

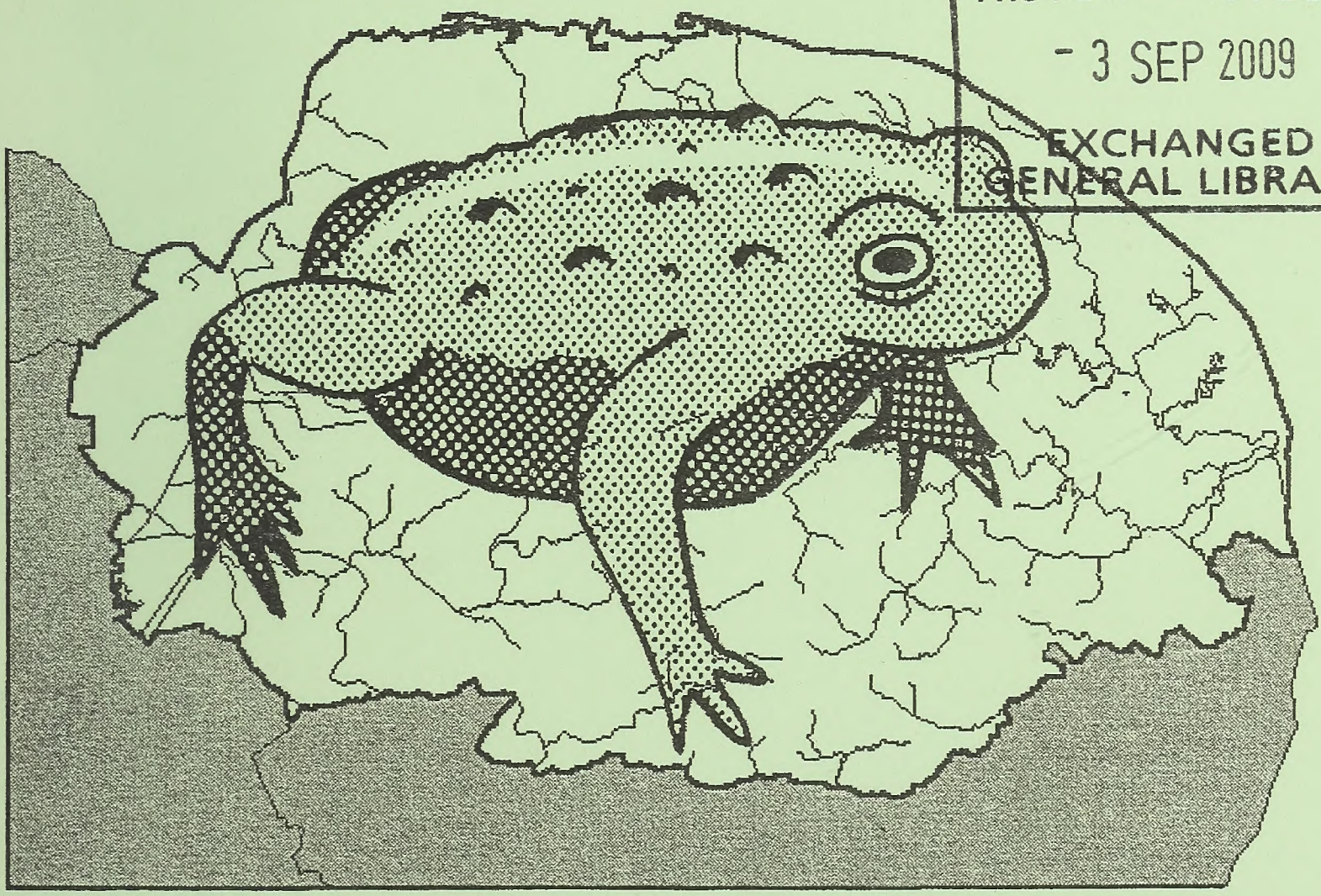
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# The Norfolk *Natterjack*



The quarterly bulletin of the Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society

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# Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society

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Articles with the camera symbol have associated photographs in the Nats' Gallery (centre pages)

## Toad-in-the-hole....

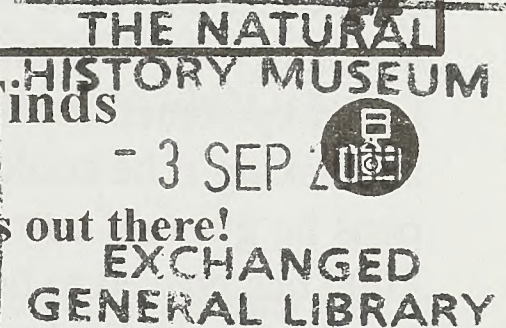
This is a bumper edition covering interesting plant finds, insect variation, bird behaviour and more on the introduction of White-tailed Sea Eagle to Norfolk. In addition there are comprehensive reports of excursions from Holt Hall, Brettenham Heath and Sea Mere. Please note on page 23 the NNS survey of hedgehogs and on page 24 further details of the new indoor meetings venue at Eaton. Many thanks to all contributors for both text and photo submissions.

### Some Recent Norfolk Plant Finds

or

Keep your eye open, you never know what's out there!

*Mike Crewe*



Over the last six years I have been gradually putting together a database of photographs of Norfolk plants and have spent many hours in the field amassing pictures of well over 1200 species. However, despite all this effort, it always amazes me what one can find when one isn't actually trying! Thus the purpose of this short piece is to encourage others to always expect the unexpected and never limit yourself as to what you are hoping to see. The following species are all either new to Norfolk (ie they don't appear as established plants in Beckett *et al.* (1999)), or are significant finds of species not seen for some time. What joins them all together, is that they were all discovered whilst I was doing something other than botanising. I include photographs here so that others will know what to look for and may well find them elsewhere.

As the vast majority of these species are non-native, one may be tempted to question the validity of recording them. However, as somewhere in the region of 50% of plant species listed in Stace (1997) are non-native, they certainly now form a significant part of our natural heritage. In addition, it is surely of value to be able to track the spread of a species to its very beginnings if, in the future, it should prove to be as invasive as Japanese Knotweed or a number of other problem species that are now having to be dealt with.

#### Native species:

##### **Mudwort** *Limosella aquatica*

My discovery of this plant, which had previously last been seen in Norfolk in 1914, has been covered in an earlier issue of *The Norfolk Natterjack*. This species is seriously declining in the UK as wetlands are polluted or drained and



lost for good. This discovery does, however, show that there is always hope and, though remarkably uninspiring, it would be great to know that it is still out there in more places. Check winter-wet hollows that dry out in summer. I found this species whilst taking part in a litter pick at Sheringham – so keep an eye while you're keeping the landscape tidy!

### **Greater Broomrape** *Orobanche rapum-genistae*

This one is worth keeping an eye out for as it is not only extremely rare in Norfolk, but appears to be declining in the UK as a whole, as well as in many other parts of its European range. Beckett *et al.* list just two records of this species for Norfolk, the most recent being as long ago as 1986. In many ways this may seem like cheating as far as this article is concerned as this plant was found by someone else, who sent a photograph to a friend of mine four years ago asking if he could identify it. He wasn't sure at the time (though as it happens he guessed correctly!) but it was four years before it showed again and 2009 has proved to be an excellent year for the colony. The reasons for including this discovery here are several; one, sometimes you get the opportunity to 'discover' unusual things whilst sitting at home (so never ignore that phone call from a curious beginner!), two, very rare plants can and do pop up in previously undiscovered places and three, this colony is on private land so, without encouraging others to take up an interest in what is around them, we never know what we may miss! The colony I was shown this year represents the first ever record for East Norfolk and is a fine example to us all that, despite the amazing efforts of the Norfolk Atlas team, there are still things out there to find – so never stop looking! With broomrapes in particular, it should be remembered that they do not show every year (2009, for example, is a very poor year for Purple Broomrape), so repeat visits to interesting spots are always worthwhile. This is the largest British broomrape which parasitises broom and gorse, so there is much scope for seeking it out in the county.

### **Non-native species:**

Note that all of these records refer to well-established individuals or colonies, which have been monitored by me for a number of years and none are simply recent discoveries which may not survive the winter.

### **Fringed Redmaids** *Calandrinia ciliata*

Probably the most interesting of the non-native species that I have found in north-east Norfolk as this probably represents a completely new species for the UK! This plant is reasonably widely available as a garden annual, however the Norfolk colony (which has continued to grow annually over the last three years) is some distance from any house (at least a kilometer from the nearest village) and is growing as an adventive on the edge of an arable field, along with more typical annuals of such places. This plant is native to the west coast states of the



USA and may typically find Britain's climate to be too cold and damp in the winter but climate change may alter that. Its flowers are such a brilliant pink that it is not easily overlooked so keep an eye out for it on disturbed ground. I found this one while chasing around after a Black Kite that had been reported near Aylmerton a few years ago (so you may wonder what I was doing looking at the ground in the first place!).

**Carthusian Pink** *Dianthus carthusianorum*

This species is well established on a grassy bank near Swafield. Though its origin remains unclear, it most likely began as a garden throw-out. A species such as this is probably quite innocuous and unlikely to become a problem for native species, so in my book it's a welcome and colourful addition and I do make a point of enjoying it each year. I chanced across this individual whilst carrying out breeding bird survey work.

**Asarabacca** *Asarum europaeum*

A small colony of this interesting species has been established for some time in a shady spot near Thorpe Market. The flowers of this plant are easily overlooked as they are small, brown and appear close to the ground and beneath the leaves. As the leaves are rather non-descript and not exactly eye-catching it could be occurring elsewhere but going un-noticed.

**Indian Rhubarb** *Darmera peltata*

I was pleased to find this species as it is very attractive, but I feel it does have the potential to become invasive and thus a threat to native species. After flowering, the leaves continue to grow and become rhubarb-like, thus giving it the opportunity to shade out other species. I spotted a colony of this species from the train just outside Norwich, where it grows in wet, fen habitat alongside the railway line. As I was on my way to Gatwick Airport at the time, I had to make a note to relocate it on the way back. The hardest part was then perusing the maps to work out how to get to the plant to take photos – but I like a challenge!

**Chinese Angelica-tree** *Aralia chinensis*

This species has long been established in North Norfolk but appears to have been over-looked. The species spreads from suckers, coming from an aggressive root system and does have the potential to become invasive. A colony of stems at Beeston Regis appears to have spread out into the wilds from a neighbouring garden but is now well established and I have noticed an increase in the number of stems every year.

**Orange ball-tree** *Buddleia globosa*

This orange-flowered butterfly-bush has not yet become invasive in the UK, as has its purple-flowered cousin, but I have seen large quantities growing in an



old brickworks in Suffolk so it may yet become a problem species. Another species spotted whilst on the train to Norwich!

**Eastern Blue Sow-thistle** *Cicerbita macrophylla*

Presumably a garden escape, perhaps the wind-blown seed having been swept out of a nearby garden somewhere. A single plant is doing well on a roadside verge near Edingthorpe. When not in flower this species could easily be overlooked as a sowthistle, when in flower, the blue petals could be passed off as Chicory without a second look.

*Centaurea macrocephala*

I found a single plant of this species near Thorpe Market, some long distance from any road and how it got there is unclear. The plant has become well established over at least the last six years and seems to be flourishing.

**Giant Butterbur** *Petasites japonicus*

Long established and certainly showing invasive tendencies around Saxthorpe and on a roadside verge near Mannington Hall, this species favours deep, loamy soils in wet areas so should be looked for along stream banks and in damp, shady areas. As with our native Butterbur, the flowers appear before the leaves and are easily noticed from a passing car – but don't take your eyes off the road for too long!

**Large Pink Nerine** *Nerine bowdenii*

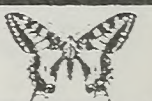
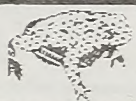
Several colonies of this species exist in north-east Norfolk with at least one small colony at Cromer increasing slowly each year and now forming a wonderfully showy patch when in flower. Seems to largely originate from garden through-outs as all plants have been found where garden waste has clearly been dumped.

**Honey Garlic** *Nectaroscordum siculum*

Well established in open woodland at Felbrigg, this plant is so unlike any of our native species that it immediately catches the eye. I first discovered this species growing naturalised in Norfolk some eight years ago and took a while to work out what it was! It often pays to hang on to old nursery catalogues, especially the colourful mail-order type often sent out by Dutch bulb companies. This is a fine example of a species that can be found whilst fulfilling family duties and going for a pleasant Sunday afternoon stroll (don't forget your camera!).

**References**

Beckett, G., Bull. A. & Stevenson, R. 1999. *A Flora of Norfolk*. Privately published  
Stace, C. A., 1997. *New Flora of the British Isles*. CUP, Cambridge.



# Hogweed Wars

Nick Owens



After reading Francis Farrow's article, *Mistaken Identity*, in May's edition of *Natterjack*, I started looking at bumblebee-mimicking hoverflies in my garden in Weybourne. I am fortunate in having a boundary with farmland, with an adjacent grassy headland, full of hogweed (*Heracleum sphondyleum*). The hogweed umbels offer scores of attractive landing stages for insects. These notes offer a few observations and thoughts on hoverflies and other insect visitors to my hogweeds.

I found that the Greater Bulb-fly *Merodon equestris* on my hogweed came in at least five colour forms, which I have attempted to illustrate. *British Hoverflies* by Stubbs and Falk gives the names of four recognised varieties, namely *validus*, *equestris*, *transversalis* and *narcissi*. The fifth Weybourne form (centre top) is probably a hybrid between *validus* and *narcissi* or *equestris*. (See Nats' Gallery).

All this raised some questions in my mind. Do these colour forms protect the insect against predators? If so, what predators does it have? Does each variety have a preference when mating? Which colour forms are the commonest and do these match the colour forms of the models (bumblebees)?

I have not observed any predations on *Merodon* so far. Wasps (*Dolichovespula sylvestris* workers) regularly patrolled the hogweed flowers, dropping on small insects and carrying them away. However, they did not take insects as large as *Merodon*, instead taking *Andrena* bees and small flies. Hornets (*Vespa crabro*) and birds such as swallows (*Hirundo rustica*) are potential *Merodon* predators in the garden.

Stubbs and Falk point out that some *Merodon* forms are sex-specific, eg *validus* only in females and *transversalis* only in males. The only mating I saw was between two *Merodon* of the same form, namely *narcissi* (see photo). *Merodon* varieties with some orange hair (ie all except *validus*) are mimics of *Bombus pascuorum*, one of the commonest bumblebees in my garden. The abdomen of *B. pascuorum* can be quite dark, resembling varieties *transversalis* and *equestris* (see photo).

I only saw *validus* once, whereas all the other forms were frequent. The *validus* I saw had a white/grey 'tail', but some *validus* have yellow or red tails according to Stubbs and Falk. The *validus* form of *Merodon* resembles *Bombus lapidarius* (all black with a red 'tail' in queens and workers). *Validus* shares the



*B. lapidarius* model with one form of the hoverfly *Volucella bombylans* (black with red 'tail'), which is frequent in the area in June. *B. lapidarius* is one of the most common and widespread bumblebees, and there are two rarer species with a similar pattern.

June is a time of a surge in bumblebee numbers, so *Merodon*'s mimicry would appear to provide it with plenty of protection. However, as mentioned, there are other hoverflies playing the same game, including *Volucella bombylans* and *Criorhina spp* (ref Francis Farrow's article), which also have more than one colour form. There can not be too many mimics in relation to models, and this may explain the advantage to these hoverfly species of mimicking more than one model. The advantage to *Merodon* of having such a variety of brown/orange patterns is not clear. Perhaps it hinders a predator's ability to discriminate between *Merodon* and *B. pascuorum*, which is itself variable.

More observations on insect predators and the relative frequency of hoverfly colour forms are clearly needed!

#### **Insects seen on hogweed at Weybourne, June 2009 included:**

*Calliphoridae* (blow flies).

*Syrphidae* (hoverflies eg *Eristalis tenax*, *Merodon equestris*).

*Ichneumonidae* (ichneumons eg *Amblyteles armatorius* (see photo).

*Apidae* (bees, especially *Andrena spp*, *Bombus lucorum* and *Apis mellifera*).

*Vespidae* (wasps, especially *Dolichovespula sylvestris*).

*Coleoptera* (beetles, especially *Oedemera nobilis* and pollen beetles *Meligethes spp.*)

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## Wildlife Records at Pensthorpe

*Colin A Jacobs.*



On Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2009 my partner and her Granddaughter decided to visit the Nature Reserve at Pensthorpe. I am not too keen on captive birds so I spent six hours recording anything that I considered wild. I was actually rather pleased with my day's total considering how packed it was with visitors hoping to gain a view of the BBC TV Springwatch presenters.

### **Micro Lepidoptera.**

*Celypha lacunana* (Denis & Schiffermuller.) An abundant moth around the county.

*Nemophora degeerella* A widespread & abundant moth around the county.





## Macro Lepidoptera.

*Xanthorhoe montanata* (Denis & Schiffermuller.) Silver Ground Carpet. Frequent in suitable habitat. (photographed.)

*Artogeia napi* L. Green-veined White. Frequent.

*Plebeius agestis* (Denis & Schiffermuller.) Brown Argus. One male in the Millenium Garden.

*Vanessa cardui* L. Painted Lady. Several on site from recent mass immigration.

*Parage aegeria* L. Speckled Wood. Frequently seen in pairs where they were "spinning"

*Inachis io* L. Peacock. Frequent throughout.

*Artogeia rapae* L. Small White. Frequent throughout.

*Lycaena phlaes* L. Small Copper. Common throughout.

*Agalis urticae* L. Small Tortoiseshell. Frequent.

*Polyommatus icarus* . (Rottemburg) Common Blue. A few males on meadows.

## Coleoptera.

*Harmonia axyridis* forma *spectabilis* Harlequin Ladybird. One in Millenium Garden.

*Cantharis rustica* (Fallen.) Sailor Beetle. Frequent throughout.

*Carabus violaceus*. L. Violet Ground Beetle. Frequent along paths throughout.

*Athous haemorrhoidalis* (Fabricious) Click Beetle. Frequent on vegetation.

*Oedemera nobilis* (Scopli) Flower Beetle. A male in Millenium garden.

## Diptera.

*Panorpa communis* L. Scorpion Fly. Common throughout. Willow Warbler seen to collect and take this species to a nest of fledglings.

*Lucilia casear* L. Green Bottle. Common throughout.

## Odonata.

*Calopteryx splendens* (Harris) Banded Demoiselle. A male by first lake from visitor centre.

*Ischnura elegans* (Vander Linden.) Blue-tailed Damselfly. Forma *Violacea* and *Rufescens* present throughout.



## Homoptera.

*Cercopis vulnerata*. (Rossi) A Froghopper. Frequent throughout on vegetation.

## Fungi.

*Kuehneola uredinis* (Link) Arthur. On *Rubus fruticosus* agg L. Bramble stems.

## Arachnia.

*Pisaura mirabilis*. (Clerk.) Nursery Web Spider. Frequent on vegetation.

*Tetragnatha extensa* L. Common by the waterside.

## Plant Galls.

*Eriophyes similis* (Nalepa) Leaf edge of *Prunus spinosa* L. Blackthorn. Very Common.

*Neuroterus anthracinus* Oyster Gall. (Curtis) On underside of leaf of *Quercus rober* L. Pendunculate Oak. Scarce.

*N. quercusbaccarum* (L) Currant Gall. Male & Female on catkins on *Q rober*. Pendunculate Oak.

*Andricus kollari* (Hartig) Marble Gall. Old galls on twigs of *Q rober*.L. Pendunculate Oak.

*Eriophyes laevis* (Nalepa) Scattered on *Alnus glutinosa* L. Alder. Upperside of leaf.

*Phyllocoptes goniothorax*. (Nalepa) on *Crateagus monogyna* ssp *Nordica* Jacq. Hawthorn leaf edge.

*Aceria crataegi* (Nalepa) on *Crateagus monogyna* ssp *Nordica* Jacq. Hawthorn upper leaf.

*Biorhiza pallida* (Olivier) Oak Apples. On twigs of *Q rober*.L. Pendunculate Oak.

*Eriophyes sorbi* (Canestrini) On upper leaf of *Sorbus aucuparia* L. Rowan.

*Chirosia betuleti*. (Rhingdahl) on *Dryopteris filix-mas* L. Male Fern.

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## Whitlingham Country Park

Tony Howes



Whitlingham Country Park, near Norwich, can be very entertaining in the month of May. There are lots of water fowl there, quite happy to come close and sample a slice of bread or two. Many human mums take their little ones there, probably, for them it's a first acquaintance with nature. The geese in particular can be rather intimidating, advancing purposefully towards you with that menacing stare and sailor's gait. At the moment there are many families of both ducks and geese, the ducklings and goslings very quickly catch on to the



free handouts, also a family of swans, the cygnets just a few days old, but already able to fend for themselves. A pair of Australian black swans are often seen there, looking virtually all black until they fly, then showing their beautiful white wings.

A lovely place to visit and walk round, always something interesting to see, the large lake is also used for various water sports, sailing, canoeing etc, and when the legs become weary there is always the old barn café for a nice cup of tea.

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## Down at my Second Home

*Brian Macfarlane*



Last Friday I went to Strumpshaw for a 6 hour stint. That wasn't necessarily my intention to stay that long, but after a slow start, I was rewarded in the last hour with something I had hoped would happen at some point. There were Mallard ducklings swimming around all morning in open water without the mother present. The Marsh Harrier came over several times without attempting to take one. In the afternoon a Heron landed in the water in front of me. He strode around for a while then suddenly lunged into a clump of reeds. He flew out with a Mallard duckling dangling by one leg from it's bill, the mother hearing the commotion flew towards the Heron quacking like mad. Too Late! The Heron flew a short distance, and landed to swallow the sibling. He turned it head first towards it's throat, and then a Coot attacked it despite not being one of it's own young. It was all go, and the camera shutter was beginning to glow red hot! It took off and landed again to swallow the sibling whole. Not satisfied with that, he turned sharply and stabbed the water and came up with a roach for dessert. I managed to get the whole sequence of events recorded.

Two days later I'm back at the ranch witnessing another first for me. A Heron flew into the water in front of the hide, and immediately caught a small pike. When I say small, it was quite big for him to swallow, but it slipped down without touching the sides. Ten minutes later, not satisfied with the snack, took another stab at what turned out to be an enormous pike. He experienced a little more difficulty putting that one away. It was a battle to turn it to go down head first, but he succeeded. It was quite a sight as the fish head could be seen wriggling at the base of his neck while the tail was still showing. Indigestion was definitely on the cards!

After that excitement all went quiet for the next three hours, so I decided to quit while I was winning, and head back to my temporary home where my wife had ALMOST forgotten who I was. I showed her my driving licence and I was admitted without losing any more points!



# Goosanders

*Hans Watson*



In April, I had the good fortune to spend a number of hours, with two pairs of Goosanders on a Scottish loch, and a small river that ran into the loch.. Although I have seen quite a few Goosanders over the years, they were not at close range, and the experience of watching these handsome ducks at about 30 feet in bright sunshine will not be forgotten.

It is hard to believe that Goosanders were not breeding in the British Isles 150 years ago, but there are now at least 2600 breeding pairs. Three years ago not many birdwatchers would have expected to see Goosanders in Norfolk outside the autumn and winter months and certainly not with ducklings in the breeding season. However, in May 2007 a Goosander with fluffy ducklings was seen on the River Little Ouse near Thetford, and one can only wonder if they will become regular breeders.

Watching these ducks at close range I could not help thinking that they were more grebe like than duck like. Unlike grebes though, they were fairly agile on land, clambering quickly over rocks to reach pools higher up the rapids. This of course, should not surprise anyone as Goosanders have no trouble clambering in and out of their nest holes in trees. Certainly they are just as efficient as grebes at catching fish, and it is probably this that has made them very unpopular with anglers. This is especially the case with those anglers specialising in game fishing, as young salmon and trout are high on the Goosander menu, and it is in these areas that licences are occasionally granted for Goosanders to be shot. A sad end for a bird that is far less numerous as a breeding bird than, for instance, the Kingfisher or Barn Owl.

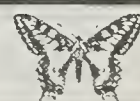
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## Strumpshaw Fen

*Brian Macfarlane*



It has been fairly quiet down at the ranch recently in terms of activity. The trick is to keep going because one time you might hit the jackpot. Yesterday was that odd occasion when something unusual happens, not by design, but luck of the moment. I was photographing from the fen hide anything that turns up as usual. I had already taken a lot of greylag flying shots, because that was one of the few birds on the menu for this day. This time it was slightly different, because one of the shots of the greylag turned out to be flying upside down, but the head was the right way up. Quite a feat! It was probably wiffing, against a strong wind which caught it and flipped it over. What could be called a mid wiffle. I have never seen a photo of it before, but I've seen geese wiffing many times on the North Norfolk coast.



Other photos taken on that day were greylag chasing, and taking off in unison. The coot was it's usual irritating self, chasing anything that came within 20 metres of it, and fighting with it's own kind. Black swans appeared, and started to mate in front of the hide. There was a lot of squabbling among the shelduck on the water in front of the tower hide. It happens mainly in the breeding season. Quite a busy day for a change!

Two days after the goose episode I returned to Strumpshaw for an early morning sortie. The two black swans were still hanging around on the water. During the morning a mute male swan kept swimming up the channel to be with his mate. Every time he came in view the two black swans swam over to intercept him, so he turned back the way he had come each time. After about an hour of this banter the mute decided to turn nasty, and chased the two blacks. The male retreated smartly leaving the female to face the male alone. Bad move! She was quickly sent packing the way she had come. I was amazed at the size between the two birds. You can see in the photo the big difference. After that he was quickly on his way to be reunited.

I went to Whitlingham lakes on another occasion where there were various goslings, and ducklings to be seen. There was one incident where a greylag gosling had been left behind when the parents took to the water. Another adult bird started to take an interest in it, and I feared it might try and kill it, so I walked towards them and they went into the water. The youngster was surrounded by several birds who looked menacing. So I went along the lake edge until I found the parents with their young, and had a word in their ear that they had left one behind. They dutifully set sail back from where they had come and the young one was reunited with the parents once again. I wondered if they would have found one another eventually, I didn't want to take that chance.

So you see it's not all watching paint dry, that's what keeps me going back hoping for the unexpected!

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## A crow, a woodpecker and a pheasant

*Tony Howes*



At this time of year many young birds are hatching and starting their lives, but some get predated, it may seem cruel to some people to see a small innocent creature caught and eaten, but that of course is nature's way. I saw this at first hand just a few days ago, when I was in the Strumpshaw fen hide. A pair of coots were keeping a careful eye on their newly hatched chicks, then over the reeds came a lone crow, he hovered over the coots, then dropped down and plucked one up as neat as you like, it was over in a few seconds, later it returned



and repeated the process.

Many colour variants of pheasant turn up at Strumpshaw, from pure white to almost black, but recently I managed to get an image of a bird that was a rich purple/blue shade. When the light caught it, it seemed almost metallic, so intense was the colour, such a shame to think such a beautiful creature may fall prey to a gun.

Recently a friend invited me to bring the camera round to his garden, as he has a pair of greater spotted woodpeckers visiting his feeders. I erected a hide and began the vigil, over the next few hours I had several visits, but only rarely would they adopt a good pose, being either at the back of the feeder or facing away from me. Then the female came round to the side and gave a good profile, nice light, good out of focus background, just what the doctor ordered, the camera gave a very satisfying click and the image was in the bag.

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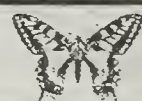
## **Colour Ringed Stonechats**

*Hans Watson*



In June I was walking on Kelling Heath and saw several colour-ringed Stonechats, and obtained photographs of two. As I am not very often in this area, I made some inquiries and found that Noel Elms has for some time been ringing Stonechats on Kelling Heath as an extension of a BTO ringing scheme in Breckland. The main purpose of the scheme is to provide information on the movements of the Stonechats.

Useful information has already been obtained, as a cock Stonechat that was ringed as a nestling by Ron Hoblyn on Cranwich Heath near Mundford on the 5th June 2008, was first located on Kelling Heath with a female on the 13th March 2009. This pair bred and their 4 nestlings were colour-ringed by Noel on the 6th May. The pair has since laid a second clutch of eggs. By a strange coincidence the two birds that I photographed were the cock bird from Cranwich and one of his four offspring, from his first nest. All the Stonechats ringed by Noel on Kelling Heath have a dark green ring and a metal ring on their right leg, and two colour ring combination on their left leg. If colour-ringed Stonechats with this combination of colours, are seen at other locations, I am sure that Noel Elms or the BTO would be interested to have the details.



# NATS' GALLERY: August 2009



**Asarabacca** *Asarum europaeum* (top) and **Greater Broomrape** *Orobanchae rapum-genistae* See article.

Photos: Mike Crewe.

**Carthusian  
Pink  
*Dianthus  
carthusianorum*  
(top), and  
Honey  
Garlic  
*Nectaroscordum  
siculum*.**

See article.

Photos: Mike Crewe







**Fringed  
Redmaids  
*Calandrinia  
ciliata*  
(top) and  
Indian Rhubarb  
*Darmera peltata*  
See article.  
Photos: Mike Crewe**





Chinese  
Angelica-tree  
*Aralia chinensis*  
(two top left).



Eastern Blue Sow-thistle  
*Cicerbita macrophylla* (right)  
and Orange ball-tree *Buddleja globosa* (below).





***Centaurea macrocephala***  
(top two).



**Large Pink Nerine *Nerine bowdenii***  
(above right).

**Giant Butterbur *Petasites japonicus***  
(bottom two).  
See article. All Photos: Mike Crewe.





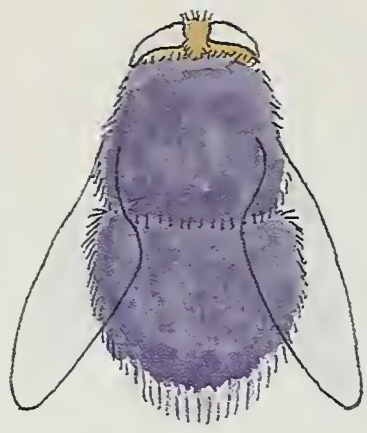
**Greylag  
Goose,  
Mute Swan**  
in pursuit of  
**Black Swan,**  
and **Coots.**  
See article.  
*Photos: Brian  
Macfarlane.*





**Grey Heron**  
with Mallard  
chick and Pike.  
See article.  
*Photos: Brian  
Macfarlane.*

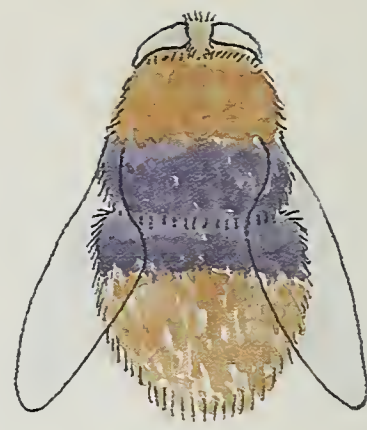




*validus*



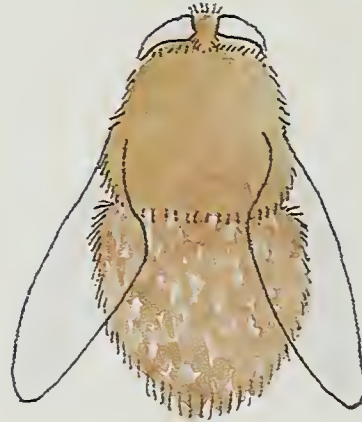
*hybrid*



*equestris*



*transversalis*



*narcissi*



**Greater Bulb-fly *Merodon equestris***

Above: Five colour forms; below: var *narcissi* mating:

**Ichneumon *Amblyteles armatorius*** left.

**Bumblebee *Bombus lucorum*** below left.

See article.

Photos & Illustration: Nick Owens.





**Greater Bulb-fly *Merodon equestris*** Left: var. *transversalis*; right: var. *equestris*.  
Photos: Nick Owens.



**Melanistic Common Pheasant, Carrion Crow with Coot chick and Great Spotted Woodpecker.** See article.  
Photos: Tony Howes.

**Bumblebee *Bombus* sp.** with a small beetle firmly attached to its tongue. It was having great difficulty in removing the hitch-hiker!  
Photo: Robin Stevenson.





**Southern  
Emerald**

Winterton North  
Dunes, toad pool,  
5 August 2009; it  
was not there the  
next day!

*Photos: Craig  
Robson.*





## Goosanders

See article.

Photos: Hans  
Watson.



**Silver-ground Carpet** *Xanthorhoe montanata*, Pensthorpe. Photo: Colin A. Jacobs.



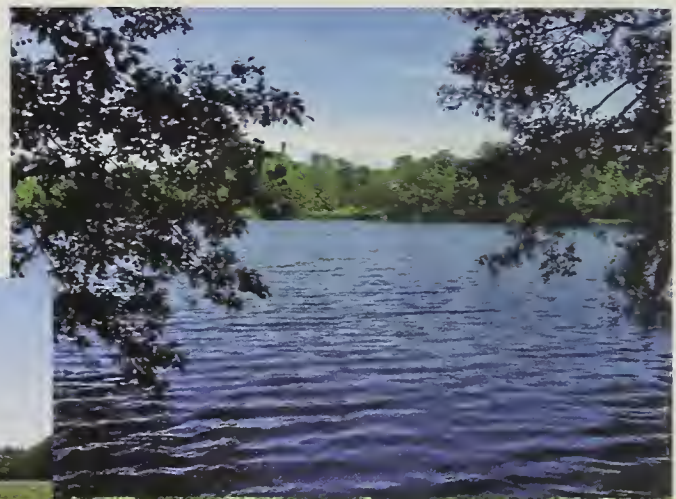
**Common Reed galled by  
Corkscrew Gall Mite**  
*Steneotarsonemus phragmitidis*. See  
article. Photo: Colin A. Jacobs.

The **NNNS field meeting** at Sea Mere on 2 June offered a chance to visit a rich site that is usually closed to the public. Clockwise: the wildflower meadow, the lake, NNNS party on the turf meadow, and Yellow Flag. See article. *Photos: Stephen Martin.*

### **Painted Lady**

Parts of the county experienced a massive immigration early in the summer.

*Photo: Simon Harrap/norfolknature.co.uk.*



**STONECHAT** at Kelling Heath. This juvenile has been colour-ringed, and colour-ringing has started to offer fascinating insights into the origins and movements of Norfolk's Stonechat. See article. *Photos: Hans Watson.*



# A close encounter with a Muntjac

*Giles Dunmore*

I was standing on the cliff edge on 30th April just before 0600 hours by the Beeston Regis caravan site (having just seen a Spoonbill flying east close over the sea) when I saw a Muntjac some distance away running westwards along the cliff path. The deer kept on running 15-20 yards, stopping, looking around and then running again. I was interested to see how close it would come before realising I was standing there. At that time of day there was no one else around and it kept on coming closer. All the time I kept motionless, watching it through my binoculars. It stopped about 10 yards away and I thought that would be the closest it would approach. To my utter amazement it ran to the side of me 2 feet away and then stopped again! I thought what do I do now - I slowly looked down and the deer looked up at me. Its reaction was predictable; it ran eastwards at great speed until it was some 200 yards distant!

I subsequently saw a Hooded Crow flying eastwards at 0630 hours and 3 Mediterranean Gulls (2 adults and a 1st-summer) moving west at 0700 hours. A morning to remember.

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## Book shelf fillers for free!

NNNS member Mike Crewe has left for the 'other side of the pond' ie USA to take up a post at Cape May Bird Observatory. In doing so he has had to leave things behind and before he left he passed the following on to me to give to members who may wish to have them:

- NNNS Transactions:** 1998-2001, 2007  
**NNNS Bird & Mammal Report:** 1982-1995 (2x 1993), 1997-2000 (3x 1999)  
**Suffolk Natural History:** 1969-1978, 1983-1990, 1992-1994, 1997-1998  
**Suffolk Birds:** 1979-1983, 1985, 1999  
**Transactions of the Suffolk Naturalist Society:** 1942-46, 1949-1968  
**Essex Bird Report:** 1988, 1991-1992, 1994-1995

If any of the above is of interest please contact me on 01263 823775 or email: [francis.f@virgin.net](mailto:francis.f@virgin.net) to arrange collection or possible delivery from Sheringham.

*Francis Farrow*

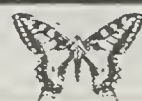


# White-tailed Eagle introduction to East Anglia

*Ian Keymer*

Don Dorling and I have discussed the articles opposing our views from Mark Cocker, Richard Mabey and Robert Lucking in the last issue of "Natterjack". With respect, we feel that they have overlooked or disregarded a number of important points concerning the introduction of this species to N.W. Norfolk.

1. The comparison with the red kite is false, because the direct hand of man largely eliminated that species; consequently a re-introduction by man could arguably seem appropriate.
2. Whilst archaeological evidence might indicate that these magnificent eagles once roamed East Anglia in the distant past, we know of no evidence that their demise was due to persecution by man. However, this does apply to N. W. Scotland, where their extinction was the direct result of man's activities. In many parts of England, changes in land use over the centuries have removed suitable habitat and prey.
3. The countryside is a working environment where farmers need to grow food for an ever-increasing population. At the same time they need to maintain as much biological diversity as possible. Producing food (which includes livestock rearing) especially for the local population, reduces our dependence on imported foodstuffs and is therefore environmentally friendly.
4. Poultry and pigs reared in outside units would be a readily available and easy prey for these eagles. If attacked, the results would create serious welfare problems for these domestic stock. Panic and injuries would occur and the financial loss could be a devastating blow to this form of environmentally friendly farming.
5. I agree that landowners, including numerous farmers, but also the Ministry of Defence, National Trust, Norfolk Wildlife Trust etc do indeed own an enormous amount of land in Norfolk and Suffolk. Thank goodness they do, because access to most of these properties is limited. This enables many species of flora and fauna to survive undisturbed. If access was not restricted, unfortunately there would always be a minority of people who would abuse the freedom of access, often for political reasons or due to ignorance.
6. Both Don Dorling and I have lived in the Norfolk countryside for over 50 years of our long lives. We have certainly not noticed the "downward trend in the numbers of visits to the countryside" referred to by Mr Lucking; quite the opposite in fact. Has he never visited our coastlines, especially in the summer?
7. White-tailed eagles are strong fliers and if introduced to N.W. Norfolk would have no difficulty in flying to the RSPB reserves in S.E. Suffolk and Lincolnshire, where bitterns and numerous other wetland species would be just as vulnerable to attack as those in Norfolk.
8. These eagles should not be used as a tool to increase tourism. Norfolk and Suffolk do not need more twitchers visiting the area carrying food for the day. More welcome, are tourists who come to stay for a few days holiday and who avoid ground-nesting birds, that at present are under so much pressure from walkers along the coast.



I have been intensely interested in natural history, since I was a small child being taken round Norfolk lanes by my mother in a pushchair. I agree wholeheartedly with all your recent correspondents including Mr Lucking, that we should be "fostering a greater appreciation of the countryside". However, I do not feel that introducing more predators to the countryside is the answer, especially when so many prey species (small birds in particular) are losing suitable habitat both in their breeding and wintering areas. Also the presence of more predators will only encourage illegal persecution of these birds. I am grateful to, and not envious of, those numerous landowners who spend so much of their time and money caring for our wildlife. They need our help and encouragement.

And.....

*Handbook of British Birds by Witherby, Jourdain, Ticehurst and Tucker, Second Edition, Volume 3 Page 91. 1943*

*Food. Prey records in Britain mainly coastal. Fish, living or stranded. Grey Gurnard, Salmon, Cod. Lambs, rabbits, carrion, domestic poultry. ducks, hare, sandpiper, wood pigeon, kittiwakes and other gulls, guillemot, puffin, grouse and coot.*

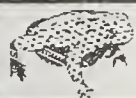
*Foreign records from coastal and inland eyries include dogs, foxes, roe deer, squirrels, mole and hedgehog. Mallard, teal merganser, eider, great crested grebe, hooded and carrion crows, rook, lapwing, curlew, terns, heron, osprey, blackbird and fresh and saltwater fish. (End of quote)*

Many of the above suggested prey items are themselves on red or amber lists and it is suggested that a pair of established Sea Eagles could devastate most of Norfolk's colonies of terns, lapwings, avocets etc in a single season. It is only 3 or 4 years since a single rogue Kestrel wiped out the protected little tern chicks on Yarmouth beach.

What further evidence do misguided and apparently under informed people require to convince them of the folly of introducing such a predator to such a sensitive area as the North Norfolk coastal belt? Or are they determined to destroy what the county already has in the interests of short term eco tourism?

Put it another way. If 90% of the population supports the introduction of Sea Eagles, what percentage of the 90 would be able to tell the difference between a Sea Eagle and a Griffon Vulture? Would they care if they could not?

Alec Bull



Or.....

I have been following the debate concerning the possible introduction of White-tailed Eagle to east Anglia with interest and not a little sadness and concern.

I suppose that part of my sadness is that well known folk in the Norfolk naturalist community have come out so heavily against what should be an exciting development, some, using language that one normally expects from the hunting lobby or 'Songbird Survival'.

The concerns seem to be centred around two notions;

- that there is doubt that White-tailed eagle ever bred in East Anglia.
- predictions about the scale of devastation White-tailed Eagle would cause to the Norfolk avifauna and to farm stock or shooting interests.

What is without doubt is that White-tailed Eagle has not bred in East Anglia for at least several hundred years. However, given the species abundance in wetland areas and in river valleys throughout its range and particularly within continental Europe it is just about impossible to believe that it was not present in both the broads and the fens in times gone by, or that it could not survive here now, albeit in small numbers.

The development of the great fen project will undoubtedly provide additional suitable habitat

As for the issue about the devastation white-tailed eagle would cause, for sure they would have an impact. But how much?

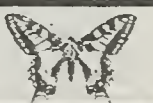
White-tailed Eagle has a daily food requirement of 500-600g<sup>(1)</sup>. That is only some six and a half times more than say the Common Buzzard's 90g<sup>(2)</sup> or the similar sized Marsh Harrier. I accept that the eagle is likely to take larger prey (including perhaps Marsh Harrier) but it is also much more likely to take carrion, of which there appears to be no shortage in Norfolk!

Marsh Harrier is doing very well in East Anglia while Common Buzzard is also increasing with apparently little impact on other creatures - or at least I have not heard calls from conservation organisations to halt the increase in numbers or the spread into alternate habitat.

What is needed is serious consideration of ways of mitigating problems as have been developed in other areas where White-tailed Eagle or other raptors have been released.

No doubt there are those who would persecute these birds. But this is nothing new and we should not use this as an excuse to abandon this project. We should simply insist that the law is upheld and encourage the law enforcement agencies to do their job. After all persecution is not restricted to released birds.

However, for me there is a more fundamental issue. Should we engage in re-introductions at all or should we simply allow species to re-colonise as and when they are able? Human interference has been the main cause of species extinctions over the past few



hundred years through persecution or habitat destruction. Now it is human 'interference' of a different kind. It all feels somewhat arbitrary to me. We can tolerate some species but not others.

I have to admit to thoroughly enjoying seeing Red Kites and Ospreys without having to travel huge distances and am excited by the thought that the Corncrakes re-introduced into the Fens might spread. I also admit that I would thrill to see White-tailed Eagle regularly soaring over East Anglia. I am just not sure any of it is right.

I do not pretend to have the answers. This is not straightforward. However I believe we should give careful consideration to this project rather than dismissing it out of hand. Furthermore, I would strongly urge all members of the naturalist community to avoid providing ammunition to those who believe that predators of any kind have no place in nature and would like a return to the destruction of all beasts 'red in tooth and claw'.

Lets give this careful consideration. It may not be right or feasible, but nevertheless lets consider it because it could just be the most fantastic project.

*Colin Jones*

#### References:

- (1) Cramp et al (1980) - Birds of the Western Palearctic, Vol II, p53
- (2) Cramp et al (1980) - Birds of the Western Palearctic, Vol II, p182

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## NNNS Research Committee Meetings

The Research Committee will be holding the following meetings at Flordon Common and Southrepps Common:

**Sun August 2nd:** Southrepps Common  
(joint meeting with the Society at 11 am)

**Thu Sept 3rd:** Flordon Common

**Sat Oct 3rd:** Southrepps.

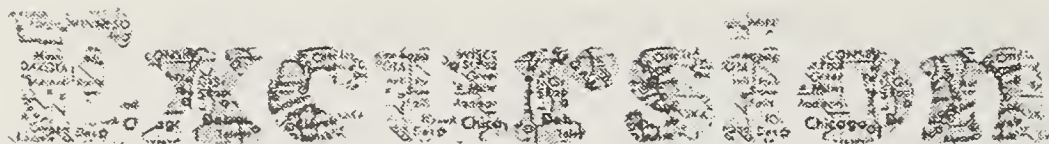
Meetings start at 10.30 am, unless otherwise stated and all specialisms are welcome.

The meeting place for Flordon Common is TM181974. The gate is on the north edge of the common, on the east side of the road.

The meeting place for Southrepps Common is TG260351. Small car park at edge of common on east side of road.

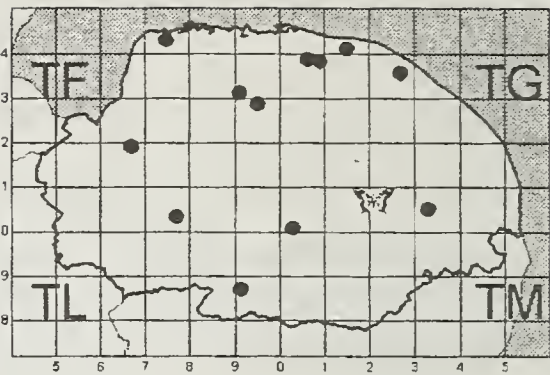
If anyone wishes to visit the sites independently of these dates, can they please contact either Mary Ghullam or Bob Ellis (for contact details see the front cover).





# Reports

● 2009-10 Field Meeting location  
 St. Andrew's Hall  
 Eaton  
 Indoor meetings



## Wild Flowers Revealed No. 20 Holt Hall

Sunday May 17<sup>th</sup> 2009  
 Leader: Dr. Bob Leaney

The inclement weather forecast must have deterred several people from coming to Holt Hall as we didn't quite make double figures, about half our normal number for these popular meetings. As it was raining when we arrived we all put our waterproofs on; a decision we soon regretted as it quickly cleared up and turned out to be fine dry day.

Holt Hall Field Studies Centre is part of the Environmental and Outdoor Learning Team within Norfolk County Council's children's services department.

We were met by Chris Wright who is the project manager for 'Roots and Shoots'. This project is helping to bring life to Holt Halls Victorian walled garden. The project aims to be a source of inspiration to all visiting schools, producing high quality examples of how to grow fruit and vegetables organically, in ways that schools can replicate in their own environments.

Chris asked if we would like to have a look around the walled garden before we set off, and just as we entered Chris pointed out Mossy Stonecrop (*Crassula tillaea*) growing on the path. Although not infrequent in west Norfolk on acid sandy tracks it is still a nationally scarce species. A little further on a patch of Oxalis leaves covered a sizable area of ground. There were no flowers to help with identification, so a few samples were taken for further study. At least two species were identified: Least Yellow-sorrel (*Oxalis exilis*) and Upright Yellow-sorrel (*Oxalis stricta*). A further visit could help to identify other species.

The north facing wall had several species growing on it, the commonest of these being many plants of Hart's-tongue fern (*Phyllitis scolopendrium*) along with various garden primulas and Wall Speedwell (*Veronica arvensis*) growing where its name suggests rather than its usual terrestrial location. A patch of rough ground just outside the walled garden contained several spikes of the grass, Squirreltail Fescue (*Vulpia bromoides*) along with Fig-leaved Goosefoot (*Chenopodium ficifolium*) and Fat Hen (*Chenopodium album*) for comparison.





We crossed into a small area of woodland and could smell the presence of the next species before it was seen. This was Ramsons (*Allium ursine*) the common name is derived from an old word meaning 'rank'. Referring not just to the odour but also to the flavour of the milk from any cow that eats it. Also noted growing here was Three-nerved Sandwort (*Moehringia trinerva*), the tiny seeds of which have an oily appendage which makes them attractive to ants, helping with its dispersal.

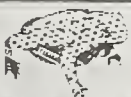
We soon passed on to a large area of grass which is used as a campsite. The grass beneath the trees had remained uncut and allowed for the identification of several grasses including: Sweet Vernal-grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Giant Fescue (*Festuca gigantea*), Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra* agg.), Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*), Smooth Meadow-grass (*Poa pratensis*) and Rough Meadow-grass (*Poa trivialis*) as well as many plants of Field Wood-rush (*Luzula campestris*), *Luzula* is said to be derived from the Italian word for a glow-worm, *lucciola* as when they are covered by dew or rain in the morning, they are thought to look as if alight with glow-worms.

An area of grass at the bottom at the far end of the meadow had been left as a wild flower meadow and contained several plants of Yellow Rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*) along with Common Bird's-foot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*) and Oxeye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*).

Moving into a small area of conifers gave us a chance to compare Corsican Pine (*Pinus nigra*) with Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*.) A little further on in an area of ancient coppiced woodland there were several oaks with various shaped leaves. Bob Ellis and Bob Leaney looked at several leaves from different trees and found there were not just Turkey Oak (*Quercus cerris*), Sessile Oak (*Quercus petraea*) and Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) but also the hybrid, Sessile Oak with Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus x rosacea*).

Our attention was drawn to a fungus pushing through the leaf litter. Bob Ellis was consulted and explained it was the start of a Stinkhorn (*Phallus impudicus*.) Cutting it neatly in half with a sharp knife, Bob showed us the compact structure contained therein before it bursts forth!

As we walked along the edge of the wood a small patch of Lily-of-the-valley (*Convallaria majalis*) was noted, and just beyond these were several splendid specimens of Broad Buckler ferns (*Dryopteris dilatata*) looking like large green shuttlecocks. At this point a Cuckoo was heard, and seen flying overhead. The path then led down to the first of the lakes. Bob Leaney discovered that the muddy margin was softer and deeper than it first looked! But he also discovered several specimens of Orange Balsam (*Impatiens capensis*), a new record for this part of Norfolk. Also known as Jewel-weed, it was first seen in Britain in 1822. Spreading north from the Thames, it was apparently introduced into Norfolk in 1927 and has since spread into the Broads and rivers.



Besides holding inquisitive botanists, this boggy area also contained Marsh-marigold (*Caltha palustris*), Celery-leaved Buttercup (*Ranunculus sceleratus*), Water-cress (*Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum* agg.), Lesser pond-sedge (*Carex acutiformis*) and Remote Sedge (*Carex remota*).

A convenient low wall made an ideal spot for lunch, with pleasant views over fields and similar conversation. As we set off again, a single leaf of Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*) was seen, but plenty of the fine leaves of Pignut (*Conopodium majus*) were growing along the path for several metres. A colony of Wych Elms (*Ulmus glabra*) was growing at the far end of the lake. Unlike most elms, Wych elm reproduces itself by seed rather than suckers from the roots of the parent tree; this means of propagation has given wych elm a greater resistance to Dutch elm disease.

In this area of the grounds there are the remains of an Augustinian priory with a low wall marking the boundaries of the gardens of a pair of cottages built on the original site. The lakes in the grounds have been artificially formed to originally provide carp ponds for the priory but in Victorian times have been used to provide water for the hall. Several violets were growing on a bank just here; these were Common Dog-violet (*Viola riviniana*), and just beyond these on a bank sloping down to the larger lake was a wonderful display of Bluebells (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) interspersed with Red Campion (*Silene dioica*). Moving round to the other side of the lake we encountered quite a large patch of Great Wood-rush (*Luzula sylvatica*). Although there were several plants here covering a fair sized area, it is quite a rare plant of damp woodlands and adjacent hedgerows.

We followed the small stream that feeds the lakes, finding Bog Stitchwort (*Stellaria uliginosa*) scattered along the bank, with Lady Fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*) growing on the higher drier side. On a grassy slope near here were many plants of Mouse-ear-hawkweed (*Pilosella officinarum*).

On passing the hall we lost some of our party who on seeing their cars decided to escape further intense botanising and a dwindling group entered another piece of woodland. Here we found the first piece of Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*) of the day, and just beyond that was a patch of Wood Meadow-grass (*Poa nemoralis*). A little further into the woodland we encountered Sanicle (*Sanicula europaea*) and Early Dog Violet (*Viola reichenbachiana*). At this point, even we few stalwarts decided to call it a day and return to the cars, glad to divest ourselves of superfluous garments.

First thanks should go to the staff of Holt Hall for facilitating our visit; to Bob Leaney for leading another interesting excursion, and to Bob Ellis for keeping a record of the plants seen and also for his help in identifying the more difficult species.

Bill Mitchell



# Brettenham Heath

Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May, 2009



Access to the 200-hectare Brettenham Heath NNR is gained ideally from the car park in High Bridgham Road, but much of the reserve is closed between March and October during the bird breeding season, including the eastern section adjacent to the car park. So participants' vehicles had to decelerate and turn instead, a little alarmingly, off a particularly straight, fast and busy dualled stretch of the A11 trunk road through a five-barred gate onto a north-south unmetalled track flanked by two western blocks of the reserve. Fortunately, Mike Taylor of Natural England was most helpfully on hand on a cloudless morning to signal the 18 or so members of the Society and the Lowestoft Field Club off the main road to safe parking by the track.

Over half the Brettenham Heath reserve comprises acid grassland, the rest being chalk grassland or heather heathland, all on sands overlying the chalk bedrock. The central and eastern parts provide one of the best examples of patterned ground in the UK, with strips and polygons of chalk and acid soil. The soils overlying the chalk bedrock vary in depth from a few centimetres in the east/south to several metres in the west/north. Unfortunately, our activities had to be limited to two largely acidic western blocks of grassland, where one might expect the flora (about 240 plant species recorded on the Reserve as a whole) to be less rich than on the closed, more chalk-influenced sections. Indeed this proved to be so, though 117 species were in fact seen.

In our search for Breckland specialities, it was disappointing not to come across Fine-leaved Sandwort *Minuartia hybrida*, nor did we re-find Maiden Pink *Dianthus deltoides*, not seen on the reserve for several years. We did find Mossy Stonecrop *Crassula tillaea* along the track however, and, not unprecedentedly, the trackways proved possibly more interesting than the grassland blocks on each side, yielding Dropwort *Filipendula vulgaris*, Field Mouse-ear *Cerastium arvense*, Lady's Bedstraw *Galium verum*, Sand Spurrey *Spergularia rubra*, Bird's-foot *Ornithopus perpusillus* and Mouse-ear Hawkweed *Pilosella officinarum*. The largely acidic nature of the grassland blocks was underlined by the presence there of such plants as Tormentil *Potentilla erecta*, Heath Groundsel *Senecio sylvaticus*, Sheep's Sorrel *Rumex acetosella*, Climbing Corydalis *Ceratocarpus claviculata* and much Heath Bedstraw *Galium saxatile*. It was nice to see Harebell *Campanula rotundifolia* in evidence. We recorded four *Festuca* grass species and sub-species, but more interestingly Mary Ghullam found a gall on one of these which Rex Hancy has subsequently identified as *Tetramesa brevicollis*, commenting that finding galls on grasses is unusual and that each *Tetramesa* species usually galls one grass species only.

A Brown Hare was put up and Curlews called and circled – a Lowestoft member coming across a nest with eggs at lunchtime. There were lots of Small Heath and some Copper butterflies, but 24<sup>th</sup> May 2009 proved to be a memorable Painted Lady day. Members scattered across the Brettenham site noticed a steady stream of rather pale migrating examples all heading north to north-west, though no count as such was made.

Stephen Martin



# Sea Mere



Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2009

Sea Mere Farm, not far from Hingham and south of the B1108 road, includes a 20-acre circular lake formed by glacial action which is almost surrounded by a 50-acre belt of ancient woodland, 35 acres of which fall within the Sea Mere SSSI. The meeting here was no less than the twenty-first in the Society's 'Wild Flowers Revealed' series of plant identification days, led this time by Arthur Copping and supported again by the Norfolk Flora Group. The site also includes the sedge-rich Turf Meadows, and the meeting, while helping participants identify plants generally, laid special emphasis on grasses and sedges.

Despite, or possibly due to, its being scheduled for a weekday, and no doubt also because the SSSI is not open to the public, the meeting was excellently attended and the car park full (I counted 23 participants, but possibly there were even more initially), and they were rewarded by a rich, varied site. The glorious weather made it unnecessary to use the Study Centre - devoted to gardening courses, natural history events and educational visits - for eating our packed lunches.

After a few words about the Centre and site from Michael Watson, we proceeded to the east of the Mere past a meadow plentifully and colourfully sown with a 'pollen and nectar mix' of such species as Red Clover, Ox-eye Daisy, Bird's-foot Trefoil and Common Poppy, though we didn't record this area. Later in the day however, Mandy Gluth of Butterfly Conservation and others saw two Clouded Yellow butterflies there, not to mention Brimstones, Painted Ladies, Common Blues and others, and also Speckled Woods in the nearby woodland. We next made our way along the track through this woodland fringing the lake, with much of botanical interest (and many frogs) to see *en route*. The species that caused most ruminating and consulting of floras was eventually decided to be Giant Bellflower *Campanula latifolia*, not yet anywhere near in flower. One member explained that the specific element in *Veronica beccabunga*, plentiful in wet areas of the path, translates as 'pungent mouth', but when I fearlessly nibbled a little of the plant in the interests of science, I have to say it tasted innocuously leafy and little more. Eventually we emerged into a corner of Turf Meadow, resplendent before we even began to look closely for its treasures with ample patches of Yellow Flag *Iris pseudacorus* and Common Cottongrass *Eriophorum angustifolium*, plus spikes of Early Marsh Orchid *Dactylorhiza incarnata* subsp. *incarnata* - always pleasant to see for those who fear it may be a contracting species in terms of numbers of both plants and sites in the county.

174 plant species eventually found their way onto Bob Ellis's record sheet, so this short account must necessarily be very selective. Among them, participants were introduced to or re-acquainted with no less than 13 *Carex* and *Cladium* sedges and 23 grasses, so the meeting did indeed aid in the identification of these families. Both Floating and Plicate Sweet-grass (*Glyceria fluitans* and *G. notata*) were seen, but also their much scarcer hybrid, *G. x pedicellata*, which the 1999 *Flora of Norfolk* recorded as having been found at that time only 5 times in the county, most recently in 1972. Later, Water Whorl-grass *Catabrosa aquatica* was found - a little less uncommon, but still only 'scattered' in Norfolk. We had to negotiate a narrow-ish plank



over a ditch to earn the right to confirm that the scarce Fibrous Tussock sedge *Carex appropinquata* and also the Slender Sedge *C. lasiocarpa*, the latter rare in eastern and northern Britain, were both still extant at Sea Mere. Many other less scarce plants in Turf Meadow were enjoyed by the party, including Green Figwort *Scrophularia umbrosa*, and plant species were supplemented by the finding of various galls and cucumber and nursery web spiders.

Many thanks to Michael and Judy Watson for the rare opportunity to visit Sea Mere, and to Arthur for organising and leading a most enjoyable and profitable excursion.

Stephen Martin

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## Survey Spotlight

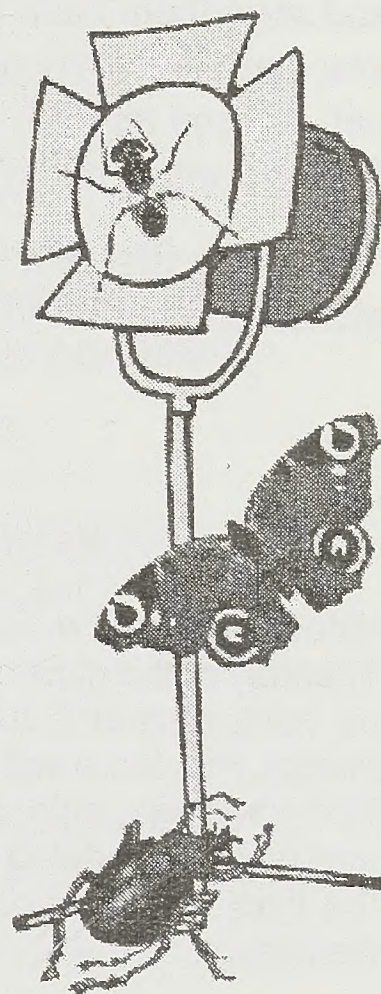
### Calling all hogggers – the N&NNS launches its own survey!

Having spent the last two years writing articles about the contribution that we can make by collecting records on behalf of other organisations, it gives me great pleasure to announce the launch of the first N&NNS general participation survey, which is focussing on the status of the Hedgehog in Norfolk.

These are worrying times for one of the UK's most recognisable and widely loved mammals, recently added to the list of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species, as evidence of its decline continues to mount. National Game Bag Census data, analysed by the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust, show that the number of Hedgehogs controlled on shooting estates since the 1960s has fallen by 49%, with English and Welsh populations faring particularly badly. Meanwhile, the Mammals on Roads survey, run by the People's Trust for Endangered Species, recorded a 25% drop in the number of Hedgehog road casualties between 2001 and 2006.

So why are Hedgehogs in decline? Their deteriorating conservation status is probably due to a combination of factors dependent on the habitats in which they live. In farmland areas, increased pesticide use and the loss of field margins may have reduced the amount of food available to them, while the destruction of hedgerows has left populations isolated, increasing the risk of local extinctions. Urban habitats are also becoming less enticing, as the overgrown, unkempt gardens and brownfield sites that once provided food and shelter are tidied up or developed.

Rather than curling up in a ball and hoping the danger will go away, with your help we can actually do something about it! In order to monitor the changes in their



fortunes in Norfolk, we need to build up an accurate picture of where they are now. While we have historic records from 700 tetrads in the county, last year we only received records from 139 of these. We urgently need to find out whether the Hedgehogs have disappeared from these sites, and whether they've colonised any new ones.

You should have received your survey forms with the most recent mailing, so all you have to do is fill them in with details of the date and location of any Hedgehogs, live or dead (or even just their droppings), that you see anywhere in Norfolk and send them back to me. If you fill your form up and need another one, then you can visit [www.nnns.org.uk/recording/opportunities.html](http://www.nnns.org.uk/recording/opportunities.html) and print a new one out, or send an SAE to me at The Nunnery, Thetford, Norfolk, IP24 2PU. Feel free to contact me at [surveys@nnns.org.uk](mailto:surveys@nnns.org.uk) if you have any questions.

This is the first of a series of regular surveys that the N&NNS will be developing - please do your bit to help make it a success!

*Dave Leech,*  
Norfolk Mammal Recorder

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## OUR NEW INDOOR MEETINGS VENUE

Indoor talks and meetings in 2009-2010 will normally be held at 7.30p.m. on the second Tuesday of the month from October to March inclusive. Photographic Group meetings will be held, also at 7.30p.m., on the fourth Tuesday of the month over the same period, except that there will be no meeting of the Group in December. The Society's 2009/10 field meetings, indoor talks and other events were listed on your pink Programme Card and those scheduled for the autumn onwards now appear updated and in more detail on the flyer, *Programme of Events, Oct 2009 – March 2010*, enclosed with this issue of *Natterjack*.

Unless stated otherwise on the card and flyer, all indoor meetings will be held at:

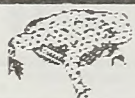
**ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH HALL, CHURCH LANE, EATON,  
NORWICH NR4 6NW.**

For a parking plan of our new venue and directions for those driving to our meetings there, see the October 2009 – March 2010 events flyer.

St. Andrew's Hall can also be reached by bus. At the time of writing (June 2009), the relevant timings are:-

From Norwich St. Stephens:	Route 15	- 6.25 p.m
From Norwich Bus Station:	Route 14B	- 7.13 p.m.
From Wymondham Cross:	Route 14B	- 6.38 p.m.
From Hethersett Mill Road:	Route 14B	- 6.49 p.m.

Alight, from either direction, at Eaton War Memorial/Unthank Road. Then walk down the slip road into Eaton Village and turn left into Church Lane. Church Hall is a few yards past Waitrose on the right.



After the meeting:-

To Norwich (from Eaton War Memorial stop) - about 9.00 p.m. or about 10.00 p.m.

To Wymondham ( ditto ) - about 9.15 p.m. or about 10.15 p.m.

We hope the new venue will prove more convenient and convivial, especially as kitchen facilities on site mean we shall be able to offer tea and coffee at most meetings, at a small cost.

Stephen Martin,  
Programme Committee Secretary.



The next issue of *'The Norfolk Natterjack'* will be November 2009. Please send all articles and notes to the editor as soon as possible by

**October 1<sup>st</sup> 2009** to the following address:

Francis Farrow, 'Heathlands', 6 Havelock Road, Sheringham,  
Norfolk, NR26 8QD Email: [francis.f@virgin.net](mailto:francis.f@virgin.net)

Please send all photographic material to:  
Simon Harrap, 1 Norwich Road, Edgefield,  
Melton Constable, Norfolk, NR22 2RP Email: [harrap@onetel.net](mailto:harrap@onetel.net)

## Membership subscriptions

The N&NNS membership year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March. During this time members will receive four copies of the quarterly *Natterjack* newsletter, and annual copies of the Transactions of the Society, and the Norfolk Bird & Mammal Report.

**Membership renewals** are due on *1<sup>st</sup> April each year* and should be sent to the treasurer:

- David Richmond, 42 Richmond Rise, Reepham, Norfolk, NR10 4LS.

**New memberships** should be sent to:

- David Paull, 8 Lindford Drive, Eaton, Norwich, NR4 6LT.

**Current rates are £12 for individual and family memberships** (£15 for groups, £18.50 overseas).

*Cheques payable to: Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society.*

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