



NBRC Newsletter 04

November 2010

NBRC News

There will be quite a few changes for the NBRC in the foreseeable future.

Tom Day, Conservation Manager for the Wildlife Trust but also manager of the NBRC will be leaving on the 13th December. His replacement, Oliver Burke has now been appointed and will start at the beginning of January.

Nathalie Hueber is expecting a baby on the 27th of March 2011 and is intending to go on maternity leave up to Christmas next year. Although we are confident that maternity cover will be put in place by March/April, we cannot guarantee anything yet as we are still waiting confirmation of Natural England funding arrangements for next year.

Local News

Bradlaugh Fields BioBlitz

NBRC organised a BioBlitz event on the 5th/6th June 2010 at Bradlaugh Fields (SP790606). We would like to thank everyone who participated and contributed to this very successful event.

Covering more than 40 hectares, Bradlaugh Fields is very rich in habitats and it is not surprising to find a great variety a species there. A total of 1,352 records were recorded for the whole event (taking into account a few weeks in May and then later in June). The number of records collected is very impressive. Although it is much higher than last year (912 records), there are a lot more duplicate records due to the complexity of the site. We found 684 species this year which is very close to the 701 species found last year.

The group with the most species recorded were the vascular plants with 218 species followed by the beetles with 81 species recorded, then the moths with 73 species recorded, the Flies with 69 species recorded, the bugs with 34 species recorded and the birds with 28 species recorded. The most common beetles recorded were harlequin ladybird

(*Harmonia axyridis*) and 7 spot ladybird (*Coccinella septempunctata*). The most common butterfly recorded was common blue (*Polyommatus icarus*) and the most common bird recorded was Green Woodpecker (*Picus viridis*).

Bradlaugh Fields is already a well recorded site. Nonetheless, the species list has been extended to include 347 new species thanks to this event. A lot of them are overlooked common species but there are certainly some interesting additions such as Small Elephant Hawk-moth (*Deilephila porcellus*), Pine Hawk-moth (*Hyloicus pinastri*), Least Black Arches (*Nola confusalis*), Cream-bordered Green Pea (*Earias clorana*), Pale Oak Beauty (*Hypomecis punctinalis*), Shaded Pug (*Eupithecia subumbrata*) for the moths and Pennyroyal (*Mentha pulegium*), Knotted clover (*Trifolium striatum*), Prickly Sedge (*Carex muricata* subsp. *pairae*), Hound's-tongue (*Cynoglossum officinale*) and Longleaf (*Falcaria vulgaris*) for the plants.

Nationally scarce species recorded at the event includes: *Orellia falcata* and *Pipizella virens* for the flies, *Bembidion (Semicampa) gilvipes*, *Platyrhinus resinosus*, *Helophorus (Helophorus) griseus*, *Grypus equiseti* and *Carabus (Morphocarabus) monilis* for the beetles, and the ant *Myrmica schencki*.



Bradlaugh Fields, June 2010.

Bradlaugh Fields is certainly turning out to be a very good site for flies. Here are some really nice records recorded on the event:

- *Pipizella virens* (hoverfly) is nationally notable and not often recorded in Northants.
- *Lucilia ampullacea* (Blowfly) may be a new county record. As there is no current national recording scheme we cannot be sure, but we cannot find records of it.

- *Platycheirus europaeus* (Hoverfly) is another scarce species in Northants (mainly recorded at Yardley Chase and north of the county).
- *Carcelia rasa* (Parasitic Fly) only recently recognised in the UK and most records are from southern counties. This appears to be the most northerly record so far according to the Tachinid Recording Scheme.
- *Ramonda spathulata* (Parasitic Fly) is probably a new county record (there are few parasitic fly records for VC32)
- *Thelaira solivaga* (Parasitic Fly) is probably another new county record.
- *Tephritis conura* (Picture-winged Fly) is rare in the Midlands. This is a northern species. Probably another new county record.
- *Orellia falcata* which is quite scarce
- *Anasimyia contracta* and *Chrysotoxum cautum* are not often recorded in the county

The site is the only site known in the county for the Phoenix fly, *Dorycera graminum*. Although the species was not recorded during the event, another BAP species was found: *Carabus (Morphocarabus) monilis*. This beetle has never been recorded in this part of the county before.

Overall Bradlaugh Fields Bioblitz was a very successful event. It would be quite interesting to repeat the event in 5 or 10 years time to compare the similarities and the differences.

LWS Gullet Surveys 2010

Over this summer the Wildlife Trust's LWS surveys included a number of ironstone gulleys across the North of the County. These are gulleys created by the quarrying of ironstone for the steel industry, leaving the limestone which lies beneath. They have since developed an interesting mosaic of habitats including species rich calcareous grassland and frequent bare ground both likely to be supporting scarce and specialist invertebrates. The survey sites included Twywell Nature Reserve and 5 privately owned LWS.

Brief survey visits were targeted at the open habitats and more extended pitfall-trapping was carried out, with a particular emphasis on Hymenoptera, Coleoptera, Hemiptera and Diptera. In total, for all six sites combined, 751 records were made of 290 species, of which 34 (12%) have a national conservation status. At least six of the species recorded during this survey appear to be new for the county; *Hedychrum niemelai* (a ruby-tailed wasp - RD3), *Lasioglossum pauxillum* (a mining bee - Na), *Nomada fucata* (a parasitic bee - Na), *Oxya nebulosa* (a tephritid fly, *Pseudospinolia neglecta* (a ruby-tailed wasp) and *Sphecodes niger* (a cuckoo bee - RDB3).

Another five species may well turn out to be new for the county too: *Mordellistena parvula*, *Nicrophorus interruptus*, *Platydracus latebricola* for the beetles and *Catoplatus fabricii*, *Thyreocoris scarabaeoides* for the bugs.

It is clear that these quarries are supporting an important assemblage of species, including national rarities, and that they are of great significance for the county; the best of them is also of at least regional importance. The Wildlife Trust is now working with landowners to help protect and manage these sites into the future.

Interesting Records for the year

Diptera Records – John Showers

In addition to the records found in Bradlaugh Fields for the Bioblitz, this year produced quite a few interesting diptera records.

Records of Nematocera (craneflies) seem to be particularly poor in the county. The Pitsford moth trap produced about a dozen species of them, all new records for the site.

The larger Brachycera as usual started with records of the bee-fly *Bombylius major* from 8th April. Robberflies seem to have been scarce but Old Sulehay produced *Choerades marginatus* and *Dioctria rufipes*.



Dioctria rufipes with prey - Old Sulehay 2010.

Some work on freshwater invertebrates by Wildlife Trust Ecology Group members and staff from the Environment Agency at Ring Haw found larvae of soldierflies including *Oxycera pardalina*, *Stratiomys potamida* and *Vannoyia tenuicornis*. Of the horseflies and allies, *Hybomitra distinguenda* (Sulby), *H. bimaculata* (Old Sulehay) and *Haematopota crassicornis* (Summer Leys) are the most notable.

A number of good hoverfly records have been received. The early highlight was the finding of a female *Callicera aurata* by an MSc student at Old Sulehay. It is only the second county record. The nationally notable *Cheilisia chrysocoma* was observed several times in Stoke Wood from late April until mid-May. Probably new for the county were *Orthonerva nobilis* (Nobottle) and *Heringia vitripennis*. The latter was seen by a PhD student studying insects visiting flowers in the gardens of some of our large country houses. There have been two records of Hornet Hoverflies *V. zonaria* (Northampton) and one of *V. inanis* (Rothwell).

Big-headed flies *Pipunculidae* reported were *Eudorylas horridus*, *Pipunculus thomsoni* and *Verrallia aucta* from Old Sulehay.

Amongst the Acalypteratae, the wasp-parasite conopids *Conops quadrifasciatus* (Greens Norton) and *Conops flavipes* (Denton Wood) were noted. Agromyzid records from leaf mines included the relatively new British species *Phytomyza astrantiae*.

Calypterates are poorly recorded but amongst these, the xylophagous muscid *Phaonia subventa* and fanniid *Fannia aequilineata* were recorded at Southwick Wood. Two tachinids raised from lepidoptera larvae by Doug Goddard were *Sturmia bella* (from Small Tortoiseshell) and *Phryxe vulgaris* (from Orange Tip). This latter species was also raised by Pete Sharp from Small Ranunculus *Hecatera dysodea* moth larvae found at Bradlaugh. I am always interested to receive flies raised from the larvae of other insects or from fungi etc...

Coverage of the county is still very patchy, with most of the western half having few records.



Lacewing *Drepanopteryx phalaenoides*, Old Sulehay – July 2010. This is probably the first record for the county.

Moth Records – John Ward

The following interesting Macro Moths have been added to the all time county list during the 2010 season:

12 July 2010. A single Waved Black Parascotia fulginaria was taken at light in an Oundle garden (TL08) by Phil Horsnail. The species is known to have increased its range in recent years and has been recorded in neighbouring county's.

24 July 2010. One White-line Snout *S. taenialis* taken at m.v. light in Sunderland Wood (SP77) by James Skinner. An easily overlooked species and likely to be present elsewhere in the county.

15 August 2010. One Toadflax Brocade *C. lunula* taken in a garden actinic light trap in Peterborough (TL19) by Mike Weedon. Not a species associated with Northamptonshire but possibly a migrant.

22 September 2010. One L-album Wainscot *M. l-album* recorded in a garden light trap in Wellingborough (SP86) by Derek Larkin. Once again not a species associated with Northamptonshire having a southern and coastal distribution. The source of the moth is unclear but possibly a vagrant due to accidental introduction in a nearby garden centre.

Macro Moth records of any species are always welcome. Please send any records that you have to John Ward: bjward@btinternet.com

Butterflies Records - Douglas Goddard

Most observers will reflect on the 2010 as being a poor one, particularly for those species often seen in gardens. Indeed, Peacocks, Small Tortoiseshells and Brimstones all seemed to suffer from the cold winter and late arrival of spring. Painted Ladies only arrived in very small numbers after the massive influx the year before and even the common White species were scarcer than normal.

The season was largely defined by the hot, dry spell from late May to the end of July, in which temperatures were higher than normal. Although this had a detrimental effect on numbers of common grassland species like Small Skipper, Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown and Ringlet, those which have multiple broods like the Common Blue, Brown Argus, Small Copper and Small Heath were all more numerous than usual in late summer. Woodland species, Purple Emperor, White Admiral, Purple and White-letter Hairstreaks, all had good emergences in July, and the Black Hairstreak showed an increase on 2009.

This hot period made 2010 a particularly memorable one for most of our rarer and threatened species. Dingy and Grizzled Skippers were present in much larger numbers on our Butterfly Conservation transect at Twywell Hills and Dales. A second generation of the normal single-brooded Dingy Skipper was seen on 31st July and another from 21st – 28th August. These are only the fourth and fifth occurrences of this in the county, the last one being in 1999. Also at Twywell, the Green Hairstreak had a magnificent showing, 41 counted through the flight period (5 in 2009); 18 seen in the Whitestones area on 21st May was the best count in the county for many years.

Our most threatened butterfly, the Wood White, had its best emergence since 2004. The first was seen in Bucknell Wood on 13th May, followed by its appearance in good numbers at all sites. Egglaying was seen much earlier than usual, on May 24th, and day counts in Salcey Forest (40), Wicken Wood (39), Hazelborough South Block (29) and Yardley Chase (33) were very encouraging. This is another species which is normally single-brooded, with second-brood specimens having been seen in only three previous years in my records, with a maximum of four individuals. 2010 proved to be quite exceptional. The first second brood Wood White was seen in Yardley Chase on 22nd July, and further sightings came from Sywell Wood (maximum 16), Wicken Wood (2), Hazelborough South Block (7) and Bucknell wood (4). Egglaying in the second brood was observed for the first time in the county in Sywell, Bucknell and Hazelborough.

The Silver-washed Fritillary has been re-appearing gradually into our woodlands in the last few years, as a result of climate change. In 2010 it was seen over a much wider range, with records received from fourteen different woods so far. This species has almost certainly established a breeding colony in Wakerley Wood, where courtship flights and mating pairs were seen by several observers. There were two sightings of Dark Green Fritillary in Yardley Chase on 9th and 22nd July. These were presumably vagrants from the nearest colonies on the Bedfordshire Downs and follow a sighting just inside the county last year (the first since 1995).



Southern Oak Bush Cricket (*Meconema meridionale*), found in Round Spinney, Northampton – November 2010. First record for the county!

Galls Records - Seán Karley

A new species of gall-causer was recorded in September in East Carlton Country park. *Andricus gemmeus* causes small (4mm) spherical galls with “fingers” on the lower part, on the bark of oak trees (*Quercus robur* etc.) This species first occurred in Britain in the last few years.

Please look out also for galls of *Andricus saliens*, on Turkey Oak (*Q.cerris*). The sexual generation causes “Anemone Galls” on twigs in summer; the

asexual generation causes tiny (ca 4mm long) galls shaped rather like a Cornish pasty on the leaves, on the upper sides of veins. All of these galls are green to start with, but may turn red in strong light.

If you find any galls and wish to record them, or you would like some assistance with naming them, please contact Seán Karley: seankarley@tiscali.co.uk

Getting Involved

A few places have contacted us as they would like to get as many records as possible to make sure that the site is managed with due consideration to wildlife. Recorders are welcome to have a look around. Please contact them before hand.

Sulby Gardens (NN6 6EZ), please contact Alison Lowe:
Email: ecolowe@onetel.net, Tel: 01858 880573

Farm at Long Buckby (SP637659)
Please contact Ian Jelley: E-mail: ian.jelley@wkwat.org.uk
Tel (Direct): 024 7630 8979, Mobile: 077400 82 552

Swywell Country Park, please contact the rangers:
Email: swywell@northamptonshire.gov.uk

Meet your fellow recorders

My name is Seán Karley. I am the Gall Recorder for the British Plant Gall Society, covering the area of the Wildlife Trust BCNP (i.e. Northants (VC32), Beds (VC30), Hunts(VC31), Cambs(VC29), and The Soke of Peterborough (part of VC32)).

I am an old codger (70). My primary interest is in Botany, especially British native plants and naturalised aliens. Particularly fond of Sedges; well, someone has to do it. Not a gardener, but I manage to keep about three dozen species of sedge alive. I also have a herbarium of ca 2800 collections. Other interests include Geology, Megaliths, and Caving. Also I have recently been involved in excavating the site of The Red Well in Wellingborough.

Seán Karley

Contact Details

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Thank you for your contributions

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