

Roesel's Bush Cricket, female nymph. Photo, Phil Rudkin, see report page 12.



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The weather always plays a big part in the world of natural history, and this year has been no exception. We have had a dry spring, followed by a pleasantly warm, sometimes hot summer – so far. The emergence of butterflies and flowers has been ahead of normal timing. Wicken Fen in early July produced 5 species of damselfly and 6 different dragonflies. Thank you to Gill Chiverton, and to the ever-enthusiastic Henry Curry who led the group.

Our evening at Beaumont Chase Farm was most enjoyable, and we saw the farm at its best, followed by cakes and drinks on the terrace very kindly provided by our hosts Joe and Mary Nourish.

Thanks also for the Merry's Meadow visit led by Jenny Harris, and the Seaton Meadows visit and survey led by Joe Costley of *Plantlife*. All outdoor events are written up on the RNHS website; apologies for not having room to include the reports in this *Fieldfare*, instead we have included photographs on page 20.

We are looking forward to our morning at Fineshade on August 5th and hope that our luck with the weather holds good for that day too, remembering that last years' meeting was cancelled due to the temperature being too high!

Rutland verges have been looking particularly good over May and June, although as usual there have been serious incidents of mowing protected verges by private individuals and organisations. As I write the Nettle-Leaved Bellflowers are at their best, and butterflies are doing well.

We wish you all good nature-watching in the rest of the summer. Don't forget to keep sending in your sightings, and taking photos for the RNHS Calendar (last date for entries September 15, see page 3 of May *Fieldfare* for more details.)

### Limestone Grassland Conservation at Ketton Quarry (part closure)

Long grass and coarse plants have been growing apace this year, and the special plants of the rare limestone grassland at Ketton Quarry are likely to have difficulty competing. The Valley is noticeably overgrown, potentially affecting plants such as **Autumn Gentian**, **Yellow-wort** and **Centaury**. The Trust has put the small flock of **Manx Loaghtan** and **Hebridean** sheep in The Valley, so this area of the Quarry has been closed to visitors, to safeguard the sheep from disturbance and possible dog worrying. The Trust apologises for any inconvenience. The rest of the Quarry apart from the Valley is still open.

Please contact Jenny Harris at LRWT (0116 2629968) for further information.

#### Look out for these!



Bee Eaters, nr Melton Mowbray. Photo, David Cotter

#### And for this!



Purple Emperor, Clipsham. Photo, Judy Wilmott

## DIARY DATES

## RNHS FIELD TRIPS

*Full details of all these events appear on our website at [www.rnhs.org.uk](http://www.rnhs.org.uk). If the weather is bad, check the website or call the 'Queries' phone number for changes.*

**Saturday August 5, 10.00 am**

### **FINESHADE – A walk in the woods: butterflies and flowers**

Barrie Galpin of Friends of Fineshade will be leading this walk. Meet at the Top Lodge car park. Most of the paths are in good condition but Barrie may take us off piste into some quieter areas, so good footwear essential. Parking charge £4. Grid ref: SP 980 983. Queries: Richard Brown, 01780 590707.

**Sunday August 27, 10.30 am**

### **CLIPSHAM PARK WOOD – joint meeting with British Plant Gall Society**

Roy Lemmon RNHS leads this walk starting at Yew Tree Avenue, Clipsham, car park. Good footwear essential. Grid ref: SK 980 169. Queries: Roy Lemmon, 01780 762051.

Wednesday Sept 6, 7.30 pm

**LYNDON RESERVE – Bats over Rutland Water**

Jenny Harris, RNHS Bat Recorder, leads this evening walk at the Rutland Water Lyndon Reserve. BRING A TORCH. Parking in the Lyndon Reserve car park. Grid Ref SK 894055. You may need to wrap up depending on the weather.

Queries: Jenny Harris 01572 755274

Saturday October 14, 2.00 pm

**BRAUNSTON-IN-RUTLAND – Lichens in Churchyards**

Ivan Pedley follows up his November 2016 lecture. Meet first at Braunston in Rutland churchyard. Grid Ref SK 833065. Then on to Brooke churchyard.

Queries: Roy Lemmon 01780 762051

**RNHS EVENING MEETINGS**

*Indoor meetings are held at Voluntary Action Rutland (VAR), Lands End Way, Oakham LE15 6RB. Tea and coffee, free. Visitors are asked for a donation of £2.*

Tuesday October 3, 7.30 pm

**Plantlife**

Joe Costley from *Plantlife*, who showed us round the Seaton Meadow Reserve in June, will explain what *Plantlife* is about, and the various aspects of the reserves in the UK and across the world that *Plantlife* is responsible for.

**LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND WILDLIFE TRUST, RUTLAND GROUP**

*For events in Leicestershire and Rutland see [www.lrwt.org.uk](http://www.lrwt.org.uk) or phone 0116 262 9968. Rutland group meetings are held at the Volunteer Training Centre (VTC), Hambleton Road, LE15 8AD. Entry £1.*

Monday October 16, 7.30 pm

**Bats at the Holwell Reserve**

Jenny Harris, LRWT, will talk about the wildlife and bats of the Holwell Reserve (near Melton Mowbray).

**LINCOLNSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST, BOURNE GROUP**

*For details of LWT events, see [www.lincstrust.org.uk](http://www.lincstrust.org.uk), or phone 01507 526677 in office hours. Bourne group indoor meetings are held at the Methodist Church Hall, Bourne. Refreshments available. A donation of £1.50 is requested, children free.*

Friday 15 October, 7.30 pm

**An introduction to Gibraltar Point**

Jim Shaw, the Trust's Assistant Warden at Gibraltar Point, will start the Bourne Area Group programme this autumn. He joined the Trust as an apprentice in 2014 and now works full time at 'Gib'.

**WEATHER**

**RECORDER Roy Lemmon**

87 Empingham Road, Stamford PE9 2SU. Telephone 01780 762051  
E-mail: [roy.lemmon@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:roy.lemmon@yahoo.co.uk)

**May 2017**

**Atmospheric pressure and wind** Overall this was a month of elevated pressures apart from the 10th-13th inclusive, when they were low. The lowest of the month was 997.5 mb at 09.00 on the 13th and the highest was 1026 mb at the same time on the 8th.

Winds were NE-E from the 1st to the 11th, and variable for the rest of the month.

**Temperature** This was a very warm May, both the mean minimum, 8.34 °C, and the mean maximum, 19.93 °C, were first in the decade 2008–2017. There was one air frost on the night of 8th–9th, when the temperature fell to –0.2 °C, and the following night was also cold at 2.0 °C. In contrast the overnight minima on the 27–28th and 28th–29th were 14.0 °C.

**Rain** All of the May rainfalls in the last 6 years have been above 100% of my long-term mean (LTM) and therefore the LTM has increased over that period. The rainfall this year was 61.0 mm (2.4 inches) and represents 122% of LTM, though this is much less than May 2014, which was 240% of LTM.

## June 2017

**Atmospheric pressure and wind** Generally a month in which pressures were low, the lowest being 958.5 mb at 09.00 on the 6th; and the highest was 1026 mb at the same time on the 17th, but both of these were brief ‘blips’ and for the rest of the time pressures were low. It was a noticeably windy month with gusty conditions throughout; the highest I recorded was 28 mph at 09.00 on the 7th and wind directions were very variable and difficult to summarise. The last five days of the month saw winds which were NW–E and cold.

**Temperature** This was a very warm June, both the mean minimum, 12.13 °C, and the mean maximum, 22.88 °C, were highest in the decade 2008–2017, with 2010 second. The highest daytime maximum was 32.9 °C on the 19th and just 9 days later it was 13.7 °C!

**Rain** A total of 35.7 mm (1.4 inches) was recorded here, which is 71% of my LTM. There was a period of 17 days, the 10th to the 26th inclusive, in which no measureable rain fell, but this was broken on the 27th when 20.4 mm or four fifths of an inch, was recorded.

## Spring 2017

Nationally this has been reported as the warmest since 1659; also there were only two warmer Mays in the past 50 years.

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## AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES **RECORDER Dr C H Gallimore**

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

## May/June 2017

**Frogs** were only recorded twice – in May at Merry’s Meadow and in June at Leighfield. Leighfield also provided records of **Common Toad**, the first being a dead one at the end of May. About 60 toadlets were seen there on 9th June. A number of toads have been present in the recorder’s garden in Wing, hopefully feasting on the slugs. One brave toad was observed crossing the lawn at midday on June 21st when the temperature was 32 °C!

**Smooth** and **Great Crested Newts** have both been seen in ponds in Wing in both months. Very small Smooth Newts have been found under the reptile sheets at Rutland Water. One sheet had five newts sheltering under it.

**Grass Snakes** are still being found under the reptile sheets at Rutland Water. A small snake found its way into a Ridlington lavatory pan and a dead one was found near Wing Lakes at the end of May. Another large dead snake was found in Wing at about the same time measuring 36 inches in length. Two live snakes have subsequently been observed in the village.

No other reptiles have been reported in these two months.

*My thanks to the following who provided records: T Appleton, D Batten, T Caldicott, M Grimes, R Lemmon and R Mackay.*

## BIRDS

### RECORDER Terry Mitcham

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

E-mail: joterpat@btinternet.com

### May/June 2017

*No photo was received for the star bird, the Hoopoe; but see page 2 for Bee Eaters (admittedly out of county).*


Star bird of these months was a **Hoopoe**, which lingered for several days, closely followed by a **White-winged Black Tern**. An overflying **Spoonbill** was seen at Rutland Water, where a good wader passage included **Temminck's** and **Little Stints** and **Curlew Sandpiper**. It was encouraging to record **Nightingales** at more sites and a roding **Woodcock** was again at Burley Wood. Passage **Wheatears** and **Whinchats** were scarce in May but **Barn Owls** had a much better breeding season with young ringed at several boxes across the county and at Rutland Water.

*My thanks to the following for their records: D & J Ball, P Bennett, A & L Biddle, T Caldicott, A & J Comber, Dr C H Gallimore, M & G Griffin, M Grimes, Dr C R Jones, P Langston, LROS, S Lister, T Mitcham, T Moffatt, B Moore, M Nourish, L Park, J S & J Rodgers, P Rudkin, D Trevor, RWNR.*

(See also Wildfowl Counts, page 8)

<b>Mute Swan</b>	Successful breeding at FHP (two pairs), Exton Park (two pairs), Banthorpe Gravel Pit, EBR and RW.
<b>Barnacle Goose</b>	One was at RWNA and Eg4 on 09 and 13.05.
<b>Shelduck</b>	Nine were at Martinsthorpe on 27.05 with pairs at FHP and LFP. The FHP pair had four ducklings from 19.06.
<b>Mandarin Duck</b>	Regular at RWDam and Norm with a female and three young there on 13.06. May and June records of one or two from Wg Burrows, with two over Leigh on 14.05. A female was at FHP on 21 and 24.06.
<b>Garganey</b>	A male was at RWEg on 09/10.06 with three there on 14.06.
<b>Gadwall</b>	A female and six ducklings were at FHP on 19.06.
<b>Shoveler</b>	A pair was at FHP throughout both months, with four on 19.06. A nest containing one egg was found at FHP on 10.06, but it was abandoned when sheep were put into the field.
<b>Red-crested Pochard</b>	Two were at RWEg on 01.05, with one on 25.05.
<b>Scaup</b>	A female was at RWSA on 02.05.
<b>Common Scoter</b>	A female was in RWNA on 05/06.06.
<b>Goosander</b>	An unseasonal female was at EBR on 02.06.
<b>Ruddy Duck</b>	The RWEg female was present to at least 15.05.
<b>Grey Partridge</b>	Between 13.05 and 12.06 pairs or singles were reported from RWEg, QF, Cott Airfield and Barrow.
<b>Spoonbill</b>	One flew over RWEg on 02.05.
<b>Little Egret</b>	One was at FHP on four dates between 26.05 and 24.06.
<b>Great White Egret</b>	One was at RWEg from 09.05 onwards, joined by a second from 22.06. What was probably the RW bird flew SW over Wg on 20.05.
<b>Little Grebe</b>	Bred at RWEg4 and at FHP (first breeding record).
<b>Great Crested Grebe</b>	One at LFP between 09-18.05 was the second record there.
<b>Marsh Harrier</b>	Singles were at RWEg from 02 to 30.05, with a regular bird throughout June. A female type flew east over Wg on 20.05.
<b>Sparrowhawk</b>	Noted at RW and FHP in May and frequent over Stam from mid-June when adults were hunting for prey for their young.
<b>Avocet</b>	Two or three were at RWEg to 23.05.
<b>Oystercatcher</b>	In May one was over Leigh on 02 and two at Martinsthorpe on 31. There were 32 at RW on 23.05. June records came from Lynd, Martinsthorpe and Banthorpe Gravel Pit (two on 24) and six at Martinsthorpe on 30. There were again 32 at RW on 13.06.

<b>Grey Plover</b>	Noted at RWEg from 01.05 to 01.06, with five on the first date, three on 06.05 and two on 11.05.
<b>Ringed Plover</b>	Apart from two at EBR on 06.05, all records came from RWEg where there were small nos of breeders and a good passage of northern birds, with a max of 30 on 17.05, and 15 as late as 15.06.
<b>Little Ringed Plover</b>	There were three at RW on 23.05 and four on 13.06.
<b>Lapwing</b>	At RW there were 38 on 23.05 and 83 on 13.06, as passage birds began to arrive. Bred successfully at RW.
<b>Whimbrel</b>	Up to four were at RWEg between 01.05 and 19.05. One called over Leigh on 07.05 and two were at LFP on 13.05.
<b>Curlew</b>	Present at Cott Airfield and Barrow breeding sites in May with birds also in song at Leigh on 17 and 30.06. One flew over Wg on 15.05 with two over Lynd on 18.05. Two flew over RWEg on 27.05 and one was at RWLynd on 16.06.
<b>Black-tailed Godwit</b>	Singles were at RW on 06 and 13.05. 18 on Eg4 on 24.06 may have been failed breeders or early returning birds.
<b>Bar-tailed Godwit</b>	There was an excellent passage with birds at RW between 01 and 18.05. Four were present on 06.05, with three between 06 and 09. One was at EBR on 06.05.
<b>Turnstone</b>	Noted at RW between 01 and 19.05, all singles except for two on the first date and five on the last.
<b>Knot</b>	One in breeding plumage was at RWEg between 06 and 09.05, and there were two there on 27.06.
<b>Ruff</b>	There were four in RWSA on 06.05, and a single at Eg between 09 and 18.05.
<b>Curlew Sandpiper</b>	At RWEg there was one on 01.05 and two on 06.05.
<b>Temminck's Stint</b>	One was at RWEg on 06.05.
<b>Sanderling</b>	Main passage at RWEg was between 01 and 19.05, with a max of 21 on 17.05. One there on 20.06 was the latest spring bird ever recorded in the county.
<b>Dunlin</b>	Present at RWEg throughout May and up to 09.06, with peak counts of 40 on 01.05, 28 on 03.05, and 26 on 17.05. Four were at EBR on 05.05.
<b>Little Stint</b>	A summer plumaged bird was at RWEg on 23.05, with two there on 26 and 29.05.
<b>Common Sandpiper</b>	Up to three were at RW between 03 and 26.05. Singles were at EBR on 05.05, LFP on 07.05 and FHP on 14.05. Two were back at RWEg on 24.06.
<b>Green Sandpiper</b>	One was at RWEg on 16.06.
<b>Greenshank</b>	Three were at EBR on 05.05. On 11.05 one flew over BCF and one was at RW with another there on 26.05. There were six at RW on 23.05 and five there on 13.06. Bred on the Eg lagoons.
<b>Woodcock</b>	A roding bird was in BW on 06 and 13.05. Are others performing in other Rutland woods?
<b>Little Tern</b>	There were two at RWEg on 01.05 and one on 10.06. One was at EBR on 29/30.06.
<b>Black Tern</b>	Passage at RW was between 01.05 and 24.05, with 42 on the first date and then single figure counts. At EBR there were three on 01.05 and two on 22.05.
<b>White-winged Black Tern</b>	One in breeding plumage was at RW on 26.05 but it did not stay long.
<b>Common Tern</b>	There were 67 at RW on 23.05 and 88 on 13.06. At EBR there were 22 on 14.05 and 16 on 11.06. Birds were breeding at both sites. Two passed south at FHP on 19.06.
<b>Arctic Tern</b>	On 01.05 there were 16 at RWEg and three at EBR. A first-summer bird was an unusual record at RW between 28.05 and 13.06.
<b>Little Gull</b>	Noted at RW between 06 and 12.05 with four on the first date, two on 07 and three on 09.
<b>Mediterranean Gull</b>	Two adults were at RWEg on 20.06 with a single on 30.06.
<b>Yellow-legged Gull</b>	At RW there was one on 13.06 and six on 23.06.
<b>Stock Dove</b>	Birds used nestboxes at Essendine, RWEg and BCF.

	<b>Cuckoo</b>	During May singing birds were at RWEg, Barrow, MM, Wg, Leigh, Man, Martinsthorpe, CPW, Ext Park, PGW and PC. In June birds were still in song at Leigh (01), Lynd (05) and Martinsthorpe (20).
	<b>Barn Owl</b>	Hunting birds were seen at Lynd Top, along Oak bypass and LFP. On 13.06, 16 young were ringed in five nestboxes across the county – a better year. RW had several occupied nestboxes.
	<b>Little Owl</b>	Birds were regular at Emp and Braun and it was occasionally heard at Barrow in both months.
	<b>Tawny Owl</b>	Calling birds were noted in BW, TunnW, FHP and Greet GC.
	<b>Short-eared Owl</b>	One was at RWEg on 01.05.
	<b>Swift</b>	First noted over Stam on 10.05 with only single figure counts there during both months. Screaming parties were frequent at Emp. 22 flew SW at Martinsthorpe on 25.06.
	<b>Hoopoe</b>	The bird of the month for some, a 'very obliging' bird was present at Hamb between 06-08.05.
	<b>Kingfisher</b>	Noted along the R.Welland at Tin Pumping Station and Tin in May, and Banthorpe GP on 10.06.
	<b>Kestrel</b>	Bred at RWLynd and Ext Park, where three young were ringed on 13.06. Hunting birds were well distributed with records from EBR, FHP, Emp, Ryll Heath and GHW.
	<b>Hobby</b>	Up to three were at RW between 01 and 15.05. One was at FHP on 13/14.05, one at RWEg on 05.06, and one over Lynd on 18.06.
	<b>Green Woodpecker</b>	Breeding records came from QF, WestW, Barrow and Greet GC. Also noted at KQ, anting on a Wg lawn and at FHP.
<b>Great Spotted Woodpecker</b>		Regular in Ext Park woodlands. Bred at QF and also noted at Wg, Mounts Lodge and Greet village.
	<b>Jay</b>	A family party was at Greet GC in May. Regularly heard at Ext and at WardW.
	<b>Goldcrest</b>	16 were singing around Wg on 24.05.
	<b>Willow Tit</b>	Noted in both months at LFP and in the Wg and WFL area. Three were at BCF on 18.06.
	<b>Marsh Tit</b>	Noted at WestW, CottW (family party), WardW and Greet GC.
	<b>Long-tailed Tit</b>	A flock of 25 was at Martinsthorpe on 27.05.
	<b>Willow Warbler</b>	34 sang in the Leigh area on 02.05.
	<b>Garden Warbler</b>	Singing birds were reported from QF, KQ, CPW (three on 09.05), Banthorpe GP, FHP, BCF, and WestW.
	<b>Whitethroat</b>	Well reported across the county. There were 11 territories on the BCF CBC Plot and 21 were singing around Wg on 24.05.
	<b>Lesser Whitethroat</b>	Eight were in song around Leigh on 02.05. Singing birds were also noted at QF, KQ, Pick and RWLynd.
	<b>Grasshopper Warbler</b>	One was singing at RWEg on 04.05 and 27.06, and one at Leigh on 07.05.
	<b>Sedge Warbler</b>	Away from RW, one or two sang at LFP from 02.05 to 03.06, and one sang at Martinsthorpe on 27.05.
	<b>Reed Warbler</b>	Singing birds were at Leigh on 01.05 and LFP from 09.05 to 03.06. On 10.06, singles sang at Wg Burrows and Banthorpe GP.
	<b>Wren</b>	45 were in song around Wg on 30.05.
	<b>Blackbird</b>	24 sang around Wg on 26.05 and 18 on 15.06.
	<b>Song Thrush</b>	This species has been more obvious this year, perhaps due to a mild winter and abundant slugs and snails. There were three territories at BCF (one or two is more usual). 12 sang around Wg on 15.06 and five sang around the south side of Eg reserve on 27.06.
	<b>Mistle Thrush</b>	Bred at Greet GC. 11 flew NW over Leigh on 03.06.
	<b>Spotted Flycatcher</b>	First reported from Leigh on 09.05 and Berrybutts Spinney on 13.05. One or two were subsequently noted at Wg (but four on 26.05), WFL, Ext Park, BCF, RWEg (bred), Upp (bred), Wg (two nests), TunnW, Lynd, LFP, Prest and Martinsthorpe.

<b>Nightingale</b>	Up to 3 sang at RWEg from 01.05 into early June. Singles sang at two other woodland sites with the last report on 18.05, when 2 birds were calling at one site.
<b>Stonechat</b>	A pair was still present at RWTTW on 13.05.
<b>Whinchat</b>	The only spring bird was at EBR on 06.05. Two there on 27.06 were probably returning migrants.
<b>Wheatear</b>	Singles were at RWEg on 01.05 and Cott Airfield on 13.05.
<b>Yellow Wagtail</b>	Noted between 11.05 and 21.05 at RWDam, Cott Airfield (four on 13.05), near Stoke Dry, Prest and Cow Close Farm, Burl. For the first year, none have been found in Ext Park.
<b>Grey Wagtail</b>	Bred at FHP in May. A pair were at Tin Pumping Station on 10.05, and 4 on 13.05.
<b>White Wagtail</b>	Two were at RWDam on 10.05.
<b>Tree Pipit</b>	One called over Leigh on 02.05.
<b>Meadow Pipit</b>	Displaying birds in May were at Cott and Luff Airfields and GHW but no numbers were quoted.
<b>Tree Sparrow</b>	One fed at feeders in Barrow throughout June and there were six at Lynd Centre feeders on 28.06.
<b>Siskin</b>	Singles were over Leigh on 02.05 and RWEg on 03.05.
<b>Bullfinch</b>	A pair fed on Herb Robert seed in a Wg garden in June. The male was killed when it flew into a window but a second male appeared the next day. Also noted at BCF and KQ.

### May/June Wildfowl counts

	RW		EBR		FHP & Exton Park		Banthorpe Gravel Pit	
	23.05	13.06	14.05	11.06	14.05	10.06	14.05	10.06
Mute Swan	294	370	50	59	7	10	1	2
Greylag Goose	308	818	25	158	19	5	12	5
Canada Goose	167	912	2	166	4			
Egyptian Goose	43	52						
Shelduck	23	12	4		2	3		
Mandarin Duck	1	2						
Wigeon			2					
Gadwall	109	313	13	8	38	43		
Teal		4						
Mallard	320	368	66	65	63	81	3	2
Shoveler	2	14		1	2	2		
Pochard		17						
Tufted Duck	237	292	21	6	23	35		
Cormorant	176	130	5	14		2		
Little Egret	12	21	6	2		1		
Grey Heron	11	17	6					
Little Grebe	6	8					1	
Great Crested Grebe	132	146	66	34				
Water Rail	6	12						
Moorhen	56	51			6	8		
Coot	329	508	15	43	40	59		2
Kingfisher								1



**April/June 2017**

There was no report in May *Fieldfare* because I was on holiday, so I will try and catch up now.

Back in April when there were many **Primroses**, **Cowslips** and above all **Bluebells**, **Cuckoo Flower**, **Lords and Ladies**, **Bugle** and **Danish Scurvy Grass** all made their appearance, whilst **Snowdrops** were still in flower at Great Casterton, on Verge 7. **Goldilocks Buttercup**, which isn't very common, was seen at Yew Tree Avenue Clipsham and also on Verge 7. Both **Russian** and **Common Comfrey** were reported by the beginning of May. Russian Comfrey has only been recorded four times in the last 16 years, Common Comfrey many more times, though my edition of Rose suggests that the former is more common (Russian is often purple or deep red, Common is white). **Meadow Cranesbill** was producing its light blue colours in late May, sharing the time with the white of **Ox-eye Daisy**.



Bee Orchid, Peter Scott

May also saw the blooming of orchids. The first record was of **Southern Marsh Orchid** at Ketton Quarry on the 18th, then **Common Spotted Orchid** by the 25th as well as **Common Twayblade**. **Bee Orchids** appeared there by the 6th June. At Merry's Meadow there were 'thousands' of **Green-winged Orchids** on the 21st May. **Pyramidal Orchids** appeared by mid June. **Yellow Birds Nest** was also present at Ketton Quarry during May. It has been reported in eight of the last sixteen years.

At Fort Henry Ponds, **Clustered Bellflower** was found, the first time for at least three years. **Nettle-leaved Bellflower** was reported from Great Casterton, Verge 7. Also on Verge 7 was **Snow-in-Summer**, *Cerastium tomentosum*, which Rose says is a garden escape having been imported from Italy and Sicily.

As spring has turned to summer the hedgerows and verges have shown the white of **Blackthorn**, then of **May blossom**, followed by that of the various members of the carrot family (*Apiaceae*), **Cow Parsley**, locally keck, then **Hogweed** with some specimens of **Hemlock** and **Wild Carrot** with its bird's nest fruiting head. **Yarrow**, which is a member of the daisy family, is also in bloom. There are other members of the carrot family to be found too, **Upright Hedge Parsley**, **Pignut**, **Ground Elder** and **Sanicle** to pick out just a few.

The wildflower meadow, the Sharples Meadow, by Lagoon 4 on the Egleton Reserve, is full of Wild Carrot but there are a number of other plants too. It looks quite spectacular this year; last year it didn't do too well.

*This report lists a few of the plants that have been recorded, but, as in previous years, only by the faithful few recorders; A & L Biddle, T Caldicott, R Edwards, M & G Griffin, M Grimes, N Harris, R Lemmon, J Mallett, T Mitcham, D Needham, J S & J Rodgers, and P Rudkin. Many thanks to them all.*



Yellow Birds Nest,  
Dave Needham

# BUTTERFLIES

**RECORDER Richard Brown**

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## May/June 2017

Our count of recorded species is now up to 28 for the year to date, compared to 30 for the whole of 2016.

**RNHS sightings to the end of June** First record date for each species, and subsequent months in which recorded.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
1 Small Tortoiseshell		3rd	X	X	X	X
2 Brimstone		3rd	X	X	X	X
3 Red Admiral		4th	X		X	X
4 Peacock		7th	X	X	X	X
5 Comma			9th		X	X
6 Orange Tip				6th	X	
7 Holly Blue				6th	X	
8 Green-Veined White				6th	X	
9 Speckled Wood				6th	X	X
10 Small White				8th		X
11 Green Hairstreak				22nd	X	
12 Dingy Skipper					1st	
13 Small Heath					5th	X
14 Grizzled Skipper					11th	
15 Common Blue					22nd	X
16 Brown Argus					22nd	
17 Small Copper					22nd	
18 Painted Lady					23rd	X
19 Large Skipper					31st	X
20 Meadow Brown						10th
21 Ringlet						14th
22 Silver Washed Fritillary						15th
23 Dark Green Fritillary						15th
24 Small Skipper						15th
25 Marbled White						15th
26 Essex Skipper						20th
27 Large White						26th
28 Gatekeeper						30th

## Noteworthy species

### 'His Majesty'



A single **Purple Emperor** has been seen on two separate mornings at Clipsham, about 300 metres from the Yew Tree Walk. The photograph was kindly provided by Judy Wilmott and is reproduced (small) on the left and larger on page 2. This is only the third site record from Rutland since 1905! There was a singleton photographed in Egleton car park in 2014, and then other singletons, both male and female, in Stretton Wood in July 2016 (not reported to RNHS, but an exceptionally reputable observer). It cannot be by chance that Stretton Wood is only a short flight from Clipsham.

### Dark Green Fritillary

Is having a remarkable year at Ketton, with more than 25 individuals seen on one visit.

### Painted lady

Few records, with maximum two butterflies at any one time – so not much of an invasion so far this year.

### Chalkhill Blue

No records from Bloody Oaks so far this year.

Records received from J W Ansley, J & D Ball, P Bennett, A & L Biddle, R Brown, C Butterfield, T Caldicott, M Grimes, A Lawrence, R Lemmon, T Mitcham, D Needham, J Pearce, J S & J Rogers, N Webb and L Worrall.

## MOTHS

### RECORDER Paul Bennett

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### May/June 2017



Leopard Moth on a fencepost at the rear of Lyndon Visitor Centre.  
Photo, Paul Bennett

After a disappointing start to the year, a sudden change in atmospheric conditions from late May onwards produced many good opportunities for trapping. No invasive swarms have been reported in Rutland but many moths appear to have been seen in larger quantities than recent years and for longer periods than normal. Ermine moths have been regularly occurring in the Lyndon trap and my own garden trap in Stamford. Nine **White Ermines** were caught at Lyndon on 27th May, while an infestation of Ermine caterpillars were seen on a hedgerow near Little Casterton. **Small Magpie** is a micro-moth that has also been seen more consistently than normal, with all these moths also occurring in the Rothamsted trap set out near the Egleton Centre. These records form a much different picture from last year and can probably be put down to the much warmer weather that we have been experiencing throughout June. 2016 remained cool until mid-July and therefore moths were emerging later and having a much shorter flight season; as an example of this the first (of several) hawkmoths recorded from my garden this year was in the middle of May whereas the first 2016 record was over a month later.

The three headline moths for the reporting period were **Currant Clearwing**, **Cream-bordered Green Pea** and **Dark Spectacle**. The first two of these are classified as Nationally Scarce B species, meaning that they have been recorded from only 31-100 10 km squares in Britain since 1980. The Clearwing was lured by pheromones at a Ryhall allotment site and could be the first Rutland record since Victorian County History days, the Green Pea occurred at Lyndon on 18th June and was the first for the site, whereas the Dark Spectacle was a Lyndon record on 25th June and is only rarely recorded in this area of the country.

Lyndon has been trapped on four occasions and following the purchase of our new Mercury Vapour (MV) trap we have moved from a position of moth scarcity to one of abundance! On 27th May, 99 moths of 32 species were identified with 165 moths (63 species) on a stifflingly humid night on the 18th June. What was also noticeable was the freshly emerged condition of many of these species, which always makes identification a lot easier! In addition to the moths referred to above there have been other site firsts or rarer records including **Bordered Sallow**, **Blue-bordered Carpet**, **Engrailed** and **Short-cloaked Moth**. There was a 'green' theme on the 18th with 20 **Green Oak Tortrix** moths, **Common Emerald**, **Light Emerald**, **Green Pug**, **Green Carpet** and **Burnished Brass**. **Prominents** caught were one each of **Pebble**, **Swallow** and **Coxcomb** while the **Hawkmoth** maxima were 3 **Poplar**, 2 **Elephant** and 1 **Privet**. I would like to thank the committee for agreeing to the purchase of the trap. Also, we now have a small display stand about moths set up at the Lyndon Visitor Centre, which will get updated as the year goes on.

Regarding daytime moths, the more interesting records were a pair of **Pale Tussocks** probably mating on the gate of an Oakham garden, while **Hummingbird Hawkmoths** were observed at Seaton, Manton and Uppingham, with the latter site enjoying regular visits over a 3-week period to feed on the nectar sources. A Poplar Hawkmoth was in an Edith Weston garden, while another was caught in the Egleton Rothamsted trap. A **Brimstone** moth was seen at Ketton Quarry. The only **Silver Y** record was at Clipsham Quarry.

Thanks to the following for their records: P Bennett, A & L Biddle, T Caldicott, R Edwards, M Grimes, Dr C R Jones, A Russell, C & J Tring.

## PLANT GALLS

### RECORDER Roy Lemmon

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#### May 2017

There have been reports on the BPGS email grapevine that some members have found huge numbers of Oak Apple galls in their localities. I have had only one such report for Rutland, which involved an Oak at the entrance to the Volunteer Centre, Rutland Water, on the 25th. Numbers were certainly more than one would normally find and appeared to be confined to one tree.

The Society's visit to Merry's Meadow on the 21st produced just 3 galls, Lagoon 2 RW gave a dozen on the 25th, and Bloody Oaks Quarry on the 28th another 6.

#### June 2017

On the 1st there was a report from Ketton Quarry which included, amongst some 8 galls, an instance of 'choke' on grass. This turns up once or twice a year and appears as a whitish collar on the grass stem. It is caused by a fungus and prevents the grass from flowering.

There was an interesting report from Ryhall Heath on the 3rd of a gall on Catsear, which is caused by a gall wasp and presents as considerable lumps and bumps on the stem. This was a first for our records and then it also turned up at the Society's visit to Seaton Meadows on the 30th. Several other new discoveries have appeared this month. Pickworth Great Wood had 3 on the 15th, Yew Tree Avenue Clipsham had another 3 on the 29th, and Clipsham Park Wood gave a new psyllid gall on Angelica on the same day.

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

## ORTHOPTERA

### RECORDER Phil Rudkin

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#### May/June 2017

First of all, I am indebted to my regular reporter Tim Caldicott for the only records received during this period. I have had no other sightings, and none from myself. So, a very big thanks to Tim for his input for May and June 2017.

It is interesting to note that only nymphs were recorded (no adults noted). Is this a consequence of the poor conditions in May, or just the lack of observers? David Needham and I were fully involved during the May/June period, studying a Green Woodpecker nest site. Then I was on holiday in France during the last week of June (this is my excuse)! However, at the time of writing (4 July), the weather has been good, and hotter and sunny conditions forecast. So, hopefully the season will reveal lots of Orthoptera species.

I would like to draw members' attention to the Society's website. The 2016 Annual Report is now fully published, and those interested in the Orthoptera can view the Report. This contains the wonderful coloured distribution maps for each species. Our editor, Paul Willoughby-Ellis, and Richard Brown have collaborated, and spent much time on the production of the maps, many thanks gentlemen!

To locate the Annual Report 2016: Google: Rutland Natural History Society, select: Home Page. Select: News and Reports, and a pop-up list appears down the righthand side, select: Annual Report Archive (second from bottom), and you can read the Orthoptera Report for 2016, 16 pages, enjoy the contents!

#### Bush Crickets

#### **Roesel's Bush Cricket**, *Metriopectera roeselii*

One nymph, by footpath near hedge, Lyndon village, 19 June, SK902040. One nymph, below Fox covert, Martinsthorpe, 20th June, SK868041. Two nymphs, by the track, Martinsthorpe, 30 June, SK857046. (See front cover)

### **Speckled Bush Cricket, *Leptophyes punctatissima***

Two tiny nymphs on nettles, Crown Well bridge, by the river Chater, Wing, 16 May. One nymph, next to the pond, west side of the Lodge, Leighfield Fishponds, 9 June.

### **Grasshoppers**

#### **Meadow Grasshopper, *Chorthippus parallelus***

One nymph, in grass, on Holygate Road, Leighfield, 26 June, SK811031.

#### **Lesser Marsh Grasshopper, *Chorthippus albomarginatus***

Two tiny nymphs, on gravel path, near pond, west side of the Lodge, Leighfield Fishponds, 14 May. Four tiny nymphs, observed in same spot, 25 May. Maximum of 8 nymphs, regularly observed, all in the month of June, at Leighfield Fishponds.

## **OTHER INSECTS AND INVERTEBRATES RECORDER Gill Chiverton**

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### **March to June, 2017**

This report covers 2017 records received for March, April, May and June.

### **Odonata DAMSELFLIES**

#### **Banded demoiselle**

*Calopteryx splendens*

**May** One male noted at Leighfield Fishponds

#### **Emerald damselfly**

*Lestes sponsa*

**June** One seen Leighfield Fishponds

#### **White-legged damselfly**

*Platycnemis pennipes*

**June** Five near Chater, Lyndon. One noted Leighfield Fishponds

#### **Azure damselfly**

*Coenagrion puella*

**May** <100 noted around ponds at Leighfield Fishponds

### **DRAGONFLIES**

#### **Emperor dragonfly**

*Anax imperator*

**June** One patrolling hedgerow near Lyndon

#### **Four-spotted chaser**

*Libellula quadrimaculata*

**June** One resting at Leighfield Fishponds

#### **Broad-bodied chaser**

*Libellula depressa*

**June** One female resting at Leighfield Fishponds

#### **Black-tailed skimmer**

*Orthetrum cancellatum*

**June** One male resting at Leighfield Fishponds

#### **Ruddy darter**

*Sympetrum sanguineum*

**June** One at Leighfield Fishponds and one on gravel track at Martinsthorpe

### **Hemiptera BUGS**

#### **Rhopalid bug**

*Corizus hyoscyami*

**June** Seven noted near the Chater at Lyndon. At a later date three noted in the same area.

#### **Red/black froghopper**

*Cercopsis vulnerata*

**May** One adult seen at Merry's Meadow

**June** One adult seen at Ketton Quarry

### **Coleoptera BEETLES**

#### **Metallic wood-boring beetle**

*Agrilus cyanescens*

**June** One resting on leaf at Leighfield

<b>Adonis ladybird</b> <i>Hippodamia variegata</i>	<b>June</b> One on gravel at Martinsthorpe
<b>7-spot ladybird</b> <i>Coccinella septempunctata</i>	<b>March</b> One active on Verge 5
<b>Swollen-thighed beetle</b> <i>Oedema nobilis</i>	<b>June</b> Small numbers (m/f) observed on umbellifers on Verge 8
<b>Black-and-yellow longhorn</b> <i>Rutpela maculata</i>	<b>June</b> One on rosa canina on Verge 5
<b>Scarce fungus weevil</b> <i>Platyrhinus resinosus</i>	<b>May</b> One noted at Martinsthorpe
<b>Diptera TRUE FLIES</b>	
<b>St. Mark's fly</b> <i>Bibio marci</i>	<b>May</b> Good numbers noted on RNHS visit to Verge 9
<b>Hoverfly</b> <i>Anasimyia contracta</i>	<b>May</b> One on reeds near ponds at Leighfield Fishponds
<b>Hoverfly</b> <i>Anasimyia lineata</i>	<b>June</b> One on overgrown pond near Chater at Lyndon
<b>Hoverfly</b> <i>Criorhina floccosa</i>	<b>May</b> One seen on edge of Fox Covert Wood near Martinsthorpe
<b>Hoverfly</b> <i>Helophilus hybridus</i>	<b>June</b> One near pond at Leighfield Fishponds
<b>Hoverfly</b> <i>Melangyna labiatarum</i>	<b>June</b> One noted at Leighfield
<b>Hoverfly</b> <i>Platycheirus rosarum</i>	<b>June</b> One noted on reeds at water's edge at Leighfield Fishponds
<b>Hoverfly</b> <i>Volucella inflata</i>	<b>June</b> One noted at Leighfield
<b>Hoverfly</b> <i>Xylota sylvarum</i>	<b>June</b> Two seen together at Leighfield
<b>Hymenoptera BEES, WASPS, ANTS and related insects</b>	
<b>Tree Bumble Bee</b> <i>Bombus hypnorum</i>	<b>May</b> Single insects noted in Manton and twice at Martinsthorpe <b>June</b> Two nests noted in Oakham – one in a nestbox at the allotments and one in a garden in a garden composter. They were also noted all month in a Manton garden. Single insect was seen at Lyndon and two recorded at Leighfield
<b>Red-tailed Bumble Bee</b> <i>Bombus lapidarius</i>	<b>March</b> One female seen at Bloody Oaks Quarry – perhaps searching for a nest site <b>April</b> One female seen nectaring in Burley Wood <b>June</b> Many workers noted at Seaton Meadows
<b>Buff-tailed Bumble Bee</b> <i>Bombus terrestris</i>	<b>April</b> One female seen nectaring at Quarry Farm
<b>Common Carder Bee</b> <i>Bombus pascuorum</i>	<b>May</b> One worker noted at Barnsdale Lodge Wood, one worker noted at Merry's Meadow and one Worker noted at Bloody Oaks Quarry

## OTHER ARTHROPODS

### Gastropoda SLUGS

<b>Large Black Slug</b> <i>Arion ater ater</i>	<b>May</b> One specimen 6-7 cm long noted at Merry's Meadow <b>June</b> One small slug noted at RWLyndon
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### Gastropoda SNAILS

<b>Pfeiffer's amber snail</b> <i>Oxyloma elegans</i>	<b>June</b> Several noted near waters edge RWLyndon at Swan Hide
<b>Slippery moss snail</b> <i>Cochlicopa lubrica</i>	<b>March</b> One recorded in woodland at Ketton Quarry
<b>Brown-lipped snail</b> <i>Cepaea nemoralis</i>	<b>April</b> Several fresh, empty shells noted Burley Wood <b>June</b> Two recent, empty shells noted Clipsham Park Wood
<b>Kentish snail</b>	<b>April</b> Two recorded at Burley Wood

*Monacha cantiana*

**May** Many recorded on Verge 9, a few noted on Verge 5. Also noted at Merry's Meadow and several seen RW Lagoon 2

**White-lipped snail**  
*Cepaea hortensis*

**April** Recorded at Bloody Oaks Quarry

**June** One large example seen at Pickworth

**Rounded snail**  
*Discus rotundatus*

**March** One live specimen found under log, in contact with soil, noted at Barnsdale Wood

**April** Noted at Bloody Oaks Quarry

**Strawberry snail**  
*Trochulus striolatus*

**April** Noted at Bloody Oaks Quarry

**Hairy snail** *Trochulus hispida*

**March** One noted under log at Ketton Quarry

*Thank you to all the people who submitted records: T Caldicott, G Chiverton, M Grimes, P Langston, S Leach, R Lemmon, D Needham, P Rudkin*

## GLOW-WORMS

**RECORDER** Linda Worrall

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**June/11th July 2017**

Comparing numbers of adult glow-worms over several years is informative but could be misleading, since females may be mated quite quickly on their first night of glowing, and unless a regular and constant watch is kept, not usually possible, many might be missed. This year's glows from adult females derive from larvae hatched two years earlier, and factors such as numbers of snails for larvae to eat, weather conditions and habitat change over that time must have an effect on time of pupation and numbers surviving for us to see now – and this year has had noticeable weather swings from cool spring to suddenly hot summer. But the delight of finding them does not go away.

**Barrowden, Verge 3, Luffenham Road SK 948005**

**11.6:** Nil. Vegetation rather high. Windy.

**16.6: West verge:** 1 by edge of road, usual place 10 m up from village sign on opposite verge. Unusually, fields behind both west and east verges have recently-planted (?) sugar beet. No snails seen.

Other visits have been made to 10.7 but no further sightings.

**Barrowden, Verge 17, Back Road SK 945003**

**11.6: North verge:** 4 spaced in a short group – 1 near field entrance, 1 at front of verge, 2 others nearer hedge. Windy, quite high vegetation. Unusually, field has recently-planted (?) sugar beet. In adjoining field to west, where no glows are usually found, there is the more usual rape. The farmer this year has, for the first time I believe, ploughed and planted half the width of Stone Close, a limestone field edge with wildflowers running north to the A47, and this valuable area of glow-worm habitat, professionally surveyed a decade ago, has been interfered with. No snails seen.

**15.6:** 1 in field entrance and 2 nearer Drift Close.

**20.6:** 1 in an unusual place 3 m west of adjacent field entrances, in short grass at front of narrow verge, opposite house on south verge which had a glow on 13.6.

1 within right hand side of field entrance in short grass.

4 between field entrance and Drift Close, including one glowing brightly under hedge.

**23.6:** Midsummer Eve's Glow-worm hunt with 5 villagers. 1 in the unusual place as on 20.6 and 1 glowing brightly under hedge. A villager whose father had told him there used to be a great many in Barrowden was very pleased to find just two. He also showed us a piece of equipment fallen from a bike near his house, glowing with several green LEDs. From a distance it looked like a large new colony!

**24.6:** Midsummer Night's Glow-worm hunt with a family visiting the village. The

father was deemed a hero by his two young boys when he saw 1 under the hedge, then by themselves they found 1 in the unusual place as on 20.6. I gave them my torch to have a good look and they said 'it's got a *body* and its *tail's* alright!' which was enough to make my own midsummer dream come true. A group of villagers walking home joined us and said they'd seen up to 6 earlier in the month, and as I left the Luffenham Road worrying what had happened to that colony, a car drew up and I was asked if there were any that night in Back Road, and they shot off to go and see them.

**26.6:** 1 in field entrance, 1 under hedge as before.

**28.6:** 1 under hedge as before.

**2.7:** 1 under hedge as before.

**13.6: South verge:** 1 on wide lightly mown grass by gable end of first house near others, built over a decade ago, lower than road, to try to avoid compromising the known glow-worm site. One was found in same place in 2015. House owner is a regular glow-worm spotter and immediately ceased any mowing.

1 just east of same house in tall grass near small field gate and tree at back of verge.

**16.6:** 1 near small field gate; glow by gable end not seen.

**20.6:** 1 opposite field entrance on north verge, 1 m in from road.

**28.6:** 1 in front of house gable, similar to 13.6.

#### **Ketton Quarry Reserve cSK 978 053**

**7.7:** Jenny Harris led a Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust wild walk. Areas searched were next to the car park, in the geology trail and by the entrance to the Valley. 2 glows were found in open vegetation in Car Park Close and a further 2 in the geology trail, one of which was on a south-east facing slope, and could be seen from the handgate on the opposite side, roughly 30–40 m away. A few days earlier 1 had been seen roughly in that area, after the spotters had been all the way up the Valley and found none there. These are small numbers compared with last year, when on 9.7.16, in similar areas, 13 were seen. Personally, I remember going up and down the Valley year after year and usually seeing some at the bottom, but none at the top end at all, then suddenly, for a few years they could be relied upon to be further up, then they disappeared again.

#### **Outside the County**

##### **Northamptonshire: Fineshade Woods cSP 982 983**

Following much work to help preserve the Woods for wildlife and people, and with the proposed holiday development currently on hold, the Friends of Fineshade are certainly confirming that glow-worms are well spread through the woods. Barrie Galpin hopes to prospect further paths not often walked after dark, and reports:

**9.6:** On an earlier date than usual, 7 glows seen while spotter was recording roding woodcock, including two areas of the Woods not usually visited.

**23.6:** Singles in two places near Top Lodge; eastward towards King's Cliffe, 2 on trackside and 1 beside a bridleway; and to the north, a further 6 on a woodland riding. A very late night.

##### **Cambridgeshire: Barnack Hills and Holes National Nature Reserve cTF 075 046**

**7.7:** The Friends of Barnack Hills and Holes website's glow-worm section reports that 13 glows were found by 7 people on their Glow-worm Walk, plus a male, and also 3 glows on the roadside on the way home. It is noted: 'There are still a few more weeks when a walk on the reserve on a warm evening after dark should be rewarded with one or more sightings of green LED-like lights.' The eight RNHS members who systematically walked the site in 1991 and found over 400 will not have forgotten that experience and I am grateful to the former Warden, Chris Gardiner, for kindly telling me the Glow-worm Walk numbers from then onward.

*Thanks for reports from B Galpin, C Gardiner, J Harris, R & V Fraser, Barrowden villagers, L Worrall.*



## And from France:

**John Rodgers**, Botany Recorder

### **Vers Luisant or glow-worm** *Lampyris noctiluca*

One evening in our house in the South of France I turned off the light in the sitting room and saw a bright spot of light on the side of the front door. At first I thought it a reflection but then realised that there were no other lights on. I examined the spot with the light of a torch and found a pale brown, flesh coloured thing about 2 cm long, emitting a florescent light from its abdomen; a glow-worm in the house. It obviously wasn't going to attract a male from that position so we picked it up and put it outside on the garden and then thought to look around to see if there were others. In a very short radius we found four more; another in the garden, one just outside the garden on the road, one in a neighbour's verge and one in the passageway between us and another neighbour. Quite unexpected but quite a thrill. We had seen glow-worms several years ago but more or less in the same places, outside, but not in the recent past.

'Our' glow-worm was still glowing in the garden the next night but the others seemed to have gone, or been satisfied. After that ours vanished too.

## MAMMALS

### **RECORDER** Linda Biddle

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### May/June 2017

Three **Otters** were observed in mid-May, swimming together close to the shoreline, heading westward from Teal Hide at RW. Almost certainly these were a mother and two youngsters, showing that we have another successful breeding of otters, a second to the three young seen at Ketton earlier this year. Other records are from signs of otter activity on mink rafts on our regular patrols at RW.

**Water Vole** activity is also indicated in many parts of the reserve, droppings have appeared on the mink rafts. Signs of the presence of water voles were found in Ketton earlier in the year, so 10 rafts have been set up on the river there, close to Ann Tomlinson's garden, to see if we can confirm their presence. We will keep you informed of any developments.

A **Badger** was seen crossing the road between Barrow and Cottesmore in May. The regular appearances of badgers on the trailcam in Marian Markham's garden in Langham have stopped – the badgers will probably have moved out into the countryside for the summer. Earlier in the year badgers made a huge sett under the boundary of Clive and Elaine Jones' garden in Uppingham, and now after the dry weather this has caused the collapse of the perimeter fence. In the same garden in May, a mystery surrounded 5 very small animals found dead above ground having been dug out by a predator in Clive's lettuce patch. After much discussion over possibly being young stoats or weasels, they were identified as baby **Rabbits** (reminds me of Mr McGregor!) They were very young and wouldn't have survived above ground after being dug out, possibly by a fox. They were not removed, but left where they were, and had disappeared by the following day – the predator obviously had returned to collect them. Other rabbits are recorded from Greetham Valley Golf Club, and Lyndon Reserve.

There have been no reports of stoats this month, but two **Weasels** were seen, the first near Pickworth crossed a farm track, and the second near the road S of Wing fishing lakes.

A **Fox** crossed the road in front of our car as we approached S Luffenham from Barrowden early in May, and in the same month others were seen at Wing and in Hambleton Wood. In June a fox was seen close to Christian's Lodge between Gt Casterton and Pickworth. At Langham the trailcam recorded a fox present nearly every night in May, and less frequently in June, though sometimes appearing twice nightly, once carrying a blackbird, and again accompanying a hedgehog on a visit to the garden. **Hedgehogs** too were extremely regular characters in the on-camera performances, often more than one, 4 seen on May 3rd and 9th. Between 10th and 19th at least 2 were recorded, but from 10th until 22nd June only a single animal, and then 2 adults seen feeding together for what remained of the month. A single

hedgehog is continuing to appear in the Willows garden in Barrow.

In Whissendine, occasionally 5 adults were observed feeding at one time, and earlier two boars had been seen competing for one female. In the same garden at least two females were seen during May and June, and one juvenile. At Barrowden the hedgehogs, 2 females and one larger male rescued in the winter, were brought back, marked blue beneath, and released on 16th June. On June 23rd one of these animals was observed, the blue colour noted. On 30th June In the same garden, near the release site, the same observer noted 1 adult with baby, 1 juvenile, 1 small one, and 1 huge, and another which slept all day in an open hutch. The blue of the released animals was not visible, but they may have been among the hogs seen. The presence of hedgehogs in Barrowden looks to be secure, particularly when villagers are so devoted to their welfare! Whissendine and Langham also seems to be ensuring that they do not disappear from our villages.

There is no danger of **Grey Squirrels** disappearing, at least for the foreseeable future. One was seen near Woodhead Wood on the Pickworth Road, and another report came from Greetham Valley Golf Club. They were also recorded on the camera at Langham.

**Brown Hares** are recorded from Pickworth, up to 5 seen at once during May, from RWNR on 3 occasions, Barrow and Cottesmore, and from Greetham Valley. Two **Bank Voles** were found under a reptile shelter at RWNR Pollards in early May, and a **Fieldmouse** was seen at Langham on 5 nights. A dead **Pygmy Shrew** and a dead **Mole** were found near Pickworth in June, and another dead mole found in the Willows at Barrow.

At RWNR **Muntjac** are still very commonly seen and heard. They are also reported from Wing, Fort Henry, Uppingham, Langham and Ketton Quarry.

**Fallow deer** have caused some damage to greens at Greetham Valley Golf Club, where fortunately the management are sympathetic to wildlife. Behind the deer fence in Holywell Wood, two fallow bounded through the trees, and in Westland Wood, Exton, three were observed separately on one morning. The early birds who joined us on the dawn chorus in May were regarded long and hard by a surprised **Roe** buck who stepped out of the wood into the ride shortly after dawn. He was obviously shocked to find our little group sitting there, but after taking a good look he proceeded across the ride and disappeared into the undergrowth, and we had a wonderful moment face to face with a wild animal. A male roe with a fine pair of antlers was seen in Westland Wood, Exton, and in June early one morning a female roe stepped out of the hedgerow by Fosters Bridge in front of my car. Showing surprise, she hesitated before fortunately bounding back into the hedge and disappearing.

*Many thanks to all of you who submitted your reports: D & J Ball, A Biddle, T Caldicott, C H Gallimore, M Grimes, P Langston, M Markham, T Mitcham, A & J Pearce, C & E Jones, P J Rudkin, L Worrall.*

## BATS

### RECORDER Jenny Harris

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### May/June 2017

Mild weather early in the year had an effect on the bat breeding cycle, and early birth of baby bats was flagged up to bat carers by the Bat Conservation Trust. On 17 June, a juvenile bat was found in the Melton Mowbray area that was already flying, the earliest I have ever recorded and it is very likely that this was also the case in Rutland. In spite of the warm weather in May and June, however, the only bat records I received from members were from Charles Gallimore and myself in respect of roost counts in June for the National Bat Monitoring Project (NBMP) although not all results have yet been received. There was also information from Joelle Woolley about bat box checks in Barnsdale Wood, and a trapping session was held in Burley Wood for the National Nathusius' Pipistrelle Project (NNPP) on 25 May.

### **Daubenton's bat** *Myotis daubentoni*

A male Daubenton's bat was caught in a mist net in Burley Wood on 25 May. The net had been placed in compartment 25, close to the main ride up to 8-Riding Tree.

### **Whiskered bat** *Myotis mystacinus*

A single male bat was caught in the mist net at Burley Wood on 25 May.

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

Two males were caught in the mist net in Burley Wood on 25 May.

### **Common Pipistrelle** *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*

Common pipistrelles were often heard foraging in gardens 39, 41 and 43 on Woodland View, Oakham, although few feeding buzzes were heard. The most favoured habitat was in the garden of 43, over open lawn in the shelter of tall conifers. A few bats were heard in Burley Wood on 3 May, and one was caught in a mist net on 25 May. Two bats were found grounded during the period; both had been injured, probably by cats, and died.

### **Soprano Pipistrelle** *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*

At least one bat was occasionally heard foraging over 43 Woodland View and in Burley Wood on 3 May. They were the most numerous species caught during the trapping for NNPP in Burley Wood on 25 May. A new roost was found at Manton when a total of 11 bats were found in a kitchen complex over a four day period in June. These were all pregnant females. The largest influx was a group of seven found on 9 May, one of which only weighed 4.4 g and was taken for rehabilitation. When a care worker tried to release the bats that evening one of the remaining six did not fly off so was also taken for care. In all, four bats were rehabilitated from this colony over the next few days. During a bat box check in Barnsdale Wood on 7 May, all the bats found (approximately seven) were male soprano pipistrelles. One of these was the male with the broken finger found during the check in April, and once again he demonstrated that he had adapted to the injury by flying off to a nearby box after disturbance.

With maternity roosts at The Fox and Hounds, Exton, and Rutland Watersports, Whitwell, now no longer accessible to bats, only two roosts were counted for the NBMP in June; at Braunston and Egleton churches.

### **Nathusius' Pipistrelle** *Pipistrellus nathusii*

Five Nathusius' pipistrelles were caught in two harp traps at Burley Wood on 25 May. The harp traps had been set up in compartment 23 close to the deer hide, and compartment 18 about 200 m away from the hide. These bats were all males and were caught at around the normal emergence time, approximately 30 minutes after sunset; no further bats were caught later in the evening. As in previous trapping sessions, all the bats were ringed, weighed and measured. Fur clippings are no longer being taken, as the data from the stable hydrogen isotope analysis has not provided the information about the bats' origin that had been hoped.

### **Brown Long-eared bat** *Plecotus auritus*

Charles Gallimore reported seeing droppings under roost entrances at his Wing home, and he counted the bats in June. A probable maternity roost of brown long-eared bats was found in Lyddington on 14 May.

### **Barbastelle** *Barbastella barbastellus*

To our enormous surprise, the first bat to be caught in the mist net in compartment 25 at Burley on 25 May was a female barbastelle. We had heard the species in the wood on bat detectors in the past, but to find a female bat early in the breeding season amazed us all. The fact that she had been caught so soon after sunset also suggested a nearby (possibly maternity) roost. What a privilege it was to have such a lovely bat in the hand.

*My thanks for help with bat surveys and other records to: A & L Biddle, L & I Burger, C Gallimore, M Cook and members of the NNPP Survey Group, J Woolley.*

## RNHS Field Trips

Field trip reports are on the RNHS website, here is a selection of photographs from various field trips to whet your appetite.



Merry's Meadow



Merry's Meadow



Merry's Meadow



Wicken Fen, Four-spotted Chaser



Female Banded Demoiselle



Azure Damselflies mating



Beaumont Chase Farm and garden



Seaton Meadows

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