RNHS
RUTLAND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

FIELDFARE

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Herb paris.
Photo Tim Sexton

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2026 is shaping up to be a year of contrasts. With May being the hottest month ever on record, it felt almost tropical – with humid stormy nights and equally hot humid days. Despite this, there has been plenty of spring activity in the garden. The crows nesting in the Willow tree at the bottom of the garden have been successful in rearing at least two offspring again this year. It was a noisy couple of weeks while the youngsters were honing their flying skills with "mum and dad" offering lots of encouragement. You can tell the newly fledged from their parents – their heads look too large for their bodies.

I saw my first Painted Lady butterfly in the garden way back at the beginning of May and many more have been seen out in the countryside since. Favourable weather conditions for them must have come together for a mass migration year for these orange beauties.

Not so welcome in our garden was the sighting of the Box Tree Moth caterpillars munching away at our Box hedge, decimating it in a matter of days. Moth caterpillars of different species have been seen by members stripping the leaves off hedges and trees more than usual this year. The Box Tree Moth is another example of an invasive species native to Asia, causing havoc with our native wildlife. Many of the Uk's worst invasives come from East Asia, where their wet mild winters and warm summers mirror the UK's warming climate. Naming just a few, the Asian Hornet, Harlequin Ladybird, Asian Longhorn Beetle and Muntjac are high on the NBN (National Biodiversity Network) UK watch list. It may be an idea to familiarise ourselves with the description of the Asian Hornet, as sightings have been moving northwards and it may not be long before we spot one in Rutland.

On a brighter note – in the next couple of months we will be counting our native magical Glowworms again! These captivating little beetles have been recorded by RNHS over many years, with several sites in Rutland where you can still spot their green bioluminescence glowing in the night. If you would like to join our volunteers, there's still time to get in touch (Carolyn 07729298125) and we will give you a list of times and places.

Enjoy your summer.

DIARY DATES

RNHS Outdoor meetings.

The following events are correct at time of publication but may be changed at short notice. Please book your place with the person who will be leading the walk; phone numbers are beside the listing. Make sure you are wearing appropriate clothing for the time of year and if the weather is bad on the day, please check first by ringing the walk leader. Details of all these events appear in the Annual programme but bookings are arranged many months in advance so dates and venue can change at any time. See round badge on the front page of website at www.rnhs.org.uk for best up-to-date information.

Sunday 5th July 10.30am. Grantham canal Stathern with dragonfly expert Ian Merrill. With plenty of vegetation on the canal, this is a superb location for both Dragonflies and Damselflies. 20 species recorded here! **Meet:** Dove cottage car park. MR SK755324. Postcode LE14 4EX. Contact: Linda 07749636919

Saturday 18th July. 10.00am Ospreys at Lyndon centre. Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust is celebrating 30 years since the first translocation of Osprey chicks from Scotland to Rutland. It's a perfect time to join a guided walk and with luck, watch an Osprey dive for fish on the water. **There will be a fee of £6.50 (inc. car parking). Meet:** in the car park. MR: SK894055. WTW: lance.full.astounded. Contact: Linda as above

Saturday 12th September, 7.00pm. An evening Bat walk at Ketton with Ann Gleave from the Leicestershire and Rutland Bat Group. A chance to see Pipisrelles in the village or Daubentons over the river. The weather can be cool after sunset at this time of year, so wear warm clothes. Bring a torch and detector if you have one. **Meet:** Aldgate, Ketton. MR: SK983042. WTW: record.pavement.brisk. Park either side of the road without blocking the gateway. Contact Linda as above

RNHS Indoor morning/evening meetings.

Evening meetings are usually on the first Tuesday of the month from January to April and October to December at the Volunteer Training Centre (VTC) LE15 8AD. MR: SK883 083.

WEATHER

RECORDER Roy Lemmon
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April 2026.

Atmospheric pressure and wind. Overall, a high-pressure month, the lowest I recorded was 1010mb. on the 12th. but from the 18th. to the end of the month there was a large "high" over the North Sea and Scandinavia which not only gave us winds NW-SE but also clear skies night and day but, unusually for an anticyclone, often quite windy conditions that must have influenced the temperatures. The highest pressure recorded here was 1035mb. on the 23rd. There was one named storm, Dave (Met. Office) on the 3rd. and 4th. of the month, but as is so often the case, mostly affected the west of the UK and only gave us strong winds and a light drizzle unlike Scotland which had snow and gale force winds.

Temperature. The overall mean at this station was 11.57ºC which is second highest in the decade 2017-2026 after April 2025 at 12.26ºC and just ahead of the same month in 2020 at 11.52ºC. There were no air frosts, but 7 nights were below 2ºC, the lowest was that of the 5th.-6th. at 1.0ºC.

Precipitation. A very dry April with a total of 3.8mm. (0.15 inches) which all fell as rain. There were only 8 days when rain fell, ranging from "trace" to 0.9mm. This is the third driest April in 36 years of recording, April 2011 was 2.3mm. and 2007 3.0mm.

May 2026

Atmospheric pressure and wind. Pressures this month were generally elevated except for the 13th-20th when they were lower, including the lowest of the month 1006mb on the 14th. The 21st-31st saw high pressures which gave rise to typical anticyclonic conditions, clear skies, including at night, low wind speeds, high daytime temperatures and virtually no rain. There was a thunderstorm on the evening of the 26th which produced a little rain, 0.5 mm.

Temperature. With a mean of 15.56ºC this was the third warmest May in the decade 2017-2026 after 2025, 17.11ºC, and 2024 at 15.89ºC. Nationally it gave us the warmest May Day since records began with 35.1ºC at Kew Gardens. My highest daytime maximum for May also occurred on this day.

Precipitation. A total was recorded here of 24.8mm (0.98 inches) which is 51% of my long term mean of 36 years. 69% of this fell between the 12th and the 19th and it all fell as rain except for a hailstorm on the afternoon of the 13th which gave 5.6mm, measured as liquid of course. This period produced 69% of the month's total. There were 20 days without precipitation.

AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES

RECORDER Dr C H Gallimore
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April/May 2026

There have been few records in these two months.

There were records of **Common Frogs** from Hebe's Wood in April and tadpoles were first seen in Ridlington on 12 April. The only record of **Common Toad** was of one in Ketton Quarry on 22 April.

Smooth Newts were seen in garden ponds in Braunston and Ridlington in April and apparently were present at Quarry Farm, as were **Great Crested Newts.**

A live **Grass Snake** was observed under a shelter in Exton on 11 April and a small dead one was found in a Wing garden in May. **Adders** were seen at Ketton Quarry on two occasions in April.

A **Red-eared Slider** was seen again in Fishponds at the beginning and end of May.

My thanks to the following who provided these records:- T P Appleton, A Hill, M Markham, T Mitcham, J Morrell and D Needham.

BOTANY

RECORDER John Rodgers
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April/May 2026
Lots of growth around as one drives around the county, though some flowers have already done their job and are changing into fruits and seeds. There seemed to be a lot of **Garlic Mustard** around during May, more than I remember in other years. There is a lot of **Meadow Cranesbill** in the verges and certainly plenty of **Ox-eye Daisy** and **Buttercup**, especially along the Oakham bypass, where I suspect it was a large part of the seed put down when the road was completed. Grasses are growing very well on the county verges. How many different species are there? Hardly anybody sends in records of grasses. (I find them quite difficult to identify) A challenge?

Very few records have been received this month. Amongst the more unusual flowers, **Herb Paris** (see photo front page) was found at Launde Big Wood by Sarah Bedford as was **Early Purple Orchid** and **Opposite-leaved Saxifrage**. Carolyn Baxter reported finding **Brooklime** at Wardley Woods and, **Dusky Cranesbil**l at Munday's Close in Langham. This is a Cranesbill with largish purple flowers about the same size as those of Meadow Cranesbill. Tim Caldicott found ***Gunnera tinctora,*** **Chilean Rhubarb,** at Manton Pastures. This is a native of Chile which has escaped from cultivation in the UK. It is now classified as a harmful invasive species and it is illegal to plant it, or let it escape, beyond the confines of one's garden.
Finally, in the last few days, Anthony Biddle has found **Sulphur Clover** at Quarry Farm. This is only found in the Oolite area to the north of Stamford. A survey of Merry's Meadows by LRWT staff has yielded, amongst other things, **Frog Orchid, Fragrant Orchid** and **Dyer's Greenweed.** The last two are rare finds in Leicestershire and Rutland, whilst Frog Orchid is only found at Merry's Meadows.

Thank you to all those who sent in records: C Baxter, S Bedford, A and L Biddle, T Caldicott, M Grimes, M Markham, T Sexton, J Colaço-Fournier, JSR



Chilean Rhubarb. Manton. Photo T. Caldicott



Dusky Crane's-bill. Langham. Photo C. Baxter



Sulpher Clover at Quarry farm. Photo A. Biddle

BIRDS

Recorder Terry Mitcham
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April.

Highlights. Rutland Water had two Common Scoter (2nd – 4th), a pair of Red-breasted Mergansers (3rd), two Red-necked Grebes to (12th) and one to (23rd), a Spoonbill and Cattle Egret (both 29th) and a Crane (21st). Eyebrook Reservoir had a Spoonbill (7th) and a Little Tern (24th).

Rutland Water. (See also Wildfowl Count). Two Goldeneye were seen (17th). Marsh Harriers and Ospreys were regular on both reserves. Some wader counts included seven Avocets, 25 Oystercatchers, 51 Lapwings (all 21st), two Grey Plovers (26th – 29th), six Ringed Plovers, two Little Ringed Plovers, two Curlew (all 21st), two Bar-tailed Godwits (28th) and two Ruff (24th). There were two Common Sandpipers (18th – 21st), four Wood Sandpipers (27th – 28th) and two Greenshanks (7th). A Kittiwake was seen (1st) and there were three Little Gulls (7th). There were five Arctic Terns (11th) and three Black Terns (23rd). Cuckoos were heard from (17th), Swifts seen from (24th), Hobby from (22nd) and a Redstart (21st). Wheatears were at the dam (22nd – 24th) and ten Yellow Wagtails (15th) with a Channel Wagtail (13th, 18th) also there.

Eyebrook Reservoir. (See also Wildfowl Count). There were three Pink-footed Geese to (24th) and a juvenile Whooper Swan to 24th) with two (12th). Scaup were present to (24th) with 11 on (6th). There were two Great White Egrets (26th) and a Crane over (7th). Some wader counts were two Oystercatchers (19th), Grey Plover (3rd, 24th), Whimbrel (23rd, 26th), Bar-tailed Godwit (24th), two Common Sandpipers (12th) and a Green Sandpiper (7th).Also noted were two Wood Sandpipers (25th) and a Greenshank (24th). Little Gulls were seen (8th, 24th) with 23 on the latter date. There were c.40 Arctic Terns (28th) and 11 Black Terns (24th) with a regular Stonechat.

Other Sites. (See also Wildfowl Count Count). A male Goosander was on the R.Welland at Tinwell (7th). A Barnacle Goose and two Shelducks were at Banthorpe GP on (19th) with a Kingfisher there (29th). Curlew and Grey Partridge were at Cottesmore Airfield (23rd) and a Cuckoo was at Quarry Farm (21st). Cetti's Warblers were singing at Geeston and Tinwell and a Grey Wagtail was at Tinwell Pumping Station (7th). A Marsh tit was seen at Pickworth wood.

May

Highlights. Rutland Water had a White Stork of unknown origin (2nd – 9th), a Glossy Ibis (17th – 25th), a Kentish Plover (21st – 24th), a Temminck's Stint (10th) and two White-winged Black Terns (15th). A Hoopoe was briefly at Eyebrook Reservoir (29th).

Rutland Water. (See also Wildfowl Count). Other wildfowl were a Whooper Swan (27th) and a pair of Garganey (16th- 21st). A Bittern boomed (2nd) and there were two Cattle Egrets (2nd – 9th). Some wader counts were 15 Avocets (19th), 29 Oystercatchers (19th) and a pair had two chicks on (15th), 49 Lapwings (19th), Grey Plover (1st – 15th), 15 Ringed Plover (17th), a Whimbrel (9th), three Bar-tailed Godwits (5th), Turnstones (10th, 13th), six Sanderling (19th), a Little Stint (30th – 31st), four Wood Sandpipers(1st), four Redshanks (9th) and a Greenshank (27th). There were two Little Terns (27th) 65 Common Terns (19th) and one or two Black Terns (1st -29th). Up to four Hobbies were noted over the lagoons and Marsh Harriers were also regular. A Nightingale was heard (9th).

Eyebrook Reservoir (See also Wildfowl Count). There was a juvenile Whooper Swan to at least (17th), three Red-crested Pochards (27th), two Great White Egrets (17th) and two Cattle Egrets (26th). An Oystercatcher was present (17th) with two Dunlin and a Common Sandpiper (both 6th). 35 Common Terns were counted (17th) and there were three Arctic Terns (6th). A Whinchat was seen (3rd) and there were three Stonechats (9th).

Other Sites. (See also Wildfowl Counts). Fort Henry Ponds had a Shelduck (1st, 16th) and nine Shoveler (to 16th). Displaying Lapwings were in Exton Park and Banthorpe GP and a Curlew was at Cottesmore Airfield (9th). Two Common Terns were at Banthorpe GP (17th). Cuckoos were in Exton Park (16th). Peregrines were at a regular breeding site and Barn Owls were at Geeston and Exton with Little Owls at Whitwell. Tawny Owls bred at Oakham and Beaumont Chase Farm.

My thanks to the following for their records for April and May:-
T.P.Appleton, R.F.Baker, A & L Biddle, A.Child, B.Fox, LROS, M.Markham, T.Mitcham, B.Moore, J.W.Nourish, C.I.Park, D.Scott, P.Scott, T.Sexton



Green Woodpecker. Lyndon. Photo: P. Scott



Yellow Wagtail. Rutland Water. Photo: P. Scott

Wildfowl Counts – April and May 2026

	Rutland Water 21.04.	Rutland Water 19.05.	Eyebrook Reservoir 19.04.	Eyebrook Reservoir 17.05.
Canada Goose	112	110	8	29
Greylag Goose	120	152	17	26
Pink-footed Goose			3	
Mute Swan	149	190	43	56
Whooper Swan			1	1
Egyptian Goose	25	25	7	8
Shelduck	5		3	2
Mandarin Duck	15	6		
Garganey		2		
Shoveler	14	13		5
Gadwall	210	122	12	16
Wigeon	2			
Mallard	330	273	48	108
Pintail	2			
Teal	84	1	49	
Pochard	32	5	5	
Tufted Duck	606	128	133	20
Scaup			2	
Goldeneye			2	1
Little Grebe	3	4		
Red-necked Grebe	2			
Great Crested Grebe	95	128	33	78
Grey Heron	7	7	1	4
Great White Egret	2	2	1	4
Little Egret	4	15	1	2
Cormorant	189	190	56	109
Moorhen	14	13		1
Coot	179	128	2	22
TOTAL	**2201**	**1514**	**427**	**492**

	FHP and Exton Park 19.04	FHP and Exton Park 16.05.	Banthorpe GP 17.04.	Banthorpe GP 17.05.
Canada Goose			3	5
Barnacle Goose			1	1
Greylag Goose	19	22	17	8
Mute Swan	7	5	5	1
Egyptian Goose		1		
Shelduck		1	2	
Mandarin Duck	2			
Shoveler	7	9		
Gadwall	29	24		
Wigeon	2			
Mallard	31	37	4	10
Tufted Duck	52	26		2
Grey Heron		1	1	1
Cormorant	1			1
Moorhen	6	5		
Coot	29	24	4	3
TOTAL	**185**	**155**	**37**	**32**



Grey Heron. Lyndon
Photo: P. Scott

BUTTERFLIES

RECORDER Martin Quinlan
4 Bayley Close, Uppingham, Rutland LE15 9TG
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Apologies from Martin to all recorders who have sent in their sightings so far this year. All records sent in will be collated and go into the August Fieldfare.

FUNGI

RECORDER K Fortune Jones
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April/May 2026.

The fungi reports for April and May were very thin on the ground this year, so this will be a short write up! A few reports of **Common** and **Pleated Inkcaps** came in, some **Turkeytails** and I spotted a couple of fresh **Dryad Saddles** erupting from their host trees. The common **Birch Polypores** and Hoof fungus were typically abundant in local Birch woods. The **Willow Blister fungus** was showing well at the Lyndon reserve on the willow fence.

I visited the Egleton Bird reserve on April 18th to see if the morels had made an appearance this year in their usual spot. Sadly I did not find any Semifree Morels nor the Common Morel – this is now two years running. However I did find a good number of the quite rare **Thimble Morels** (*Verpa Conica*), of varying shapes and sizes which was encouraging. Also known as the Bell Morel or Early Morel, the head is attached only at the top of the stipe (stem). The caps vary and can be smooth but also wrinkled – mostly an olive brown or reddish brown colour. They are very easily overlooked, being usually no more than 7-8cm high. They are not a prized edible species, as are the other members of the morel family, which is always a good thing for conservation.



Willow Blister. Lyndon. Photo: K. Fortune Jones.

At this time I would expect to see the St Georges Mushrooms fruiting and have previously found small groups not far along from the morel site in the tree line and undergrowth - not this year though, unless I was a bit early. However I haven't found any at other known sites either, and none have been reported to me. Apart from some lovely Turkeytail cascades, also at Egleton this is about it for these two months. Most of the jellies and crusts dried up during the dry April, with a few robust cups hanging on.

Thanks to all those who sent in reports.





Thimble Morels. Long form above.
Egleton reserve.

Photos: K. Fortune Jones.

MAMMALS

RECORDER Linda Biddle
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With sincere apologies from Linda to all who sent in their records for the June report. Due to technical problems (computer issues!) the report could not be compiled at this time but will be added to the August newsletter. Please keep sending in your reports.

INSECTS & INVERTEBRATES

RECORDER : VACANT

April.

Bees/wasps/ants.

The early spring warmth of April bought out the **Buff-tailed bumble bees** in woods and gardens everywhere, with other garden bees, **Common carder** (22nd) seen several times in an Uppingham garden. As the month progressed, the solitary bees made an appearance, **Grey mining bee** (19th) Uppingham, **and Ashy mining bee** (28th) outside Stoke woods. The ***Nomada bees***, (a type of cuckoo bee which lay their eggs in the nest of solitary bees) started to appear slightly later. A foray around the edge of Stoke woods on 26th and 28th April saw numerous Nomada species seeking out the underground nests of the mining bees. A **German wasp** was spotted in Langham (22nd). A parasitic wasp – an ***Ichneumon species*** was seen in Stoke woods (28th). Most are armed with alarming looking ovipositors and are harmless to humans but lethal for moth and butterfly caterpillars by laying their eggs on or in them.

Flies.

Syrphus sp. hoverflies appeared in the fields and hedges *Epistrophe eligans* Langham (23rd). Along with myriads of other species of fly, they seem to love the emerging umbellifers, Cow parsley and Hogweed especially.

Bugs.

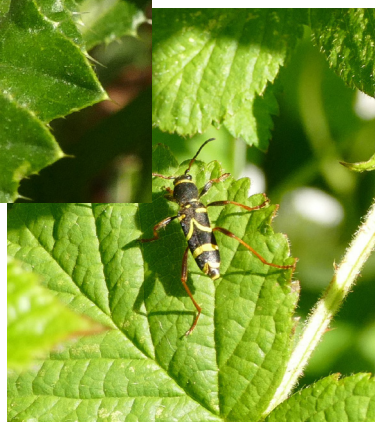
A sortie on 27th April around an Uppingham field which has been left untouched for many years, revealed quite an assortment of Bugs and Shield bugs. A **Bishop's Mitre Shieldbug**, **Brassica Shieldbug**, a **Cinnamon Bug** and a **Hairy Shieldbug**. The **Dock Bug** was seen here as well as in Uppingham, Langham and around Stoke woods

Beetles

A **10-spot Ladybird** was found on the Uppingham field (27th).



Left: Golden-bloomed Grey Longhorn. Wardley. Photo: C. Baxter



Right: Wasp Longhorn. Wardley. Photo: C. Baxter

May

Bees/Wasps/Ants.

Many species of worker bumble bees were seen foraging towards the end of May when the temperature rose dramatically to over 30 degrees. The big queen bumble bees were still seen early on, **Buff-tailed Bumble Bee** (10th) and **Common Carder** (1st) (11th). More species of ***Ichneumon*** wasp are recorded as more caterpillars were seen on the vegetation (10th Wardley) (23rd Wardley).

Flies.

More Hoverfly species seen around umbellifers, Hawthorn and Dog rose around edge of Wardley woods (9th) and a **Dark-edged Bee Fly** on the same day. Sawflies can sometimes be confused with wasps due to mimicry but are fairly easy to identify. ***Tenthredo temula*** and ***Tenthredo mesomela*** were seen in Priors coppice (21st.)

Bugs.

The **Red and Black Froghopper** was very abundant in Wardley woods (9th) and again in Priors coppice (21st). A **Dock Bug** was seen in Wardley woods (9th) and a shieldbug – (*Rhopulus subrufis)* seen there on the same day. Another Dock bug was seen, this time in Stoke woods (10th). A **Hairy Shieldbug** was seen in Stoke woods (25th).

Beetles.

Many beetles were recorded in this month. There were a pair of **Scarlet Lily Beetles** *(Lilloceris lilii)* found in an Uppingham garden (1st). **Common Cardinal Beetles** were seen around Wardley woods (9th) (23rd), Langham (20th). The beautiful **Golden-bloomed Grey Longhorn Beetle** was seen at Wardley woods (9th) and again in Stoke woods (25th*). Grammoptera ruficornis,* a small longhorn beetle was found on cow parsley at Priors coppice (21st). The **Wasp Longhorn** was seen at Wardley woods (23rd) and again on (25th) at Stoke woods. *Rutpela maculata,* another large black and yellow longhorn beetle was seen at Wardley woods (23rd). **Soldier Beetles**, of which there are many similar looking species were beginning to make their appearance as did the familiar **Swollen-thighed Beetles**, male and female in all three woods visited. The **2-spot Ladybird** was seen in Uppingham garden (2nd), and alongside Wardley woods (9th). A **10-spot Ladybird** was at Wardley (23rd). A **14-spot Ladybird** was seen in Langham (20th) and Priors coppice (21st). More **Harlequin Ladybirds** were seen this year than last year, in all places visited as were the **7-spot Ladybirds.**

Dragonflies and Damselflies

A Dragonfly seen along the grassy ride At Wardley (9th) may have been a female **Black-tailed Skimmer**, but the photograph doesn't show all the ID features well enough to be positive. An **Azure Damselfly** was seen at Priors coppice (21st) and a **Common Blue Damselfly** at Stoke woods (25th). A female **Beautiful Demoiselle** was seen at Wardley woods near the entrance (23rd).

MOTHS

RECORDER Paul Bennett
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April/May 2026.

Despite the mainly settled conditions and a few sunny days, temperatures have for the most part dropped at night to below the seasonal average. The first trap of the year, therefore, was run at **Bloody Oaks** nature reserve as late as the night of 23rd May. 65 moths of 21 species was a reasonable return of mainly common spring moths although **Spruce Carpet** and **Ingrailed Clay** have not been recorded there in recent years. The highlight was **Reddish Light Arches**, a species that occurs on chalk and limestone grassland, but which generally prefers coastal sites such as sand dunes. It has been previously recorded at Bloody Oaks and Ketton Quarry but very rarely elsewhere in VC55 given its habitat preferences. Apart from coastal areas of north Lincolnshire and north-west England, Rutland seems to be at roughly the northern extent of its current range.

The following night Lyndon reserve was trapped with 126 moths of 46 species recorded. **Treble Lines** with a count of 31 was the highest species total with 9 **Poplar Hawk-moth** also notable. **Pale Pinion** and **Pebble Hook-tip** were surprisingly the first site records there for several years, while **Small Mottled Willow** is a small immigrant moth that can arrive in most months of the year, brought in by any period of mild weather and southerly airflows.

Day-flying moth records have included **Chimney Sweeper** with a count of 30 plus in Lyndon meadows at the end of May which is higher than usual on the site. **Scarlet Tiger** have been seen at both adult and larval stages in Manton, Exton and Langham while **Hummingbird Hawk-moth** was seen in a Manton garden in early May.



An **Emperor Moth** in Uppingham on 27th April was notable, as was a **Small Yellow Underwing** at Brooke on 8th May and a **Gold Swift** in Wardley Wood on 23rd May. A **Chestnut** was in Langham on 5th March. More regular species records in late May have included **Common Heath** and **Latticed Heath** at Ketton Quarry and a **Mother Shipton** at Pickworth Wood. Micro moth records include a **White Plume** at Braunston, **Green Longhorn** at Hebe Wood on 18th April and **Yellow-banded Longhorn** at Stoke Woods on 25th May.

Larval searches in May were productive, with **Mottled Umber**, **Satellite** and **Merveille du Jour** seen in the Manton area with Lyndon area records including **Blossom Underwing**, **Frosted Green** and **Green Oak Tortrix**.

Larval webs of **Small Eggar** were seen by a few observers, mainly on Blackthorn with some of these being of substantial size. Large **Spindle Ermine** webs seem to be becoming more numerous each year or maybe with a recorders eye I am just noticing them more with the road towards Bloody Oaks being especially full of them, so spare a thought for the Spindle tree as it becomes completely bare and defoliated when colonised by this species.



Left: Gold swift. Wardley. Photo C. Baxter



Right: Mother shipton. Pickworth woods. Photo: L. Biddle



Left: Small eggar caterpillars. Ryhall. Photo: L. Biddle

It is to be hoped that slightly warmer nights will come in the summer, and more moths will then appear on the wing.

Thank you to the following for submitting their records: - C Baxter, P Bennett, A Biddle, T Caldicott, R Edwards, Dr C Gallimore, M Grimes, M Markham, J Morrell, T Sexton, J Walker.

FIELD TRIPS

Saturday 16th May 2026. Memorial walk at Merry's meadows

Sarah Bedford, the Senior Reserves officer for the LRWT (Wildlife Trust) led this special walk in memory of Jenny, who was herself once the Senior Reserves officer for Merry's meadows and other LRWT reserves. So, it was good to see eleven members of both the Rutland Nats and LRWT come together for a walk in Jenny's favourite wildflower meadow.

It was a cool and cloudy start to the morning as we gathered at the entrance to Cow pasture Close and before we set off, Sarah gave us a potted history of all three meadows – Cow pasture Close, Long Meadow and Donkey Paddock (13 hectares in all) and why they are so important to preserve in our two counties. Only 3% of truly pesticide, fertilizer free wildflower meadows still exist in Britain today and Merry's meadows is a glowing example of how these grassland meadows should look like at this time of year.

Almost immediately our list of flowering plants grew, dominated by a purple haze of hundreds of **Green-winged Orchids** and the brown husks of **Cowslip** flowers seeding everywhere. Sarah reminded us of the way old traditional hay meadows were managed in the fields of Britain for hundreds of years in the past and how they teemed with all kinds of birds, butterflies and insects, all depending on one another for their future survival, and how the Trust now manage and care for these meadows in the same traditional way. Sarah recounted how Jenny once quoted "we had just finished counting 5000 Green-winged orchids in Cow Pasture Close. . . when we heard a peculiar sound of a nightingale clearing its throat and then bursting into song! No one had heard a nightingale in there before . . . it really was a spine-tingling moment!"





Above: Green-winged Orchids and Meadow Buttercups.

Left: Yellow Rattle

Both photos by R Edwards

From Cow Pasture Close, we entered Donkey Paddock which has a slightly different geology and a different suite of flowering plants. **A few Heath-spotted Orchids** were seen at the bottom of the close, along with **Tormentil** and other species peculiar to this part of the site. We also found **St-Georges Mushrooms** hugging the soil like a line of potatoes - an apt name as it is a springtime fungus which starts to appear around St Georges Day towards the end of April. We looked for the Twayblade orchid which can usually be found in Donkey paddock in plenty, and also the elusive Frog orchid but maybe it was too early this year because after a long search we finished our walk without finding them. Below is a list of all the species we encountered on our walk. As Sarah very poignantly said "I am standing on the shoulders of conservationists like Jenny who so carefully managed these meadows before me".

Thankyou to Sarah for leading the walk and sharing our memories in this beautiful meadow.



Jenny leading a walk in 2023. Identifying a single spike of Fragrant Orchid in the eastern end of Donkey paddocks. Merrys meadow.

Species list

Plants	**Birds**
On the trackway	Whitethroat
Bush Vetch	Crow
Cowslip	Skylark
Dandelion agg.	Yellowhammer
Cow Parsley	Chaffinch
Hawthorn	Wren
Shepherd's Purse	Blue-tit
Germander Speedwell	Curlew
Red Clover	Chiff-chaff
Daisy	
C. Bird's-foot Trefoil	
In meadows	
Meadow Buttercup	
Greeen-winged Orchids	
Bulbous Buttercup	
Mouse-ear	**Butterflies**
Cuckoo Flower	Orange-tip
Pignut	Large White
Tormentil	Small Heath (Many)
Common Sorrel	Small Copper
Yellow Rattle	
Bird's-foot Trefoil	**Other**
Hairy Tare	Hare
Smooth Tare	St. Georges Mushroom
Common Vetch	Soldier Beetle
Common Milkwort	
Water Avens	
Bugle	
Heath-spotted Orchid	
Field Wood-rush	
Quaking Grass	

Saturday 18th April 2026, 10.00am. Visit to Hebe's wood in Braunston

It was a perfect day for a walk through part of this 45-acre reclaimed forest of Leighfield. The site is accessed from an ancient bridleway which is a continuation of Wood Lane, the metalled road from Braunston. After some confusion about which gate we were to drive through, around 20 of us eventually got started with Min and Suzie the owners leading the walk. Min explained about how part of the 45-acre site was once farmed, containing three agricultural fields when they inherited the site from their aunt some years ago. After they took ownership, they deliberately left the fields to regenerate naturally on the ancient woodland ground. There is management still; to keep some of the rides open from encroaching scrubland and trees are planted in some areas, although they have also witnessed Ash die back from many of their planted Ash saplings.

Scrubby bushes and trees of many species – **hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel, willows**, were a haven for the songbirds, all singing around our heads as we continued our walk, stopping at a large muddy pond in need of more than a few days of rain to fill it back up. There are four large ponds on the site, but the lack of water didn't stop the frogs from spawning in them. We came across **froglets** jumping around in the wet grass, a few early butterflies and bee-flies out on the wing and the yellow and blue spring flowers of **Forget-me-nots** and **Lesser celandines** soaking up the sunshine in the warm grassy sheltered spots.

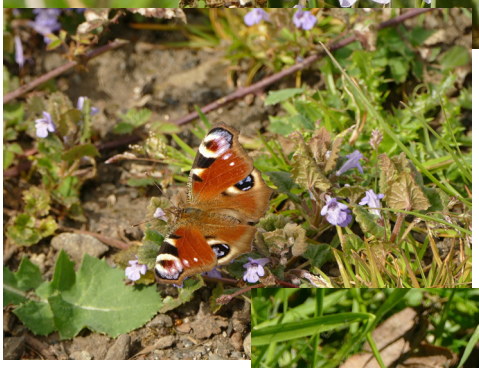
April is still too early to see the many orchids which grow here but as we gathered around after a quiet cheerful morning accompanied by a chorus of birdsong, we were invited by Min and Suzie to return in a few weeks' time to see them at their best.

Butterflies seen in Hebe's woods.
(Photos taken previously in other parts of Rutland).

Female Orange Tip.

Male OrangeTip





Peacock

Speckled Wood



Brimstone

Species list

Birds	Botany	Butterflies	Fungi	other
Chiff-chaff	Red Campion	Male Orange-tip	Sulpher Tuft	Mole hill
Willow Warbler	Lesser Celandine	Female Orange-tip	Hairy Curtain Crust	Fox poo
Dunnock	Ground Ivy	Speckled Wood	King Alfreds Cakes. (On burnt ash stump)	Dark-edged Bee Fly
Robin	Wood Forget-me-not	Peacock		Green Longhorn moth
Blackbird	Silverweed	Brimstone		7-spot Ladybird
Blackcap	Marsh Thistle (Leaf rosette)	Large White		Dung fFy
Red Kite	Spear Thistle (Leaf rosette)			St. Marks fly
Whitethroat	Guelder Rose. Bush			Froglets x 2
Pheasant	Winter Cress			Dock Bug
Song Thrush	Lesser Stitchwort			
Carrion Crow	Yellow Archangel			
Greater-spotted Woodpecker	Spotted Orchid Leaf rosette)			
Mallard	Lords and Ladies			
Long-tailed Tit	Dog's Mercury			
Skylark				
Bullfinch				
Great Tit				

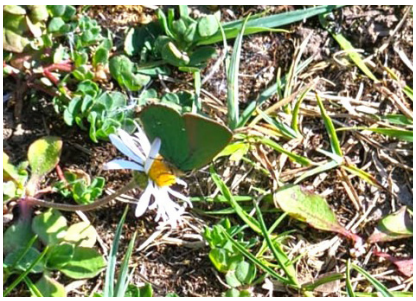
Social media records.

April.
1st April.
"Hairy-footed Flower Bees out in good numbers on the wall in **South street. Oakham"**. Peter Scott.



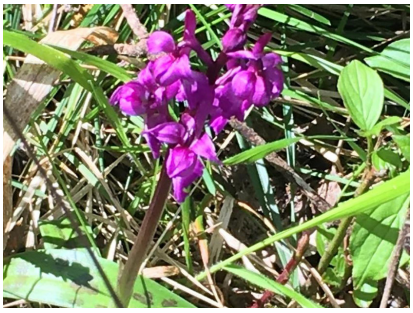


21st April.
"Thousands of HFFB's and a scarce Common Mourning Bee". **Oakham.**Tim Sexton.



22nd April.
"Green Hairstreak in Donkey paddock at **Ketton Quarry."**
Dave Needham

23rd April.
"Early Purple Orchid and Herb Paris in **Pickworth woods".** Linda Biddle



24th April.
"Two Roe deer and a Dingy skipper at **Bloody Oaks Quarry".** Peter Scott.



27th April.
"Flavous Nomad Bee at **Whitwell**."
Jayne Walker

Herb Paris
Pickworth
woods 23rd



May
12th May.
Hedgehogs in **Oakham garden.**
John Rodgers



22nd May.
"Winter Moths stripping the Oak leaves at **Launde woods"**
Carly Butler





25th May.
Common Swift in **Exton garden.**
Jayne Walker

If you have wildlife photos of your own, either on your phone or camera while out walking anywhere in Rutland or even in your garden, we would love to see them. You can email your photo's directly to any of our recorders. You will find their email addresses at the top of their *Fieldfare* reports or on the RNHS website. Please include a Grid reference or what3words location so we can add your sightings to RNHS records.

You can also email your photos to: rnhsfieldfare2@gmail.com. Please include a few details about what's in the photo and where you found it and we will try to feature it in the next *Fieldfare*

OTHER NEWS

The Fairy-ring longhorn beetle (*Pseudovadonia livida*) in Langham Churchyard, by Marian Markham

There are various examples of insects extending their range to the north and west from South-East England where they first arrived from Europe. The fabulously named Fairy-ring Longhorn Beetle has now been recorded in Rutland - the first by LRWT species and recording officer and entomologist, Tim Sexton, who discovered five on Ox-eye Daisy and Hogweed at Lagoon VII of Rutland Water Nature Reserve on 30th May 2022.
I discovered and identified the small brown beetles perched on Ox-eye Daisy flowers in Langham St Peter & St Paul church yard in mid-June and it is the second record now for Rutland. I counted 15 beetles, mostly in mating pairs. Curiously, they were only on one patch of Ox-eye Daises and none elsewhere in the rest of the church yard meadow.
I am sure you are wondering how the Fairy-ring Longhorn Beetle gets its name? It comes from the larval phase which feed in soil colonised by the Fairy-ring Champignon *Marasmius oreades*, feeding on its mycelium and pupating in soil cocoons. The adult beetles like warm sunny meadows and feed on the pollen and nectar of flowers, particularly Buttercups, Yarrow, Ox-eye Daisy, Blackberry, and Hogweed from May to September.
Next time you see Yarrow or Ox-eye Daisies in a warm sunny spot, take a closer look, like I did, and see if there is a Fairy sat in the flower head to surprise you too.



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