



TROUBLING THOUGHTS

During my lifetime the World's human population has almost quadrupled, rising from just below two billion to over seven billion (7,000,000,000). I would guess that most naturalists must be very concerned at this massive increase but the population at large seem unaware of its implications and the media provide little space for discussing it. Even the candidate for this last summer's Green Party elections failed to mention it in their election statements!

Forty years and more ago, numerous environmentalists such as Sir Frank Fraser-Darling, Professor Paul Ehrlich, Lord Ritchie Calder and Professor Rene Dubos were doing their best to make everyone aware of the tragic consequences of ignoring it but as the situation becomes ever more acute those

in positions of power seem content to do little about it. Today the World seems to have an abundance of very clever people, sometimes talking glibly about their high hopes for the future, while seeming unconcerned by this worrying situation. I wonder if today, when most of us live in large urban conurbations, near large food stores, whether this makes it difficult to think that things could ever change! Some seem to equate growth with progress.

Our oil-based agriculture is at present making it possible to feed the world's huge human population, though even now there are plenty of places on earth where people are hungry and lack supplies of clean drinking water. History should teach us that any time volcanic eruptions or other natural phenomena could bring about changes in the weather system that could cause crop failures on a massive scale and that rainfall amounts can vary markedly from year to year, especially so in some parts of the earth. Also, in addition, global warming poses a greatly added threat.

We must also be aware that oil, a much-squandered resource, is finite and what happens when it eventually runs out? With this in mind is it not reprehensible for present populations to waste and squander this now vital finite resource?

Many parts of the earth's surface are not suitable

IN THIS EDITION

CLASSIFIED RECORDS

- Mammals Page 2
- Birds Page 3
- Reptiles and Amphibians Page 7
- Fish Page 8
- Dragonflies & Damselflies Page 11
- Butterflies Page 13
- Moths Page 16
- Beetles Page 18
- Other Insects Page 22
- Plants and Ferns Page 26
- Other Records Page 27
- Weather Page 29
- Acknowledgements Page 29

for producing food and the soil, so precious and necessary for plant growth, has often been lost or damaged by misuse and inappropriate development. Continual increases in the population will inevitably mean that more and more land will need cultivating at the expense of those wild undeveloped places still rich with diverse wildlife.

During my time on earth, vast areas of the World's best wildlife habitat have been desecrated to make large profits for a relatively small number of people and if any other creature was responsible for causing as much damage to the environment as we humans, we should be pressing for its urgent reduction or removal to save the world.

We are frequently reminded that we are more intelligent than all other forms of life but it remains to be seen if we can solve this most vital of our problems.

Peter Gamble

CLASSIFIED RECORDS

The original records from which *Heritage* is compiled will no longer be archived at the Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre, County Hall. The committee is looking for a new home for them.

MAMMALS

Hedgehogs are taking food and water regularly from PJD's Quorn garden and leaving droppings on the path. Two young ones were found hiding by the wall in Old Dalby churchyard – they were not well hidden so we hope they survived. Road casualties were seen near Burton on the Wolds, Sutton Cheney and at Groby. A live one was also seen at Groby and another in a Woodhouse garden at 5 am in early September. We have a report of up to six individuals being seen in a garden in Quorn – maximum of three at once. The owner of the garden bought some mealworms for them and later when she tried to substitute dog food, they refused to eat it – so it is costing her many pounds each week to buy mealworms! Hedgehogs have been seen in JGr's Holwell garden several times during the quarter – on one occasion an adult with four young ones

visited the garden.

The **Moles** in DAP's Swithland garden have been digging near the stream margin this quarter – probably due to the dry conditions – the worms have probably moved too. Mole hills were noted in 12 churchyards and at Freeby, Thorpe by Water, Sandhills Lodge, Prestwold Hall, Walton Grange, Swithland Wood Farm, Glooston, Desford, Peckleton, Knipton, Sheet Hedges Wood, Foxton, Burton on the Wolds and fields near Baggrave.

The only record of **Common Shrew** is one found dead by PHG on the terrace of his Quorn house.

Several bats, thought to be Common Pipistrelles, were feeding around trees in DAP's Swithland garden on warm evenings in July. ATO reports bats flying near his Shelthorpe garden in July and August and a dead one – probable cat victim, also thought to be Common Pipistrelle. HS had bats flying around her Quorn garden pond in late July. With a bat detector, JG and SG have identified Noctule, Common and Soprano Pipistrelles, Brown Long-eared and Daubenton's Bats above their Cropston garden and Noctule and Common Pipistrelle at Cropston Reservoir.

Five **Rabbits** were seen near Cropston Reservoir, two at Tur Langton and one at Glooston and commonly at Swithland. Signs of rabbits were recorded at Freeby, South Croxton churchyard, Burton on the Wolds, Thistleton and in field hedgerows near Saxby where there was also a live rabbit, crouching in the road, which was seen to be suffering from myxomatosis.



Grey Squirrel © Jim Graham

Grey Squirrels were feeding on yew berries at the bottom of PHG's Quorn garden adjoining Kayes Plantation and were also noted in

Swithland Wood, Kirkby Mallory and along the Great Central Railway south of Rothley Station.

The two mouse records come from PJD who has a **Wood Mouse** in a hole under her pear tree in her Quorn garden and another in a hole in a neighbour's lawn.

There was a dead **Brown Rat** floating in the GU Canal near Belgrave Hall in Late July.

Red Foxes are regularly visiting a Loughborough garden – all looking healthy. A large male is marking his territory regularly in a Swithland garden and a well-grown cub was also seen in mid-September. A vixen and four cubs were seen in a Diseworth garden. Foxes were seen in a Holwell garden in July and September. Dead foxes were seen on roads at Wymeswold, Asfordby and Groby and live foxes were noted in Leicester on 26 August, near Glenfield and at Roecliffe crossroads.

A **Stoat** was crossing Main Street, Swithland on 27 July.

A **Weasel** was seen by EPT crossing the A60 in front of his car just north of Cotes on 5 July. He had a sighting in the same place last year. KH watched a Weasel being chased by crows in her garden in Quorn in August.

In late July, DAP watched three adult **Mink** rolling around and playing together in the water at Cossington Meadows for 15 minutes before they noticed him.

Between one and three **Badgers** were visiting a Loughborough garden regularly during August and September for food and water and another Loughborough garden is host to two Badgers and their three cubs – all busy ruining the lawns. Lawns in Swithland were also being given the same treatment throughout the quarter as was a garden in Quorn. A dead Badger was reported from Farley Way in Quorn in early July.

Only two records of **Muntjac** this quarter – one on the verge of Brand Lane, Woodhouse Eaves in the late evening of 20 September and GLF's dead one being consumed by beetles in Bradgate Park.

Helen Ikin

BIRDS

Mute Swans were at most local waters with successful breeding at seven. Post-breeding flocks were not evident until September when a count of 38 was noted.

It is obvious that **Canada Goose** are quite mobile in the local area and some site counts no doubt refer to the same variable groups. Counts of in excess of 30 occurred at four waters with the highest coming from Cropston Reservoir where 176 were noted on 8 September. All three-figure counts of **Greylag Goose** came from Cropston Reservoir peaking at 477 on 13 September. **Egyptian Goose** was noted at Cropston reservoir on two dates in September.

A single juvenile **Shelduck** (not local bred) was at Cropston Reservoir inflow on 24 August. The only records of **Mandarin Duck** came from the same site with the highest count being 29 on 24 August. Small numbers of **Wigeon** started to appear during September with a high of 100 at Swithland Reservoir on the 30th. An eclipse plumaged drake **American Wigeon** first located on 8 September remained until the 24th although at times it was rather elusive. **Gadwall** was reported from five sites with successful breeding being noted at both Cropston Reservoir and Cossington Meadows. Post-breeding flocks did not begin to build up until the second week of September with the highest count being 62 at Watermead CP North on the 18th. The first returning **Teal** were a group of four at Cropston Reservoir on 14 August. Numbers began to rise during the month with 55 there on the 28th. The two highest, and only three-figure counts, may refer to the same birds; 150 at Birstall Meadows on 16 September and 135 at Watermead CP North two days later. Counts of **Mallard** in excess of 20 came from six sites with three-figure counts from three where maxima were: 200 at Birstall Meadows on 17 July, 124 at Cropston Reservoir on 14 August and 113 at Watermead CP North on 18 September. Young were still being seen at most sites. Two female **Pintail** were on Tern Pool at Cossington Meadows on 24 September. Small numbers of returning **Shoveler** were found at six localities, the first being two at Groby Pool on 17 July. The two highest counts were 12 at Sence Valley FP on 17 September and 16 at Watermead CP

North the following day. A drake **Pochard** at Groby Pool on 15 July was joined by four others two days later – the only records during the period. Records of **Tufted Duck** came from just four widespread sites with the highest count being just 41 at Watermead CP North on 18 September. A female at Cropston Reservoir on 25 September seemed to be feeding well and in good health despite the fact that she had a badly deformed upper mandible. A drake **Scaup** was on the south side of Swithland Reservoir on 30 September whilst a drake **Common Scoter** was located off the dam at Cropston on the afternoon of 19 September but was not there the following day.

Records of **Red-legged Partridge** came from just two locations, but that was two more than for **Grey Partridge**. Despite September being the prime time for reared **Pheasant** to be released, just two sites managed double-figure counts: Blaston and Cropston Reservoir.

Gannets that are located inland are invariably lost and not in the best of health, and so was the adult surprisingly found at Thornton Reservoir on 21 August. It appeared to be making progress with the help of a few choice fish from a local resident and was seen flying around on the 23rd. However, its body was found on the 29th. There were only two double-figure counts of **Cormorants** both in September; 24 at Watermead CP North on the 18th and 20 at Cropston Reservoir on the 23rd. Seven Shag circling low over Ibstock on 8 September before gaining height and heading north-east is an excellent record for an inland county.



Little Egret © Jim Graham

The growing range of **Little Egrets** is becoming ever more apparent and records came from 11 sites, usually in single figures, however 15 were at Swithland Reservoir on 30 September and 36

at Cropston Reservoir on 14 August by far the highest count there. Included in the latter count was a colour-ringed bird from a breeding site in Nottingham, obviously following the River Soar into Charnwood. The highest counts of **Grey Heron** came from Cropston and Swithland Reservoirs with maxima of 15 and 12 on 14 August and 30 September respectively.

Little Grebe was at eight sites with breeding confirmed at two. Three nests were located at Thornton Reservoir on 1 August whilst ten birds were seen at Longmoor Lake on 17 September. The only double-figure counts of **Great Crested Grebe** were from Cropston Reservoirs and Watermead CP North with a maximum of 46 at the former on 28 August and 36 at the latter on 18 September. Adults with juveniles were found at four locations.

Records of **Red Kite** came from South Croxton, Market Harborough and Horninghold, during the quarter, with three at the latter site on 15 September. **Sparrowhawk** was recorded from 15 widespread sites including six gardens mainly singles. A male and female were daily visitors to JG's Cropston garden. Nearby, a pair was seen to be taking prey items into a spinney at Cropston Reservoir indicative a successful breeding. Records of **Buzzard** were widespread and came from 19 locations. At least one juvenile was part of a party of four over Cropston on 10 August. A migrating Osprey was fishing over the fishing ponds at Kelham Bridge on 24 September. **Kestrel** was reported from 13 locations, mostly of singles with a family party of four at Thornton Reservoir on 6 August. **Hobby** was reported from eight sites with birds hawking insects chasing hirundines being regular noted. Juveniles were noted at Bradgate Park and Swithland Reservoir. The resident pair of **Peregrines** in Leicester city centre successfully reared two juveniles with up to four birds being recorded at Leicester Cathedral during the period. Surprisingly, there was only one other record, three together over Buddon Wood with two Raven and two Hobbies.

There were no reports of **Water Rail** but **Moorhen** came from 11 waters with juveniles at most. The best count was 55 at Watermead CP North on 18 September. There were four double-figure counts of **Coot** with 72 at Cossington Meadows on 7 September the best.

Other than one near the River Soar at Kegworth on 10 July, all other records of **Oystercatcher** were from Birstall Meadows during the month with up to three being seen. There were no reports of **Little Ringed Plover** but up to two **Ringed Plover** were at Cropston Reservoir between 28 August and 25 September, including one juvenile. Post-breeding flocks of **Lapwing** started to build during August with the best totals being 195 at Cossington Meadows on 7 September and 200 at Watermead CP North on the 18th. A single **Dunlin** was at the latter site on the same date with three summer-plumaged birds at Cropston Reservoir on the 25th. The single Dunlin was in the company of a **Ruff**. The first returning **Snipe** was one at Birstall Meadows on 4 August, rising to 14 by 22 September, with records from four further localities by the end of the quarter. The highest count was 18 at Cossington Meadows on the 24th. All **Black-tailed Godwit** records came from at Cropston Reservoir starting with two on 31 August rising to four on 5 September remaining until the 10th. Although not appearing to land, at the same site, two Bar-tailed Godwit flew in from the west circling the reservoir twice before heading north on 10 September. Four sites held **Common Sandpiper** with two at Cropston Reservoir on 12 July the first of the quarter peaking at four on three dates. Three were at Birstall Meadows on 19 August with singles at Brascote Pits and Cossington Meadows. The first returning **Green Sandpiper** was at Cropston Reservoir on 14 August, the low water levels obviously to their liking as various numbers were recorded frequently through the quarter here peaking at eight on 11 September. Away from this site, four were at Wanlip Meadows scrape on 21 August with singles at both Cossington and Birstall Meadows. After two **Greenshank** were at Cropston Reservoir on 24 August, numbers peaked at six on the 28th with up to three remaining until 13 September. One was at Birstall Meadows on the 15th and two at Wanlip Meadows on 21 August.

Few gull records were received but three-figure counts of **Black-headed Gull** came from two sites with maxima of 600 at Birstall Meadows on 7 August and 459 at Cropston Reservoir on 25 September. The only Common Gull noted was two at the same site and date.

There was just two counts of **Lesser Black-backed Gull** in excess of 50; 69 at Longmoor Lake on 17 September and 53 at Cropston reservoir on 14 August where there were also 11 **Herring Gull**.



White-winged Black Tern © Jim Graham

Cropston Reservoir was the hot spot for **Black Tern** with the first there on 27 August joined by three more the following day. A juvenile on 8 September remained until the 10th. However, one of the highlights of the period was a **White-winged Black Tern** found at Watermead CP Birstall on 21 August remaining until mid-morning the following day. Most records of **Common Tern** came from Cropston reservoir but relate to the birds from the artificial rafts at Watermead Country Park Birstall. These were identified by the colour-rings that had been attached as part of the monitoring programme with at least 12 individuals identified. Most had departed by 3 September. A juvenile **Arctic Tern** was at Cropston Reservoir between 9 and 12 September.

Small numbers of **Stock Dove** came from just four locations. The highest count of **Wood Pigeon** was 250 at both Cropston Reservoir on 14 August and Holwell on 26 July. The latter location hosted the largest count of **Collared Dove** with 14 there on 26 July. There were no records of **Feral Pigeon**. A **Ring-necked Parakeet** most frequently seen in the Evington area of Leicester was observed around Cropston Reservoir and Bradgate Park on 31 August and 1 September.

There were no reports of **Barn Owl** and the only **Little Owl** records were from from Bradgate Park and Cropston Reservoir. As usual **Tawny Owl** was very vociferous and noted particularly

from member's gardens throughout the period. It has been a poor year for **Swift** which was recorded from just four locations in July the best count being 35 over Groby on the 18th. The only September record was of one apparently going to roost at Ibstock on the 12th.



Kingfisher © Jim Graham

Kingfisher were reported from eight sites, usually singles, but six at Thornton Reservoir on 5 August was made up of family party of four plus a separate pair. **Green Woodpecker** was noted at 14 widespread locations and juveniles were confirmed at three of these. Records of **Great Spotted Woodpecker** came from just eight locations with no juveniles noted.

As usual, only small numbers of **Magpie** and **Jay** were noted. The highest count of **Jackdaw** was 109 at Cropston Reservoir 25 September and 50 **Carrion Crow** at Holwell on the 27th whilst 100 **Rook** were in a field near Kegworth on 10 July. **Raven** were seen in five locations with six at Cropston Reservoir on 28 August.

Small numbers of **Goldcrest** records came from just two sites with a family party noted at Thornton reservoir in July.

Most records of **Blue Tit** were from gardens but party numbers were low with none exceeding ten, whilst 15 **Great Tit** in Holwell was by far the best count from just four sites. There were just two records of **Coal Tit** but that was two more than for **Willow Tit** or **Marsh Tit**.

There were no **Skylark** records.

Several pairs of **Sand Martin** were still using the artificial bank at Bagworth Heath whilst ten over Birstall Meadows on 10 September were the last of the year. There were no large numbers of passage **Swallow** this autumn and just three sites had small double-figure counts all in September: 11 at Cossington Meadows and

12 at Neither Broughton on the 7th and 15 at Frisby-on-the-Wreake on the 25th. Active **House Martin** nests were still being noted during July with passage birds congregating by the end of the month. Double-figure counts were common through September.

Small flocks or family parties of **Long-tailed Tit** were widely reported, the highest counts being 20 at Birstall Allotments on 1 July and 16 at Cossington Meadows on 20 September.

Vocal **Chiffchaff** was common, widespread and still singing through the quarter, with 11 at Cropston Reservoir on 11 September the best count, whilst the only **Willow Warbler** noted was one close by on 10 August. **Blackcap** was recorded from seven locations with no more than three noted. A single **Lesser Whitethroat** was only found at Cropston Reservoir on 14 August whilst small numbers of **Common Whitethroat** were located at six sites with the last records on 4 September. No **Grasshopper** or **Sedge Warbler** were recorded whilst **Reed Warbler** was found at just two sites: Cropston Reservoir on 28 August and a family party of four at Groby Pool on 17 July. Single **Cetti's Warbler** were recorded at both Birstall and Cossington Meadows.

Records of **Nuthatch** and **Treecreeper** were very sparse, although one of the latter was singing at Cossington Meadows on 7 September – unusual at that time of year and the best count of **Wren** was four at Cropston Reservoir.

Small flocks of **Starling** were starting to form during July and a group of 140 at Bradgate Park on the 8th was made up of mainly juveniles. The next best count was 112 at Cossington meadows on 24 September.

There were few notable records of thrushes and 12 **Blackbird** coming to suet pellets in JG's garden was the best count. Single **Song Thrush** were reported from just four sites whilst the only location for **Mistle Thrush** was Bradgate Park where three were seen on 4 September.

Spotted Flycatcher was noted at just two sites during the quarter, successful breeding being confirmed at Bradgate Park. Small numbers of **Robin** were reported and included three gardens, six at Cropston Reservoir on 25 September was the highest count. At least three different passage **Redstart**

were reported during August. The first was a male by the Anstey gate in Bradgate Park on the 22nd, a female/juvenile was along Causeway Lane in Cropston on the 26th and a 'stunning' male was found on the footpath behind Newtown Linford cemetery leading to Groby Pool on the 28th. A single **Whinchat** was close to Longmoor Lake on 4 September whilst a single Stonechat was at Birstall Meadows on the 16th. Two, possibly three, **Wheatear** were noted at South Croxton on 23 August and a single juvenile was at Brascote Pits on 2 September.

A few **Dunnock** were noted in small numbers but eight were at Holwell on 26 July. Double-figure counts of **House Sparrow** were at three sites with maxima of: 20 in ATO's Loughborough garden, 30 at Cranoe and 50 at Stonton Wyville through the quarter. There were no records of **Tree Sparrow**.

Grey Wagtail was found at eight sites with at least one juvenile at Bradgate Park on 8 July. The party of five by the dam at Swithland Reservoir on 29 September was probably a family group. Surprisingly the more common **Pied Wagtail** was not reported. At least 25 **Meadow Pipit** were in Bradgate Park on 26 September.

There were few finches reported and 17 **Chaffinch** at Holwell was the best count but there was just a single **Greenfinch** record. There were 47 **Goldfinch** at Cossington Meadows on 11 September. The first autumn **Siskin** record was one at Bradgate Park on 18 September. There were just two **Linnet** records. Two pairs of **Bullfinch** visited feeders in JG's Cropston garden and were accompanied by at least three juveniles. The best count of **Yellowhammer** from 14 widespread sites was just five at Stonton Wyville on 16 July. A single **Reed Bunting** was located at Sandhills Lodge Marsh on 19 July.

Jim Graham

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

Slow Worm *Anguis fragilis*: PJD reports finding four young Slow Worms, approximately 10 cm long, while clearing an overgrown area in a neighbour's garden, in Barrow Road, Quorn. This was on 25 August. Three weeks later, HI and



Slow Worm © Steve Woodward

SFW report finding a single specimen, under the cover on top of a compost heap, at Stoneywell Cottage where they have been seen for many years.

Grass Snake *Natrix natrix*: We have several sightings of this reptile to report for this quarter; and, reassuringly, they come from different sites within the county. JGr reports seeing a specimen at Holwell on the 20 July, with another sighting, also in Holwell, on 15 August. LWP reports finding the apparently freshly shed skin of a Grass Snake, approximately a metre in length, near the weir in Watermead Country Park on 30 August. JG Reports finding an adult Grass Snake sunning itself on the dam wall at Cropston Reservoir on 7 September. Two weeks later, on the 21 September, JG reports finding a young specimen, approximately size 15 to 18 cm, on the patio. This specimen was dead and appeared to have been mauled, possibly by a cat. This was the first sighting of this reptile in the garden, and JG was left wondering whether other young Grass Snakes would turn up in the garden. Incidentally, when attacked, Grass Snakes can release a musky odour from scent glands near the anus. However, speaking personally, I do not find this odour particularly offensive.

Smooth or Common Newt *Lissotriton vulgaris*: LWP informs us that he has a comparatively large pond, measuring five metres by two metres, in the garden at his home in Rothley. This pond is now 15 years old and is well established as a site for wildlife other than fish. Small log piles are kept nearby as sites for hibernation. As a result of this thoughtful planning, the pond has been attracting the three most common amphibians ever since it was created, including the Smooth Newt. This year

Smooth Newts appeared at the pond in the spring, as usual.

Common Toad *Bufo bufo*: By the end of March six male Toads had appeared at LWP's pond. However, only one female was seen, and only a single strand of spawn appeared. LWP reports that he encounters an occasional Toad while gardening, but has not seen any juvenile Toads this year. We have no other reports of Toads for this quarter.



Common Frog © Jim Graham

Common Frog *Rana temporaria*: LWP reports that Common Frogs first appeared in his garden on 13 March. The numbers increased to over 40 by the end of the month, and spawn was produced in larger amounts than in any previous year. Numerous tadpoles were present in April and May, and large numbers of froglets appeared in August. LWP also reports that he encounters frogs in various sizes while gardening. SFW and HI found a small frog in All Saints' Churchyard, at Ratcliffe Culey, on 2 July; and another small specimen at St. Edith's Churchyard, at Orton on the Hill, on 6 July. On the evening of 8 July, ATO found a large specimen in his Shelthorpe back garden. On 12 July, SFW and HI found a dead adult and many small froglets in wet, mown grass at St. Peter's Churchyard in Thornton. Towards the end of the month, on 26 July, ATO disturbed a small frog (about 3 cm long) while tidying up in his front garden. A few days later, on 9 August, ATO discovered a medium-sized frog in his back garden in the late evening; and on 14 August SFW and HI came across a small specimen in Grace Dieu Wood. And so, from this it appears that the Common Frog is doing quite well, even in suburbia!

Tony Onions

FISH (including CRAYFISH)

We have only one sighting for this quarter, which is very disappointing: however, we do have some interesting news to report from further afield!

Chub *Leuciscus cephalus*: On 24 July SFW and HI observed a shoal of five Chub in the River Lin in Bradgate Park.

A Helping Hand for Migratory Fish

Starting on 24 October, the BBC presented a series of 'Countryfile' programmes each morning. On 25 October the programme included a piece on the River Tyne, which takes water from the Cheviot Hills and the Pennines, and flows into the North Sea at Newcastle-upon-Tyne. In brief, the history of the Tyne mirrors that of most other rivers in the industrial north of England. At one time the lower reaches of the river were grossly polluted, but in recent years, partly as a result of the decline in the traditional heavy industries, the river has become much cleaner - clean enough to support a population of Atlantic Salmon. At the same time, the construction of the Kielder Reservoir resulted in the loss of 7 % of the available spawning grounds. To compensate for this, the Environment Agency and the water company came to an agreement to raise young fish in a hatchery and release them into the river. Another problem - common to many rivers - are weirs which impede or prevent upstream migration, especially when water levels are low. In the case of the Tyne, a fish pass was recently constructed on a weir at Hexham - at a cost of £400,000.

Coincidentally, within the last two weeks there have been reports in the Angling Press concerning the River Severn in the West Midlands. It has been announced that a project to improve fish passage on the Severn and its tributaries has received a grant of £19.4 million, with two thirds of the money coming from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the remaining third from the European Union. This is one of the largest grants of its kind ever awarded, and is intended to be used to install state-of-the-art fish passes on the weirs in the system. The project will start in 2017, and is expected to take five years to complete. The Atlantic Salmon and

the Migratory (Brown) Trout will be the obvious beneficiaries of this project; however, an equally important aim of this project is to help to preserve two other rare species of migratory fish: the Allis and Twaite Shads (*Alosa alosa* and *Alosa fallax* respectively).

Most people in this Country - and that includes many people in the angling world - will not have heard of these two fish species, which is in itself a testament to their rarity!

Notes on the Natural History of the Shads: the Allis Shad *Alosa alosa* and the Twaite Shad

Alosa fallax: The Herring family (Clupeidae) is a large family of marine fishes with a worldwide distribution. They are found mainly in warm temperate and tropical seas, and they usually inhabit coastal waters where they feed close to the surface. They are mainly small fish, with few species growing to more than 40 cm. They tend to feed on pelagic crustaceans and plankton which they capture in the mesh of gill rakers, situated in the throat on the front edge of the gill arches. (This is the same principle as the approach to feeding evolved by the Baleen Whales.) Some species will also feed on small fish found in coastal areas such as the Sand Eels and their larvae (*Hyperoplus* and *Ammodytes* sp.) Within the Clupeidae, there are some species which migrate into freshwater in order to spawn, and these include the Shads. There are two species found in Northern European waters: the Allis Shad and the Twaite Shad. Their ranges overlap and extend from Norway to North Africa. However, while the Allis Shad is found only in the western Mediterranean, the range of the Twaite Shad extends into the Baltic Sea and also into the eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea. A third species, the Black Sea Shad *Caspialosa pontica*, is found in the Black Sea.

The Allis Shad and the Twaite Shad are very similar in appearance: they are Herring-like fish with silvery sides and belly, and a blue-green back. The head is comparatively large and there is a notch in the tip of the upper jaw, into which the lower jaw fits. On the Allis Shad there is a large black spot to the rear of the gill cover, and another, less prominent spot behind it. On the Twaite Shad there is a row of spots, although those farthest from the gill cover may be

indistinct. In any case, these spots are too variable to be a reliable means of identification. A more accurate guide is the number of rays in the anal fin: 19 to 23 rays for the Twaite Shad, and 24 to 26 rays for the Allis shad. An even more foolproof means of identification is the number of gill rakers. In the Twaite Shad there are 40 to 60, fairly short, gill rakers; whereas in the Allis Shad there are 80 to 120, longer, finer, gill rakers. Neither fish has a lateral line, and the scales are large, easily dislodged, and form a sharp 'keel' on the belly. The Twaite Shad is not a big fish: an average length would be about 30 cm, with a maximum of 50 cm, for a weight of 2 kg. The Allis Shad is the larger of the two species with an average length of about 40 cm, and a maximum length of over 60 cm, for a weight of 2.7 kg.

Like the migratory Salmonids, the Shads spawn in freshwater: however, their spawning behaviour is very different. They move into reasonably large rivers in shoals in the summer when the water temperature reaches 15°C. They may spawn in the lower reaches, not far above the tideline, although the Allis Shad, like the Atlantic Salmon, may travel much farther upstream. Shads spawn at night, under cover of darkness, on the surface, very noisily, with much splashing. The eggs are shed over a substrate of gravel or sand, sink slowly down to the substrate, and then drift at the mercy of the currents. The eggs are approximately 1.6 mm across when they are shed, but soon swell in the water to 4.5 mm. A large female, (and females are larger than males), can shed up to 200,000 eggs. The eggs develop very quickly, sometimes in less than a week, depending upon temperature. The fast-growing young fish migrate to the sea in the late autumn. They become mature at three years of age, typically at a length of 30 cm. Unlike Atlantic Salmon, they usually survive to spawn again and may live for over 20 years. Like salmon, they do not feed once they enter freshwater; nevertheless, they can be caught by anglers using small, flashy, spinning lures, or brightly coloured "flies". Also, as with the Atlantic Salmon, the Twaite Shad has established freshwater populations in some lakes: most notably in Lakes Como and Garda in Italy, and, closer to home, in Lake Killarney in Ireland.

In this country, it appears that the River Severn and its tributaries have traditionally been the home of very large populations of the two Shad species, and in the days before industrialisation the Thames was also the home of a large population of these fish. John Dennys, whose book 'The Secrets of Angling' was published in 1613, offers the following comments on the rivers which drain into the Bristol Channel:

"The Shad, that in the Spring time commeth in ... With many more that in the deepe doth lye of Avon, Uske, or Severne, and of Wye."

The River Avon referred to here is almost certainly the Bristol Avon (as opposed to the Warwickshire Avon or the Hampshire Avon!) Dennys, it seems, lived in Gloucestershire and almost certainly would have had an intimate knowledge of the rivers draining into the Bristol Channel. A more recent writer who had a considerable amount of information to impart was the Reverend William Houghton, whose book 'British Freshwater Fish' was originally published in 1879. It seems that Houghton, unlike modern writers, had actually had the opportunity to eat these fish! He comments on the Allis Shad:

"The flesh, as an article of diet, is fair, and though far inferior, in my opinion, to that of a Herring, is nevertheless good food. I believe that the London markets and the markets of the large towns are supplied with Shad to a considerable extent from Holland, a country famous for its fisheries."

However, he is less complimentary about the Twaite Shad:

"The Twaite Shad never attains to the size of the other species, nor is it considered as good a fish for the table."

Houghton offers more detailed information on Shad migration in the Severn system:

"The Shad used at one time to ascend the Severn as far as Shrewsbury, but I am told it is never now found higher up than Worcester... The Severn navigation weirs prevent the ascent of Shad and Flounders beyond certain parts of the river; excepting in very high tides Shad seldom come up as far as Diglas, which is one mile below Worcester. The spawning of both

species of Shad has often been observed in the gravelly pools near Powick, on the Teme, near Worcester."

Houghton also discusses Shad migration in the Thames, drawing on the work of an earlier writer, William Yarrell, quoting from the second edition of Yarrell's book, which was published in 1841.

Referring to the Twaite Shad, he offers the following details:

"These fish were formerly very abundant in the Thames. Yarrell says that Twaite Shads appear during May, June, and July, in great numbers in the Thames from the first point of land below Greenwich, opposite to the Isle of Dogs, to the distance of a mile below, and that many are taken, but that they bring a small price to the fisherman, being in little repute as food, 'their muscles being dry and full of bones'. The present condition of the Thames, I suspect, prevents this periodic migration of the Twaite Shad."

Houghton also provides some anecdotal evidence that Shad were also present in the estuaries of the Tay and the Tweed in Scotland. However, I have no information on Shad populations in the Trent, or the other rivers which drain down into the Humber Estuary. Nevertheless, it does seem reasonable to assume that these rivers did host populations of these fish in the days before industrialisation. On the other side of the Atlantic, on the eastern Seaboard of North America, the European Shads are replaced by several relatives, including the American Shad *Alosa sapidissima*. In 1871, the pioneering American fish culturist, Seth Green, transported eight cans (?!) of newly hatched American Shad fry from the Hudson River, in the East, to the Sacramento river in California. The journey took a week, but apparently 66 of the fry survived. Between 1871 and 1886 further consignments travelled westwards, and in the space of a few years the American Shad had become established on the Pacific coast. Today they can be found from San Diego in the South, to Alaska in the North. There are two reasons for mentioning this transplanting! Firstly, it suggests that Shad can be reared in hatcheries with comparative ease, although I am not aware that this is currently being undertaken anywhere

in this country. Secondly, if the European Shad species are anything like as amenable as the American Shad, it suggests that the introduction or re-introduction of Shad to other rivers in the U.K. could be undertaken with a reasonable chance of success.

This, however, brings us back to that other problem which affects migratory fish - the problem of weirs. The Trent system has more than a few weirs which would benefit from having fish passes installed, but that would, of course, cost a considerable amount of money!

Tony Onions

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DRAGONFLIES and DAMSELFLIES

Q2 April - June

There were no April records, the first for the year not being noticed until 4 May when a **Large Red Damselfly *Pyrhosoma nymphula*** was found at Burton on the Wolds with another close by three days later. It was noted at a further eight sites by the end of the quarter.



Banded Demoiselle © Jim Graham

All **Banded Demoiselle *Calopteryx splendens*** records came in June from six sites, the first on the 5th in PJD's Quorn garden, a male resting on an Acer near the pond. A male and three females seen frequently in PHG's Quorn garden was the best count. One near Great Central Street in Leicester city centre was "an unexpected sighting" but not too far from the River Soar and canal.

The only record of **Blue-tailed Damselfly *Ischnura elegans*** was two males found by the Grantham Canal near Sathern Bridge on 28 May. By contrast, **Azure Damselfly *Coenagrion puella*** was found at six, mostly in small numbers with in excess of 150 in the grasslands around Rough Hill Wood on 21 June by far the highest count. **Common Blue Damselfly *Enallagma cyathigerum*** was also noted at six sites and frequent at Buddon Wood south mound and on old grassland near Quorn Grange. The only record of **Variable Damselfly *Coenagrion pulchellum*** was of three pairs and five males at one of their strongholds along the Grantham Canal near Sathern Bridge on 28 May. Two **Red-eyed Damselfly *Erythromma najas*** were by the ruins lake in Bradgate Park on 19 June. There were no reports of **White-legged Damselfly *Platycnemis pennipes***.

Two sites held the early-emerging **Hairy Dragonfly *Brachytron pratense***. A single male on the south side of Swithland Reservoir patrolling the causeway on 27 May was an unexpected find as I can see no previous site records. A more regular location to find these normally reclusive insects (they do not like cloud cover) is the Grantham Canal and at least 12 (nine males and three females) were by the Sathern Bridge the following day.

No **Broad-bodied Chaser *Libellula depressa***

were reported and the only **Four-spotted Chaser** *Libellula quadrimaculata* was on the Grantham Canal at the end of May.

The larva of a **Southern Hawker** *Aeshna cyanea* was fished out of EPT's Loughborough garden pond whilst clearing pond debris on 19 May and returned immediately. A female **Black-tailed Skimmer** *Orthetrum cancellatum* was found near the Queen Elizabeth 2 Wood at Ravenstone on 21 June and a male **Emperor Dragonfly** *Anax imperator* was at Rough Hill Wood the same day

Q3 July - September

Records of **Banded Demoiselle** *Calopteryx splendens* came from six sites mainly in small numbers during July, however, an exceptional 184 (including 103 males) was found on the River Soar near Kegworth on the 10th.

There were no reports of **Emerald Damselfly** *Lestes sponsa* or **White-legged Damselfly** *Platycnemis pennipes* and all **Large Red Damselfly** *Pyrrosoma nymphula* records occurred in the previous quarter.

Twelve Blue-tailed Damselfly *Ischnura elegans* were recorded by the River Soar near Kegworth on 10 July. A single male at Knossington on the 13th was the only other sighting.

Recorded in all three months during the period, **Common Blue Damselfly** *Enallagma cyathigerum* was much more widespread with records from nine sites mostly in single figures but there were no **Azure Damselfly** *Coenagrion puella* or **Small Red-eyed Damselfly** *Erythromma viridulum* and the only **Red-eyed Damselfly** *Erythromma najas* record came from the River Soar at Kegworth where three pairs and six males were noted.

Their ability to turn up almost anywhere and often away from water bodies enabled **Brown Hawker** *Aeshna grandis* to be observed in 19 diverse locations usually in small numbers. Found in all three months of the quarter, the best count was four near Pilling's Lock on the Grand Union Canal by Woodthorpe Bridge. Of the five **Southern Hawker** *Aeshna cyanea* sites noted, three were members' gardens. No count exceeded three. The first **Migrant Hawker**

Aeshna mixta was at Twenty Acre Piece, Six Hills on 9 July and by the end of the period records came from nine sites, including three gardens. There were two double-figure counts, ten at Cropston Reservoir (seven males) on 11 September and at least 12 hunting around PHG's Quorn garden on 23 August. Single **Emperor Dragonfly** *Anax imperator* were at two sites, Cropston Reservoir on 28 August and Cossington Meadows on 7 September.



Scarce Chaser © Jim Graham

There were no **Broad-bodied Chaser** *Libellula depressa* or **Four-spotted Chaser** *Libellula quadrimaculata* records but there report of a female **Scarce Chaser** *Libellula fulva* along the River Soar near Kegworth on 9 July. Although the female was not seen the following day, a male was photographed and the marks on the abdomen were indicative of breeding. Being at the northern edge of its normal range, this would be a very welcome addition to the Leicestershire odonata species as it looks to expand its range. This same site held one of only two **Black-tailed Skimmer** *Orthetrum cancellatum* records, the other being a male at Swithland Reservoir on the 8th.

Small numbers of **Common Darter** *Sympetrum striolatum* were noted at 14 widespread sites throughout the quarter, mainly one or two, with three pairs at Cossington Meadows on 7 September the best count. Records of **Ruddy Darter** *Sympetrum sanguineum* during the quarter came from six locations with nine at Kelham Bridge on 28 September the highest number seen.

Jim Graham

BUTTERFLIES

This was a bad summer for many of our butterfly species and populations of some species such as the Small Copper and Small Heath have really reached rock-bottom whilst in our garden the Peacock numbers dropped to exceptionally low levels. It seems many years now since our Buddleia bushes attracted hosts of butterflies!

On the plus side, however, it is good that recent new colonies of the Dark Green Fritillary and Silver-washed Fritillary have been maintained. The Dark Green Fritillary now seems to be well established at several sites such as Ketton Quarry in Rutland and the Silver-washed Fritillary also well established at Ketton Quarry, colonised Cloud Wood NR and Launde Big Wood in 2013. It also seems likely that this handsome large fritillary may have colonised Pasture and Asplin Woods, both private and lying close to Cloud Wood.

Hesperiidae

Numbers of **Small Skipper *Thymelicus sylvestris*** like many other species were on the low side. It was first noted on 8 July at Rough Hill Plantation near Benscliffe Wood and last seen on 31 July in the Buddon Brook Meadows at Quorn. Maximum counts reported were 16 at Cossington Meadows NR on the 16th and 200 at Wetton Wood, Bawdon Lodge on 26th. Most counts, however, were in single figures. Altogether it was observed at 17 widely scattered localities.

The closely related **Essex Skipper *Thymelicus lineola*** was identified at some nine localities. It was first noted on 14 July at St Catherine's churchyard at Burbage and at Humberstone Heights and last reported seen on 23 August at Cossington Meadows NR. Though mostly recorded in single figures, 20 were identified at Wetton Wood on 26 July.

The **Large Skipper *Ochlodes sylvanus***, first noted last quarter on 17 June, was last seen on 18 July when it was observed at Broad Hill, Mountsorrel, Buddon Brook Meadows in Quorn and Bloody Oaks Quarry in Rutland. It was only reported seen in nine localities and the largest site counts were 16 at Cossington Meadows on 5 July and about 22 along a roadside verge at



Large Skipper © Steve Woodward

Humberstone Heights on the 14th.

Pieridae

Numbers of the **Brimstone *Gonopteryx rhamni*** reported were well down on the 46 localities mentioned in the spring bulletin. This quarter, sightings were reported for only 14 widely spread localities between 17 July and 18 September and it seems likely that they all represented new generation butterflies. Ones and twos were noted at most sites and the 30 recorded by LWP at Ketton Quarry on 15 August was very unusual.

The **Large White *Pieris brassicae*** was reported seen in 21 well scattered localities between 13 July and 30 September, mostly in small numbers but double figures were recorded in a few places. The **Small White *Pieris rapae*** was more common though reported seen in fewer localities. Most were seen between mid-July and late September.



Large White Caterpillars © Steve Woodward

The **Green-veined White *Pieris napi*** was observed in 30 scattered localities, including some gardens, between 10 July and mid-September. Some large counts were 50 at Launde Big Wood and 20 in Launde Park Wood on 5 August and 22 at Cossington Meadows NR on 7 August.

Lycaenidae

The **Purple Hairstreak *Favonius quercus***, our commonest but, nonetheless, easily overlooked hairstreak was reported seen at seven well spread localities during July and August. Apart from being seen at several of its usual sites, it was also noted at Eleven Acre Covert on the Shenton Estate on 21 July, at Beacon Hill on 3 August and at Ulverscroft NR on 16 August. At Rothley Common several were observed on a favourite oak on 27 July where some were still active on 24 August.



Purple Hairstreak © Steve Woodward

At Cloud Wood NR on 7 August HBH watched about ten **White-letter Hairstreaks *Satyrion w-album*** resting on the ride floor being harried by a similar number of Common Darters. It seems likely that the hairstreaks had gathered on this spot to take salts from the damp ground. HB who reported two White-letter Hairstreaks nectaring on marjoram at Castle Gardens in Leicester last summer, also reported finding one at the same place again on 7 August.

The **Small Copper *Lycaena phloea***s, whose first generation went largely unreported in the spring, improved somewhat with the second, and possibly third, generations, being noted in nine separate localities between 30 July and 25 September, though mostly in ones and twos. Eleven were observed, however, by HS in the Buddon Brook Meadows at Quorn on 23 August.

After having only one sighting of the **Brown Argus *Aricia agestis*** reported in the spring it was good to have this attractive small species recorded in eight widely spread localities when the second generation appeared in August and September. It was first found on 12 August at Bede Island meadow and was present at Bloody

Oaks Quarry and Ketton Quarry where ten were noted on the 15th. On the 20th one was noted in LWP's Rothley garden and on the 24th one was found on Broad Hill and another at Buddon Brook meadows. Finally it was present in HS's Quorn garden on 30 August where it was seen again on 1 September. It was last noted on 5 September at Stoughton Airfield.



Common Blue © Steve Woodward

Numbers of second generation **Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus*** showed a marked improvement on the first generation in the spring but numbers were still poor compared with those in good years. During the quarter it was reported seen in 15 localities compared with only four in the spring but the only double-figure count was of ten (nine males and one female) at Buddon Wood south mound on 24 August.

The **Holly Blue *Celastrina argiolus*** had another satisfactory year and was recorded at 19 scattered localities including villages, parks and gardens. It was first noted in July on the 5th by HB at Spinney Hill Park in Leicester and, on balance, this was probably a second generation individual as were others in EPT's Loughborough garden and our Quorn garden on the 17th. It became frequent in some gardens in early August and was last seen on 18 September at Quorn.

Nymphalidae

The handsome **Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*** was widely recorded at some 39 localities: at four localities in July, 14 in August and 21 in September. It was mainly present in ones and twos but during September, six were counted at Broad Hill, Mountsorrel on the 14th, ten in HS's Quorn garden on the 22nd and 14 on

Ivy blossom at the Reedbed NR at Wanlip on the 30th.

During August and September small numbers of **Painted Lady *Cynthia cardui*** appeared in nine localities including several members' gardens; these were probably the progeny of those migrants which arrived hereabouts in early June. It was first noted on 3 August in EPT's Loughborough garden and last noted on 28 September in HS's Quorn garden. All sightings were of lone individuals with the exception of two noted at Broad Hill on 14 September.



Painted Lady © Steve Woodward

The colourful **Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae*** was widely noted at 31 localities during the quarter but, although several favoured habitats held double figures – such as Bloody Oaks Quarry NR with 13 on 18 July, Thurnby Lodge brookside nettlebed with 34 on 21 July and Broad Hill at Mountsorrel with 15 on 1 September, most gardens attracted only ones and twos with the exception of LWP's Rothley garden which held 18 on 13 July.

This was the worst summer for the **Peacock *Inachis io*** that I can remember. Nests of larvae on Stinging Nettle were found at Freeby on 3 July and at Burton on the Wolds on the 20th and during July single new generation butterflies were noted in our Quorn garden on the 25th and in HBH's Loughborough garden on the 26th. From the end of the month and throughout August it was reported seen in 22 widely separated localities but no double figure counts were recorded. The largest single site counts reported for August were seven in Launde Park Wood on the 5th and the same number at Bloody Oaks Quarry and at Ketton Quarry on the 15th. No sightings were reported during September.

During the summer quarter, two separate emergences of The **Comma *Polygonia c-album*** occurred, the first in July when one appeared in our Quorn garden on the 16th quickly followed by one in EPT's Loughborough garden on the 17th and these continued with others through August to be followed by a new generation in September. Altogether this richly coloured distinctive species was recorded in 32 well distributed sites, mostly in ones and twos but with seven recorded by SFW and GH at Tur Langton on 10 September. Some were still active at the end of the month when three were seen on Ivy blossom at Watermead Country Park.

The **Dark Green Fritillary *Argynnis aglaja*** appears to be holding its own in Rutland and LWP, who visited Bloody Oaks Quarry on 18 July, saw seven. The following day on a visit to Ketton Quarry he counted nine and it is also known to occur at Clipsham. Up until the 1940s it was resident on Bradgate Park and Bardon Hill, on Charnwood, where this strong flying species is occasionally seen. It would be splendid, and probably not too unlikely, to get resident colonies back again.

The small colony of **Silver-washed Fritillary *Argynnis paphia*** which has been established at Cloud Wood NR since 2013 and possibly before this date as one was photographed here during early August in 2006, was present again this summer and six were seen here on 19 July and seven or eight on 7 August. In addition three were noted at Launde Big Wood, an old haunt in East Leicestershire, on 5 August and one was seen in Bloody Oaks Quarry on 18 July and ten at Ketton Quarry on 15 August. Actually, although we regret the decline in many woodland birds, it may be helping to aid the colonisation of butterflies, such as fritillaries.

Satyridae

The **Speckled Wood *Parage aegeria*** was widely noted in some 39 localities though its numbers were well down on some recent years. It was active in woods, hedgerows and shady places generally throughout the quarter, mainly in ones and twos though during August eight were noted at Leicester Arboretum on the 26th and 14 in Buddon Brook Meadows on the 30th, while in September 11 were seen along hedgerows at Cossington Meadows on the 7th.

On 14 August a **Wall Butterfly *Lasiomamata megera*** was found in St Andrews churchyard at Thringstone by HI & SFW, a location where they found another specimen of this local butterfly in 2013. The only other sightings reported were from Charnwood Lodge NR where HS saw two on both 16 & 24 August.

The only sightings of **Marbled White *Melanargia galathea*** come from Rutland where LWP saw 50 at Bloody Oaks Quarry NR on 18 July and 40 at Ketton Quarry on the 19th.

The **Gatekeeper *Pyronia tithonius*** was seen first on 14 July at Humberstone Heights and next observed on the 16th at Cossington Meadows NR and last noted on 18 August in LWP's Rothley garden. This attractive, small, well-named species was reported from 37 well spread localities and although its numbers were generally on the low side, 50 were seen at Wetton Wood on 29 July.

The **Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina*** which was first noted on 19 June in the last quarter, continued to be seen until 26 August when it was last noted at Leicester Arboretum. Though much less common than in some good years, up to 50 were noted at several sites and the species was reported seen in 46 well scattered localities. Though, in all probability, our commonest butterfly, its numbers must have shrunk hugely since the pre-Second World War days when much of the countryside supported permanent pasture and abundant hay fields!

The **Small Heath *Coenympha pamphilus*** though still one of the most widely distributed of our butterflies, both in Britain and Europe, at present seems both local and scarce in VC55 and was only recorded at Charnwood Lodge NNR in August, with two seen on the 16th and four on the 24th and at Broad Hill, Mountsorrel with one on the 24th and another on 1 September.

As usual, the **Ringlet *Aphantopus hyperantus*** had another good year being reported seen in 33 localities including several members' gardens and in around 30 years has gone from being an extremely local species to being as plentiful as the Meadow Brown in some rough, grassy areas. It was late appearing this year with only a single sighting last quarter. It remained active throughout July and was last reported seen at Launde Park Wood and Launde

Big Wood on 5 August. Double-figure counts were recorded at many sites in July with 32 at Cossington Meadows NR on the 5th, 50 at Rough Hill, Newtown Linford on the 8th, about 80 at Twenty Acre Common at Six Hills on the 9th and 50 at Cloud Wood NR on the 13th.

Peter Gamble

MOTHS

Starting off with the usual numbers, I have received 1,164 records submitted by 12 recorders totalling 3,806 individuals of 283 species. The bulk of these records come from Les Purnell at Rothley and the Bradgate Park permanent actinic trap overseen by Mick and Joy Braker, many thanks go to these individuals for their sterling work. The Bradgate Park trap is situated in the staff car park in the behind the Deer Barn café and visitor centre area and has quite a wide outlook here. Next year I hope to restart some mobile trapping in other areas of the park, especially about half way from the Hallgates entrance and Deer Barn. There are a couple of nice looking spots on the left driving up to Deer Barn, tucked away near the wall, which not only overlook the park, but are close enough to the reservoir margins, we just might pull in a few extra species from here. July appeared to be the most productive month followed by August, then September always seemingly a little slow. I guess it's the start of that in-between period of the ending of the summer rush and the start of the autumn to winter transition. Either way, I still think we did more than OK judging by the results, which are comparable to the same periods of recent years. Most 'moth recorders' seem to be of the opinion that moths were in low numbers and generally scarce, most of the species were there, just not many individuals.

On to the species summaries, two **Ghost Moth *Hepialus humuli*** at Brown's Hay (Sandhill's Lodge) in mid-July were the only ones reported, whereas **Orange Swift *Hepailus sylvina*** was widely scattered. The only **Forester Moth *Adscita statices*** was at Martins Wood in early July. The leaf mines of **Horse Chestnut Leaf Miner *Cameraria ohridella*** were very much in evidence throughout the whole quarter, mainly recorded on Steve and Helen's ongoing churchyard survey.



Six-belted Clearwing © Steve Woodward

A nice find of **Six-belted Clearwing** *Bembecia ichneumoniformis* was at Asfordby Hill in early July and just a single report of **Nettle-tap** *Anthophila fabriciana* was from a churchyard at Higham on the Hill in early July.

Although close to 90 species of micro moths were identified there were only single records of **Ash Bud Moth** *Prays fraxinella* Brown's Hay and **Hawthorn Moth** *Scythropia crataegella* Rothley in early to mid-July. A few **Diamond-back Moths** *Plutella xylostella* put in an appearance in Rothley around mid-July. Three *Mompha ochraceella* and four *Limnaecia phragmitella* were at Brown's Hay in mid-July and the stunning *Phtheochroa rugosana* at Rothley in early July. **Light Brown Apple Moth** *Epiphyas postvittana* was seen on ten occasions, all in single figures and all only at Rothley, from late August throughout September. The very nice pine feeder *Lozotaeniodes formosanus* and with a fondness for Ivy *Lozotaenia forsterana* were at Rothley all in July. The **Garden Rose Tortrix** *Acleris variegana* was a regular from Rothley and Groby but *Celypha lacunana* usually an unbelievably common species was only seen at two sites. I must admit I thought the *Crambus* species of grass moths seemed quite scarce this summer, but they were all recorded with some regularity from various light traps and almost restricted to July and August. The usually abundant delicate little **Water Veneer** *Acentria ephemerella* was only seen at two sites, Brown's Hay and Groby. The **Mint Moth** *Pyrausta aurata* was everywhere, July and August produced a very nice run of **Rush Veneer** *Nomophora noctuella* at Rothley and the **Bee Moth** *Aphomia sociella* was again quite widespread.

Oak Hook-tip *Watsonalla binaria* starts the

true macro moths off, being recorded on just three occasions, only from Bradgate Park and all in August. A solitary **Common Lutestring** *Ochropacha duplaris* was at Brown's Hay and the only **Maiden's Blush** *Cyclophora punctaria* came from Bradgate Park in early September. It was nice to see records of **Shaded Broad-bar** *Scotopteryx chenopodiata* from several sites including Puddledyke, Ketton and Walton Grange. Unusually no **Yellow Shell** *Camptogramma bilineata* were seen during the day - all were at light and the only record of **Beautiful Carpet** *Mesoleuca albicilata* was from Martin's Wood. Regularly recorded, mainly from gardens **Spruce Carpet** *Thera britannica* was at Rothley and Bradgate Park. A single **Treble Bar** *Aplocera plagiata* was at Bradgate Park late August. Feeding on various species of currant bushes **The Magpie** *Abraxas grossulariata* was in a Loughborough garden end of July and **Brimstone Moth** *Opisthograptis luteolata* was one of the most widely recorded species. Records of the Honeysuckle feeding **Lilac Beauty** *Apeira syringaria* are getting few and far between, so the record from Twenty Acre Piece in early August is a welcome one, and the only record of **Purple Thorn** *Selenia tetralunaria* was again of a singleton in Bradgate Park in early August. Nowhere near towards the end of its flight period, **Peppered Moth** *Biston betularia* produced just a singleton to light at Brown's Hay in mid-July. **Willow Beauty** *Peribatodes rhomboidaria* was recorded on 24 occasions from all sites whereas **Mottled Beauty** *Alcis rependaria* only on six occasions and from just two sites, with both species in single figures.

A good selection of Hawk-moths from Rothley including the only records of **Privet Hawk-moth** *Sphinx ligustri*, **Pine Hawk-moth** *Hyloicus pinastri* and **Lime Hawk-moth** *Mimas tilae* plus **Poplar Hawk-moth** *Laothoe populi* the latter also at Bradgate Park. There were just two records of **Hummingbird Hawk-moth** *Macroglossum stellatarum* all from Loughborough both in early July. The only other Hawk-moth was **Elephant Hawk-moth** *Deilephila elpenor* at Brown's Hay in mid-July. The **Vapourer** *Orgyia antiqua* was seen to be widespread, the only record of **Yellow-tail** *Euproctis similis* came from Bradgate Park and good numbers of **Round-winged Muslin** *Thumatha senex* at Brown's Hay in mid-July.

Most of the Footman species were recorded, with the exception being **Buff Footman *Eilema depressa*** - no reports of this species at all. **Ruby Tiger *Phragmatobia fuliginosa*** was found at Rothley, Bradgate Park and Glooston all in August.

The most frequently recorded species was **Large Yellow Underwing *Noctua pronuba*** with 46 sightings, and a total of 1,281 individuals, the single highest nightly count was 164 at Rothley at the end of August. Does this mean that this species is getting back on track towards the *annoyingly* high numbers we used to get several years ago? I guess we will have to wait and see. Quite a good range of sightings for **Lesser Yellow Underwing *Noctua comes*** from all sites, and all the other *Noctua* species were widespread and well recorded, but **Autumnal Rustic *Eugnorisma glareosa*** was only seen at Bradgate Park in September, At the end of its flight period, a single **Ingrailed Clay *Diarsia mendica*** lingered on at Rothley in late August. Most of the *Xestia* species were well recorded throughout the quarter. **Hedge Rustic *Tholera cespitis*** and **Feathered Gothic *Tholera decimalis*** were found only at Bradgate Park in late August. Two larvae of **Mullein *Shargacucullia verbasci*** were found at Asfordby Hill and **Deep Brown Dart *Aporophyla lutulenta*** - a nice record from Rothley. **Black Rustic *Aporophyla nigra*** recorded from Rothley and Bradgate Park with **Brindled Green *Dryobotodes eremita*** only at Bradgate Park, both throughout September.



Mullein Caterpillar © Steve Woodward

An unsuspected total of 21 individuals of the **Suspected *Parastichtis suspecta*** was a good number for the garden at Rothley. **Centre-barred Sallow *Atethima centrago*** and **Lunar Underwing *Omphaloscelis lunosa*** began to put

in an appearance at the end of August and continued throughout September, with **Barred Sallow *Xanthia aurago***, **Pink-barred Sallow *Xanthia togata*** and **Sallow *Xanthia icterita*** starting a little later from the middle of September. Bradgate Park in late August was the only site for **Poplar Grey *Acronicta megacephala*** and **Knot Grass *Acronicta rumicis*** were recorded. A solitary **Old Lady *Mormo maura*** was at the trap in Rothley in late August with the only **Small Angle Shades *Euplexia lucipera*** at Groby. Just two **Dingy Shears *Apterogenum ypsilon*** came to light at Brown's Hay in mid-July, no **Dusky Brocade *Apamea remissa*** were at the trap in Bradgate Park but one adult was caught at Rothley. Three **Slender Brindle *Apamea scolopcaina*** and a single **Rosy Minor *Mesoligia literosa*** from Brown's Hay with a singleton of the latter from Rothley, three **Small Dotted Buff *Photedes minima*** were also at Brown's Hay. August and September were the months for **Flounced Rustic *Luperina testacea*** being widespread throughout and all the records of **Ear Moth *Amphipoea oculea* agg.** came from Bradgate Park in September. **Vine's Rustic *Hoplodrina ambigua*** seems to be becoming more frequent nowadays, August and September produced numerous records at Rothley. **Pale Mottled Willow *Paradrina clavipalpis*** was at Rothley, Groby and Bradgate Park in July and September but none in August.

Many thanks to all who submitted records for this quarter.

Graham and Anona Finch

BEETLES

Altogether there were 311 records, from seven recorders and between us we visited 31 sites. This has given us a bumper total of 6,417 individuals, made up from a staggering 148 species. This is an incredible increase on last year's equivalent quarter and an encouraging follow on from this year's second quarter. The two families with the highest species count are the Water Beetles and the Carabids, with 29 species each, the Staphs came in second with 16, although none of the other families made it into double-figures. Usually, the Water Beetles only manage a few species, but that extra bit of effort has really paid off and pushed the number

up. Defining what is and what is not a Water Beetle is not straightforward as there are many candidates in several families that are reliant on the water, the water's edge and emergent vegetation. The main families that spring to mind are Staphylinidae, Carabidae and Curculionidae but there are others. For the sake of convenience (not scientific by any means) I have only included those species that were taken using a pond net, i.e. those that were actually in the water. Also it is worth noting that 26 individuals of 12 species, just from July were identified from a Malaise Trap sited at Rutland Water in a fixed position are integrated into the overall total.

On to the species summaries, *Gyrinus substriatus* was found at Bradgate Park and Brown's Hay (Sandhills Lodge), mid-July to mid-September, I did not notice many of the usual congregations of our 'whirligigs' this year at all! The Grand Union Canal at Theddingworth produced the only *Haliplus lineaticollis* and the Screech Beetle *Hygrobia hermanni* was at Bradgate Park in late August. The widespread *Noterus clavicornis* was found in good numbers at several sites but just a single **The Smaller Noterus** *Noterus crassicornis* only at Bradgate Park. Singles of *Liopteris haemorrhoidalis* and *Laccophilus minutus* were at Charnwood Lodge in late August and early September respectively. Several **Cherry Stone Beetle** *Hyphydrus ovatus* were found at Bradgate Park and *Hygrotus impressopunctatus* were at Charnwood Lodge and several small wetland areas on Shenton Estates. The last site also produced the only record of four *Hydroporus discretus* with *H. palustris* at Bradgate Park on several occasions. Charnwood Lodge held five *H. pubescens* with several *Nebrioporus elegans* at Bradgate Park and Shenton Estates. The Nationally Scarce *Scarodytes halensis* was attracted to light at Essendine Embankment in late July and again the only records of *Agabus guttatus* and *A. sturmii* at Shenton Estates. *Agabus maculatus*, *A. bipustulatus*, *A. nebulosus* and *Illybius fuliginosus*, were found fairly widespread at numerous sites and Puddledyeke produced the only *Colymbetes fuscus*.

Moving on to the Carabids, the pitfall traps at Bradgate Park continually produced *Carabus nemoralis* and a single *Carabus violaceus* was



Tiger Beetle Larva © Steve Woodward

at Hicks Lodge. The snail-feeding *Cychnus caraboides* were only found in pitfall traps in Bradgate Park and Brown's Hay. Grubbing on the ground in Launde Park Wood and Saxby produced *Leistus ferrugineus* with the latter site providing the only records of *Notiophilus biguttatus* and *N. substriatus*. Adults of **Green Tiger Beetle** *Cicindela campestris* were only found in its usual haunt at Bradgate Park plus 100's of the larval chambers at the same site. *Bembidion lampros* was found along the margins of Saddington Reservoir, with *B. obtusum* at Shenton Estates. *Ocys harpaloides* were found in numerous situations swept from low vegetation, beaten from aerial dead wood and under rotting logs on the ground, but grubbing along field margins at Saxby gave the only *Patrobus atrorufus*. Bradgate Park gave the only *Poecilus versicolor* but *Pterostichus madidus* was found throughout, and in fact was the commonest Carabid species recorded with high pitfall trap counts of 71 and 89. Other *Pterostichus* species recorded were *P. niger*, *P. melanarius*, *P. diligens* and *P. strenuus*. The huge *Abax parallelepipedus* came in second as the most abundant Carabid found throughout, but only in pitfall traps and particularly abundant in Bradgate Park. Two *Calathus* species were recorded: *C. rotundicollis* at Bradgate Park and *C. melanocephalus* from Saxby, both as singletons. A single metallic green and orange *Anchomeus dorsalis* was found at Launde Park Wood and *Paranchus albipes* were at Saddington Reservoir and Theddingworth. A solitary *Agonum thoreyi* was beaten from low vegetation in Grace Dieu Wood and the only other *Agonum* species recorded was *A. emarginatum* from Charnwood Lodge and Foxton Locks both as singles. *Harpalus rufipes* was widely found in most of the pitfall traps plus

at MV light at Hicks Lodge and Brown's Hay. A single *Stenolophus mixtus* was in the pitfalls at Bradgate Park and two *Demetrius atricapillus* at Saxby. The last of the Carabids was *Dromius quadrimaculatus* being quite widespread although only found in singles.

Back to the Water Beetles, they are split into two main groups, one before the Carabids and the other just after. A single *Helphorus aequalis* was found on Shenton Estates but *H. brevipalpus* was found at most water bodies surveyed. The quite striking *Berosus signaticollis* was a really nice find on Shenton Estates. We have just one previous record for this species from Saddington Reservoir 1990 by Derek Lott, making this quite a significant record. *Hydrobius fuscipes* was widespread but just a single record of *Laccobius striatulus* from Bradgate Park. *Helochares lividus* was quite widespread but *H. punctatus* only at Charnwood Lodge. Then finally the Nationally Notable B *Enochrus quadripunctatus* came to MV light at Essendine Embankment in late June. *Sphaeridium bipustulatum*, *S. lunatum* and *S. scaraboides* were found to be abundant in various sources of dung, often with *Cercyon nigriceps*, *C. impressus*, *C. melanocephalus* and *C. pygmaeus*. This latter species was found in considerable numbers in sheep and horse dung from rough grazing fields near Saddington Reservoir. *Cercyon unipunctatus* was only recorded once, at Brown's Hay mid-July, when well over 200 individuals were attracted to MV light. A single *Hister unicolor* was found in cow dung at Charnwood Lodge in late July. A single round fungus beetle *Anisotoma humeralis* was taken from "Jelly Fungus" in Launde Park Wood in early July. A single *Silpha atrata* was in the pitfalls at Brown's Hay at the end of September, just one record of *Nicrophorus humator*, that was at Groby and a single *Nicrophorus vespilloides* was found under a dead Muntjac in Bradgate Park, the Muntjac being more of a rarity in the park than the beetle!

Not so many Staphs as expected this quarter, but several very nice records, a single *Megarthus prosseni* from horse dung at Saddington and two *M. depressus* were beaten from Chicken of the Woods fungus in Cloud Wood. Just two records of *Tachyporus obtusus*, Saxby and Brown's Hay, usually one of the most

abundant *Tachyporus* species found in dung of any kind. Singles of *Tachinus laticollis* and *T. proximus* were in the pitfalls in Bradgate Park, the latter with only five previous records, and the large *Tachinus rufipes* was as usual everywhere. Apparently, not at all rare, but we only have two previous records for *Cilea silphoides* and these are Leicestershire between 1894 and 1896 by J H Woolley; and Leicestershire in 1907 by F Bouskell, the details are no more specific than that. This makes the two adults from horse dung at Saddington quite good finds. Also beaten from the same Chicken of the Woods fungus in Cloud Wood were two of the not at all staph-like *Cypha longicornis*. Numerous in horse dung was *Oxytelus laqueatus*, quite a nice looking small staph, with obvious bright golden/bronze elytra.

A single *Anotylus rugosus* was found at Hicks Lodge and a single *A. tetracarinatus* was in horse dung at Saddington. Two *Stenus* species were recorded, ten *Stenus similis* at Brown's Hay and one *S. impressus* from Grace Dieu, all swept from low vegetation. A single delicate-looking *Rugilus orbiculatus* was found in deer dung in Bradgate Park, one *Philonthus intermedius* from cow dung at Charnwood Lodge and the last staph, a single *Quedius curtippennis* was found by grubbing at Foxton Locks.

A solitary Lesser Stag Beetle *Dorcus parallelipedus* was in a small dead Beech tree in Cloud Wood. The *Aphodius* species were well in evidence with *Aphodius rufipes*, the most widespread in small numbers, everywhere in dung and at MV light, several *A. ater* in dung, two *A. rufus* at MV light, one *A. fimetarius* at Saddington, one *A. foetens* to MV light at Hicks Lodge, a single *A. pedellus* from cow dung at Charnwood Lodge. Numbers of *A. prodromus* and *A. contaminatus* were beginning to build up towards the end of September, with over 350 individuals of the latter in deer dung in Bradgate Park. Lastly, two *Aphodius sticticus* were found in sheep dung in the fields near Saddington Reservoir.

The only record of Brown Chafer *Serica brunnea* was of three to MV light at Hicks Lodge in mid-July. The small Scirtid *Cyphon coarctatus* was swept from low vegetation in damp situations at Brown's Hay and Charnwood Lodge



Oak Jewel Beetle © Steve Woodward

in early July and the **Oak Jewel Beetle *Agrilus biguttatus*** was found indoors at Groby in mid-July. Another species associated with damp conditions and often found on muddy margins is ***Heterocerus fenestratus*** but obviously attracted to light as it was recorded on two occasions at MV light at Hicks Lodge and Essendine Embankment both mid-July. Just one Click Beetle recorded this quarter and that was a single ***Athous haemorrhoidalis*** at Saxby in early July. Soldier Beetles were quite thin on the ground with ten ***Cantharis lateralis*** at Launde Park Wood and 12 at Saxby in early July, a few ***C. nigra*** at Saxby and Brown's Hay in mid-July and just a single record of ***C. thoracica*** at Brown's Hay in mid-July. However ***Rhagonycha fulva*** was widespread throughout, but the only ***R. lignosa*** record was of six adults at Hicks Lodge and three ***R. testacea*** at Brown's Hay in mid-July both species to MV light, and ***Malthodes minimus*** was fairly widespread mainly found by sweeping low vegetation. The eye-catching ***Kateretes pusillus*** was swept from damp vegetation at Brown's Hay and with only three previous records, the last being Buddon Wood in 1972 by C W Henderson, the **Two Spotted Carrion Beetle *Nitidula bipunctata*** was beaten from a bracket fungus in Cloud Wood in early July. By far the most numerous, beetle encountered was the **Common Pollen Beetle *Melegithes aenea*** with approximate counts of over 2,000 at several sites throughout the quarter. Early July in Grace Dieu Wood and Cloud Wood produced ***Rhizophagus dispar*** from soft dead wood and from bracket fungi respectively. The small fairly shiny black with a reddish head and two discrete red patches on each elytra ***Dacne rufifrons***, several were beaten from various bracket fungi in Cloud Wood and Grace Dieu Wood. At the end of its

season ***Byturus ochraceus*** a few were swept from flowery areas of Launde Park Wood and field margins at Saxby.

The Ladybirds start off with **Orange Ladybird *Halyzia sedecimguttata*** four adults attracted to MV light at Hicks Lodge mid-July, a single **22-spot Ladybird *Psyllobora vigintiduopunctata*** was found at Thistleton, and two **14-spot Ladybird *Propylea quattuordecimpunctata*** were on the Great Central railway at Rothley Station in early August. The most abundant and widespread was **Harlequin Ladybird *Harmonia axyridis*** which although was mainly in low numbers was found everywhere. Saxby provided the only record of **2-spot Ladybird *Adalia bipunctata*** and **7-spot Ladybird *Coccinella septempunctata*** was a similar story to the Harlequins, but again all in low numbers. **Water Ladybird *Anisosticta novemdecimpunctata*** was found at Puddledyke, Charnwood Lodge and finally **16-spot Ladybird *Tytthaspis sedecimpunctata*** at Charnwood Lodge and Saxby.

Not too dissimilar to one of our black Ladybirds, ***Mycetophagus quadripustulatus*** was beaten from bracket fungi in Cloud Wood and Grace Dieu Wood both at the beginning of July. Three members of the Tenebrionidae family were ***Lagria hirta*** attracted to MV light in good numbers from Hicks Lodge, and Brown's Hay, and a singleton swept off low vegetation at Cloud Wood, the large black Tenebrionid ***Prionychus ater*** where a singleton was attracted to MV light at Essendine Embankment, all in July. The third Tenebrionid was ***Corticeus unicolor*** where six were beaten from Dryad's Saddle fungus on dead wood in Cloud Wood, and approximately 80 individuals beaten from, a large bracket fungus in Grace Dieu Wood, both in early July. This species was added to the county list as recently as 2012, when a solitary specimen was found well inside soft rotten wood in Cloud Wood by GLF. This quarter's record, also from Cloud Wood, was well away from the original site, in fact the opposite end of the wood. This should mean this species has a reasonable population at this site. The Grace Dieu records are significant both by the sheer numbers recorded and that it is a new site. It is hoped that a serious effort to tap any bracket fungi over a white tray or sheet, will produce

more records of this JNCC-designated Nationally Scarce beetle. The comical looking **Swollen-thighed Beetle** *Oedemera nobilis* was recorded as singletons at several sites and the close relative *Oedemera lurida* only found in Cloud Wood. Beating aerial dead branches in Cloud Wood produced two of the blackish/blue and red *Vincenzellus ruficollis* and tapping Chicken of the Woods fungus in South Wood yielded another, both in mid-July. Saxby produced two and Brown's Hay five of the "Tumbling Flower Beetles" *Anaspis maculata*, singles of *A. regimbarti* were attracted to MV light at Hicks lodge and *A. thoracica* again at Saxby all in mid-July. Just two species of Longhorns were recorded *Grammoptera ruficornis* and *Rutpela maculata* both were quite widespread, with only *G. ruficornis* achieving reasonable numbers with 100 plus at Cloud Wood, ten plus at both Saxby and Launde Park Wood. A single strange looking *Bruchus loti* was in the Malaise Trap at Rutland Water. Usually over by end of June, a late straggler of **Green Dock Beetle** *Gastrophysa viridula* was at Brown's Hay in mid-July, another late hanger-on was a single adult of **Hawthorn Leaf Beetle** *Lochmaea crataegi* attracted to MV light at Sheepy Parva in early September. Sweeping low vegetation at Saxby produced three **Small Striped Flea Beetle** *Phyllotreta undulata* in early July. Still with the Chrysomelidae, *Neocrepidodera ferruginea* was quite widespread and close relative *N. transversa* were only found at Brown's Hay, all from mid-July to early August and mainly found by sweeping low vegetation. Grubbing at Saddington Reservoir margins produced three of the lovely bright green with yellowish/orange legs *Crepidodera plutus*. Looking like a plain orange-ish Ladybird, a single *Sphaeroderma testacea* was in the Malaise Trap sample from Rutland Water. The dark purplish/blue *Psylliodes napi* was attracted to MV light at Essendine Embankment in late July. Last seen in 2012, *Cryptocphalus pusillus* was found in South Wood, we only have ten previous records for this species.

The Curculionidae did not fare very well in the record stakes with a mere three species recorded. Just three adults of *Sitona lineatus* were at Cloud Wood in mid-July, four of the un-weevil looking *Euophryum confine* were beaten from bracket fungi in Grace Dieu Wood

and eight adults were found inside soft dead wood in Launde Park Wood. Finally, a single of the **Nut Weevil** *Curculio nucum* was beaten from Hazel in Launde Park Wood.

Many thanks to those who helped to make this another bumper and interesting review.

Graham Finch

OTHER INSECTS

Hemiptera

Very few records for this group this quarter. I encountered few of the normally very common **Green Shieldbug** *Palomina prasina* with just a few nymphs from Spinney Hill Park, one on 10 July and another at the Leicester Arboretum on 3 August, four more were beaten from a shrub layer at Humberstone Heights on 5 August. Surprisingly, no adults at all were seen by me. The only other record I have is for single adults at Asfordby Hill Iron Works on 10 July and another in a Shelthorpe garden on 13 September.

The only record received for the **Forest Bug** *Pentatoma rufipes* was for an adult and final instar nymph at Victoria Park Nature area tree layer on 10 July.

The **Hawthorn Shieldbug** *Acanthosoma haemorrhoidale* records are as follows, adults Victoria Park on 16 July, probably first generation, one at Great Central Way on Italian Alder on 9 September, with two adults at the Leicester Arboretum on 16 August and 22 September.

Just one **Parent Bug** *Elasmucha grisea* record, three adults on Great Central Way on Italian Alder on 9 September.

Single records also for the **Gorse Shieldbug** *Piezodorus lituratus* at West Bridge on 30 July. Five nymphs of the **Sloe Bug** *Dolicoris baccarum* also at West Bridge, on rough ground margins of River Soar on 30 July, likewise five nymphs of the **Woundwort Bug** *Eysarcoris fabricii* same site and date. The only other record I have for this species is a single adult at Humberstone Heights on 14 July.

Of more interest, to me at any rate, is sweeping a **Turtle Bug** *Podops inuncta* instar from the roadside margin at Humberstone

Heights on 14 July. I have, in previous years, found adults near here at Barkby Road meadow, also at Appleton Park on one occasion and strongly suspect this species was at one time present at the old Gypsum Pit, which now is mostly turned in to factory units and little remains of the previous flora and fauna once present at this site, but a few cling on, hopefully.

Ant Damsel Bugs *Himacerus mirmicoides*, three nymphs swept from road margins at Humberstone Heights on 14 July.

Stilt Bugs *Metatropis rufescens*, singles were swept from Enchanter's Nightshade at Cloud Wood on 13 August and at Shenton Estate on 21 July.



Metatropis rufescens © Steve Woodward

Various Mirid bugs recorded were as follows. ***Capsus ater*** at Freeby and Sandhills Lodge at Uverscroft, **Potato Capsid *Closterotomus norwegicus*** at Stoke Golding and Sandhills Lodge, ***Megaloceroea recticornis*** at Sandhills Lodge and Shenton Estate, ***Phytocoris longipennis*** at Stoke Golding, ***Plagiognathus arbustorum*** at Sandhills Lodge and Walton Grange, ***Deraeocoris ruber*** on tree layer in Spinney Hill Park and Victoria Park, Leicester, ***Grypocoris stysi*** in Victoria Park tree layer, ***Phytocoris varipes*** at Humberstone Heights, with a single ***Pantilius tunicatus*** at Leicester Arboretum on 22 September. Many of these Mirid and Capsid bugs can be found commonly in most years, however many of the records submitted, relate to single specimens, such was this summer.

Homoptera

Many Froghoppers ***Aphrophora alni*** were swept from grass at Sandhills Lodge and it was also recorded from Rothley Station in August.

The Leafhopper, ***Cicadella viridis*** was reported from Bagworth Heath Woods and Ulverscroft NR with many swept from grass. The

Leafhopper ***Evananthus interruptus*** was also swept from grass at Sandhills Lodge in July.



Cicadella viridis © Steve Woodward

Diptera

I shall start as usual with Hoverflies. Syrphids were particularly thin on the ground during the summer months. The **Marmalade Hoverfly *Episyrphus balteatus*** was, as usual, the most widely observed but not in the numbers of previous years, rarely abundant anywhere but still recorded from 25 sites in the county. Subsequently very few associated species were seen. No ***Eupeodes corollae*** were sighted and only a single report of ***Scaeva pyrastris***, one briefly in my garden on 31 July.

The partial migrant ***Eupeodes luniger*** was only seen a couple of times, my garden on 9 September and a single at Leicester Arboretum on 22 September.

Syrphus ribesii, a female at Sandhills Lodge on 19 July, with another single female at Rothley Station on 9 August. In my locality, I did not see any this quarter before the 26 August, when a few females were noted on Bindweed at the Leicester Arboretum, odd specimens were on Field Bindweed along Ethel Road on 29 August, with others in a hedgebank at Belgrave Lock on 30 August, a few more were nectaring on a second flowering of Dandelion at Aylestone Meadows on 9 September.

Only three records of ***Syrphus vitripennis*** were reported, a male ***Syrphus vitripennis/rectus* agg.**, at Sandhills Lodge on 19 July, with a single female on Ivy on Beatty Avenue on 15 September and one at Gartree Road on 22 September, also on Ivy.

Singles of ***Sphaerophoria scripta*** were observed at Burbage Churchyard, Freeby and

Glooston Lodge all males, singles also at Humberstone Heights and Castle Gardens and four were observed nectaring on Dandelion on Great Central Way on 9 September.

The only other species observed from this group, was of a single *Xanthogramma pedissequum* at Bradgate Park on 14 July. The only Chelosini seen were two *Cheilosia illustrata* on Ethel Road in July.

Eristalini

The Drone Fly *Eristalis tenax* was widely present during the latter half of the quarter. Other members of this group - *Eristalis pertinax* was recorded from Knossington, usually widespread but no other records were received for this species. Singles of *Eristalis arbustorum* were noted at Sandhills Lodge, Ulverscroft, Shenton Estate and Rothley Station. *Eristalis nemorum* was common on Evington Park on 5 September and in a Belgrave Lock hedgebank on 30 August. Singles of *Eristalis intricarius* were noted at Ethel Road in a hedgebank, Evington Park on Hebe and a female at a Belgrave Lock hedgebank on 30 August. A single *Eristalis horticola* was observed in a thistle bed at Thurnby Lodge on 21 July. The most interesting record for this group was a specimen of *Eristalinus sepulchralis* recorded on Tormentil at Bradgate Park by SFW & HI. Not a species I am familiar with, described in Britain's Hoverflies as visiting nutrient rich pools and ditches, a lowland species which has undergone a serious decline in recent years.

Myathropa florea, although all singles, was recorded widely from Castle Gardens, Hamilton Pools, Ethel Road, Shenton Estate, Wetton Wood at Bawdon Lodge, Desford, Rothley Station, Groby and one on my Abney Street kitchen window.

The **Sun Fly**, *Helophilus pendulus* was fairly widespread, mostly singles, from Evington Park, Bede Island, Ethel Road, Leicester Arboretum, Cossington Meadows where several were noted on 7 September. PHG records several in his Quorn Garden between 11 and 22 September.

Anasimyia contracta, one seen on brookside vegetation on 10 August, the three previous occasions I have seen this species, usually from streamsides or ditches with plenty of emergent vegetation.

The only records of the **Bulbfly** *Merodon equestris* were a single at Spinney Hill Park on 5 July and two brookside at Thurnby Lodge on 21 July.

Volucellini

The **Pied Hoverfly** *Volucella pellucens*, had singles at Cloud Wood, Shenton Estate, Belgrave Hall Gardens and at Meeting Street, Quorn on 19th and 27th July, all records are from July. *Volucella inanis* appeared scarcer this year, singles from Abney Street, Spinney Hill Park and Bede Island, with the last record at Castle Gardens on 31 August. The spectacular hoverfly *Volucella zonaria* appears to be increasing in numbers locally. This hoverfly is especially attracted to Buddleia blossom and should be looked for in August. Records as follows; Castle Street, Buddleia 17 July; Evington Park 27 July on Hebe; Humberstone Park 10 August on Buddleia; Castle Gardens, Buddleia 17 August; Upperton Road 12 August, Buddleia; Leicester Arboretum 26 August, low vegetation; and Humberstone Park 28 August and Belgrave, brownfield site, Buddleia 30 August, all singles.

Syritta pipiens, records this quarter from Wymeswold, Mountsorrel, Rothley Station, Evington Park and Castle Gardens.

Xylota segnis, one recorded from Knossington 13 July.

Miscellaneous Records

Long-legged fly, *Poecilobothrus nobilitatus* at Higham on the Hill churchyard, with several in a puddle at Sandhills Lodge, Ulverscroft in July. **Black Snipefly** *Chrysopilus cristatus*, many swept from grass at Sandhills Lodge, Ulverscroft and the **Small Fleck-winged Snipe-fly**, *Rhagio lineola*, a female in Bradgate Park in July.

A single **Stripe-legged Robber-fly** *Dioctria baumhaueri* at Asforby Hill Iron Works on 10 July and a **Common Red-legged Robber-fly** *Dioctria rufipes* at Freeby on a BSBI walk. A Soldier-fly, **Dull Four-spined Legionnaire** *Chorisops tibialis* was taken from Cloud Wood NR on 13 July. This species, which prefers shady situations rather than sunny ones, was noted in 2015 from the old hedgerow at Ethel Road, the only other soldier fly record this quarter was of a single **Dark-winged Black** *Pachygaster atra* at Spinney Hill Park on 5 July.

Conops quadrifasciata, singles were only observed from Spinney Hill Park on Hebe and one on Ragwort at Leicester Arboretum in August. Like several species, very scarce or absent this year.

Hymenoptera

Social Bees and Wasps

Buff-tailed bumblebee *Bombus terrestris*: I will start with this species from records of FTS and his extensive bee garden at Barlestone, July - occasional during the month, August frequent and September, single queens on 9th, 15th and 20th. Young queens were also observed in July from Spinney Hill Park and Evington Park, with one at Leicester Arboretum on 3 August. MF recorded workers with six males on her survey there in July.

Red-tailed Bumblebee *Bombus lapidarius*: at Barlestone this species was frequent in July, workers and males, some with pollen, mainly males in August, with queens on 21 July and 30 September. Other records: Humberstone Heights, several on 5 August; single males at Spinney Hill Park, Humberstone Heights, and five at the Botanic Gardens on 7 August. In addition, HI and SFW added a further 22 records over a wide part of the county during this period.

Tree Bumblebee *Bombus hypnorum*: now a very widespread and common bee in most areas and a welcome addition to the bee fauna in built up areas of the city where I reside. HI and SFW recorded this species from 15 sites, with eight recorded at various churchyards around the county, mostly the records are of singles or queens, with many nesting in an Ash tree at St Leonard's churchyard at Sysonby on 4 July; also recorded throughout this quarter from Barlestone. Other records, several workers one with full pollen on Hebe 23 July and a queen in Spinney Hill Park on 18 September on Agrimony.

White-tailed bumblebee *Bombus lucorum*: HI and SFW recorded this species from 17 sites in the county, but not in any numbers and mostly singles. Elsewhere at Barlestone, a few males in July and August, with a single queen on 25 September at the Botanic Gardens - eight males were seen on July 8th, on various shrubs and plants. Locally a worker with full pollen with

another with full pollen in Victoria Park on 24 July and queens with full pollen Abney Street 14 July on Hebe, with a young queen at Spinney Hill Park on 18 September.

Garden bumblebee *Bombus hortorum*: fewer numbers reported than previous species, with singles from Orton on the Hill 6 July, Breedon on the Hill 23 July, Wetton Wood, Bawdon Lodge 26 July, Glooston Lodge 5 August and Wymeswold 12 August, other records are from Barlestone, seen for a few days in July, with a single queen on the 5th. In Abney Street, a worker with full pollen 7 July and another one on Foxglove 21 July, Spinney Hill Park, a worker foraging Hedge Woundwort on 10 July, with a young queen foraging Larkspur 18 July. A single worker with full pollen baskets was foraging Hebe at Evington Park on 23 July. What struck me with the workers I saw in this period was how small they were.

Common Carder-bee *Bombus pascuorum*: as is usual, this bee is active usually to the end of the quarter, this year being no exception, although in my locality, I did not find numbers to be exceptional, usually odd specimens. FTS at his Barlestone garden records this bee as a few in July, occasional in August and in September, with a single queen on the 12th with pollen. In contrast, PHG in his Quorn garden records many still active in September till the end of the month. HI and SFW weigh in with a further 22 records in their continuing travels around the county, mostly single records overall, apart from 25 in a nest opened up by Badgers at Wetton Wood, Bawdon Lodge on the 26th July.

Early-nesting bumblebee *Bombus pratorum*: produced very few records this quarter, one seen July 3rd at Barlestone, with three in my garden the same date with full pollen baskets, probably partial second brood. The only other records were a further specimen my garden 17 July with a single male in Castle Gardens on the 6th of the month.

Hive Bees *Apis mellifera*: widely recorded, particularly in July and August, HI and SFW report this bee as the most common on Bramble flowers during this period; recorded from 20 localities.

Cuckoo Bees

***Bombus vestalis*:** the most widely parasitical

bee, whose host is *Bombus terrestris*, recorded from Barlestone which reached a maximum of eight on the 25th July, a few more seen in August on the 7th, none seen in September, all males. Other single males were seen in July from Loughborough, Bradgate Park, Burbage, St Catherine's Churchyard and Stapleton, St Martin's churchyard, at Beacon Hill and Walton on the Wolds in August. Other males recorded were two at Castle Gardens 17 July, four at the Botanic Gardens on 7 August, a single at Evington Park on 26th August, with the last record at Spinney Hill Park on 18 September.

Bombus campestris: was also well recorded this quarter, a parasite of *Bombus pascourum*, noted at: Spinney Hill Park on 5 July, a fresh male; Castle Gardens three males, on a rockery on 30 July; August had two at Barlestone on the 5th and 11th; six at Botanic Gardens on the 7th, with singles at Bede Island on the 12th and at Stoughton Airfield on 5 September.

Bombus rupestris: the only record submitted was six males at the Botanic Gardens on 7 August from MF.

Social Wasps

Common Wasp *Vespula vulgaris*: many nesting in lawn Burbage, St Catherine's churchyard; others mainly singles, noted at Knossington, Wigston Magna and Foxton. Numbers built up in late September, common on Ivy in Gartree Road on 22 September, Ethel Road and elsewhere.

German Wasps *Vespula germanica*: noted in September from Groby, Cadeby and Foxton. Two or three were present in my Leicester garden, in late August - a first for me.

Tree Wasp *Dolichovespula sylvestris*: one was seen at Nunckley Quarry, Mountsorrel on 30 July.

Hornet *Vespa crabro*: singles were reported from Coleorton on 31 August, Grand Union Canal near Market Harborough on 28 September and Cropston Reservoir on 11 and 25 August. PHG had several in his Quorn garden during this period, last seen on 14 September.

Howard Bradshaw



Checking Burbage churchyard © Steve Woodward

FLOWERING PLANTS and FERNS

A rather undistinguished quarter, quite a low rainfall for October although the plants did not seem to suffer.

Two things need a mention. One is the increasing records of coastal plants such as Buck's-horn Plantain and Reflexed Salt-marsh Grass, and Danish Scurvy-grass show the increasing effect on roadside vegetation of salt deposited on the roads.

Secondly is the presence of the Deptford Pink in our county, we are very lucky to have this rare and decreasing flower and hope it will remain with us.

Once again there is a paucity of recorders. It would be very welcome to have a few more members contributions to the records, they do not necessarily have to be rarities, all records contribute to the overall picture of our flora and over a period of time will show the gradual changes in our overall picture of plant distribution, increases and decreases of particular species, whether plants have become extinct plus many other factors of interest to ecologists and botanists of the future.

Plants of Interest This Quarter

Red Currant *Ribes rubrum*: present on Swannington Incline and on the old railway line at Glenfield.

Spotted Medick *Medicago arabica*: along the Grand Union Canal east of Foxton and in Thorpe by Water village. The GU Canal record is unusual as it was found on top of a garden wall.

Hairy Lady's Mantle *Alchemilla filicaulis* ssp. *vestita*: recorded at Bagworth Heath Woods.

The commoner of the two subspecies found mainly in the west of the county possibly avoiding the more basic soils of the east.

Spindle *Euonymus europaeus*: in Wetton Wood at Bawdon Lodge. An interesting tree with colourful but very poisonous fruits. Rare in the county in widely scattered locations and increasingly being included in planted hedges.

Lesser Sea-spurrey *Spergularia marina*: two localities for this introduced maritime plant which seems to be increasing very slowly. Found on a road verge in two tetrads along Leicester Lane near Market Harborough.

Spiny Restharrow *Ononis spinosa*: recorded at Bede Island Meadows, HB reports that he did not expect to see this old favourite again. Also two plants on the margin of the Ivanhoe Line.

Deptford Pink *Dianthus armeria*: located at Asfordby Hill ironworks in grassland near the railway. Nice to know that this rare and decreasing plant is still hanging on in this location where it was first discovered some years ago. Although called the *Deptford* Pink it is unlikely to have been found where it was originally named and the plant which should have been called the Deptford Pink was in fact the Maiden Pink, *Dianthus deltoides*. This plant is in decline and Plantlife has included it in its 'Back from the Brink' project. New sites such as the above are occasionally discovered and it is thought there may be a buried seed bank which when disturbed, produces a small population.

Buck's-horn Plantain *Plantago coronopus*: found at Glenfield - another coastal species which seems to be increasing.

Vipers Bugloss *Echium vulgare*: found at Beacon Hill and Asfordby Ironworks. An impressive plant which is only a casual in our area, much more common on the coast as it prefers sandy, calcareous soil.

Corn Marigold *Glebionis segetum*: noted on a roadside verge at Groby.

Narrow-leaved Water-plantain *Alisma lanceolatum*: present on the Grand Union Canal north-east of Foxton.

Reflexed Saltmarsh-grass *Puccinellia distans* ssp. *distans*: recorded from six locations in the east of the county. Often recorded inland, in fact

noted in 'Stace' as common inland, especially in the east.

Eric Webster

WEATHER

July 2016 was both warmer and drier than average with sunshine figures close to normal. The most notable feature of the month was how dry it actually was. Only 23 mm of rain fell at Ken Hickling's station in Barrow upon Soar which is only 40% of the expected figure, making this the driest July locally since 1999. At Mountsorrel my 30 mm was also only half the usual figure. Rain fell on just 11 days in the month and most of this total 18 mm fell in the downpour on Saturday the 9th.

Average daytime temperatures in Mountsorrel were logged at 21.8°C which was close to normal but night time temperatures of 13.2°C were 1.2°C above normal. This made the overall average 17.8°C or 0.5°C above the expected figure. The large number of muggy, cloudy nights was responsible for the warmth rather than outstandingly hot days. The sun shone for 186 hours which was in line with the long term figure.

The first week of the month had average temperatures but heavy rainfall somewhat unexpectedly hit the region on the 9th with 18 mm falling. There were then a few cool, breezy days with temperatures on the 16th only reaching 16.3°C, the month's coldest day. The third week of the month did see the arrival of hot and sunny conditions. The 18th saw more than 14 hours of sunshine and on the 19th temperatures rose to 31.4°C the highest temperature since 1 July 2015 as a hot air mass from Africa was blown northwards. With the heat came the humidity and sleeping became difficult as warm, moist air holds its heat throughout the night. Indeed the 19th/20th saw temperatures only fall to 20.4°C. This made it the warmest night I have recorded in my 15 years of records and a colleague locally who has a much longer log says it was his warmest night since 1896 when the records he holds were begun. The intense heat pushed eastwards during the final week of the month and temperatures dropped to normal levels but it

still remained mostly dry. So all in all, not a bad summer month with 20 dry days and some warm sunshine as the Azores high pushed up several ridges of high pressure from the south.

Finally, after a 13 year wait, **August** this year resembled a summer month being warmer drier and sunnier than normal. Average afternoon temperatures were logged at 22°C and average night time temperatures at 13.7°C. This made a mean temperature of 17.8°C, 0.8°C above normal for August. The fact that it was the warmest since 2003 with only a slightly positive anomaly illustrates how disappointing recent Augusts have been. It was also a dry month with 16 days with no rainfall at all and most of my 47 mm at Mountsorrel and Ken's 40 mm at Barrow upon Soar falling on just five occasions. These totals only made up about two thirds of the expected figures. It was also a very sunny month, indeed this was the most notable feature of the month with 216 hours being recorded a considerable 25% above normal. Every August since 2003 has seen rather cool and dull so we were well overdue for an improvement.

The month began with a few showers but it soon became dry. During the first 18 days just 5 mm was recorded and the lawns began to look parched. Temperatures ranged between 20°C and 24°C by day at this stage so it was pleasantly warm rather than hot. The 19th to the 22nd briefly saw it more unsettled with some notable rain falling, before very warm air to the south over Spain and France drifted northwards. Temperatures quickly climbed, reaching 28.5°C on the 23rd and at night they failed to drop below 18°C making sleeping very difficult. The weather then broke down with heavy thunderstorms being recorded on the 27th but the end of the month saw a return of the fine conditions.

The summer as a whole from June to August has been the warmest and driest since 2006. Temperatures for the summer months averaged at 17°C which was 0.7°C above normal. There were 12 days where temperatures exceeded 24°C and six days where they exceeded 27°C, the magic 81°F mark. The highest temperature was on 19 July when 32°C, 90°F was recorded and that night saw temperatures drop no lower than 21°C, a record for this month. Total rainfall

was 192 mm for the summer which is average but 80 mm of this fell in the second week of June in severe thunderstorms. Apart from this, significant rainfall events were rare and 50 days stayed totally dry. The total sunshine for the three months was 508 hours, 5% below normal, with June just seeing 60% of the usual figure but this is counter-balanced by the sunny August. The Azores high pressure area pushed ridges up over Southern England and Wales and this made for a lot of fine dry weather with the jet stream further north and its attendant rain bands affecting Scotland. So all in all, a fine summer and the warmest for ten years and this has continued into September with the first half of the month nearly 4°C warmer than normal.

September was the warmest month for ten years and it ranked in second place in records going back 350 years! Afternoon temperatures averaged 20°C, more than 2°C above normal while night time averages of 12.6°C were 2.5°C above normal for September. The overall average of 16.3°C was 2.2°C above normal. Rainfall was below average with 52 mm recorded at Mountsorrel with just 39 mm falling in Barrow upon Soar and much of this fell in heavy showers. Rain fell on just 11 days of the 30 and only fell significantly on two occasions. There was 137 hours of sunshine which was average for the month.

September was dominated by humid air masses coming from the south with frequent areas of high pressure! The first few days were damp but by the 5th temperatures were reaching 24°C by day and at night they only dropped to 18.7°C making this the warmest September night since 2006. The heat reached a peak on the 13th when I recorded 28°C, a figure 10°C above normal. Sunshine totals were only average but with the very humid air mass temperatures were able to rise with only normal amounts of sunshine and the cloudy, warm nights meant that temperatures stayed up. The heat on the 16th did spark a thunderstorm which produced 10 mm of rain with the other wet day of the month being the 10th when 15 mm fell but, apart from these events, the rest of the month's weather was dry and mainly fine. Septembers since the millennium have become in general much warmer and three out of four

have seen a continuation of summer weather rather than the beginning of autumn. So the summer and early autumn this year have done us proud, being mainly fine and warmer than usual.

Phil Morrish

OTHER RECORDS

Records were also received for:

Spiders, Harvestmen, Galls, Woodlice, Earwigs, Stoneflies, Psyllids, Bark Flies, Mites and Ticks, Molluscs, Ants, Millipedes, Lichens, Mosses, Liverworts and Fungi.

If any member feels able to write up a summary of the records of any of these groups, they would be welcomed.

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We are grateful to them all.

Records for the fourth quarter of 2016 should be sent asap to:

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