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CLASSIFIED RECORDS

MAMMALS

Only one report of a bat was received this quarter, from HS at Quorn where one was circling the garden in early May.

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A dead **Pygmy Shrew** was found in J & CG's Holwell garden and another dead shrew, yet to be identified, on a path at Grace Dieu.

Five members have seen **Hedgehogs**, ATO has two visiting his Loughborough garden, the larger one has blond spikes with two brown patches. GF has had as many as three regularly visiting his Scraftoft garden, DAP saw a medium specimen on the road verge in Quorn at about 4 pm on 9 May and one triggered a security light in Groby.

The only squashed Hedgehog was near Lount. HB remarks that he rarely sees dead Hedgehogs now as he cycles around Leicester and east Leicestershire and wonders if they are becoming smarter or scarcer?

Molehills were noted throughout the quarter at Swithland and also recorded at Bradgate, Peckleton, Grace Dieu and in Bob's Closs behind the Community Centre at Thringstone.

Rabbits were plentiful and healthy in Swithland and other sightings came from New Lount, Sheet Hedges Wood and Prestwold Hall, Quorn, Wymondham, Woodhouse and around the nature reserves at Holwell.

Two **Brown Hares** were seen at Stoughton on 2 June and two in fields near Newtown Linford on 21 April.

We have one record of a **House Mouse** from HB in Leicester and three of **Wood Mice** – one dead by Quorn Baptist Chapel, commonly seen in DAP's Swithland garden and a quite tame one scavenging under the bird feeders in EPT's Loughborough garden.

BIRDS

DAP reports that there have been high sales of rodenticide at Cooks Farm Shop in Newtown Linford and he has seen and heard of higher than usual numbers of **Common Rats** around the county.

Grey Squirrels are so much a part of the scene that reports are few but they were noted, unusually, at Shelthorpe being chased by ATO's cat, also seen at Thornton Reservoir, Quorn and Grace Dieu.

A **Fox** has been regularly digging under DAP's Swithland garden gate to gain entry so there must be something fox-worthy in there. An active earth was found near Whitwick. Adults with two cubs are regularly seen crossing a Loughborough garden – first seen on 20 May. A fox walked quite close to JG Holwell Mineral Line.

Signs of **Badgers** were seen in the Gopsall area, Ulverscroft, Quorn, Loughborough and Swithland gardens and Grace Dieu. Two live Badgers were seen near Holwell. Road casualties were found at Stoughton, Swithland, Ulverscroft, Rothley and Syston. Damage was recorded at Quorn – digging out a bumblebee nest and digging for Pignut tubers and on a lawn in Swithland. There was, unusually, no damage to a Loughborough lawn where the ground is baked hard. Have the dry conditions forced the Badgers to forage more widely, wonders DAP.

A former member, CP, reported to PHG that he had seen two **Otters** in the early morning of 17 April at Lagoon 3 of Rutland Water.

The only **Weasel** seen was crossing the road between Twyford and Somerby at 3 pm on 15 June.

Muntjac droppings were found in Sheet Hedges Wood and the characteristic barking was heard. Sightings came from Grace Dieu and gardens in Holwell and Newtown Linford.

Helen Ikin

Mute Swans seem to have been on every available stretch of water in the area with many young noted. The number of cygnets per pair varied between one and eight. One pair at Cropston Reservoir appeared to be sharing their nest with a Canada Goose. A **Bewick's Swan** was at Watermead CP on 21 April.

Reports of **Greylag Geese** came from Cropston Reservoir with a maximum of 13 on 30 May whilst 14 were at Charnwood Water on 19 May and another was at Groby Pool in April. A white/blue intergrade **Snow Goose** was at Watermead CP during April and June whilst a **Ross's Goose**, of captive origin, was at the same site in June. The maximum count of **Canada Geese** was 41 at Hick's Lodge in May. Many young Canada goslings were seen with broods of up to eight. A **Barnacle Goose** of unknown origin was at Thornton Reservoir in early April and an **Egyptian Goose** was at Wanlip Meadows on 1 May and a pair was seen at Cropston Reservoir during May and June. Display was noted but no young were reported.

A pair of **Shelduck** reared eight young at Cropston Reservoir and another pair was there regularly throughout the season. **Mandarin Ducks** reared young at Swithland and Cropston Reservoirs. Others were seen at Copt Oak and Grace Dieu with a maximum count of 17 at Cropston Reservoir on 21 June.

A late pair of **Wigeon** was at Cossington Meadows on 20 April whilst the usual male was with a female Mallard at Cropston Reservoir during April and May. **Gadwall** were found throughout the Soar Valley with breeding proven at Cropston Reservoir and Cossington Meadows. **Teal** in small numbers were still to be found throughout April with the last record at Watermead CP on 27 April when three were noted. **Mallard**, as usual, were widespread, with young seen throughout the quarter. Maximum counts were at Swithland Reservoir with 113 on 25 May and Cropston Reservoir with 42 on 17 April. What was probably the same male **Garganey**, was seen at Cossington Meadows, Watermead CP and Wanlip Meadows at the end of April and early May. There were a few **Shoveler** around the Soar Valley with a maximum of 14 at Swithland

Reservoir on 9 April but no breeding was reported.

A pair of **Red-crested Pochard** was at Watermead CP on the 10 April. All **Pochard** reports were from Swithland Reservoir apart from one at Hicks Lodge and 12 at Groby Pool in June. The latter was the maximum number seen. **Tufted Ducks** were, as usual, widespread but surprisingly only proven to breed at Cropston Reservoir, in mid-June. This species is known as a late breeder so more records may come in the next quarter. There was at least one **Goldeneye** at Swithland Reservoir throughout the quarter with a maximum of 16 on 3 April. The last one (in eclipse) was noted on 23 June. A female **Goosander** was at Swithland Reservoir between 2 and 24 April.

Red-legged Partridge were only found at six sites, with no more than four seen together, these were at Griffydam. Even worse was the "Common" or **Grey Partridge** the only record coming from Normanton-le-Heath where there were two on 23 April. At least two and probably three **Quail** were calling in cereal crops near Normanton-le-Heath during June. **Pheasants** were obviously under-recorded, with only five reports and a maximum of five birds.

Little Grebe were found at eight sites. Although nests were noted at most of these, the breeding was confirmed only at Kelham Bridge. **Great Crested Grebe** were attracted to the larger stretches of water with 39 at Cropston and 14 at Swithland Reservoirs. In spite of those numbers, the only young seen were at Albert Village Lake and Watermead CP.



Great Crested Grebe © Jim Graham

Cormorants nested and raised young at Watermead CP and Groby Pool whilst 26 adults

were noted at Cropston Reservoir in late June. **Little Egrets** were found at Watermead, Mountsorrel and Cropston Reservoir, with a young bird at the latter site in late June. Young **Grey Herons** were present at Cropston Reservoir and also at Charnwood Water. Six was the highest count in April, at Cropston Reservoir.

Red Kites were noted mainly in the east of the county with one over Bradgate Park in April and one over Six Hills in May the only local birds. A female **Marsh Harrier** passed over Halstead on 18 May. What was almost certainly a female **Goshawk** was seen at Normanton-le-Heath on 23 April and what could well have been the same bird was noted over Charnwood Lodge the following day. **Sparrowhawks** for some reason were not much in evidence with only nine records. One at Swithland was seen to take a juvenile **Great Spotted Woodpecker!** (With only a few more records than the last quarter there appears to be a big drop in numbers from last year). In comparison to the previous species there were 38 observations of **Buzzards** with a maximum of eight over Charnwood Lodge in April. A pair nested in a hedge at Cossington Meadows. An **Osprey** failed in five attempts to catch fish at Cropston Reservoir on 27 June, this was the only local record reported although there has been anecdotal evidence of at least three other sightings in the area during May and June. There were 25 separate reports of **Kestrel** spread over the area but only one thought to have a nest. Most of the **Hobby** sightings were around Swithland Reservoir with four seen together there on 21 May. Others were located at Cropston Reservoir, Bradgate Park and Hugglescote. The only two **Peregrine** reports were from their usual haunts of Swithland Reservoir and the Albert Village/Moira area.

Moorhens tend to keep a low profile in the breeding season so a maximum of six at Cropston Reservoir was not surprising. By the end of the quarter there were at least six young at Kelham Bridge. **Coot** were much more in evidence with many double-figure counts and 204 were noted at Swithland Reservoir with 14 nests on 17 June.

Oystercatchers are becoming more widespread in the area with birds found at seven different sites with young birds being



Ringed Plover © Jim Graham

noted at Cossington Meadows, Albert Village and Hicks Lodge. **Little Ringed Plovers** were at nine sites, usually coinciding with the previous species, however pairs proven to have raised young were at just two. **Ringed Plovers** were present at Heather, Watermead CP, Wanlip Meadows and Cropston Reservoir where a pair abandoned a nest due to rising water levels. It was encouraging to have **Lapwing** reports from ten different sites. Distraction display or courtship was observed at most sites and birds fledged at Cossington Meadows and Cropston Reservoir although some nests were lost at the latter site due to rising water levels.

A **Temminck's Stint** stayed at Wanlip Meadows for the first two days of May. Spring passage **Dunlin**, some in summer plumage, passed through four sites. **Snipe** in single figures were only to be found at Cropston Reservoir and Wanlip Meadows. Up to six roding **Woodcock** were observed at Blakeshay Wood in June and two at Lea Wood in May. Single **Curlew** were noted at Black Hill, a previous nesting site, Heather and Cribb's Meadow.

A **Spotted Redshank** was at Cossington Meadows on 4 May. **Redshank** bred at Cossington Meadows and others in suitable areas were at Hicks Lodge and Wanlip Meadows. Single spring passage **Greenshank** were at Wanlip Meadows and Stanford Reservoir and a returning migrant was at Swithland Reservoir on 20 June. Of the four individual **Green Sandpipers** passing through the area, one at Cropston Reservoir on 26 June was probably on return passage. In late April and early May two **Wood Sandpipers**, probably the same birds, were noted at Wanlip,

Cossington and Birstall Meadows. Passage **Common Sandpipers** were found at five sites, all single birds, one at Swithland Reservoir on 23 June may have been a returning bird.

Apart from a few gulls at the larger water bodies, all relevant gull counts were at Albert Village where the lake is close to a large waste tip. There were four **Mediterranean Gulls** of different ages in June whilst **Black-headed Gulls** numbered 600 by the end of the quarter and **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** reached 1350 in mid-June. There were 60 **Herring Gulls** in April, up to eight **Yellow-legged Gulls** and a **Caspian Gull** in June. In early April there were 14 **Great Black-backed Gulls**. The only gull that wasn't upstaged by Albert Village was a single **Common Gull** at Cropston Reservoir on 2 June!

Three **Black Terns** passed over Cropston Reservoir on 5 May and 12 Arctic Terns were present on 27 April. All other tern records concerned **Common Terns** which were numerous around the Soar Valley with nests seen at Watermead CP, including eight pairs incubating eggs on two new artificial tern rafts, and at Lockington GP. The only other site noted was at Hicks Lodge with a pair nesting on the island.

Stock Doves in small numbers were found in half a dozen areas with a minimum count of 21 at Heather on 13 June an exception. Only three double-figure counts of **Woodpigeon** were received but there was one of 250 birds at Lockington GP at the end of the quarter. We are now all too familiar with **Collared Doves** and take them for granted, hence the total birds reported was 25 with 11 in Loughborough on 30 May. On the same day a **Turtle Dove** was seen at Holwell, unfortunately the only record of the quarter.

The first **Cuckoo** was heard on 1 April at Charnwood Lodge and was the only record during the first week of April. By the end of the month there were a further 15 calling birds. In total there was approximately 19 males recorded in the quarter just one fewer than in 2010.

There were no records of either **Barn Owl** or **Little Owl** during the quarter although **Tawny Owls** were present at six different locations with pairs calling at Blakeshay and Benscliffe

Woods, Grace Dieu and a Cropston Garden. A bill-clacking juvenile was noted at the former site on 14 June.

The first **Swifts** just managed to scrape into April when three were noted over Swithland Reservoir on the 28th. Numbers began to build during May and June and three-figure counts came from three sites where maxima were: 100 at Cropston Reservoir on 28 May, 180 at Stanford Reservoir on 4 June and 600 at Swithland Reservoir on 26 May.

Just six water courses had **Kingfishers** and it would seem that the severe winter has had an effect on numbers.

An excellent find was an over-shooting **Hoopoe** at South Kilworth on 4 June. This may well have been the same bird that was photographed in a Whitwick garden in late May and featured in the *Leicester Mercury*.

Green Woodpecker records were mainly in the Charnwood area. Most were of single birds but two were in the grounds of Cropston Reservoir in April and a pair was feeding at least one young at a nest hole in Bradgate Park on 26 June. Records of **Great Spotted Woodpecker** came from 18 widespread sites with drumming or confirmed breeding from seven of these. One juvenile was taken by a **Sparrowhawk** from a Swithland garden whilst another was temporarily stuck in a greenhouse in Holwell. Unfortunately **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** are not fairing so well with the only record being one heard on the south side of Swithland Reservoir on 17 April.

Magpie records were received from seven sites with a maximum of only eight at Measham on 25 May whilst Jays were also poorly recorded with just six areas being identified.

Jackdaw numbers peaked at 68 at Cropston Reservoir on 11 June with 32 at Griffydham on 31 May the only other double-figure count. **Rooks** numbering 83 at Griffydham and 50 at Measham both during May were the only counts of note whilst the highest count of **Carrion Crows** was a paltry 14 at Cropston Reservoir on 17 April. One or two **Ravens** were reported from five sites during April and May.

Goldcrests were reported from 15 locations with many indicating singing males. Most were

of singles but five were at Charnwood Lodge whilst nine were in Lea Wood, all on 25 April.



Goldcrest © Jim Graham

Blue Tits and **Great Tits** were abundant and widespread but **Coal Tits** were only noted at eight sites with breeding confirmed at three of these. The only record of **Willow Tit** was of one at Lount on 26 April and the single record of **Marsh Tit** came from Loddington Reddish on 11 May when a pair and three singles were seen.

Singing **Skylarks** were noted throughout the quarter mainly in single-figures but with 24 in two parties around Normanton-le-Heath on 25 April and 11 near Lount the following day.

As would be expected, the highest numbers of **Sand Martins** came during the early part of April with over 200 at both Swithland and Cropston Reservoirs on the 7th and 13th respectively. The only record of breeding was from Kelham Bridge where at least 20 pairs were utilising the artificial wall at the start of May although birds were also seen nesting in the Swaley area in June just over the border into Nottinghamshire. Unlike **Sand Martin**, there were no three-figure counts of **Swallows**, the only counts in excess of 50 came from Cropston Reservoir during the last week of May. Few nests were found but there were at least ten at Grace Dieu Manor Farm and two in Mill Close, Birstall. Good numbers of **House Martins** started to arrive in early May with 120 at Swithland Reservoir on the 7th gradually rising to peak at around 400 on the 26th. Disturbingly, there were very few nesting attempts recorded with four building in Cropston the only confirmed pairs.

A lone **Cetti's Warbler** was heard singing at Watermead Park during April and May. **Long-tailed Tits** were found at around 12 sites with family parties seen from 25 May when eight were together at Cropston Reservoir.

Chiffchaff was noted at 34 sites with song heard at 29 of these. The only double-figure count was of 15 at Normanton-le-Heath in April. There were slightly fewer observations of **Willow Warblers** with records from 31 locations with song noted at all but three of these. Numbers were mostly five or less but ten were at Swepstone on 19 April and 11 in Benscliffe Wood on the 9th. However, a remarkable 41 singing birds at Charnwood Lodge on the 24th must have included some migrants. With over-wintering birds now commonplace it is difficult to determine when migrant **Blackcap** arrive but records were received from 42 locations with 32 recording song. Numbers were mainly four or less but 17 were around Normanton-le-Heath, 15 at Lount and 11 at Swepstone all in April. Groby Pool had the first **Garden Warbler** of the season when one was heard singing on 21 April. Song was also mentioned at ten of the 18 sites noted in the quarter. Most counts were of up to four but six were at both Beacon Hill on 2 May and Loddington Reddish on the 11th. A singing male at Lount and a female at Hungarton both on 26 April were the first **Lesser Whitethroats** of the season with records from a further 11 sites by the end of June. Song was noted at most but the only confirmation of breeding was a pair taking food into a nest at Griffydam on 31 May. Its relative the **Common Whitethroat** was much more widespread with records from 29 locations the vast majority noting singing, the first being one at Watermead CP on 10 April. Counts in excess of ten came from three locations: 33 in two counts around Normanton-le-Heath and 12 at Lount in April and 16 at Measham in May.

Reeling **Grasshopper Warblers** were first heard on 10 April and subsequently at five sites during the quarter (ten in 2010). Two were singing at Cossington Meadows during April. The first **Sedge Warbler** was at Watermead CP on 10 April followed by reports from eight other sites with song noted at most including 'several' heard at Cossington Meadows on 27 April. The

first **Reed Warblers** were heard eight days later than Sedge when five were around Cossington Meadows on 18 April. This was also the largest count for the period.

The only, and therefore last, record of **Waxwing** in the area was of 12 flying northwest over Swithland Reservoir on 4 April.

The majority of **Nuthatches** were to be found in 16 widespread woodlands with family parties at four of these. **Treecreepers** are much more difficult to locate due to their camouflage, crepuscular nature and thin call and song. Consequently, birds were located at just eight sites although breeding activity was noted at six of these. Double-figure counts of **Wrens** were noted around Normanton-le-Heath, Swepstone and Lount during April with 27 in two counts at the first site the highest achieved.

Reports of **Starlings** came from nine sites with juveniles noted at three. The largest flock was 120 at Hicks Lodge on 13 June whilst double-figures came from a further four.

It was a poor year for passage **Ring Ouzels** with all records coming from Charnwood Lodge. The first was a male on Timberwood Hill on 3 April. This was followed by two females and a first-year male in the fields between 24 April and 1 May. **Blackbirds** as usual were very common, 37 at Normanton-le-Heath on 23 April the highest of seven double-figure counts. Numbers of **Fieldfares** during April are normally small so the 200 seen at Launde Park Wood on the 2nd was exceptional. The last of the spring was located at Charnwood Lodge on 1 May. There were no **Redwing** records during the period. **Song Thrushes** were widespread with most records noting singing birds. The maximum count was five in song at Blakeshay Wood. Single **Mistle Thrushes** were at nine sites whilst an adult was feeding two juveniles at Bradgate Park on 29 May was the only confirmation of breeding.

There was no mention of **Spotted Flycatchers** from Bradgate Park or Swithland Woods this year probably due to lack of observation rather than lack of birds. The only records were of three at Loddington Reddish on 11 May and a pair at Grace Dieu Manor Farm on 6 June. Five sites held double-figure **Robins** with 34 in two counts around Normanton-le-

Heath the highest.

There were no spring **Redstarts** this year, however a male **Black Redstart** was at Charnwood Lodge on 9 April. Similarly there were no **Whinchats** recorded but the spring passage of **Wheatears** continued on 3 April when four males were at Charnwood Lodge. Sightings came from a further five locations with six birds at Village Farm, Hungerton on the 26th the highest count.



Wheatear © Jim Graham

All counts of **Duncock** were of nine or fewer. There was a scattering of **House Sparrows** with double-figure counts at four sites with 30 at Highgate Farm, Sileby regularly during the quarter and 34 at Griffydam on 31 May the highest. Eight sites held small numbers of **Tree Sparrows** with 20 at Normanton-le-Heath on 23 April the largest gathering. Five sites had breeding birds including three pairs using nest boxes in a Holwell garden.

Three male **Yellow Wagtails** at Cropston Reservoir on 17 April were the first arrivals of the year. Encouragingly, records came from a further 11 locations during the period (more than double last year's five), whilst confirmation of breeding or pairs in suitable habitat were noted at five. All **Pied Wagtail** observations were of single figures with juveniles being noted at just two sites: Cropston Reservoir and Heather Brickworks Quarry. A single **White Wagtail** at Cossington Meadows on 1 May was still there the following day. Pairs of **Grey Wagtails** were noted at Cropston Reservoir during the quarter and Buddon Brook Meadow on 9 April with singles at two other sites: a very poor showing.

The first **Tree Pipits** of the year at Benscliffe

Wood on 9 April were not followed by others at Beacon Hill and Charnwood Lodge until two weeks later. By the end of May song or display was noted at a further six sites all in the Charnwood area. **Meadow Pipit** song was heard at six of the nine sites whilst ten passing northwest at Cossington Meadows on 7 April were presumably migrants.

Single **Bramblings** were seen at Groby Pool on 4 April and Charnwood Lodge on 9 April. The last one being a singing male. There were seven double-figure counts of **Chaffinch** with 82 being counted around Normanton-le-Heath in late April. Far fewer **Greenfinches** were seen with only two counts of ten or more with 22 at Measham in late May the highest count. Surprisingly **Goldfinches** were only mentioned from three gardens of the 16 widespread sites encountered with double-figure counts at just five the highest being 21 at Lount on 26 April. The only **Siskin** reported was a juvenile feeding on sunflower hearts and nyger seed in a Cropston garden on 24 June. Although most probably a passage bird, this species is regarded as a scarce breeder in the adjoining counties of Notts., Derbys. and Lincs. Six double-figure counts of **Linnets** were reported with 22 at Normanton-le-Heath in April the highest. Although pairs or singing was noted at nine of the 14 sites recorded, there was no confirmation of successful breeding. Of the five locations holding **Lesser Redpolls** just Charnwood Lodge and Benscliffe Wood held numbers of any significance with 15 and nine respectively both on 9 April after which there no more sightings. The latter site was the only location for **Crossbill** when six were recorded on 9 and 16 June. **Bullfinches** were reported from 16 sites usually in ones or twos with four (two pairs) at both Measham on 25 May and in a Swithland garden on feeders throughout the quarter.

Double-figure counts of **Yellowhammers** were at five sites with a total of 35 at Normanton-le-Heath in late April the highest. Pairs or singing was noted from 15 of the 19 locations. **Reed Buntings** were noted in ten suitable wetland areas but numbers were low and never into double-figures. Pairs or song was noted at seven of these.

Bas Forgham and Jim Graham

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

We do not have many reports for this section, for this quarter; however, those which we do have are from different areas of the county.

Common Lizard *Zootoca vivipara*: SFW reports finding a specimen at the Lea Meadows NR on 2 June and another specimen at Grace Dieu on 29 June.

Grass Snake *Natrix natrix*: We have a number of sightings of Grass Snakes for this quarter, and, interestingly, they come from different locations within the county. SFW reports seeing two specimens together, the larger of the two being about a metre long, near a small pond, at New Lount NR on 6 April. J & CG, report seeing a large specimen taking frogs in a garden pond at Holwell on 19 April. They report a further sighting of a smaller specimen on 25 April and another on 5 May. On the same day – 5 May – DAP found a single specimen, about 1 m long, hunting in the margins of the Fishing Lake at Rearsby. As has been remarked before in these reports, although our sightings are comparatively few in number, it seems that Grass Snakes are doing well in various parts of the county.

Adder *Vipera berus berus*: For this quarter, we have only one report of a sighting of this reptile, and that comes from HI, who saw one travelling along by the North Wall of Bradgate Park on 19 April.

Common Newt *Triturus vulgaris vulgaris*: Common Newts continue to turn up from time to time in people's garden ponds! HS reports seeing a single female in her garden pond in Quorn on 6 March and again on 7 March. She continued to see newts in varying numbers in her pond throughout April: three on 6 April, two on 10 April, and four on 25 April. Finally, PMH reports that on the same day she found four lovely specimens in her pond at Markfield.

Common Toad *Bufo bufo*: Our earliest sighting of a Common Toad for this quarter comes from HI who reports finding one in Compartment 13 at Grace Dieu on 1 April. HS reports finding a small specimen while cleaning out a drain on 28 April. She adds that in the past she has had large groups of spawning frogs and toads in her

garden pond, with large quantities of spawn. However, there was very little spawn last year and, while it is possible that she may have been away when all of the fun and games were taking place, she did not see any spawn this year! Finally, PK reports finding a toad in the garden in Loughborough on 22 June.

Common Frog *Rana temporaria*: Our first sighting for this quarter comes from HI, who reports finding spawn in Compartment 13 at Grace Dieu, on 1 April. SFW reports finding a specimen at New Lount NR on 6 April. On the following day, PH found that the spawn in her pond at Markfield had hatched. The same day, ATO found a medium-sized specimen in his front garden, in Loughborough which he disturbed while gardening. Finally, our last sighting comes from PK who found one in the garden in Loughborough on 22 June.

That brings to a close our report for this quarter. I do not propose to offer any comment here about the unusual drought conditions we have experienced locally since the beginning of the summer, but one cannot help but wonder what effect these conditions may have had on our populations of amphibians?

Tony Onions

FISH (including CRAYFISH)

Sadly, we have very few sightings for this quarter.

Brown Trout *Salmo fario*: Our single report comes from DAP, who has a stream flowing through his garden at Swithland. DAP reports that the drought conditions have forced the fish into the deeper pools, (or perhaps downstream?). Through the quarter he has observed up to nine specimens up to three inches (8 cm) long – but no larger fish.

Three-Spined Stickleback *Gasterosteus aculeatus*: SFW reports finding two adults and about 20 fry at Grace Dieu (SK429173) on 6 June.

Bullhead *Cottus gobio*: HI reports finding a specimen in Grace Dieu Brook on the 8 April. Apparently, this fish was facing out from between some rocks, and HI suspects that it may have been guarding a clutch of eggs.

Certainly, this would seem highly likely given the date of the sighting.

In conclusion, we have a very short report this time round! As has been mentioned earlier, we have experienced unusual and severe drought conditions this year, although the temperatures have not been particularly high. These conditions are almost certain to have an effect on our fish populations. Under these conditions fish will tend to drop back downstream in search of deeper, and possibly cooler, water. The species which are likely to suffer most are those which are technically referred to as “stenotherms” - those species which require truly cold water with a high oxygen content: most typically Salmonid species like the Brown Trout. Anyway, at the time of writing (August) my lawn seems to have been brown forever, and in spite of the clouds and humidity, it never seems to rain. However, there is now a hint of autumn in the air, and it will be interesting to see what kind of weather the Autumn will bring!

Tony Onions

DRAGONFLIES AND DAMSELFLIES

The over-riding theme from this quarter's records is the earlier emergence of insects than in 2010, however in most cases, the physical numbers were lower and in some instances significantly fewer than last year.

The first record of the season was on 27 April involving a single **Large Red Damselfly *Pyrrosoma nymphula*** found in a Cropston garden pond. The only other records for the month were of two **Banded Demoiselle *Calopteryx splendens*** found at Kaye's Plantation in Quorn the following day and a single **Blue-tailed Damselfly *Ischnura elegans*** at Dishley Pool on the 30th.

After the first **Banded Demoiselle *Calopteryx splendens*** mentioned above, records came from a further eight sites, mainly in single figures. The only double-figure counts were both on the Grand Union Canal: 30 at Pillings Lock on 3 May and 25 in Loughborough on 2 June.



Banded Demoiselle © Jim Graham

The only **Emerald Damselfly *Lestes sponsa*** record was of a female at New Lount on 26 June.

Large Red Damselfly *Pyrrosoma nymphula* seemed to emerge much earlier this year than in 2010, with records received from six sites prior to 16 May - last year's first record date. A further six sites were added by the end of the quarter, all with singles other than two at Grace Dieu on 6 June, and three ovipositing in a Loughborough garden on 4 May whose observer commented on the poor numbers this year.

There were no counts of note for **Blue-tailed Damselfly *Ischnura elegans*** either, with just one count in excess of two from 12 sites: four at the Grand Union Canal on 2 June.

Azure Damselfly *Coenagrion puella* was first recorded on 4 May, almost three weeks earlier than in 2010 but again numbers were low and the only count of note from the nine sites was of 20 at Little Stretton on 2 June.

Records of **Common Blue Damselfly *Enallagma cyathigerum*** came from 13 sites, almost double that of 2010, but once again number were poor with single figures from all sites the highest being five at Cropston Reservoir on both 5 and 26 June.

First seen on 21 May at Quorn, **Red-eyed Damselfly *Erythromma najas*** was recorded from just four locations in the quarter. The 40 on lily pads at Miller's Bridge on the Grand Union Canal in Loughborough on 2 June was by far and away the highest count.

Also on 2 June, the same site held the first of four single **Emperor Dragonflies *Anax imperator*** from four sites, all during the last month of the quarter.

Records of **Black-tailed Skimmer** *Orthetrum cancellatum* did not appear until the last week of June when the only records were of two found at Dishley Pool and four at Cropston Reservoir both on the 26th.

The first **Broad-bodied Chaser** *Libellula depressa* was a female recorded in a Quorn garden on 2 May. Numbers were again low with single figures coming from eight sites with ovipositing noted from three.

All records of Four-spotted **Chaser** *Libellula quadrimaculata* were in June and came from five sites all of singles except for two at a fish pond in Little Stretton on 2 June.

Brown Hawker *Aeshna grandis* were located in the last week of June with Watermead CP and Kaye's Plantation, Quorn the only sites.

The first of three single **Migrant Hawkers** *Aeshna mixta* was at Dishley Pool on 2 June with others in a Quorn garden and at Puddledyke on the 25th and 29th respectively.

There was just one record of **Common Darter** *Sympetrum striolatum*, three were noted at Dishley Pool on 2 June.

Jim Graham

GRASSHOPPERS & BUSHCRICKETS

The **Orthoptera** report for the whole of 2011 will be in Heritage 204.



Purple Hairstreak © Keith Allsopp

BUTTERFLIES

Once again this turned out to be a disappointing spring for many of our butterfly species and this was particularly so for some of those species which regularly visit our gardens. Indeed, one member, PMH, remarked, "Butterflies are the worst in my garden I have ever recorded". I imagine this may well have been the experience of a number of us. Nationally this has been an exceptional spring for the early emergence of certain species and some species have appeared as much as a month early.

Hesperiidae

The first **Small Skippers** *Thymelicus sylvestris* reported were around six noted at Stonebow Washlands, Loughborough, on 22 June and on the 29th others were present at Puddledyke, near Cropston Reservoir and in the small pasture in Swithland Wood. The only **Essex Skipper** *T. lineola* reported were two at Dishley Pool on 22 June and one at the Buddon Brook Meadows on the 27th. In both instances this easily misidentified species was photographed showing the diagnostic black underside to the tip of the antennae.

The **Large Skipper** *Ochlodes venata*, an earlier emerging species, appeared first on 1 June when several were seen at Cademan Moor and the following day at Quorn Lodge Farm where four were noted. During the month it was reported seen at 19 well-spread localities but only at Hamilton were double figures, eleven, reported.

The local **Dingy Skipper** *Erynnis tages*, was reported at three localities. In April several were seen by HBH at Brown's Hill Quarry N R, at Holwell, on the 23rd and during May four were noted Stonesby Quarry by Jeff Adams of East Midlands Butterfly Conservation on the 1st and several others were noted by myself at Cribb's Meadow NNR., Wymondham, on the 13th.

The only **Grizzled Skipper** *Pyrgus malvae* were singletons at Stonesby Quarry on 1 May and at Cribb's Meadow on the 13th.

Pieridae

This was a poor spring for migrant butterflies and the **Clouded Yellow** *Colias*

croceus seen flying strongly by HB along Mere Road in Leicester on 3 June must have been one of very few seen in the Midlands this quarter.

The **Brimstone *Gonepteryx rhamni***, late out of hibernation this year, was widely reported seen in some 22 localities, during April and was last noted during May at Pilling's Lock Willowholt, Quorn, both males and females, on the 3rd and a female at Beacon Hill Country Park on the 8th.

Both Large **White *Pieris brassicae*** and **Small White *P. rapae*** tend to go largely under-recorded and the Large White was reported seen in only eight localities, mostly during April but with several noted during May and June and the Small White, easily confused with the following species, also most often seen during April was a frequent visitor to some gardens in May. The **Green-veined White *P. napi*** was noted in 20 scattered localities, mostly in meadowland and gardens, during the latter half of April and May and again at the end of June.

It is always a joy to see the **Orange-tip *Anthocharis cardamines*** in our meadows and along country lanes and following the exceptionally early one seen in Market Bosworth on 25 March it became frequent and widespread from 2 April onwards and was reported seen in over 40 localities between then and the last sighting of one on 19 May at Mountsorrel Common. Double figure counts were made in eight localities with maximum of 30+ present in the Buddon Brook Meadows at Quorn on 19 April.

Lycaenidae

Some decent sunny days during April and early May favoured the **Green Hairstreak *Callophrys rubi*** this spring and HBH described it as plentiful on the Warren Hills, at Charnwood Lodge NNR, on 19 April while HS counted c.30 on Bilberry at Timberwood Hill on the 23rd. Approximately ten were also noted on and around the Bilberries here during the LNC Wednesday morning walk at Charnwood Lodge on 4 May.

Colonies of **Small Copper *Lycaena phlaeas*** in VC55 are usually small and thinly spread and although it was reported seen in some eleven localities no double figure counts were reported. It was first noted at Broombriggs,

Woodhouse Eaves and Twenty-acre Common, Six Hills, on 1 May and last noted on 30 June in PH's Shepshed garden.

During May two fresh specimens of **Brown Argus *Aricia agestis*** were found at Scruptoft along Covert Lane by HB on the 6th and the same observer also saw another at Glen Parva on the 20th. KA also informed me that he had seen one in his Rothley garden, a first for the garden.

The **Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus*** was first reported seen on 11 May at Grace Dieu and last noted on 29 June at Swithland Wood pasture. In total it was seen in 15 localities as against 23 last spring and most sites produced less than ten individuals, but c.17 were noted along the Barkby Thorpe Road on 25 May.

Compared with the Common Blue the **Holly Blue *Celastrina argiolus*** had a good spring being recorded in 35 widely spread localities compared with 15 last spring. The first generation butterflies were active throughout April with maximum numbers around mid-month and remained active until about mid-June. Six or more females were observed laying eggs on a large flowering Holly in Kaye's Plantation, at Quorn, on 21 April. New second-generation butterflies were first observed in our Quorn garden on 25 June, at Welford Road, Leicester, on the 27th and in Quorn War Memorial Garden on the 29th.

Nymphalidae

For the fourth successive spring numbers of the **Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*** remained low, singletons being seen in only eight localities, with two in April, three in May and three in June. Similarly the migrant **Painted Lady *Cynthia cardui*** was again scarce with one in CG & JG's Holwell garden on 1 May and one in FTS's Barlestone Garden on the 7 and 11 June being the only ones reported.

The **Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae*** was reported seen in 30 well-spread localities, the over-wintered generation throughout April and the new generation during June. Numbers of this once common species remain low and no single site produced double figures. Larvae were present on Stinging Nettle in JK's Loughborough allotment on 11 May.

MOTHS

The over-wintered generation of the **Peacock *Inachis io*** remained active until 4 May when one was seen at Charnwood Lodge and another near Rabbits' Bridge. Normally this species remains active much later than this prior to the new generation appearing in July. Altogether it was reported seen in 30 well-scattered localities. The **Comma *Polygonia c-album***, another over-wintering species, was noted in 15 localities during the period April to mid-June and the new generation appeared first on 25 June at Quorn followed by others at Aylestone Meadows on the 27th and at Shepshed on the 30th

Satyridae

An early **Speckled Wood *Pararge aegeria*** was observed in HBH's Loughborough garden on 1 April followed by other sightings at Watermead North on the 9th and Scraftoft on the 15th. During the quarter it was observed in 33 widely spread localities with a new generation appearing in June and no double figure counts were reported for single locations. No reports of the **Wall *Lasiommata megera*** were reported this quarter.

A particularly early **Gatekeeper *Pyronia tithonus*** was observed in PH's Shepshed garden on 30 June and an early **Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina*** was found on the margins of Dishley Pool on 1 June followed by one at Ulverscroft NR. on the 9th. During June this widespread species was noted at 17 grassy sites across the county and several places produced double figure counts.

The, now very restricted, **Small Heath *Coenonympha pamphilus*** was reported seen in only three localities: at Cademan Moor, one on 15 May and about five on 1 June; Soar Valley Way meadow, one only on 19 May, and again on 13 June; Bradgate Park, c.15 on 25 May, and one on 16 June.

In contrast to the previous species, the **Ringlet *Aphantopus hyperantus***, formerly scarce and local in Leicestershire prior to the mid 1990's, continues to do well. It was first recorded at Grace Dieu and Dishley Pool on the 19 June and by the end of the month had been reported seen in 20 localities.

Peter Gamble

Quite a similar start to April as last year, with some incredibly hot days and fairly cool clear evenings. I think because the weather was so hot during the day, evening temperatures managed to stay reasonable at least for the first two or three hours. By carefully choosing your night, it was worth putting the trap out. The warm, sunny but breezy conditions of early May proved good for invertebrates in general, but cool clear nights kept light trapping to a minimal. Nevertheless more species emerge as the season progresses with new species being recorded weekly. June started off promising, but soon deteriorated into cold and blustery nights, even heavy rain on some. Latterly, June was almost tropical scorching during the day, warm and very mothy at night, at long last.

Members' Sightings

SFW recorded **Forester *Adscita statures*** at Ulverscroft NR, Lea Meadows NR and Rough Hill in Newtown Linford, all in the first half of June.

HB has sent in variety of day flying moth records from an assortment of locations with a total of 30 **Burnet Companion *Euclidia glyphica*** from five sites, although **Chimney Sweeper *Odezia atrata*** was only recorded from a single site at Aylestone Meadows. Other sightings were **Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet *Zygaena lonicerae***, **Cinnabar *Tyria jacobaeae***, **Latticed Heath *Chiasmia clathrata***, **Vapourer *Orgyia antiqua*** and **Mother Shipton *Callistege mi*** from another seven sites.

FTS had the pleasure of **Hummingbird Hawk-moth *Macroglossom stellatarum*** visiting his garden at Barlestone from 6 June to 24 June.

HBH found a, solitary **Forester *Adscita statures*** at Dishley Pool in June, well away from the more usual haunts around the Charnwood Forest. On 29 June he had a single **Hummingbird Hawk-moth *Macroglossom stellatarum*** visiting his Loughborough garden. He also recorded singles of each **Cinnabar *Tyria jacobaeae*** at Dishley and **Burnet Companion *Euclidia glyphica*** at Loughborough Big Meadow all in June.

HI found a **Pine Hawk-moth *Hyloicus pinastri*** in her Woodhouse garden on 21 May.

EPT found two **Chimney Sweeper *Odezia atrata*** at Quorn Lodge on 2 June, and in his Loughborough garden, a **Hummingbird Hawk-moth *Macroglossom stellatarum*** several times from late June into July.

PHG found singles of **Forester *Adcita statices*** at Puddledyke on 8 June and ***Nematopogon swammerdamella*** at rest in his garden on 22 April. The following day he watched thousands of **Green Longhorn *Adela reaumurella*** gyrating around Sessile Oaks in The Outwoods in full sunshine. The **Treble-bar *Aplocera plagiata*** was noted on 10 May and again 12 May in the garden in Quorn. The larvae of **The Mullein *Shargacucullia verbasci*** were noted at Wanlip Nature Reserve on Greater Mullein near the north car-park.

Light trap results

PHG operated the moth trap in his Meeting Street, Quorn, garden on six occasions, four in April and two in June for 230 individuals of 100 species. The only two species to get into double figures were 11 **Heart and Dart *Agrotis exclamationis*** and 12 **Hebrew Character *Orthosia gothica*** and then only just! A singleton of the lovely little micro ***Ancylis badiana*** on 26 June, a feeder on various vetches and clover, in comparison a rather plain **Lesser Wax Moth *Achroia grisella*** was in the trap 14 June. Just a single **Small Blood-vein *Scopula imitaria*** on 26 June, another species that feeds on privet amongst other low growing plants. 26 June was PHG's best night with 47 species, a few notables were singles of **Orchard Ermine *Yponomeuta padella*** and **Pine Hawkmoth *Hyloicus pinastri*** also two **Light Arches *Apamea lithoxyloae***, this latter species seems to be having a very good year. **Grey Shoulder-knot *Lithophane ornitopus*** was a nice find in the trap on 1 April, as was the closely related **Pale Pinion *Lithophane hepatica*** on 6 April. Both of these species, although we get a few more records than we used to, are still not at all common, particularly in gardens.

SML trapped a total of 19 nights for a total of 83 species in his Loughborough garden. He commented on May being a disappointing month, trapping on nine nights but only caught 171 moths of 32 species, and none were new for the site or particularly early. Commonest

species were 71 **Heart and Dart *Agrotis exclamationis***, 12 **Common Pug *Eupethecia vulgata***, 11 **Shuttle-shaped Dart *Agrotis puta***. June fared much better trapping on ten nights, catching 1116 moths of 72 species. The only new species for the site was a solitary **May Highflyer *Hydriomena impluviata*** on 1 June but a single **Sycamore *Acronicta aceris*** on 26 June was only the second record here. The only migrant was a **Diamond-back Moth *Plutella xylostella*** on 29 June. Commonest species were 323 **Heart and Dart *Agrotis exclamationis*** with a max of 61 on both 15 June and 21 June, 239 **Dark Arches *Apomea monoglypha*** and 181 **Uncertain *Hoplodrina alsines***.

SFW operated an Actinic light trap in his Groby garden on six nights in April, five nights in May and four in June, for a total of 171 moths of 33 species. **Heart and Dart *Agrotis exclamationis*** was the most abundant species here with 103 individuals for the quarter. The next most frequent visitors were **Willow Beauty *Peribatodes rhomboidaria***, **Hebrew Character *Orthosia gothica*** and **Early Grey *Xylocampa areola*** all with just five individuals each. A solitary **Early Thorn *Selene dentaria*** made a welcome break from the late winter noctuids on 3 April. Another species that, although widespread, seems to turn up at light in low numbers is **Swallow-tailed Moth *Ouraapteryx sambucaria*** perhaps its very short flight period does not help. On 23 April a solitary **Waved Umber *Menophra abruptaria*** turned up, still not a particularly common species despite Privet and Lilac being the foodplant. **Lime Hawk-moth *Mimas tiliae*** looks like it is having a reasonable year as he recorded one on 23 April and another 3 June.



Hebrew Character © Graham Finch

Charnwood Forest Survey

Stoneywell Wood

6 April was the second night this year at this lovely woodland site fairly mild and a little breezy but still returned a catch of approximately 950 moths of 22 species. With a minimum count of 450 *Eriocrania subpurpurella* a beautiful little golden coloured micro moth, 145 *Diurnea fagella* followed by 87 **Brindled Pug** *Eupithecia abbreviata* made up the bulk of the night's total. An excellent number of 54 **Lunar Marbled Brown** *Drymonia ruficornis* this species does particularly well in deciduous woodland on the Charnwood Forest.

A mild 2 June returned over 300 moths of 75 species. **Map-winged Swift** *Hepialus fusconebulosa* f. *gallicus* outnumbered the nominate form. The micro moth *Coleophora mayrella* is one of the identifiable members of this family in the adult stage, a deep glossy dark green with the antennae having thick bases with black and white rings. A single **Beautiful Carpet** *Mesoleuca albicillata* was a pleasant surprise plus 14 **Northern Spinach** *Eulithis populata*, a species, which is having a really good year nationwide. Stoneywell is the site for **Barred Umber** *Plagodis pulveraria* so although only a single specimen was recorded it was reassuring this site still holds this species, plus a superb total of 18 **Orange Footman** *Eilema sorocula*. This really is a marvellous site, with mature typical Charnwood Forest woodland bordered with extensively planted heather covered banks and scattered Bilberry, interspersed with grassy areas, most of which is left to seed.

Beacon Hill

Together with Harry Ball and Glen McPhail, 22 April gave us the best night of the year to date, staying on the, sheltered lower slopes we had over 300 moths of 60 species, including 14 species of micro moths. Although some distance from any Heather a single *Neofaculta ericitella* put in an appearance as did the local *Pammene argyрана*. This latter species is associated with Oak woodland and is interesting in that the larva lives and feeds inside a wasp gall. A single and local Beech feeding **Barred Hooktip** *Watsonalla cultraria* and three **Seraphim** *Lobophora halterata* were nice

records for the night. Moth of the night was probably two **Orange Footman** *Eilema sorocula*, which now seems well established here

The second trip here was on 6 May, this time around the western edge of the summit with almost perfect conditions, except for a gusting breeze, however the sheltered traps were heaving with moths. The night's total of over 500 moths of 84 species, which included 19 micro moth species, with many new for the year and several quite notable ones. The two micro moths *Teleiopsis diffinis* and *Epinotia tedella* are both category D for VC55. The former feeding on Sheep's Sorrel the latter on Norway Spruce so, going by that, you would think they ought to be very common, but then again maybe they are, they just do not come to light! Just a few of the notables were a solitary **Puss Moth** *Cerura vinula*, and a fantastic total of 11 **Orange Footman** *Eilema sorocula*.

Grace Dieu Wood

A hot, sunny and very productive daytime session as part of the on going LNC survey here on 27 April yielded a nice series of micro moths with a couple yet to sort out. *Micropterix calthella* were all over Marsh Marigold flowers, adults of *Adela reaumurella* were in uncountable numbers, literally thousands through out the whole area, but particularly enjoying exposed sunny places. The larvae of the latter live in portable cases on the ground and feed on leaf litter, now they would be a challenge to find! The pretty little Oak-feeding *Phyllonorycter lautella* was already on the wing, this is usually recorded from May onwards plus another six species. This again made for a very productive day at this site, which on every visit seems to turn up something of special interest.

26 June at Aviary Cottage was the best night yet with 1300 moths and close to 170 species. After months of low numbers it's great to turn over the egg boxes to see all the nooks and crannies filled with moths. Out of the micro moths *Parachronistis albiceps* is a lovely little black and white Gelichid whose larvae feed on hazel, another one we never seem to see in great quantities so 12 of these were nice. A total of 19 **Bee Moth** *Aphomia sociella* is

probably the most of this species we have recorded in one night. Out of a very varied assortment of macro moths, four **Blackneck** *Lygephila pastinum* were the highlights, proving this species is well and truly established and in good numbers.



Blackneck © Graham Finch

Bardon Hill

21 April was a warm night with the temperature still well in double figure after 01:00 this resulted in an excellent catch of 280 moths of 36 species. The Heather-feeding micro moth *Neofaculta ericetella* seems well established here with three individuals recorded, some distance from the main Heather area. Just mention of a few others with five species of Pugs, including five immaculate **V-Pug** *Chloroclystis v-ata* a single of the both night and day-flying **Latticed Heath** *Chiasma clathrata*. Not the most colourful of moths being variations of grey, but when they are fresh they really are stunning, so the three **Grey Birch** *Aethalura punctulata* were very welcome.

Around the county

Burrough Wood

A new site at Ratby, an area sitting alongside the golf course, made up of quite new plantations beside fragmented old woodland and hedgerows. Although our first trip here only produced 17 moths of 13 species, as it was a really cold and blustery night. Easily accessible from Ratby village, it's well worth a couple of

hours of anyone's time. **Flame Carpet** *Xanthorhoe designata*, **Rivulet** *Perizoma affinitata* and **Small Rivulet** *Perizoma alchemillata*, **Oak-tree Pug** *Eupithecia dodoneata*, and **Coxcomb Prominent** *Ptilodon capucina* were part of a mixed selection, looking forward to more favourable conditions here.

Cloud Wood

Never get tired of a visit here, but a very cool 16 April was a test as it took six moth traps to record 66 moths of 24 species. Numbers of species slightly improved although mainly the expected candidates, pick of the bunch was a single **Acleris cristana** very variable and now almost an expected species to record. Slightly early were three **White-pinion Spotted** *Lomographa bimaculata* and a huge **Lesser Swallow Prominent** *Phoesia gnoma*. There's something about the Prominents - it's always nice to see them.

25 April was close to being one of those perfect nights with over 1000 moths of 148 species, including just over 65 species of micro moths. Way too many to do justice to, but 30 of the pretty Ash and Privet feeding **Psuedargyrotoza conwagana** were a nice sight. It's been some time since **Green Oak Tortrix** *Tortrix viridana* has been common, we had over 60 of these, it's the start of their season, so it will be interesting to see if they build up to the numbers we used to see. A single **Blotched Emerald** *Comibaena bajularia* and two **Beautiful Carpet** *Mesoleuca albicilata* and three **Scallop Shell** *Rheumaptera undulata* plus one **Clouded Magpie** *Lomaspilus marginata*: all of these never seem to be recorded in any number.

Martinshaw Wood

This large woodland, which was planted up by the Forestry Commission and is now owned by the Woodland Trust, is mainly coniferous but with several good quality deciduous areas and well vegetated wide tracks, 1 April produced 296 moths of 19 species. The tiny and very plain Scots Pine-feeding micro moth *Ocnerostoma friesei* put in an appearance with 13 individuals. There have only been three other records of this moth in our county, Launde Park in 2003, Bloody Oaks Quarry 2005 and from a

Queniborough garden 2009. Singles of **March Moth** *Alsophila aescularia* and **Satellite** *Eupsilia transversa* both usually seen in abundance seem to be well down in numbers this year.

Manor Farm Meadows

5 May, Jim Beechy invited us to operate the moth traps in his wonderful SSSI meadows near Sheepy Parva. Unfortunately, the night turned clear and cold, resulting in just 55 moths of 24 species. The two choice species of the night were a single **Diamond-back** *Plutella xylostera* and a single **Chocolate-tip** *Clostera curtula*, needless to say Jim was very pleased with the latter.

Aylestone Meadows

Second visit here on 15 April this time conditions a little more moth-friendly with the temperature just managing to stay in double figures up to midnight. 59 moths of 18 species included the two rose-feeding close relatives a single **Shoulder Stripe** *Anticlea badiata* and nine **Streamer** *Anticlea derivata*. A single unhelpfully named **Yellow-barred** **Brindle** *Acasis viretata*, unhelpful because the first fresh specimens of the year to appear are a bright grass green! A lone **Pine Beauty** *Panolis flammea* was among the many *Orthosia* species.

Watermead Country Park

On a cool, clear night on 8 April we struggled for 13 species and 55 individuals, nevertheless surprise of the night was a very early **Pebble Prominent** *Notodonta ziczac*, which really should not be out until May. Just a single **Powdered Quaker** *Orthosia gracilis* being a mainly Sallow feeder, this whole area should no doubt be a stronghold for this species.

A more productive second session here on 27 May over 230 moths of 50 species, skies were overcast, strong winds dropped and the temperature was still around 11°C at 01.30 when we packed up. We operated three light traps along the Wild Flower Meadow. **Ghost Moths** *Hepialus humuli*, **Common Swift** *Hepialus lupulinus*, **Green Carpets** *Calostygia pectinataria* and **Silver-ground Carpets** *Xanthorhoe montanata* were all in good numbers, flying just above the meadow at dusk, quite a sight. Many new species for the year,

but a single **Silky Wainscot** *Chilodes maritimus* was the highlight of the night. Very rarely recorded outside of Rutland, and even then usually restricted to the reed beds of Rutland Water. From, a total of 34 records for this latter species 26 are from Rutland Water, the earliest record is July 1969 at Barrow-upon-Soar, a couple of singles from Blaby 1987 and Market Bosworth 2004. Another singleton from Ravenstone and three records from Kelham Bridge Nature Reserve, maybe the Ravenstone record originated from Kelham. In 2003 a singleton was trapped from the large reed bed at Nature Alive almost in the centre of Coalville.

Many thanks to everyone who has sent in their moth records for this quarter.

Graham and Anona Finch

OTHER INSECTS

As is usual for this quarter, members have contributed a great number of records and it is impossible to mention them all in the report.

Hemiptera

Shieldbugs

A few members submitted records of the widespread **Green Shield Bugs** *Palomena prasina* which was at Morley Quarry on 17 April, including several mating pairs and at Grace Dieu and Quorn.

Hawthorn Shield Bugs *Acanthosoma haemorrhoidale* were reported from Grace Dieu and Quorn this quarter, just singles in this instance.

SFW recorded **Gorse Shieldbugs** *Piezodorus lituratus* from a wide area this quarter including Charnwood Lodge, Grace Dieu, Croft NR, Morley Quarry and Peckleton House Farm. The only **Sloe Bug** *Dolycoris baccarum* records were a single specimen at Quorn on 2 May and singles at Morley Quarry and Grace Dieu in April.

Several **Parent Bugs** *Elasmucha grisea* were swept of Birch on 1 June and a **Bronze Shieldbug** *Troilus luridus* was found in a moth trap at Grace Dieu on 26 June, engaged in feeding on a Buff Arches moth.

The only record of the little **Woundwort Bug** *Eysarcoris venustissimus* came from Grace Dieu on 25 May and 4 June. It is over two years since I last recorded this attractive little bug. It has, on occasion, turned up in my own back yard. Other Shieldbug reports were **Blue Shieldbug** *Zicrona caerulea* at Lea Meadows on 2 June, and the **Bishop's Mitre** *Aelia acuminata* appears to be making a comeback at a flowery meadow Barkby Thorpe Lane on 25 May where about 14 adults and instars were counted and there were six at Aylestone Meadows on 4 June. Several mating pairs of the **Brassica Bug** *Eurydema oleracea* were on Horse Radish at Freeman's Common which is, as far as I am aware, the only known site so far recorded.

Rhopalid bugs recorded were *Rhopalus subrufus* at PHG's garden at Quorn, a first for this site and *Chorosoma schillingi* two nymphs at Bede Island on 25 June and several nymphs on a tall grassy margin in Ethel Road on 29 June.

Froghoppers, a somewhat large and difficult group, include *Cercopis vulnerata* recorded at Bradgate Park, Groby Pool, Grace Dieu, Brentingby and Scraftoft Gorse margins, mostly in May. The **Potato Leafhopper** *Eupteryx aurata* at Grace Dieu, Several Mirid Bugs, another vast group, were recorded including *Capsis ater* from Grace Dieu, Shenton, Ulverscroft NR, Aylestone, *Deraeocoris ruber* at Grace Dieu and, of interest, *Miris striatus* a woodland species, SFW beat several nymphs from trees at Grace Dieu which he describes as ant-like. The **Saucer Bug** *Ilyocoris simicoides* is worth a mention among many other records sent in for this group.

Thysanura: Bristletails

PHG informs me he has a good healthy population of the living fossil Silverfish *Lepisma saccharina* in his house at Quorn and has had a healthy population for many years. HI also has them in her bathroom. Please let us know if you have silverfish in your house/outbuildings.

Diptera

The **Dark-edged Bee-fly** *Bombylius major* continued to appear in several sites in April and was recorded a Groby Pool, Launde Park Wood, Sheet Hedges Wood, Stonesby Quarry, Quorn and Buddon Brook Meadows. One member,

SFW, stated that they were turning up in several places where he had never seen any in previous years. What caused this explosion in numbers I have no idea, never previously having recorded more than four at their host's nest sites.

St Marks Fly *Bibio marci* was recorded as common along Barkby Holt Lane in April and at Grace Dieu, although completely absent in some areas such as Aylestone Meadows.

Bibio leucopterus was swept from oak at Grace Dieu on 11 May.

One or two members have commented on the paucity of hover flies in our gardens this quarter - *Syrphid* species have been generally very low or absent in many instances, this also applies to *Platycheirus* sp. Anyway a few records are worth a mention *Xanthogramma pedissequum* was recorded on Spinney Hill Park, margin of hedge on 31 May and two at the margins of Hamilton Ponds on 11 June,



Xanthogramma pedissequum © Steve Woodward

Epistrophe eligans were noted at Glen Parva, Aylestone Meadows and Victoria Park in early May but in very small numbers. **The Garlic hover fly** *Portevinia maculata* at Grace Dieu and Sheet Hedges Wood in May, swept from *Allium ursinum*, *Leuozona lucorum* just singles at Spinney Hill Park, Aylestone Meadows and Glen Parva, *Merodon equestris* a yellow-tailed specimen in my garden and two at Thurnby both in June. *Volucella pellucens* was well in evidence with records from Spinney Hill Park, Coleorton Wood, Peckleton House Farm, Cossington Meadows and four on bramble at Hamilton, 6 June, *Volucella bombylans* records only came from Puddledyeke several noted and three at Glen Parva both in early June.

Two species found in the Aylestone Water Meadows on 6 June: *Chysogaster solistitialis* and *Orthonevera brevicornis* both females, were firsts for me in this region.

A few snipeflies were recorded, the **Downlooker Snipefly** *Rhagio scolopaceus* from Thringstone, Bradgate Park and Aylestone Meadows, the **Black Snipeflies** *Chrysopilus cristatus* from Grace Dieu, Ulverscroft NR and Aylestone Meadows and the **Small Fleck-winged Snipefly** *Rhagio lineola* from Grace Dieu in June.

The **Common Red-legged Robberfly** *Dioctria rufipes* recorded on oak at Grace Dieu and the attractive **Small Yellow-legged Robberfly** *Dioctria linearis* is also at Grace Dieu in June. Finally, a few **Striped Slender Robberflies** *Leptogaster cylindrica* were in Aylestone meadows in June. The only Soldier Fly reports are the **Broad Centurion** *Chloromyia formosa* one in a moth trap at Abbey Park, a single specimen Cossington, a few at Aylestone Meadows in June and two or three foraging on Hogweed at Spinney Hill Park in June. Hogweed is very much favoured by this Soldier Fly. The only other member of this group recorded was single *Microchrysa flavicornis* also at Spinney Hill Park in June.

The impressive Cranefly *Tipula maxima* singles were noted at Lea Meadows NR and Buddon Brook Meadows on 7 May. The only other record for this large group was *Tipula vittata* noted ovipositing in the brook at Grace Dieu on 14 April.

I shall close this group with a few species of other flies put together by SFW: *Pegomya solennis* Bosworth Park mine in dock leaf, Grace Dieu leaf mine in *Rumex obtusifolius*; *Phasia hemiptera* also at Grace Dieu; *Physocephala rufipes* at Ulverscroft NR, a first from this site; the **Holly Leaf Miner** *Phytomyza ilicis* at Thringstone and Hill Hole; *Phytomyza spondylii* at Grace Dieu, mining on Hogweed and finally *Poecilobothrus nobilitatus* several at Cossington Meadows on 24 June.

Hymenoptera

As from this newsletter, I shall no longer be responsible for writing up records for solitary bees and wasps. This is being done by Helen

Ikin. Helen has been working on the identification of solitary bees in particular, which includes the large genus of *Andrena*, several of which, such as *Andrena fulva* and *A. cineraria* can readily be identified but many can be tricky for the general enthusiast.



Andrena cineraria © Steve Woodward

So I shall carry on for the present with the main body of bumblebees and social wasps.

Bumblebees

Buff-tailed Bumblebees *Bombus terrestris*, as one would expect, was recorded widely by members. FTS, recording them from his garden, states they were scarce during April with a few queens early in the month, scarce during May more frequent at the end of the month with the occasional queen in June, young queens were also recorded from Glen Parva and Abney Street in early June.

The **Common-carder Bee** *Bombus pascourum*, as expected, was common everywhere this quarter with queens from 4 April, a great lover of White Dead-nettle and being a long-tongued species forages Foxglove among many other plant species later in the season.

Red-tailed Bumblebee *Bombus lapidarius* were also well reported this quarter in urban areas and rural habitats. Queens were well in evidence over a wide area from early April as many as six in a garden at Barlestone reported. Workers of this species usually build up slowly but the exceptional weather we experienced this quarter no doubt pushed numbers forward. For the first time that I can remember, two workers even appeared in my garden and a fair number were foraging on a stand of Charlock on

Spinney Hill Park on 31 May, several workers were observed entering an old Wood Mouse hole at Markfield on 12 May, males were observed from 20 June.

Fewer **Early-nesting Bumblebees *Bombus pratorum*** were observed from Abney Street A few queens and workers from April to 13 June, similar numbers at Quorn, but commoner at Barlestone where workers with pollen were frequent throughout May and June with males from 1st. Fewer were recorded from rural habitats but noted from Bradgate Park, Grace Dieu and Ratby Burroughs.

A few **Garden Bumblebees *Bombus hortorum***, odd queens and workers in my garden and Quorn in June, commoner at Barlestone, seen with pollen from 10 April, occasional during May and frequent during June to end of month, mainly observed nectaring *Aquilegia*, *Stachys* and Foxglove.

Tree Bumblebees *Bombus hypnorum* are now widely recorded in the county, with records from Quorn, Barlestone, Castle Gardens, Spinney Hill Park, Charnwood Lodge, Markfield, Grace Dieu, Tilton and Cossington Meadows. HI records a colony in a bird box at Grace Dieu where all the bees were black except for the white tail - no orange on the thorax.

Of the cuckoo bumblebees, ***Bombus vestalis***, a social parasite of *Bombus terrestris*, was as usual quite widespread with single females from 8 April, single females appeared continually at Barlestone throughout April, females also noted at Thurnby Lodge on 21 April and Spinney Hill Park on 20 May, males were seen at Barlestone in June from the 10th, and throughout the month, first males noted on my patch in Great Central Way on 20 June, probably under-recorded.

Bombus sylvestris an inquiline of *Bombus pratorum*, a female was observed foraging a Dandelion in a small nature area on Humberstone Park on 21 April and a male in my garden on the Beauty Bush on 22 May which was only my second record here, all other records came from FTS's garden at Barlestone with single males in May on the 24th, 25th and 6th and 8th of June.

The only records of ***Bombus campestris*** all

came from Barlestone in June, with four on the 6th, two on the 7th and one on the 9th.

Bombus rupestris a social parasite of the common *Bombus lapidarius* appears to be increasing in our county, a female was seen on the Rally Bank, Humberstone Park on 24 April and one on the bankside of Willowbrook Park, Thurnby on the same date. Other females were at Barlestone on 16 April and another at Market Bosworth on 9 May.

A single **Hornet *Vespa crabo*** was buzzing around a pond at Quorn on 25 May and two individuals were noted at Barlestone on 25 & 28 May. **Honey Bees *Apis mellifera*** were widely reported, I get the impression that far more people are indulging in the keeping of hive bees at the present and bee keeping is becoming more popular.

Coleoptera

Another very wide and diverse group, a large number of records have been submitted by members, so apologies if some records don't get a mention.

The handsome **Tiger Beetle *Cicindela campestris*** is always worth a mention. SFW saw two at Bradgate Park on 16 June and eight on 18 April, with one pair mating.

Among many others from this group of ground beetles ***Elaphrus cupreus*** was recorded from Bradgate Park and at Grace Dieu at pond margins and wet mud, ***Dromius quadrimaculatus*** was also recorded at this site in April. Burying and dung beetles were ***Spaeridium searabaeoides*** numbers tunnelling in fresh cow pat Aylestone Meadows late June, ***Nicrophorus investigator*** one at Grace Dieu in a moth trap and one at Ulverscroft NR both in June and ***Nicrophorus humator*** M/V trap at Quorn on 1 April.

A **Dor Beetle *Geotrupes stercorarius*** was also caught in a moth trap at Grace Dieu in late June.

Cockchafers *Melolontha melolontha* were recorded at Grace Dieu, four on 25 April, many on 17 May and many at Quorn 23 April, all caught in moth traps.

Lily Beetles *Lilliceris lillii* were recorded on Martagon Lily at Quorn in April and at Groby in

June, a pest on garden Lilies. Flower Beetles *Oedemera nobilis* at Grace Dieu, North Farm at Shenton and Barkby Thorpe Road, *Oedemera lurida* at Grace Dieu and Cossington Meadows. Soldier beetles *Rhagonycha sp.* and Cardinal beetles *Pyrochroa sp.* were widely reported. A Wood-Boring beetle *Ptilinus pectinicornis* was swept from bramble at Grace Dieu in May, PHG recorded a female *Hylecoetus dermestoides* at his garden at Quorn on 22 April, he states that is a nationally scarce 'Nb' species, as usual he photographed the specimen for posterity. This has been an exceptional early summer for Longhorn beetles and I don't remember having so many records submitted previously, sadly I failed to find a single specimen anywhere.

Wasp Beetle *Clytus arietis* was found at Grace Dieu and Shenton Estate where there were several on 3 June *Rutpela maculata* is one of the most frequent of the woodland species and was recorded from Grace Dieu, Ulverscroft, Newtown Linford and Quorn one seen in PHG's garden on 25 June, which he describes as a yearly event.

Rhagium mordax was recorded in several parts of Grace Dieu in May and June, SFW who recorded a number of these species had *Grammoptera ruficornis* at Thringstone, Cossington Meadows, Groby Pool, Grace Dieu and Shenton Estate in May and June. *Rhagium bifasciatum* was recorded at Lea Wood on 23 April and Lea Meadows on 2 June, *Anaglyptus mysticus* at Shenton on 3 June, *Stenocorus meridianus* also at Shenton Estate field hedgerow on 3 June, *Leiopus nebulosus* found on SFW's rucksack after walking through Grace Dieu Wood on 23 June and finally the **Plum Longhorn** *Tetrops praeustus* a very small species, one swept from apple blossom at Ulverscroft NR by SFW, was a first reserve record.

A young man, collecting larva for his pet Carp, had at Aylestone Meadows a larvae of the Great Diving Beetle *Dytiscus marginalis* from a weedy stream on 27 June.

Ladybirds

As is usual for this popular group, once again **Seven-spot Ladybirds** *Coccinella 7-punctata* were the most common and widely reported species this quarter. **Harlequin**

Harmonia axyridis numbers are slower to build up: the larva was first recorded at Spinney Hill Park on 15 June, it is exactly five years ago that I recorded Harlequins at Ethel Road, they are still present in numbers among clouds of aphids in late June and I am now wondering if this species has decimated as many native species as first thought, from records received this does not appear to be so, except for the **Orange Ladybird** *Halyzia 16-guttata*, only one record received this quarter from Loughborough. Single **16-spot Ladybirds** *Tytthaspis 16-punctata* were recorded from Grace Dieu, Peckleton, Stonesby Quarry and Little Stretton this species appears to like lighter soils. **22-spot** *Thea 22-punctata*, singles from Watermead, Barkby Thorpe Road and Loughborough. **Two-spot** *Adalia 2-punctata* at Grace Dieu and Loughborough. **Cream Spot** *Calvia 14-guttata* singles at Grace Dieu at three sites and Loughborough just one **Ten-spot** *Adalia 10-punctata* at Quorn, **14-Spots** *Propylea 14-punctata* were also recorded from one or two locations. DL records a great many Harlequins, many 7-spots, some 2-spots, estimated at about ten Ladybirds, larvae or pupae per metre over 100 m, on a nettle bed alongside the footpath SW of Dishley Pool no date. It shows that some mixed colonies are flourishing

Howard Bradshaw

Solitary Bees and Wasps

The "Other Insects" is a very large group for one writer to cope with, so we are trying to give its very patient writer, Howard Bradshaw, a bit less work by writing up the solitary bees and wasps separately.

2011 has been a very good year for this group of insects and we have recorded a number of bees that have not been reported in the area since the 1980s. This is mainly because no-one was looking for them. However, the identification keys are not straightforward and some of our records are still awaiting confirmation by experts.

We have accumulated over 230 records of more than 34 species this quarter so this will only be a brief overview of mainly bees – the solitary wasps will come into their own next quarter.

Crabronidae

We have had just two species of solitary wasp - *Argogorytes mystaceus* at Grace Dieu and *Crossocerus quadrimaculatus* at Newtown Linford.

Apidae

Andrena species are mining bees which, although they are solitary, often nest in aggregations on suitable sunny slopes and sparsely vegetated areas. They need to be within a reasonable distance of flowers in order to collect pollen to stock their nests.

The very early species *Andrena clarkella* was recorded at New Lount NR and at Thornton Reservoir in the first week of April.

The lovely fox-red **Tawny Mining Bee** *Andrena fulva* was widely reported by several members and FTS had about 60 holes in his lawn at Barlestone. Other records came from PHG's garden at Quorn, Newtown Linford, Hill Hole at Markfield, Beacon Hill, Croft Pasture, Grace Dieu, Peckleton and Charnwood Lodge.

Another very common, but less striking, bee is *Andrena scotica* seen at Grace Dieu, Woodhouse, Belton, Cloud Wood, Peckleton, Broombriggs and Newtown Linford.

HB's speciality is the little *Andrena bicolor*, which is in Spinney Hill Park in Leicester. We have not found it on the Forest although there are old records for this area.

Another very recognisable bee is the grey and black *Andrena cineraria*, which has been recorded from 14 sites including a garden at Woodhouse where the whole lawn is taken over every year by this species. It has a longer season than many species and can be seen from early April to beyond the end of the quarter.

Andrena nigroaenea provided us with a spectacle at Morley Quarry where hundreds could be seen around their holes the top of the cliff along with its cuckoo bee *Nomada goodeniana*. We also had records from another six sites.

Andrena nitida is less common with only four sites.

My favourite, the lovely *Andrena haemorrhoa* is another common bee recorded

from 14 sites including Aylestone Meadows, Glen Parva, Peckleton, Groby Pool, Croft NR, Scraftoft and several locations on Charnwood.

Andrena chrysoceles, a small species with orange legs in the female was noted at Ketton, Woodhouse and Scraftoft Gorse.

Andrena wilkella is a smart bee with white hair bands on the abdomen and was only recorded from Grace Dieu this quarter.

The distinctive *Halictus rubicundus* with its orange hind tibia and tarsi is much commoner and was also seen in this quarter at Grace Dieu and by HB at Spinney Hill Park and Hamilton.

The *Lasioglossums* are not easy to separate and we have only one record of *Lasioglossum albipes* found by JK at Grace Dieu. Others wait to be identified!

Sphecodes is another genus which is difficult and we need expert help to say which species of this cuckoo bee that we have seen.

Chelostoma florissomme is a most unusual bee in that it appears to have a spade under its abdomen, which makes it easy to identify! It is a species that carries pollen on long hairs under the abdomen and not in *scopae* or baskets on the hind legs. It specialises in sleeping in flowers – hence its scientific name, and the structures under its abdomen are said to facilitate its curling up to sleep. It was found at Grace Dieu.

The *Osmias* nest in holes of various types and the **Red Mason Bee**, *Osmia rufa*, is the commonest and is an important pollinator. Records come from Woodhouse, Shenton Estates, MF's house at Knighton and Croft



Osmia rufa © Steve Woodward

Pasture NR where SFW spotted the females collecting mud from the banks of the River Soar to line the interiors of their cells.

A less common species is *Osmia leiana*, which was recorded from Markfield. This one lines its cells with chewed leaves – perhaps we will be lucky enough to see this happen sometime.

One of the highlights of the season was watching the distinctive red and black *Osmia bicolor* at Ketton Quarry. This species nests in empty snail shells and then covers the shells with pieces of vegetation, which it picks up and carries through the air, to drop the grass stems etc. on to the shell, one presumes, to camouflage it. SFW found that photographing this activity is not easy.

Another species, which uses vegetation, is the leaf-cutter bee *Megachile ligniseca* recorded by HB from Aylestone Mill Lock. Another of this genus is *Megachile willughbiella*, which frequents HB's garden in Abney Street, Leicester. The discs of leaves are used to line the breeding cells, which are in holes in dead wood or in soil.

The little *Nomada* cuckoo bees are cleptoparasites of the mining bees and each species has its own host species although some have several hosts. They lay their eggs in the host's nest and the *Nomada* larvae hatch first and eat the pollen that has been provided for the host's offspring.

Nomada fabriciana is a red and black species which parasitises *Andrena bicolor* and has been seen by HB at Aylestone Meadows.

The more usual colouring for *Nomadas* is yellow and black, sometimes with orange, and the more common *Nomada flava* is this colour. There is another very similar species *Nomada panzeri* and it is sometimes almost impossible to distinguish between them. The former seems to be the most common.

A tiny tricolour bee *Nomada flavoguttata* parasitises several of the small (and hard to identify) *Andrena* species and has been seen at Newtown Linford, Broombriggs and Grace Dieu.

Nomada goodeniana is a distinctive black and yellow species with no orange markings and is found with *Andrena nigroaenea* among other



Nomada lathburiana © Steve Woodward

species. This species is double-brooded so seems to have a long season.

Nomada lathburiana is the parasite of *Andrena cineraria* and has been recorded from Beacon, Grace Dieu, Broombriggs, Croft Pasture NR and Newtown Linford this year.

Nomada marshamella is less common but is reported from Woodhouse and Spinney Hill Park. It is associated with *Andrena scotica*.

Nomada ruficornis, another little tricolour bee, is the cleptoparasite of the widespread *Andrena haemorrhoa* and was recorded from Grace Dieu, Peckleton, Morley, Stonesby and Ketton Quarries, Croft Pasture NR, Abney Street in Leicester and Quorn.

An early species is the large **Hairy-footed Flower Bee** *Anthophora plumipes*, which is a colonial nester in south facing banks and has been recorded from Desford, Croft Pasture NR, Loughborough, Hill Hole, Quorn, Morley Quarry and Ketton Quarry NR and two sites in Leicester city. It is the cream-faced males that have the hairy feet, while the females are black with bright orange hind legs. Its equally impressive cleptoparasite is *Melecta albifrons*, which was actually seen at Morley, Desford and Croft but is likely to be present wherever its host is nesting.

A good reference book, which I have used while writing this, is the "Bees of Surrey" by D W Baldock published by the Surrey Wildlife Trust. It covers nearly all the Leicestershire species and is full of useful information.

Helen Ikin

FLOWERING PLANTS & FERNS

There have been plenty of records this quarter although there were only four recorders. The plants I have chosen to comment on I believe show the wide range found in our area even though some of them take a little finding.

The one problem this quarter has been the dry weather which has prevented many plants from developing their full potential although, I must say despite the very hard winter, the blossom on many trees & shrubs has been the best I have seen for many years.

Some Plants of Interest This Quarter

Greater Spearwort *Ranunculus lingua*: Locally frequent in flower in reed swamp on pool margins at Dishley Pool, Loughborough.

Little Mouse Ear *Cerastium semidecandrum*: Present at Groby Rifle Range drive and Hill Hole, Markfield.

Upright Chickweed *Moenchia erecta*: Plants in fruit were at Croft Pasture NR.

Annual Knawel *Scleranthus annuus*: Present at Croft Pasture NR.

Sand Spurrey *Spergularia rubra*: On path above bench at Bradgate Park. (Co-ordinates given)

Imperforate St John's Wort *Hypericum maculatum*: Present at Coleorton Wood.

Creeping St John's Wort *Hypericum humifusum*: Single plant on path at Bradgate Park, one plant in rank grassland at Swannymote Wood, Thringstone and one plant in flower on path side Swithland Wood (north section).

Musk Mallow *Malva moschata*: Frequent in both normal and white versions at Stonebow Washlands, Loughborough.

Early Dog Violet *Viola reichenbachiana*: Present at Grace Dieu Wood.

Small flowered Wintercress *Barbarea stricta*: Present and in flower on the side of the River Soar at Barrow Bridge, Quorn. Until recently considered a rarity but now fairly common along the Soar Valley to which it is restricted in Leicestershire. Considered an introduction.

New Zealand Pygmy Weed *Crassula helmsii*:

Locally frequent on pool margins at Stonebow Washlands, Loughborough also present in two locations at Nature Alive NR. This plant is an introduction that is very invasive and the RHS recommend that it is disposed of in such a way it cannot escape into the wild.

Hoary Cinquefoil *Potentilla argentea*: Many healthy plants were in bud on rock face 19 May at Mountsorrel Common. This plant is one of our local rarities.

Fragrant Agrimony *Agrimonia procera*: Two plants and 11 spikes in bud at Ulverscroft NR.

Knotted Clover *Trifolium striatum*: Noted on a steep grassy slope in front of ruins plus two other locations at Bradgate Park. Also frequent plants on the hill and on outcrops to the south-west on Mountsorrel Common.

Wood Spurge *Euphorbia amygdaloides*: A colony was identified along a hedgerow below Castle Hill, Mountsorrel Common – doubtless originated from an adjacent garden.

Petty Whin *Genista anglica*: A single plant was in flower at Charnwood Lodge NR.

Deadly Nightshade *Atropa belladonna*: found in the car park margins at St.James Street, Leicester. HB states that several species such as this find refuge in such places.

Wild Clary *Salvia verbenacea*: Present at the base of the cliff at Croft Hill NR.

Lousewort *Pedicularis sylvatica*: Many hundreds of plants were scattered across the lower half of pastures at Grace Dieu.

Toothwort *Lathraea squamaria*: 32 spikes were visible, mostly on the quarry side of the fence, under hazel at Sheet Hedges Wood. In addition, 17 spikes were found at Grace Dieu Wood.

Moschetel *Adoxa moschetellina*: Exceptionally common in Ash Plantation – spread over several hundred yards of woodland floor at Thornton Reservoir.

Saw-wort *Serratula tinctoria*: three plants were present at Lea Meadows NR.

Poison Lettuce *Lactuca virosa*: A colony of large plants, apparently of this species, but not yet in flower were noted at Swithland Wood. This is a plant which seems to be on the increase in our area – windborne seeds help its dispersal over

a wide area and it turns up in unusual places.

Sweet Flag *Acorus calamus*: A large colony, some in flower, was at Quorn Brook. This plant usually flowers best in hot weather.

Slender Rush *Juncus tenuis*: In Bradgate Park.

Wood Small Reed *Calamagrostis epigejos*: Present in Sheet Hedges Wood.

Orange Foxtail *Alopecurus aequalis*: Several plants were found at the edge of a pool at Cossington Meadows NR.

Pyramidal Orchid *Anacamptis pyramidalis*: Just a single spike was noted at Evington Park Embankment.

Green-winged orchid *Orchis morio*: Found at Cribb's Meadow NR. Some flowers had gone over, whilst others were in flower although suffering from drought.

Bee Orchid *Ophrys apifera*: Just three spikes, were found at Evington Park Embankment.

Southern Marsh Orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa*: Stonebow Washlands, Loughborough held a colony of c.200 flower spikes alongside the Blackbrook at the edge of the Garendon Estate in a small area of meadow.

Heath Spotted Orchid *Dactylorhiza maculata*: Only one spike, (a white flower) was located at Ulverscroft NR. Last seen in compt 2 in 2006.

Ferns

Adders Tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum*: Many plants were noted - all going yellow and suffering from drought at Cribbs Meadow NNR near Wymondham. Many plants were also found at Ulverscroft NR.

Sweet Scented fern *Oreopteris limbosperma*: Present in several places at Bradgate Park.

Rusty back *Ceterach officinarum*: Fourteen plants were on the inner side or west wall of the bridge at Bradgate Park whilst three were on the outer side.

Soft Shield Fern *Polystichum setiferum*: At Grace Dieu Wood and Sheet Hedges Wood.

Hard Shield Fern *Polystichum aculeatum*: Two more plants were found at Grace Dieu Wood in addition to the one found recently nearby.

Scaly Male Fern *Dryopteris affinis*: Present at

Grace Dieu Wood whilst a large plant was on the side of the path at Gisborne's Gorse, Charnwood Lodge NNR.

Eric Webster

OTHER RECORDS

Records were also sent in for the following groups for which we have no scribe – snails, spiders, harvestmen, sawflies, bark-lice, a horsehair worm, mosses, lichens, liverworts, *Hydra*, woodlice, millipedes, mites and ticks, plant galls, fungi, earwigs and a fish louse.

WEATHER

Just four years since April last broke the records, the figures this month were smashed again. It was the warmest April ever recorded in 350 years of national records. Locally, in Leicestershire, it was our warmest month since records began in 1836. Average afternoon temperatures were 18°C, a staggering 5°C above normal while night-time temperatures averaged 7°C about 3°C above normal. This gave us a monthly mean of 12.5°C, 4°C higher than normal. It was also a very dry month. Jim Lofts, at Nanpantan, recorded 13.5 mm of rain for the month, which is just 22% while at Mountsorrel I only received 5 mm or 10% of the usual figure. This makes it the driest April in Leicestershire since 1938. It was a very sunny month, however, as high pressure dominated our weather and this drove our more customary April showers further south over southern Europe and left us frequently in Mediterranean-sourced air masses. It was also a sunny month with 220 hours of sun recorded at Mountsorrel, which is slightly less than the 2007 total of 235 hours but this still made it the third sunniest April ever recorded.

The first few days of the month did provide us with some showers and our lowest temperature of 2.5°C was recorded at night at Nanpantan on the 3rd. High pressure then began to dominate and it only rained on four days in the entire month. Temperatures did vary according to the position of the high pressure but the hottest day was recorded on the 23rd when Jim recorded a temperature of 27°C at

Nanpantan, the warmest he has ever recorded in April and indeed the temperature on the day was nearly double what it should have been. The high temperatures did spark off some very localised but severe thunderstorms. Jim recorded 7 mm of rain in one of these on the 23rd and thunder was heard for nearly 45 minutes. Some places received huge downpours particularly parts of Birstall and Shepshed where radar traces show that up to 25 mm may have fallen in an hour. As well as the rain, huge hailstones fell in a few specific locations. A storm chaser friend went to Shepshed and he thinks the marble sized hail he saw was some of the biggest he has ever seen in the UK and a similar story can be told for the western half of Birstall. Most of us, however, missed the worst of the storms and I recorded less than 0.5 mm of rain at Mountsorrel just three miles north of the Birstall deluge. The rest of the month was mainly sunny and dry. Before we get too excited about the summer, statistical analysis shows that nine out of every ten warm and dry Aprils have summers that are wetter than normal and the last warm and sunny April in 2007 was followed by a wet summer with Jim recording nearly eight inches of rain in that July!! Some rain would now be welcome but let's hope that there is still a little summer left!!

May was once again drier and warmer than normal but it was not as parched as recent months. Jim recorded 57 mm of rain at Nanpantan, which is average for May, while I received 40 mm at Mountsorrel, which is about 20% below normal. Average afternoon temperatures were 17.8°C, while night-time values were close to 8°C. The average of 12.7°C was about 1.2°C above normal. There was 199 hours of sunshine recorded - about 10% above normal. Many days were dry in the month with substantial rain only falling on five days.

The month began with high pressure in charge, which brought clear skies and cool winds, initially. On the 2nd, 14 hours of sunshine were recorded but the clear days also led to cold nights with temperatures tumbling to -1°C at Nanpantan on the night of the 4th, recording our only air frost of the month. The weather then warmed up and the month's maximum of 24°C was recorded on the 6th at Nanpantan. The end of first week had some significant rainfall;

the first since the end of February. I recorded 19 mm over the 7th & 8th at Mountsorrel. On the 9th some heavy thunderstorms broke out with Jim collecting 5 mm in a single storm but in addition there was also some large hail falling with a diameter of 2.5 cm, which is very substantial for the UK. The next fortnight was mostly dry with just weak weather fronts giving us small amounts of rain. It turned more unsettled after the 22nd with heavy showers and on the 30th both stations reported a fall of over 10 mm. So a return to unsettled conditions was signalled after nearly three months of fine settled weather. As I said last month, nine out of every ten warm and dry Aprils give us wet summers and as I write this that statistic is being reflected in June's weather so far! Let us hope that the sunshine returns again, soon.

Thanks to Jim Lofts for his figures.

Phil Morrish

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Records for the third quarter of 2011 should be sent to:

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