

NBRC Newsletter 17

Spring/Summer 2019

Over 65,000 of your species records were added to our database this year, making an impressive 930k to date. With your help, we are fast closing in on our first million species! We rely on your website and excel data submissions, our county recorder experts' annual reports, shared ecologist reports, collaboration and data sharing across our partners to build a quality, comprehensive and current picture of Northamptonshire's biodiversity. With 300+ data enquiries this year alone, and continued data provision with our partners, the data informs local decision-making, national trends and research. In order to securely house our growing database we have recently updated our entire IT infrastructure.

Our WILDside 'look out for...' surveys are generating targeted species records for our lesser reported (though often commonly sighted) species, currently running are rabbits, bee fly and a three-county collaborative swifts survey developed by Rachel from the national swifts monitoring scheme. In addition, BioBlitz season has begun with two visits to Yarwell Quarry. In early June, through the WILDside project we hosted volunteers to learn QGIS with Maplingo, a course directed at the recording community. Our upcoming WILDside conference will be held in September when we aim to share the impact of WILDside, the legacy for the NBRC and shape the future of Northamptonshire recording.



Rapid Grassland Survey with the Wildlife Trust Living Landscapes team

The LWS layer and citations have been updated in partnership with the Wildlife Trust Living Landscapes team and work is already underway for site reassessment, as supported in five sites by Nathalie. The NBRC team have also joined for a number of Rapid Grassland Assessments, repeatable surveys of habitat condition. Alongside this work, Nathalie has completed a course in the new UKHAB classification system for habitat assessment and both Nathalie & myself headed off to Salisbury to learn Phase1 & NVC habitat assessment with the Species Recovery Trust. We are currently looking at how we can continue to update and improve our habitat information, including potentially hosting maps that model habitat creation opportunities in Northamptonshire & Peterborough as produced by Natural Capital Solutions.

Competition Winner Announced!



John Showers adding his winning name '*Eristalis tenax*' to the NBRC drone, June 2019.

Thanks to the many submissions by email and twitter for our 'name the drone' competition'- they really made team smile, and although '*droney-mc-drone face*' was a strong contender the team were unanimous in their selection, in honour of the 'year of the fly', a massive congratulations to John Showers who very aptly named our drone *Eristalis tenax* the Drone hoverfly!

As the days become longer, warmer and drier, Nathalie and Rachel are gearing up to complete further aerial drone survey work. They have been out producing 3D and whole site imagery in support of Wildlife Trust reserves conservation planning. Over the summer, we

will be out to complete environment agency funded river restoration survey work in the Nene Valley. With his new high-powered machine, James will complete image analysis to produce the 'birds eye view' whole-site orthomosaic, 3D close up and editing of footage gained to showcase change before and after the planned works have taken place. We have now officially launched our drone service for bookings and updated all our services pages on the NBRC website.



WELCOME E.T.
(ERISTALIS TENAX ;)
OUR PHANTOM IV DRONE

NEW SERVICE FLYING IN TO
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
- 20 MPX UP TO 400 FT
- ORTHOMOSAIC,
PANORAMA & HD VIDEO
NBRC@NORTHANTS.BRC.ORG.UK/
01604 400448/@_NORTHANTS.BRC

Rosalind Johnston, NBRC Centre Manager

Bookings now open for drone projects:
<http://northantsbrc.org.uk/services/drone>

BioBlitz 2018 Report from Priors Hall, Corby

In 2018, NBRC held its annual BioBlitz event on 1st - 2nd of June at two fantastic Local Wildlife Sites, Corby Old Quarry Gullet and Corby Old Quarry Ponds. Both are part of the large housing development called Priors Hall, which is managed by Urban and Civic and lies to the east of Corby and just north of Weldon.



Corby Old Quarry Ponds. Photo by Nathalie Hueber

Corby Old Quarry Ponds is thirty-two hectares of calcareous grassland and woodland plantation, mainly of alder with belts of Scots and Corsican pine, silver birch with some larch, willow and Norway maple. The

southern end of area is grassland recently cleared of invasive trees and shrubs. Within the site are thirteen well established ponds and lakes formed in quarry hill and dale. There is a good sized lake, man-made but well established, with reed/sedge and willow scrub. Two newly created ponds have been built to comply with great crested newt licence. There is a significant amount of dead wood arising from basal rot of alder.



Corby Old Quarry Ponds. Photo by Nathalie Hueber

Corby Old Quarry Gullet is split into south and north sections by a central causeway. South of the causeway is designated as a Regionally Important Geological Site with exposed limestone floor and quarry face, the remnant of extensive limestone extraction. This region is made up of calcareous grassland, willow and hawthorn scrub as well as linear reed bed and wet grassland area with ephemeral ponds. North of the causeway, there are twenty-one ponds, linear reed bed and wet grassland areas, calcareous grassland and willow scrub. The area is split in two by an attenuation lake and north of this are two scrapes as well as alder woodland and hawthorn hedges.



Corby Old Quarry Gullet, photo by Nathalie Hueber



Corby Old Quarry Gullet, photo by Nathalie Hueber

Our BioBlitz began on the Saturday 1st June, on a warm, but slightly breezy evening from memory, when Juliette Butler and Matt Johnson of the WildlifeBCN, Rosalind Johnston from the NBRC team, and Keith Walkling, Ecological Clerk of works for the site, walked a bat transect they had setup within Quarry Ponds. Within a couple of hours they'd managed to record four species, Common Pipistrelle, Daubenton's, Noctule and Soprano Pipistrelle, this being a new addition to the site list, and a great start.

Within Quarry Gullet, myself and Ryan Clark setup moth traps, laying out a couple of hundred metres of cable for the two 125W Mercury Vapour and single 60W Actinic trap which we aimed to run for a few hours. A couple of 8W Heath Style battery traps were also left overnight within areas of reeds and scrub. Fingers were crossed for a 'good' night.



Local residents learning about the species found on the site

The Sunday was split between the two sites, the morning focussing on the gullet area where there was also the opportunity for residents of the local housing estate to attend a stand that had been setup. Staff were on hand to show some of the wildlife that was being found, and Keith Walkling, the ecologist for the site, could give people information about the sites and answer any questions they may have. It was great to show people what was effectively right on their doorstep, including some of the moths that had been

caught from trapping within the gullet the previous evening.

During lunch people discussed what had been recorded so far and it was quickly apparent that, being such excellent sites, it might have been best to concentrate on just one area rather than biting off too much. Fortunately, Keith was more than happy to arrange continued visits for recorders, which a number seemed very keen to take up.

Refreshed, the afternoon was spent at the Quarry Ponds site, where, with some additional recorders we continued our blitz of the sites. Although both fantastic sites ecologically, little data was held for either other than the results of the Local Wildlife Site surveys that had been carried out in the 1990's and again in 2002. NBRC held 587 records within its database, which were spread over 264 species and covered twelve taxon groups. Data submitted to the NBRC via its website, the majority which had been recorded by Keith, had not yet been included into the database, and meant there was a combined total of 327 species known from the sites prior to the BioBlitz,

In total, thanks to the efforts of everyone who took part over 900 records were made and a fantastic 531 species were recorded within the 24hrs covering 20 taxon groups. This resulted in a combined total of 692 species now known for the site and included 365 new species. The table below shows a comparison of the number of species held, prior to and after the BioBlitz.

Taxon group	No. of species			
	Prior to BioBlitz	BioBlitz	Total	New Species
amphibian	4	3	4	-
bird	51	46	76	25
bony fish <i>Actinopterygii</i>	-	1	1	1
conifer	1	1	2	1
crustacean	-	2	2	2
fern	2	2	3	1
flowering plant	166	116	188	22
horsetail	2	3	3	1
insect - beetle <i>Coleoptera</i>	5	54	59	54
insect - butterfly	12	10	18	6
insect - caddis fly <i>Trichoptera</i>	-	5	5	5
insect - dragonfly <i>Odonata</i>	1	15	15	14

insect - <i>Hymenopteran</i>	1	10	11	10
insect - mayfly <i>Ephemeroptea</i>	-	2	2	2
insect - moth	60	113	158	98
insect - <i>Orthopteran</i>	1	1	2	1
insect - true bug <i>Hemiptera</i>	-	17	17	17
insect - true fly <i>Diptera</i>	2	36	38	36
liverwort	-	9	9	9
mollusc	-	5	5	5
moss	-	53	53	53
reptile	2	1	2	-
stonewort	4	2	5	1
terrestrial mammal	13	6	14	1
TOTAL	327	531	692	365

The most frequently recorded species was the Common Blue butterfly, *Polyommatus Icarus*. This species feeds principally on Bird's-foot Trefoil, Clover and Black Medick, and is on the wing from Mid-May to early July, and again from late July to mid-September. It frequents varying habitats including unimproved grassland, woodland rides and brown-field sites. David James' (county butterfly recorder) [2018 report for butterflies](#) shows it was interesting to see that the species had a great season last year. There was a 406% increase from the 10 year average and although at least 32 adults were seen across both areas on the day. David remarks on there being exceptional high counts at Priors Hall in 2018. Ten species of butterflies were recorded in total on the day, including Small Heath, Dingy and Grizzled Skipper (both declining nationally), and Green Hairstreak.

The second most common species was the Blue-tailed damselfly (*Ischnura elegans*) with 10 records, and highlighted as the most widely distributed species in the county (Tyrell, The Dragonflies of Northamptonshire, 2006). This was recorded by 5 people across both sites, and included approximately 300 adults estimated by Northamptonshire's county dragonfly recorder, Mark Tyrell, within Corby Quarry Ponds. Sampling of the ponds by Kevin Rowley meant that larvae of this species were also recorded, along with others which was nice to have the evidence of breeding. In total 15 dragonfly species were recorded including Hairy Dragonfly, Emerald Damselfly, Small Red-eyed Damselfly and a larvae of Ruddy Darter.

The group with the highest number of species recorded this year was plants, with 124 species recorded. With Local Wildlife Site surveys having been carried out by the WildlifeBCN in the 1990's and again in 2002, the sites were reasonably well recorded for plants, with a total of 174 species known. However, a number of individuals, including Nathalie Hueber from the NBRC helped in recording 25 species new to the site, including Kidney Vetch and Heath Speedwell. It also being extremely useful to re-affirm the continued existence of many species. One particular plant, the Common Spotted Orchid, ended up being the third most common species recorded with 8 records to 6 individuals, and recorded across both sites.



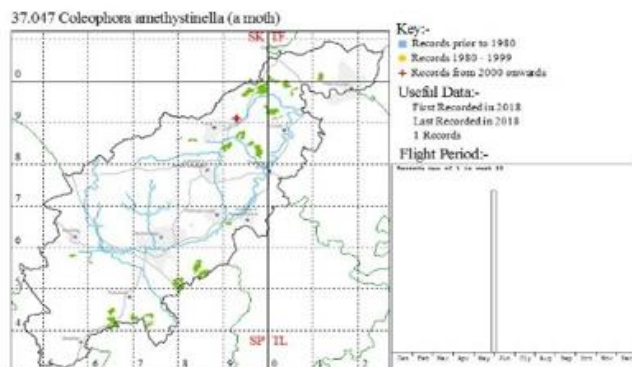
Heath Speedwell and Common Spotted Orchid.
Photos by Nathalie Hueber.

Of the 159 records received for moths, a total of 113 species were recorded over the two days and was the second most well recorded group. This included 2 pRDB2 sp. (*Coleophora amethystinella*, *Epiblema grandaevana*), 2 Nationally Scarce Na sp. (*Cochylidia heydeniana*, *Brachmia inornatella*), 2 Nationally Scarce Nb sp. (*Eulamprotes unicolorella*, *Commophila aeneana*) and 16 Local and 81 Common species.

Some previous moth trapping had been done by an individual in 2009 and 2010 which had meant 60 species were known to the site. Members of the Northants Moth Group had also carried out light trapping prior to any of the housing development back in 2004 and 2005 but it was believed this may have not been directly within the LWS areas. From what was known a total of 98 species were recorded new to the site.

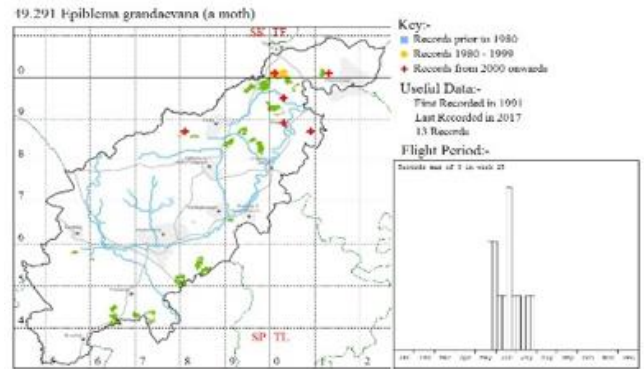
A single specimen of *Coleophora amethystinella* was recorded within the gullet area. One of the metallic looking *Coleophora* sp., if looked at closely it has quite distinctive orange 'eyelashes'. Adults fly in sunshine between May and June, frequenting Grassland and waste ground. Regarded as vulnerable nationally, and a proposed future Red Data Book species, this is the first record for this species within Northamptonshire. The larva feed on Smooth Tare (*Vicia tetrasperma*), where they bore into a seedpod and use it as a portable

case.



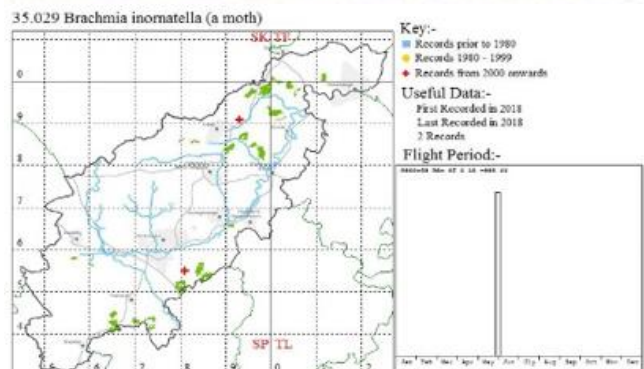
***Coleophora amethystinella* specimen photo and distribution Map from Northamptonshire Moth Group**

Epiblema grandaevana is a vulnerable moth nationally and is also proposed as a future Red Data Book species (pRDB2). It is only known from a few Vice counties, many being on the eastern coast and is rare in Northamptonshire with only 13 records currently known. One of the largest British Tortricidae, it is associated with quarries and waste ground, the larva feed within the roots of Colt's-foot and Butterbur.



***Epiblema grandaevana* specimen photo and distribution Map from Northamptonshire Moth Group**

A single specimen of *Brachmia innornatella* (Fen Crest) was taken within the gullet area, to a 125W Mercury vapour lamp. A nationally scarce (Na) species that is mainly found in East Anglia, with records also known from the south and south-east of England. This is the first time the species had been recorded within Northamptonshire although interestingly a 2nd record was recorded in Hackleton two days later, on the 3rd June. Adults are 'on the wing' in June and July. Inhabits fens, wetland areas, where the larvae are believed to feed within the stems of Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*), although the early stages are not fully known.



***Brachmia innornatella* specimen photo and distribution Map from Northamptonshire Moth Group**

For further details of the moths recorded on the site, please contact me for my separate report which details the ongoing surveying done on the site in 2018. In total 319 species were recorded.

Only 5 coleoptera species were previously known, although included the lovely Green Tiger Beetle, glow-worm, Lesser Stag beetle, and the even lovelier *Platystomos albinus*, one of the fungus weevils.

A total of 54 species were recorded on the day, mostly aquatic beetles, thanks to the efforts of Kevin Rowley (county water bug recorder) and Ryan, who couldn't keep himself away from the ponds during the evening's mothing. I think the surprising lack of beetle activity, to, and around the traps led Ryan to head for the ponds. Many different groups also come to light and is quite usual to see a number of water beetles. In fact, making use of this, Ryan managed to record 5 species of Caddis flies which were very kindly determined by Yorkshire county recorder for Caddis. I don't think we often make best use of this opportunity by recording bi-catch from moth traps, and I'm sure we could add a more information about sites if this was the case.



Green Tiger Beetle, photo taken by Nathalie Hueber

Two of those that stood out were *Hydrochus crenatus* and *Limnebius papposus* which are both classed as Near Threatened, occurring in 15 or fewer hectads but do not qualify as Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable. A JNCC report 'A review of the Scarce and Threatened Coleoptera of Great Britain, Garth Foster, 2010' highlights these are now recorded in more hectads, 25 and 79 respectively. *Hydrochus crenatus* occurs mainly in the mossy edges of fluctuating ponds and in rich fens, the adults feeding on algae. As with other *Hydrochus* species, the adults and larvae are aquatic but don't swim. *Limnebius papposus* is largely confined to lowland fen areas and ponds, usually with rich vegetation and detritus. Also recorded were two species of the metallic brown/green looking *Donacia*

species. Also known as reed beetles, they can, as expected be found, sometimes numerous on plants such as Reed Sweet-grass.

No true bugs had been recorded previously at the site, so the 17 species recorded on the day were all new to the site. With the large number of ponds/lakes, 15 of these were thanks mainly to Kevin Rowley (county waterbug recorder). This included the Nationally Scarce Nb species *Microvelia pygmaea*. A species confined mainly to the SE of England although a few records have been taken in Wales and Scotland and appears to making a gradual move northwards. For further info on its status in Northants please do visit <https://sites.google.com/site/northantswaterbugs/home/microvelia-pygmaea-dufour> where information can be found for all the water bugs recorded within the county. Kevin's sampling efforts also meant that four other previously unrecorded groups were covered, adding five species of mollusc, two species of mayfly, two species of crustacean, and one species of fish, all of which were new to the sites.

Only a single Hymenoptera species had been previously recorded, this being the Common Wasp. Ryan Clark (county Hymenoptera recorder) and John Showers (county Diptera recorder) managed to add a further 10 species despite the heat, with Ryan recording the Lobe-spurred Furrow Bee (*Lasioglossum (Evylaeus) pauxillum*). A single adult female was seen within the Gullet area. This nationally scarce, Na species is mostly concentrated within the south, south-west of England with Northants being one of the furthest north records. It favours mostly open habitats, including chalk grassland, where it visits flowers such as Bramble (*Rubus* sp.), Common Fleabane (*Pulicaria dysenterica*) and Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*)

Bryophytes were recorded on the 13th December and again on the 16th January 2019, when county recorder Rachel Carter and Margaret Crittenden visited the site along with Ryan Clark. No known bryophyte records were previously known. Sixty-two species were recorded across both sites, with the Gullet being the richest with Forty-two. Two species in particular, Top Notchwort (*Leiocolea turbinata*) and Lesser Germanderwort (*Riccardia incurvata*) which were seen had both only been recorded once previously before at one other site in the county, Old Sulehay Sand-pit area. Rachel highlighted that *Riccardia incurvata*, a rare liverwort of damp soil, was also classified as Nationally Scarce until recently, a few more records having taken it over the threshold of records in 100 10km squares. Both species were recorded from the gullet area. *Leiocolea turbinata* is a tiny liverwort of calcareous soil. It has two rows of rounded bilobed leaves which

narrow at the base. Thanks go to Rachel Carter for her notes on these species.

A huge thanks, in particular, go to Keith Walkling for all his time and effort in making the event possible, along with Urban & Civic for giving us the permission to hold the event. Finally, we'd like to thank everyone who participated on the day, in whatever capacity, for making the event a huge success and to adding to the continued knowledge about the site.

James Skinner, Data Officer NBRC

If you are interested in recording in this site, send us an email and we can put you in touch with Keith to discuss access: nbrc@northantsbrc.org.uk



WILDside Update

We are now into the final field season of our WILDside Project. Thank you to everyone that has taken part and contributed so far. We have achieved a lot and there is lots more to get involved with in the last 7 months of the project.

Swifts Survey

Swifts have now started to grace our skies again. Their screams certainly fill me with joy. This species is not doing well though and we are looking to gather evidence about where they are exhibiting breeding behaviour in Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire. We would also like to know where you might have boxes that are not being used. Please help us out by recording information on [our website](#).

Local Wildlife Site Survey Days



Volunteers recording in a Local Wildlife Site survey

Local Wildlife Sites are incredibly important areas for wildlife and help link up nature reserves and the wider

landscape. We need your help surveying them. Make sure you are signed up to the WILDside mailing list to hear about these opportunities.

Talks at the Northamptonshire Natural History Society

So far this year we have had some great WILDside talks at the Northamptonshire Natural History Society. All of these talks take place at the NNHS building in the centre of Northampton. Please see their website for [location details](#). These talks are free to attend and everyone is welcome. They start at 7:30pm and no booking is required. We have 3 more coming up in the next few months. They are:

Date	Title	Description
Tuesday 25 th June	Farming for the Future and Marvellous Meadows	Helena Darragh is the Nene Valley Land Adviser for the Wildlife Trust BCN. She will give an overview of the Farming for the Future project running in the Nene Valley and discuss the importance of meadows, along with the opportunity to learn about and see a variety of wildflowers found in meadows across Northamptonshire.
Tuesday 9 th July	Recent finds and refinds regarding the Northants Flora	Brian Laney is joint county recorder for vascular plants. He has an incredible ability to find species that have been overlooked by other botanists and travels around the county (and beyond) finding and conserving rare species. He will take to us about some of his recent finds and refinds. An entertaining talk not to be missed.
Tuesday 13 th August	All about Badgers	This talk by Northamptonshire Badger Group will explore the ecology of badgers to dispel some of the myths and misunderstandings

		about the animal, covering; biology, setts, diet, reproduction, communication and social organisation as well as current threats that badgers face today. Northamptonshire Badger Group is actively involved in the welfare of badgers across all Northamptonshire.
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Abington Meadows BioBlitz

We are having a BioBlitz on the 11th August (with moth trapping and bat surveys on the 10th August) at this [Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve](#). The site is situated just north of the river Nene and is separated from it by a high bank. There is a large ditch through the middle which divides the site into two fields. There are two large ponds present on the site and lots of marshy vegetation. Ten years ago NBRC held a BioBlitz here so it will be great to go back and see what has changed in terms of the species present. This will help influence ongoing management of the site. We would love as much help as possible to record the species found on the site, numbers will be limited though so booking is required. Please email wildside@northantsbrc.org.uk if you are interested in attending.

As we are now approaching the end of the WILDside Project, our focus has also shifted slightly to try new things for the records centre. You can expect to see before the end of 2019:

- New promotional materials for the records centre
- A recorders handbook – how to record, why to record and who to send your records to in the 3 counties
- The first ever Northamptonshire Recorders Conference – see the back page of this newsletter for more information!

Thank you to everyone that has got involved with WILDside so far, and to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for supporting this project.

Ryan Clark, WILDside Project Coordinator

For more information about the WILDside project or to sign up for updates, please email WILDside@northantsbrc.org.uk

Hunsbury Hill Fort Survey Report 2018

The Friends of West Hunsbury Parks contacted the records centre asking for our help with wildlife surveys in 2018. As part of their National Lottery Heritage Fund bid, they included training on wildlife surveying. Hunsbury Hill is an Iron Age Hill Fort situated in Hunsbury Hill Country Park on the outskirts of Northampton. It is probable that defences were built at Hunsbury Hill between the 7th and 4th centuries BC. Therefore, it is clear that this site was important historically, but its value to wildlife wasn't fully known and this is what we set out to discover.

The site is designated as a Local Wildlife Site, which means it has significant value to wildlife in the county. This survey was updated by the Wildlife Trust in 2018, further highlighting the habitats on site and their importance for wildlife.

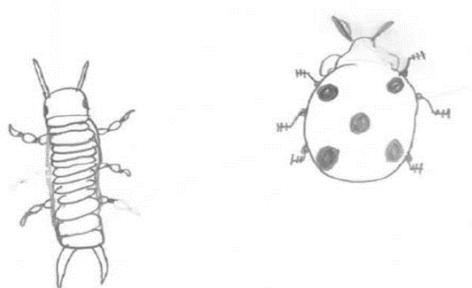


Map of Hunsbury Hill Country Park

The records centre sought to expand this knowledge and encompass other species groups on the site with the help of local people. We ran a training course for adults to come and learn about species identification. This was very popular and highlighted to local residents that there is lots of wildlife in the park. We also ran a session for children from the local school on site in both grassland and woodland habitats. They collected and identified leaves and flowers, took part in bug hunts and helped us build up a picture of the wildlife. Finally, we had a BioBlitz where the public could join us for daytime hunts alongside bat and moth sessions. Further highlighting the species present on site.



Ryan Clark teaching local residents about the site's wildlife



Children's drawings of wildlife they found and identified in a mini BioBlitz with Hunsbury Park Primary School children as part of their Forest School activities

During our workshops and BioBlitz we recorded over 100 species which were new for the site. The site total, according to our database, now stands at 319 species, with many more to find! A full list of the species known on the site can be found in the report for this work, which is available on the [Friends of West Hunsbury Parks website](#).

Thank you to the Friends of West Hunsbury Parks for the opportunity to carry out this work. The results of these surveys will feed into future work in the hill fort.

Ryan Clark, WILDside Project Coordinator

County firsts & recent arrivals: Diptera update 2019

The year has started well for Diptera in the county. Firstly, Tim Pridmore sent me a photo of dotted bee-fly *Bombylius discolor* from Farthinghoe NR. At the time this was the first county record of this species, which has been gradually expanding its range northwards. About a week later, David James recorded one at Salcey Forest. I alerted local dipterists to keep a look-

out for it and Kate Colles photographed one in her garden at Upper Boddington. This prompted Chris Colles to search his photos from 2018 and he sent me the photo below in Upper Boddington Churchyard in April 2018, making it the first county record. Tim has also seen them in the Fawsley/Everdon area so they seem to be well established in the south-west of the county.



Dotted bee-fly *Bombylius discolor* showing dotted wing pattern © Chris Colles

In April, I was just clearing up after a moth trapping session in my garden when I noticed a small black hoverfly on my book. I took it and keyed it through Stubbs and Falk but it failed in the Pagana Group key, I realised that the wings had vague clouds and checked it against the NW Europe key (van Veen) and it keyed out straight away to a female *Cheilosia caerulea*, another county first. This is a recent arrival in the UK. Its larvae mine the leaves of houseleeks and it is believed to have been introduced on imported plants. The larvae leave pale blotches on the leaves.



Hoverfly *Cheilosia caerulea* showing dark wing shade, extended lower face and all-black femora. © John Showers

Find examples on the British Leafminers website:
<http://www.leafmines.co.uk/html/Diptera/C.caerulea.htm>

The year has been very slow for hoverflies and this seems to be reflected across southern Britain. It is thought that the prolonged dry summer last year led to a shortage of nectar and failure of hoverflies to breed in their usual numbers. This happened after the summer of 1976 and it took several years for numbers to recover.

The BioBlitz at Yarwell Quarry produced several of the short-palped crane fly *Dicranomyia sericata*. This is a local species associated with scrub on limestone. It has a short flight period around May. It had only been previously recorded in Northants at Twywell Whitestones. Subsequently I found another thriving population at Prior's Hall Quarry.

John Showers, County Recorder

Northamptonshire RIGS revisited

In December 2018, Dr Diana Sutherland retired from her long-held post as guardian of Northamptonshire's Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS), also known as Local Geological Sites (LGS). A group of four volunteers from the East Midlands Branch of the Open University Geological Society have got together to pick up Diana's work.

Each LGS is assessed on four criteria: scientific, educational, historical, and aesthetic. Northamptonshire's sites cover the whole range of Northamptonshire's Middle Jurassic geology, from the Marlstone Rock and Upper Lias in the west of the county, through the Northampton Sand Ironstone belt around Northampton, Wellingborough, Kettering and Corby, and up to the Lincolnshire Limestones of the north east area. Many of the ironstone sites are reminders of Northamptonshire's vanished iron ore extraction industry. The South Northants area still needs further exploration to identify potential sites.



Priors Hall LGS, Corby

RIGS status, unlike SSSIs, confers no statutory protection to a site, but landowners and local authorities are notified in the hope that these sites can be left visible and accessible for further study by geologists. Many of the sites also provide useful wildlife habitats. We are grateful for the Wildlife Trust's help in record keeping and administering Northamptonshire's RIGS.



Eastfield Park LGS, Wellingborough

There are over 70 RIGS in Northamptonshire and, as most of them have not been looked at for 10-15 years, the group is concentrating on updating the condition monitoring forms for the best, most easily accessible sites. So far, we have visited and updated the records of about 15 sites in the Northampton, Corby, Rothwell, and Daventry areas. Problems that we have encountered include sites that are badly overgrown with vegetation and difficulty in identifying and contacting landowners,



Viewing Platform Irchester Country Park

An example of what can be done at a LGS is at Irchester Country Park. Here, in conjunction with Northamptonshire County Council, a successful Heritage Lottery bid enabled the provision of the

Ironstone Heritage Trail, a viewing platform, and some clearance of the Wembley Pit face, making a very valuable educational facility and useful geoconservation.

There is much work to be done on this project, so if there are any interested geologists, it would be good to hear from you.

Ian Clarke, co-ordinator for Northamptonshire's Local Geological Sites

New co-ordinator for Local Geological Sites



My name is Ian Clarke and I have recently taken over from Dr Diana Sutherland as co-ordinator for Northamptonshire's Local Geological Sites (LGS, also known as RIGS, Regionally Important Geological Sites). Unlike Diana, I am not a professional geologist, but an enthusiastic amateur. I

studied Earth Science courses with the Open University from 1995 to 2002 to obtain a BSc. To maintain my interest in geology I am an active member of the Open University Geological Society, being Treasurer and organising field trips for the East Midlands branch.

As a "native" of Northamptonshire, I am enjoying visiting our 70+ LGS, discovering more about our geological past, and hoping to share some of what we find with the county's ever growing population.

It is good to be working with the NBRC and Wildlife Trust as geology underpins and influences our landscape and wildlife habitats.

Ian Clarke, co-ordinator for Northamptonshire's Local Geological Sites

If you are interested in the LGS group and would like to find out more please get in touch

Tel. 01327 705114

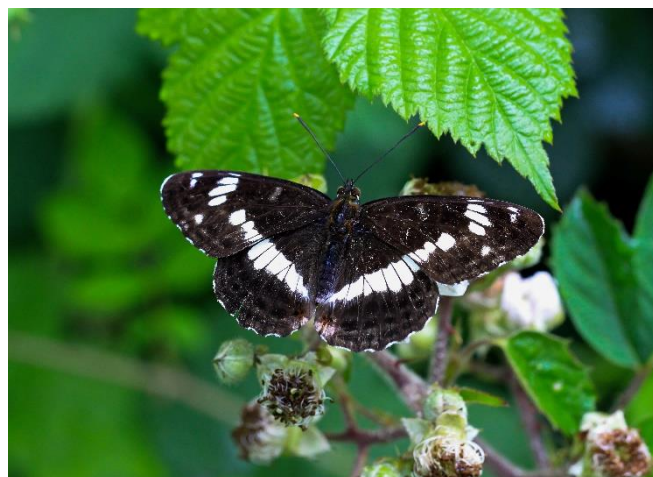
E-mail i.j.clarke@hotmail.com

Vacancies

Bedfordshire & Northamptonshire Butterfly Conservation vacant committee roles

From April 2020, our current chair Doug Goddard is retiring from the post and the Branch is looking for

someone to take on the role either working with Doug in the coming year or taking on the role directly at that date. A knowledge of butterflies is not essential and induction is available from Head Office.



White admiral. Photo by David James

The Branch Chair's role is to lead and manage the Branch and its activities (delegating tasks to other Branch committee members and post-holders as needed) in accordance with the Branch Rules and Butterfly Conservation's policies etc. The role includes chairing regular Branch Committee meetings and the Chair leads the committee and Branch post-holders in planning and reviewing the work and activities of the Branch. BC's Head Office can provide full information on BC's policies as well as guidance on running a Branch and Branch activities, and further information is available in the Branch Handbook via the BC website and in regular newsletters and other communications from BC's Head Office and Regional Offices. The Chair also has an important role in maintaining good relationships and communication within the Branch between committee members and post-holders, and between the Branch and BC Regional and Head Office staff, to further the work of the Branch and BC.

The Branch is also looking to recruit further committee members.

Branch committees run their local Branch of Butterfly Conservation and its activities, and in order to do that committee members attend regular meetings of the Branch committee, and take part in committee decisions. Guidance about committee meetings is available in the Branch Rules. Committee members help the Branch Chair in making sure that the Branch and its activities follow this guidance and BC's principles and policies in conserving butterflies and moths. Many committee members also help with other activities of the Branch or take up a specific Branch post. If you are interested in doing this, information about those roles is available from the Branch Chair and on the Branch Area of the BC website.

Please contact Doug Goddard by email goddarddougglas@hotmail.com if interested in these posts or for further information.

County Bird Recorder

Could you take your passion for ornithology to the next stage and support quality recording of bird records for the county? The committee produces the Northamptonshire Bird Report annually, and they are looking for someone inspiring to take on or share the responsibility of the county recorder role.

Contact Mike Alibone for details:

Email: alibone.mike@gmail.com (Twitter: @Bonxie)
<https://northantsbirds.com/contact/>

Any bird records can be sent to

Chris Coe, 3 Manor Rd, Weedon, Northampton NN7 4QN. email c.coe898@btinternet.com

Northamptonshire Badger Group working group members needed

Northamptonshire now has full county coverage for Badger recording and for rescue. The group needs members across the county to support their work. Various roles are available but in particular, they are looking for volunteers to help:

1. Booking and planning the events we attend.
2. Checking and commenting on Planned Development in various areas of the County (possibly suit someone with ecology background).
3. Settle Surveyors to update and increase our badger records.
4. Promotion and marketing including poster and leaflet distribution across the County.

Read about the Northamptonshire Badger Group and get in touch about member roles: <https://www.northamptonshirebadgers.co.uk/>

Not your species passion? Search or set up your own scheme

The NBN holds a bank of 200+ national schemes and societies to join, learn, engage and lead in species recording. Find your species passion and support others to get involved with recording in Northants.

<http://www.brc.ac.uk/recording-schemes>

Wildlife Trust Northamptonshire River Mammal Survey Project – help needed

If you live in the Nene Valley, how many times have you thought any of the following: “Otters are everywhere” “Water voles have virtually disappeared” “There seems to be loads of mink around”?

There is truth behind these statements, which we know from looking at national trends. However, it is important to start gathering data to support these statements and fully understand the extent to which they are true in our local area. We also need to collect this data so we can target our conservation efforts effectively, particularly when it comes to the case of one of our most at risk and enigmatic species: the water vole.

We need your help

To do this, we are launching a Water Vole, Otter, and Mink Survey Project in the Nene Valley and would like you to be involved.

The project aims to understand the distribution of these species across the Nene Valley with the secondary objective of improving the situation for water voles by boosting habitat connectivity.

In its first year, the project will initially focus on Summer Leys, Nene Wetlands, and Barnwell local wildlife site; once the project is established we can move on to surveying other areas.



Otter spraint, photo by Rosalind Johnston

Training for volunteers

We have held two survey-training workshops in the first week of April to train volunteers to identify signs and how to record. Surveys have started, including support from members of the NBRC team, with James Skinner and Rosalind Johnston volunteering on surveys and Rachel Tate preparing an online survey on the NBRC website to support recording over the summer. We want Northamptonshire's recording community to get involved and we will be holding the occasional workshop throughout the survey season – get in touch to join us.

If you are interested please contact Lewis at lewis.dickinson@wildlifebcn.org

**Lewis Dickinson, Water for Wildlife Officer
Northamptonshire**

Help our swifts – join the 2019 survey

We would like you to let us know where swifts are nesting in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire. Breeding numbers of swifts are declining dramatically in the UK. This is considered to be partly due to the loss of nesting sites, as older buildings are demolished and modern buildings are often not suitable for building nests.

We need information on swift nesting sites from your local area to help us to protect these areas and to plan the installation of new boxes. Swifts begin to return to the UK from late April onward, and will be looking for suitable nest sites.



What can I record?

The aim of the survey is to record nesting sites, so we are asking you to send us sightings of:

- Screaming parties – birds congregate on the wing calling to each other with the distinctive screech, usually near suitable buildings
- Nests in buildings - swifts return to the same sites throughout their life (up to 20 years). Please report swifts entering buildings through the roof or a hole
- Nest boxes – you can report the presence of swift boxes and let us know if they are being used
- There is no need to report sightings of swifts away from nesting areas. Swifts fly very long distances and may just be passing through.

Record your sightings and nest sites in the NBRC online survey here:

<http://www.northantsbrc.org.uk/Wildside/LookOutForSwifts>

Read our swift identification guide here:

https://www.wildlifebcn.org/sites/default/files/2019-03/ID_CommonSwift.pdf

Help swifts by incorporating nest boxes in suitable building sites: <https://www.wildlifebcn.org/swifts>

**Josh Hellon, Research & Monitoring Manager
Wildlife Trust BCN**

Join in with National Surveys this season....

OPAL Bugs Count – all year

Take part in a timed survey, sweep nets, pooters and hand lenses at the ready! Remember to record your location as accurately as possible and so a verifier will recognise it ☺postcode not #mygarden please.

Further details:

<https://www.opalexplornature.org/bugscount>

Ancient Tree Inventory – all year

Characterful, gnarled, fungi loving ancient trees provide homes and shelter for thousands of species. We need to know where they are to ensure they are protected.

Record a tree: <https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk/>

BeeWalk March - October

Britain's bumblebees need you! Could you commit to recording a transect monthly? With a little learning, you can get to grips with the Northants Bumblebees (Buff-tailed, White-tailed, Tree, Garden, Heath, Red-tailed, Early & Common carder) and take part in tracking the trends this summer.

Survey:

<https://www.bumblebeeconservation.org/beewalk/>

ID guide:

<https://www.bumblebeeconservation.org/bumblebee-species-guide/>

Big Butterfly Count 19th July - 11th August

Fifteen minutes in a sunny spot is all you need to take part in this national annual survey.

Find out more: <https://www.bigbutterflycount.org/>

Moth Night 26th – 28th September

Moth cinema anyone? With as little as a torch, a sheet and an ID book you can start mothing. If you have caught the bug, you can try sugaring traps as well as building your own moth trap for even more species diversity.

Further details: <http://www.mothnight.info/>

Meadows Weekend - 13th-14th July

Be part of a wonderful weekend celebrating our amazing meadows at Nene Wetlands nature reserve in honour of National Meadows Day on the 6th July. Learn the traditional skill of scything at one of our workshops, and discover more about the plants and animals which reside in these wonderful habitats on a wildflower, insect and photography walk!



Photo Matt Johnson

This event is being run by the Farming for the Future project which is one of sixteen National Heritage Lottery funded projects forming the Nenescape Landscape Partnership, working within the Nene Valley.

Find out more...

Meadows weekend in the Nene Wetlands

Find out more about our amazing meadows as part of the Farming for the Future project in the Nene Valley.

Learn about grassland invertebrates and plants and how we study them with experts Ryan Clark and Matt Johnson or learn a new practical skill as part of the scything workshop or photographic safari.

Scything Workshop | Saturday 13 or Sunday 14 July | 10am - 4:30pm | £25pp

Insect Walk | Sunday 14 July | 10:30am - 12pm | £10pp

Wildflower Walk | Sunday 14 July | 12:30 - 2pm | £10pp

Photographic Safari | Sunday 14 July | 2:30 - 4pm | £10pp

Spaces are limited and booking is essential, so do get in touch to sign up and be part of a fantastic weekend!

For more information and to get involved contact:

Helena Darragh: 07540 670229 | helena.darragh@wildlifebcn.org

Helena Darragh, Nene Valley Land Adviser

Hedgehog awareness week

Annually from the 5th – 11th May, the Hedgehog Preservation Society aim to draw attention and funds for hedgehog protection.

Competitions were ran every day on Facebook and Twitter. Over £2800 was raised for the through this week long campaign. One of these competitions, 'make a blu tac hedgehog' was won by our very own James Skinner see his winning entry below!



NBRC Contact Details

Northamptonshire Biodiversity Records Centre

c/o The Wildlife Trust BCN

Lings House, Billing Lings, Northampton, NN3 8BE

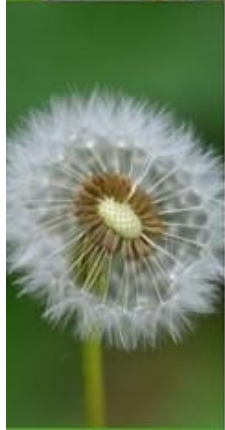
Tel: 01604 400448, Fax: 01604 784835

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

If you would like to sign up to, update your details or be removed from our mailing list – please get in touch. For further details, please see our privacy policy.



Northamptonshire Biological Recorders Conference 2019

Sunday 29th September Ecton Village Hall

Talks and displays from local recorders – what is going
on in the county and how you can get involved

Updates from the Northamptonshire Biodiversity
Records Centre

Free buffet lunch

Booking essential. Please contact
wildside@northantsbrc.org.uk for more details

