



## NBRC Newsletter 13

**December 2016**

Despite rather significant events elsewhere in Europe and the World, this has been a relatively quiet year for your local records centre. Much of what has gone on has been behind the scenes, with the steady addition of new datasets to our database, working through Local Wildlife Site citations and getting the new website up, running and receiving records.

Looking forward, there has been a gradual build up to the public launch of our WILDside Project in Spring 2017 and, just as important in some ways, towards NBRC gaining 'accredited Records Centre' status.

New draft data exchange agreements that set out how we will share information and manage datasets on behalf of county recorders and other data providers have had to be revised to take account of recent changes elsewhere in relation to the promotion of Open Data from within and beyond the National Biodiversity Network. These will be circulated for comment and amended as needed ahead of the end of March. It's looking as though it's going to be a busy end to the financial year.

Our first ever annual report will be published soon and will be followed by a report on the Centre's first 10 years. Look out for these on our website in the New Year.

### Highlights (and lowlights) of 2016.

James' 2016 Bioblitz cake icing, Rachel's delight at getting the recording features of the website working, Steve's getting stuck on the M1 and arriving three and a half hours late for the NBRC steering group meeting, various new species for the county and the growth of volunteer involvement with Records Centre projects, something we hope to take still further in 2017.

### And a BIG Thank You

We'd like to acknowledge the generous donations totalling £140 to NBRC funds this year (You know who you are). We'll put this money towards WILDside or other projects. Speaking of which...

## WILDside

It having now been mentioned numerous times since we first carried out a [consultation](#) with interested parties in 2014 and then sought to extract funds from the Heritage Lottery Fund to be able to [deliver](#) what had been requested in a joined up way, we're looking forward to the arrival of 2017 and for WILDside to become a full blown project.

In the meantime we have to thank Ken Rowley, Duncan McCollin, Serena Parker, Penny Foster, Josh Hellon and Matt Johnson for agreeing to join the project board which will be overseeing project planning and delivery. Following the first two meetings of the board in spring and autumn we have now advertised what is the vital post of [WILDside Project Co-ordinator](#) post. Do please pass on the information to anyone you think might be qualified. Interviews will be held in mid-January and we're expecting the successful candidate to start a.s.a.p. in February or March.

Between then and October 2018 the main objectives will be to

- ensure that the county's recording networks will be better supported than at present
- provide new and existing wildlife recorders with opportunities to develop their skills, gain experience and support others in turn
- enable those who wish to do so to tackle those species for which the county is presently lacking both records and recorders
- target a series of Local Wildlife Sites for which we presently have very little information
- help fill in some of the 'gaps in maps' for selected species around the county
- get more people involved with recording
- raise the profile of wildlife recording and the value of biodiversity information around the county

In the run up to the public launch in spring there will be a lot of preparatory and promotional work to organise. Watch out for email invites, WILDside information on our website and a special Facebook Group for all the project participants. And do make the most of the opportunities it offers to yourself.

## Northants Diptera 2016

This is a summary of the Diptera highlights for 2016 from the records received so far. Much identification and reporting is carried out over the winter months so this only covers what I know of so far. Overall it seems to have been a very mixed season, with a cool start and a fairly dry period in the summer keeping numbers down at times. Nevertheless there have been some interesting records.

The spectacular crane fly *Tipula maxima* were recorded at Southfield Farm Marsh. This is the only site from which I have had a record so far this year, despite its large size and strong wing markings making it an easy fly to identify. A much smaller, blackish crane fly *Nigrotipula nigra* was recorded at both Rushden Lakes and Ditchford Lakes. This crane fly is associated with fens and is local in the Midlands. It has been previously recorded at Irthlingborough Lakes. These are the only sites in the county where it has been found so far. Jeff Blincow found several of the scarce comb-horned crane fly *Dictenidia bimaculata* in Yardley Chase MoD. These breed in rot holes in ancient trees.



*Dictenidia bimaculata* - Notice the "comb horns" the pectinate antennae of the male. The photo was taken by Jeff Blincow at Yardley Chase MoD.

Ring Haw Marsh proved to be a good site for aquatic soldierflies, including the dark-winged soldier *Oxycera analis*, the banded general *Stratiomys potamida* and the long-horned soldier *Vanoyia tenuicornis*. Wood-soldierflies Xylomyidae, are not closely related to the soldierflies Stratiomyidae. They get their name, like soldierflies, from their colourful "uniforms". Kev Rowley found one, *Solva marginata*, near a poplar log pile at Pitsford Reserve. This is probably our only wood-soldierfly as the family is represented by only two species in the UK, the other being a rather rare

Inhabitant of some of the UK's Southern ancient forests. This species specialises in breeding under the bark of poplars which have been dead for 1-2 years. With this in mind I inspected a poplar log pile in Sulby but did not find the wood-soldierfly. However I did find the lance fly (Lonchaeidae) *Lonchaea hackmani*. This is a county first. It is another specialist breeder in rotting poplar sap. These two findings should encourage reserve wardens to leave felled poplars on the ground.

The hoverflies are the most frequently recorded of the fly families and this year we have had a number of unusual sightings. At a fly family identification workshop at Ring Haw in April *Cheilosia nebulosa* was found hovering near bushes on the track past the field station. This is our second record for this species. The first was found within 100 metres of the same spot just a few years ago!



*Sericomyia silentis* – two new sites found

The large *Sericomyia silentis* is scarce in Northants as it tends to prefer acid heaths and bogs but two new sites for it were discovered this year. One was a small overgrown pond in Fineshade Woods and the other was the ivy growing beside the track at Southfield Farm Marsh. The Hoverwatch Ecology Groups project completed its eighth year. A new species for the project *Myolepta dubia* was found in the June visit. This is a nationally scarce dead wood breeder of southern England. We also found *Eumerus ornata* on the same visit, another scarce species.

Whilst looking through the Wildlife Trust's Facebook pages for Twywell I noticed a photo of the Tephritid fly *Orellia falcata* that a visitor, Chrissie Hadley, had posted. I contacted her and she was able to provide me with the date. This species is not common in Northants. Its larvae develop in the root crown of goat's beard *Tragopogon pratensis*. Another infrequent Tephritid fly in Northants was found at Titchmarsh Reserve. It is *Merzomyia westermanni*, whose larvae develop in hoary ragwort *Senecio erucifolius*.

The leaf-mining flies Agromyzidae are often more easily recorded from their mines than as adults. This was the case with *Chromatomyia ramosa*, which forms short galleries perpendicular to the mid vein on the leaves of teasel *Dipsacus fullonum*. Although very distinctive, we have had very few records of it. It was noted at Rushden Lakes and Yardley Hastings Sand Pit.

Both <http://www.ukflymines.co.uk/index.php> and <http://www.leafmines.co.uk/> offer excellent resources for identifying what was responsible for a certain leaf mine on a particular plant. Additionally, a new agromyzid recording scheme is in the offing.

My thanks go to the members of the Northants Diptera Group and other individuals who send me records and photos from around the county. Northamptonshire was a largely blank space on Diptera distribution maps ten years ago but we are gradually filling in the gaps and finding extensions to ranges of some species. We still have very patchy coverage of the West of the county however.

The data we have collected suggests that the Nene Valley has characteristics of fenland Diptera fauna and this is further supported by surveys of pond invertebrates by the volunteers of the Nene Valley Ecology Group. This is something that warrants further analysis.

**John Showers, Diptera Recorder**

See John's [northantsdiptera.blogspot.co.uk](http://northantsdiptera.blogspot.co.uk) blog and visit <http://www.dipteristsforum.org.uk/> too.

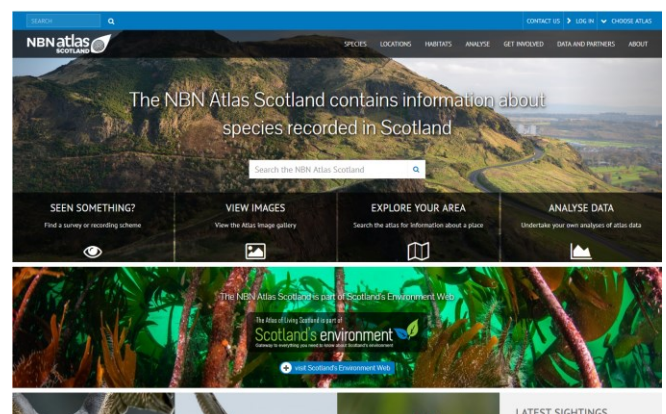
**NB. Have you registered to use our website and store your records yet?**

Make the most of your recording. Click [here](#), register and see all the records entered so far or just yours, their distribution across Northants and any associated photos.

## Out with the creaky Gateway...

From April 1<sup>st</sup> 2017 the [NBN Gateway](#) will be no more. Following a [review](#) and the decision to adopt the infrastructure offered by the [Atlas of Living Australia](#) it's due to be replaced with a series of national atlases and a grand UK atlas that will span the country borders that bear no reflection on wildlife country borders.

To get an advance idea of what the new **NBN Atlas England** will look like we suggest you travel across virtual borders and visit the pilot version for [Scotland](#). The Scottish Wildlife Trust gave a very useful presentation on the use they are already making of the Atlas at the NBN's Conference in November. It already offers far greater functionality as well as being much easier, more welcoming, more reliable and useful in comparison to the Gateway so it will be interesting to see how the Atlases develop in future.



There are some other factors in relation to the introduction of the new Atlases, however. The NBN Trust concluded that the access controls and the multitude of different constraints applied to datasets shared via the Gateway were causing more problems than they were worth, increasingly so as the Gateway grew (presently some 130 million records). Henceforward, it will only be possible to apply one of four standard licences to datasets on the Atlases. Additionally, it won't be possible for data providers to control the resolution of information which different Atlas users will be able to view and download. This may have some impact on the resolution at which some data are provided to the Atlases - possibly reducing the quality of Atlas-accessible data for all. It remains to be seen what impact this has overall and whether the impact will be short-lived

The new licences are consistent with what is now being used for datasets shared to the [Global Biodiversity Information Facility](#) (GBIF) so it is to be hoped that rather more UK datasets will once again be shared to the global portal than at present.



## Orchids on the move

Lizard orchid (*Himantoglossum hircinum*) is a species on the move and expanding in range in recent years. This is most likely caused by climate change. As the species occurs not far away in neighbouring Cambridgeshire even on the embankment of the A14 itself and has recently been re-found in Bedfordshire in an allotment site of all places, the chance for the species to turn up in Northants VC32 is very real. It has even turned up in two more sites in Oxfordshire in recent years.

Thanks to learning over the years from fellow botanist Paul Stanley as to what the rosette of the species looks like and looking out for it at various sites around the UK many times over recent years, Brian Laney has got his eye in for the species at rosette stage.

On the 31st December 2013 I started checking the roadside verges along the A45 section between the A14 and Raunds for lizard orchid rosettes. Sadly I had no luck on the Lizard front but I did find several of the wintergreen rosettes of Bee orchid (*Ophrys apifera*). The habitat in places along this roadside corridor was not bad in places with mossy areas. (BLTT: Such areas are worth checking even in light scrub as orchid rosettes for various species, including Bee and even Lizard orchid can be found in such habitat).

As recently as January 2016, I started targeting Corby, looking for Lizard orchid rosettes amongst its post-industrial sites, lawns and mown verges in industrial estates, and old quarries. No luck so far but I am not giving up.



One of the Oxfordshire sites is a roadside verge and the verge itself is very poor botanically and does not contain a rich flora. So for a lizard orchid to appear in Northants vc32 the site may not have to be a very rich floral site. However, areas of Northants with calcareous soils are especially worth checking.

If someone had said to me thirty years ago what percentage probability would it be for Lizard orchid to turn up in Northants, I would have said 10%. If asked nowadays I would say 100%!



Yes, it's the wintertime rosette of a Lizard orchid.

The rosette of Lizard orchid has quite a distinct light green hue to it especially in mature rosette specimens. The rosette comes up in the winter so **anytime between December through till at least March**, before the vegetation starts to grow up, is a good time to look for the characteristic rosettes.

**Brian Laney, Botanist**

Follow Brian on Twitter @BrianLaney2

## And don't forget

The 6th **New Year Plant Hunt** will be on again between January 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> 2017. It's grown so popular that there's even now 'an app for that' produced by the Biological Records Centre to help cope with all the records. As a [Guardian article](#) shows, a surprising variety of plants can be found in flower at the start of January, so why not join in too? Visit the [BSBI NYPH page](#) for full details.



What will you find? Look in the right place and you might even beat Brian to that Lizard orchid.

## Back to the Future?

I recently gave a talk at the Humfrey meeting rooms of, to give it its full title, the **Northamptonshire Natural History Society and Field Club**. Those in the audience probably found that I'd bitten off too much in trying to talk about the distant past, going back to before the establishment of the Society through to more recent times, the creation of the records centre, the slow growth in the aggregated county database, especially in the early years and what the gaps between available data and information needs means for our work. It was certainly interesting bringing all the material together.

One fact quickly became obvious. Apart from articles reproducing authors' earlier works (such as writings of the ornithological first president, Lord Lilford and the eminent botanist George C. Druce from which records are likely to have been transcribed into county reports, atlases or floras) scant few wildlife observations in the pages of the more than a century of the Society's journals have yet made it into the county database or reached the relevant national societies and recording schemes. Whilst some pages have no reference to wildlife, and some (reflecting what was standard at the time) are less precise as to date or location than would be expected today, other pages offer records by the score, including complete site lists for a day or year for a particular taxon group. Just picking out one example a society excursion (not described as a 'fungus foray', I wonder when that term came into popular use?) to Harlestone Firs, resulted in records of 60 fungus species, complete with information about habitat, from the month before my birth, but we don't as yet have any of those records on file. And, picking out a single fungus, there was also this note by another of the Society's foremost members, the bryologist H. N. Dixon:

### LYCOPERDON GIGANTEUM L.

A specimen of this fungus, the Giant Puff-ball, was found by A. P. Robinson and H. Parker Gray last March, in a pasture between Upper Heyford and Little Brington. It was not *in situ*, and was over-mature, and had been flattened out; but even then it measured 10 inches across and 32 inches in circumference; so it must have been a well grown specimen. In most of the puff-balls the interior mass of spores becomes ejected, leaving only the outer integument; in this species on the contrary the outer skin becomes disintegrated, leaving, after the dispersal of the spores a brown, spongy, fibrous mass.

Rev. M. J. Berkeley refers to this species (Journal II, 161) as occasionally occurring in our pastures; and Mr. A. Wallis tells me he has seen it at times; but I believe no definitely localized record of it occurs for Northamptonshire, so it seems worth putting upon record.

Sadly, not only is that record (like all of the others I referred to on the night) not in our database but for this species, one which can reach well over a metre across and stands out pretty well even when it doesn't reach epic proportions, the Northamptonshire database currently boasts a not very grand total of two records (neither of which relate to this locality or another listed for Yardley Chase).

So the message is that there is a huge trove of records in the Northamptonshire Natural History Society's journals (and 'mushroom' for improvement in NBRC's data holdings).

Simply extracting records from the NNHS journals would represent a major undertaking in itself, let alone from other historic sources for Northants. Moreover, NNHS is just one of many long-running county and district natural history societies across the UK. Hopefully the National Biodiversity Network's plans for historic information will result in the means for capturing and sharing what's currently locked away in published journals, collections, survey reports, site management plans, and - where they survive - the original notebooks of the naturalists who once stopped to document their interest in the natural world, recording what they saw, when and where.

We did follow up in trying to track down Dame Miriam Rothschild's records for the Aston Estate and the former airfield at Polebrook but with no success so far. On the other hand, thanks to the efforts of two wonderful NBRC volunteers, Amelia Kyprianou and Kim Harrison, and to County Beetle Recorder Tony Drane for keeping safe his predecessors' notebooks, we have been able to take the first steps in digitising beetle records from across the UK (with the majority from Northamptonshire) back to the 1950s.

Steve Whitbread



The giant puffball - Too easily mistaken for a sleeping sheep?

H. N. D.



## Lichens and lichenicolous fungi

I began the recording year full of enthusiasm on New Year's Day at Irchester Country Park where I added two terricolous lichens to the county list (*Leptogium subtile* and *Placidium squamulosum*). The *Leptogium* is a miniscule species but the *Placidium* is large and quite easily recognised. It occurs on disturbed ground and quite a few sites in the county ought to be suitable for it. The fact that it has not been previously recorded is indicative of how neglected lichens have been in Northamptonshire (other than a flurry of churchyard recording during the 1990s).

My recording sessions in Northamptonshire have been fewer than I had hoped because I was diverted to various surveys in neighbouring counties. Two days recording in Warwickshire (Upton House and Farnborough Hall) resulted in 37 first county records of lichens and lichenicolous fungi – Northamptonshire is not the only county in the Midlands with under-recorded diversity.

Lichenicolous fungi are specialized fungi living on or in lichens. Many are pathogenic and a significant number of them are host-specific. Commonly called 'parasites' they are now attracting more attention from the lichenological community, having been extremely neglected in the past. With an interest in these fungal parasites every car park and roadside becomes a potential source of exciting records. In February I stopped to look at hedges which were being removed beside the A6 at Burton Latimer. As is typical of roadside shrubs, these supported an abundance of *Xanthoria parietina*, a nitrophile encouraged by NOx emissions. Within a few minutes I found a couple of colonies of the lichenicolous *Arthonia molendoi*, new to Northants, along with a colony of another parasite creating a minutely furry brown coating to the lichen. The latter, after considerable research, was discovered to be *Cladosporium licheniphilum*, new to Britain.

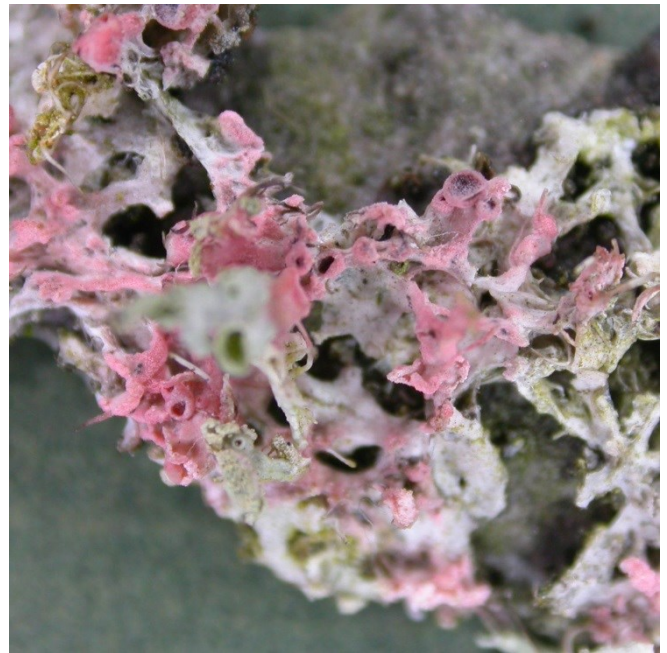
In May I visited Ringstead cemetery, anticipating a pleasant hour of easy recording and not expecting anything much of note. A curbed grave contained a large colony of *Peltigera neckeri*, new to the county. I collected a small specimen because the lobes appeared to be infected by a fungus.

If you would like to find out more or would like some help with identification, please feel free to contact Mark directly at [markpowell222@btinternet.com](mailto:markpowell222@btinternet.com)

On microscopic examination I discovered that the *Peltigera* was host to two lichenicolous fungi (*Corticifraga fuckelii* and *Hawksworthiana peltigericola*) both also new to the county. The best was yet to come...

I also collected a discoloured lobe of *Xanthoria parietina* which appeared to have a speckling of minute, bristly fruiting bodies. These turned out to belong to *Pyrenochaeta xanthoriae*, new to Britain.

An amateur natural historian sent me a specimen of a pink parasite from Hainault Forest in Essex, claiming that it looked like images of *Laetisaria lichenicola* he had seen online. I was initially sceptical since this had not been recorded for Britain but detailed examination proved that he was correct. Browsing pictures is a valid way at arriving at a tentative identification, as long as this is followed by a verification process. This attractive basidiomycete, which infects the common twig species of *Physcia*, has now been found at Sywell Reservoir.



A particularly colourful lichenicolous fungus (*Laetisaria lichenicola*) infecting the tiny grey twig lichen *Physcia adscendens*. There are several pink and pale orange parasites which infect lichens and microscopic examination is often required. The microscopy is not a chore because most parasites have attractive anatomical features.

These are just a few of the discoveries this year. If anyone is tempted to take the plunge into this fascinating world then I will be happy to help.

**Mark Powell, Lichen Recorder**

## 2015 Northamptonshire Bird Report - out now!



The latest, limited edition, Northamptonshire Bird Report, with records for 2015, is now available. Contents include a full Systematic List compiled using records from more than 320 observers, sections on Escapes, Ferals and Hybrids, as well as many photos and illustrations by local photographers and artists.

There are also reports from the Northants Ringing Group, as well as the full list of species recorded in Northants, tables of arrival and departure dates for summer and winter visitors and a county site map.

### **Copies and back issues from:**

R W Bullock, 81 Cavendish Drive, Northampton NN3 3HL

Phone: 01832 273523

**Price £7.50 + £1.30 p&p**

Cheques payable to 'Northamptonshire Bird Report'

Also on sale at the Oundle Bookshop, 13 Market Place, Oundle PE8 4BA

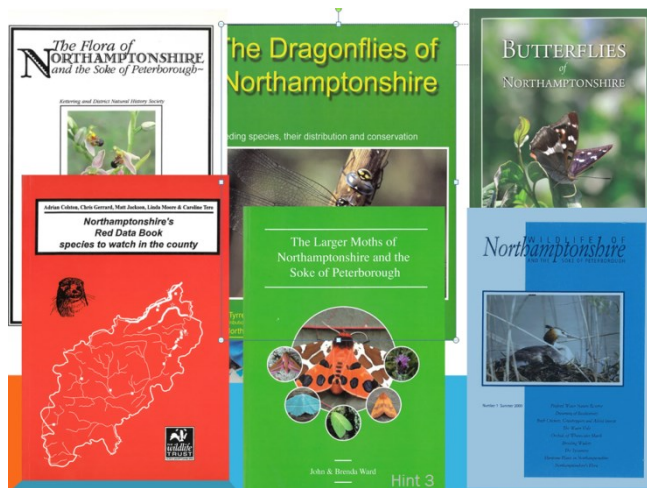
## County Recorders Wanted

We can't pass up the opportunity to publicise the current vacancy for a [county bird recorder](#) (to take over in spring 2017) or to offer thanks for all the hours that Mike Alibone (@Bonxie) must have devoted to this over the last nearly 10 years on top of more usual commitments and running the really rather wonderful [Northants Birds website](#). Contact Mike if you would be interested in taking on or sharing the work.

Of course there are various other species groups and at least one whole Kingdom (fungi), where Northamptonshire is currently lacking a county recorder or even any active recorders (Another reason why all County Recorders, past and present deserve our very grateful thanks). If there is somebody with an interest in a particular group, who might then inspire others to get involved with, recording, coordinating their efforts and ensuring they know where to find support, then do consider putting yourself forward. WILDside provides an excellent opportunity for this and the various national schemes and societies are very supportive. We can provide full details on request.

## County Atlases

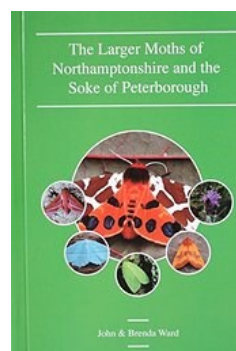
There are a range of excellent books that detail and map elements of our county flora and fauna.



Each of these volumes, some slim and some not so slim (like the most recent flora for VC32 by Gill Gent and Rob Wilson), represents a huge commitment of time over decades or spanning centuries and captures what's known about the county's wildlife and what has been lost or is now under threat. It's always worth contributing your records especially where that helps to fill gaps in survey effort. And if you're looking for somewhere to start, especially if you're keen on recording what's in your garden, why not investigate...

## The Larger Moths of Northamptonshire and the Soke of Peterborough – John & Brenda Ward

**\*\*\* ....now only £14.50 \*\*\***



The [book](#) contains write-ups of the 648 larger moths recorded in the vice-county since the earliest records in 1840. Moths that have been recorded within the past 50 years are illustrated and dealt with in greater detail with some 90% of the entire county species list being illustrated.

Released in August 2015, this is the first time that the vice-county's moths have been specifically reviewed since Eustace Wallis wrote the *Lepidoptera of Northamptonshire* between 1908 and 1912.

To order a copy, please contact John or Brenda via email, [bjward@btinternet.com](mailto:bjward@btinternet.com).

We also have copies available for collection from the NBRC office.



## Northants Moths 2016

The 2016 season has been extremely poor - both for the variety of species seen and numbers of individual moths. I have not had any datasets returned yet as it is still too early for record submission, but certainly based on my garden and field results, and looking at e.g. the interim reports and analysis from the UK-wide Garden Moth Scheme - VC32/Northants is not alone in witnessing this issue. Causes are unknown, and indeed may be due to more than one factor. Early Spring 2016 saw some unseasonably warm weather and a subsequent spike in early sightings, but the rest of the year did not live up to that early expectation.

That said 2016 has seen six species added to the VC32 list:

**11th February 2016:** Three larval cases of *Dahlica triquetrella* were discovered in a pedestrian underpass in Northampton (SP75).

**6th July 2016:** Single *Cydia cosmophorana* at Wootton Landfill Site, Northampton (SP75).

**5th August 2016:** Dark Ash Bud Moth *Prays ruficeps* in a Denton garden light trap (SP85). Record was confirmed by examination of hindwing venation. Two further records now confirmed by DNA sequencing.

**13th September 2016:** *Ectoedemia sericopeza* in Far Cotton garden (SP75).

**24th September 2016:** A single Box Moth *Cydalima perspectalis* was taken in a garden MV trap, Kingsthorpe (SP76). Subsequent scouring of the county for Box plants has failed to show any evidence of larval feeding – this species is a known pest of Box.



A single Box Moth *Cydalima perspectalis* was taken in a garden using a Mercury vapour bulb trap



-this species is a known pest of Box so look out for evidence of larval feeding

**8th October 2016:** Sywell Country Park (SP86) has yielded yet another excellent record - this time a single *Acleris abietana*. This species is Nationally Notable and associated with Norway Spruce, with the majority of records being from Scotland.

Some further significant records:

**7th June 2016:** A single Toadflax Brocade *Calophasia lunula* was recorded by Nick Smith on Toadflax plants in his Nassington garden (TL09). This is the first record of this colourful moth outside of the Peterborough area, and shows further expansion in range.



A single Toadflax Brocade *Calophasia lunula* was recorded by Nick Smith on Toadflax plants in Nassington in June.

**20th June 2016:** A single Alder Kitten *Furcula bicuspis* in an Islip garden trap (SP97). This is only the second confirmed VC32 record (older pupal exuviae records having been discounted due to possible confusion with congeners).





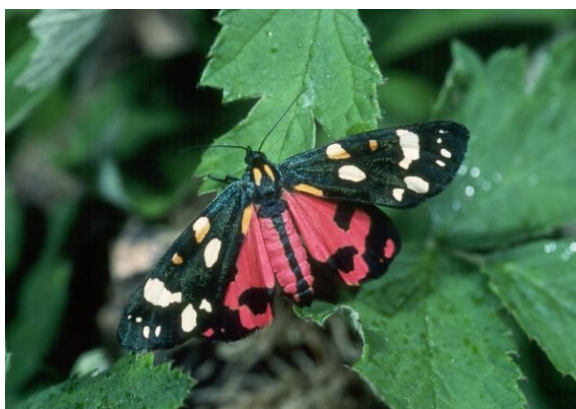
Alder Kitten *Furcula bicuspis*

There have also been two sightings of Kent Black Arches *Meganola albula* in July, with one being taken at light at Polebrook (TL08) by James Skinner. And another in a garden light trap in Kingsthorpe, Northampton (SP76) by Pete Sharpe. These represent the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> county records.



Two sightings of Kent Black Arches *Meganola albula* in July.

An incredible four Scarlet Tiger *Callimorpha dominula* were reported on 10th July 2016 during a walk in Harlestone Woods (SP76). This species has made inroads into the county in the last couple of years, with nine reported in 2015 (for comparison, a total of seven have been reported between 2000 and 2014!). It is also well worth looking out for the colourful larvae on e.g. Green Alkanet and hoping for one or two more sightings from the three counties Tiger Moths survey! See the [WTBCN website](http://www.wtbcn.org.uk/) for details.



Scarlet Tiger *Callimorpha dominula* adult (above) and caterpillar (below)



The Moth Group had a quiet year in terms of organised events, but did run a light trapping session in Fermyn Woods on [National Moth Night](http://www.northamptonshirewildlife.co.uk/nmoths/nmot_hindex.htm), 11th June, with a number of the butterfly enthusiasts attending. Despite the slightly inclement start to the evening, the event was enjoyed by all, and ultimately about 100 species recorded. All those attending appeared to thoroughly enjoy the event, with a desire to attend others. Members of our group carried out Moth survey work at the NBRC BioBlitz on 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> July. Sadly another planned event at Stanwick Lakes in early Sept was a victim of heavy rain and thus cancelled, but I plan to run a couple of public sessions in Northants in 2017, which will be advertised on the website in due course.

**Mark Hammond, Moth Recorder**

Visit:

[http://www.northamptonshirewildlife.co.uk/nmoths/nmot\\_hindex.htm](http://www.northamptonshirewildlife.co.uk/nmoths/nmot_hindex.htm) for information about moths and future events.

## Meanwhile, elsewhere...

Both the [National Forum for Biological Recording](http://www.nationalforumforbiologicalrecording.org/) and the [National Biodiversity Network](http://www.nationalbiodiversitynetwork.org/) provided excellent conferences in 2016. Follow the links to these: [NFB: Lancaster](http://www.nationalforumforbiologicalrecording.org/) and [NBN: Edinburgh](http://www.nationalbiodiversitynetwork.org/) to see all the presentations.

The [British Ecological Society](http://www.britishecologicalsociety.org/)'s Winter Meeting also goes from strength to strength. This year it was in Liverpool. The complete set of presentations hadn't been made available by the time this newsletter was completed but will certainly be worth looking out for in the New Year based on the comments via [Twitter](https://twitter.com/BES2016). There was a huge amount in it to interest everyone who is interested in how biodiversity data is (or at least could be) put to effective use. #BES2016

## 2016 Bioblitz in brief

Rushden Lakes is the name of the new shopping centre that is in process of being built, just off the A45, adjacent to the internationally important Ramsar site/Special Protection Area for birds. Although the new complex will occupy the previously developed areas it will help to safeguard the wetland, open water and other habitat areas along the Nene. The Wildlife Trust BCN will gain its first visitor centre and a major new reserve adjoining its long-established Wilson's Pits site.

In the run up to the eventual opening of Rushden Lakes, our 2017 Bioblitz provided the opportunity to add to knowledge to inform reserve management of both sites. As usual, the full write up will be in the spring/summer newsletter but some highlights in 2017 were provided by:

County Waterbug Recorder Kev Rowley making the most northerly record (so far) of the water skater, *Aquarius paludum* with key identification features of larger than normal at 15mm long, a pale yellow line on the side of the thorax and upturned tips of the abdomen, all clearly seen below.



Kev Rowley demonstrates how to hold a water skater. *Aquarius paludum* obligingly shows off its distinguishing features.

It was great to be able to welcome regular Bioblitz supporters, some of whom we rarely have opportunity to see in between times, and to welcome several new attendees including Penny Foster and Samantha Bucknall from the Canal and River Trust.

James's latest icing extravaganza added to what was an excellent cake... but you'll have to wait to see that in its full glory and for the full write up in the next issue.

## Volunteer projects

I'm delighted to say that two members of the audience at Steve's NNHS were inspired to offer help with the digitisation of Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust site survey records dating back to the 1970s so we will have a quantity of additional plant, bird, butterfly and incidental observations to share in future and to provide more information about what was found at these locations in the past to add to what is known about them presently and to guide future decision making.

### Help wanted

If you would be interested in helping with the digitisation of the contents of old record cards, reorders' notebooks and records contained in management plans and old survey reports we would be delighted to hear from you.

Or if the BIP Project – investigating the use of biodiversity information within the planning system in Northants - appeals to you, please sign up here: <http://www.wildlifebcn.org/volunteer-opportunities/biodiversity-information-and-planning-project-volunteers>

At the current rate of expansion in pages perhaps we should also be inquiring if there's an eager newsletter Editor out there.

## Training Courses

WTBCN's 2017 [programme](#) is now out and booking fast



A whole range of species groups and ecological or conservation skills are covered (with great tutors). There is bound to be more than one course to suit you so why not book up now. Some really excellent entomological sessions start in early January.



## The Wildlife Trust BCN Monitoring & Research

The Monitoring & Research team coordinates ecological surveys across the three counties. We work with volunteers and staff to collect a wealth of information on species and habitats. Our surveys include monitoring of mammals, reptiles, invertebrates and birds – often supporting national monitoring schemes. The data we collect is used to inform the way we carry out our conservation work.



We seek to ensure that the Trust's work is underpinned by sound science and demonstrate the positive results of our reserve management.

The [2017 WTBCN Monitoring & Research Conference](#) will be held at Cambourne Village College on February 18<sup>th</sup>. Click on the link and book up to hear about all of our recent work in Northants, Beds and Cambs.

If you are interested in getting involved in our monitoring and research work please contact the team at [ecologygroups@wildlifebcn.org](mailto:ecologygroups@wildlifebcn.org)

**Josh Hellon**

**WTBCN Monitoring & Research Manager**

To find out more join our [Facebook group](#) or sign up to our 'Local Wildlife - in Depth' [e-newsletter](#).

## NBRC Contact Details

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c/o The Wildlife Trust BCN  
Lings House, Billing Lings, Northampton, NN3 8BE  
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Website: [www.northantsbrc.org.uk](http://www.northantsbrc.org.uk)

NBRC's staff members are Nathalie Hueber, Rachel Tate, James Skinner & Steve Whitbread.

## The State of Nature 2016

The second [State of Nature report](#) (or son of SoN) was published in September, its launch having been postponed of a certain referendum. Perhaps because of other events it hasn't gained the traction that one might have expected building on the base of the [2013](#) report. This time there were also individual country reports including one for [England](#).

The key points are

- that the information that we (collectively) have for the countries' wildlife does demonstrate real change (for those species for which, with statistical help, there is adequate information),
- these changes can be clearly attributed to particular cause, mainly associated with changes in land use
- change over the short term has been more rapid, indicating acceleration
- we don't have enough information for the great majority of species
- a huge number of people are involved in recording wildlife, mainly as volunteers.



Other points which it is possible to make include the doubling of the number of organisations now involved with the SoN partnership (All those logos!) and the fact that, despite all the Species Recovery Plans and Biodiversity Action Plans resulting from the Rio Convention on Biodiversity and all the activities and grant-aided projects they spawned, more species are under threat than was the case in 1992. There is clearly a need to ensure that we have the biodiversity evidence that leads on to net benefit actions for the natural environment rather than simply charting further declines. Yet, at the present time, it is not clear that such evidence is being sought or acted upon in order to achieve the [2020 Aichi Targets](#).

## NO REINDEER IN NORTHANTS TO HELP PULL THE SLEIGH?

As Christmas approaches, and following on from our festive map last year, we decided to map the deer records currently held in the NBRC database.

The low number of records shown on the map could be used as a way of demonstrating how the more common species do tend to be overlooked when recording.

Despite the paucity of records overall, Muntjac appear to have a fairly even distribution throughout the county.

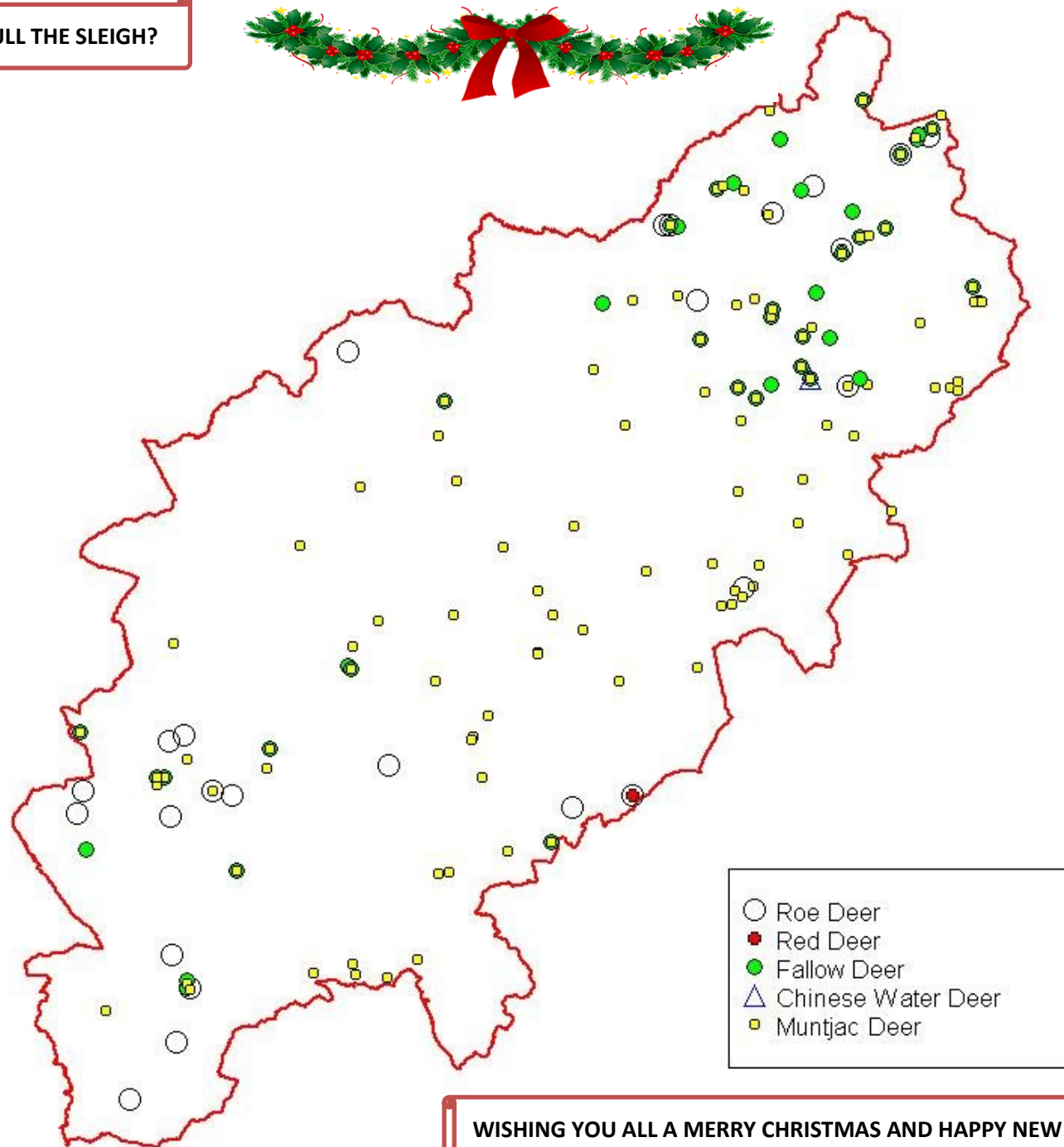
In contrast, records for both Roe and Fallow deer are mainly from the north and south of the county.

The single Red deer record was recorded as an escapee, though no information was provided regarding where it had escaped from.

Surprisingly, we only have a solitary record for Chinese Water Deer.

So if you spot any deer this month please let us know.

<http://www.northantsbrc.org.uk/record/submit-a-sighting>



WISHING YOU ALL A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!