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URGENT NOTICE! Access to Burley Wood has changed!

We have been informed by Burley Wood staff that access to Burley Wood will in future be from **1st April** to **30th September** each year. Burley is required to cull its deer numbers and has thus **extended its shooting season**. Regrettably RNHS wasn't informed about this change until mid-March, hence there may have been some confusion for members who have tried to visit the Wood during March.

Please observe the new dates!

Message from the Chairman

Those of you who attended the AGM will know that I concluded my report for the year on something of a down-note. Like all societies, our membership changes over time and the help that members give to it varies as well. We have always been lucky in that our members have been generous in coming forward with help when asked over the years, and consequently you have a very experienced Committee to guide RNHS forward and an array of extremely knowledgeable and professional Recorders to maintain and develop one of our core functions – recording data.

But that's actually quite a small body of people to maintain the Society at its current high standards, and we are now finding that, not surprisingly, some of the people who have helped us for so long need a bit of a rest.

This is a serious request from your Committee to consider whether you, personally, could help out on various tasks. Even small things would make a huge difference to those who are currently bearing the brunt of organization, and, to be honest, it really isn't fair to expect only the same few to be making the efforts all the time.

So, for example:

- Join the Committee, for minute-taking, or advising on possible indoor and outdoor meetings;
- Help proof-read *Fieldfare* and our other publications, working with Hendrina Ellis;
- Join Shirley Hope as a regular assistant for refreshments at our indoor meetings;
- If you're into recording, help our Recorders with data input or typing-up; or consider extending our Records by taking on a new biological group, or subgroup, as a Recorder; or join the Roadside Verge Monitoring Programme.

Fieldfare

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- Assist the Chairman by being on hand to help put up and take down our various bits of equipment at indoor meetings. Training can be provided! If she has more help, then we can make sure all the necessary kit is employed, including our lectern.

And everyone can help the Society by **SENDING IN YOUR SIGHTINGS.... PLEASE!** This is so important! Sightings of wildlife, whether they are of plants or animals, are crucial to the work of the RNHS. It's not just the unusual or rare that we need to document; every record is important. What is a common species today may be disappearing in a few years' time, and the information that our records can supply is vital if there are to be early warnings of further biodiversity loss.

The number of members who are active in sending in their record cards is decreasing. Please make a resolution this Spring and Summer to **get out there and observe**, and send those observations in to our Recorders.

Voluntary organisations run on dedication and goodwill. The goodwill element is vital – people give up their time and energy to make things work for their fellow members. If you value your Society, please think hard about the above. Your Committee is waiting to hear from you!

Canon Tovey

The latest set of the RNHS' financial statements, which were considered by the membership at our AGM in March, are the last on which Canon Tovey will carry out an Independent Examination, as required by our Constitution. After many years of generous service to the Society, working with a number of Honorary Treasurers, Canon Tovey has decided to pass the baton to a successor. The Committee will be looking for that successor over the course of this year.

I should like to express the Society's appreciation to Canon Tovey for his invaluable assistance over this long period, and his unfailing speed and efficiency in fulfilling his appointment each year. We wish him the very best!

Ann Tomlinson
Chairman

Your new summer PROGRAMME AND PERMIT CARD

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

Annual General Meeting 1st March 2011

50 of us were present, with our President, Sir Clifford Boulton, in the Chair. The following were elected: President: Sir Clifford Boulton; Chairman: Ann Tomlinson; Secretary: Linda Worrall; Treasurer: Martin Grimes; Programme Secretary: Dawn Whitefield; *Fieldfare* Editor: Hendrina Ellis; other committee members: Linda Biddle, Gill Chiverton, Jenny Harris, Andrew Lear, Peter Scott.

A correction was made to the Minutes of the 2010 AGM as circulated in January 2011 *Fieldfare*: item 5) Appointment of Independent Examiner should have read: 'Canon Tovey was thanked. Proposed G Kirk, seconded P Scott, Canon Tovey was reappointed' with subsequent items renumbered.

Alterations to the constitution and notes, also circulated in the January *Fieldfare*, were agreed.

The school's new sound system would be available from the October Indoor Meeting but as the current one had not always been found suitable, the Committee would continue to try to source portable equipment, which might prove more reliable.

Finances were sound and the Society active, but different people were urgently needed to assist in several ways.

Under Any Other Business, P Rudkin reported that the Biological Records Centre, which receives and uses our journals, much appreciated them.

RUTLAND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY events

OUTDOOR MEETINGS

Saturday April 30 **CALKE ABBEY PARK, DERBYSHIRE** **10.30 am**

This park is a National Nature Reserve and contains outstanding wood pasture.

How do you fancy a family outing to Calke Abbey? We will be having a walk around the park in the morning (10.30 am to lunch), and accompanying family can join us, or visit the house and gardens – or all can do so in the afternoon. If you want to stay, take packed lunches or have a National Trust lunch, soup and a sandwich (or even something more substantial) in the cafe.

Meet at Calke Park, in the main car park. Map reference 128 SK 367226. By road, 10 miles S of Derby, on A514 at Ticknall, between Swadlincote and Melbourne. Cost: Park only £1.70 (£1.50 if more than 15 members). No charge for National Trust members.

If you would like to go please contact me (Linda Biddle 01780762108 or abiddle21@talktalk.net) as I need to know how many will be attending, and arrange for a warden to lead the group.

Saturday 7th May **BURLEY WOOD** **10.00 am**

Joint walk with the Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society at Burley Wood, led by Phil Rudkin. Meet at the gate to the Wood on the A606. Map reference: SK 893 093. Park on the verge; watch out for fast traffic.

Thursday 9th June **LONG DROVE ON THE LOW WASH** **7.30 pm**

We had a brilliant walk here last year. We hope to see corncrakes, snipe and lots more!

Suggested route: Take A605 to Whittlesey and then in the town take the left turn towards Thorney on the B1040. Take the drove road/track off the B1040 on the right-hand side just before Dog in a Doublet – map reference: TL 273 985. Follow this track as far as the shut gate (map reference: TL 280 993) and park on the verges – please do not obstruct access.

Sunday 19th June **CLIPSHAM QUARRY** **10.30 am**

Focusing on botany. Led by Barbara and Don Parker.

Directions: Turn off A1 for Stretton and head for Clipsham village. From the east end of the village, take the Holywell road for about a mile. Look for the quarry entrance on the right and make way to park near stable building. Alternatively, from Great Casterton, take Pickworth Road, over crossroads in Pickworth to T-Junction near Holywell Hall, turn left along narrow road for a mile or so and look for quarry entrance on left. Map reference: SK 981 155.

INDOOR MEETINGS

Indoor meetings are held at the Oakham Church of England school, Burley Road, Oakham: there is a charge of 40p for tea / coffee / biscuits.

Tuesday April 5 **CHRISTMAS IN THE KALAHARI** **7.30 pm**

An illustrated talk by RNHS member Dave Needham, globe-trotting birder, will focus on the birds he found in the Kalahari.

LEICESTER AND RUTLAND WILDLIFE TRUST

See www.lrwt.org.uk, or phone 0116 272 0444 in office hours, for all events in Leicestershire and Rutland, including guided walks, for which it is often necessary to book.

LINCOLNSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST

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

WEATHER SUMMARY Roy Lemmon

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

January 2011

Atmospheric pressure and winds Pressure started high on 1st to 4th with winds W-NW, then it became unsettled with low pressures and winds generally SW-W until the 17th, after which it was much more settled, pressures were high and winds NW-NE but generally of low velocity.

Temperature This was the third warmest January in the last five years, warmer than 2010 and 2009 but quite a bit cooler than 2008 and 2007. It is interesting that the first half of the month was markedly warmer than the second, the mean maximum temperature for that period was 7.9 °C and for the second 5.48 °C. There was a relatively

warm spell, the 12th to 16th, when daytime maxima were 11.7 °C–13.2 °C.

Rainfall A drier than expected month with a total of 34.6 mm or 78% of my long term mean. 92% of this total fell between the 1st and 16th, again reflecting the unsettled nature of the first half of the month. The precipitation on the 7th fell as sleet/snow but had melted by 1400 hours.

Sunshine This, averaged over England and Wales, was 57 hours or 104% of the mean for the standard reference period 1971–2000. The LTM for RAF Wittering is 53.4 hours.

February 2011

Atmospheric pressure and winds Generally pressures varied between 1008 and 1022 mb over the month, apart from the period 13th to 17th when they went below 1002 mb. Paradoxically this period also saw winds SW-S, of low velocities, and some clear skies, which is normally what we get under high pressure conditions! For the rest of the month winds were between SE and W, and only on 28th was there significant change when the wind veered to N, where it stayed into March.

Temperature This was a relatively warm month; looking back through my records for the past ten years only February 2002 was warmer, although 2007 was close. This result was due to a high mean night-time minimum temperature – 3.69 °C compared with 2.74 °C (2007) and 3.34 °C (2002) – and the temperature went below freezing on only four nights during the month.

The mean day-time maximum was 9.51 °C, 2007 was 9.48 °C and 2002 well above this with 10.67 °C. Nationally, only eight Februaries in the last 100 years were warmer.

Rainfall I recorded a total of 46.9 mm (1.85 inches) or 115% of my LTM. February rainfall can be very variable, in my records varying from 5.0 mm (1993) to 67.1 mm (2009 and 2010), and snow often falls although none did this year. This result is mirrored by the national figure averaged over England and Wales, which was 84 mm or 132% of the mean for the standard reference period 1971 to 2000.

Sunshine This was a markedly dull month with just 50 hours averaged nationally, which represents 65% of the 1971 to 2000 mean. The LTM for RAF Wittering is 71.6 hours, which goes to emphasise what a dull month it was.

I am indebted to the Philip Eden monthly weather report in the Sunday Telegraph for national figures.

HIGH TIDES IN NORTH NORFOLK Nola Thurlow

High tides for Kings Lynn. Times in BST.

April				May			
Sunday	3	07.25	19.28	Sunday	1	06.22	18.25
	10	10.59	23.37		8	10.07	22.41
	17	06.30	18.37		15	05.16	18.45
	24	11.26	–		22	12.51	17.21
					29	05.02	17.04

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

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



January/ February 2011

There was no amphibian activity in January. However, on 9th February the Worralls reported their first sighting of frogs in their garden and by 19th they were busily croaking and a pair was observed in amplexus on 25th. The only other place where live frogs were observed was in Oakham on 23rd February, although 28 dead frogs were found in a pond in Barrowden following cold weather, and a mummified frog was found on a lane in Wing, although it had presumably died a long time before. There was one record of a

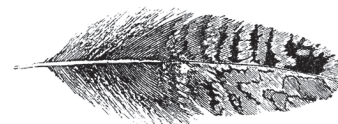
Common Toad, which was found disembowelled at Fort Henry on 12th February.

Smooth Newts were first seen in my garden pond in Wing on 11th February and one was seen in Barrowden on 25th in a garden pond. The first Great Crested Newt was reported from Stretton on 9th February, where it was found under an ash stump. They were seen in Wing from 11th February onwards.

My thanks to M Branston, J Crosby, J Harris, T Mitcham and L & G Worrall who sent in records.

BIRD REPORT compiled by T. Mitcham

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



January/February 2011

Long-staying rarities in January and February were Rutland Water's American Wigeon and Long-tailed Duck. Good numbers of Goldeneye and Smew were reported with Red-necked and Slavonian Grebes also present. Wader numbers decreased in the freezing weather but recovered towards the end of February. Gardens provided interest with records of Blackcaps, Waxwings, Bramblings, Siskins and Reed Buntings and it was good to receive reports of Yellowhammer flocks, albeit small in most cases. Corn Buntings were found at their regular site, still hanging on in the county.

Our target species for 2011 is the Nuthatch, which has been extending its range across Rutland for several years and appearing more often at feeding stations. We already have reports from some sites but please send in records of presence and numbers from all woodlands where you find them. They will be easy to locate in the coming weeks by their loud and ringing song.

My thanks to the following for their records: A Biddle, M Body, M A Branston, R Brewster, C Brown, A Bull, T Caldicott, A Carling, A & J Comber, J Crosby, J Foster, Dr C H Gallimore, N E Gordon, M & G Griffin, J Harris, J & P Harrison, Dr C Jones, A Lambert, P Langston, A Lawrence, LROS, R Lemmon, A Mannison-Reeves, I Misselbrook, T Mitcham, C Nelson, L & B Nicholls, E Northen, M Nourish, D & B Parker, D Perril, R Reeve, P Rudkin, RWNR, P Stancey, R Springthorpe, A R & M A Thorp, N Went, M Winslow, L & G Worrall

Pink-footed Goose Two were at FHP on 22.01, with one on 30.01 and 06.02. At RW seven on 08.02 increased to nine on 27.02.

Greylag Goose There was a max of 180 at FHP on 20.02.

Barnacle Goose One was regularly with Greylags at FHP from 22.01 to 27.02.

Egyptian Goose Four flew over Brooke on 06.01 with two there on 01.02 and two over Oakham on 06.02.

American Wigeon The drake at RW remained to at least 22.02.

Green-winged Teal The EBR bird was reported on 02 and 08.01.

Pintail Twelve were at RW on 08.02.

Red-crested Pochard One was at EBR on 08.01 and five were at RW on 08.02.

Scaup A max of six were at RW between 15 and 22.02.

Long-tailed Duck The first-winter male remained at RW, mainly in N.Arm, throughout both months.

Goldeneye There was a county record count of 650 at RW on 05.02.

Smew Present at RW throughout both months with a max of 19 on 10.01. Twelve were at EBR on 08.02 with a male there on 26.02.

Goosander LFP had five on two Jan dates and ten on 13.02.

Ruddy Duck There was a max of 24 at RW(Dam) on 05.01. Only three remained on the count of 16.01.

Bittern One remained at RW(Eg) to at least 25.01.

Little Egret Two were at Horn Mill trout hatchery on 08.01, with one frequenting the valley up to FHP to 05.02. One was by the R.Gwash at Ryhall on 19.01.

Red-necked Grebe One was at RW(Lyn) on 10.01 and 21.02.

Slavonian Grebe Three were at RW(N.Arm) on 04.01, with one noted on 01.02.

Red Kite Widely reported with max counts of six over Barrowden on 05.02 and five over Stocken on 08.02. One was seen scavenging road-kill on the A1 near Bloody Oaks on 03.02 – a fairly hazardous occupation!

Sparrowhawk Several reports of birds hunting in gardens were received with Collared Doves taken in Barrowden and Stamford and Blackbird at Oakham. House Sparrows were the unsuccessful target at Stocken, with forays also noted at Normanton feeders.

Buzzard Well reported during both months with four near Cold Overton on 08.02 the max.

Kestrel Records were received from FHP, Exton Park, Ketton, Quarry Farm and Whitwell.

Merlin Males were seen along roadsides near Pilton on 11.01 and Braunston on 07.02.

Peregrine Noted around Brooke to 24.02, over Burley Wood and Barnsdale on 14.02.

Oystercatcher Returned to RW in Feb, with four on 13.02, and eight on 25.02.

Ringed Plover First noted at RW(Eg) on 08.02, with five present on 25.02.

Golden Plover 59 were at RW on 13.02 increasing to 210 on 25.02. 95 flew north at FHP on 27.02.

Lapwing Fifty were in flight at Gt.Casterton on 09.01, and there were 968 at RW on 16.01. On 05.02 there were 363 at FHP and 1651 were at RW on 13.02. 161 were on plough at Tinwell on 22.02.

Dunlin Seven were at RW on 15.01, with eighteen noted there on 16.01 and five on 13.02. There were twenty at EBR on 26.02.

Ruff One was at RW on 15/16.01.

Snipe Up to three were at LFP, FHP, EBR and RW between 23.01 and 26.02.

Woodcock Singles were flushed at Brooke, Oakham, RW and Pickworth, Tunneley, Little Haw and Clipsham Park Woods between 04.01 and 27.02.

Black-tailed Godwit Four were at RW(Eg) on 18.02, with one on 22.02.

Curlew Nos at RW increased from one on 15.01 to seven on 25.02. One was at EBR on 26.02.

Redshank Eight were at RW on 16.01, with six on 13.02. Three were at EBR on 26.02.

Mediterranean Gull Two were at RW on 05.02, with singles on 25/26.02.

Caspian Gull One was at RW(S.Arm) on 05.02.

Iceland Gull A second-winter was at the RW roost on 23.01 and 11.02.

Glaucous Gull An adult was at RW on four dates between 23.01. and 23.02. A first-winter was present on 08.02.

Stock Dove Noted at FHP and Aldgate (song) with a pair inspecting a nest-hole at Wing on 26.02. Regular at RW(Eg) with birds often noted at duck nesting boxes.

Collared Dove Sixteen on a Stamford bird table on 14.01 was the max count. How many are being recorded at other feeding stations? This information will not be passed on to the local Sparrowhawks!

Barn Owl A long-dead bird was found near Pickworth Wood on 02.01. Live birds were noted near Brooke, Leighfield, Barrowden/Morcott, FHP, near Cold Overton and near Seaton.

Little Owl Heard and seen in Jan at Normanton.

Tawny Owl Calling birds were noted at Barnsdale, Tunneley Wood, FHP and near Oakham Castle, mainly in Jan. One was roosting near Brooke throughout both months and a dead bird was found near Uppingham on 26.01.

Green Woodpecker Records were received from FHP, Exton Park, EBR, Barnsdale and Barleythorpe.

Great Spotted Woodpecker Drumming first noted in Westland Wood on 09.01 and then at Beaumont Chase Farm on 19.01. Noted at seven well-scattered sites, with birds in two Oakham gardens and up to three at Park House Normanton in Feb.

Raven There were records for both months with singles or pairs noted at Exton Park, FHP, Pilton/Wing, Barnsdale /Burley, Brooke, Leighfield and Cold Overton.

Goldcrest Noted in Uppingham gardens between 06 and 31.01.

- Coal Tit** Up to five visited a Barleythorpe feeding station in Feb.
- Willow Tit** One was at EBR inflow on 08.01. One or two were at Brooke and Leighfield in Feb.
- Marsh Tit** Noted at Barnsdale, Brooke, Leighfield, Tunneley Wood*, Yew Tree Avenue and the RW Centre at Eggleton*, with birds on feeders at asterisked sites.
- Skylark** There were weather movements of 56 near Brooke on 01.01, and twenty near Pickworth on 02.01.
- Long-tailed Tit** Gardens at Oakham, Normanton, Stamford and Barleythorpe provided records with up to eight taking fat and sunflower hearts.
- Blackcap** Singles visited two Stamford and five Oakham gardens between 06.01 and 20.02.
- Waxwing** Unlike other areas our birds seemed very mobile, rarely staying long at one site. The highest counts were twenty at Exton on 02.01, 40+ at Oakham on 11.01, and twenty at Stamford on 18.01. Smaller nos were noted at Barrowden and the other sites mentioned.
- Nuthatch.** Our target bird for this year was noted in regular sites at FHP, Tunneley, Barnsdale and Pickworth Woods and Yew Tree Avenue. Others were noted at Woodside Farm, Normanton, and at Cold Overton, where they are now regular at feeders. An Oakham garden was also visited.
- Treecreeper** Treecreepers seem to have survived the harsh weather quite well with birds noted at FHP and Tunneley Wood throughout both months. Garden records came from Barleythorpe, Empingham and Uppingham, and seven were counted at Barnsdale on 17.02.
- Starling** The suburban roost in Stamford noted in previous years peaked at 250 in Jan.
- Fieldfare** Few records received for this species. One ate apples in a Stamford garden in late Jan/early Feb. The largest flocks reported were 105 at Normanton on 31.01, 12000 near Whissendine on 08.02 and c.400 over Lady Wood, Stocken on 23.02.
- Redwing** Up to three were in Oakham and Uppingham gardens throughout Jan. Fifty were at Normanton on 25.01.
- Mistle Thrush** A pair were nest-building at Wing on 22.02.
- Stonechat** The only record was of a male near Brooke on 27.02. This species has probably been hard-hit by the cold weather.
- Tree Sparrow** Records only came from garden feeders at Brooke, near Clipsham and Tixover Grange from 23.01 onwards. Max counts were eight at Brooke and five at Tixover.
- Grey Wagtail** The only record was one in Ironmonger Street, Stamford on 03.01.
- Chaffinch** There were 45 near Normanton Cottages on 31.01 and 61 at FHP on 20.02. Full song was heard at Whitwell on 09.02.
- Brambling** Singles visited feeders at two gardens in Oakham and Beaumont Chase Farm with other singles noted at FHP, Barnsdale and Oakham. All records were after 30.01.
- Goldfinch** Small nos were noted in Oakham and Stamford gardens. The max count was 37 at Stocken on 07.02.
- Siskin** The largest flocks were 20 in Exton Park on 23.01 and forty at RW(Lyn) on 13.02. Oakham gardens were visited from 17.01, with a max of twelve on 21.02. One was at an EBR feeder on 06.02 and a pair were at Beaumont Chase feeders on 26.02. One or two were at RW(Eg) on 25.02.
- Linnet** Eleven were at FHP on 23.01, sixty were at Leighfield on 13.02 and fifty were at Tinwell on 22.02.
- Lesser Redpoll** Up to three were at feeders in Uppingham and Oakham to 31.01, with twelve on birch in an Oakham garden on 22.01. Other flocks of between fifteen and seventy were at Pickworth Wood, Yew Tree Avenue, Barnsdale and Tunneley Wood.
- Common (Mealy) Redpoll** Noted at both RW reserves between 20.01 and 22.02, with a max of four at Eggleton on 23.01.
- Bullfinch** Well reported from scrubby areas at Yew Tree Avenue and Pickworth Wood, where eight were present on 02.01. Pairs were in gardens at Barrowden on 16.01 and Oakham on 07.02.
- Yellowhammer** The largest flocks at each site were 120 at Brooke (20.02), 25 at Mounts Lodge (29.01) and 17 on Tinwell Meadows (22.02).
- Reed Bunting** Bird regularly fed in a Barrowden garden and three Oakham and two Stamford gardens in both months, with a max of five at Oakham on 07.02. Members noted birds on feeders as well as taking food from the ground.
- Corn Bunting** Ten were with Yellowhammers near Mounts Lodge on 29.01.

January/February 2011 Wildfowl Counts

	Rutland Water		Eyebrook Reservoir		Fort Henry Ponds and Exton Park		Holywell Lake	
	16.01	13.02	16.01	13.02	14.01	12.02	16.01	12.02
Mute Swan	231	163	65	58	6	8	2	2
Pink-footed Goose		7						
White-fronted Goose	1							
Greylag Goose	340	157	216	71	107	34	7	32
Canada Goose	670	403	232	35			88	113
Barnacle Goose	15	14						
Egyptian Goose	26	32						
Ruddy Shelduck		1						
Shelduck	11	41	2	12	1	3		
Wigeon	4237	2635	221	144	125	121		
Gadwall	859	444	24	65	125	71	10	16
Teal	658	494	205	125	3	8	37	36
Green-winged Teal	1							
Mallard	880	467	64	34	87	88	178	72
Pintail		7						
Shoveler	8	28						
Red-crested Pochard	32	2						1
Pochard	127	117	37	5	9	5		
Tufted Duck	5449	1487	264	110	51	64	14	14
Scaup	10	2						
Long-tailed Duck	1							
Goldeneye	334	509	16	32				
Smew	9	15	19					
Goosander	56	4						
Ruddy Duck	3							
Cormorant	20	65	34	38		1		
Little Egret	4	3			1			
Grey Heron	5	11	2	4			1	
Little Grebe	73	54	5	5	13	7	4	5
Great Crested Grebe	183	121	11	9				
Red-necked Grebe	1							
Slavonian Grebe	3							
Moorhen	79	21	1	4	2	7	18	14
Coot	3678	1197	240	164	47	68	33	4
American Wigeon	1							
TOTAL	17999	8502	1659	921	577	485	392	309

ORTHOPTERA REPORT compiled by Phil Rudkin

10 Brooke Avenue, Stamford PE9 2RU. Telephone: 01780 762998

No records received.



BOTANY NOTES compiled by Graham Worrall

6 Redland Close, Barrowden LE15 8ES. Telephone: 01572 747302



January/February 2011

The first flower of the New Year was reported on 17th January – **Hazel Catkins** at Manton Hill and Main St Ketton. The only other flower, reported on 31st January, was **Common Whitlowgrass** at the Eyebrook Reservoir. Dr Clive Jones reported finding **Broad Buckler Fern, Male Fern** and **Hart's-tongue** in a sunken way at College Farm, Belton – obviously not in flower, the normal requirement for our records, but a justifiable exception in the case of non-flowering plants!

February was a much warmer month and as a result **Colt's-foot** and **Deadnettle** flowered at Stocken on the 4th. On the 6th, **Toothwort, Dog's**

Mercury, Primrose and **Snowdrops** were found at Yew Tree Avenue, Clipsham.

Spurge Laurel was found at Bloody Oaks, Ketton Quarry and on Verge 7 NE of Casterton during February.

Lesser Celandine were found in flower at Seaton, ten weeks after the first flowering – obviously the cold snap had a marked effect.

I have had confirmation from three members that they wish to carry on with Verge Recording – can I beg for more, both established recorders and new volunteers?

Thanks for records: R Lemmon, J Crosby, C Jones, G Worrall, B and D Parker, P and E Mann, J Myers, M Grimes.

LEPIDOPTERA NOTES compiled by Jean Harvey

4 Clarkesdale, Great Easton, Market Harborough LE16 8SP. Telephone: 01536 770259



January/February 2011

The first butterfly of the year to be reported was a **Small Tortoiseshell**, which was seen flying around inside Wing church, obviously disturbed from hibernation by the heating!

On February 24th we all enjoyed a beautiful sunny day and two other species of butterfly were observed, this time flying outdoors. These were a **Brimstone** in a garden at Langham and a **Peacock** near Edith Weston.

With the very cold weather in early January no moths were caught in the trap at Rutland Water but in the last week of the month two species were attracted to the light, these being Spring

Usher and Pale Brindled Beauty. During February, several spring species were trapped there and by the 22nd the total was 15 moths of 8 species.

The garden trap at Barrowden operated on a few nights had only odd moths, which is not surprising as it is usually in the woods that the mothing season really starts.

A **Herald** was found in the kitchen of a house in Wing on January 16th. This is a moth that overwinters as an adult and can be seen flying in autumn before hibernation and then again from March to June on recovery from its dormant state.

Many thanks to R Follows, C H Gallimore, E Mann and T Newton for their observations.

PLANT GALLS REPORT compiled by Roy Lemmon

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January/February 2011

This is traditionally a quiet time for plant gall reporting and this year seems even quieter, whether this is due to the extreme cold we had

in December I am not sure. There are signs of growth out there but not of galling yet, and I will use this occasion to review the current position

of literature available in this country for gall identification.

The most comprehensive guide and the one I use is *British Plant Galls* by Redfern, Shirley and Bloxham, published in the AIDGAP series by The Field Studies Council at Preston Montford. This was published in 2002 and when I went on a course run by Margaret Redfern in 2009 I remember seeing her own copy of the book, which had a mass of handwritten annotations which she said would all be incorporated into the next edition. I rang the FSC recently and it seems it will be available in April.

The FSC also does one of their identification cards, which costs £3.50 and is normally available from the shop in the Egleton Centre but was out

of stock there about two weeks ago. This would suit most people. There is postage of £1.00 if you order from the FSC.

There is also a Naturalists Handbook No. 17 called *Plant Galls*. I have the Society's copy which is available for loan to any member who would like to borrow it – just ring me. Also in the future the British Plant Gall Society will publish a photographic guide to some 150 of the commonest galls found in this country and as we currently report only 65–70 different ones it should cover most people's requirements. It will be in A5 format, which is convenient to take into the field, and is likely to be published by WILDguides but quite when is, up to now, a closely guarded secret.

INSECTS AND OTHERS compiled by Gill Chiverton

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It's good to be receiving insect records again, albeit not in vast quantities yet! It's a lovely day as I am writing this so I am hoping for lots of sightings for March and April.

January 2011

Hymenoptera

Common Wasp *Vespa vulgaris* – a queen wasp was found over-wintering in a shed at Stocken, and indicated, by pulsating her abdomen, that she was very much alive.

Coleoptera

Sixteen **Orange Ladybirds** *Halyzia 16-guttata* were found hibernating on an ash tree at Leighfield. They were in the same sheltered spot where the recorder had found hibernating ladybirds in previous years.

February 2011

Hymenoptera

All bee records were noted over two days towards the end of the month (as one recorder said, 'first sun for ages'). **Honey Bees** *Apis mellifera* were noted at Barrowden (at least 10) and Stocken (5 + 2). A **Bumblebee** *Bombus lucorum* was visiting snowdrops at Barrowden and another **Bumblebee** *Bombus terrestris* visited winter honeysuckle the following day, also at Barrowden.

Coleoptera

The **Orange Ladybirds** at Leighfield were again recorded in the sheltered tree, but only fourteen were noted this month. Also at Leighfield one **Kidney-spot Ladybird** *Chilocorus renipustulatus*.

7-spot Ladybirds *Coccinella 7-punctata* were seen as follows: 4 recorded at Barleythorpe, one at Ketton Quarry, 2 single insects on separate dates at Oakham, and 7-spots were observed mating at Edith Weston.

Note

I thought RNHS members might be interested to read part of a letter I received in answer to a query I sent to Buglife last October. I had received a photograph of a flesh fly from one of our recorders in which the head and thorax of the fly appeared covered in what looked like a fungal infection. So I forwarded the photograph to Buglife and received this interesting reply to my query.

Dr Duncan Sivell gave permission for the following extract from his letter –

'This is a species of flesh fly (Sarcophidae) ... it has been infected by a fungus, which is the white substance you can see around the face and thorax. Normally the head and the thorax would appear black with grey patches, like the rest of the body. It is not unusual to find dead flies or other insects 'resting' on vegetation in late summer or autumn, however the extent of fungal growth is often more subtle with a few outgrowths breaking through the abdomen or elsewhere.

The biology of these fungal pathogens is quite interesting. They often induce the insect to cling onto

the vegetation before it dies as this will help the fungal spores disperse. Others affect female flies by making them bloated, hence appearing more attractive to males.

The male flies will attempt to mate with the infected or dead female and spread the fungus in the process.'

My thanks to the following recorders: T Caldicott, J Crosby, A Lawrence, R Lemmon, T Newton, D Perril and L Worrall.

MYCOLOGY NOTES compiled by Linda Worrall

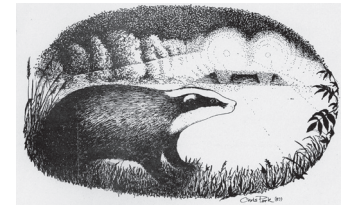
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No report this issue, please continue sending in your records.

MAMMAL REPORT compiled by Linda Biddle

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Please note that the first report is for November/December 2010, followed by January/February 2011 on page 12.



November/December 2010

The early winter weather has resulted in a **Stoat** in full ermine being seen. It was hunting across a ride in Tunnely Wood, very active, jumping up and peering around whilst sitting upright. It was observed for 10 minutes until it moved into a thick bramble patch.

Otters have been around in both November and December. The remains of a fish were found on the S side of the dam at Fort Henry in November. In December, tracks in fresh snow, including tail swipes, were followed near Barrowden, and fresh spraint discovered on an ant hill, the tracks continuing back to the Welland.

Badger setts were active near Pickworth, and a badger was seen running by the road between Wing and Preston. Two **Foxes** were seen separately in Little Haw wood, and another crossed the road at Red Hill Barrowden. Also at Red Hill a **Brown Hare** was seen on the roadside verge, but the two events were separated by a week. Two Hares were also seen between Great Casterton and Pickworth to the E of the road. Two **Rabbit** warrens, of 28 holes and 8 holes respectively were found at Whitwell Creek RW, and 4 rabbits seen close by. Rabbits are also very active close to the entrance to the Walk Farm path near Pickworth. In November a **Grey squirrel** ran across the road on the bend near Tickencote on the road to Cross Roads Farm, and another was

seen in Exton Village. In December three were seen separately in the vicinity of Barnsdale Wood.

Hedgehogs were still active in November and December in spite of the cold weather, one on Rectory Lane, Wing, and another heard grunting near the patio of the Worralls' home in Barrowden. A dead hedgehog was found in the leaf pile in Dr Gallimore's garden, 'perhaps dug out of hibernation site by a fox, other predator, or even a neighbour's dog'.

The snow has made the activities of **Moles** very conspicuous, and lots of hills have been reported; on the path to Deep Hide near Lyndon Center, alongside the path to Fort Henry Lakes from Horn Mill, and alongside the lakes themselves. In December they are recorded in the Barnsdale wood area, and Whitwell Creek RW, and next to the A6121 South Luffenham where 'hundreds' were seen in a pasture field.

Three **Roe Deer** crossed the ride in Tunnely Wood near the Pheasant pen in November. A **Muntjac** was seen on the verge on Seaton Road Barrowden, just after the last house, and another in Morkery Wood. **Fallow Deer** were reported in numbers of up to 30 from Little Haw and Clipsham Woods, though in November there were fewer in Clipsham, only 3 or 4 on several occasions. Two were seen running across fields to the S of Cross Roads farm in November.

Thank you for reports from: A Biddle, M Branston, R Clark, C Gallimore, C Jones, R Lemmon, T Mitcham, P J Rudkin, A R & M A Thorp, L & G Worrall

January/February 2011

A new decade, and how lovely to begin with a **Stoat** in ermine, even if it was preceded by a very cold and snowy end to the last! (I'm sure there are members out there who will argue that the decade began last year, and they're probably correct). It was seen at Barnsdale car park in February, with only the tip of the tail black, and a dark smudge on its face. In January one was seen chasing **rabbits** near the River Gwash east of Brooke village.

This is the first mammal report for some time that has not begun with an Otter record. It is good to reflect that the last ten years have seen the return of otters as a regular presence, after around 30 years of almost total absence, and I am confident that they are now well established, and that future months will include otter reports.

There are three reports of **Foxes**, the first being a large dog fox, dead on the Oakham bypass close to the railway bridge, exactly where I had seen a live one in the autumn of last year. Later in January one was observed hunting in the long grass at the edge of winter cereals near Morcott Road Wing. At Rutland water a fox was seen on the shoreline of lagoon 3 on the south arm of Rutland Water.

The bumper bundle of reports this month are **Brown Hares**, a total of fifteen reports, with 26 animals, seen near Barrowden, Wing, Whitwell, Pickworth and Fort Henry. It is amazing that these animals can remain hidden for the latter months of the year, and then suddenly reappear in such numbers as the winter approaches its end. **Rabbits** are ever present, but are under reported by members: in January a 17+ hole warren was found along a hedgerow near Belton-in Rutland, two live rabbits seen. **Grey squirrels** have been seen near bird feeders and also along the plantation track at Eyebrook Reservoir, at Pilton, and in Barnsdale Woods. We have a resident around our Stamford garden, which attempts to get birdseed from our feeders, but as yet I have not seen it succeed.

Thankyou to all members who send in reports, which I enjoy compiling: A Biddle, M Branston, T Caldicott, J Comber, C Jones, C Gallimore, P Langston, R Lemmon, T Mitcham, D Perril, P J Rudkin, A R & M A Thorp, R Williams, L & G Worrall



There are just three reports of our smaller mammals. A **bank vole** reappeared in its usual walk around Dr Gallimore's conservatory and bird feeders at Wing. A **Wood Mouse** feeds on a bird feeder in Barmstedt Drive Oakham, and a **Pygmy Shrew** was found dead on the pathway from the Trout Farm to Fort Henry Lakes.

The first **Hedgehog** of the year was seen on January 23rd feeding at 8.00 am on bird food outside a front door in Manton. In the Worralls' Barrowden garden a small animal was seen on evenings of 24th and 25th of January, possibly the small one reported before the winter snows of November and December. On 28th February a large hedgehog was seen feeding near the nestbox after several wet and cold days.

Again large numbers of **molehills** have been seen, thirteen reports note activity at Bloody Oaks Quarry, Woodhead Castle, Barnsdale, Barleythorpe, Eye Brook, Belton in Rutland, Whitwell, Fort Henry, and Clipsham Park Avenue.

At the end of February two **Roe Deer** broke cover in Exton Park and ran across winter cereals into Tunnely Wood, and two more were seen at Greetham Valley Golf club. It is good that we are now regularly recording these animals, seldom reported in this area before about 5 years ago. Large groups of **Fallow Deer** are recorded regularly in Clipsham Woods but with fluctuation, probably due to disturbances; up to 87 recorded on 2nd February, but only 5 on 19th January, similarly in Little Haw Wood a maximum daily count of 93 on January 31st and minimum of 7 on February 11th. Fallow are also reported from Morkery Wood, around 30 on winter cereals north of Greetham Wood, and 10 in field next to Little Sutie Wood, Pickworth. One **Muntjac** was observed in the front drive of a member at Barleythorpe in early February.

BAT REPORT compiled by Jenny Harris

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No report this issue, please continue sending in your records.

