Northamptonshire Biodiversity Records Centre

NBRC Newsletter 15

Spring/Summer 2018

As we move from winter to spring we have once again been busily gathering, processing, validating and, *with the aid of Northamptonshire's fantastic county recorders*, verifying all of the records submitted to us throughout 2017. A massive annual effort to ensure our database remains up-to date with over 130,000 new records added in the last year alone! We are now ready and up to date with new species layers and new citations from the latest local wildlife survey.

As well as keeping our database current, our digitisation project ran by Rachel and our team of wonderful volunteers ensures historical species records are retained and transferred from paper to digital records for future use. This information is invaluable to ensure we are able to track local trends and as an archive for biological research. We are not alone in this, research by Henry McGhie, Head of Collections & Curator of Zoology, Manchester Museum, University of Manchester aims to investigate how best to support the ongoing usefulness of natural sciences collections held in museums across the UK as a research infrastructure. You can still take part in this research and have your say.

The team saw a steady demand for biological information and species mapping throughout the last year – producing over 200 reports! Each report means up to date current biological information being used in the decision making that shapes the landscapes and species we see in Northamptonshire.

Our Heritage Lottery Fund WILDside project has gone from strength to strength – inspiring new audiences to take up biological recording, equipping our Lings office with reference materials and equipment needed and supporting species identification skills. Ryan has planned a fantastic summer of bioblitz events, training workshops, and talks to get us all out surveying. Your response to our seasonal surveys has been fantastic!

A new and exciting feature of our project work is the establishment of drone biological monitoring by the NBRC team. Funded by the Environment Agency, the project aims to strengthen ecologically informed river restoration project development within Northamptonshire, with the aid of new technologies for monitoring and evaluation within the Nene Valley. Our state-of-the-art Phantom 4 Pro drone is capable of producing detailed aerial imagery and video, allowing us a bird's eye view of the county. This means that we can get detailed imagery of previously inaccessible areas – including in 3D! Nathalie and Rachel are training as qualified operators to meet civil aviation authority standards.

Lastly, our annual county recorders Bioblitz is only weeks away! We intend to survey two local wildlife sites near Corby over a period of 24-hours. Watch our twitter and WILDside facebook group for live updates of the species we find on the day.

Staffing

Due to the success of the first year of our WILDside project, Heritage Lottery Fund has approved a contract extension for our fantastic Project Coordinator, Ryan Clark. This means he will be with us and leading throughout the project period, helping the NBRC grow recording reach and support for identification across the county.

In December, we welcomed a new Centre Manager to the Northamptonshire Biological Record Centre team, Rosalind Johnston.

Introductions

The time has seemed to have whizzed by, I have now been with the team for nearly half a year. I am new to the record centre world, joining from years of project management and fundraising roles for a number of conservation and international development NGOs including ZSL, Care for the Wild (now Born Free) and Mission Rabies. I hold an MSc in Primatology, giving me useful skills for analysis (utilising SPSS and ArcGIS software), however, my interests are broader and I

would describe myself as a generalist in biological terms. I am, however, fascinated by people's engagement with the natural word and how to maximise the benefits of this for species and habitats – the basis of research I have completed. I am a trained teacher and have recently been developing my knowledge of Forest School through volunteering in my spare time.

Having grown my love of wildlife watching many years ago at Arundel wetland centres, where I guided visitors to notice, understand and enjoy the ecology around them, it feels wonderful to once again be able to contribute to the species and habitats in my native land by delivering a vital ecologically informed underpinning for planning and decision-making through our database.

The team and our wider recording network have been fantastically supportive in helping me getting to grips with the procedures at the centre, a process we are documenting formally alongside the work itself so that we can work towards submission for ALERC accreditation within the year. The fantastic WILDside and Bigger Vision projects are a tremendously exciting step, from which we aim to strengthen our surveying for years to come – enhancing the information held in our database and our capabilities for biological monitoring.

As a team, we are growing in our skills to meet these aims, but this cannot be achieved alone. Your record submissions, your feedback from events, workshops and talks, your voluntary help to strengthen our data and ideas for services we can work towards are what keeps the centre growing.

Rosalind Johnston, NBRC Manager

National Forum for Biological Recording Conference 2018

Our WILDside Project Coordinator, Ryan Clark attended the National Forum for Biological Recording Conference in May. This year the event took place in Shrewsbury and the theme was 'Skill Development for Biological Recording'. Ryan spoke at the conference about our Heritage Lottery Fund supported WILDside Project and the lessons learnt from the project so far. Juliette Butler, the Wildlife Trust's Training Workshop Officer, spoke alongside Ryan about the training courses the Wildlife Trust runs, both these set of workshops complement one another.

There were two days jammed packed with talks and workshops discussing various national and local projects, which are developing biological recording skills in Britain. His favourite talk came from Ian Wallace, National Caddisfly recorder. Ian gave a personal account of how he learnt species identification and has now progressed into a national expert. He spoke about how technology and recording has changed during this time. This event brought together people with such a varied background and this made the discussions thought provoking and informative.

Everyone agreed that we need to work together more to try and fill the gaps in species identification and recording, whilst also working individually to pass on our own skills wherever possible. Social media was also highlighted as playing a huge part in modern biological recording. We certainly do agree, so please do follow us on Twitter @_Northants_BRC to keep up to date with records centre news.

Ryan Clark, WILDside Project Coordinator

NBN Atlas

As of the 31 March 2017 the NBN gateway was replaced by Atlas. As a member of the NBN and partner we are of the current 129 data partners sharing our records with the agreement of county recorders to 2km resolution for the benefit of public research. We have recently updated our data sharing agreement to reflect this. To support data partners, who like us are often LERCs who rely on revenue from commercial provision of biodiversity information services to support collection and processing of biological data, NBN Trust have updated the terms of use recently so that data users may now be liable to pay a penalty charge if they breach an NBN data partner's licence conditions. Additionally, the newly enhanced verification process for occurrence records

will be translated into the display shown on occurrence maps – making the difference between 'accepted' and 'unconfirmed' records clearer.

Rosalind Johnston, NBRC Manager

ALERC

The year started with a new ALERC Chair, Clare Blencowe of Sussex BRC and Steve Whitbread in his new post as ALERC Director putting out a call to all LERCs and key stakeholders to share their views of the next steps for Recorder 6. Over 100 responses formed the resulting report, which will form the basis of planning for a software successor. This is expected to be a key issue discussed in October's conference.

The new DEFRA 25-year environmental plan relies on the provision and use of ecological data. ALERC have responded here with a call to support the source of this information – the recording network.

Other changes include discussion of the current data supply to the Environment Agency. The existing MoA expires in 2019 and discussions are ongoing between ALERC Directors and the Environment Agency in shaping a new contract.

Rosalind Johnston, NBRC Manager

General Data Protection Regulation

As of the 25 May 2018, EU law will bring into force new regulations for how organisations handle your personal data. We will share our updated Privacy Policy on the website soon which details how and why we collect and store this information.

Some data, such as this newsletter and updates from our WILDside project are categorised as 'direct mail' and you must be opted-in for us to hold your contact details and to continue receiving these mailings. Thank you for everyone who has contacted us your information will be retained securely, after the 25th May we will be deleting the details of contacts held who have not indicated that they wish to still receive such contact and this will be the last newsletter received. If at any time you wish to re-join this list please get in touch and let us know. Ongoing we will periodically check in with you we have the correct details and contact preferences for you.

Much of our data is of course biological records, which requires your name for the verification and validation process. This falls under 'legitimate interest' and outside the purpose of adding to biological information in the county, your details would never be shared with a third party. We store all of our records securely.

You can read up on GDPR and how this affects you here and view our updated Privacy Policy on our website http://www.northantsbrc.org.uk/ from mid-June.

Rosalind Johnston, NBRC Manager

Database

Alongside ensuring that our county records are kept up to date annually, over the last few years the NBRC has continued to increase and improve it's holding of full county datasets.

It is hoped later this year to gain a full county lichen dataset from the British Lichen Society. We will also be continuing to work with county recorders in getting full county datasets for other groups not yet added into our database. We are always open to discussion to form new agreements and support recorders to make this possible.

A total of fifty-four datasets were received last year, forty-four of which have been fully processed and added to the recorder database. This included updates to the county datasets held for Bryophytes (2015 and 2016 records), Macro & Micro Moths (Full county dataset) and Water Bugs (Full county dataset) and equated to approximately 476,000 records being added into the database last year.

Although NBRC holds a full county dataset for butterflies, further work is required on getting this fully into our database, along with the 2016 and 2017 records. Our full county plant dataset totalling over 450,000 records is a mammoth task which we aim to start processing and adding to the database soon.

So far this year the database has received 34 datasets, including updates to the following county datasets

- Bryophytes – 2017 records
- Butterflies – 2017 records
- Water Bugs – Full county dataset received (9000+ records), up to end 2017
- Birds – 2014, 2015 and 2016 records
- Diptera – Full county dataset received (26,000+ records)

Our work will initially focus on getting these datasets updated, along with other datasets to be validated and sent out to county recorders, where necessary, for records to be verified.

Full county datasets currently held and updated over the last few years

Dataset	Current date records to in R6	Last time updated in Recorder 6	No of records
Bryophytes	Dec 2016	Spring 2017	20,000+
Butterflies	Dec 2015	Spring 2017	37,000+
Diptera	Dec 2015	Summer 2016	19,500+
Moths	Dec 2016	January 2018	450,000+
Water Bugs	Dec 2016	Spring 2017	8500+
Plants	October 2006	October 2006	13,500
Dragonflies	Nov 2003	March 2004	2,500+

James Skinner, Data Officer

Volunteer digitisation project: Harry Henson's Beetle records

We have been given the pleasure of scanning and digitising the recording notebooks and record cards of the late Harry Henson.

Harold Edward Henson, born in the Soke of Peterborough in 1931, had a life-long interest in entomology. Harry developed a particular passion for beetles and over time, created a significant and detailed collection of records and specimens for the East Midlands. His collections and recordings weren't restricted to this area but cover the whole of the UK from Cornwall to Scotland and have informed many national recording schemes. You can also follow Harry's travels abroad with details of species found in countries such as Turkey, Portugal and Spain.

Harry shared his passion with others and passed on his knowledge of the ecology and identification of beetles with fellow enthusiasts, including our current county recorder for Northamptonshire, Tony Drane. Tony became the temporary custodian of this important collection of specimens and notebooks when Harry sadly passed away.

Mr Henson's specimen collection is now being cared for by the University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge and we would like to thank Tony for loaning the original books and cards to NBRC for digitisation.

A digital copy of all the notebooks and recording cards has been created by our wonderful volunteer, Carol. This has involved scanning each filled page of the 16 notebooks of various sizes and all the individual recording cards. This also entailed careful handling of the delicate books whilst making sure the scanned copy is legible. So we would like to say a huge thank you to Carol for numerous hours of standing at the photocopier followed by checking the scanned copies.

Now the scanning is complete, we'll be able to re-unite the original paperwork with the specimens at the museum.

The next stage of the project is to complete the digitisation of the information by copying the records from the scanned documents into a spreadsheet. The data will then be processed and checked for any errors or anomalies. Once these checks have been made, we'll be passing a copy of the digitised records that fall outside the Northamptonshire County to the relevant Local Environment Records Centre and to the museum.

Some of the records have already been digitised onto a spreadsheet. We are looking for a volunteer who would be interested in finishing the record digitisation from the scanned files.

Rachel Tate, Data Officer

If you would like to become involved and help to complete the digitisation of these and other records, please contact us at NBRC@northantsbrc.org.uk

NBRC Website

We are sorry for this week's technical difficulties with the website and are pleased to say we are now back up and running. It is wonderful to have been contacted by so many keen to use the recording facility - showing us just how valuable an aid this is to recording.

Rosalind Johnston, NBRC Manager

Mysterious Frogs in Northants

Recently, a very interesting record submission came across my desk. Intrigued, I got back to the recorder who had reported an albino common frog in his garden in Northampton.

"At first I thought it may have been a common frog that had died in the very cold weather and as I approached it, it moved under some plants."

The albino frog also laid some white frogspawn in the pond. As you can see on the picture the difference is quite striking.

Half of the white frog spawn were given to the Weston Favell Church of England School to take care of them.

Albinism is an inherited genetic condition that reduces the amount of melanin pigment formed in the skin, hair and/or eyes. Albinism is caused by mutations in one of several genes, and most types are inherited in an autosomal recessive manner meaning that you need two set of genes to have albinism.

Many amphibians labelled as albino are, in fact, not completely lacking in all colour pigments. They are actually amelanistic, not albino. Amphibians have six types of chromatophore in their skin. An amelanistic amphibian therefore, may still have various other pigmentation. What you end up with is usually a pinkish or whitish or ghostly looking frog, with red eyes. The eyes appear red because the blood vessels of the retina show through the iris, giving it a pink or reddish colour. The eyes of albino animals tend to be highly sensitive to light.

As albinism is inherited in a recessive manner, one would expect that the tadpoles from the white frog not to be albino. So where do those white frogspawn come from? It could be that the white frog found a mate which was a carrier for albinism and so half of them would be normal and half of them albino. Or it may be that all the tadpoles are white initially but then develop into normal frogs.

It turns out that, as reported by the school, the tadpoles had a fawny colour initially and then became almost normal. The resulting froglet, which still has his tail on the left is slightly lighter in colour compared with the two normal froglets on the right. It certainly lacks the red eyes of albino frogs.

They have now been released in the school pond and I suspect that they wouldn't be any different from the other frogs. So yes, the white frogspawn did not developed into albino frogs after all, but what is going to happen next year?

Back in 1949, W. A. Smallcombe published an article "Albinism in Rana temporaria" in the Journal of Genetics (Volume 49, Issue 3, pp 286-290). He said that: "White frog spawn gave rise to black-eyed white tadpoles, which later darkened, and developed into normal frogs. The latter produced normal tadpoles, some of which developed into albino adults. The facts can be explained if albinism is recessive, but the dominant allelomorphic gene found in normal frogs produces enough pigment in the eggs of heterozygous females to give black tadpoles, and only comes into action some time after the hatching of the eggs of albino females." So it seems that in this case only adult frog would be albino. White tadpole would only develop if both parents were albino.

Michael F. Benard was also able to observe the development of white toad eggs and noted that "by day six, just two days after hatching, the formerly all-white hatchlings had started to develop black pigment. By day 12, the tadpoles from the white eggs were indistinguishable from the tadpoles from the black eggs". You can see the pictures here; http://www.mister-toad.com/photos/frog/albino-tadpole-develop.html

He explained that "if their mother had two copies of the recessive albino allele, she would not have been able to produce the black pigment found in normal eggs. As a consequence, the eggs she produced would be all white. But then if she mated with a normally-pigmented male toad, their offspring would have one albino allele and one wild-type allele. As the eggs developed into tadpoles, the wild-type alleles from the father would start producing dark pigment, and the toads would eventually develop the normal pigmentation."

So next year if two of the offspring from the albino frog were to mate they'll have 25% chance for the tadpoles, although looking normal at first, to develop into adult albino frogs. So we might see some more white frogspawn the following year once the new albino frogs have laid their eggs.

All kind of animals can get albinism, we also had an albino grey squirrels being reported in Duston area in Northampton in March. It would be interesting to know if there are any more albino animals seen across Northamptonshire.

Nathalie Hueber, Data Officer

Bigger Vision Project

With the support of the Environment Agency we have purchased a professional DJI Phantom 4 Pro drone. We intend to collect aerial imagery, including 3D and video footage, and utilise computer software for NDVI and orthomosaic image analysis in conjunction with GIS tools to deliver detailed habitat surveys for nenescape river restoration. We expect to be able to use the drone in project surveys as part of our information services.

Nathalie Hueber and I are currently going through the process of training, flying practice and passing exams to obtain a commercial drone pilots licence. This licence is required for commercial operations and is ultimately overseen by the Civil Aviation Authority.

So far, we have both attended an intensive fast track ground school course over the Christmas period to pass the theory part of the licence requirements. This involved 20 hours of online learning followed up with a two-day instructor led course, which ended with two exams.

The course covered all manner of topics including but not limited to; Air Law, Civil Aviation Authority Law, Meteorology, Airspace, Flight Navigation and Charting, Principles of Flight for both fixed wing and multi-rotor aircraft. Not to mention having to re-learn Newton's three laws of motion, the physics of aircraft stability, work out much power you can pull from a battery and most importantly aircraft crash procedures! At the end of the course we took two tests, one on pre-flight planning and the other was on all the theory we had learnt. Happily we both passed!

The next stage of the process is to pass a Flight Assessment test. This is essentially, a driving test but done with your vehicle travelling up to 300 ft in the air above you! We will have to demonstrate that we can carry out all the pre-flight safety checks, equipment maintenance and of course fly the drone safely. For the flight test we will be asked to fly certain manoeuvres with the drone to a specific standard in GPS supported and in manual ATTI mode.

Finding somewhere suitable to practice hasn't been easy, however the University of Northampton have kindly given permission for us to use one of their sports fields that is relatively, though not totally free from public access. Flying practice has certainly been a challenge in the unusual winter/spring weather, with wind and fast gusts, being the most problematic conditions. However we have managed to clock up around 3.5 flying hours each in preparation for the test. A practical flight training session has helped us gain techniques to make sure we are ready and in control of the drone for our flight assessment booked for mid-July.

Rachel Tate, Data Officer

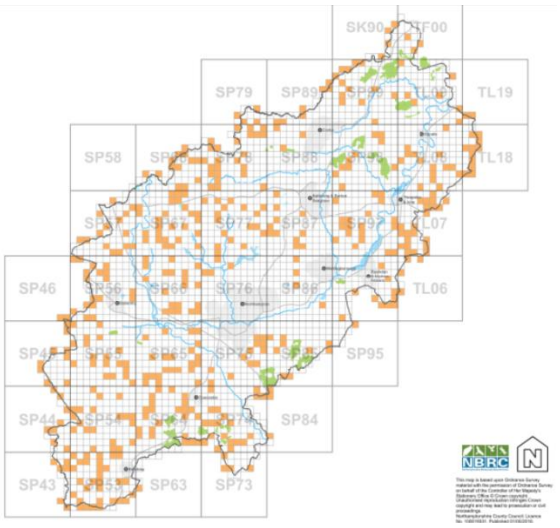
Wildside Update

Spring is finally here and the WILDside Project is in full swing, supporting biological recording in Northamptonshire. We have now ran a number of introductory workshops and talks to highlight the importance of biological recording to a variety of groups. These workshops have been very successful in taking you through the process of making biological records, which feed into the records centre database. I have produced guides to biological recording and using the website for submitting records. These will be downloadable from NBRC website in due course, but in the meantime please email me for a copy of these. We have had workshops on a variety of species groups now and will continuing to run series of other workshops on other groups so please email me and ask to be put on the mailing list or follow 'WILDside Project' on Facebook to hear about these.

We have had monthly talks at the Northamptonshire Natural History Society covering how biological recording is essential in conserving a wide variety of species groups. Our talk on butterfly recording was especially popular! June's talk will cover water bugs, with July's talk focussing on solitary bees. If you are just getting into recording or just need a piece of kit, our WILDside section in the Lings Education Centre has a range of survey equipment and guides available to use and loan.

We have also been running Bioblitzes to engage the public with biological recording. These have been successful in highlighting the wealth of wildlife we have in Northamptonshire and how to start identifying it. We are always looking for helpers at our private and public events; please contact me for more details.

As part of our WILDside Project, we have been asking people to look out for certain species throughout the year. In the first of these surveys, we asked you to look out for mistletoe. Sixty-four records of this species were submitted during this survey, doubling the number of records we have in the county for this species! Next, we asked you to look out for the dark-edged bee fly; again, this generated many records for this species and generated awareness for biological recording. The flight period of this species will tail off soon so we will be launching a new seasonal survey. We still have lots to do – the map below shows all of the areas we currently have no records for (in orange). We will be featuring some of these for you to take up the challenge in gaining greater coverage of our species recording.



Thank you to everyone that has taken part so far!

For more information about the WILDside project, please email WILDside@northantsbrc.org.uk

Ryan Clark, WILDside Project Coordinator

News from the Northamptonshire Diptera Group

The Dipterists forum, the national society for the study of flies, met in South Northants in early May for the first spring field meeting - kick starting this season's recording. Sites visited so far includes the Nene Wetlands, Salcey Forest, Yardley Chase, Deer Park and Sane Copse.

The Nene Wetlands saltmarsh survey included soldierfly *Stratiomys longicornis,* found in the Ditchford Meadows. There have been few inland records of this species and this was a first for Northants. The Yardley Chase MoD area produced several sightings of the comb-horned craneflies *Ctenophora pectinicornis* and *Dictenidia bimaculata*. These both breed in rotting wood in mature trees and are considered indicators of a continuity of mature woodland. The site also produced a record of the saproxylic muscid *Phaonia cinctus* on a sap run on horse chestnut. An area of mature birch woodland in the site produced a list of 45 species of fungus gnats.

The group also visited Salcey Forest, Yardley Chase Deer Park and Sane Copse. The members from outside the county said how impressed they were with the sites visited. They added a number of interesting records to the county list, in particular several Chloropids, including *Epichlorops puncticollis* and *Lipara rufitarsis* from the Yardley Chase Deer Park.

Elsewhere in the vice-county, three new sites for the saproxylic cranefly *Gnophomyia viridipennis* were discovered by visiting known mature poplar plantations. Several sites visited did not yield any records but looked promising for future visits. In all cases the craneflies were found on vegetation close to fallen mature trunks that had been on the ground for 2 or more years but which still had firmly attached bark.

A record of the wood soldierfly *Solva marginata* was made when I found a dead specimen on the floor of my conservatory. The day had been warm and the doors to the patio were open for a few hours, effectively making the conservatory a giant Malaise trap. The nearest likely breeding site is a row of mature poplars in Rothwell Gullet, close to my home. I have examined these trees and fallen or cut trunks and branches over several years but have failed to find either the wood soldierfly or the cranefly on them. However, they have yielded Hornet Clearwing Moth *Sesia apiformis* on one occasion.

Amongst the soldierflies, *Beris fuscipes* was recorded at High Wood and Meadow Nature Reserve near Daventry (KR), a site with steep grassy banks with several wet seepages. Two *Odontomyia tigrina* were noted at Pitsford Nature Reserve during a mini bioblitz of a poorly recorded part of the site. This soldier fly is associated with well vegetated ditches and pools in wetlands.

A new site for the Scathophagid *Norellia spinipes* was discovered near Blatherwycke when several adults were found on a clump of daffodils growing on the road verge. Several more sites with well established daffodils were checked but this was the only successful hunt this year.

The Northants Biodiversity Records Centre launched its WILDside project in Spring 2017 and members of the Diptera group have been active in encouraging volunteers to get to grips with flies. A talk on hoverflies and a weekend workshop on fly families were held. These were followed up by a second day of practical classroom identification and some field work. More has been planned for 2018 including Stuart Ball and I running a weekend workshop on soldierflies and allies, which was held at the beginning of February and some follow up field and indoor workshops throughout the year.

Soldierfly *Cloromyia Formosa* provided by Nathalie Hueber.

If anyone is interested in getting started with flies please let me or Ryan Clark know. The Diptera Group is holding field meetings every Sunday morning through to September. To date through the recording efforts of John and the Diptera group, Northants county records now exceeds 26,000 records for this taxon group!

John Showers, Diptera County Recorder

If you would like to find out more, want to get involved or would like some help with identification, please see John's blog and visit the group forum.

2017 Bioblitz – Horton Woods & Meadows

Last year NBRC held its annual Bioblitz event on the 24th and 25th June at three Local Wildlife Sites collectively called Horton Woods & Meadows. Geographically, these three sites, Horton Woods, Horton Meadows North and Horton Meadows South lie in between the large areas of woodland, and well

recorded areas, of Yardley Chase and Salcey Forest. However, there was limited information known, or held, by NBRC for the Bioblitz sites.

Horton South Meadow, Nathalie Hueber

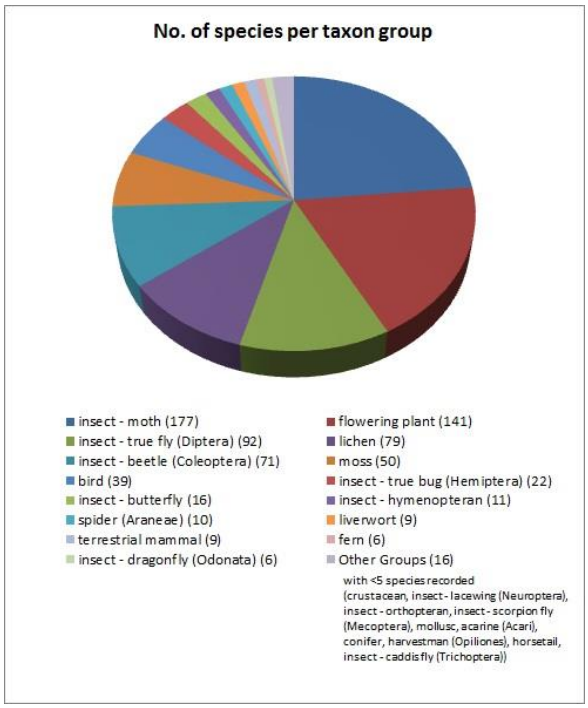
A good number of recorders took part, including some attendees from WILDSide events. Moth traps were ran overnight, there was a bat walk, small mammal trapping, and much sweep netting from people from the Diptera group who kindly added this to their fully packed annual programme. Bryophytes were surveyed during the beginning of 2018 when conditions were more favourable.

Unfortunately, due to the good weather that had been experienced early on last year, and seeing an opportunity to make hay before any rain, the South meadow was cut by the tenant farmer the week prior to the event. This therefore meant that it wasn't able to be surveyed in all its glory, although fortunately an area had been left to allow for some surveying.

Access to the North Meadow was limited due to its location from the other two sites, and was only surveyed by a few recorders, which was reflected in the species and record numbers.

Prior to the event, NBRC held 656 records spread across 586 species. A good majority of these were flowering plants, having been recorded during Local Wildlife surveys which are more focused towards this group. However, there was also a good number of moth and moss species recorded from other previous surveying, and the site had been visited by other recorders on occasions over the years although records may not have been held by NBRC. This was highlighted with one such group by receiving an interesting report from Mark Powell (County lichen recorder) following the event. In our pack prior to the Bioblitz, no lichen records were held by NBRC for these sites, however, it turned out that Mark had been surveying the lichens there, adhoc, whilst undertaking coppicing and felling work. This information can now be added to our database as a result.

As is often the case with LWSs there was plenty of scope to add further knowledge to this site, with the Woods only having nine groups with records prior to the Bioblitz, and the meadow areas just three. From the results received so far, a total of 1325 observations were made comprising of 755 species from 25 different taxon groups. This ranged from single records for caddis, harvestmen and mites to 334 records for moths.



Total number of different species across both sites

The group with the highest number of species this year was moths with 177 species recorded, 63 which were new to the woodland and 29 to the south meadow. This was followed by plants with 141 species, 21 which were new to the woodland, 18 new to the north meadow and 38 new to the south meadow. Finally, in third place was diptera with 92 species, 37 which were new to the woodland, 1 to the north meadow and highest of all groups, 64 new species to the south meadow.

The top 10 most frequently recorded species this year fell to species within just two groups, diptera and butterflies. The most frequent recorded species was Marmalade Hoverfly (*Episyrphus balteatus*), a very common hoverfly that can be recorded in most months of the year due to it hibernating throughout the winter and emerging on warmer days. It is often

seen in large numbers during the summer, when numbers are boosted by migrant individuals. The adults feed on nectar, whilst the larvae are predatory on aphids. It is fairly easily recognisable by the two 'moustache' black bands on tergites 3 and 4 of the abdomen, which are unique. It does hibernate throughout the winter, emerging on warmer days. Numbers are also boosted by migrants. Widespread within the UK this is probably our most common hoverfly. A species that can be found in a wide range of habitats including gardens, hedgerows, grassland and woodland.

This was closely followed by Ringlet and Meadow Brown which were also recorded in good numbers. David James (county butterfly recorder), recorded 97 Ringlet and 57 Meadow Brown in the South Meadow, along with 78 Ringlet within the woodland. In total 16 species of butterfly were recorded across the woods and south meadow including Wood White, Purple Emperor, White Admiral and Purple Hairstreak.

It was lovely to see a Barn Owl in the South Meadow as dusk fell upon us, and hear the call of Yellowhammers in the surrounding hedgerows, which also ended as the top bird species recorded. Seeing the hares off the access track to the meadow each day was also great. However, I wasn't fortunate enough to able to see or hear the Crossbill that Bob Bullock recorded from the plantation woodland.

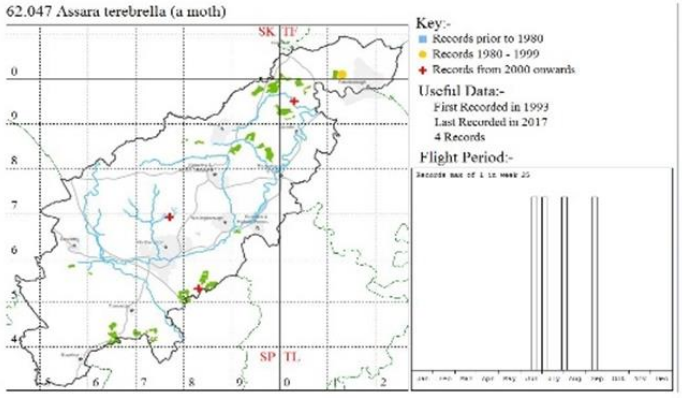
A number of moth traps (5x 125W Mercury Vapour, 2x 8W Heath traps) were run by myself and Peter Terry, mostly covering the woodland, where Peter kindly also ran his traps overnight, with a single trap also being left overnight in the south meadow. By myself.

Of the 177 species of moths recorded a few of note included:

Assara terebrella (Na)

Distribution map and photo -
http://www.northamptonshirewildlife.co.uk/nmoths/1461.htm

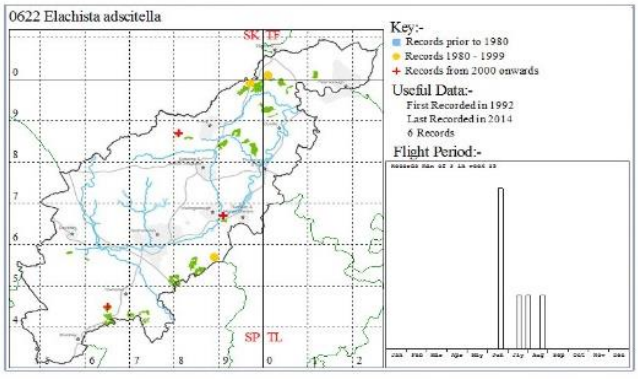
A single individual taken to a 125W MV skinner trap by Peter Terry and confirmed by Mark Hammond (VC32 County moth recorder). A nationally scarce species that is mainly distributed within southern England. It is a rare species within Northants, with only 3 previous records known since it was first recorded within the county in 1993 at Castor Hanglands NNR. It was then not recorded again until 2008 when taken at Woodnewton. It is known from coniferous woodland and plantations, where the larvae feed within the cones of Norway Spruce and can cause sufficient damage to be seen as a pest in some areas. The adults fly between June and August.



Elachista adscitella

Distribution map and image
from Northamptonshire Moth Group website
(http://www.northamptonshirewildlife.co.uk/

A single individual recorded to MV light and identified by genitalia dissection. A rare species within Northamptonshire. There are currently only 12 other records, which are widely scattered across the county. Previously was recorded in SP85 in 1995 when it was taken to light at the woodland called Old Pastures near Yardley Hastings. Larva mine the leaves of Tufted Hair-grass and Blue Moor-grass although it has been recorded on other species. Adults fly late May to early July and again in August. Habitat: Damp grassland.

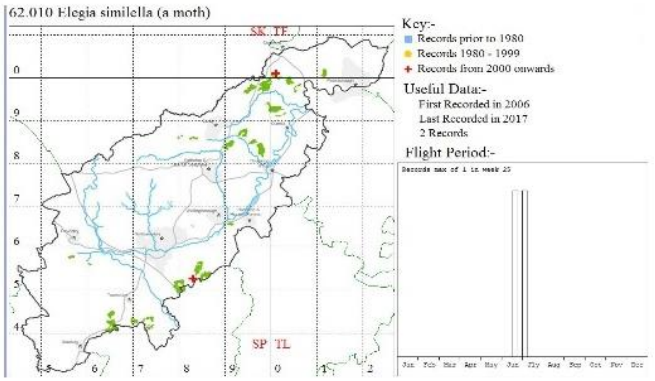


Elegia similella

Distribution map and photo - http://www.northamptonshirewildlife.co.uk/nmoths/1449.htm

A single individual taken to an MV light within Horton Woods. A distinctive species which was also confirmed by genitalia dissection. This nationally scarce species is rare within Northamptonshire with only a single previous record known from Collyweston Great Wood in the north of the county in 2006.

It is mainly distributed within south and south-east England, with Northants around the furthest north it has been recorded. Adult moths are on the wing between June and July. The larvae feed on mature oaks, often high in the canopy, living between leaves spun together with silk. It frequents oak woodland, and areas with mature oaks such as Parkland.



Bryophytes were recorded on the 12th February 2018, when county recorder Rachel Carter and Margaret Crittenden visited the site. A full report was kindly written by Rachel. Forty nine species were recorded, comprising 40 mosses and 9 liverworts.

"This is a good total for a Northamptonshire wood, especially as there was no stonework or masonry, and the rides didn't carry any of the bare-soil species often found for example in muddy ruts. Forty-plus species is good, (a few of the very best local woodlands reach 80-plus). Almost everything on the previous list was re-found, which is encouraging: the wood has clearly stayed in good condition (although there's no information about the quantities occurring)" Rachel Carter, Bryophyte County Recorder

Two bryophyte species in particular that were found are notable, *Platygyrium repens* and *Plagiochila asplenioides*. *Platygyrium repens (pictured)* is an uncommon moss which grows on trees, mostly on the bark of standard trees but in Horton Wood we also found it on some shrubs and fallen branches. It makes creeping patches – below left. Looking closely, you can see that many shoots look bushy at the tip; they have many little bud-like shoots in their leaf axils which are loose and fall off as a means of vegetative propagation.

Plagiochila asplenioides (pictured below) is a large, handsome liverwort, which used to be more plentiful in Northamptonshire woodlands than it is today. We found remarkably large amounts, fine big cushions in the area just beyond the pond a little way from the gate.

Another pleasing find was the liverwort *Riccardia chamaedryfolia*, (*pictured below*) on a cut log at the side of a ride.

Lichens were surveyed by Mark Powell (county lichen recorder), and Paula Shipway. A full report was kindly

written by Mark, from which I've taken out a few highlights below.

A number of species which appear to be new to VC32 were found. *Arthonia muscigena*, *Bacidia friesiana* and *Psoroglaena stigonemoides were all found in part of the Old Thorns between the conifer block and Keeper's Cottage, where the lichen interest is mainly associated with the Sambucus bushes under the spectacular thorn trees.*

Anisomeridium viridescens and *Leptorhaphis maggiana* have recently been found elsewhere in Northamptonshire, otherwise the records made at Horton would have been new for VC 32 *Arthopyrenia salicis* is completely new to the region (as a modern record).

NBRC held no beetle records for either site prior to the event so it was great to have Tony Drane, county beetle recorder at the event. Unfortunately Tony found that beetles were not much in evidence, possibly due to the hot spell of weather experienced prior to the event, and the afternoon being damp and very windy which meant beating rotten branches was difficult. One particular good find was *Abdera quadrifasciata* which is generally associated with good sites. There is potential for further work on the mature oaks on a better day in the future.

It was great that more information was added for all of the individual sites, including a number of new taxon groups from well recorded ones such as coleoptera, hymenoptera and hemiptera, to less recorded groups such as lacewings, molluscs and caddis flies. In total 13 new groups were recorded at Horton Woods, 4 for Horton Meadows North and 17 new groups for Horton Meadows South. Overall, the event added 305 new species to the list for Horton Woods, 274 for Horton Meadows South, and 31 to Horton Meadows North, although as previously mentioned this wasn't surveyed by most.

No. Species – Post & (Pre) Bioblitz			
Taxon group	**Horton Woods**	**Horton Meadows North**	**Horton Meadows South**
insect - moth	380 (317)		29
flowering plant	166 (145)	59 (41)	87 (49)
insect - true fly (Diptera)	59 (22)	1	64
insect - beetle (Coleoptera)	45	4	33
lichen	58		37
bird	33 (5)	3 (1)	20 (2)
insect - butterfly	19 (13)	8 (4)	15 (4)
moss	48 (35)		
insect - true bug (Hemiptera)	5		18
insect - hymenopteran	9	1	2
terrestrial mammal	6		3
insect - dragonfly (Odonata)	5		1
spider (Araneae)	1		9
liverwort	9 (8)		
fern	9 (9)		
crustacean	2		2
insect - orthopteran	1	1	1
insect - scorpion fly (Mecoptera)	1		2
horsetail	1 (1)		1
insect - lacewing (Neuroptera)			2
mollusc	1		1
acarine (Acari)			1
conifer	1		
harvestman (Opiliones)			1
insect - caddis fly (Trichoptera)	1		
Species Total	860 (555)	77 (46)	329 (55)

We'd like to thank everyone who participated and contributed to what was a very successful event. We are now looking forward to our 2018 Bioblitz event next weekend!

James Skinner, Data Officer

Hedgehog awareness week

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This year from 6th – 12th May this year people were asked to pledge to do one thing to raise awareness of hedgehogs; make a hole in your garden fence, contact a tool company to ask about putting stickers on strimmers, or sign the petition to withdraw approval of the A24 trap. Hedgehogs, and other species viewed as 'common' are often underreported meaning that when tracking decline and recovery of populations is made tougher. Do your bit by recording any sightings on our website or through the traditional paper method.

Training Courses

Want to up your skills over the summer? WTBCN's 2018 programme is full of wildlife courses ran by the experts. You can brush up on your wildflower identification, develop an interest in new species groups and gain skills in training others to identify and record species. We have a few joint WILDside courses with spaces still available.

To find out more join the WildlifeBCN Facebook group or sign up to their 'Local Wildlife - in Depth' e-newsletter.

#30DaysWild

The Wildlife Trusts #30dayswild is back! Starting on the 1st of June and lasting for the month get involved with 30 days of simple, fun and exciting Random Acts of Wildness. Everyone can get involved. Take time out in your day to get outside and notice the wildlife around you, record the birdsong at dawn, plant to attract pollinators to your garden, share your tips for the best wildflower photos, use wild ingredients (*elderflower champagne and cordial making pictured*) and head out for a nature picnic.

Sign up http://www.mywildlife.org.uk/30dayswild/ and find out more. Share your wild days using #30dayswild on social media.

The Big Butterfly Count

From the 14th July – 6th August

This nationwide survey run by Butterfly Conservation is aimed at helping them assess the health of our environment. It was launched in 2010 and has rapidly become the world's biggest survey of butterflies. Over 36,000 people took part in 2016, counting almost 400,000 individual butterflies and day-flying moths across the UK. For more information and to get involved please visit www.bigbutterflycount.org

Great British Bee Count

Organised by Friends of the Earth, the survey runs between 17th May – 30th June. Discover how to help bumblebees and solitary bees this summer by downloading their free app.

https://friendsoftheearth.uk/bee-count

NBRC Contact Details

Northamptonshire Biodiversity Records Centre
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Email: nbrc@northantsbrc.org.uk
Website: www.northantsbrc.org.uk

NBRC's staff members are Rosalind Johnston, Nathalie Hueber, Rachel Tate, James Skinner and Ryan Clark

Help WILDside fill the ‘Dots on the Map’

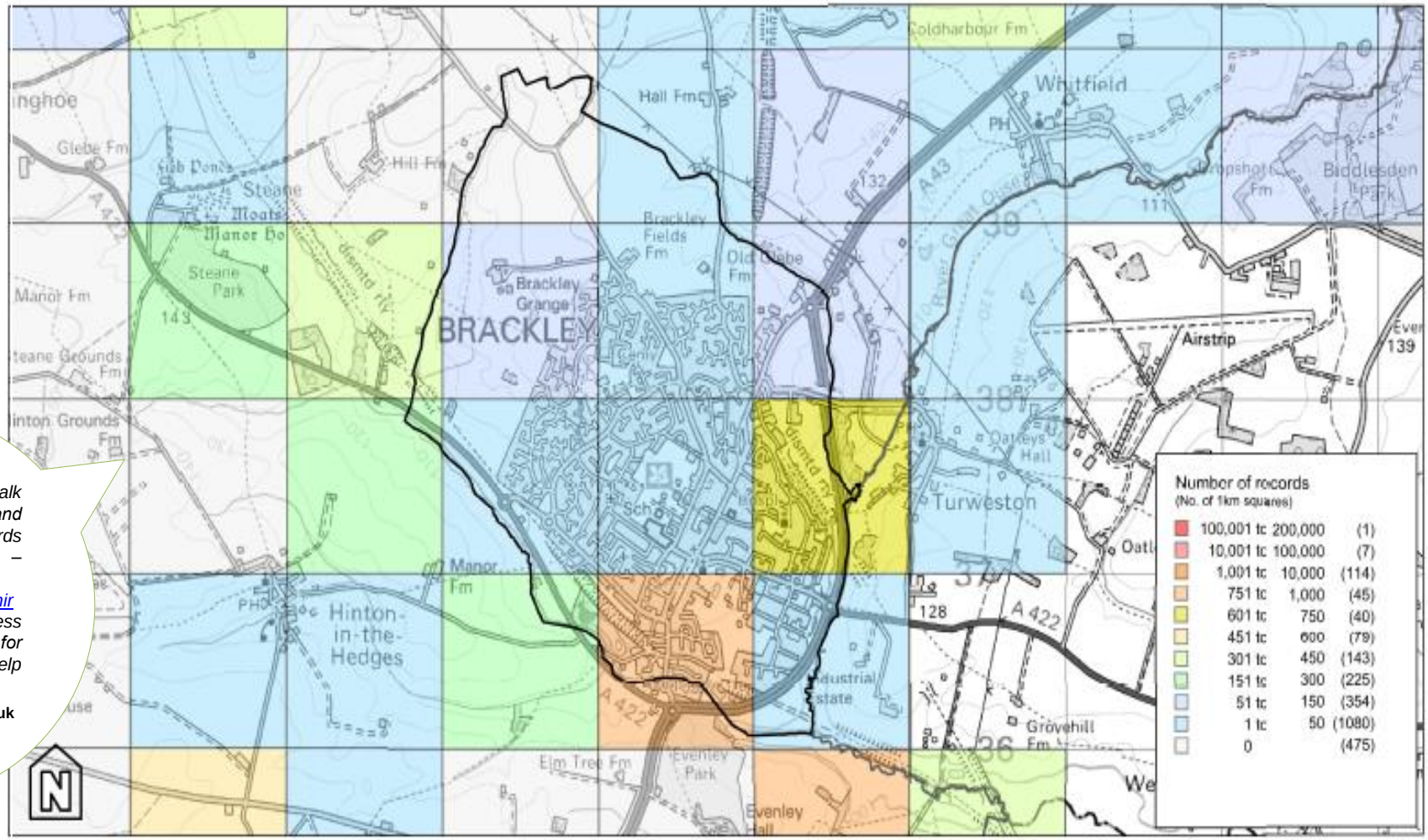
As well as species richness, we are aiming to grow our recording coverage. There are surprising amounts of easily accessible areas that we simply do not have any or many records for.

We will regularly feature a spot on the map to challenge you to

Head out for a summer walk in the shaded ‘white, blue and green’ squares to add records in underreported regions – checking https://maps.northamptonshire.gov.uk/ for right to access first under the ‘layers for public right of way’ and help us by adding your records.

http://www.northantsbrc.org.uk

Map showing the distribution of records held by NBRC within each 1km square for the parish of Brackley



Northamptonshire Biodiversity Records Centre