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RUTLAND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY events

OUTDOOR MEETINGS

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 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 ref: TL 273 985. Follow this track as far as the shut
gate (map ref: 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, RNHS.
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 ref:
SK 981 155.*

Saturday 9th July BATS AND GLOW-WORMS 9.15 pm

*A bat and glow-worm walk at Ketton, led by Jenny Harris (Bat Recorder, RNHS).
Directions: Meet at the stone bridge at the entrance to Aldgate (map ref: SK 983 043).*

Sunday 24th July RING HAW RESERVE 2.30 pm

*A walk at Ring Haw Reserve, part of the Beds, Cambs, Northants and Peterborough
Wildlife Trust, led by Henry Stanier, RNHS. Meet at the Field Station.
Directions: From the roundabout on A47 outside Wansford village (west of the junction
with the A1) enter Wansford and drive downhill to a staggered junction. At the junction
turn right and then second left towards Yarwell. Drive to the crossroads outside Yarwell
village and turn right onto the Sulehay Road. On reaching a sharp bend in the road (map
ref: TL 054 980), turn left off the road and drive along the right-hand track through the
reserve to the Field Station (NOT the left-hand track as it is unsuitable for vehicles).
There are three field gates on the access track that are only open when events are being
held onsite. As the track runs through the nature reserve, all vehicles users must: keep to
the speed limit of 5 mph; give way to people and wildlife; stop and look at each gateway.*

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RNHS indoor meetings are held at the Oakham Church of England school, Burley Road, Oakham: there is a charge of 40p for tea / coffee / biscuits. They will start again in October.

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

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March 2011

Atmospheric pressure and winds Pressures were generally high for most of the month apart from the 10th to 13th, with the lowest for the month on the last day of that period, at 996 mb. Winds started N-E until the 8th and were then SW-W until the 14th, when they were N-NE again with generally low velocities and some morning mist. The rest of the month saw SW-W winds apart from 26th to 28th when they were NW-NE again. Quite a complicated picture!

Temperature The mean night-time minimum was 2.66 °C, warmer than 2010 (2.27 °C) but slightly cooler than 2009 (2.7 °C); and there were 7 nights when the temperature went below 0 °C, the lowest being -4.8 °C on the 7th. The mean day-time maximum was 12.16 °C, again higher than 2010 (11.14 °C) and cooler than 2009 (12.3 °C), and the month finished with a day-time maximum of 19.2 °C on the 31st.

Rainfall This was an exceptionally dry month with just 4.0 mm (0.16 inches) being recorded at this site. This is 10.6% of my LTM and 85% of this fell on the 30th. This is the lowest March rainfall I have recorded since I began in 1991; only 1997 came anywhere close at 8.6 mm.

Averaged nationally rainfall was 26 mm (1.02 inches) or 35% of the average for the standard reference period 1971 to 2000, but Cambridge recorded only 2 mm in the whole month. In the past 100 years only 9 Marches were drier.

Sunshine Averaged over England and Wales this was 152 hours or 134% of the standard mean. In the past 100 years only 12 Marches were sunnier. The LTM for RAF Wittering is 112 hours.

April 2011

Atmospheric pressure and winds Apart from the 2nd (1003 mb) pressures were high for the whole of the month, ranging from 1009 mb on the 22nd to the highest for the month, 1027 mb, on the 27th. As far as wind direction is concerned it was a month of two halves, generally SW-NW up to the 15th and then N-NE for the rest. Velocities were generally low and on the 21st it was 0 at 0900 hours with a visibility of 250 m.

Temperature Nationally this was the warmest April since records began in 1659. Previously the record was held by April 2007 and my records for that year give a mean minimum of 6.25 °C, this year it was 6.06 °C; but the mean maximum for 2007 was 18.23 °C and this year it was 19.3 °C. The lowest night minimum was 1.7 °C on the 12th and there were just six ground frosts but no air frosts during the month. The highest day-time maximum occurred on the 23rd when 27.5 °C was recorded.

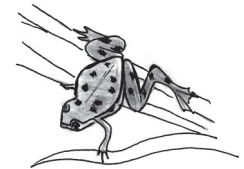
Rainfall A second consecutive dry month with a total recorded of 2.3 mm (0.09 inches), which is 6.2% of my LTM. The lowest that I have seen reported was 1 mm at Moulton Park, Northants. April 2007 was also low at 3.0 mm but the months either side of it made up for the shortfall. This year, averaged over England and Wales, rainfall was 13.0 mm (0.52 inches) or 21% of the average for the standard reference period. In the past 100 years only 5 Aprils were drier.

Sunshine Averaged over England and Wales this was 234 hours or 150% of the mean for the standard reference period. The LTM for RAF Wittering for this month is 147 hours.

I am indebted to Philip Eden's monthly review in the Sunday Telegraph for the national statistics quoted here.

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

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March/April 2011

As last year, following another hard winter, frogs were late spawning this year and the first spawn was reported from Great Casterton on 11th March, followed by Little Casterton on 16th March. In Barrowden and Tunneley Wood spawn was observed on 23rd March. Although spawning was recorded in North Luffenham and Oakham it seems it was completed by the end of March. However tadpoles in April in Braunston, Prior's Coppice and Ketton Quarry provided evidence of breeding elsewhere.

Quite a lot of toad activity was recorded from four different sites in the Exton area from 23rd March to 2nd April, with clasping and calling, although spawn was not seen. Spawn was seen however in a pond in Barrowden on 28th March. Also in a field pond in Wing, which last had toad spawn in 1992 and which I have inspected every year since, a few strings were present on 12th April.

Interestingly this pond usually has frog spawn, but this year I found none, although that may have been because I was initially too early and subsequently too late.

There were only a few reports of newts. Smooth Newts were noted in Empingham, Exton, Wing and Barrowden, where one was unfortunate enough to be observed being carried off by a crow. Great Crested Newts were only seen in Empingham and Wing.

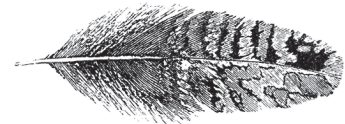
Lizards were observed at two sites in Ketton Quarry on 22nd April.

A Grass Snake on 24th March was the first sighting, but they were subsequently seen in Oakham, Exton, Fort Henry, Ketton Quarry and Leighfield during April. No less than five Adders were seen at Ketton Quarry on 9th April and Phil Rudkin nearly trod on another on 20th April in a different part of the quarry.

My thanks to the following who sent records: T Caldicott, A L Lawrence, R Lemmon, T Mitcham, D Needham, P Rudkin, C Scott, A R & M A Thorp, M Tyler, L & G Worrall

BIRD REPORT compiled by T. Mitcham

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



March/April 2011

Summer migrants arrived on cue in March and early April, as bird watchers yearned for signs of spring after a cold winter. Fieldfares lingered into April, overlapping with the new arrivals. A wide range of waders dropped in at Rutland Water, with Avocet and a good passage of Bar-tailed Godwits taking pride of place but it was left to Luffenham Airfield to produce the bird of the month with a one-day Stone Curlew.

Red Kites and Buzzards were widely reported and, now that they are so well established in the county, I would ask that only records of groups of birds or probable / confirmed breeding are submitted – a sign of the times!

My thanks to the following for their records for these months: P Bennett, A Burdett, T Caldicott, A & J Comber, J Crosby, J Foster, Dr C Gallimore, M & G Griffin, J Hughes, B Jackson, A L Lawrence, LROS, R Lemmon, E M Mann, I Misselbrook, T Mitcham, D Needham, B & L Nicholls, D & B Parker, D Perril, K Potterton, J S & J Rodgers, P Rudkin, RWNR, Jill Stapleton, A R & M A Thorp, D Whitefield, M Winslow, G & L Worrall.

Whooper Swan. One was at RW(Eggleton) between 03 and 08.04.

Wild Swan. A flock of 35 flew north over Stocken on 23.03. These were likely to have been Whoopers en route to Iceland from the Ouse Washes but no positive identification was possible.

Pink-footed Goose. One was at FHP on 06.03. c.100 flew north-west at Wakerley on 07.03 and eight were at RW between 02 and 18.03. One was at RW(Eggleton) on 29.04.

Greylag Goose. There was a peak count of 186 at FHP on 06.03. A pair was at Wing Fishing Lakes on 13.04.

- Canada Goose.** A pair had five small goslings at FHP on 25.04.
- Barnacle Goose.** One was at FHP on 06.03.
- Egyptian Goose.** Small nos were noted at Burley Wood and Brooke in March.
- Ruddy Shelduck.** One or two were near Burley Wood on 01 and 07.03.
- Mandarin Duck.** A pair frequented FHP on several dates between 20.03 and 25.04. A female was on the R Chater near N Luffenham on 04.04.
- Mallard.** Breeding was confirmed at FHP and Oakham Canal from mid-April – please send in all records of duckling broods.
- Garganey.** A male was at RW(Egleton) on 21.04, with up to three present to 29.04.
- Shoveler.** Two pairs were at FHP on 26.03 and 02.04, but they have not remained to breed.
- Scaup.** Up to 4 were at RW between 13 and 18.03.
- Long-tailed Duck.** The RW male remained throughout March and was last seen on 05.04.
- Common Scoter.** Two were at RW(North Arm) on 17.04, with singles on 26 and 29.04.
- Smew.** At RW up to seven were noted to 18.03, with one at EBR on 04.03.
- Red-breasted Merganser.** There was a pair at RW(North Arm) on 09.04.
- Goosander.** Seven were at LFP on 19.03.
- Grey Partridge.** A pair was on Pickworth Plain on 18.04.
- Little Egret.** One was at RW on several dates between 08.03 and 29.04, and one at EBR on 17.04.
- Grey Heron.** One visited a Wing garden pond on 28.03. Numbers seem to be reduced after the hard winter.
- Little Grebe.** Heard trilling at Clipsham Ford on 11.04.
- Slavonian Grebe.** One in stunning breeding plumage was at EBR from 02.04 to end of April.
- Black-necked Grebe.** One was at RW(North Arm) between 23 and 27.03.
- Great Crested Grebe.** Singles at FHP on 26.03 and 16.04 were the first here for several years.
- Red Kite.** Well reported with five over Barrowden on 20.03 and pairs noted at five likely breeding sites.
- Marsh Harrier.** Singles female/ imms. were at RW(Egleton) between 15 and 30.04.
- Sparrowhawk.** Seen regularly at Stocken in March with one in Oakham on 30.03.
- Buzzard.** Counts exceeding four were received from Exton Park, Lady Wood/Stocken, Langham and Burley Wood but the highest number was nine at Horn Mill on 06.03.
- Osprey.** The first bird back at RW was 03(97) on 20.03, and pairs were established at regular sites by early April. One was at Horn Mill on 26.03 and one at FHP on 02.04.
- Kestrel.** Noted at breeding sites near Pickworth, Exton Park, FHP, and Beaumont Chase Farm, where a pair were disputing a nest-box with Jackdaws on 17.04.
- Hobby.** One was at RW on 19.04.
- Peregrine.** A juv. frequented RW and the area west of Oakham throughout both months.
- Water Rail.** Six were at RW on 13.03.
- Oystercatcher.** 19 were at RW on 13.03 and one at EBR on 03.04.
- Avocet.** One was at RW on 25.03 with a pair from 13.04 to 28.04, and four on 20.04.
- Stone Curlew.** One was at Luffenham Airfield on 20.04, the first Rutland record since one near Prior's Coppice in April 1987.
- Little Ringed Plover.** An early bird was at RW on 05.03 with birds well established on the Egleton reserve by the end of the month. One was at EBR on 26.03 with two there on 12.04.
- Ringed Plover.** First noted at RW on 01.03, with five pairs present on 23.03, and birds settling to nest on lagoon 4.
- Golden Plover.** March flocks of 50+ were noted at RW, Cottesmore Lodge, near Brooke and over Quarry Farm. One flew north-east over FHP on 25.04.
- Grey Plover.** Singles were at RW on 11 and 13.04, with two on 27.04 and three on 28–29.04.
- Lapwing.** Displaying birds were noted in March at FHP, EBR, Brooke and Pickworth. An adult and two chicks were near Langham on 27.04.
- Sanderling.** Singles were at RW on 17.03, 27.03, and 13.04.
- Dunlin.** Up to eight were at RW on dates between 11.03 and 29.04, with 30 present on 30.04.
- Ruff.** One was at RW on 24–25.03.
- Snipe.** One was at George Henry Wood on 09.03 and eight were at RW on 13.03. Seven were at LFP on 19.03. Two were at EBR on 27.03 and one at RW(Egleton) on 29.04.
- Woodcock.** One or two were flushed at Burley and Clipsham Park Woods between 01 and 21.03.
- Black-tailed Godwit.** Present on six dates at RW between 05.03 and 26.04 with 16 on the last date.
- Bar-tailed Godwit.** Up to 44 may have been present at RW(Egleton) on 29.04, with many in full breeding plumage.
- Whimbrel.** Three were at EBR on 16.04, with singles at RW on 25 and 30.04.
- Curlew.** The March roost at RW peaked at 26 on 05.03. One flew over the RW dam on 25.03 and one was at RW(Egleton) on 21.04.
- Common Sandpiper.** Singles were at RW on four dates from 17.04.
- Green Sandpiper.** One or two were at RW between 18.03 and 13.04, with three on 25.03.

- Greenshank.** Present at RW from 10.04 with a max of c.8 on 29.04.
- Wood Sandpiper.** Singles were at EBR on 21 and 30.04.
- Redshank.** Ten were at RW on 13.03, with five on 25.03. One was at EBR on 27.03 and 17.04.
- Turnstone.** One was at RW on 30.04.
- Kittiwake.** There were eight at RW on 04.04.
- Little Gull.** First-winter birds were at EBR on 06.04 and 23.04, and at RW between 11.04 and 15.04. An adult was at RW(Eggleton) on 29.04.
- Mediterranean Gull.** Two were at RW on 12.03, with singles on 21.03 and 05.04.
- Ring-billed Gull.** An adult roosted at RW on 20.03.
- Yellow-legged Gull.** One was at RW on 10.04.
- Little Tern.** One was at RW (Manton Bay) on 20.04.
- Black Tern.** In April there were three at RW on 19th with five in breeding plumage on 21st and one on 23rd.
- Sandwich Tern.** Two were at RW on 10.04.
- Common Tern.** First noted at RW on 06.04, with birds well distributed there by 20.04. Two were on an EBR nesting raft on 17.04.
- Arctic Tern.** Singles were at both reservoirs between 11 and 13.04, with four at RW on 27.04.
- Cuckoo.** An early bird sang in the Northfields area of Stamford on 10.04, with the next near Uppingham on 17.04. From 18.04 birds were heard at Wing, Langham, RW, Seaton, Stocken/Lady Wood, and Burley and Tunneley Woods.
- Stock Dove.** Singing birds were noted at FHP, Wing Fishing Lakes, Barnsdale and Tunneley Woods.
- Turtle Dove.** One sang at RW(Eggleton) on 21.04, with two in Eggleton village on 23.04.
- Barn Owl.** Reported from Brooke, RW(Burley Fishponds), Barrowden, Braunston and Tinwell, where two were sadly found dead on 27.04.
- Little Owl.** Singles were noted at FHP, Barrowden, near Wing and Tickencote. Two were at Borderville in early March and one was found freshly dead at FHP on 20.03.
- Tawny Owl.** Reports came from Burley, Pickworth and Tunneley Woods (occupied nest-box), Barleythorpe, Brooke and Normanton Park.
- Swift.** Two at RW on 19.04 were first, with singles at Whitwell (29.04) and Barrowden (30.04).
- Kingfisher.** March records came from RW (three on 9th), Brooke and Tinwell.
- Green Woodpecker.** Records came from seven widespread sites – the species seems to have survived the winter in good numbers.
- Great Spotted Woodpecker.** Five were drumming in Burley Wood on 05.03 with others heard at Prior's Coppice, Tunneley, Westland and Pickworth Woods and at Clipsham Quarries. Garden records were received from Barleythorpe, Stocken, Tickencote and Wing.
- Rook.** It was encouraging to receive a few rookery counts – perhaps someone might revive this county-wide survey next year? There were 34 nests at Barleythorpe and 8, 27 and 29 in Hambleton rookeries, with 16 at Beaumont Chase Farm.
- Raven.** Birds were noted at three sites. A pair bred but the single chick was predated – the first breeding attempt in Rutland since c.1840.
- Firecrest.** A singing male was at RW(Eggleton) on 19.04.
- Willow Tit.** Records were received from Beaumont Chase Farm, Wardley Wood, Brooke (song), Langham, RW and Leighfield.
- Marsh Tit.** Singing birds were reported from Prior's Coppice, Clipsham Quarries and Westland Wood. Other sites included Wing, Dawn's Paddock and Tunneley Wood, where feeders were visited.
- Sand Martin.** One at RW on 09.03 was the first record, with five present on 13.03 and 25 on 15.03. At least 200 were at the RW (Eggleton) 'nestbox' by mid-April. The first at FHP was on 20.03. c.30 were on powerlines at Normanton on 20.04.
- Swallow.** One was at RW on 29.03 and birds had returned to breeding sites at Stocken, Uppingham, Normanton and Barrowden between 02 and 05.04. A nest at Stocken had three eggs on 27.04.
- House Martin.** First noted at RW(Whitwell) on 01.04, with the next at Barrowden on 03.04. Only small nos were noted to the end of April with records from Mounts Lodge, Stocken and Langham.
- Chiffchaff.** In 1968 the Society recorded its first Chiffchaff on 24.03, and over the years first dates have become progressively earlier. This year the first was at RW on 08.03, and by mid-month birds were widespread and well-established in woodlands across the county. Eleven sang at LFP on 27.03, and 27 in the same general area the next day.
- Willow Warbler.** First noted at RW(Gorse Close) on 23.03, with birds at other RW locations to the end of the month. April records came from ten sites with nine singing at Clipsham Quarries on 10.04 and 14 at Gorsefield on 18.04.
- Blackcap.** March garden birds were at Barrowden and Oakham up to 13th. The first song was at RW(Hambleton Road) on 29.03, with two at Quarry Wood the next day. Throughout March numbers increased in all areas visited and seven were at Ketton Quarry woodlands on 20.04.
- Garden Warbler.** One was ringed at EBR on 15.04, and singles were at RW(Lyndon) on 18.04 and Burley Wood on 27.04. Good nos were singing at Lyndon on 28.04.
- Lesser Whitethroat.** One was at EBR on 16.04 and one near RW(Dam) on 21.04.

Common Whitethroat. An early bird was at RW(Lyndon) on 04.04, with the next at Quarry Farm on 14.04. From 20.04 birds were singing from hedgerows and scrub in many areas.

Grasshopper Warbler. One singing at RW(Egleton) on 09.04 was the first, with one at Tunneley Wood on 17.04 and two there on 21.04. One sang at wader scrape hide (Lyndon) on 28.04.

Sedge Warbler. One at RW on 02.04 was the first record and by mid-month birds were well established on both sections of the reserve. One sang at FHP on 25.04.

Reed Warbler. First heard at RW(Egleton) on 15.04, with several singing by lagoon 3 on 21.04. One sang at FHP on 25.04.

Waxwing. c.20 were at Ashwell on 19.03.

Nuthatch. An encouraging response for records produced sightings at Burley (up to 14), Barnsdale, Tunneley, Newell, Westland and Clipsham Park Woods as well as Beaumont Chase Farm, Clipsham Quarries (nest-sites at these two locations) and Woodhead.

Treecreeper. Noted at nine sites, with evidence of roosting in a *Wellingtonia* at Wing.

Fieldfare. Noted in flocks of 20–300 (Thorpe-by-Water on 02.03) at eight sites in March. There were seven in Exton Park on 09.04.

Redwing. There were 27 on pasture at Normanton on 02.03 and c.120 were at RW(Barnsdale) on 05.03. Ten were at Wakerley Bridge on 31.03.

Nightingale. Two were singing in Hambleton Wood on 14.04, with one on Lyndon reserve from 20.04. On 24.04 two sang in Greetham Wood Far and one at Clipsham Park Wood (Yew Tree Avenue).

Black Redstart. A male was at RW(Egleton) on 18.04 and a female at the dam there on 19.04.

Redstart. A male was at RW(Egleton) on 13.04.

Wheatear. Most records were of singles between 14.03 (RW) and 20.04, when there were nine at Luffenham Airfield. Other sites were FHP, Langham and EBR.

Tree Sparrow. Twelve were near Brooke on 08.03, with ten at RW(Hambleton Peninsula) on 24.03. Five visited feeders at Tixover in March and there were six on Lyndon Centre feeders on 28.04.

Yellow Wagtail. Three were at RW on 02.04 with one at EBR the next day. Birds had arrived at breeding sites in Exton Park/FHP on 09.04 and one was on Pickworth Plain on 18.04.

White Wagtail. c.12 were at RW on 08.04 with one on 11.04 and three at EBR on 13.04.

Meadow Pipit. One was back at Quarry Farm with possibly three pairs there by 25.03. This was the only site to provide records.

Rock Pipit. One was at RW(North Arm) on 18.03.

Brambling. One or two were noted between 01 and 28.03 at Oakham, Normanton, Brooke, LFP and RW.

Goldfinch. Fourteen frequented an Oakham garden all month whilst nineteen 'argumentative' birds fed on dandelion seeds at Stocken on 27.04.

Siskin. Up to eleven fed in two Oakham gardens to 24.03. Twenty were in Burley Wood on 06.03 and forty were near Brooke on 08.03. Eighteen flew north at FHP on 20.03 and there were eight at Brooke on 27.03.

Linnet. c.50 were near Brooke on 27.03.

Lesser Redpoll. Two were at feeders in an Oakham garden between 04 and 24.03. c.20 were in Burley Wood on 05.03, with 24 there on 07.03.

Common Crossbill. Two were near Brooke on 27.03 and one in Exton Park on 16.04.

Bullfinch. Two were in an Oakham garden on 04.03 and they also visited feeders at Dawn's Paddock in March.

Yellowhammer. Flocks of up to 120 (02.03) were in the Brooke area in March and thirty were at Quarry Farm on 04.03.

Reed Bunting. Garden records of one or two came from Barleythorpe and Tixover in March, whilst one visited a Stamford garden regularly to 20.04.

HIGH TIDES IN NORTH NORFOLK Nola Thurlow

High tides for Kings Lynn. Times in BST.

June				July			
Sunday	5	09.19	21.51	Sunday	3	08.27	20.59
	12	03.46	15.56		10	02.03	14.19
	19	09.20	22.04		17	08.24	21.04
	26	03.04	15.12		24	00.46	13.01
					31	07.31	20.02

March 2011 Wildfowl Counts

	Rutland Water 13.03	Eyebrook Reservoir 13.03	Fort Henry Ponds and Exton Park 11.03	Holywell Lake 12.03
Mute Swan	162	47	6	2
Greylag Goose	155	40	76	8
Canada Goose	116	16	2	70
Barnacle Goose	9			
Egyptian Goose	23			
Shelduck	51	9	2	
Wigeon	1881	335	30	
Gadwall	216	52	23	20
Teal	738	118	4	14
Mallard	504	16	65	22
Pintail	1			
Shoveler	34			
Pochard	18	8	4	
Tufted Duck	592	138	80	25
Scaup	4			
Long-tailed Duck	1			
Goldeneye	428	43		
Smew	5	1		
Little Grebe	9	3	3	6
Great Crested Grebe	92	15		
Cormorant	151	33		
Little Egret	1			
Grey Heron	17	2		
Water Rail	6			
Moorhen	40	4	9	9
Coot	548	113	59	22
TOTAL	5810	993	361	198

BOTANY NOTES compiled by Graham Worrall

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March/April 2011

March started with a floral flourish – **Primrose**, **Opposite-leaved Golden Saxifrage**, **Common Whitlowgrass**, **Lesser Celandine**, **Stinking Hellebore**, **Spurge Laurel** and **Dog's Mercury**. As the month progressed, along came **Colt'sfoot**, **Common Stork's-bill**, **Barren Strawberry**, **Hairy Bittercress** and **Toothwort**.

All through the month we could find **Dandelion**, **Daisy** and **Violets** – both **Common** and **Hairy** – and of course **Hazel catkins**. **Bloody Oaks**

Quarry came up with the first **Cowslip** of the year as the month closed.

April opened with **Danish Scurvy-grass** on most salted verges with 'bare' soil. **Toothwort** again appeared on Hazel roots at Gower Lodge Uppingham and by the middle of the month **Hawthorn** was flowering intermittently, but by the end of the month it was everywhere. **Greater Stitchwort** was scattered from the middle of the month and **Marsh Marigold** was in reasonable



abundance in Seaton Meadows SSSI; **Bulbous Buttercup** was in flower on calcareous soils and **Cow Parsley** and **Garlic Mustard** were abundant along with **White Dead-nettle**, **Bugle** and **Cuckooflower**.

Thanks to the recorders for the first look at the Roadside Verge Reserves and to the following for their sightings: T Mitcham, R Williams, R Archer, J Crosby, R Lemmon, G Worrall, M Grimes, C Jones, J Mallett, A Malcolm, P Rudkin, G Chiverton, D Whitefield.

Ancient woods such as Tunneley, Pickworth and Shire Oaks and Coppice Leys Barrowden were covered with **Wood Anemone**, and there were many areas with **Bluebells**.

LEPIDOPTERA NOTES compiled by Jean Harvey

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March/April 2011

BUTTERFLIES

The four species which over-winter as imagos, namely **Brimstone**, **Small Tortoiseshell**, **Peacock** and **Comma**, were all reported on the wing during the second half of March and these were seen mostly in gardens.

April has certainly made history this year as we understand it has been the warmest since records began. Some species emerged earlier than is usual and by the end of the month members had recorded 15 species throughout the County (as opposed to 10 species in 2010). As the weather has been so favourable, more people have visited woods and reserves and thus the number of cards received has been higher than in the last few years.

A few **Dingy** and **Grizzled Skippers** appeared at Ketton Quarry during the last week of April and were seen by several members on 4 separate days.

Brimstones were 'top of the list' with 28 reports from 18 sites. The largest numbers seen were at Rutland Water Lyndon Reserve (12+), Rutland Water Egleton (6), Ketton Quarry (8), Clipsham Park Wood (6) and Exton (6).

Both **Large** and **Small Whites** were recorded in a few areas and there were **Green Veined Whites** at Oakham Canal, Rutland Water Egleton and Ketton Quarry.

With so many sunny days recently there have been good numbers of **Orange Tips** this year. The first were recorded on April 7th in Clipsham Park Wood and at Uppingham. On the 20th 8 pairs were noted in Ketton Quarry and on the 21st there were 15+ at Rutland Water Egleton.

Green Hairstreak was another attractive species located at Ketton Quarry on four dates at the end of April. On the 27th two **Brown Argus** were also added to the list for the quarry.

Holly Blues were seen about a week earlier than in 2010 and were reported in ones and twos in several areas. During the last week of April there were five sightings of **Red Admiral**. These were at Brooke, Ketton Quarry (x 2), Leighfield and Oakham Canal.

The majority of records for Small Tortoiseshell came from the woods and reserves and these were mostly during the second half of March and the first half of April. Peacocks were seen in good numbers in the woods with 11 being counted in Burley Wood, 7 in Clipsham Park Wood and another 6 at Rutland Water Lyndon.

From mid-March onwards, Commas were reported from ten different areas, thus showing an increase for this species. A very early **Speckled Wood** was noted at Rutland Water Lyndon on April 8th, while all other records were for the last week of the month. On the 21st seven were counted at Rutland Water Egleton.

MOTHS

During early March, there were very few moths on the wing when the nights were fairly cold. On March 15th at the trap in the reedbeds at Rutland Water 612 of 13 species were attracted to the light, and a week later on the 22nd there were 787, again of 13 species but on this occasion there were four which had not been caught the previous week. The interesting moth here was the **Yellow Horned**, which is not often seen in our area. During April, 50 species were identified at this trap which was operated every other night during the month. These included **Blossom Underwing**, which was new for Rutland Water, a **White Marked** and several **Chocolate Tips**, which are becoming more common.

This year some species appear to be emerging about a fortnight earlier than is usual and a migrant **Dark Sword-grass** was trapped on two occasions. These are usually recorded later in the

year but can arrive early in mild conditions and with southerly winds.

We trapped twice in April at Eyebrook Reservoir but the weather was not kind to us on either occasion thus resulting in low catches. On the 4th the totals were 95 moths of 11 species and on the 18th 64 moths of 14 species. We were however very pleased to have two **Frosted Greens**, which were new for the site, on our second visit.

The other results received were both on March 26th when traps were run for a few hours only

For the above records I thank: J Ansley, T Caldicott, A & J Comber, J Crosby, R & J Follows, C H Gallimore, M Grimes, C R Jones, A L Lawrence, R Lemmon, J Levisohn, A Malcolm, J Mallett, T Mitcham, D Needham, D Perril, P Rudkin, A Russell, P Scott, M Skevington and G & L Worrall.

ORTHOPTERA REPORT compiled by Phil Rudkin

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March/April 2011

On 14 February, I received an email from Bjorn Beckmann, of the Biological Records Centre, Centre for Hydrology and Ecology. Bjorn is assisting Dr. Peter Sutton, the National Orthoptera Recording Scheme Organiser, with the input of data for the forthcoming National Orthoptera Atlas. This season (2011) is the last cut-off point before the Atlas is produced. I am delighted to say that the Society's orthoptera records from 2007 (my first season) to 2010 are now all on the database, thanks to Bjorn and his colleague Val Burton. Bjorn also told me that the Centre receives our *Fieldfare* newsletters, enjoys reading them, and is impressed with our Society. Thanks Bjorn, much appreciated!

So, this season we will give an extra push in our quest to expand into new areas of Rutland, and to give the National Atlas as much information as possible. I do think that we have done a good job so far, between us, to fill many gaps.

The dry, sunny weather this season has certainly been fabulous for our butterfly populations. March was the driest in 50 years, and April had the least rainfall for 80 years. Butterfly Conservation informs us that the glorious weather has given a new lease of life to Britain's butterflies, and, that the long warm spell may help to reverse their dramatic decline. Therefore, it will be interesting to see how the orthoptera fares this season. For the period under review, it is no surprise that Slender Groundhopper and the nymphs of crickets feature in this report.

Many thanks to: T Caldicott, R Harvey, C Jones, P Rudkin.

in Prior's Coppice (36 moths of 9 species) and Wardley Wood (42 moths of 10 species). At the second site, two White Markeds were recorded but all the others were common spring species.

At Ketton Quarry **Common Heaths**, which are day fliers, were seen. On April 20th there were c20 and again on the 22nd 'quite a few' were reported. A **Garden Carpet** was found on a windowsill in Oakham and a very early **Cinnabar** was seen in Brooke on April 30th.

Crickets

Dark Bush Cricket, *Pholidoptera griseoptera*

One, tiny nymph, located on vegetation, in the first ride from the entrance gate, at the A606. Burley Woods, Oakham, Compartment 23 (SK 892 094), 25th April.

Speckled Bush Cricket, *Leptophyes punctatissima*

One, tiny nymph, located on a Bluebell flower head. Burley Woods, Compartment 23 (SK 892 094), 19th April.

Groundhoppers

Slender Groundhopper, *Tetrix subulata*

The first orthoptera sighting of the season goes to Clive Jones and Phil Rudkin, with Clive spotting these tiny hoppers on the dirt track of the path, near the entrance gate, just inside Burley Woods, in between compartments 23 and 24 (SK 892 093), 13th March. At least 5 were noted. A regular area for this species!

The now famous Brooke Road Oakham allotment (SK 860 081) features next, with 3 seen near the compost heap on 22 March. Tim Caldicott carried out his observations from 20th April through to the end of the month. 5 were the maximum at one time, and smaller numbers from then on.

Finally, from Thorpe by Water, Ron Harvey was filming Wolf Spiders, and a Slender Groundhopper was observed nearby, 3 feet from edge of water, on the bank of the River Welland (SP 892 962), 22 April.

PLANT GALLS REPORT compiled by Roy Lemmon

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March 2011

The very beginning of the gall season with just one report for this month and this was, not surprisingly, a rust induced gall on Common Mallow from Verge 7 on the 24th.

I will take this opportunity to mention a book on *Plant Galls* in the New Naturalist Series, which has just been published. A.D. Imms devoted just 15 pages to the subject in his *Insect Natural History* (No. 8, 1947), and now some 64 years later we have a whole book of 562 pages written by Margaret Redfern, one of the leading authorities on plant galls in this country. Her book, No. 117 in the series, is not an identification guide but gives a huge amount of information about the subject, from classical Greece to the present day; covering such a range of topics it must contain something for everyone. It is well illustrated with diagrams and some excellent photographs and occasionally when the text gets more technical it is placed in a coloured box so you have the option to read it or not. The book is available in soft or hard back and the latter at least has a very attractive dust jacket in the usual New Naturalist mould. These books are not cheap but Amazon softens the blow!

Thanks to Dr C H Gallimore, R Lemmon

April 2011

Many more galls this month, perhaps the fact that this was the warmest April since records began in 1659 may have something to do with it. Many were rusts and outstanding amongst them is that found on Dogs Mercury, which was found in Clipsham Park Wood, Priors Coppice, Verge 7 and Woodhead Castle. Running it a close second was another rust, this time on Lesser Celandine, found in CPW, Verge 7, and WhdC. On 16th there was a report of a marble gall on Oak in Lax Hill and the observer noted a small hole in it, which indicates that the gall wasp had hatched and gone. At the end of the month on the 28th mite galls were found on Cleavers, Midland Hawthorn and Wild Service Tree. These are all different species of mites causing galling on specific leaves and it is interesting how quickly the damage appears after the plants have broken leaf, although it has to be said that the mites have probably overwintered among the bark adjacent to the new leaves, so they can make the most of their opportunity.

Please let me have your records, every little helps to give a picture across the County.

INSECTS AND OTHERS compiled by Gill Chiverton

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I wrote in the last Fieldfare that I was hoping for lots of records for the next two months – March provided a good number of records but it has proved really interesting typing up all the April sightings.

March 2011

Hemiptera

A **Common Pond Skater** *Gerris lacustris* was noticed on a pond at Woodhead Castle.

Hymenoptera

Red-tailed Bumblebees *Bombus lapidarius* noted at Barleythorpe, on Verge 7 and on two occasions at Stocken. **White-tailed Bumblebees** *Bombus lucorum* noted on Verge 7 and at Stocken. **Honey Bees** *Apis mellifera* 10 recorded at Stocken, and 20+ noted on two occasions at Barrowden. A small number of **Ashen Bees** *Andrena cineraria* (a solitary bee) were flying over the lawn at Stocken. Another solitary bee **Andrena haemorrhoa**

(one of the earliest spring species) was noted as numerous at Stocken. **Hairy-footed Flower Bees** *Anthophora plumipes* were noted at Stocken and Barrowden. **Buff-tailed Bumblebees** *Bombus terrestris* recorded at Verge 7 and Barleythorpe. **Hornet** *Vespa crabro* – a large queen was noted at Stocken. An **Ichneumon**, a parasitic insect, *Ichneumon stramentarius*, was seen at Stocken.

Coleoptera

7-spot Ladybirds *Coccinella 7-punctata* were well recorded over the month. They were recorded on four occasions at Stocken, the largest number being 28 at one time; Verge 7; Burley Wood and noted as being 'abundant everywhere in Rutland this spring'; Empingham and North Luffenham;

Dawn's Paddock and Barleythorpe. A solitary **Harlequin Ladybird** *Harmonia axyridis* was seen at Stocken. **Orange Ladybird** *Halyzia 16-guttata* – six were still on an ash tree at Leighfield (recorded last month). **Kidney-spot Ladybird** *Chilocorus renipustulatus* – one still remained on ash tree at Leighfield.

A **Whirligig Beetle** *Gyrinus natator* was seen on the pond at Stocken and one was also noted on the pond at Woodhead Castle.

Bloody-nosed Beetles *Timarcha tenebricosa* – are again doing well at Dawn's Paddock – many recorded and also mating pairs.

April 2011

Odonata

Large Red Damselfly *Pyrrosoma numphula* – single insects noted at Leighfield Fishponds and Brooke.

Broad-bodied Chaser *Libellula depressa* observed at a garden pond in Barrowden.

Hemiptera

A **Hairy Shieldbug** *Dolycoris baccarum* – two were observed on separate plants of *Atropa belladonna* in Ketton Quarry. A **Squash Bug** *Coreus marginatus* was disturbed from ivy at Barrowden. A **Common Flower Bug** *Anthocoris nemorum* was recorded at Stocken. The following were observed on the pond at Stocken – **Pond Skaters** *Gerris lacustris*, a **Water Measurer** *Hydrometra stagnorum* and **Common Water Boatmen** *Corixa punctata*.

Diptera

Recorded at Stocken: a **Common Bee-Fly** *Bombylius major*, a **Drone Fly** *Eristalis tenax*, 10+ **St. Mark's Flies** *Bibio marci*, also a single specimen of *Bibio anlicus*, a **Yellow Drone Fly** *Scathophaga stercoraria*, a **Crane Fly** and a **Marmalade Hoverfly** *Episyrphus balteatus*. A **Snouted Hoverfly** *Rhingia campestris* and a **Dainty bee Hoverfly** *Leucozona lucorum* were recorded at Belton. An **Elegant Hoverfly** *Epistrophe elegans* (another bee-mimic) was recorded at Rutland Water NR. **Black Midges** were found to be common in Burley Wood – recorder notes 'probably *Chrysopilus cristatus*'. A **Common Bee-Fly** *Bombylius major* was recorded on Verge 7.

Hymenoptera

Early Bumblebees *Bombus pratorum* were noted at Oakham and Stocken. **Buff-tailed Bumblebees** *Bombus terrestris* were seen at Stocken and Clipsham Park Wood. **Red-tailed Bumblebees**

Bombus lapidarius were noted at Stocken, near Pilton and at Priors Coppice. A **White-tailed Bumblebee** *Bombus lucorum* was recorded at Stocken. **Tawny-mining Bees** *Andrena fulva* were noted at Stocken and Oakham. **Red Mason Bees** *Osmia rufa* were recorded at Ketton Quarry and Stocken. **Common Carder Bees** *Bombus pascuorum* were seen on Verge 7 and at Stocken.

Solitary Bees *Andrena haemorrhoa* were noted at Stocken, Rutland Water NR and Belton. Wasp mimic solitary cuckoo bees *Nomada flava* were seen Rutland Water NR, Belton and Stocken. **Honey Bees** *Apis mellifera* were seen at Brooke and Belton. Solitary bees: **Andrena chrysoceles** – both male and female – were found at Belton; *Dasypoda hirtipes*, an 'attractive hairy bee' noted in Lyndon churchyard; *Osmia caerulescens*, male and female, again in Lyndon churchyard; *Andrena humilis* a 'scarce' species <10 insects were noted at Rutland Water NR; *Nomada fulvicornis*, a scarce species noted at Belton, but specimen taken to ID; **Hairy-footed Flower Bee** *Anthophora plumipes* seen on violets at Lyndon churchyard, **Melecta armata**, a species parasitic on *A. plumipes* also seen at Lyndon churchyard. *M. armata* was recorded as fairly abundant around *A. plumipes* – ratio approx 1 parasite to 3 host species.

A **Common Wasp** *Vespula vulgaris* – a queen wasp was observed chewing wood for nest-building at Rutland Water NR. Two **Red Wasps** *Vespula rufa* were noted at Stocken. Three **Tree/Wood Wasps** were observed constructing nests at Stocken. A **Hornet** *Vespa crabro* was also noted at Stocken.

Coleoptera

7-spot Ladybirds *Coccinella 7-punctata* were recorded as follows: 50+ at Stocken, in good numbers at Barrowden, good numbers throughout Clipsham Park Wood, 3 noted at Woodhead Castle and Verge 7. **Orange Ladybird** *Halyzia 16-guttata* – 6 were still at Leighfield but only one remained a week later. A **10-spot Ladybird** *Adalia 10-punctata* was noted at Leighfield Fishponds. A **14-spot Ladybird** *Propylea 14-punctata* was noted at Burley Wood. An interestingly marked **22-spot Ladybird** *Psyllobora 22-punctata* was recorded at Rutland Water NR and one was seen at Stocken. **Two-spot Ladybirds** *Adalia 2-punctata* were noted on four occasions at Stocken. **Harlequin Ladybirds** *Harmonia axyridis f. succinea* – 3 recorded at Stocken and one insect at Barrowden; also one *H. axyridis f. conspicua* noted at Stocken.

Lily Beetles *Lilioceris lili* were being removed from martagon lilies over the month at

Barrowden, 6 were noted in a garden at Oakham, and one found unusually on white dead-nettles near Pilton. A **Cockchafer** *Melolontha melolontha* was rescued when it flew into a lighted window at Barrowden. A **Ground Beetle** *Pterostichus niger* was noted still hibernating in a tree stump near Pilton.

Arachnida

Dark-coloured spiders were noted as common in dry vegetation at Burley Wood. The recorder noted them as probably *Micaria pulicaria*, the Ant-mimic spider whose habitat is leaf litter and which run about in warm sun. Eight **Garden Spiders** *Araneus diadematus* were noted in the gardens at Stocken.

Many thanks to the following people for all records, interesting observations and photos: T Caldicott, J Crosby, M Grimes, C R Jones, A Lawrence, R Lemmon, T Newton, D Perril, M Tyler, D Whitefield and L & G Worrall.

MYCOLOGY NOTES

compiled by Linda Worrall

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Your Recorder apologises very much for the lack of reports. All cards already received, which were most welcome, will be recorded as soon as possible. Please continue to send further sightings. Thanks.

MAMMAL REPORT

compiled by Linda Biddle

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Thank you for all your reports; unfortunately I am unable to meet the deadline this month, but your records will be included in the next Fieldfare, and do keep sending them in.

BAT REPORT

compiled by Jenny Harris

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March/April 2011

There were no records from members in January and February, but on 18.1 a female **Common Pipistrelle** (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) was found in a garden at Burley Crescent, Ashwell, with a cat in attendance. It subsequently died. Visits were made to a hibernation site in January and February. On 16.1, a **Natterer's bat** (*Myotis nattereri*) and three unidentified bats were found; these three roosting together were too high to identify. On 20.2 two Natterer's were observed.

The first bat seen in flight was on 29.3, when a small bat was flying erratically, fairly low, over the education garden at Stocken Prison, before disappearing past 'J' wing. In April a single bat was again observed emerging from the garden, following the same flight path past 'J' wing on 10th, 14th, 15th and 16th, on each occasion leaving the area quite quickly. However, on 17.4 on a warm evening, a bat foraged in the prison garden

for about 30 minutes. Its flight was less erratic, consisting of graceful swoops and long straight flights. This description of the flight pattern on 17.4 is very characteristic of **Whiskered bat** (*Myotis mystacinus*), which has been recorded at HMP Stocken as recently as 2010.

In Barrowden, two small bats were first seen foraging over gardens on 9.4. Thereafter, odd ones were seen occasionally up to 23.4, but very few on colder nights towards the month's end.

Common Pipistrelle were seen in an Oakham garden on various dates between 8.4 and 23.4, while a **Soprano Pipistrelle** (*P. pygmaeus*) was recorded on two occasions in April, briefly, over gardens in Woodland View, Oakham.

Copious droppings were noted on 20.4 under the eaves of the extension at the Stone House, Wing, and thought to be of both Pipistrelle and **Brown long-eared** (*Plecotus auritus*) bats.