hoping to catch a glimpse of an elusive, agile four legged wee 'beastie' too. Our specific targets were Twayblade

Orchid which hide (and I do mean hide) themselves within the emerging grassland flora and Common Lizard which can be found sunning themselves on the old log piles stacked at the base of the south facing embankment. After some searching for Twayblades, we finally came across our quarry and once you had your eye in, we realised we were standing amongst many! As an added bonus, the increasing temperature began drawing out more insects and we spotted Burnet Companion and Sliver-Y moths along with the best spot of the day (in my humble opinion...) which was a Dingy Skipper. From our records, this butterfly has not been recorded here for a few years so I was extra excited for this one!

Back along the bottom of the embankment, as if on cue, a Common lizard posed on said log pile for our attention for a few moments before scooting off, which the rest of us did shortly afterwards. In all, we managed to clock up over 70 species of flora and fauna in our whistle-stop tour and I want to thank all those who came out to join me for a pleasant couple of hours in a very special little bit of the world.

John Bristow



John Bristow. Cribbs meadow



Flower head. Twayblade. Cribbs meadow. Photo. C.Baxter

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION REMINDER



Just a reminder from Peter Scott that there are only three months left to keep snapping your Rutland wildlife photos for a chance to have your photo in next year's **2022 calendar.**

Maybe you have already got a few that you like already.

Don't leave them sitting in your computer until the last minute or you may forget to send them off by the deadline which is **31st August.**

Send them to Peter: peter.scott27@btopenwork.com



Green winged orchid. Cribbs meadow



4 - spotted chaser at Cribbs meadow. Photo C. Baxter



Twayblade. Cribbs meadow. Photo C Baxter

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