



Marbled white.
Photo Jayne Walker.

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Welcome

What appeared to be a distinct lack of “buzz and flutter” earlier on in the season, has become a reality according to the big insect conservation societies, the Butterfly Conservation Society in particular. Roy’s weather report (page 3) says all we need to know for the last two months – below average temperatures and plenty of rain.

We seemed to have planned our spring field trips to perfection because the sun accompanied us on two of our outdoor walks to Robert’s field in June and Swaddywell in July. We could have done without a surprise greeting from a rather large member of the Vespa family at Robert’s field though! You can read these reports on pages 15-19.

The Annual Family Bug and Butterfly hunt took place in Ketton quarry again, and this year we teamed up with the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust who were also promoting “slugs and “snails” with leaflets handed out to our young audience. I’m not sure what they made of that, but their parents probably needed some convincing, with our garden Gastropods heartily munching through our veggie patches this year. Does a Leopard slug eat lettuces, I wonder?

An additional report for this edition is this year’s Glowworm survey, for which we thank those members and volunteers who gave up an evening a week throughout June and July to go outside into the fading light and count glowworms in selected sites throughout the County. I’m sure you will agree, there were some great results. (Pages 10-12).

Unfortunately our September Bat walk has been cancelled for this year, but in October we will be joining Craig Howat for a foray into Wardley woods - delving into the fascinating world of fungi.

And don’t forget our first Autumn indoor meeting will be on 1st October at VTC with a talk by the Beekeepers Association. For all these events, don’t miss booking with Jeff. (See Diary dates page 2).

The nights are drawing in - enjoy what is left of the warm summer days!

DIARY DATES



RNHS Outdoor meetings.

The following events are correct at time of publication but may be changed at short notice, so it is important to book your place with Jeff Wilcox-Smith. Details. Mob: 07946733931 or wilcoxsmith@btinternet.com. Full details of all these events appear on our website at www.rnhs.org.uk. Please make sure you are wearing appropriate clothing for the outdoor meetings and if the weather is bad on the day, give Jeff a ring beforehand in case it needs to be cancelled. Jeff may also help with any queries if you are unsure about directions.

Sunday 8th September. 7.15pm. Bat walk at the Volunteer Training Centre (VTC) with Jenny Harris.

Please note that this event has been cancelled.

Saturday 19th October. 10.00am. Fungi foraging in Wardley woods with Craig Howat. Owned and managed by The Forestry Commission, this is a woodland currently undergoing a management plan along with Owston woods. It is a wet woodland so appropriate footwear should be worn. **Meet:** At Sweethedges Farm Car park. LE16 9AD. Grid ref: SP831 991. From Uppingham take B664 towards Stockerston. Before turnoff to the reservoir, turn right and immediate right again onto Allexton Field road. After 2nd cattle grid turn right into Sweethedges car park.

RNHS Indoor evening meetings.

7.30pm – 9.30pm on First Tuesday of every month from October through to March at Volunteer Training Centre (VTC). LE15 8AD. Ref: SK883 083. Please book your place as detailed above with Jeff Wilcox-Smith as places may be limited. Visitors are asked for a donation of £2.00.

Tuesday 1st October. 7.30pm. Grantham and District Bee Keepers Association. Sarah Algar and Catherine Sheen (Chair and Secretary) will speak about the beekeeping year, food production and Asian hornets. These insects are a growing invasive species to this country, specializing in preying on Honeybee hives with enormous destructive effects. Honey will be available to purchase in jars or by the pound.

Tuesday 5th November. 7.30pm. A talk by our Vice-president Tim Mackrill. Tim needs no introduction to Rutlanders. He managed the Rutland Osprey Project some years ago and is now also leading a team to re-introduce White-tailed eagles back into England. Learn more about these fabulous birds of prey.

Notices.

We still have 2 vacancies for important roles on the committee. Peter Scott has continued as acting Treasurer for the Society since he officially retired at the 2024 March AGM. This was to act as advisor to anyone who may take up the role in his place. Unfortunately, as no one has offered to replace Peter, **we will no-longer have a Treasurer from March 2025** unless a volunteer can be found to replace him.

Jeff Wilcox-Smith, (**Programme secretary**) who has produced a great programme of annual events for us over the last few years has also retired and we need someone who can help with our 60th anniversary programme next year. If you have ideas you would like to put to the committee, let us know and we will discuss at the next meeting.

Roy Lemmon (Gall reports) and Jayne Walker (Insects and other invertebrates) have now retired from years of recording and sending in reports to this newsletter. Thank you Roy and Jayne for your contributions.

If there is anyone who would like to take over the Gall or Insect recording or has a special interest in any wildlife taxa and would like to record for our Annual Report and contribute to the RNHS newsletter, do please get in touch. You do not need to be an expert but this could be a great opportunity to further your own interest in a subject you have been waiting to share with like minded people. Contacts are on the back page of the newsletter.

There will not be a photographic competition this year, but if members would like to send in photo's of any wildlife they have spotted in the County, they could be used in future Fieldfares.

WEATHER

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June 2024.

Atmospheric pressure and wind. The first 3 days of the month saw high pressures, the monthly highest was 1029mb. on the 2nd and for the rest of the month they were lower, the lowest was 1000mb. on the 15th. A feature of the winds this month was that on 16 days they were NW-E and this doubtless had an effect on the temperatures (see below). There were no named storms, but daytime winds often increased in velocity as the day progressed. At 09.00 on the 28th I recorded a gust of 15mph. and this did increase later.

Temperature. A cool June with a mean temperature of 15.81C making this month the 8th. coolest June in the decade 2015-2024. From the 20th. to the 27th. the daytime maxima was in excess of 25C and this was also a sunny time.

Precipitation. A total of 12.8mm. (0.5 inches) for the month equates to 25% of my long-term mean. It is the lowest I have ever recorded for June, the next lowest being 14.6mm. in 2012.

July 2024.

Atmospheric pressure and wind. Pressures were generally low until the 27th. and then high until the end, the lowest being 1000mb. on the 6th. and the highest was 1026.5mb. on the 28th. Winds were very changeable in direction throughout with gusty conditions on the 4th, 7th and 10th. There were no named storms. There were 16 days during the month when the wind directions were NW-NE and this, as with June 2024, must have affected the overall temperatures.

Temperature. The overall mean was 18.45C placing July 2024 5th. in the decade 2015-2024, ie. there were 5 cooler months in that period. It is interesting that July 2023 had a mean of 16.76C, the lowest in the decade.

Precipitation. A total here of 59.4mm. (2.34 inches) which equates to 108% of my long-term mean. All but 1mm. fell in the first half of the month and there were 17 days on which no rain fell.

AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES

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June and July 2024

There have been very few records for these months.

There were records of **Common Frogs** from Ridlington and Ketton Quarry in mid-July and Tim Sexton found one at Rutland Water Nature Reserve, commenting that it was the first frog he had seen on the reserve in three and a half years. In fact, the last record from the reserve that I have was spawn in 2019.

Common Toads were also in evidence, Driving from Wing to Braunston on the wet night of July 5 my wife encountered eight toads on the road in Wing, Preston, Ridlington, Brooke and Braunston. Dave Needham also recoded eight toads at Ketton Quarry on 18 July. At the end of July Carolyn Baxter found a toadlet again by Wardley Wood and also found a toad in her greenhouse in Uppingham.



Toadlet seen again at previous crossing at Wardley. Photo C. Baxter

The only other herp records were of a **Viviparous Lizard** photographed on Pickworth Drift on June 7 and one at Bloody Oaks on 29 July.

My thanks to the following who provided these records:- C Baxter, A Biddle, P Harwood, J Morrell and D Needham

Below. Common frog at Ridlington. Photo J. Morrell



BATS

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April to July 2024

The weather during this period was very changeable, and evenings were often cold and wet. However, there were a few garden bat sightings from members during the period. On 5 April Donnie and Steve Smalley saw two small bats, probably pipistrelle sp., flying over Barmstedt Close in Oakham, SK865095 and on 13 April two pipistrelles were hawking for insects in Jayne Walker's Exton garden, SK12781098. In July a Common Pipistrelle (identified by its

45kHz echolocation calls), was regularly seen foraging over my front garden in Oakham, with acrobatic dives and feeding buzzes observed. At Toletorpe open air theatre, several bats were seen flying over the floodlit stage soon after the lights went up after the interval. There were probably two species, but at least one of these was clearly a long-eared bat; it flew in the spotlight out from the stage towards the audience, then turned back and disappeared behind the scenery.

National Bat Monitoring programme (NBMP) counts at maternity roosts.

Leicestershire and Rutland Bat Group count a number of bat roosts in June, which includes four Rutland church sites, listed below. The Programme is run by the Bat Conservation Trust.

Roost name	Date	Species	Count	Weather, etc.
All Saints Church, Braunston-in-Rutland	11 June	Soprano Pipistrelle	141	Full cloud, calm, intermittent drizzle, 13°C falling to 11°C count ceased when too dark.
St Edmund's Church, Egleton	07 June	Soprano Pipistrelle	1052	Full cloud, calm, dry, 14°C falling to 11°C, ceased when no further activity
	18 June	Soprano Pipistrelle	626	Full cloud, breezy, dry, 14.5°C falling to 13°C ceased when no further activity
Stoke Dry Church		Natterer's bat		No count this year
St Andrew's Church, Whissendine	25 June	Natterer's bat	76	Patchy cloud, light wind, dry, 21°C, count ceased because of confusing behaviour

No counts were carried out at Stoke Dry church this year, but there are still Natterer's bats using the church, and further surveys to discover where they emerge may be possible next year. Following remedial work in Egleton Church in October 2023 to prevent the soprano pipistrelles entering the building, this appears to have been successful and I did not hear of any problems arising this year. The count of 626 bats on 18 June was the lowest it has been for some time, but it may have been caused by the changeable weather as several other roosts in Leicestershire and Rutland were also down in number. At Braunston-in-Rutland church, the number of bats counted had more than halved compared to last year (324 the

maximum number in June 2023). I don't know the reason for this, but I noticed that on 11 June, security lights on the front of the village hall were on all evening and were lighting up the entrances on the east side of the porch. The eastern section of the south aisle was, in previous, years the principal area where the soprano pipistrelles were roosting, and bats avoid emerging into a lit environment. In contrast, the count at Whissendine was very pleasing, and is the highest since around 2008 when flood lights were put in. I believe the flood lights were not turned on over summer this year, which seems to have benefited the uncommon Natterer's bats breeding there.

Bat box checks at Rutland Water for National Nathusius' Pipistrelle Project. (NNPP)

I attended the bat box check at Barnsdale Wood, Rutland Water, carried out by Tom Bennett, who co-ordinates the NNPP in this area. This took place on 13 April 2024 before the risk of finding bats in the boxes that could be pregnant or lactating. Any Nathusius' pipistrelles found were ringed if new to the scheme, and ring number recorded if it was a re-trap. Only Nathusius' pipistrelles were ringed; the only other species recorded that day was soprano pipistrelle, and most of these were not handled. Boxes that had fallen or were broken were re-erected or replaced by Tom. Boxes other than those containing bats were mostly empty, though a few had slugs, spiders or bat droppings in them. One had the remains of a bird's nest on top of bat droppings

Results were as follows:

Box no 10 one Nathusius' Pipistrelle, male, new to scheme, ringed
Box no 11 13 Soprano Pipistrelles
Box no 16 one Nathusius' male, re-capture. Ring number J4900, weight 7.0g, f/a 33.5mm
Box no 13 six Sopranos
Box no 20 one Soprano
Box no 22 20 Sopranos
Box no 24 seven Sopranos
Box 1FF one Soprano in woodcrete box
Box no 27 six Sopranos
Box no 44 one Nathusius' Pipistrelle female; she was ringed and tagged (see next page)

I left the survey early so did not see this female captured. She was taken to VTC where Tom fitted a Motus tag and released her at sunset, around 8.0pm. Female Nathusius' Pipistrelles are the target species for the survey, as it is hoped the Motus scheme tags that are attached to them will show where the females go in summer, and perhaps lead to the discovery of a maternity roost. This female's Motus antenna signals were picked up by receptor equipment at RW, the last signal being recorded on 20 April away from the reserve.

After I left the survey a further three Nathusius' Pipistrelles

were found in boxes, all male, and one of them was another recapture for the Barnsdale scheme. I don't have these box numbers, but a further 14 Soprano Pipistrelles were also found. The total count of Soprano Pipistrelles in the Barnsdale boxes was 88.

Later in the day Tom and his group checked bat boxes in Lax Hill Wood, but there were no bats in any of these boxes.

On 24 May Tom Bennett and his group carried out a harp trapping survey at RW, but I do not have details of the results.

Grounded bats.

Key: f/a: Forearm length. Died E: Euthanized by vet.

Date	Details
09 April	Soprano Pipistrelle, adult male, Lyddington Church, SP876969. 3.5g, starved/dehydrated, taken into care, released 06 May, weight 4.8g
06 May	Whiskered bat, male, Rutland Hall, Barnsdale, SK903092. 4.2g, starved/dehydrated, f/a 34mm. Released 18 July
14 May	Common Pipistrelle, f/a 32mm, 3.8g, Barleythorpe, SK849097, damage to left wing (cat?) Died E 16 May
17 May	Common Pipistrelle, male, f/a 31mm, extensive injury to left side, cat injuries, Barmstedt Close, Oakham, SK865095. Died E 17 May
04 June	Common Pipistrelle, adult male, f/a 30.5g, Stamford, broken humerus, died E, 04 June. Weight not taken because of injury. SP005080.
04 June	Common Pipistrelle, adult male, Barleythorpe. f/a 31mm, not weighed. Damage to right wing and ears, what looked like dried saliva on head and face, bare skin patches on shoulders, pink urine. Probable cat or dog victim. Died E, 04 June. Near SK849097.
17 June	Brown Long-eared bat, adult male, Seaton church. Came into care on 22 October, when weight 3.27g, forearm 37mm, very small. He was over-wintered, but bearing in mind his low weight initially, he was kept until warmer weather would allow him to thrive in the wild. Released in the churchyard on 17 June, and flew off strongly. SK904982.
04 July	Pipistrelle sp., infant c. 2 weeks old. Oakham. Too young for rehabilitation so taken to vet for E, 05 July. SK853080.
09 July	Pipistrelle sp. Stretton, Rutland. Found on wall below roost. Very small (photo sent to me). Died before I could collect it. SK947158.
12 July	Soprano Pipistrelle, juvenile. Barnsdale Avenue, near Oakham. Originally seen on ground c. 05 July, weight 2.8g, forearm 30mm. Formerly pipistrelle roost in roof of house. Bat retained for rehabilitation and flight training/assessment. SK912109.
14 July	Pipistrelle sp., infant approx. 2 weeks old. Lammas Close, Braunston-in-Rutland. F/arm 22mm, weight 2.4g, very thin, especially over hip area. It did not take any water and died soon after collection. SK835067.
18 July	No ID as bat had died before I could collect it. Main Street, Edmondthorpe, found in kitchen on floor. House has a bat roost, but no further details supplied. SK852175.
19 July	Brown Long-eared bat infant, West End, Exton (converted farm building/industrial unit). F/arm 28mm, weight 3.8g. Probably approx. 2 weeks old. Died while I was trying to feed it. SK924114.

In addition, a bat was found in a waste bin in a work yard near Ketton on 26 July. The finder removed the bat and put it somewhere safe, i.e. above ground in the shade, but did

not contain it. When he returned to the yard a few hours later, the bat had disappeared, so let's hope it sensibly flew to a nearby roost.

New roosts discovered.

Following the discovery of the grounded bats listed above, several new roosts were found, as follows:

- 26 June, Derwent Avenue, Edith Weston, Oakham. The owner of this former RAF married quarters house discovered the roost when he noticed bats emerging from a tiny pipe in an east-facing wall. He has asked for it to be listed on the LRERC county database.
- Shannon Way, Oakham. Bats seen emerging from gable end.
- Spinney Lane, Stretton, Rutland.
- Lammas Close, Braunston-in-Rutland

5. Main Street, Edmondthorpe
 Thanks to Donnie and Steve Smalley and Jayne Walker for their records, and to all who contacted me about a grounded bat. Thanks to Linda and Anthony Biddle, Neil Hughes and others who helped with bat counts at the Braunston-in-Rutland and Egleton NBMP churches for help and especially to Ann Tomlinson for the counts she has carried out to find where the Natterer's are emerging at Stoke Dry. Thanks also to Tom Bennett for his work checking bat boxes and trapping at RW sites for the National Nathusius' Pipistrelle Project.

BIRDS

Recorder Terry Mitcham

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June 2024.

Highlights. Rutland Water had a Little Tern (2nd) and a Sandwich Tern (5th). Shoveler bred at Fort Henry Ponds and tree nesting Peregrines fledged three young at the 2023 site. A Spoonbill flew over Eyebrook Reservoir (2nd).

Rutland Water. (See also monthly Wildfowl Count). Other wildfowl were a Ruddy Shelduck (29th) and a Garganey (1st). Marsh Harrier and Hobby were regular at Egleton. Wader counts included 33 Oystercatchers (11th), eight Avocets (21st), 16 Lapwings (11th), six Little Ringed Plovers (21st), 12 Black-tailed Godwits (28th), single Dunlin and Snipe (both 11th) and Green Sandpipers (from 11th) and a Spotted Redshank (11th). There were two Yellow-legged Gulls, 54 Common Terns and an Arctic Tern (11th). An early (late?) Wheatear was at the dam (20th).

Eyebrook Reservoir. (See also monthly Wildfowl Count). There was a Ruddy Shelduck (17th) and a pair of Garganey (1st – 5th) with a female to (22nd). There were two Ospreys (9th). Waders included two Oystercatchers (6th), three Ringed Plovers (9th), eight Little Ringed Plovers (29th), a Sanderling (3rd), Green Sandpipers (8th, 29th) and two Common Sandpipers (29th). There were 40 Common Terns (6th)

Other Sites. Fort Henry Ponds had two Shelducks (8th), 27 Gadwall (8th), 28 Tufted Ducks (22nd) and a Mandarin Duck (22nd). A Kingfisher was at Banthorpe GP (21st) with two Yellow Wagtails there (3rd). A Wheatear was at Luffenham Airfield (4th). Exton Park had an Osprey (22nd) and a Hobby (29th).

July 2024.

Highlights. There was a Long-eared Owl at Rutland Water (22nd). Eyebrook Reservoir had a Pectoral Sandpiper (10th-11th) and a Roseate Tern (28th).

Rutland Water. (See also Monthly Wildfowl Count). Wildfowl included two Barnacle Geese from (9th) and three Common Scoter (16th). Some wader counts were five Oystercatchers, 265 Lapwings, a Little Ringed Plover, two Black-tailed Godwits (all 23rd), three Ruff (9th), two Dunlin, four Common Sandpipers and ten Green Sandpipers (all 23rd) and two Wood Sandpipers at Lyndon (30th). On (23rd) there were 11 Yellow-legged and three Caspian Gulls and 43 Common Terns. There were five Hobbies (4th) and four on (26th). Spotted Flycatchers were at Gibbet Gorse and Egleton Meadows and there was a Wheatear on (30th).

Eyebrook Reservoir. (See also Monthly Wildfowl Count). There was a Common Scoter (13th) and a Marsh Harrier (28th). Some wader counts included seven Little Ringed Plovers (14th), three Whimbrel (10th), four Black-tailed Godwits (10th), a Turnstone (16th), six Ruff (9th), ten Redshanks (9th), a Wood Sandpiper (15th – 18th) and Greenshank (10th – 28th). There were two Yellow-legged Gulls (20th) and 20 Common Terns (21st). A Hobby was seen (21st) and Stonechats were present all month.

Other Sites. Fort Henry Ponds had a second brood of Shoveler and a Green Sandpiper (21st) with a Hobby (6th). Two pairs of Barn Owls bred at Exton. Eight pairs of Sand Martins bred in a stone wall at Normanton, where Spotted Flycatchers were regular and also in Exton Park.

My thanks to the following for their records:- T.P. Appleton, R.F. Baker, D & J Ball, G & M Griffin, LROS, K. Mathers, T. Mitcham, B. Moore, P. Murray, J.W. Nourish, C. I. Park, RWNR, T.Sexton.

Wildfowl Counts June and July 2024.

	RW 11.06.	RW 23.07.	EBR 09.06.	EBR 21.07.
Canada Goose	1126	896	166	68
Barnacle Goose		2		
Greylag Goose	1036	878	101	93
Mute Swan	327	394	63	106
Egyptian Goose	38	63	1	3
Shelduck			2	5
Mandarin Duck	6	4		
Shoveler	28	27	1	10
Gadwall	189	1941	26	221
Wigeon	2	8		
Mallard	606	792	170	381
Teal	4	28	1	16
Red-crested Pochard	2			
Pochard	14	55		
Tufted Duck	188	1409	10	4
Little Grebe	1	26		2
Great Crested Grebe	187	356	35	113
Grey Heron	3	20		3
Great White Egret	1	11		
Little Egret	33	69	1	2
Cormorant	156	274	104	58
Moorhen	27	43		3
Coot	144	283	6	39
Kingfisher		1		
TOTAL	4118	7579	687	1127



Wildfowl counts June and July continued

	FHP and Exton Park 08.06.	FHP and Exton Park 21.07.	Banthorpe GP 10.06.	Banthorpe GP 19.07.
Canada Goose	12		4	2
Greylag Goose	2		2	27
Mute Swan	7	5	2	2
Egyptian Goose	2			
Shelduck	2			
Mandarin Duck	1			
Shoveler	1	12		
Gadwall	28	6		
Mallard	52	96	3	11
Teal			2	
Tufted Duck	23	6	2	
Little Grebe		1		
Grey Heron		3	1	1
Little Egret	1		1	1
Cormorant		1	1	1
Moorhen	3	15		1
Coot	28	58	3	3
TOTAL	162	204	21	49

BOTANY

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June/ July 2024

Last spring will be remembered as cold and wet, but it obviously suited some things. At Swaddywell which the Society visited in July, we found lots of **Centuary, Lesser Centuary** and **Yellowwort**; all had benefited from that weather, as our guide Sarah Lambert suggested. The same situation apparently existed at Quarry Farm, where Terry Mitcham found the same groups of flowers towards the end of the month.

Terry was also involved in finding **Dropwort**, a plant in the Rosaceae family and very similar to Meadowsweet but smaller, unscented and with fewer but larger flowers. The last record of this was 9 years ago in Merry's Meadows. This latest find was at Fort Henry Ponds. Geoffrey Hall and Steve Woodward, whom Terry was accompanying, recognised the flower. Steve had also told us of **Corn Parsley**, an uncommon member of the Apiaceae family, at



Dropwort.
Photo C Baxter

Meadowsweet.
Photo C Baxter.



Chapel Hill, Empingham and suggested that we might like to follow this up and collect seeds to verify the identification, but when Roy Lemmon, Martin Grimes and I went there we found that the weather and the farmer's harvesting had only left a few dried up specimens of what was possibly the plant. We did though, find a lot of **Hemlock** instead.

Other records received included **Common Twayblade, Bee Orchid, Common Spotted** and **Southern Marsh Orchid** all found at Ketton Quarry by Dave Needham, and **Thyme-leaved Sandwort** at Bloody Oaks Quarry by Roy Lemmon. Martin Grimes found **Wild Liquorice** at Pickworth and also at The Freewards, Essendine and Terry Mitcham found **Nettle-leaved Bellflower** on a verge near Belmsthorpe.

Thank you to the above recorders and to Carolyn Baxter, Anthony and Linda Biddle, Tim Caldicott and Marian Markham for all that they contributed.

BUTTERFLIES

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April/May 2024.

Although it was a mild - even warm - Spring, the persistent low pressure produced seemingly endless cloud and rain. The lack of sunshine was the coup de grace to a "Butterfly Spring". In a word, April was poor though it did improve a little in May.

GRIZZLED SKIPPER was seen at Ketton Quarry (KQ) with 2 on 11th May, 2 on 19th May and the last one was at Bloody Oaks Quarry (BOQ) on 25th May.

The only **DINGY SKIPPER** sightings were 4 at BOQ on 13th May and one at KQ on 19th May.

ORANGE-TIP began to emerge in early April with records from Wing (W) on 5th, Essendine (ESS) on 8th, KQ on 13th, Uppingham (UPP) on 13th, 29th and 30th, BOQ on 13th, Oakham (O) on 29th, Pickworth Great Wood (PGW) on 29th, Pickworth Walk Farm (PWF) on 30th and also on 30th maxima of 4 at Egleton (EG) and 7 at KQ. The only records in May were from O on 1st, 6th, 9th and 12th and 3 at Merrys Meadows (MM) on 18th.

BRIMSTONE males were a familiar sighting in Spring, but it was a slow start this year. The first was at KQ on 2nd April with 15 there on 6th and singles in O on 6th, 12th and 13th and UPP on 3rd, 6th, 12th, 13th and 30th. There were no further records until the end of April with singles at UPP on 29th and 30th, 2 at PGW on 29th and 3 on 30th at EG, 1 at PWF and a maximum of 22 at KQ on 30th. In May, 9 were at KQ on 19th, 2 at BOQ on 13th, 2 at UPP on 13th and 2 at MM on 18th.

Only 2 records of **LARGE WHITE** were received both on 30th April at EG and PWF with none from May. I did not see any "whites" in my garden until mid-June.

SMALL WHITE was first seen at KQ with 3 on 13th April, 2 at KQ on 30th and 3 at EG also on 30th. In May, 1 was at MM on 18th.

The first **GREEN-VEINED WHITE** was at Langham (LA) on 14th April followed by 1 at Stretton Wood (SW) on 27th, 1 at PWF on 30th and 2 at EG on 30th. In May, 2 were at MM on 18th.

SPECKLED WOOD was seen at MM with 4 there on 8th April. Subsequent records were at EG on 11th, Leighfield (LE) on 14th, KQ on 26th, PGW on 29th, PWF on 30th. The only May record was from SW on 27th.

The first **SMALL HEATH** record was 5 at MM on 18th May with a single at KQ the next day on the 19th.

RED ADMIRAL was seen at ESS on 18th April, PGW on 29th and EG on 30th. In May one was seen at Gibbet Gorse Meadows (GGM) on 13th, 2 at LE on 17th and finally one at Martinthorpe (MTH) on 19th.

The migrant **PAINTED LADY** was recorded in May at MM on 13th and 18th, Quarry Farm (QF) on 21st and (SW) on 27th.

PEACOCK was reported from KQ with 5 on 2nd April and 2 there on 6th. There were no further records until the end of April with singles at ESS and PGW on 29th and 2 at EG on 30th, 4 at KQ and 1 at PWF. In May singles were at MM on 18th and MTH on 19th.

The only record of **SMALL TORTOISESHELL** was a single at W on 30th April.

The **COMMA** was seen in early April with singles at KQ on 2nd and 6th and 2 at W on 5th.

The first **SMALL COPPER** record of the year was at MM with 3 on 18th May.

The only record of **GREEN HAIRSTREAK** was 2 at KQ on 19th May.

The first brood of **HOLLY BLUE** were first seen at KQ on 6th April, Stamford (SD) and Manton (M) on 11th and 2 at KQ on 30th. May records were nearly all from O with 2 present there on 1st and 1 on 4th, 8th, 9th and 11th. Singles were also at UPP on 1st, LA on 9th and MM on 18th.

The only record of **BROWN ARGUS** was a single at KQ on 30th May.

Finally, a **COMMON BLUE** was at MTH on 24th May.

Although 19 species were recorded in total in this period, 5 had only a single record and 3 had only two records. Butterflies were indeed thin on the ground this Spring.

I would like to thank Tim Caldicott, David Needham, Duncan and Jane Ball, Alistair Lawrence, John Rodgers, Peter Scott, Diana Masters, Terry Mitcham, Linda and Anthony Biddle, Roy Lemmon, Marian Markham and Martin Grimes for their records.

Below. Black hairstreak. Photo Tim Appleton.



June/ July 2024.

Finally, a reasonable version of summer arrived around the middle of June and allowed 'butterflying' to be enjoyed by many.

The only and final record of **DINGY SKIPPER** came from Ketton Quarry (KQ) on 7th June.

The excellent sighting of 3 **ESSEX SKIPPER** on 27th July at KQ was the only record.

SMALL SKIPPER was seen at Gibbet Gorse Meadows (GGM) on 24th June and KQ on 26th June. In July a maximum count of 48 was recorded at GGM on 19th.

LARGE SKIPPER was widely recorded from Uppingham (UPP) and Leighfield (LE) both on 2nd June, Egleton (EG) on 5th June, KQ on 21st and 26th June and Bloody Oaks Quarry (BOQ) on 30th June. In July, 3 were seen at KQ on 2nd, 1 at EG on 5th and 2 at BOQ on 8th.

LARGE WHITE was almost certainly under-recorded as the only records were 3 in UPP on 18th June and 2 in UPP on 19th July.

SMALL WHITE was seen at Merrys Meadows (MM) on 20th June with July records coming from BOQ on 7th, UPP on 10th and 26th, Oakham (O) on 5th, 7th, 15th and 26th, KQ on 29th and 31st and 2 at BOQ on 29th. The maximum count was 7 in UPP on 29th July.

GREEN-VEINED WHITE sightings in July of 2nd brood adults came from EG on 5th, BOQ on 8th, UPP on 18th, O on 19th and finally KQ on 22nd.

BRIMSTONE records came from KQ on 21st June with 3 at EG on 5th July and a maximum count of 8 at KQ on 31st July.

There were only 2 **SPECKLED WOOD** reports - singles at KQ on 7th June and EG on 5th July.

SMALL HEATH was seen in June with 1 at KQ on 7th, 3 at GGM on 17th, 1 at MM on 20th and a maximum of 6 at GGM on 24th.

RINGLET started appearing in mid-June with the first record being 6 at KQ on 16th, then a single at GGM on 18th, 30 at MM on 20th, 8 at KQ on 21st, a maximum of 40 at GGM on 29th and 11 at BOQ on 30th. July started with another count of 40 at MM on 1st then 8 at EG on 5th, 20 at BOQ on 8th. July ended with 2 at BOQ and 5 at KQ on 31st.

MEADOW BROWN usually appears around the same time as Ringlet and this year was no exception. Widely reported the first were 4 at KQ on 11th followed by 8 there on 16th with 1 at Martinthorpe (MTH) also on 16th. Numbers then quickly built up to maximum of 40+ at MM on 20th and 37 at GGM on 29th. There were also 5 at KQ on 21st and 5 at BOQ on 30th June. In July the maximum was 27 at EG on 5th with numbers dropping to 5 at BOQ on 29th and finally 10 at KQ on 31st.

GATEKEEPER were surprisingly plentiful this year. The first were 2 at GGM on 29th June. Numerous records from gardens in O and UPP followed in July with an excellent maximum count of 127 made at GGM on 19th July. The final records from this period were 3 at BOQ and 5 at KQ

on 31st July.

MARBLED WHITE appears to be expanding its range with new records at Quarry Farm (QF) on 24th June and EG on 5th July. The 3 strongholds of this species are GGM, KQ and BOQ. The first were 2 at KQ on 15th June followed by 6 at KQ on 16th June, 1 at GGM on 21st, 5 at KQ on 21st, a maximum count of 35 at GGM on 19th and 14 at BOQ on 30th. In July a maximum of 30+ was counted at BOQ on 8th, 15 at GGM on 19th and finally a single at KQ on 31st July.

The only record of **SILVER-WASHED FRITILLARY** was 2 at KQ on 31st July.

DARK GREEN FRITILLARY was first seen at KQ, with 2 there on 26th June. A maximum of 7 were at BOQ on 30th June, with 4 there on 8th July.

A superb record of **WHITE ADMIRAL** was found by Tim Caldicott at Pilton (PIL) on 28th July.

Tim also found a **PURPLE EMPEROR** at Rutland Water (RW) on 1st July.

RED ADMIRAL were scarce this summer with records from only 2 locations. Singles were seen at GGM on 13th, 24th and 27th June, and at Manton (M) on 18th, 23rd and 27th June.

There were 2 records of **PAINTED LADY** at MM on 18th June and at W on 29th July.

Surprisingly, **PEACOCK**, which should have been abundant in July when the 2nd brood emerges, were very scarce with only one record on the final day of the month at KQ.

One record of **SMALL COPPER** was found with a single at EQ on 5th July.

There were only two records of **PURPLE HAIRSTREAK** both at RW with singles on 15th and 19th July.

A single **WHITE-LETTER HAIRSTREAK** was found at PIL on 27th July.

An incredible series of sightings of **BLACK HAIRSTREAK** took place this summer at RW. The first record was 3 on 13th June followed by 4 on 17th, 2 on 18th, 4 on 20th, 3 on 21st and finally a single on 4th July.

The first of the second brood of **HOLLY BLUE** was seen at W on 31st July.

There were just 2 records of **BROWN ARGUS**. Singles were seen at KQ on 7th June and at GGM on 24th June.

COMMON BLUE was seen at KQ on 7th, 16th and 21st June. The maximum was 8 at MM on 20th June and the last one at KQ on 31st July.

I would like to thank the following for their records: Alistair Lawrence, David Needham, Tim Caldicott, Carolyn Baxter and Terry Mitcham.

FUNGI

RECORDER: K. Fortune Jones

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June/July 2024.

These two months of the year are generally quiet for the mushroom hunter but wet conditions in early summer can sometimes bring surprises. Ambling along the muddy rides at the top of Wardley woods at the end of July, we found many patches of tiny **Horse-hair parachute fungi** (*Marasmius androcaceus*) clinging to the wet rotten wood on the dark woodland floor and further up in a drier part of the wood in the "Beech" area there were several troops of the much larger **Whitelaced shank** (*Mega-collybia platyphylla*). Both these fungi can be found in woodland at this time of the year and can be fairly easily identified by distinctive features described in their common names; the stipe of the horsehair being long and thin, black and very tough and the Whitelaced having large white bootlace like "roots" at the base.

Some Mycologists also study Myxomycetes - the Slimemoulds, because they are often found in the same kind of places as Fungi. They are not Fungi though, but are in a separate Kingdom - Protista. It was in a particularly damp area of the wood on very a decayed stump that we spotted a nice example of the **Coral slime** (*Ceratiomyxa fruticulosa*). From a distance it looks like a log covered in

frost.

Also in July, during a visit to the Owl Sanctuary near Exton, we couldn't help spotting a variety of fungi and slimemoulds in the dark nooks and crannies where the dampness persists, and where owls and hawks of all kinds were perched. Probably because the conditions were right with plenty of dead wood lying around, there were a number of different species of fungi in noticeable troops. Of the bracket fungi, we saw **Ganoderma** species, **Lumpy bracket** (*Trametes gibbosa*) and **Blushing bracket** (*Daedaleopsis confragosa*). There were a couple of large clumps of **Common inkcap** (*Coprinopsis atramentaria*) and inside one of the aviaries were what looked like Whitelaced shank here too, but a bit of common sense prevented me from investigating further.

Of the slime moulds, there was a white gooey plasmodium of an unknown slime mould (they can sometimes be tricky to I.D. in the plasmodial stage) and what looked like the distinctive yellow lumpy slime of **Dog sick slime mould** (*Fuligo septica*) covering the entire end of a sawn off log. There can be surprises, even when you are not really looking!



Coral Slimemould.
Photo C. Baxter



Whitelaced shank.
Photo C. Baxrer

GLOWWORMS

Burley wood Glow-worm report by Tim Sexton

DATE	FEMALE GLOWS	MALE GLOWS	LARVAE GLOWS	WEATHER
05/06/24	2	0	0	10 Overcast
13/06/24	3	0	0	12 Overcast
18/06/24	9	7	0	12.5 Overcast
24/06/24	9	9	0	11 Clear
29/06/24	25	7	0	14 Clear
03/07/24	28	3	0	16 Lt. cloud. Clear later
09/07/24	10	3	2	14 Clear. Showers earlier
12/07/24	5	0	0	11 Overcast. Lt. rain
18/07/24	16	7	1	18 Scattered cloud. N.r full moon
25/07/24	5	2	5	19 Overcast. Lt. cloud

Area of wood searched for Glow-worms .Only rides with red dots had Glow-worms.



See table previous page. If each week is to be individual records, then there were a total of 158 Glow-worms in Burley wood. (The ONLY ones seen from the track).

Rutland Glow-worm survey 2024

JUNE

In the first week of June, on 4th, the first 3 glows were recorded at **Burley** woods followed by 18 in the second week on 18th June and 32 by 27th June.

Ketton Quarry saw it's first 13 glows on Saturday 22nd June and 12 by the end of the month. **Barrowden** showed 7 glows on 17th June with **Essendine 2** the following day on 18th June.

By the end of June, the Burley count with 32 glows was far ahead of all the rest with Barrowden at 14 on 24th, **Ketton Quarry** at 12 on 28th, **Essendine 10** on 24th and **Pickworth** with 6 recorded glows on 25th June.

JULY.

By the first week in July, the count was reaching its peak of glowing females, with many males and larvae also recorded at some sites. **Burley** had a count of 31 on Wednesday 3rd of July with all the other sites, **Barrowden 27**, **Ketton Quarry 22**, **Essendine 16** and **Pickworth 12** having their best week so far.

The second week showed a change on the leaderboard with **Ketton Quarry** counting an impressive 35 glowworms in the Quarry, followed by **Barrowden 17**, **Essendine 13** and **Pickworth** with 7 glows. **Burley** was counted twice in this second week and perhaps because of the weather, 14 were counted on 8th July and only 5 three days later Friday 12th.

Into the third week of July and the seventh week of recording, the glowworms were still in good numbers, with **Ketton Quarry** at 32 followed by **Burley, 24**, **Barrowden 20**, **Essendine 11** and **Pickworth 5**.

By Monday 22nd July the peak seemed to be over with just 12 at **Burley**, 7 at **Ketton Quarry** and 6 at **Barrowden**. By the end of the survey and the last week in July **Barrowden** had just 3 glowing females spaced very far apart on the verges on 29th July. On 25th July, **Burley** had 12 glows,

A total of 6 sites were visited from the beginning of June through to the end of July, mostly on a weekly basis although Burley (which was covered by Tim Sexton and volunteers) was covered twice weekly on a couple of occasions.

1. **Barrowden.** Back road and Luffenham road. (Morcott road was walked on 1 occasion with no glows recorded at peak time).
2. **Burley woods.** See Tim's report.
3. **Ketton Quarry** - various areas.
4. **Pickworth woods**
5. **Essendine verge**
6. **Bloody Oaks Quarry.** No records from Bloody Oaks Quarry after several outings.



Above. Female glow-worm beetle with male below. K Fortune Jones

Below. Male Glow-worm beetle. Males only. have wings. K Fortune Jones.



a good number of which were glowing larvae, not the females and on the same night, the **Ketton Quarry** record was 7.

Thanks to all who went out and made this year a successful record of sites visited.

Linda and Anthony Biddle for Pickworth and Essendine,

Tim Sexton and volunteers for Burley, Sarah Bedford, Dave Needham, Kate Fortune Jones for Ketton Quarry and Bloody Oaks Quarry, Carolyn Baxter and Sally Cox for Barrowden and especially to Hilary Ludlow and Helen Denny who responded to the call for volunteers!

INSECTS & INVERTEBRATES

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June / July 2024.

See notices on page 2 of this newsletter.

The insect and other invertebrate records for these last two months have been sent to the relevant records centre by Jayne from all those members who have sent in records to her from around the county.

Below is a summary of invertebrates recorded in the county over June and July.

June

Several kinds of bee made an appearance in early June in Langham. Marian Markham noted four - the **Common Carder**, **Tree bumblebee**, **Early bumblebee** and the ubiquitous **Buff-tailed bumble bee**. No other sightings were sent in.

Of the beetles, both Martin Grimes and Marian sent in records of the **Swollen-thighed beetle**, an iridescent green beetle easily spotted on flowers in gardens and meadows.

Shieldbugs are also easily spotted as the adults are quite large but the nymphs are sometimes a little tricky to identify to species. **Woundwort shieldbug** and **Green shieldbug** were seen in Munday's close in Langham and to demonstrate the difficulty in identifying nymphs, a strikingly red, **Blue shieldbug** was found in Wardley woods in July.

Dragonflies and Damselflies appear also at this time of year. Roy Lemmon found the lovely **Banded demoiselle** on the Pickworth verge at Essendine and the **Common**



Green shieldbug nymph. Photo J. Morrell

Blue shieldbug nymph. C. Baxter



blue damselfly was spotted in Langham.

There never seems to be common name for a fly unless it is a Bluebottle, but a few have been seen and their scientific names have been recorded as have Mites, Ticks and pseudoscorpions were recorded by Roy Lemmon from various locations around Rutland.

July

A black and yellow tube nesting wasp was found by Marian Markham in Langham in July with the scientific name of **Symmorphus gracilis**. On the other hand, some lovely common names have been given to some interesting Gall causing wasps recorded by Roy in Bloody Oaks quarry and Stretton woods - **Robin's pin cushion Gall**, **Sputnik Gall**, **Silk-button causer** and **Smooth-spangle causer**.

A **Lesser stag beetle** was seen in Langham and another beetle, an easily identified **Orange ladybird** at Bloody Oaks triangle, though not often seen.

Dragonflies and Damselflies were again spotted in Langham - the **Southern hawkler** and a **Common blue damselfly**. More Ticks and Mites have been recorded this month.

Thanks to Roy Lemmon and Marian Markham, for sending in records. Please do keep sending in your insect records to Naturespot.



Robin's pincushion gall. Photo C. Baxter

Migrant hawkler. Photo Jacky Morrell



MAMMALS

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June -July 2024

An eerie mammal experience was had at Pickworth wood in June when out at midnight searching for glow worms. Out of the silence a **muntjac** barked loudly quite close to us and was joined by another in competition further away. Other muntjac were reported from Langham on 8 evenings, and were also seen at Pickworth, Great Casterton, RWNR wet meadow, and in the east of Rutland between Belmesthorpe and Newstead. **Fallow deer** were seen as we approached Pickworth wood on two of our glow worm evenings, 12 cantering for the cover of the woodland as we approached in our car, and another night just 4, less hurriedly making their way to the trees. Later that evening as we returned home at 12.30pm a small but extremely smart little **badger cub** ran across the track from the field to a large sett in the bank. More badger cubs were reported from Ketton quarry by other glow worm hunters.

A highlight of this season was the appearance of a **weasel** on camera of one the small mammal traps behind Lax Hill, giving us a beautiful full-frontal portrait (see photo below.) Weasels rarely appear on this survey, and very few have been reported in recent years, so it was particularly pleasing. Stoats are very camera shy, and haven't yet been seen in the camera traps, though one or two are occasionally seen around the county (nor have water voles, despite many months of trying suitable spots!).



There was one **stoat** observed this time on the Walk Farm path at Pickworth in July as it dashed across the path in front of us, from hedgerow to plantation.

The **fox** put in very regular appearances on the trail camera at Langham, sometimes twice a night, and badgers were seen on three or four occasions in June. During July one **badger** was seen on the camera traps behind Lax hill and sadly 2 road casualties were recorded on the A606. Only one **otter** has been seen recently, by the bridge at Eye Brook reservoir, but they are still around at RWNR, just being more cautious about showing themselves. We have noted this before; in winter they are obviously around and visible, but in summer they either move away from the water, young ones dispersing while new cubs are raised, or just remain less conspicuous.

The most numerous reports this time were the **hedgehog** or hogs which visited the Langham trail camera garden many times during June, on several nights 2 visits, and also two at a time, one pushing the other! In Oakham one or two came to food in a Barmstedt Drive garden frequently. A hog road casualty was seen at the top of Barnsdale hill, the second one this year, strangely, as I don't think they have ever been reported from RWNR which is only a stone's throw away. In Stamford in our own garden we have again been visited by a hedgehog for the first time in many years.

A **bank vole** was recorded in a member's Ridlington garden, and many were also seen on the camera traps behind Lax Hill at RWNR. Also recorded there were a couple of **common shrews** and lots of **field mice**, which also often appeared on the trail camera at Langham. One bold **rat** behind Lax Hill kept returning to the camera trap until all the bait had been consumed.

Between Ridlington and Preston a **brown hare** was on the roadside verge and a brown rat ran across the road. Other hares were reported from Pickworth, Walk farm, and Pilton. The only other records this month were of **rabbits** at Manton Bay, Ridlington, Pickworth and Great Casterton.

Many thanks to the few recorders this month. Carolyn Baxter, Sarah Bedford, Diana Masters, Marian Markham, Jacky and John Morrell and Dave Needham

MOTHS

RECORDER Paul Bennett

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June/July 2024.

When temperatures started to rise during the second half of the reporting period, moths were seen on the wing in greater numbers although sightings both by day and of those found in moth traps left overnight seemed to be lower than normal for the time of year, although with the year being poor for insects generally there is no real indication that moths have been more adversely affected than other

taxa. As a recorder I am aware that moth reports can often seem a bit doom and gloom and not without reason, but this time I want to focus on a few better known species that for the most part give us cause for a little optimism.

The moth in Rutland that has seen the biggest rise in observance this year is **Scarlet Tiger**, whether as a

larva or an adult on the wing, with records including regular sightings from 7 different locations as well as 2 appearances in or around the trap at Lyndon with 6 individuals on 24th June and a further 2 on 19th July. This contrasts with no records there from 2012 until one was seen last year. As has been mentioned before, it can take several years before a discernible trend in a moth species can be measured, so figures have to be treated with a little caution. However, this increase is compatible with a general increase in both distribution and abundance across the southern half of England in the last 20 years. Climate change has played its part but also, probably its catholic choice of foodplants and its ability as both a day flyer and night flyer to maximise its potential to feed, breed and disperse. It appears to have done this at the expense of the Garden Tiger which was formerly the more frequent species in the county but has declined considerably this century and in some areas of the country by as much as 90 per cent; maybe a victim of wetter winters and springs and also being outcompeted now by its Scarlet cousin.



Scarlet tiger moth.
Photo Craig Howat

Another moth seeming to appear more frequently in traps is **Latticed Heath**. This moth has a first generation in spring that has been assumed by many to be the larger generation with a smaller second one appearing in summer, but it is the second generation that is now becoming more noticeable, with moths regularly seen now in traps at Lyndon with 5 there on the 19th July and it is also being recorded from Bloody Oaks. Its preferred food plants of clovers and trefoils are available for it throughout much of the summer and climate change is believed to offer species with more than one annual lifecycle, a better chance of long-term survival if these opportunities are there for them. A later generation also largely avoids competition with the day-flying Common Heath which only has a limited summer emergence. It therefore appears that a moth that has been in decline, may be finding a way of reversing its fortunes but only time will tell.



Latticed heath moth. Photo C. Baxter

The improved fortunes of lichen feeding species has been well documented and this trend is set to continue. Footman species have been regular but not exceptional in number this year, but 2 records of **Four-dotted Footman** at Cherry Wood and Martinthorpe follow on from sightings in 3 other

locations in 2023. A pristine **Tree-lichen Beauty** was seen in a garden trap in Ridlington at the end of July and a first record of a **Marbled Green** at Lyndon on 19th July was a first confirmed photographic record for VC55. This is a small but attractive species that can be seen resting on walls, similar to the more common Marbled Beauty but is more easily seen because of its colouration. It is also a moth expanding its distribution range. An attempt was made on the night of 13th July for a moth



Marbled green moth. Photo Paul Bennett

bio-blitz at Rutland Water, but a combination of poor overnight weather and the distractions of Global Birdfair meant that only Cherry Wood and Lyndon were trapped. The total catch was 327 moths of 103 species, with the highlights being a **September Thorn** (not especially early as they emerge around the same time as August Thorn, which itself can emerge in July!), **Black Arches** and **Olive**. It is planned to have another blitz in either August or September. It has not been a great summer for large numbers of immigrant moths with only a few **Silver Y** sightings and one record of a **Hummingbird Hawk-moth** in a Manton garden that was seen on successive nights. A male **Vapourer** (the female is flightless) was seen at Martinthorpe on 16th June, and 2 **Blue-bordered Carpets** at Gibbet Gorse on 21st June. A Small **Dusty Wave** was inside an Oakham House in July and a **Common Carpet** was presumably flushed in Wardley Wood at the end of July. 2 micro moths of note were a **Blushed Knot-horn** probably feeding on decaying plant matter in an Oakham garden while 2 **Scabious Longhorns** were seen by day nectaring on Field



Blushed Knot-horn. Photo Roy Edwards

Scabious at Bloody Oaks on the 28th July.

Thank you to the following for sending their records:- C Baxter, S Bedford, P Bennett, A Biddle, T Caldicott, R Edwards, C Howat, J Morrell, J Rodgers, T Sexton.

Apologies from the editor for mis-labelling a moth on page 8 of the June newsletter. The moth is a Dotted chestnut NOT a Dotted heath. Thanks to Jacky Morrell for pointing out the error.

ORTHOPTERA

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June/ July 2024.

Members who read the Orthoptera reports in Fieldfare, will find this pre-amble in a different guise: Because (apart from Tim Sexton's late sightings for last May), I have received nil casual sightings from anyone: therefore, fortunately, I have been able to attend a few of the RNHS field meetings for the period under review. Members got cracking on their wildlife sightings (which included some of the orthopterans), thank you folks!

Bush Crickets

Dark Bush Cricket, *Pholidoptera griseoptera*
Numerous nymphs located in Cherry Woods. Just south-East of the Volunteer Training Centre. 11 May 2024, regular haunt of this species.



Dark bush cricket nymph. Photo Tim Sexton

Roesel's Bush Cricket, *Roeseliana roeselii*
The RNHS Field Meeting was held at Robert's Field, Lincolnshire Gate (right on the border of Rutland and Lincolnshire), on 29 June 2024. Linda Biddle 'potted' two Roesel's Bush Cricket nymphs in the long grasses., new site, SK999147.

I visited Ketton Quarries, with the Stamford U3A Birds and Nature Group, on 22 July 2024. Massive numbers of stridulating males heard in the deep grasses of the car park field. More large numbers were stridulating in the dense grasses in 'The Valley'. Both of these areas are regular sites for this species.

Grasshoppers

Meadow Grasshopper, *Chorthippus parallelus*
Large colonies of stridulating males, in long grasses, Robert's Field. Lincolnshire Gate, 29 June 2024. New site, SK999147
Five stridulating males, in 'The Valley' area of Ketton Quarries, 22 July 2024. Regular site for this species.



Meadow grasshopper. Photo C. Baxter

Thanks to Tim Sexton, Linda Biddle, Phil Rudkin.

FIELD TRIPS

Visit to Robert's Field June 29th 2024.



David Vendome from Lincs Wildlife Trust was not able on this occasion to show us around this little meadow, (in the middle of nowhere it seemed - down little country lanes between Holywell and Pickworth) but there were members on hand, notably Jenny Harris and Phil Rudkin, who were able to tell us about its varied history and how it has come to be a floral paradise today.

Robert's Field is a 4-hectare limestone rich grassland which has been restored by Lincs Wildlife Trust back to its former glory. These meadows were a common sight in the countryside before the First World War, and since its restoration it has become home to an impressive number of limestone plants, not to mention the different species of butterflies found here. In the 1950's, before the Forestry

Commission planted most of the site with conifers (1960's), it was one of the best places in Lincolnshire to find butterflies - as many as 25 species were found here. In 1991 the Trust purchased the lease and set about restoring the land back to its grassland roots and after a bit of trial and error, Robert's field in the early summer is now a wonderful spectacle of colour from both the butterflies and especially the variety of flowers that we found there.

Our first encounter, however, was with a very large orange hornet that was very persistent in shooing us all away from the entrance to the field, so all nine of us quickly took the hint and hastened down into the meadow. Although the weather was overcast, our next sighting was of several **Marbled white butterflies** taking flight in front of us as we disturbed their resting places. A total of seven butterflies with **Small and Large skippers** were noted throughout the morning with the **Dark green fritillary** making an occasional appearance when the cloud lifted. Three moths were also spotted but perhaps because of the weather, bees and other insects were few and far between amongst the surrounding flora. We did turn up a colourful little **Malachite beetle** resting on the tip of a leaf and there seemed to be quite a few nests of the **Nursery web spider** looking like balls of cotton wool, hidden

amongst the vegetation. Those with observant eyes were able to find the tiny **Common leaf weevil**, and to add even more colour, several **Robin's pin-cushions** were spotted clinging to the **Dog-rose**. Phil came armed with a Bat 4 detector which can also be used to identify various species of Grasshopper and Crickets, but with persistent cloud above, it didn't really crackle into life until much later in the morning. Phil also reminded us that at this time of the year we generally only find nymphs of the orthopteran species, but two different species were identified – **Roesel's bush nymph** crickets and **Meadow nymph grasshoppers**. Other members concentrated on the birdlife in the hedges around with quite a few of the warblers singing - **blackcap**, **whitethroat**, **willow warbler** and the easily recognized **chiff chaff**. The plant life in flower was spectacular; a total of 33 species were recorded over the morning with notables being **Wild liquorice**, **Rockrose**, **Dropwort**, **Fairy flax**, **Dyer's greenweed** and three **orchids** – **Bee**, **Pyramidal** and **Common spotted**. One plant however, (in hindsight) has stumped us all, but only because we didn't examine it properly at the time. Looking a bit like a cross between a harebell and clustered bellflower, it seemed to show characteristics of both. Perhaps there is a lesson to be learnt!

Species recorded were sent to the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust. All photo's below by C. Baxter.



Nursery web spider nest showing cream coloured egg sack.



Malachite beetle.



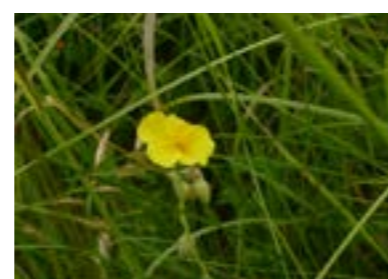
Common leaf weevil.



Pyramidal orchid



Common restharrow



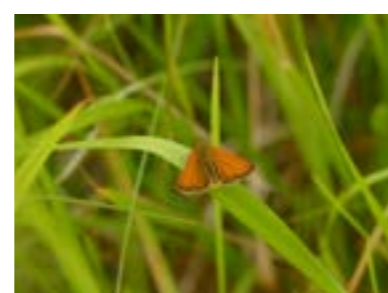
Common Rock-rose



Wild liquorice



Robin's pin-cushion



Small Skipper



It was a pleasantly warm and dry morning as 18 members and friends assembled at the entrance car park at Swaddywell, between Ufford and Maxey on the Peterborough side of Stamford. The spaces were at a premium, and it was great to see so many members interested in this reserve, with its many and varied flora due to its chequered history. Part of the area was once a quarry, and some of it was used as a rubbish dump. Another area had been home to the VW enthusiasts club, who had tarmacked a roadway into the far end of the reserve.

yellow wort, **agrimony**, **self heal**, and many others including **wild parsnip**, the sap of which can cause non-allergic dermatitis. A **hobby** was seen and then a **kestrel** and a **kite** as we first entered the reserve. After spending a lot of time in this area, we slowly made our way diagonally across to the public footpath, where we were intrigued to see the **lesser centaury**, with its tiny bright pink flowers, like little stars hiding in the bottom of the sward. Another tiny delicate flower was fairy or **purging flax**, Latin name *Linum (flax) catharticum* (you can imagine the reason for this unforgettable Latin name!) Sarah gave us a really good, guided tour around the reserve, mentioning the history of the area, as well as pointing out the fascinating flora of the reserve as we walked.



Yellow-wort



Purging or Fairy flax.



Lesser centaury

Our leader for the visit was Sarah Lambert, who many of us knew from her talk earlier this year, on nature in Clare country and the Langdyke Trust owners of Swaddywell. Sarah is an excellent botanist and photographer, trustee of the trust and is a BSBI recorder.

She led us from the car park into the first part of the reserve, which was built on the rubbish tip. It was alive with insects, and covered in wild flowers, **centaury**, **pyramidal orchids**,

As we followed the pathway into the lower part of the reserve, we saw **hemp agrimony** and **ragwort** at the side of our path, both of which are very attractive to bees and insects of many kinds, and here we saw **gatekeeper**, **brimstone** and **skipper** butterflies. **Tufted vetch** with its bright purple

pea type flowers in clusters up the stem was found, and **cinnabar moths** flying over the tall vegetation. We also found the remains of **Man orchid** standing up against a fence. A **blackcap** was heard calling its metallic chip chip as our group entered the lowest part of the reserve. The lake is bounded by a cliff on its northeastern edge, and up on its ledges grew **ploughman's spikenard**, a widespread but uncommon plant, named after an aromatic Himalayan oil which was supposedly hung in the homes of ploughmen to sweeten the air. A large specimen of **hoary mullein**, also perched on the cliff, overlooked the reeds around the margins of the now dried up basin, where we saw **sedge** with serrated edges to its leaves, **clustered stonewort** and **water mint** are also found. **Sedge warblers** were heard with their repetitive tractor like sound on several occasions in the reedbeds. **Gypsywort** was another plant that was spotted as we followed the boardwalk around the perimeter of the reserve, and up onto a raised area looking over the reserve. Here **ivy bees** were busy on the nearby plants, and a **buzzard** was soaring overhead. The only mammal seen was a dead **common shrew** picked up along the

footpath, and evidence of **rabbits** in the form of droppings and scrapings at several different points.

Some of our members had shortened the walk and were resting on chairs in front of the cabin, listening to the occasional **chiff chaff**, **linnet** and at one point a **green woodpecker** yaffling. They watched the **swallows** looping and turning overhead. The rest of us descended from the higher area and made our way back to the cabin to rejoin our fellow members to wander back to the car park and make our way home.

A huge thankyou to the Langdyke Trust for making us welcome, Sarah Lambert for her expert guidance, and also Claire Noble the Trust's event coordinator, who came along in support, (and I think also provided drinks to some of us!) We all had a very good visit and hope to return soon.

Linda Biddle

The full species list will be available on the website.



Green grasshopper



Fleabane.



Field grasshopper

Members may like to know that Sarah is a wildlife travel leader for **Wildlife Travel holidays**. The 2025 brochure is available to download at <https://wildlife-travel.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/brochure2025-web-1.pdf>

Below is a note from Sarah explaining her role as a leader.

" I'm delighted to be leading trips to Cyprus in both November 2024 and March 2025. In November, the focus will be particularly on autumn-flowering bulbs, while on the spring trip we'll be rewarded with a stunning array of orchids, though we'll also be looking out for birds, reptiles, amphibians, insects... well everything really! In March I'll be joined by James Lowen, a renowned nature travel writer, photographer and moth expert. We'll be allowing plenty of time for photography!

In June 2025 I'm returning to The Vercors in south-east France. This is a truly outstanding wildlife location, with the chance to experience alpine flora and fauna among stunning scenery. There were so many highlights from my visit in 2024, but the sheer abundance of Lady's-slipper Orchids must be up there. And this trip has the added advantage of travelling by train...

Do let me know if you want any further information. All the best, Sarah"



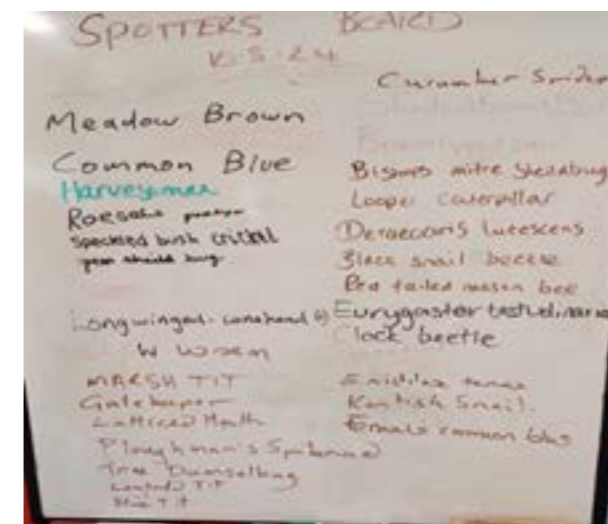
Saturday 10th August. Ketton Quarry family bug and butterfly hunt.



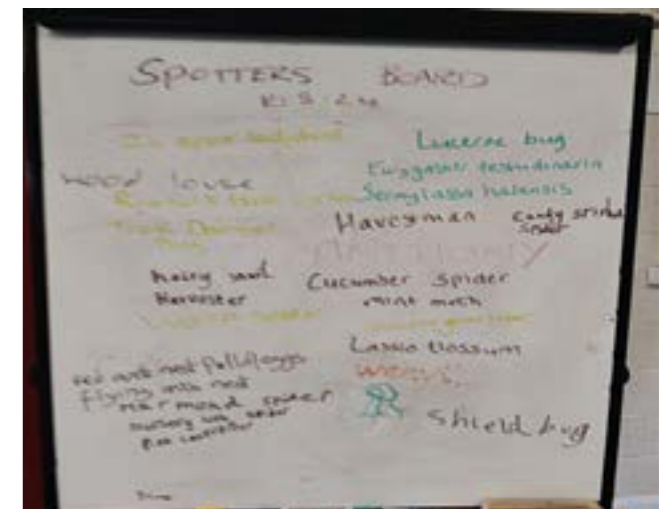
This year we were delighted to be sharing our Annual bug hunt as a joint venture with Fee, from the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust. Fee is a Next door Nature Community organiser and well used to sharing her enthusiasm with younger wild life champions.

The day started at 9am (an hours journey for Fee) by setting up the LRWT and RNHS banners outside the Scout hut and then getting to work setting out the tables and various paraphernalia to arm the children for the hunt in the Quarry. The weather was cool and overcast in the morning, not ideal for butterflies or insects, but by the time we were ready for our first session at 10.30, we had gathered together a small assortment of children, each carrying a sweep net, bug pot, tray, hand lens and FSC insect charts. After a brief introduction about how to use the equipment and simple safety instructions by Fee, we led the party down the road and into the Quarry.

The families quickly spread out searching the scrubby areas, while the children used their nets sweeping away at the grass as if they were mowing a meadow with a scythe. Soon the bug pots were full of harvestmen, Crickets, Shieldbugs, beetles and the like, each child proudly handing round their catch for identification. Fee had brought down a large white sheet, which was placed just under the trees and shook down anything clinging to the shrubs and by 11.45, just before the session was due to end, it was apparent that the children had become totally absorbed. We had planned to take some of the more difficult species to identify back to the hut to examine more closely but it was decided to carry on til the end and then release the captive beasts straight back into the quarry. Back in the hut, after welcome refreshments, the children were encouraged to write down on the board those bugs and butterflies they had caught and identified. Below are the results of the morning session.



Although there were more children for the afternoon hunt (a total of 17 children attending both sessions), the cloudy weather had turned to a gentle drizzle by 2.00pm. The format was the same however, a walk into the quarry with our nets, pots and trays to identify any bugs or butterflies that were still lurking in the wet undergrowth and swept enthusiastically into the nets and then emptied into pots or trays to be forensically examined and puzzled over. This time we kept some of our trophies and headed back a bit earlier to the hut to dry out and where Craig had set up his viewing microscope. The bugs, of course, were set free a little later to continue with their own lives in the quarry. Below are the results of the afternoon session.



Many thanks to all those volunteers who made the day a success: Fee Worton (LRWT), Dave Needham, Martin Quinlan, Craig Howat and Sam, and Katy Atkinson. Thanks also to Jane and Duncan Ball for their support, and to Sarah (Ketton Scouts).



Left. Tortoise bug.



Right. Black clock beetle



Left. Roesel's bush cricket



Right. Ichneumon fly



Female Glow-worm. Photo Tim Sexton

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