



No. 250

1 April - 30 June 2023

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CLASSIFIED RECORDS

MAMMALS

During May, three **Hedgehog** were victims of road accidents. A live one was located in HG's Loughborough garden on the 24th, whilst droppings were found in Caldecott churchyard in April.

SFW & HI continued on their **Molehill** hunt during the period and managed to find activity in five locations.

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Brown Hare © Jim Graham

Brown Hare sightings came from a respectable 15 sites throughout the county mainly of one or two. The best count was four on farmland near Burrough Hill on 7 May with a further three not too far away on the same day. Three were also at Waltham on the Wolds on 29 June.

Records of **Rabbit** came from just five locations, most were twos but there was a total of four at Ratcliffe on the Wreake on 6 April. Droppings were recorded near Cottesmore on 11 June.

Grey Squirrel records were made at just seven sites, with the highest count five at Cropston Reservoir on 25 June. The only report of **Brown Rat** was of one seen dead on the Oakham Road near Braunston-in-Rutland on 16 April. It was also reported to have been part eaten.

There were just two **Red Fox** sightings, singles at Martinshaw Wood and in HG's Loughborough garden, both in April.

There were three reports of **Badger** none of which were in gardens. One was dead on the road near Braunston-in-Rutland.

An unspotted adult female **Fallow Deer** was located near Exton Park on 3 June, whilst six were seen in a horse paddock just south of Clipsham on 1 May. A single **Roe Deer** was on Long Lane near Caldecott in late April. **Muntjac** was well recorded and found at seven sites. Most were singles but two were at Charnwood Lodge on 21 May, whilst three near Stretton in Rutland were found in a grain crop on 17 May.

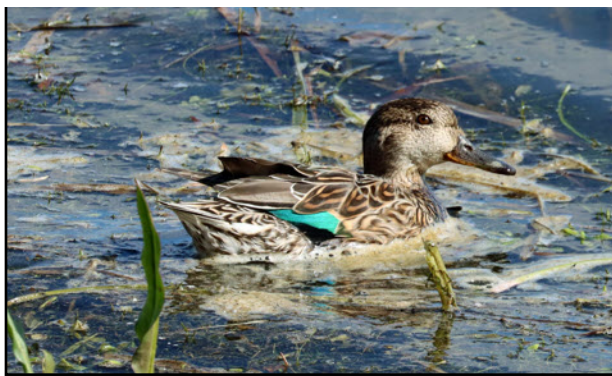
Jim Graham

BIRDS

Mute Swan nests were found at eight sites with a total of at least a dozen successful nests producing over 50 young. The most seen together was 50 at Groby Pool on 27 June. There were 24 **Greylag Geese** at Watermead Park on 18 April and breeding was confirmed at Groby Pool and Cropston Reservoir. Surprisingly the most **Canada Geese** seen together was just ten at Watermead Park and the only nest reported was by Bradgate Park ruins which produced two Young. Two **Egyptian Geese** were at Lockington Gravel Pits on 5 May and later in the month; perhaps the same two were at Cossington Meadows.

A pair of **Shelduck** was at Hicks Lodge on 4 April and in early May there was a pair at Cossington Meadows and a single at Lockington Meadows.

Mandarin Duck were found at seven different sites with no more than four together. Ducklings were noted at Newtown Linford and Cropston Reservoir. At least 18 **Wigeon** were at Cropston Reservoir on 2 April and there were still two on the 7th. Pairs of **Gadwall** were seen at half a dozen sites with four pairs at Cropston Reservoir but no young were reported in the quarter. Cropston Reservoir also had the last **Teal** of the winter with two on 16 April. **Mallard** appeared to be in all the suitable wet areas but the highest count was only 16. Most of the observations also included family parties with a



Teal © Steve Woodward

few including ten or more young. Up to three **Shoveler** were noted at Cropston Reservoir, Lockington Gravel Pits and Watermead Park but breeding was not recorded. There was a **Red-crested Pochard** at Watermead Park on 13 May and recently fledged young were seen there on 6 June. Two male **Pochard** were at Cropston Reservoir in late June.

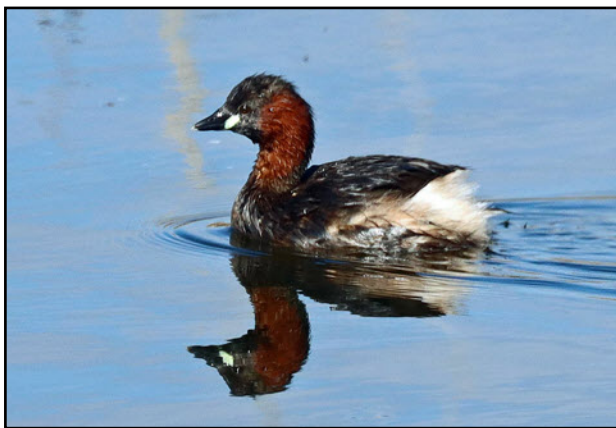
The long-staying female **Ring-necked Duck** was still at Dishley Pool on 5 April. Pairs of **Tufted Duck** were to be found quite regularly throughout the quarter, with 40 birds at Watermead Park and 21 at Cropston Reservoir both in April. A drake **Scaup** was with Tufted at Trent Valley Pit on 1 May. In late May and early June, a female **Goosander** was seen with 12 young on the River Lin in Bradgate Park. She was later seen with just three young Cropston Reservoir.



Goosander juveniles © Jim Graham

Red-legged Partridges in ones or twos, were found at Cropston, Charnwood Lodge, a Holwell garden, Snarestone and two sites in Rutland; mostly at the end of the quarter. A pair of **Grey Partridge** was on Causeway Lane Cropston on 5 May - the only record. Migrating **Quail** were "nocmaged" (sound recorded overnight) over Ibstock on 16 and 17 May. All the **Pheasant** reports were from Charnwood with a maximum count of four at Castle Hill Park on 1 June.

The majority on **Cormorant** records were from Cropston Reservoir with eight on 30 April but there were ten on 18 April at Watermead Park. Three **Night Heron** at Watermead Park was an unusual record; they were there for three days from 29 April. Continuing with unusual herons there was a **Cattle Egret** at Lockington Gravel Pits on 7 May. The now, much more common **Little Egret** was found at eight sites with 12 at Watermead Park on 6 May. A **Great White Egret** was at Cossington Meadows on 29 May. Amazingly, **Grey Heron** were seen at fewer sites than Little Egrets with nine at Cropston Reservoir in June and 12 at Watermead Park in April.



Little Grebe © Steve Woodward

Surprisingly, the only **Little Grebe** to be mentioned were two throughout the quarter at Kelham Bridge and two at Watermead Park in April. On two nights in May, two were “nocmigned” over Ibstock. The majority of **Great Crested Grebes** were reported from Cropston Reservoir with eight pairs on nests on 25 June. Smaller numbers were seen at Dishley Pool, Watermead Park and Staunton Harold Reservoir.

Red Kite, never more than two birds together, were noted at a dozen places throughout the north of the county, with some garden flyovers. There were less **Sparrowhawk** mentioned than the previous species with a few garden visits, but a pair were displaying over Dishley Pool on 5 April. **Buzzard** was by far the most numerous predator reported with sightings from 20 different locations, some which suggested breeding in those areas. An **Osprey** was seen at Cropston Reservoir on 24 May; it caught a fish and flew off with it.



Kestrel © Steve Woodward

Kestrel were seen in a dozen areas with at least one pair in Bradgate Park. Two **Hobby** were chasing Swallows over Cropston on 5 May and two were over Watermead Park on 13 May. The only other record was one near Hinckley on 21 May. One of the young Leicester Cathedral **Peregrines** was found at Cropston Reservoir and was chased off by Carrion Crows on 25 June. Other Peregrine were seen at Mountsorrel on 12 June and a male was over Bradgate Park in April.



Moorhen © Jim Graham

Moorhen were obviously under reported with only Cropston Reservoir having regular sightings and then only a maximum of six. The same comments apply to **Coot** but with a maximum of ten and some young at Cropston Reservoir; although Watermead Park had the same number in April.

Three **Common Cranes** were found at Swithland Reservoir on 3 May.

Four **Oystercatcher** were at Hicks Lodge in early May and ones and twos were at Watermead Park and Cossington Meadows. On 3 May an **Avocet** was recorded at Wanlip Meadows. Throughout May and early June up to three **Little Ringed Plover** were at Cossington Meadows. There was a single at Watermead Park and two at Measham in early May. Two

Ringed Plover were at Measham on the same day and others were at Cossington and Kegworth where there were nine on 3 June. Both **Golden** and **Grey Plover** were recorded over night at Ibstock in early May. A Grey Plover was at Trent Valley Pit on 5 May. **Lapwing** probably breed at Dadlington and Queniborough and others were seen at Watermead Park and Cropston Reservoir with 21 at Cossington Meadows.

Single **Sanderling** were noted at Kegworth on 24 April and Watermead Park on 1 June. There were three **Dunlin** at Kegworth and Lockington, both on 7 May. The only **Snipe** of the quarter were five at Cropston Reservoir on 2 April. Single **Whimbrel** were at Lockington and Kegworth and also night recorded over Ibstock all in early May. Calling **Curlew** were heard in the Bradgate Park area twice in April and there was one at Lockington on 1 May. **Common Sandpiper** were seen at five locations with five at Lockington on 7 May the highest count. There was a **Greenshank** at Kegworth on both 22 April and 3 June.

Apart from occasional birds at other sites, most **Black-headed Gull** were reported from Cropston Reservoir but the maximum there was only 12 on 25 June. The same note applies to **Lesser Black-backed Gull** with a maximum of eight, but there were 20 catching insects over Bradgate Park on 9 June. The most **Herring Gull** seen together was 30, also insect catching over the Park on the same day, although there were 24 at Cropston Reservoir on 16 April.



Herring Gull © Steve Woodward

All the **Black Tern** were noted at Watermead Park with counts of one, five and two, all in the first week of June. **Common Tern** were at suitable breeding sites, Hicks Lodge, Cropston Reservoir, Cossington Meadows, Swithland

Reservoir and at Watermead Park where there were 25 on 6 May. On the previous day there were two **Arctic Tern** at Lockington and Kegworth.



Woodpigeon © Jim Graham

All **Stock Dove**, apart from a few in Member's gardens, were found in Bradgate Park but never more than four. There were numerous reports of **Woodpigeon** but only seven double-figure counts. However 600 were at Cropston in early May and 300 there in late June. **Collared Dove** were few and far between, mainly because of under reporting; almost all sightings were in gardens with four the highest count. There was some good news, a **Turtle Dove** was seen at Upton on 21 May; unfortunately it was the only one reported. Three **Ring-necked Parakeet** were at Watermead Park on 6 May.

For the first time ever I personally didn't hear a **Cuckoo** this year, but others were heard or seen in ten different locations well spread across the north of the county.

Barn Owl were found at Ibstock, Bradgate Park and Rothley Station and the only **Little Owl** were noted in Bradgate Park with four, possibly including young heard on 22 April. **Tawny Owl** were heard in ten places including gardens at Holwell and Loughborough.

Cossington Meadows had the first **Swift** of the year with six on 1 May. Others followed in the first week of May. The biggest groups were at Swithland Reservoir with 20 on 30 May and Bradgate Park with 50 on a few occasions in mid-June.

Kingfisher were seen at Watermead and Bradgate Park and Grace Dieu Priory where one was seen to catch a fish.



Great Spotted Woodpecker juvenile © Jim Graham

Green Woodpecker were only noted in half a dozen areas but regularly in Bradgate Park. There were four in Holwell Nature Reserve on 21 April. As usual **Great Spotted Woodpecker** out-numbered Greens by three to one. They were noted at around 20 different sites with three adults and two young in a Holwell garden on 24 June and two nests in Bradgate Park and at Swithland Reservoir.

The most **Magpie** seen together was ten at Castle Hill Park on 1 June. **Jay** were only noted in around a dozen sites, mainly in Bradgate Park, and never more than three. **Jackdaw** were more widespread in higher numbers with 150 in Bradgate Park on 24 May. Apart from a site in Rutland, the only **Rook** record was five at Cropston Reservoir on 28 May. **Carrion Crow** were far more noticeable with records from all over the area, the most seen together was 22 on 1 April in Bradgate Park. **Raven** reports seem to be less this quarter with sightings at only four areas but there were six at Bradgate Park on 22 June.

Singing **Goldcrest** were heard at seven sites with never more than four birds together. The most **Blue Tit** counted was 23, which included young birds at Cropston Reservoir on 18 June. Double-figure counts of **Great Tit** were noted at Dishley Pool, Castle Hill Park and Watermead Park where there were 12 on 18 April. Apart from one or two regularly in my garden at Hugglescote, the only other **Coal Tit** were found around the Bradgate/Cropston area with a maximum of six singing on 22 April.

Small numbers of **Skylark** were found at Cropston, Thurcaston, Lount and Charnwood Lodge but the majority were in Bradgate Park where there were plenty of double-figure counts and a maximum of 25 on 6 May with 21



Skylark © Jim Graham

of these singing.

Sand Martin were nesting at Kelham Bridge with others were seen at Cropston Reservoir, Swithland Reservoir and Lockington Gravel Pits where there were around 100 on 5 May. The first local **Swallow** of the year was an exhausted looking bird at Kelham Bridge on 9 April. Others quickly followed with a maximum number of only 30 at Cropston Reservoir on 23 April. Five young fledged from the Deer Barns in Bradgate Park. **House Martin** were in smaller numbers than Swallow, with just 24 at Cropston Reservoir; others were at another six sites.

Cetti's Warbler were heard at Kelham Bridge, Dishley Pool, Groby Pool and Watermead Park where there were five on 18 April.

The most **Long-tailed Tit** seen together was 12 at Castle Hill Park on 1 June. Smaller numbers were seen at another dozen sites.

There were over 50 reports of **Chiffchaff** from all around the area. Ten singing birds were heard at both Castle Hill Park and Martinshaw Wood. There were less than half the number of observations of **Willow Warbler** with the most, only four, heard in Bradgate Park; others, mostly singles, were widespread across the area. **Blackcap** were in similar numbers and locations to Chiffchaff. The most heard in the same area was nine at Watermead Park on 18 April. The first **Garden Warbler** of the year was at Lount on 17 April. Others were at another ten sites mostly around Charnwood. All **Lesser Whitethroat** reports were of singles and were heard at a dozen sites. As usual there were more **Common Whitethroat** than the previous species with nine singing at Castle Hill Park on 1 June. Other sites had up to six or seven singing.

Grasshopper Warbler were only heard at Trent Valley Pit and Watermead Park where two were present in late April. **Sedge Warbler** were singing at Great Easton, Kelham Bridge, Grantham Canal and Watermead Park, where seven were heard on 6 May. On the same day ten **Reed Warbler** were heard at the same site. Others, usually singles, were heard at Groby Pool, Kelham Bridge and Swithland Reservoir.

Apart from Bradgate Park, where there were five on 22 April, most **Nuthatch** were seen with some regularity in Members' gardens at Whitwick and Holwell. **Treecreeper** were found at Cossington Meadows, Kelham Bridge, Beacon Hill, Watermead Park and Bradgate Park but never more than two.

Singing **Wren** could be heard all around the area with the highest numbers in Bradgate Park with 12 on 22 June, Castle Hill Park with 13 on 1 June and Watermead Park, 16 on 18 April. Surprisingly the most **Starling** seen together was only 20 at Castle Hill Park and a Holwell garden.

A lone **Ring Ouzel** was at Warren Hills on 16 April. **Blackbird** were widespread with a maximum count of 13 at Castle Hill Park on 1 June. **Song Thrush** were less in evidence but still widespread with a maximum of five at Castle Hill Park on 7 June. **Mistle Thrush** were much rarer with records from just six sites. Six birds, including juveniles, were in Bradgate Park on 22 April. The most **Robin** noted were 16 singing birds at Castle Hill Park on 1 June and 11 at Watermead Park on 18 April.

A **Redstart** was at Trent Valley Pit on 11 April. A single **Whinchat** was found at Watermead Park on 30 April. There were three pairs of **Stonechat** in Bradgate Park during April and May and a single bird was at Charnwood Lodge



Wheatear © Jim Graham

on 3 April. During April up to nine **Wheatear** were in Bradgate Park and others were noted at Warren Hills and Ellistown.

Most sites had **Duncock** in small numbers but 15 were counted in Martinshaw Wood on 8 April and 14 at Watermead Park ten days later. Most **House Sparrow** sightings were from gardens and surprisingly the most seen together was 14 at Thurcaston on 26 May.

Grey Wagtail were noted at Grace Dieu Priory and Puddledyke and young birds were seen at Cropston village, Cropston Reservoir and Swithland Reservoir. **Pied Wagtail** were only found at half a dozen sites with a maximum number of four at Cropston Reservoir on 16 April. Two singing **Tree Pipit** were heard in Bradgate Park in late April and early May and two were singing near the summit of Beacon Hill on 6 June. Apart from a single **Meadow Pipit** at Charnwood Lodge on 5 June all other records came from Bradgate Park where there were numerous double-figure counts with a high of 24 on 6 May.

Chaffinch were common in gardens and woodlands but not in big numbers; eight at Cropston Reservoir on 30 April being the highest count. Similarly with **Greenfinch** the highest count was four at a few sites but usually only one or two together. **Goldfinch** were more widespread than the other finches, most reports being of up to ten birds. There were 19 at Martinshaw Wood on 8 April and 11 at Castle Hill Park on 7 June. A **Siskin** was in a Cropston garden on 2 April. **Linnet** were only seen at five sites with five at Thurcaston on 16 April being the highest count. **Bullfinch** were found at only six sites with never more than three birds.

There were a surprising number of **Yellowhammer** observations from around 15 sites. Bradgate Park had the greatest number with 22 counted on 6 May and 18 on 22 June. **Reed Bunting** were equally represented but with slightly fewer sites and birds, eight were singing in Bradgate Park on 22 June.

Bas Forgham

REPTILES and AMPHIBIANS

There were records for just four species in this section.

Common Lizard *Zootoca vivipara*: one was seen by HI & SFW at the Old Quarry near Clipsham on 1 May.



Common Lizard © Steve Woodward

Slow-worm *Anguis fragilis*: the only record was of an adult found near Nanpantan on 26 April.



Slow-worm © Steve Woodward

Common Frog *Rana temporaria*: singles were found at Charnwood Lodge and Grace Dieu in May whilst at least ten, mostly youngsters, were on the edge of a pond in Castle Hill Park on 7 June.

Smooth Newt *Lissotriton vulgaris*: a pair were noted on at least three occasions in JG's garden pond in May but there were seven in MM's pond on the 4th.

Jim Graham

DRAGONFLIES and DAMSELFLIES

Banded Demoiselle *Calopteryx splendens*: the first sighting of the year was of five noted at Watermead CP North on 25 May. Records came from eight further locations in the quarter. Most were of single figures but at least ten were on the River Lin in Bradgate Park and also on the River Welland near Thorpe-by-Water both in



Banded Demoiselle © Jim Graham

June. The highest count was 12 at Watermead CP North on the 16th.

Azure Damselfly *Coenagrion puella*: first recorded at Puddledyke, Cropston with two on 1 June. They were also recorded at Sandhills Lodge on the 14th but by far the largest count was at least 100 at Cropston Reservoir on the 25th.

Common Blue Damselfly *Enallagma cyathigerum*: noted from five locations, the highest counts all came from Cropston Reservoir with over 100 in both May and June.

Red-eyed Damselfly *Erythromma najas*: the only record was of 20 at Watermead CP North on 16 June.

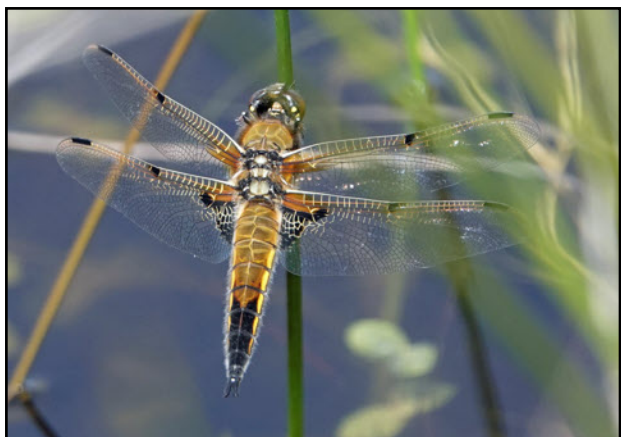
Blue-tailed Damselfly *Ischnura elegans*: records came from just three locations with just one double-figure count, 12 at Watermead CP North on the 25 May.

Large Red Damselfly *Pyrrhosoma nymphula*: recorded from six sites, the first on 3 May. Most counts were of one or two but six were at Castle Hill Park on 7 June, and five in both JG's Cropston garden pond and Bradgate Park in May.

Emperor Dragonfly *Anax imperator*: singles were noted at Bradgate Park, Castle Hill Park, Cropston reservoir and Sandhills Lodge, all in June.

Broad-bodied Chaser *Libellula depressa*: the only records came from Bradgate Park, with a maximum of ten on 22 June, and Cropston reservoir with six on the 25th.

Four-spotted Chaser *Libellula quadrimaculata*: there were records received from just three locations. The first was of a single at Puddledyke,



Four-spotted Chaser © Jim Graham

Cropston on 1 June. The best count was 12 at Watermead CP North on the 16th.

Black-tailed Skimmer *Orthetrum cancellatum*: recorded at Bradgate Park and Cropston Reservoir in June with the highest count of five and the later site on the 18th.

Ruddy Darter *Sympetrum sanguineum*: only recorded at Cropston Reservoir in June with a maximum of 20 on the 25th.

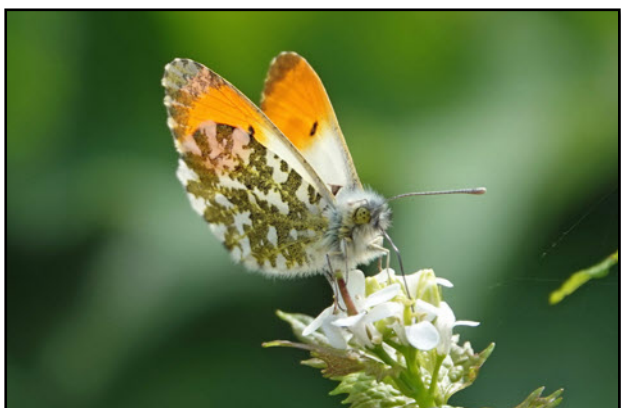
Jim Graham

BUTTERFLIES

As you may note in reading the weather report, it looks like the extremes during the quarter had a significant effect on the numbers of butterflies recorded.

Pieridae

Orange-tip *Anthocharis cardamines*: frequently seen between 7 April and 28 May. Although mostly in ones and twos in 26 locations, there were a few larger counts including 12 at Sence Valley FP on 13 May (DBF) and ten at Watermead North on 6 May (MBr).



Orange-tip © Jim Graham

Brimstone *Gonepteryx rhamni*: seen regularly between 4 April and 10 June. Nearly all were singletons at 36 different sites but ten were noted at Hicks Lodge on 18 April (DBF) and eight at Martinshaw Woods on the 8th (MBr).

Green-veined White *Pieris napi*: reported from just seven locations, the first recorded was a single in MM's Coalville garden on 4 May. The highest count was just three at Castle Hill Park on 1 June (JG).

Small White *Pieris rapae*: a few were noted from four locations in May, mainly in ones and twos with four near Nanpantan the best count on the 21st (MM).

Large White *Pieris brassicae*: just one lucky Member managed to find this species in the quarter, MM had one or two in her Coalville garden through May plus three near Nanpantan on the 21st.

Lycaenidae

Green Hairstreak *Callophrys rubi*: Members obviously did not visit the normal locations for this species as no records were received.

Purple Hairstreak *Favonius quercus*: no records were received.

Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus*: recorded between 7 May and 15 June. SFW & HI saw five on 5 June near Newbold Verdon whilst DFB had four at Sence Valley FP on 15 June.

Small Copper *Lycaena phlaeas*: singles were located by SFW & HI at just three locations between 16 May and 9 June; Beacon Hill, near Newbold Verdon and Ulverscroft NR.

Holly Blue *Celastrina argiolus*: widely recorded from 19 sites between 18 April and 11 June. All were singles with the highest count being six in May at both Watermead CP North and Cloud Trail, Worthington.

Nymphalidae

Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae*: this is one of the species that appear to have been weather-affected as records came from just 11 locations compared to 41 during the same period last year. The highest count was half that of 2022, with four at both Barrowden on 4 April (SFW & HI) and Bradgate Park on 5 May (JG).



Small Tortoiseshell © Jim Graham

Peacock *Aglais io*: were seen at 15 sites between 4 April and 3 June. The highest count was just three at both Sence Valley FP on 7 April (DBF), and Bradgate Park on 5 May (JG).

Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*: were seen in ones and twos between 6 May and 29 June at 12 locations.

Comma *Polygonia c-album*: singletons were seen at seven sites between 3 April and 29 June.

Painted Lady *Vanessa cardui*: the only record was of one found by SFW at Grace Dieu on 20 May.

Small Heath *Coenonympha pamphilus*: were recorded at four sites between 23 May and 25 June. By far the most prolific site was Bradgate Park where at least 50 very noted by JG on 22 June.

Speckled Wood *Pararge aegeria*: were widely recorded from 23 locations between 22 April and 25 June. They were mostly seen in ones and twos but eight were noted by JG at Cropston Reservoir on 18 June and five on the Cloud Trail, Worthington on 3 May (SFW).



Speckled Wood © Jim Graham

Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina*: were sighted in 12 places all during June. Counts of ten or more came from seven sites the best being 124 at Sence Valley FP on the 25th (DBF), 100 in

Bradgate Park on the 22nd (JG) and 50 at Cropston Reservoir on the 25th (JG).

Ringlet *Aphantopus hyperantus*: there were just two records, nine at Sence Valley on 25 June (DBF) and a single at Waltham on the Wolds on the 29th (HI & SFW).

Wall *Lasiommata megera*: singles seen at Charnwood Lodge on 25 May (MM) and 15 June (DBF).

Hesperiidae

Grizzled Skipper *Pyrgus malvae*: SFW & HI had the only record, one at Clipsham Old Quarry on 1 May.

Large Skipper *Ochlodes venata*: were seen in just three places in June. Five at Bradgate Park on 22 June (JG) was the best count.

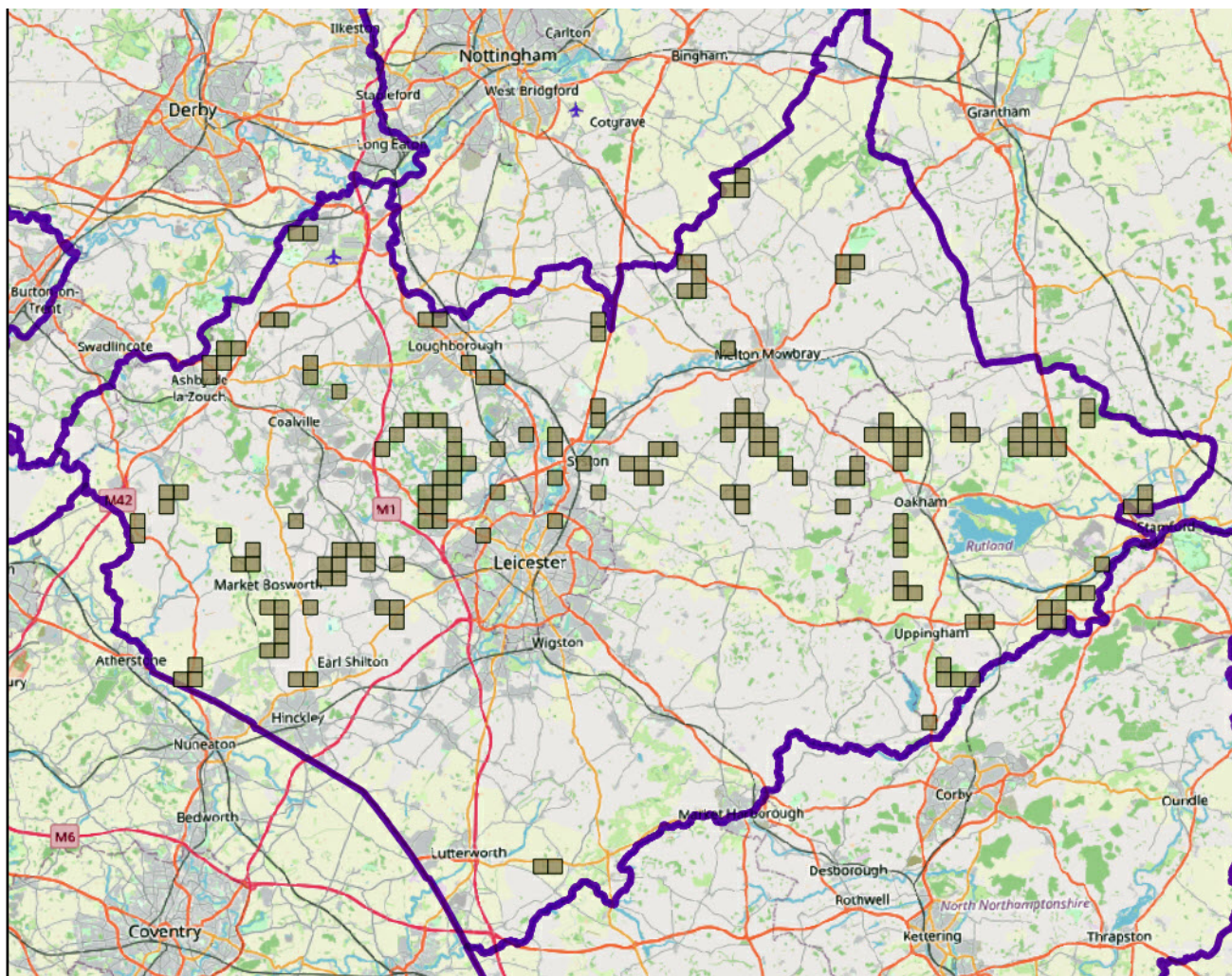
Small Skipper *Thymelicus sylvestris*: the only record was of 12 at Sence Valley FP on 25 June (DBF).

Thank you to all who sent in butterfly records. There were sightings for this quarter from 14 Members.

Jim Graham

FLOWERING PLANTS and FERNS

Vice-county Recorder Geoffrey Hall has published another book: *Flora of Rutland: Messenger's Supplement*. Although not directly relevant to the Loughborough area, Club Members do regularly visit and record wild flowers in Rutland (see below). Guy Messenger published the *Flora of Rutland* in 1971 but maintained a card index of updates based on new records up to 1990, and older records discovered during research. His intention was to publish a *Supplement*, but the manuscript was far from complete when he died in 1993. Fortunately, the manuscript and records have survived, and Geoffrey has been able to complete the compilation of records, resolve many of the problems and make corrections where necessary. The result is a paperback book of 149 pages, including introductory sections, record summaries for each species with updated distribution maps, a few photographs and a copy of Messenger's obituary written by Tony Primavesi.



Distribution by 1 km squares of all the plant records submitted for Heritage, from all recorders, for 2023 Q2.
 © OpenStreetMap contributors, CC-BY-SA.

The systematic account for this quarter is based on 3754 records of 611 taxa submitted by fourteen members and their fieldwork companions. Inevitably, I can only pick a tiny fraction of them for this report, with a bias in favour of the locally scarce or rare (as defined by Hall & Woodward, 2022). The majority are from myself and HI and these have been accepted by the Vice-county Recorder and uploaded to the BSBI database. Records by other Members have their initials shown. Readers of *Heritage* may reasonably expect records to be concentrated in the Loughborough area, but in fact most records are from further afield, notably Rutland. The reason is that the Charnwood area is already very well-recorded and few notable records were received, whereas the fieldwork by SFW and HI has targeted areas where recording is needed, where unusual plants have turned up.

Stoneworts, or Charophytes, are not flowering plants nonetheless they are traditionally recorded by members of the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI). Stoneworts are algae, but a particularly “advanced” group that does resemble horsetails in some respects. SFW fished out a specimen from a disused quarry near Stamford at a site called Quarry Farm (TF0108) on 15 June. At an aquatic plant course hosted by the Botanic Garden at Bangor, the



Quarry Farm pond © Steve Woodward

specimen was shown to Nick Stewart, the BSBI Referee for this group. It was determined as **Bristly Stonewort *Chara hispida***. The “prickly” appearance of the stem accounts for its name. Thirteen records were known to Hall (2015) in VC55 and this one appears to be the only record for Rutland (BSBI database).



Adder's-tongue © Steve Woodward

Adder's-tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum* seems to vary in quantity from year to year in Bradgate Park. On 15 June many were found in a grassy area closest to Newtown Linford cricket pitch (although we failed to re-find orchids previously seen here).

Long-headed Poppy *Papaver dubium* was found by HG at Cropston Reservoir Dam on 19 June, and at Peckleton by SFW and HI on 25 June. A sample must be picked to check the colour of the sap, so that **Yellow-juiced Poppy *Papaver lecoqii*** can be distinguished. The latter species was found at Cottesmore parish (Rocks by Rail) and Waltham on the Wolds, also in June. Also in the Poppy family Papaveraceae, **Greater Celandine *Chelidonium majus*** was found by VD in Syston Town Centre on 29 April. The orange sap of this plant is supposed to suppress the growth of warts.

Anemones are members of the Buttercup family Ranunculaceae. What appear to be petals are actually the sepals – anemones lack true petals. **Wood Anemone *A. nemorosa*** was recorded at Martinshaw Wood by MB on 8 April and six further localities by other Members. Water Crowfoots (Crowfeet?) *Ranunculus* subgenus *Batrachium* are under-recorded because they are often difficult or impossible to identify. **Ivy-leaved Crowfoot *Ranunculus hederaceus*** (locally scarce) was fairly easy, having looked at



Ivy-leaved Crowfoot © Steve Woodward

the leaf shape and flower size, and I am confident that I re-found this in Bradgate Park, on muddy ground beside the River Lin where the deer regularly cross. Another species in the actual river was flowering abundantly near the stone bridge opposite the ruins on 12 June and I was able to obtain a specimen to check. My plant had only capillary leaves, i.e. finely divided into hair-like segments. Flower details need to be checked under magnification and the length of the flower stalk relative to the stem internodes is very important. I had my provisional identification of **Stream Water-crowfoot *Ranunculus penicillatus* ssp. *pseudofluitans*** (locally scarce) confirmed by Nick Stewart, on the course previously mentioned.



Stream Water-crowfoot © Steve Woodward

Wild Liquorice *Astragalus glycyphyllos* was found by SD during our excursion to Great Casterton on 15 June. She also found **Narrow-leaved Bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus tenuis*** on the same excursion, at Quarry Farm. Another member of the Pea family Fabaceae, **Lesser Trefoil *Trifolium dubium*** was seen by GF at Woodhouse Eaves on 9 June and a further 16 sites by SFW and HI. With experience, it can be

separated at a glance from Black Medick *Medicago lupulina* on the basis of flower colour, but beginners do need to look carefully at the leaves or fruits.



Sulphur Cinquefoil © Steve Woodward

Sulphur Cinquefoil *Potentilla recta* sometimes escapes from gardens onto nearby footpaths. This appears to account for GS's record on Freeman Way, Quorn on 21 June. The flower colour is sulphur-yellow, rather than the deep yellow of most Potentillas, such as the **Creeping Cinquefoil** *Potentilla reptans* found by VD on Barkby Holt Lane on 3 June. The latter is an extremely common verge plant, with 24 other records.

Crucifers (Brassicaceae) can be confusing for the novice, but identification is easier and more reliable if fruits are present, as they vary so much. The Club's visit to Castle Hill Country Park on 7 June produced a good range of common plants. One of the less common finds was **Marsh Yellow-cress** *Rorippa palustris*, on some damp ground near the Rothley Brook. The fruits are sausage-shaped and semi-erect. **Field Penny-cress** *Thlaspi arvense* is a weed of arable land and disturbed places, but I see only a few plants



Field Penny-cress © Steve Woodward

infrequently. The distinctive fruits are shaped like small coins. One plant turned up on a roadside verge at Ridlington on 21 May, by the River Chater.

On 25 June **Bugloss** *Lycopsis arvensis* was still present on the roadside verge on Dan's Lane, Peckleton parish, where I had found it in 2019. A new plant for me, confirmed by GH, was a garden escape working its way along Middle Lane, Nether Broughton, seen on 13 May. **Yellow Monkswort** *Nonea lutea* was horribly sticky and I wished I had not touched it!



Yellow Monkswort © Steve Woodward

Hound's-tongue *Cynoglossum officinale* (locally scarce) was among the arable weeds at the edge of a field in Greetham parish on 3 June. The fruits have Velcro-like hooks to hitch a ride on the trousers of passing botanists.



Hound's-tongue © Steve Woodward

Ivy-leaved Toadflax *Cymbalaria muralis* is common on urban walls (three records this quarter) but plants with larger flowers may be another species, **Italian Toadflax** *Cymbalaria pallida*. The latter (flowers 20 mm long) was confirmed at Mill Lane, Waltham on the Wolds, on 29 June by SFW and HI.



Comm Blue-sowthistle © Steve Woodward

Common Blue-sowthistle *Cicerbita macrophylla* leaves seemed to be spreading across St. Peter's churchyard Knossington, on 16 April, occupying several square metres. **Common Cudweed** *Filago germanica* is certainly not common in Leicestershire. SFW found plants on the pavement on Birmore Avenue, Leicester on 28 June. One plant of **Corn Marigold** *Glebionis segetum* turned up as an arable weed in Peckleton parish on 25 June.

Marsh Pennywort *Hydrocotyle vulgaris* (locally scarce, only four VC55 sites) was re-found at Beacon Hill. Its flowers seem very shy and are rarely seen, but this plant is an umbellifer (Apiaceae). **Sanicle** *Sanicula europaea* (local) is well-distributed in the north-west of Leicestershire and parts of Rutland, but very sparse elsewhere so records from Kilworth House Hotel grounds on 14 June were very welcome. So too was the tea and cake available at the hotel! Sanicle was also reported by GF from Cloud Wood on 9 June.

A locality that Helen and I had never visited was Thorpe-by-Water, on the border between Rutland and Northamptonshire. Its tetrad score



River Welland at Thorpe-by-water © Steve Woodward

needed a boost, so we visited on 26 June. The Water in the name is the River Welland, whose centre-line is the vice-county boundary. A good range of water plants was found (as well as a family of Kingfishers) including **Arrowhead** *Sagittaria sagittifolia*. It is not scarce but its arrow-shaped leaves pointing out of the water are a striking sight. The flowers will have only three white petals.



Arrowhead © Steve Woodward

Another locality that was new to us was the public footpath through Clipsham Quarry, from the village. Many typical quarry plants were in evidence, including one that we rarely encounter: **Common Twayblade** *Neottia ovata* (1 May). The **Pyramidal Orchids** *Anacamptis pyramidalis* at Stonesby Quarry NR were spectacularly abundant on 29 June, with probably more than a thousand spikes.



Clipsham Quarry footpath © Steve Woodward

I will finish with examples from the Poaceae: Grasses (one of my favourite families). Early summer is when most of them flower, so a total of 413 grass records were received. The *Brachypodium pinnatum* aggregate contains two segregates: **Heath False-brome** *B. pinnatum sensu stricto* and **Tor-grass** *B. rupestre*. The

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difference seems to be very slight – the key expects us to look for “prickle hairs” that are less than 30 microns long! - so I just record the aggregate. I found it in Clipsham Quarry (mentioned earlier), Little Casterton churchyard and on the golf course at Greetham. As a plant of calcareous grasslands, its centre of distribution is north and east of Oakham. In older records, prior to the split (including the 1988 *Flora*) the name Tor-grass was applied to *Brachypodium pinnatum* – no doubt this will cause confusion.

HG found **Fern-grass *Catapodium rigidum*** at Cropston Reservoir Dam on 19 June. This is a stiff little plant with spikelets arranged each side of the shoot, like a pinnate fern. The dead shoots persist and this grass can be detected in winter, usually at the edge of pavements or on walls.



Fern-grass © Steve Woodward

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My grateful thanks to Sara Botterell for checking through the botany report.

Steve Woodward

April was a very wet month with temperatures close to average and sunshine totals around normal too. Indeed, April 2023 was the 4th wettest month in my records in Mountsorrel that go back 21 years. The wettest in the series was in 2012 when I logged 114 mm, then came 2004 at 85 mm, 2018 with 84 mm and 2023 at 78 mm. Dean Whittaker at his Hinckley station recorded 82 mm. Rain fell on 16 days of the month with the wettest day in Hinckley being the 14th when 20 mm, fell while at Mountsorrel was the 23rd when 17 mm fell. The combined March and April rainfall in Mountsorrel was 206 mm with 128 mm falling in March, so spring has certainly been very wet so far!

People's perception of April was that it was a very cool month but in reality temperatures were fairly close to the long-term average. Recent Aprils have seen some warm and sunny spells but none materialized this month with our maximum temperature of 18.8°C reached in Hinckley on the 29th. Average daytime maxima were logged at 13.2°C, with our night-time temperatures averaging 4.5°C. There were just two night-time air frosts recorded with our lowest temperature being -1.3°C. The overall mean of 8.9°C was 0.4°C lower than normal but April 2021 was a very cool 6.7°C, while April 2020 had an average of 11°C, so it goes to show how varied the weather can be in this month. The average temperature for April continues to creep up as with all the other months, with the current 9.5°C being 1.3°C higher than it was before the millennium.

Steve Jackson at his Bablake School website recorded 160 hours of sun which was average for April, with our sunniest day being logged on the 4th when 12 hours were recorded.

Looking at the month as a whole, it started off cool and bright with nearly 30 hours of sunshine in the first four days. The middle part of the month was very wet with 35 mm of rain falling between the 10th and 14th as Storm Noa passed close by, with a maximum wind gust of 38 mph. There was another wet spell between the 21st and 23rd when another 28 mm fell, but some warmer air did reach us on the 29th when 18.8°C was recorded. So in people's perceptions a poor month, but one in reality not too far from



Weather vane © Steve Woodward

average but a lack of any prolonged warm spell made it feel cool and it was very wet.

May was a slightly milder and in most places a much drier month than normal with sunshine figures above average too.

Temperatures were consistently slightly above average but there were no really warm spells, that gave some people the impression that it was a cooler than normal. Indeed, looking at Steve Jackson's Coventry data, only six Mays have been warmer than this one in the last 30 years. The highest temperature of just 21.4°C on the 27th however, meant that this was the lowest May day maximum since 2015 when we only managed 20°C. The average day maximum was 17.7°C at Mountsorrel and at Dean Whittaker's weather station in Hinckley. Night-time temperatures averaged 8.2°C at Both Mountsorrel and Hinckley with the lowest temperature of 3.5°C recorded at Mountsorrel on the 3rd. No night frost was recorded at all. The overall average temperature of 13.1°C was 0.8°C above normal.

The rainfall in May was more variable across the region as it mainly fell in the form of showers. Rain in Mountsorrel only fell on eight days and amounted to just 31 mm or 56% of usual. The same was true in Coventry at the Bablake School site with just 33 mm falling. Hinckley however had a severe localised downpour on the 19th when 11.4 mm fell in just 30 minutes. This helped their local total to reach 57 mm or the usual figure for the month.

It was a sunny month with 216 hours of sun recorded in Coventry or 10% higher than the 30-year averages. Only five months have been sunnier in the last 30 years.

The first ten days of the month were mainly unsettled with showery rain but after the 11th, high pressure took control and it was dry for 18 days as a large high formed to our north-west. On some days there was plenty of sun but others remained cloudy as low cloud arrived from the North Sea and on many days did not break up. So all in all, a fairly average May with variable rainfall.

June was the warmest ever recorded in Leicestershire with records going back to 1659! After an average first week the heat set in on Saturday the 10th and lasted 16 days until 26 June. During this period the temperature exceeded 24°C every day and on six dates they exceeded 27°C or 80°F. The hottest day was the 11th when the temperature in Hinckley peaked at 29.9°C at Dean Whittakers' station which is 86°F. The same date at Mountsorrel was also my highest temperature too at 29°C. Many nights during this period were very mild too as the moist, humid air held on to its temperature at night. The highest night minimum at both stations was 17.5°C on the 12th, 7°C above normal! Afternoon temperatures were logged at 22.8°C, 3°C above normal, while night-time temperatures averaged 12.2°C, 1.4°C above normal. The overall mean of 17.5°C was the warmest in recorded history and easily beat our previous records in Leicestershire. The heat was caused by a warm humid airmass being brought up from the south and the position of the Jet Stream meant the warm and humid air stayed with us a long time.

The rainfall during the month was also dramatic with most of the rain falling in torrential thundery downpours. Some of these downpours were exceptional and affected different parts of the city and county on different days but the heaviest at Hinckley and Mountsorrel was recorded on Sunday 18th June when a storm started late afternoon and very heavy rain then fell for five hours. This deluge produced 49 mm at Hinckley and 43 mm at Mountsorrel; these totals represent three weeks normal rainfall falling in one evening! Flash flooding was widespread and at one point the rain was falling at a rate of eight inches an hour! Although rain only fell on eight days in the month these large totals resulted in the monthly fall in Hinckley being recorded at 76 mm with 78.8 mm being

logged at Mountsorrel, these figures were 25% above normal.

Sunshine totals were also high with 241 hours at Bablake School in Coventry at Steve Jacksons' site. This represents 26% more sun than usual. Only four June months have been sunnier than this one since 1976 namely: 1994, 1996, 2010 and 2018. The average temperature for June so far this decade is 16.4°C, nearly 1°C warmer than 2010-20 and the pattern of warmer months across the year in the last few decades is true for June too.

As the month ended the Jet Stream moved southwards again and introduced cooler weather for the remainder of the month.

Thanks again to Dean Whittaker and Steve Jackson with their help in producing the report.

Phil Morrish

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Heritage has been compiled from records submitted by the following Members and friends:

Mick Braker (MB), Ann Brown, Jennifer Brown, Ben Croxtall, Veronica Dale (VD), Rhys Dandy, Pam Darby (PJD), Sue Dawson (SD), Graham Fisher (GF), Bas Forgham, Jim Graham (JG), Sue Graham, Hazel Graves (HG), Dave Gray, Colin Green, Jackie Green (JGr), Geoffrey Hall (GH), Helen Ikin (HI), Nigel Judson, Margaret McLoughlin (MM), Stuart Moffat, Fiona Proudlove, Dave Robinson, Helen Shacklock (HS), Steve Woodward (SFW).

We are very grateful to them all.

Records for the next quarter should preferably be entered via [NatureSpot](https://www.naturespot.com) as soon as possible. Please ensure that you select "Loughboro' Nats" Project and set the padlock. Alternatively email a simple spreadsheet or text document to Margaret McLoughlin at:

loughboroughnaturalists.records@gmail.com

Records submitted for *Heritage* have been checked as far as possible by the writers of the various sections. They have not all been formally validated by County Recorders (as this is not practical on a quarterly basis). Full details of the records are submitted to Leicestershire & Rutland Environmental Records Centre LRERC, County Hall, Glenfield, Leics. LE3 8RA, either as spreadsheets or as scans of paper records. Once validated, selected records will be added to the LRERC database and made accessible to the public.

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The original records are archived. All of the older paper records have been deposited at the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, Long Street, Wigston Magna, Leics. LE18 2AH, accession number DE9392. Most pre-2011 paper records are also available on a disc (see *Heritage* 205). Recent paper records will reside with Margaret McLoughlin, until a batch is ready to go to the Record Office.