

High Batts

Annual Report 2024



Published by
High Batts Nature Reserve



© High Batts Nature Reserve 2026

c/o Secretary:

Jane Mathewson, 5 Victoria Terrace, North Road, Ripon, HG4 1JP

This publication is copyright. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of the Publisher.

The editorial team thanks the late Peter Hills for providing the map of the Reserve and Laurie Reed for the map of the Recording Area.

Title page: Robin, *Trevor Baker*

Published by High Batts Nature Reserve

Charity No. 1151676

Compiled and edited by John Drewett
johndrewett@btinternet.com

Printed by North Yorkshire Document Management Centre

Contents

Trustees, Officers & Recorders	4
Contact Information	5
The importance of SSSIs for Nature Conservation	6
Report from the Chair	10
Reserve Management Report	14
Fungi	21
Flowering Plants	27
Butterflies	33
Moths	41
Damselflies and Dragonflies	49
Plant Galls	51
Other Insects and Invertebrates	55
Fish, Amphibians, Reptiles and Crustacea	87
Birds	89
Bird Ringing Report	118
Mammals	123
High Batts Nature Reserve: General Information	129
Membership of High Batts	130
Location Names Shown on Recording Area Map	132

Trustees, Officers & Recorders: 2024

Trustees

Peter Bowman

Alwin Knowles Secretary

Terry Marsh Treasurer

Ray O'Donnell

Colin Slator Chairman

Stuart Ward

Marian Wooding

Stephen Worwood

Ex-officio Officers: Colin Slator (Reserve Manager), Robert Adams (Warden), Ron Weeks (Assistant Warden), Marian Wooding (Membership Secretary), Alwin Knowles (Newsletter Editor), Pat Rumbold (Minute Secretary), Steve Black (Bird Record Collation), David Mitchell (Website).

Honorary Life Members: Richy Graham, Colin Slator

Recorders: Laurie Reed and Pandora Thoresby (*Botany*), Sally Driscoll (*Butterflies*), Nick Gaunt (*Mosses & Liverworts*), Trevor Baker (*Insects other than Lepidoptera, Odonata and Plant Galls*), John Drewett (*Plant Galls*), Robert Adams (*Mammals*), Ron Weeks (*Fish, Amphibians and Reptiles*), Karen Hargreave (*Moths*), Stephen Worwood (*Dragonflies and Damselflies*), Adrian Bennett (*Fungi*), Patricia Rumbold & Peter Bowman (*Birds*).

Contact Information

Robert Adams	17 Kirkby Avenue, Ripon, HG4 2DR	01765 600632
Trevor Baker	The Cedars, Forest Court, Pateley Bridge, HG3 5RE	01423 711217 hbinv@btinternet.com
Adrian Bennett	Greystones, 5 Aldborough Rd., Boroughbridge, YO51 9EA	01423 324011
Peter Bowman	13 Renton Close, Bishop Monkton, Harrogate, HG3 3UB	01765 676164 peter.bowman@highbatts.org.uk
John Drewett	No Man's Common, Arrathorne, Bedale, DL8 1NA	01677 451886 johndrewett@btinternet.com
Sally Driscoll	Ryecroft, Whitegate Lane, Marton-le-Moor, HG4 5AT	01423 324829 sallydriscoll60@gmail.com
Nick Gaunt	Green Ridge Cott, The Green, Nun Monkton, York YO26 8EW	07587 226336 drnickgaunt@gmail.com
Karen Hargreave	The Coach House, Asenby, Thirsk, YO7 3QL	07340 378278 karenhargreave@aol.com
Alwin Knowles	Mayfield Farm, Wilsill, Harrogate HG3 5EB	07849 250077 admin@highbatts.org.uk
Andrea Mapplebeck		info@andreacm.co.uk
Terry Marsh	Crofters Ghyll, Fellbeck, Harrogate HG3 5EL	01423 711690 treasurer@highbatts.org.uk
Ray O'Donnell	5 Watermill Close, North Stainley, Ripon, HG4 3LD	01765 635387 ray.odonnell@highbatts.org.uk
Pat Rumbold	Mayville, Fishergreen, Ripon, HG4 1NL	01765 604220 pat.rumbold@highbatts.org.uk
Colin Slator	Broadacres, Kirby Hill, Boroughbridge, YO51 9DH	07484 792858 colin.slator@highbatts.org.uk
Pandora Thoresby & Laurie Reed	Riverton, Langthorpe, Boroughbridge, YO51 9BH	01423 325368 home@yorkstock.plus.com
Stuart Ward	26, Racecourse Marina, Boroughbridge Rd., Ripon HG4 1UG	07748 962830 stuart.ward@highbatts.org.uk
Jill Warwick	Sharow Grange, Sharow, Ripon, HG4 5BN	07817 155731 jill@swland.co.uk
Ron Weeks	42, Moorside Dale, Ripon, HG4 2RZ	07425 170242 ron2396@talktalk.net
Marian Wooding	55 Kirkby Drive, Ripon, HG4 2DP	07920 282003 membershipsecretary@highbatts.org.uk
Stephen Worwood	Dudley House, 18, Coltsgate Hill, Ripon, HG4 2AB	01765 6025181 stephenworwood@outlook.com

The importance of SSSIs for Nature Conservation – a Natural England perspective

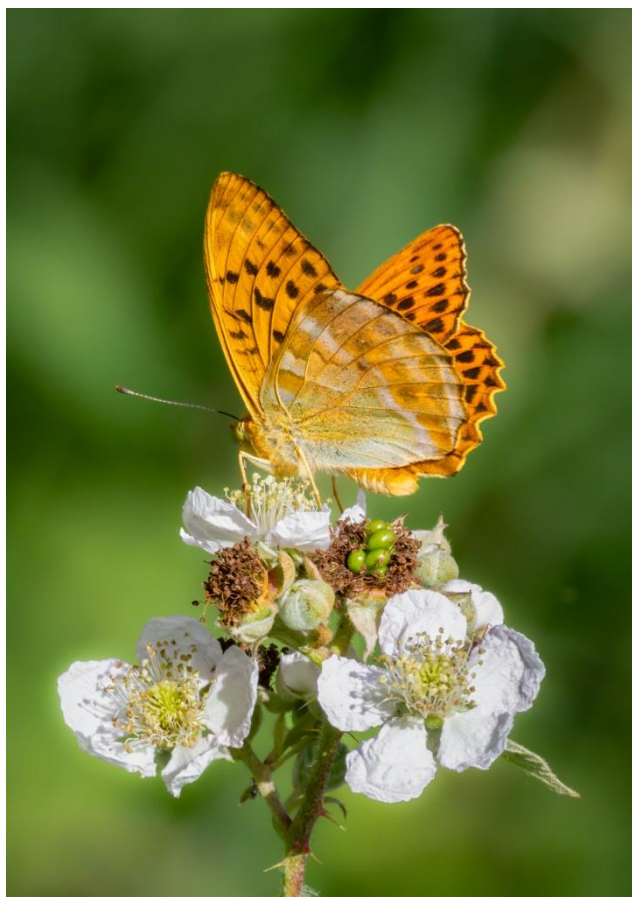
Dr Anne Readshaw

Members of High Batts Nature Reserve don't need me to tell them what a wonderful place it is, with an abundance of biodiversity that is so rarely encountered nowadays. It feels like an oasis, where plants, birds, insects and other wildlife are encouraged to thrive, in a variety of habitats. It's no surprise then, that High Batts plays a national role in nature conservation, through its designation as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

SSSIs began to be set up ('designated' or 'notified') in the UK after the Second World War, as it became apparent that nature-rich sites and vulnerable species were under threat, due to pressures from development and intensive agriculture. Many of the foundations were put in place by an amazing naturalist and visionary called Derek Ratcliffe, whose seminal 1977 work 'A Nature Conservation Review' remains a key reference to some of the richest wildlife sites in Britain. The aim was to select the best examples of a representative range of ecosystems and give them statutory protection from harm, for the benefit of future generations. In England, this work has continued under the auspices of successive iterations of the government's nature conservation bodies (the Nature Conservancy Council, then English Nature, now Natural England).

We now have a suite of around 4,100 SSSIs in England, covering more than 1.1 million hectares, which is around 8% of our land area. Many different types of habitat (and species) are represented, from blanket bogs to chalk streams, railway sidings to salt marshes, freshwater lakes to underground caves, birds to amphibians...

High Batts was designated in 1983, as part of Ripon Parks SSSI, which stretches over an area of 137 hectares and comprises a range of habitats associated with the River Ure and adjacent land. The special features (of national importance) in the High Batts Reserve are calcareous grassland and mixed deciduous woodland.



Silver-washed Fritillary, Ken Readshaw

Every SSSI has a set of important documents, generated as part of the designation process. The first of these is known as the 'citation'. This is a somewhat narrative account of the most important features of the site, which may include habitats, species, geology, or all of these. I am invariably impressed whenever I read a citation document; the knowledge and passion for nature conservation exhibited by the humble civil servant who wrote it always shine through. Usually it makes me want to go straight out and visit the site! The citation relating to High Batts refers to the Magnesian limestone that we know has such

an important influence on the flora of the Reserve, and mentions the Yellow Star of Bethlehem (*Gagea lutea*) that's one of the botanical highlights of early spring. Though (strangely) not on the citation, there is also the very rare Thistle Broomrape (*Orobanche reticulata*), which pops up elsewhere on the SSSI and makes a noteworthy appearance on the Pennycroft part of the Reserve from time to time.

The second important document is the 'Views About Management' (VAM), which describes how the site should be managed to conserve and enhance its features. It goes without saying that landowners and managers are crucial to the success of this, and Natural England is always keen to work constructively with these very

important people. At High Batts, for example, the VAM emphasises the importance of active management to prevent build-up of rank grasses and scrub on the calcareous grassland, and recommends grazing to keep an open sward. The woodland is managed through an agreed Woodland Management Plan.

The third document is a list of ‘Operations Requiring Natural England’s Consent’, or ORNECs. These are activities which have the potential to damage the notified features of the SSSI, so anyone wanting to do anything on the site needs first to consult the ORNECs list to see if they should ask permission from Natural England. For High Batts, the list would include things like introducing new species, changing woodland management, altering drainage or changing the grazing regime (plus several more).

So the citation (and an associated boundary map), the Views About Management and the ORNECs are designed to define the features of interest, guide their conservation management and prevent damage. Does this work as a system to protect and maintain SSSIs? To know this, we need to monitor the SSSIs over time, to see if there is any change in the condition of their notified features.

SSSI monitoring is carried out by Natural England according to a set of criteria developed by the JNCC (Joint Nature Conservation Committee) for each habitat in the UK. Survey data are collected for each feature, using a standard monitoring form that’s tailored to the site. The results are distilled into a short verdict on the condition, ranging from ‘Favourable’ through various grades of ‘Unfavourable’, to ‘Destroyed’. It may surprise you to learn that High Batts is not in Favourable condition, which seems odd, when it is clearly so carefully managed and supports such a wide range of species. The reason is because of the Burnet Rose (*Rosa pimpinellifolia*) which has rather got away on the calcareous grassland in the Hall Clearing. This prickly and invasive plant counts as scrub and its area exceeds the 5% target for scrub cover stipulated in the monitoring specification. A management plan is now in place to address this, so at its 2023 condition assessment, Natural England decided that High Batts should be in ‘Unfavourable-recovering’ condition.

Considering England as a whole, only 40% of SSSI features were deemed to be in Favourable condition in 2024. Does this mean that the current ways of looking after protected sites are ineffective? Well, they aren’t perfect, it’s true. Recent research shows that (with certain caveats) protected sites generally do work in

protecting biodiversity, when compared with unprotected areas (Pulido-Chadid *et al*, 2025). A Natural England Research Report published in 2022 found that ‘the SSSI series has been critical in maintaining England’s biodiversity and continues to perform such a role’ (NECR414).

The UK government have a stated aim of 75% SSSI features in Favourable condition by 2042, and going forward there is definitely a need for application of the Lawton principles of ‘Bigger, Better, More and Joined-up’. All that will take serious commitment and dedicated funding.

Meanwhile, we just have to try and make the SSSI system work for nature as best we can, in accordance with the guidance supplied by Natural England, as I described earlier. Certainly I am always inspired by my visits to High Batts, where the management team and stalwart volunteers are apparently doing exactly that.



Pyramidal Orchids, Ken Readshaw

References:

Pulido-Chadid, K. et al (2025) *A systematic review of the effectiveness of protected areas at reducing threats to biodiversity*. BMC Environmental Evidence. <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-7046705/v1>

Natural England Research Report NECR414 (2022) *SSSIs in England: their historical development and prospects in a changing environment*.

Anne Readshaw worked at the University of York as a plant scientist for many years, then latterly as a project manager. In 2022 she joined the Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire Area Team at Natural England, where she now works on nature recovery and protected sites.

She is a member at High Batts and (together with husband Ken – a keen photographer) is part of the butterfly surveying team.

Report from the Chair

Colin Slator

2023 was very busy organising all the activities in celebration of our 50th anniversary and we assumed that 2024 would be much quieter. However it turned out to be just as busy, with much being achieved.

Our priority is always the care of the Reserve and its wildlife, and we follow a management plan for conservation work. Our Thursday team of 18 extremely dedicated and hardworking men and women, turned up weekly to undertake a wide variety of environmental jobs, from grassland management to coppicing, plus species surveying. A sub-group of these volunteers concentrated on construction and technical work, looking after fences, gates, hides, and nestboxes, plus our two vehicles and the barn that we use as our work base. New High Batts members are always complimentary about how well maintained the Reserve is and this is due to the outstanding work of the Thursday team.

Our general membership also contributed by coming to our Members' Muck-in mornings which were held on ten Saturday mornings during the year. Volunteers helped with routine tasks such as Himalayan Balsam and Bracken control, hay raking and autumn coppicing. We also had two visits by volunteers from Open Country – a charity which works to provide opportunity for those with disability to access and work in the countryside.

Another priority task is our Species Recording Programme. Our records go back to the late 1970s, and we continue to encourage visitors to record what they see so that we can have relevant data to underpin and measure the effectiveness of our conservation work. Through the year we undertook survey work for the BTO through its nestbox record scheme and its wetland bird surveys (WeBS). A small team of volunteers undertook five moth-trapping sessions. We also used camera traps to record species' presence and behaviour on site. All of this data goes to our team of Species Recorders for evaluation and inclusion in their annual reports which form the backbone of this publication. We also receive important species records from our neighbours across the river, Brian and Sue Morland at Bellflask, and from the East Dales Ringing Group which undertakes bird ringing on the Reserve and in the area. During the year we moved to give more focus to our

recording programme with the appointment of Ray O'Donnell, one of the trustees, who took on the role of Species Recording Co-ordinator.

Much volunteer time was spent during the year on our project "In at the Start" which has been running since 2017. Working in partnership with Heidelberg Materials UK which operates the quarry adjacent to the Reserve, we are helping with the planning and delivery of the restoration of the area for conservation after quarrying ceases. To this end our volunteer teams undertake site maintenance such as managing the new woodland that has been planted and looking after hedges. During the year we continued to work on the development of a Fenland area adjacent to the southern end of the Reserve. We also continued our programme of formal wildlife surveys, with specialist teams monitoring breeding birds, butterflies, dragonflies and botany, thus providing valuable data on how wildlife is reacting to the changes in habitat on the site. In July we organised a walk around the Pennycroft site for members to show the changes, particularly in relation to the restoration work of this quarrying site.

A great number of volunteer hours are devoted to the administration of High Batts as a registered charity and as a membership organisation. During 2024, we developed a new management system for our records using Google Workspace, thus allowing us to begin developing a digital archive, plus also facilitating easier communication and access for those involved in administration. One of the biggest changes during the year was the growth in our membership. In January 2024 a Facebook Page was initiated where members can record their sightings and photographs. This proved very popular and by the end of the year had 220 members. This also led to an increase in membership of the Reserve by those who wished to access the page, so by the end of the year our membership had increased to almost 480. During the year we introduced a new Membership Management System designed by Terry Marsh, our Treasurer, and Marian Wooding took over as Membership Secretary following the retirement of the late Peter Hills who had held this position for 25 years.

The new Membership Management System also formed the basis of a new communication system with members, allowing us to send out mailings and newsletters more easily. We took the decision at this time to move to primarily digital communications which allowed us to improve the physical quality and size of communications, making newsletters more informative and attractive with additional photographs. It also reduced work and led to much reduced costs for

printing and postage. Hard copies continued to be supplied to those members unable to access digital documents. At the same time, we began to supply copies of this Annual Report digitally to those members who wanted them, though the option of hard copies is still available. Our website also holds digital copies of all our Annual Reports since 1980, plus lots more information for our members.

We held an Open Day on 21st July which was a great success with over 120 visitors despite two competing public events being held nearby on the same day. Over half the visitors who came were not members and five families subsequently joined. As usual the day included guided walks of the Reserve, demonstrations of bird ringing and moth trapping, plus small mammals caught during the day; there were also displays about the work of the Reserve and by other local environmental groups. A programme of children's activities such as quizzes and pond dipping was also offered. During the year we hosted three visits by external groups from further afield, including two environmental groups and one photographic society. We participated in the work of two local environmental groups, established to improve co-ordination and collaborative working amongst the important wildlife sites situated along the Ure River. We took part in the Sights & Sounds Festival in Ripon in March joining with other local organisations to inform residents of the opportunities open to them. In October we hosted an evening talk by Nicholas Watts MBE of Vine House Farm covering his 60 years involvement in farming and conservation and in November we organised an evening talk by Marek Borkowski of Wildlife Poland, focusing on his life spent in wildlife conservation, an event which attracted over 60 attendees.

The High Batts AGM was held on 22nd October. Peter Bowman, Terry Marsh, Stuart Ward and Marian Wooding were re-elected to serve a further three year term as Trustees, and I returned as a Trustee, creating a board of eight trustees with four vacancies. It was disappointing that despite our best efforts we did not recruit any new trustees, and this continues to be a source of concern both in terms of spreading the current workload and in relation to building future capacity. In addition to regular Trustee meetings, we held some specific meetings devoted to the introduction of new management arrangements.

One major development during the year was the completion of a new lease with James Staveley of Lightwater Holdings for the land adjacent to the Reserve which provides access, car parking and a work area and small agricultural building. This lease replaced one that expired in 2015, and which has been under negotiation for

nine years. The new lease mirrors the lease for the Reserve which we have with Sir James Graham of Norton Conyers in that it runs retrospectively from 2020 until 2040, thus providing the Reserve with improved security for the future. We are extremely grateful both to Sir James Graham and to James Staveley for their continuing support for the Reserve. The Graham family has supported us since 1973 and the inception of the Reserve, and our debt to them is immense. The Staveley family's support has also been critical over many years, in providing the land and facilities to allow us to manage the Reserve effectively.

Heidelberg Materials UK, formerly Hanson Aggregates, operates the quarry to the north of the Reserve and is therefore a close neighbour. The company has always been most supportive of the Reserve and has over many years sponsored several of our activities. They also have provided us with practical help, and during the year we worked very closely both with site staff and with Georgina Watkins from the regional office in the delivery of the "In at the Start Project" described above. We would like to record our thanks to them for their outstanding support and comradeship.

Finally I would like to thank all the members of High Batts, both those who undertake the many different volunteering roles, and to those who support us through their visits and species records, subscriptions and donations and their goodwill. Working at High Batts is a labour of love for many long term helpers and is made even more rewarding by the enjoyment of members who visit and experience its wildlife and its peace. Thank you all for your continuing support.

Reserve Management Report

Colin Slator

The January return of the Thursday volunteers to the Barn, is often one of a dull and wet day. It is therefore a case of get the fire on, the usual chat post-Christmas/New Year and my debriefing on the day's tasks and future survey dates. During the winter months there is always wild bird feeding and trays to wash off; hides to clean and check; species recording forms to gather and bring in for collection by the Recorders; paths and rides to check for wind blown debris; site security checks; camera traps to check; and vehicles to check for oil and diesel. Gosh!! Actually, we undertake these tasks throughout the year, no matter what! Read on.

This **January** the section of the Access track that we maintain was badly in need of repair. We thank the quarry staff for supplying the material needed for this task, throughout the year. As it was the start of a new year the two wardens and the Site Manager undertook a site walk to discuss the future work plans. The first full Recording Area WeBS survey (a once monthly British Trust for Ornithology run survey to monitor the national populations of waders, waterfowl, herons and egrets) took place on the 11th. Hall's Clearing was flailed during frosty weather, a week later. We do this during these conditions so that the towing vehicle does not leave wheel ruts and importantly the flailed Burnet Rose is, we find, knocked back by frost on the fresh cut rose stalks. The charity Open Country volunteered on one day during the month and the Reserve members once monthly Saturday morning Muck-in session helped with coppicing and pollarding in the North Clearing and taking off the tree guards in Oscar's Wood (Pennycroft). At Pennycroft we undertook a full site photographic survey from the seven permanent posts on the 4th. The surrounding valley experienced two full floods towards the month end. Two ex-council wheelie bins were cut up by the Construction team to make (cheaply!) 'portable' sluice gates (for water management) at the Little Studley Meadow site run by the Site Manager.

On the first day of **February** all the reserve mowers, hedge cutters and strimmers were brought back, after a full service, from a very charitable large company in Melmerby. We thank them very much for this hugely cost saving gesture. The

wheelie bin sluice gates were completed by the construction team during early February and later installed, after they had expanded their expertise by taking the outlet ditch levels ready for excavation! Also, in early February, five dumper loads of gravel were laid in the Reserve ride vehicle tracks, further work on pointing the Barn wall was carried out and Sycamore saplings were removed throughout the reserve and the stumps treated with a growth retardant. The Pennycroft survey route was flailed – such early grass growth! The 8th was only a half day's work due to inclement weather, which illustrates why we need a large, covered area, over the Barn compound, where volunteers can work in shelter and comfort in bad weather. It was, and is, such a shame to lose so much manpower for a good half day. By the mid-month the *Gagea* (Yellow Star-of-Bethlehem) cages were put out in the south end of the Reserve to protect the early growing plants from Rabbit and Pheasant attacks. The construction team once again showed their versatility by cutting out a small, hinged flap on the side of the dumper, to be able to plug in our magnetic flashlight, placed high on the roll bar and plugged into the battery; we can now go into the quarry weighbridge areas legally! The Muck-in teams did more tree guard work in Oscar's Wood, and pollarding in the North Clearing and made brash hedges with the cut material. A Mandarin Duck nest box was constructed and erected late in the month.

It was mild enough for the first push mowing of the grass to take place in the first week of **March**. A 3-ton mini-digger was hired from Skipton Hire Centre (SHC) to place soil around the sluice revetment and put gravel along the Pennycroft survey route, especially behind the conifer belt. Also, during the first week of the month all the ex-gear of the sadly defunct Staveley Management Group was donated and collected – this was a very generous offer of small tools and wild bird seed. The High Batts are a regular user of hire equipment from SHC. For example, a woodchipper hired on the 14th was used to chip willow brash, already cut down by the East Dales Ringing Group, at their ringing site around the Queen Mary's Dubb, on Ripon Parks. All the chipped material was tractor and trailered back to the Reserve to be wheel-barrowed onto footpaths in the south end of the Reserve. We extended our volunteering area on a day in mid-March when a small team went over to Wath churchyard to install, for the PCC, several pre-purchased small nest boxes, a hedgehog house and a bee wall. Whilst on the east side of the river we carried out a litter-picking session (mainly flood debris) on the riverbank opposite the Hotel. A Barn Owl nest box was nearly completed to be placed in Pennycroft and towards the month end the Reserve weekly check and recording of nest boxes

got underway, looking for early nesters. But before the season got into full swing, another Muck-in concentrated on pulling out tree guards in Oscar's Wood. We now take these ex-guards, in builders' dumpy bags, to a recycling depot on the south side of Boroughbridge. They are then turned into, what else, but tree guards! Pruning three years growth around the Long Hedge standard trees is a yearly task in the four 50m blocks of hedge flailed each year, as the hedge cutter cannot get too near the standards. Again, this has to be done during the early winter period, before the birds start nesting. A small management group for the Reserve made up of the Site Manager, two wardens and four other Thursday volunteers meet roughly quarterly to discuss management; the minutes of the discussions are fed back to the Trustees. Several 'broomrape plots' were dragged and rolled in Pennycroft, towards the month end – we do this to create bare plots for thistles to establish, and the eventual establishment, we hope, of the rare parasitic Thistle Broomrape.

Plug planting of locally sourced plants was carried out at The Fen (Pennycroft) in early **April**. New, better quality side windows, and stronger hinges, were put into the Mobile Hide, before it was parked in the north end of the Reserve. With the milder weather, the Sycamore sap started to rise and more were cut back and the stumps treated. We are very grateful to the NEYEDC (North and East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre) who once again undertook a once yearly drone flight over the Reserve and adjacent Pennycroft quarry. The images that the drone camera produces are both of excellent quality and informative, especially when looking at site development. We undertook one of the twice-yearly litter picks on the full length of the Access Track from the A6108 to the Reserve. This walk, in early April, took place before the vegetation grew up. We always seem to gather four or five sacks of rubbish each walk, it must be said, seemingly emanating from wagon cabs! The Barn wall was pointed up – illustrating the variety of tasks we undertake. Towards the end of the month a Swallow nest cup was placed inside the Barn. And in Pennycroft all the plastic 50m marker posts were painted on top to aid sighting and the numbers checked. The moth traps were put out very late April, in the Reserve and Pennycroft, for the first time this year. But due to the low temperature, which can be exacerbated by the low, riverine position of the sites, the catch was a complete failure.

Our first workday in **May** was on the 2nd, when five dumper loads of gravel, obtained from the quarry, were shovelled out onto the Reserve ride track sides, and with some later onto the survey route in Pennycroft. The Barn wall pointing

continued. By now hardwood saplings were in fresh leaf and could be spotted growing on the edges of the Dragonfly Ponds, so could be hand-pulled. The *Gagea* plants were now swamped by other vegetation and unlikely to be attacked by mammals and pheasants, so all the protective cages were lifted off. As most of the small birds are now away from the feeding stations and breeding, the numbers of feeders and trays are gradually reduced; only one was left in place by the 9th. On this date the dumper wheel was taken off and the tyre replaced the following week. The twice yearly and spring mown glades in Pennycroft, were cut with a hired (SHC) reciprocating mower in the Oscar's Wood section. All the arisings were eventually raked and cleared off site. Further into Pennycroft all the botanical survey plots were checked and maintained. Within the same site wildflower seeds were hand scattered on the banks of The Fen. General (push!) mowing was by now in full swing every week, - all the car parks, path sides, rides, bird feeding areas and any connecting paths are kept short, mainly for the ease of walking. Some weed wiping took place in The Fen on the last day of the month – and into June, when spot spraying was the norm.

In early **June**, Bracken is emerging rapidly, especially in the north-west of the Reserve. In an attempt to restrict its growth we 'bash' it - i.e. bend it over with a stick - which bruises the stalk, rather than breaking or cutting it off; the bruising causes the stalk to rot, whereas breaking or cutting would allow the plant to re-grow from the bottom. The flail mower required an inhouse service mid-month. A newt survey in the Bridge View, Ripon allotments specifically in a water stop-tap pit, found several Smooth Newts and some second-year Toads, but no Great-crested Newts! In Pennycroft a few more aquatic plants were put out in The Fen and the mobile hide was moved to the south end, to act as a shelter for the survey workers. To combat the algal growth in the Stream Pond, six bales of near organic barley straw were cut and thrown into the water. Towards the month end not only Bracken was 'bashed' but also the very invasive alien Himalayan Balsam was pulled and bashed – although the former treatment is preferred.

During the summer months we could potentially see 320 volunteer man hours per month – which does NOT include bird feeding, nest box checking, survey work and site management preparation time. It may seem odd therefore, when I say we can't get all the 'required' bashing/pulling work completed. Entries on the workday reports sheets for **July** illustrate what I mean; 24 volunteers on plant control work during the month takes about 72 hours. But leading up to the Open Day late in the month, preparation work and other events concentrated our minds!

We carried out lots of flailing and strimming of net rides (for bird ringing on the Open Day), repairs to the interior of the Pond Hide and the flail mower. Fourteen helped on the Muck-in Morning on the 13th and a members guided walk was held in Pennycroft during the afternoon. When the 18th arrived (the Thursday prior to the Open Day) it was a case of all systems go! The marquee and gazebos were erected, directional signs put out, display boards sorted, chairs washed and extensive grass mowing carried out. All hands were required on deck for the Open Day on the 21st! On our return on the following Thursday it was a WeBS bird count, consequently most of the volunteers were out in the Recording Area partaking in the survey. So, it was down to a few others to undertake a post Open Day clean up and start dismantling the marquees. Important warning signs for members whilst driving, were erected at the Quarry Haul Road/Access track junction. And it happened to be the last day of the Reserve nest box check. Phew!! July was an incredibly busy time, especially the second half.

The first workday in **August** was on the 1st, when the flail mower had to be taken to the quarry plant for some serious welding work. We thank the quarry staff so much for their work on this and many other occasions. Although we don't like pulling Ragwort, as it is such a valuable plant for insects, when it grows so prolific adjacent to farmland, we feel compelled to pull some of it – therefore several hours were spent controlling it in the Top Car Park and surrounds and in Pennycroft. Some balsam control was also carried out in the SSSI section of the latter site. Before some cattle grazing could take place at Little Studley Meadow the three installed (wheely bin) sluices were fenced off. On the 5th, with a hired (SHC) reciprocating mower, a number of hay meadow blocks were cut. Three small areas around the Car Parks and the Reserve ride side were mown. On the 8th an ingenious 'floating' trail camera on a (greasy) pole was made and erected by the construction team, at the sluice outlet. It is designed to go up and down the pole during and after floods. All the mown hay was raked and carted off mid-month. More weeding around the recently planted and established plants in The Fen took place towards the end of the month. The mobile hide was brought in from Pennycroft and (after painting) was taken to the north end of the Reserve. Half a ton of wheat was obtained from nearby North Parks Farm (and lifted into our storage bin) and further conservation work took place in Little Studley Meadow.

Sixteen volunteers turned out on Thursday 5th **September**. More plugs were put into The Fen in Pennycroft. The view from the Hotel to the river bankside was

strimmed. On the 12th a good attempt was made to rake off the surface algae in the Stream Pond. Once again, the SHC mower was hired, this time to cut six blocks in Pennycroft. A new screen was placed in situ near the cage feeder to prevent disturbance to feeding birds. A failed attempt was made to pull out the densely matted root systems in the middle of the North Dragonfly Pond, which was more difficult than expected. A Muck-in on the 14th was centred around raking and stooking the recently mown blocks in Pennycroft. The 17th and 18th were two of the annual one-off tasks we carry out each year. Myself and two volunteers with our own dumper, a hired dumper and a 3-ton mini digger, were busy over the two days clearing out sections of the stream, stripping off two sections of the scrape between the South & Halls Clearings, and creating several south-facing sand (silt) banks in the Silt Lagoon for insects - mainly Hymenoptera - that tunnel into bare ground. Heavy rain towards the end of the month and a Met. Office Amber Warning did not discourage twelve volunteers from turning out on 26th.

During **October** two groups (of nine each) were split on different Thursdays to undertake First Aid training with a professional instructor, at Nosterfield. All High Batts Thursday volunteers are basic First Aid trained. Consequently, only about half the usual management tasks were completed, over the two dates. WeBS was undertaken on one date. This just illustrates, if need be, that we need the large and dedicated team of volunteers we now have. Some work that was undertaken included raking and carting off mown material from the North Clearing and Pennycroft. One day was given over to 'yard work' i.e. dumper service, hand tool maintenance and sieving wheat so that it takes out chaff that would otherwise block the feeders. The steps and platform at the Riverside Hide were fixed – then the Hide itself was painted. Fifteen members at the Muck-in on the 19th were employed in the considerable task of raking and stooking mown grass over the Reserve and Pennycroft. On the last day of the month a new lifebuoy rack was constructed, the Orchid area was strimmed and raked off (we never leave any mown debris on the ground where it was cut) and sheep were put into the Barn Paddock, to eat off what the farmers up the Dales call 'the fog'.

Work continued on the sluice revetment on the 7th **November** when two wire gabions were made and installed, then filled with cobbles later in the month. Also on this date the steps, outside the northwest corner of the Reserve were topped with fine gravel. This amazing set of steps were constructed by the volunteers in house and are used by the survey teams only to gain access to the north end of the reserve. Mid-month shrubs were cleared from The Mound sightlines, fine

gravel was placed around the feed stations to keep the surrounding ground clean, and the storage area was cleared out and the Wood Mice evicted! On the last workday of the month the track potholes were filled in once again, the flail mower was repaired and two benches were brought in to dry and then painted. To carry out our legal responsibility we placed Accident Report Books and confidential report boxes in the Hotel and (lower) Pond Hide.

The maximum of 19 registered Thursday volunteers turned out on 6th **December** when a broomrape survey was carried out within the Recording Area, on Ure Bank Bottoms. The area around the standard trees was cleared, prior to flailing, in the Pennycroft Long Hedge. The main task of the day, was chipping the already felled willows around The Dubb on Ripon Parks with a hired chipper; all the woodchip was taken back to the Reserve and laid on the footpaths at the south end. The next day a recently purchased 1.5 m cutter bar was delivered. This bar was eventually adapted to go onto an 8 ton mini-digger and was bought for the purpose of cutting the dense ride side beds of Dewberry. The last WeBS of the year took place on the 12th, when a new seat, with safety belt, was put onto the dumper; more woodchip was put down on the Reserve paths, and the painted benches were put back into the Reserve. A Muck-in on the 14th was attended by 14 members. After the work morning a fully deserved lunch was served at mid-day on-site. On the last Thursday workday of the year (19th) eighteen volunteers turned out. Before the excellent and well-deserved Christmas lunch was taken mid-day in Ripon, the usual feed trays were swopped and washed off, hides cleaned out and record sheets sorted – just like every Thursday in the year!

The volunteers on both workdays certainly earned their Christmas lunch. This report only touches on a portion of the work carried out. It was, and continues to be, a wonderful and much appreciated work rate from all involved. As Site Manager, it goes without saying that I could not manage without everyone's sterling input. For all the hard work, banter, verbal support and dedication I thank every person involved. Thank you.

Fungi

Adrian Bennett



This year was a good year for fungi, and 60 species were recorded on the Reserve. A relatively mild winter brought a few surprises, such as some Wood Blewits in the main car park in February - perhaps related to our changing climate. Although many species are familiar, and present from year to year, there are always a few seemingly new to the Reserve.

Pocket Plum

Taphrina padi

We have had some wet Spring months in recent years, and the last two fungi reports included *Taphrina* species which affected Alder cones & Blackthorn sloes. This year, the large Bird Cherry, *Prunus padus* on the Main Ride was badly affected by *Taphrina padi*, a species exclusive to this plant. Instead of neat round berries, they were hollow, elongated and brown and did not contain any seed. As you can see, not every fruit was affected. The plant usually recovers in subsequent years.



Ergot of Rye

Claviceps purpurea



The picture shows the seed head of a grass, illustrating the characteristic black spurs of Ergot. There were several affected plants just inside Hall Clearing. These black 'sclerotia' fall off the grass head onto the soil, and in the following spring they form a spore body which fires spores into the air, to be carried away by the wind to infect other plants. In the past it mainly affected Rye and caused Ergotism when the Rye grain was consumed, resulting in gangrene or convulsions. Ergot contains many complex, toxic alkaloids but some have been medically helpful in treating migraine and Ergometrine is used today to enhance the contraction of the uterus after a baby's birth.

Stinking Parachute

This is the first time I have personally seen this species which has never previously been recorded on the Reserve. A moderately large group were clustered on a rotten deciduous log. The photograph shows the underside of two specimens. The top of the cap is a similar colour. The stipe (stem) is, like other species in this genus and also the genus *Marasmius*, very tough. The blackness at the base of the stipe is typical of this species. You might wonder why it is called 'stinking'. The usual description of the smell is that of rotten cabbage. Unlike many of the other species in this genus however, it doesn't look much like a parachute.

Marasmiellus foetidus



Garland Roundhead



Stropharia coronilla

Although we have had several other species belonging to this genus this is the first record for this species on the Reserve. The top of the cap is slimy when moist and a pale straw colour. The gills are, as shown, a violet-grey colour. The ring on the stem is I'm afraid out of focus but is grooved and gives the species both its name and common English name, as *coronilla* means small garland.

Stubble Rosegill

Volvopluteus gloiocephalus

This specimen was in the short grass on the entrance path to the Reserve. It was solitary, although it can often be found in large numbers at times, notably in fields of wheat stubble. This specimen is quite small as the cap can be 6" (15cm) across and the stem 9" (22.5cm) tall. *Gloiocephalus* just means sticky cap and it is quite viscid when damp. At the base of the stem near the ground is the so-called volva. A volva is



a 'covering' and is a remnant of the universal veil which covered the whole of the fungus before it expanded. When mature the gills become pink, because the spores are pink, which explains the epithet 'Rosegill'. This species is occasionally seen on the Loop.

Orange Bonnet

Mycena acicula



This species is very small and found on wood, but I have only found it three times on the Reserve in the last 12 years. *Acicula* means 'pin' to give you some idea of how small it is. It is very easy to overlook despite the brightly coloured orange cap and yellow stipe. The spores are white. The fungus genus *Mycena* is named after the shape of the conical to bell-shaped hats worn by the ancient Greek Mycenae people.

Burgundydrop Bonnet

Mycena haematopus

Another *Mycena* but one which is quite common on the Reserve. From the photo you can see they are quite red in colour. They are found on dead wood of broadleaved trees. The common English name is a bit of a giveaway, but unfortunately it doesn't exude wine! A red-coloured liquid droplet bleeds from damaged areas. A separate, more delicate species that also bleeds - *Mycena sanguinolenta* - is associated with conifers.



Yellow Shield

This *Pluteus* species is about 3" (7.5cm) tall. Like most *Pluteus* species it grows on rotten wood – usually lying tree trunks. It has once been previously recorded. Like all *Pluteus* species it has pink gills and spores although this specimen is too immature to show that. When the cap has opened more fully it has radial wrinkles similar to some other *Pluteus* species. They are described as ‘veins’ and *chrysophlebius* means ‘golden veins’.

Pluteus chrysophlebius



Hare's Foot Inkcap

Quite a lot of wood chip has been laid on the Reserve paths in recent years. This Inkcap species is often found in such a habitat. These specimens were just off the Main Ride at the junction of the west path. Whether or not they look like a Hare's or Rabbit's foot I'm not sure, but all that 'Fur' is just the fungal mycelial veil which coats the immature specimens. This is soon lost, and they develop a typical cap

Coprinopsis lagopus



and stem appearance with lots of black spores. The veil cells (right picture above) are helpful for confirming the genus. The veil cells are pointed in this genus but round in the *Coprinellus* genus of Inkcaps.

Magpie Inkcap

Coprinopsis picacea

I have only recorded this Inkcap on one other occasion on the Reserve. This year there were four or five specimens associated with the piles of brash and wood at the southern edge of the Birches area. This specimen was around 9" (22.5cm) tall. Perhaps I have photographed it a little soon, as the areas between bands of white veil have not yet turned black enough to perhaps warrant the 'Magpie' epithet. Eventually the whole head deliquesces into a black mass of spores and leaves just the stem standing. *See photograph on introductory page to this section.*

Thank you to all who reported fungi or sent photographs during 2024.

If any member would like a complete list of the fungi found in 2024, please contact me by post or email and I will be happy to provide one.

Flowering plants

Pandora Thoresby & Laurie Reed



The start of January brought mild and windy weather, with storm Henk bringing heavy rain. Between January 21st and January 24th, storms Isha and Jocelyn caused flooding which led to closure of the Reserve and did considerable damage in the SSSI adjoining the river and in Pennycroft.

Taking the circular walk up the Ride then back along the central path through the Silver Birch area, the clearings, and then along the woodland path, here are some plants to look out for; some familiar seasonal highlights, and some of the less obvious but interesting plants.

The earliest Snowdrops *Galanthus nivalis* to flower are just inside the Reserve, in a sheltered but sunny area to the left of the path. Overall the Snowdrop display lasts around a month, from the first buds here to the last flowers going over in shadier parts. The display was still going strong in mid-February.

Between the Pond Hide and the bridge in early spring look for the shiny yellow flowers of Lesser Celandine *Ficaria verna*, the arrow-shaped leaves of Lords-and-Ladies *Arum maculatum* and the Yellow Star-of-Bethlehem *Gagea lutea*: the latter is increasing within the protective cages and beneath the recently coppiced Hazel *Corylus avellana*. In spite of caging the plants, the display has been very poor, with many of the flowers being eaten as soon as they open, probably by slugs that have thrived in the warm, wet weather. Lords-and-Ladies, or Cuckoo Pint, usually starts to flower in early April. It is pollinated by tiny midges which it attracts by increasing the temperature of the flower and by emitting a putrid odour. The flies are trapped overnight in the flower, becoming covered in pollen, which is transferred to the next flower they visit after the plant releases them the following day.

There are many of the earlier-flowering white form of Sweet Violet *Viola odorata* var. *dumetorum* in this area, an important early food source for long-tongued nectar-feeding insects. Look out also for the whorls of magenta-flowered Hedge Woundwort *Stachys sylvatica* from early Summer.

*Previous page: Dame's Violet from Hotel Hide,
John Drewett*



Sweet Cicely, Laurie Reed



Yellow Rattle, Laurie Reed

Just beyond the bridge is a large area of Butterbur *Petasites hybridus* with spikes of densely packed pink flowers emerging from March. They are a rich source of both nectar and pollen and are very attractive to bees at a time when food is scarce. The huge leaves appear later, and the Latin name reflects their similarity to large hats. Several plants of Sweet Cicely *Myrrhis odorata* emerge amongst the Butterbur leaves.

Spring highlights along the Ride up to the Hotel include Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, Comfrey *Symphytum x uplandicum*, Sweet Violet *Viola odorata*, Common Dog-violet *Viola riviniana*, Ground-ivy *Glechoma hederacea* and Primrose *Primula vulgaris*.

Over the last few years we have encouraged the spread of Yellow-Rattle *Rhinanthus minor* at the edge of the ride. This is an annual hemi-parasitic plant which restricts grass growth and allows other plant species to thrive. Look out for its bright yellow flowers.

Late spring and summer brings displays of Red Campion *Silene dioica*, Wild Marjoram *Origanum vulgare*, Meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, and Giant Bellflower *Campanula latifolia*. Amongst the Meadowsweet are occasional pink/purple spikes of Marsh Woundwort *Stachys palustris*. This is a close relative of the more common Hedge Woundwort, but found in damper situations.

The open section of the Ride leading up to the Dragonfly Ponds had fewer Pyramidal Orchids *Anacamptis pyramidalis* than usual this year. There are a few Common Spotted-orchids *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* down the ride, but the greatest numbers are around the Dragonfly Ponds often hidden amongst other plants. This year there were over 265 flower spikes around the Dyke Pond and over 140 around the Reed Pond. Viper's Bugloss *Echium vulgare* has increased in the mown area around the ponds; on sunny days many bees and butterflies feed on these flowers.



Blackthorn, Laurie Reed

Following the fence alongside the North Clearing there are Violets and Primroses under the trees. As the path enters the Silver Birch *Betula pendula* clearing, there is a small area of Wood-sorrel *Oxalis acetosella*. Bright three-lobed leaves and delicate white flowers are visible very briefly before being hidden by other plants. Ground cover alongside the path here is a mixture of Wild Strawberry *Fragaria vesca*, Barren Strawberry *Potentilla sterilis* (both with white flowers) and Yellow Pimpernel *Lysimachia nemorum*.

Further into the Silver Birch Clearing, the early Spring display includes Sweet Violet *Viola odorata*, Common Dog-violet *Viola riviniana*, and one of the best displays of Primrose *Primula vulgaris* on the Reserve. Primrose and Cowslip *Primula veris* in the clearing contrasts with the blue spikes of Bugle *Ajuga reptans*. Much of the centre of the clearing is carpeted with the yellow-flowered Rock-rose *Helianthemum nummularium* in early summer. Devil's-bit Scabious *Succisa pratensis* seems to be spreading in the clearing, and in late summer the flowers are very attractive to butterflies and bees.

After the Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* wood, the path crosses Hall Clearing, an area of species-rich grassland typical of magnesian limestone. With South Clearing, this habitat supports over seventy species of plants including the extremely prickly Carlina Thistle *Carlina vulgaris*, with its persistent straw-brown flowerheads, Wild Basil *Clinopodium vulgare*, Hairy Violet *Viola hirta*, Wild Thyme *Thymus drucei*, and Dropwort *Filipendula vulgaris*. Marjoram in the area of the warren, on the lower part of the clearing, flowers well as rabbits do not usually eat aromatic plants. Some of the interesting plants in this clearing are tiny and easily missed, like Spring Sedge *Carex caryophyllea* which, when flowering in April, has spikes of bright yellow anthers, but which is inconspicuous the rest of the time. Most of these sedge plants are towards the southern end of the clearing. Other small plants in this area include Field Woodrush *Luzula campestris* also known as Good Friday Grass. The flowers appear in March or April, and in some regions was used as a sign historically that cattle could be put out to grass after Winter.

A little further on, the path runs along the edge of the South Clearing, another area of limestone grassland, where the tiny blue flowers of Common Milkwort *Polygala vulgaris* can be seen. This clearing often has a good display of Pyramidal Orchid *Anacamptis pyramidalis*, Lady's Bedstraw *Galium verum*, Agrimony *Agrimonia eupatoria* and Rough Hawkbit *Leontodon hispidus*. Burnet Rose *Rosa spinosissima* is increasing in the grassland, the striking white flowers followed by large black hips that provide food for birds.

The winding path which rejoins the Ride is edged with Wild Garlic or Ramsons *Allium ursinum*, widespread in the Reserve. Ramsons comes from the Old English word 'hramsa' which simply meant garlic. Deer, wild boar, rabbits, squirrels and cattle all eat the leaves or bulbs. The Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* had a bumper crop of sloes this year. The young Blackthorn were in full flower in mid-February, with the trimmed hedges leading to the car park flowering about ten days later.



Agrimony, Laurie Reed

Some areas of the Reserve are particularly beautiful in just one season, while many, such as the open areas alongside the Ride, offer an interesting succession of plants flowering for most of the year.

A few plants can be seen best from outside the Reserve, for example there is good view down onto the Marsh Marigold *Caltha palustris* from the track near the car park, a spectacular sight when they are in flower. Early-purple Orchid *Orchis mascula* and Toothwort *Lathraea squamaria* can be seen from the old quarry access road. The Early-purple Orchid area is shown on the inside cover of the report. The Toothwort can be seen with binoculars, for a short period in early Spring, emerging from the roots of Wych Elm *Ulmus glabra* and Hazel growing on the steep slope below the road, near the North-Western boundary of the Reserve.

We continued recording 5m x 5m fixed plots in Pennycroft, the area south of the Reserve that is being quarried for sand and gravel. After eight years of surveying plots, without much intervention, we will look at a different approach for next year.

We continue to monitor the rare Thistle Broomrape *Orobanche reticulata* which occurs on Pennycroft, and found an encouraging increase to 16 spikes following some cultivation to encourage its spread.

Nomenclature follows New Flora of the British Isles 4th Edition (Stace 2019)

We are very grateful to the team of volunteer surveyors who record the plants twice a year. We would welcome more records from members to help us update the botanical survey of the Reserve. Most of the complete surveys are now several decades old, so we would like to know what species have been gained or lost, to inform our approach to conservation on the Reserve.

Butterflies

Sally Driscoll



INTRODUCTION

This report for High Batts comes following an unprecedented year of weather conditions. The continual and prolonged period of storms, with Henk, the first, in January through to Kathleen, the 11th in April, with 300+ flood warnings, was closely followed by exceptionally wet weather in May. The culmination of this had a severe effect on the environment, and dramatic consequences for the butterfly population. This led to an extremely poor year, with a Butterfly Emergency being declared later in the year by Butterfly Conservation. In the 2024 National Butterfly Count, sadly, 9,000 counts from 143,241 surveys saw no butterflies at all.

Within the Recording Area sightings overall were, unsurprisingly, extensively reduced from 2023 and some species were not recorded at all, so the following makes rather disappointing reading. Although this needs no emphasis, I have included a comparison to 2023 to demonstrate these recent changes. However, there were some small compensations as the weather lightened over the summer months, and with later sightings going into October and November.

Note: Some of the maxima given below may have been exceeded at Bellflask / Ripon Quarry, as counts were not provided for all species.

The ordering of species and nomenclature in this report follows *The Checklist of the Lepidoptera of the British Isles*, Agassiz, Beavan and Heckford (2015) as updated (2022) by Evans-Hill and Raper (Natural History Museum).

Unless otherwise stated the Recording Area refers to that part of the recording area to the west of the River Ure. Pennycroft, is the area around the working quarry which is subject to regular butterfly transects during the main flight period by the In At The Start (IATS) teams.

Hesperiidae

Small Skipper

Thymelicus sylvestris

The first sightings this year were two in June at Bellflask. The last was a little later than usual on 16th August in the Reserve. The maximum of seven on 26th July at Pennycroft is far fewer than the maximum of 27 in 2023; however that had been a very good year, and numbers over the previous few years had fluctuated from single figures up to 27.

Previous page: Ringlets mating, Paul Newey



Large Skipper, Trevor Baker

Large Skipper *Ochlodes sylvanus*

With the first sighting on 25th May at Pennycroft and the last on 31st July, also at Pennycroft, the flight period was relatively short. The maximum number of 30 on 24th June at Pennycroft was a remarkable increase on the three sighted there in 2023, though they had been frequently recorded across the quarry site.

Pieridae

Orange Tip

Anthocharis cardamines

Bellflask held the first sighting on 14th April, with the last being on 19th June at the Reserve. Numbers at Bellflask were reported to be well down, however over 50 were seen in the Recording Area on 9th May during the WeBS walk, a significant increase on the 17 recorded in 2023. Additionally, there was a possible single second generation daytime sighting of a male in October.

Large White

Pieris brassicae

The first sighting was on 9th May in the Reserve and the last on 19th September, also in the Reserve. The maximum number was nine, on 12th August, at Pennycroft. Numbers were also low at Bellflask where the species did not appear until 6th June, with a reduction from the maximum of 17 in 2023.

Small White

Pieris rapae

The first sighting was on 16th April at Bellflask where there was an early scarcity. Numbers overall increased in July and August, with the last sighting being in the Reserve on 16th June. The maximum was 23 at Pennycroft on 9th May. Numbers at Bellflask also increased, but not enough at either site to match the 100 maximum recorded in 2023.

Green-veined White

Pieris napi

The first sightings coincided at both the Reserve and Bellflask on 20th April, with the last being seen on 22nd August at the Reserve. Numbers overall were down,

with the maximum being 14 on 3rd August at Pennycroft against a high of 25 in 2023.

Brimstone

Gonepteryx rhamni

Bellflask saw both the first sighting on 3rd February, and the last on 23rd October, with the maximum of 28 at Pennycroft on 18th May. Regular recordings over all sites and the maximum matching that of 2023 is encouraging.

Nymphalidae

Wall

Lasiommata megera

With one sighting on 20th May at the Reserve, one on 31st July at Pennycroft and an average number at Bellflask this species appears to be holding up well, as there were also three in 2023.

Speckled Wood

Pararge aegeria

The first sighting on 14th April and the latest on 24th October were both at the Reserve; a maximum of ten was recorded on 16th August. Spring numbers at Bellflask were low, increasing over the summer, but sadly all well down from the excellent 50+ maximum in the Reserve and Pennycroft in 2023.

Ringlet

Aphantopus hyperantus

Ringlets were first seen on 16th June in the Reserve with the last on 5th August also in the Reserve, but two weeks earlier than last year. The maximum of 133 on 11th July at Pennycroft was a notable increase from 50+ in 2023 and is heading back towards the maximum of 194 at Pennycroft in 2022.

Meadow Brown

Maniola jurtina

The first at the Reserve were on 21st June and the last on 27th July, with a longer flight period than normal. Some were being seen in September at Bellflask. The maximum of 54 was at Pennycroft on 15th July. Numbers in 2023 had, on occasion been 50+ and 150+. Bearing in mind conditions, a fair result for this year.

Gatekeeper

Pyronia tithonus

The first sighting was on 21st June at Pennycroft, followed by a single sighting at



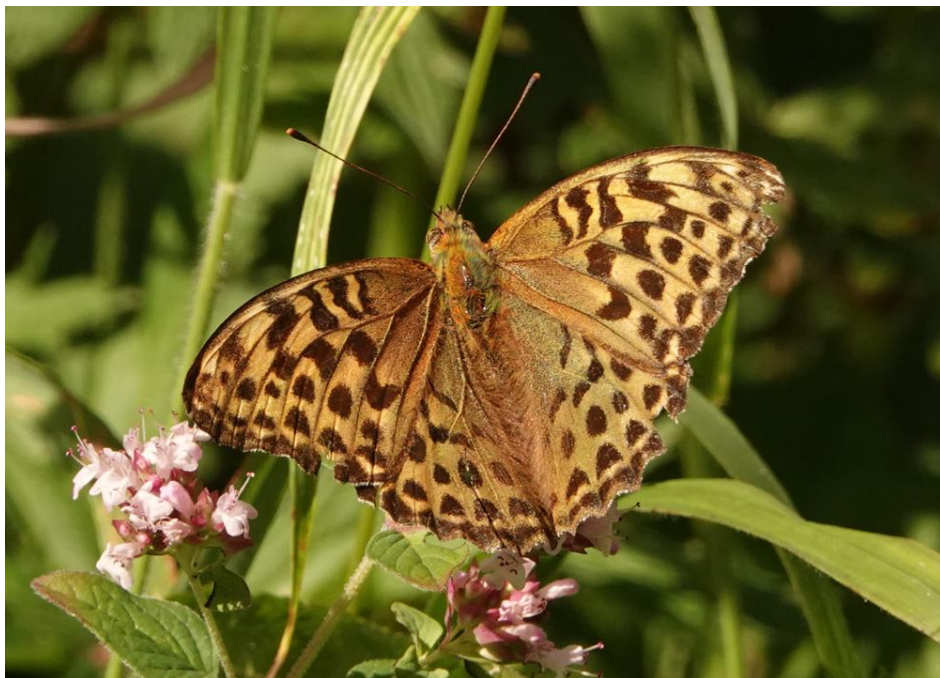
Gatekeeper, Paul Newey

Bellflask on 17th July. The last was at the Reserve on 27th July. The maximum of four on 26th July at Pennycroft matched that of 2023 so this too, is a fair result.

Silver-washed Fritillary

Argynnis paphia

A heartening return this year for this lovely species, with the first on 18th July and the last on 16th August, both at the Reserve. The maximum was of two as in 2023.



Silver-washed Fritillary, Eric Ward

Red Admiral

Vanessa atalanta

The first was on 12th May at Pennycroft & the last on 6th November at the Reserve, one of the latest butterfly species of the year. More numerous than some other species at Bellflask, the maximum at the Reserve on 22nd August was just three.

Painted Lady

Vanessa cardui

Although there were a few migrants at Bellflask in July, only singles were recorded to the west of the river at Pennycroft on 26th July and the Reserve on 19th September. It is worth noting that there had only been a maximum of three in 2023.

Peacock

Aglais io

April 20th saw first sightings of overwintering Peacocks at Bellflask, Pennycroft and the Reserve with later sightings of the main broods. The last sighting was on 17th August at Pennycroft and the maximum was 11 on 21st April, also at Pennycroft. This number was half that of the low showing of 23 in 2023.

Small Tortoiseshell

Aglais urticae

First seen at the Reserve on 14th April where the last was also recorded on 18th September. Numbers were exceptionally low, with a maximum of two at the Reserve on 2nd July as opposed to 19 in 2023.

Comma

Polygonia c-album

On 21st May, the first was seen at Bellflask. The last was on 18th October at the Reserve. The maximum of three was on 14th September in Oscar's Wood, Pennycroft. Again, a poor contrast against the maximum of nine in 2023.

Lycaenidae

Small Copper

Lycaena phlaeas

A single Small Copper was seen on 7th June at Pennycroft, repeating the single sighting of 2023.

White-letter Hairstreak

Satyrrium w-album

Hearteningly, the White-letter Hairstreak returned to the Reserve on 16th June and was last seen there on 4th July, having made three appearances in total, one deftly recorded by the indefatigable Colin Slator on his mobile phone. There had been two recorded visits in 2023.

Holly Blue

Celastrina argiolus

A single sighting on 2nd May at Bellflask was followed by another in Pennycroft on 18th May. Similarly, there had been two in 2023.

Brown Argus

Aricia agestis

Matching the two seen in 2023, the first sighting was on 17th August at Pennycroft, followed by one on 22nd August in the Reserve. The final one was in the Reserve on 29th August noted on Devil's-bit Scabious.

Common Blue

Polyommatus icarus

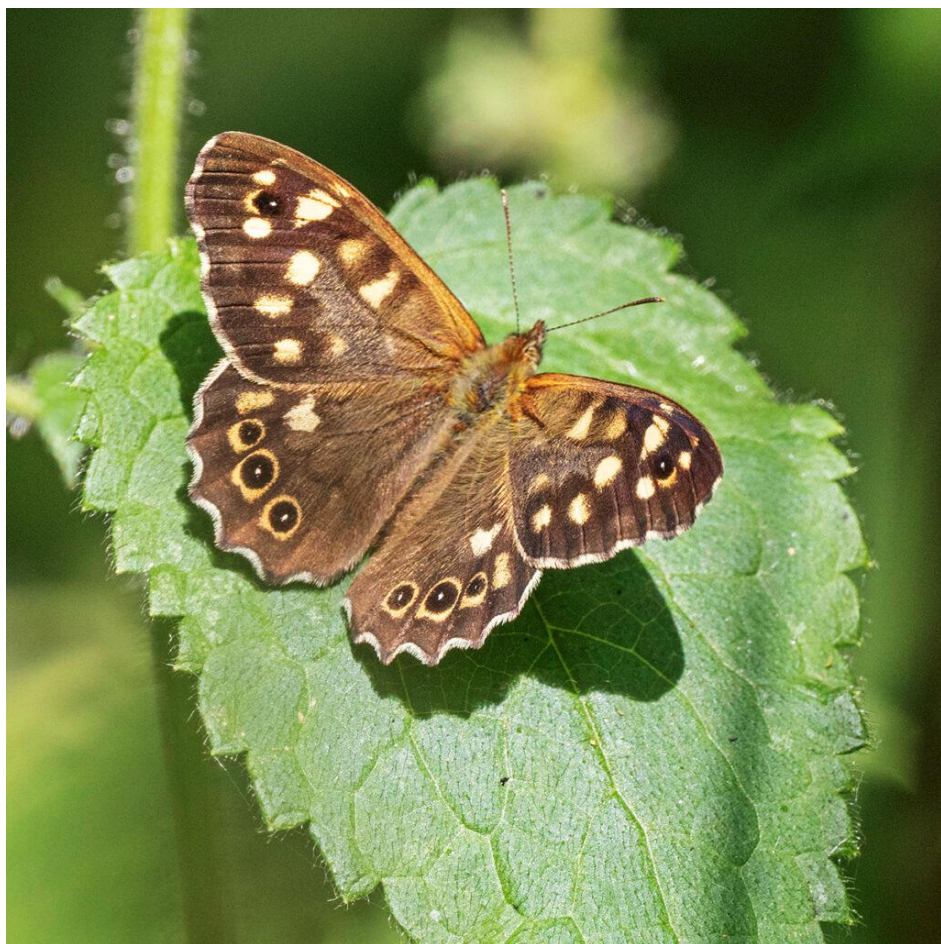
The first single sighting of this species in the Reserve was on 16th June and was followed by a later and final one on 17th August in Pennycroft. This compares with three in 2023.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to the following for submitting their records, with apologies for any omissions: Robert Adams, Mike Barland, Adrian Bennett, Peter Bowman, Rex Bradshaw, Alan Draper, Dave Edmundson, Dave & Karen Hargreave, Nigel & Jacqui Heptinstall, Mike & Viv Johnson, Alwin & Tony Knowles, Pam Millen, Brian and Susan Morland, Paul and Trish Newey, Jayne Needham, Helen Pickard, Anne & Ken Readshaw, Laurie Reed, Will Rich, Clare and Colin Slator, Diane Smiley, Eric Ward, Jill Warwick, Ron Weeks and the Thursday volunteers, David Wilson.

Records at a Glance

Species	First Seen	Last Seen	Maximum
Small Skipper	7 Apr	16 Aug	7
Large Skipper	25 May	31 Jul	30
Orange Tip	14 Apr	19 Jun	50
Large White	9 May	19 Sep	12
Small White	16 Apr (BF)	16 Jun	23
Green-veined White	20 Apr	22 Aug	14
Brimstone	3 Feb (BF)	23 Oct (BF)	28
Wall	20 May	31 Jul	1
Speckled Wood	14 Apr	24 Oct	10
Ringlet	16 Jun	5 Aug	133
Meadow Brown	21 Jun	23 Aug	54
Gatekeeper	18 Jul	27 Jul	2
Silver-washed Fritillary	18 Jul	16 Aug	1
Red Admiral	12 May	6 Nov	3
Painted Lady	26 Jul	19 Sep	1
Peacock	20 Apr	17 Aug	11
Small Tortoiseshell	14 Apr	18 Sep	2
Comma	21 May (BF)	18 Oct	3
Small Copper	7 Jun	7 Jun	1
White-letter Hairstreak	16 Jun	4 Jul	2
Holly Blue	2 May (BF)	18 May	1
Brown Argus	17 Aug	29 Aug	1
Common Blue	16 Jun	17 Aug	1
<i>BF indicates Bellflask</i>			



Speckled Wood, Paul Newey

Moths

Karen Hargreave



INTRODUCTION

2024 started with a new Moth recorder for High Batts (HB). Karen Hargreave took over the role and wishes to thank all the visitors to the Reserve for their photos and records. It is very important to keep an up-to-date record of all species seen, and even if you cannot identify them, then there is always someone within the membership who will be able to. Please therefore continue to send images to karenhargreave@aol.com.

The High Batts Moth group, which includes trap setters, collectors & recorders trapped on 16th May, 7th June, 20th July, 9th August, & 13th September – many thanks goes to all the volunteers involved.

With a total of thirteen NEW Micro and five NEW Macro moths recorded for the Reserve this year, the Reserve list has now increased to an amazing combined total of 621 excluding sub species.

** Refers to new species recorded.

Meadow Longhorn

Cauchas rufimitrella

This longhorn species, is usually found flying in sunshine often visiting flowers of its foodplants, Cuckoo-flower and Garlic Mustard. Two seen and photographed on 10th & 16th May.



Previous page: Mint Moth, Sue Parris.

Above: Meadow Longhorn (left) & Comfrey Ermine (right), Eric Ward.

Comfrey Ermine

Ethmia quadrillella

The smallest of our *Ethmia* species, is a local moth, occurring in England mainly in the east and south-east. It is usually found on the many Comfrey plants around the Reserve between May and July and was seen & photographed by members on numerous days. The adults are mostly nocturnal, and are attracted to light, but are sometimes seen flying in sunshine.

** *Cauchas fibulella*

Though it is often overlooked because of its diminutive size it is unlikely to be confused with any of the other longhorn species. The combination of the small size and the elongated whitish spot on the dorsum of the wing at about two-thirds is diagnostic, although sometimes the wing markings are reduced and difficult to make out. It flies by day and is often seen visiting the flowers of its foodplant, Germander Speedwell. A new moth for the Reserve - one was seen and photographed by Eric Ward on 27th May.

** *Eriocrania salopiella*

On 28th May Charlie Fletcher was surveying the woods and found a leaf mine of *Eriocrania salopiella* on Silver Birch at the Reserve. Not only new for the Reserve, but the first record for VC65. Leaf-mines are the feeding signs of insect larva. Various insect larva feed within leaves, including some moths whose larvae occur in May and early June. The leaf mine begins as a narrow gallery in the centre of the leaf, turning into an elongate blotch and then a larger blotch encompassing the leaf margin. The one shown in the photo is in its early stage, and within a week it will have grown significantly.



Above: (left) *Cauchas fibulella*, Eric Ward & (right), *Eriocrania salopiella* Charlie Fletcher.

July is the peak season for moths to be on the wing, and this year it didn't disappoint. The Moth trapping session on 20th July was run by Charlie Fletcher, for the benefit of High Batts Open Day on 21st. On that day we recorded 209 Species with a total of 1385 Moths. Thirteen species were new to High Batts - ten Micros and three Macros. A total of ten traps were set around the Reserve and Pennycroft. This is an enormous task and takes a lot of time and effort – grateful thanks goes to the volunteers who undertook this.

**** *Phyllocnistis unipunctella***

Adults are on the wing in July and also from September onwards, sometimes overwintering in haystacks.

**** *Bryotropha similis***

A rare and very local resident which requires genitalia examination for species confirmation. Widely but rather thinly recorded from all five vice-counties.

**** *Coleophora ibipennella***

A scarce moth with widely scattered records. Another species which requires genitalia examination for species confirmation. The larva feeds on oak (*Quercus*), building a distinctive 'pistol-case' with a 'handle' of pale greyish silk.

**** *Elachista atricomella***

Common & thinly distributed resident. Good to eventually trap one at High Batts.

Brindled Tortrix



Brindled Tortrix, Eric Ward

**** *Ptycholoma lecheana***

Quite a distinctive species, with a dark brownish ground colour, variously suffused with yellowish scales and patches of metallic silver. It is distributed throughout England & Wales, becoming scarcer further north into Scotland. The larvae feed inside the rolled leaves of a variety of trees & shrubs. Photographed by Eric Ward on 31st May.

**** *Clepsis consimilana***

Trapped at the Open Day. One of the plainer-looking of the Tortricidae, the female being even more indistinctly marked than the male. Two small darker spots on the hind edge of the reddish-brown forewing help to distinguish this species. The larvae feed on trees such as Privet (*Ligustrum*), apparently preferring dead leaves.

**** *Endothenia quadrimaculana***

Larvae feed in the roots and underground stems of Marsh Woundwort (*Stachys palustris*) in such places as damp meadows, hedgerows and probably riverbanks. It also occasionally feeds on Spearmint (*Mentha spicata*). The moth hides low in vegetation during the day but flies in the evening and later comes to light. Thinly distributed across the county, but recorded from all five vice-counties.

Scarce Rose Shoot Moth

Whilst not a new moth for High Batts this moth is a real rarity. Nationally scarce in the UK, very few records for the vice-counties locally. One was trapped on the Open Day, and again on 9th August.

Scarlet Rose Shoot Moth,
Charlie Fletcher

Notocelia incarnatana



Mugwort Moth

The larvae feed within the roots of Mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*). Requires genitalia examination for species confirmation.

**** *Dichrorampha simpliciana***

**** Codling Moth**



This moth is often considered a pest species because of the larval habits of burrowing into fruits. The caterpillars feed inside the fruits of apple (*Malus*), quince (*Cydonia oblonga*), pear (*Pyrus*) and other wild and cultivated fruit. Trapped on 9th August.

Cydia pomonella

Codling Moth, Karen Hargreave

**** Plum Fruit Moth**

A Rare and local resident which was recorded at light on the 20th July.

Grapholita funebrana

**** *Dioryctria abietella***

This moth is now recorded in small numbers from widely scattered localities across the five vice-counties. The larvae feed on various parts of pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), including cones, shoots and buds.

**** Pine Hawk-moth**

Sphinx pinastri

Pine Hawk-moth can't quite decide what to do. It's not sure whether it's invading us or not. It's a bit of a ditherer and is prone to make U-turns. It seems to wait and see what other moths are doing before it makes its mind up! The food plant is

Scots Pine, though it will occasionally use other conifers. Nice to eventually catch up with this splendid moth.

**** Dwarf Cream Wave**

Idaea fuscovenosa

This was a fairly sedentary species, confined to the south-east quarter of the county. However in the last few years it is spreading further north. It inhabits open areas of woodland, parks and gardens and other weedy places, and the larvae are thought to feed on low-lying plants such as Dandelion (*Taraxacum*).

**** Small Blood-vein**

Scopula imitaria

Feeding on Privet (*Ligustrum*), Honeysuckle (*Lonicera*) and a variety of low-growing plants; the caterpillars overwinter. The adults fly at night during July and August and occupy habitats such as waste ground, hedgerows and coastal sand-dunes. This moth is generally local and uncommon although distribution is spreading further north; it is still uncommon in VC65.

**** The Chevron**

Eulithis testata



Chevron, Karen Hargreave

9th August. Quite a variable species, this moth displays colour forms from yellowish through to fairly dark brown. The larvae are said to feed mainly on sallows and poplars, but also sometimes on birches, heather and Hazel .

**** Black Rustic**

Aporophyla nigra

A rather long-winged species, with little variation from the blackish-brown ground colour and whitish stigmata. The males have white

hindwings, the females more dusky. It tends to be a moth of open grassy heath and moorland habitats, though it can occur in any herb-rich grassy areas and is not uncommon in gardens. Numbers still seem to be increasing. This one was trapped on 13th September in North Clearing.



Black Rustic, Karen Hargreave

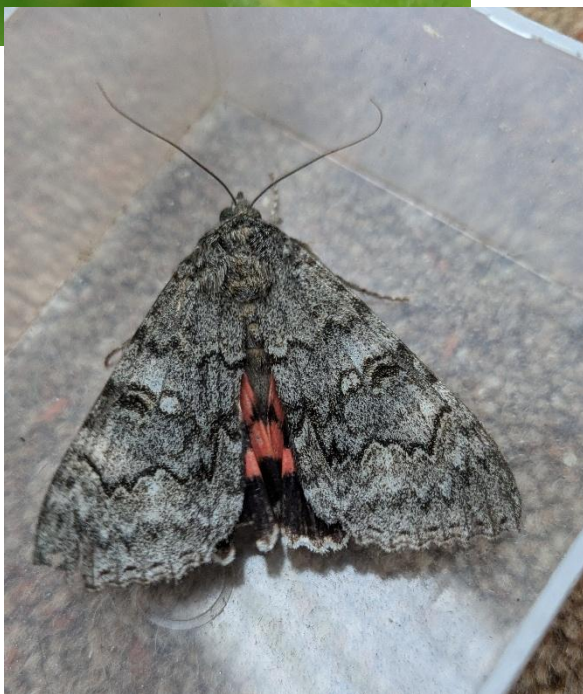


A couple of the more
colourful moths at the
Reserve in 2024.

*Above: Yellow Shell,
Eric Ward*

*Right: Red Underwing,
Karen Hargreave*

Should anyone wish to see
a full list of moths
recorded for 2024 please
contact
karenhargreave@aol.com





From the Hotel Hide, July 2024

Damselflies and Dragonflies

Steve Worwood



INTRODUCTION

Only fifteen species were recorded this year, a reduction of three compared with 2023. One was new for the Reserve - a species that had been predicted – the Small Red-eyed Damselfly. Two of the new species of 2023, Red-eyed and Hairy Dragonfly, were not a surprise by their absence. However, of more concern was the lack of a single report for either Emerald Damselfly or Common Hawker, both long term denizens of the Reserve. While fewer reports overall were submitted than in 2023 there does appear to be a drop in counts across the board.

Again, I would like to request that people submitting reports at least try to make an estimate of numbers present; a tick or the term ‘present’ could mean anything from one to 1001 and makes producing a meaningful report that much harder!

The order and nomenclature follows Askew R.R. ‘*The Dragonflies of Europe*’. 1988.

Zygoptera

2. Banded Demoiselle

Calopteryx splendens

The first of the year was one on 19th May, two weeks later than in 2023. The peak for May was five at Pennycroft on 30th. The species was regularly reported in June, with a peak count of four in the Reserve on various dates; 18 were at Pennycroft on 24th June. July started with a count of 30+ across the Recording Area on 4th followed by reports of lower numbers until the last, a male, on 9th August.

16. Large Red Damselfly

Pyrrosoma nymphula

Two on the North Pond on 19th May. A male recorded on 8th June and two on 18th June were the only other records this year.

18. Small Red-eyed Damselfly

Erythromma viridulum

The first record of this species at High Batts was on 5th July on the ponds in the Reserve where it was photographed by Eric Ward.

28. Azure Damselfly

Coenagrion puella

A count of 23 on 19th May was the first of the year, but such numbers would indicate that some were out earlier than this. Four were on Pennycroft on 30th May. Reported as present throughout June in single figures. No further records until the last, of three, on 9th August.

Previous page: Common Blue Damselfly, Paul Newey

31. Common Blue Damselfly

Enallagma cyathigerum

The first record was of 36 on 19th May, some in tandem. Again, as above, this is indicative that they had been on the wing for some time. Counts remained low through May and June with the exception of 90+ at Pennycroft on 27th May. On 4th July counts of 30+ in the Reserve and 78 on Pennycroft. Counts were low in the Reserve for the remainder of July, but 150+ were on Pennycroft on 31st. In August there were counts of up to 25 in the Reserve and 50+ at Pennycroft with the last report of 32 at Pennycroft on 29th August.

33. Blue-tailed Damselfly

Ischnura elegans

The first record was on 19th May with four in the Reserve; there were four at Pennycroft on 27th. Low numbers were noted in June with five in Reserve on 16th being the maximum; two on 26th was the only Pennycroft record this month. July was a repeat of June with a maximum of six on 18th; just two July records of two and a single insect on Pennycroft. The last record of the year was of two in the Reserve on 9th August.



Small Red-eyed Damselfly (male), Eric Ward

Anisoptera

43. Migrant Hawker

Aeshna mixta

Surprisingly only four records this year - one at Pennycroft on 29th August, then one in the Reserve on 14th September. In the wider Recording Area, Little Studley Meadows had one on 31st August and four on 14th September.

45. Southern Hawker

Aeshna cyanea

Four records, two in the Reserve on 4th July and 9th August, then one on 16th and one at Pennycroft on 29th August.

47. Brown Hawker

Aeshna grandis

First record for the year was of two at Pennycroft on 24th June; there were low counts during the rest of the month. July had regular counts again in low single figures in Pennycroft and the Reserve until nine on 31st. Reported regularly in low numbers throughout August with peaks of 12+ on Pennycroft on 1st and 11 in the Reserve on 14th. The last was a record of two over Pennycroft on 29th August.

49. Emperor Dragonfly

Anax imperator

All records were of single insects. The first was in the Reserve on 18th June, this being the only record for this site in 2024. Pennycroft had reports on 26th June the 4th, 15th and 31st July the latter being the last record for the year. In the Recording Area Little Studley Meadows had one on 27th June.

81. Four-spotted Chaser

Libellula quadrimaculata

One over the North Pond on 19th May was the first. In June there were two on 16th, four on 18th and three on 20th. One was at Pennycroft on 21st June and two on 7th July. In the Recording Area two were at Little Studley Meadows on 27th June.

83. Broad-bodied Chaser

Libellula depressa

Single insects were in the Reserve on 19th May, 8th June and 19th June. These were the only records this year.

86. Black-tailed Skimmer

Orthetrum cancellatum

The first record was of two on 6th June, freshly emerged, on Pennycroft. Then reported regularly in ones and twos throughout June in both the Reserve and Pennycroft. There was a single record in July of two at Pennycroft on 26th then one in the Reserve on 14th August. In the Recording Area, Little Studley Meadows had single insects on 29th August and 14th September.

95. Common Darter

Sympetrum striolatum

One on Pennycroft on 4th July was the first for the year. The species was then reported on 20 dates, just in single figures in July; by August counts reached 15+ at the Reserve and 46 at Pennycroft. September had counts of 20+ in the Reserve and Pennycroft. Good numbers extended into October and the last report was of 20+ in the Reserve on 18th October. In the Recording Area, Little Studley Meadows had two on 17th August, eight on the 31st, four on 7th September and five on the 14th.

102. Ruddy Darter

Sympetrum sanguineum

A male was on Pennycroft on 26th July, with single insects in the Reserve on 5th and 14th August and two on the 16th. Little Studley Meadows had one on 7th and two on 14th September.



Other Insects & Invertebrates

Trevor Baker



INTRODUCTION

I was expecting to start recording insects in the Spring, but this year it started on Thursday 15th February, a volunteer day. Andrew Rider, Adrian Bennett and I were working on a wooden box-like structure when we noticed a huge Hornet at the entrance of the box. It seemed to be a bit drowsy, so we were able to observe it for a while. The day was warm; according to the BBC weather forecast the temperature was similar to that of June. Maybe the warmth affected the Hornet as they normally become active from April. Another sign of global warming perhaps?

By 2nd June a few members had already sent me many sightings, but it was the first time that I had been able to get to the Reserve myself specifically to look for insects to photograph. The day was hot and sunny and the most obvious thing was the number of bees on the vegetation. Although some bees probably escaped my attention, I still managed to identify eight species. At some point late in the day I realised that I had not seen any hoverflies, which struck me as odd. The only one, towards the end of the day, was a Great Pied Hoverfly! The other insect that seemed prolific was the Harlequin Ladybird; many were copulating.

On the afternoon of 18th October, Martin Hammond, an ecologist, spent some time at the Dragonfly Ponds to see what was in them. This was a one off survey but was useful to get some different records that we might not usually get. His results are contained within this report.

The Reserve does not appear to have a definitive list of invertebrates that have been seen before. To rectify this, I decided that I would use 2024 as the new baseline. Therefore, any species that has not been reported to me since 2021, when I started as recorder, has been treated as an NRR or NS. I appreciate that this may not be accurate, but I needed to draw a line somewhere.

NRR Species new to reserve since 2021

NS Species new to Recording Area since 2021

All records in this report refer to the Reserve unless otherwise stated.

Ephemeroptera: Mayflies

Baetidae

Small Dark Olive

Baetis scambus

17th May, Eric & Linda Ward. **NR**

Lake Olive

Cloeon simile

17th May, Eric & Linda Ward.

Pond Olive

Cloeon dipterum

18th October (larvae), Martin Hammond.

Ephemeridae

Green Drake Mayfly

Ephemera danica

10th May, Eric & Linda Ward; 2nd June, Trevor Baker; 5th & 27th June, Chris Hardy.

Ephemera vulgata

25th May, Chris Hardy; 2nd June, Trevor Baker.

Orthoptera: Bush-Crickets, Crickets and Grasshoppers

Tetrigidae: Ground-Hoppers

Slender Ground-Hopper

Tetrix subulata

30th April, Chris Hardy.

Acrididae: Short-horned Grasshoppers

Common Field Grasshopper

Chorthippus brunneus

6th September, Eric & Linda Ward.

Hemiptera: Bugs

Acanthosomatidae, Scutelleridae, Cydnidae, Thyreocoridae, & Pentatomidae: Shieldbugs

Birch Shieldbug

Elasmotethus interstinctus

16th August & 4th October, Eric & Linda Ward.

Pied Shieldbug

Tritomegas bicolor

19th April, Eric & Linda Ward; 20th April, Jill Warwick.

Hawthorn Shieldbug

Acanthosoma haemorrhoidale

27th May, Eric & Linda Ward.

Woundwort Shieldbug

Eysarcoris venustissimus

13th May, Eric & Linda Ward.

Green Shieldbug

Palomena prasina

17th May & 2nd August (final instar); 30th August (2nd, 3rd, 4th and final instar); 6th September (adult, 3rd and final instar); 27th September (adult and final instar); 4th October (20+, Final and 4th instar nymphs); 11th October (10+); 18th October, Eric & Linda Ward. 25th May, 5th & 13th June, Chris Hardy.

Hairy Shieldbug

Dolycoris baccarum

30th April and 16th & 25th May, 5th & 27th June, Chris Hardy; 10th, 13th & 17th May, 14th June, 5th July, 16th & 30th August, 6th September (adult & late instar), 4th October, Eric & Linda Ward.

Spiked Shieldbug

Picromerus bidens

6th September, 4th October, Eric & Linda Ward.

Red-legged Shieldbug/Forest Bug

Pentatoma rufipes

21st June (final instar), Eric & Linda Ward; 12th September, Adrian Bennett & Trevor Baker.

Gorse Shieldbug

Piezodorus lituratus

7th June, Eric & Linda Ward.

Coreidae: Leatherbugs

Box Bug

Gonocerus acuteangulatus

31st May, Eric & Linda Ward.

Rhopalidae: Rhopalid Bugs

Rhopalus subrufus

25th May, Chris Hardy; 14th June, Eric & Linda Ward. **NRR**



Box Bug, Eric Ward

Nabidae: Damsel Bugs

Marsh Damsel bug

Nabis limbatus

4th October, Eric & Linda Ward.

Common Damsel Bug

Nabis rugosus

16th May, Chris Hardy; 17th May, Eric & Linda Ward. **NRR**

Miridae: Plant or Capsid Bugs

Potato Capsid Bug

Closterotomus norwegicus

13th June, Chris Hardy.

Red-spotted Plant Bug

Deraeocoris ruber

26th July, 2nd August, Eric & Linda Ward; 17th July, Trevor Baker.

Common Flower Bug

Anthocoris nemorum

17th July (final instar), Trevor Baker.

Tarnished Plant Bug

Lygus rugulipennis

14th June, Eric & Linda Ward. **NRR**

Lygus pratensis

30th April, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Lygus sp.

4th October, Eric & Linda Ward.

Acetropis gimmerthalii

14th June (nymph), Eric & Linda Ward. **NRR**

Calocoris alpestris

5th June, Chris Hardy; 14th June, Eric & Linda Ward. **NRR**

Dryophilocoris flavoquadrimaculatus

16th May, Trevor Baker; 5th June, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Grypocoris stysi

27th May (nymphs), Eric & Linda Ward; 2nd June (imago & nymph), 17th July, Trevor Baker; 5th June, Chris Hardy.

Fine Streaked Bugkin

Miris striatus

31st May, Eric & Linda Ward.

Plagiognathus arbustorum

17th July, Trevor Baker.

Adelphocoris quadripunctatus

14th August, Eric & Linda Ward. **NRR**

Lygaeidae

Nettle Groundbug

Heterogaster urticae

Little Studley: 16th August, Colin Slator.

Gerridae: Pondskaters

Common Pondskater

Gerris lacustris

3rd May, Eric & Linda Ward.

Corixidae: Water Boatmen

Hesperocorixa linnaei

18th October, Martin Hammond.

Hesperocorixa sahlbergi

18th October, Martin Hammond.

Sigara fossarum

18th October, Martin Hammond.

Veliidae

Microvelia reticulata

18th October, Martin Hammond.

Cercopidae: Froghoppers

Red-and-black Froghopper

Cercopis vulnerata

16th & 25th May, Chris Hardy; 17th May, Eric & Linda Ward; 2nd June, Trevor Baker; 13th June, Chris Hardy.

Aphrophoridae: Froghoppers

Alder Spittlebug

Aphrophora alni

14th June, Eric & Linda Ward.

Common Froghopper

Philaenus spumarius

17th July, Trevor Baker.

Horned Treehopper (Eric Ward)



Membracidae: Treehoppers

Horned Treehopper

31st May, Eric & Linda Ward.

Centrotus cornutus

Cicadellidae: Leafhoppers

21st July, Eric & Linda Ward.

Cicadella viridis

20th July, Colin Slator (insect caught in a moth trap). **NRR**

Oncopsis flavicollis

20th July, Colin Slator (insect caught in a moth trap). **NRR**

lassus lanio



Oncopsis flavicollis, Trevor Baker



lassus lanio, Trevor Baker

Cixiidae

31st May, Eric & Linda Ward. **NRR**

Cixius nervosus

Neuroptera: Lacewings and Ant-lions

Chrysopidae: Green Lacewings

31st May, 14th & 21st June, Eric & Linda Ward; 2nd June, Trevor Baker; 13th June, Chris Hardy.

Chrysopa perla

11th April, Trevor Baker.

Chrysoperla sp.

Megaloptera: Alderflies

Sialidae

Sialis lutaria

16th May, Chris Hardy.

Sialis sp.

6th & 17th May, Eric & Linda Ward.

Coleoptera: Beetles

Dytiscidae: Diving Beetles

Agabus affinis

Hydroporus angustatus

Hydroporus neglectus

All three species on 18th October, Martin Hammond. Martin states that *H. neglectus* is a small diving beetle at the northern edge of its range and is listed as nationally scarce.

Hygrotus impressopunctatus

18th October, Martin Hammond.

Hydrophilidae: Water Scavenger Beetles

Anacaena limbata

Helochaeres lividus

Cercyon convexiusculus

Chaetarthria simillima

Above four species all 18th October, Martin Hammond.

Carabidae: Ground Beetles

Necklace Ground Beetle

Carabus monilis

Recording Area near South Parks Farm: 7th March, Rob Adams and Adrian Bennett saw this beetle whilst on a WeBS walk. A good sighting as the beetle is a rarity. **NS**

Bronze Ground Beetle

Carabus nemoralis

11th April, Trevor Baker & Adrian Bennett. This lovely coloured beetle was found on lifting a large piece of plywood near to the Hotel Hide.



Bronze Ground Beetle, Trevor Baker



Black Clock Beetle, Sally Driscoll

Rainbow Greenclock

2nd June, Trevor Baker, three found in pitfall trap. **NRR**

Poecilus versicolor

2nd June, Trevor Baker, found in pitfall trap. **NRR**

Stomis pumicatus

Black Clock Beetle

19th October, Sally Driscoll. **NRR**

Pterostichus madidus

Silphidae: Carrion or Burying Beetles

Red-breasted Carrion Beetle

25th May, Chris Hardy; 2nd June, Trevor Baker.

Oiceoptoma thoracicum

Staphylinidae: Rove Beetles

25th May, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Tachyporus chrysomelinus



Red-breasted Carrion Beetle, Chris Hardy



Aphodius rufipes, Trevor Baker

Scarabaeidae: Scarab Beetles

Cockchafer

14th June, Eric & Linda Ward.

Melolontha melolontha

Brown Chafer

20th July, Colin Slator (found in moth trap).

Serica brunnea

Aphodius rufipes

20th July, Colin Slator (caught in moth trap). **NRR**

Volinus sticticus

16th May, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Elateridae: Click Beetles

Denticollis linearis

25th May & 13th June, Chris Hardy.

Athous haemorrhoidalis

17th May, Eric & Linda Ward; 2nd June, Trevor Baker; 25th May & 13th June, Chris Hardy.

Athous bicolor

16th & 25th May, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Cantharidae: Soldier Beetles

Cantharis cryptica

27th May, Eric & Linda Ward; 16th & 25th May, 13th June, Chris Hardy.

Cantharis nigricans

10th, 13th & 17th May, 14th June, Eric & Linda Ward;
16th & 25th May, Chris Hardy.

Cantharis rustica

10th, 13th & 17th May, Eric & Linda Ward; 16th & 25th
May & 5th June, Chris Hardy.

Cantharis pellucida

16th May, Chris Hardy; 17th May, Eric & Linda
Ward.



Cantharis rustica, Chris Hardy

Cantharis livida

3rd May, Eric & Linda Ward.

Cantharis decipiens

3rd May, Eric & Linda Ward.

Common Red Soldier Beetle

Rhagonycha fulva

28th June, 5th July, 2nd August, Eric & Linda Ward; 17th July, Trevor Baker.

Malachiidae: Soft-winged Flower Beetles

Common Malachite

Malachius bipustulatus

17th May, 4th & 21st June, Eric & Linda Ward; 2nd June, Trevor Baker; 13th June, Chris Hardy. Eric and Linda reported that they saw many of these beetles along the ride on the 4th June.

Coccinellidae: Ladybirds

7-spot Ladybird

Coccinella septempunctata

18th March, Pam & Trevor Baker; several on the supporting struts of the structure on top of The Mound on 30th April, Chris Hardy; 19th & 26th April, 3rd & 17th May, 6th September, 4th & 11th October (5+), Eric & Linda Ward.

14-spot Ladybird

Propylea quatuordecimpunctata

28th April, Edgar Maily; 30th April & 16th May, Chris Hardy; 6th & 10th May, 30th August & 6th September, Eric & Linda Ward.

Cream-spot Ladybird

Calvia quatuordecimguttata

18th April, Edgar Maily.

Harlequin Ladybird

Harmonia axyridis

The Harlequin Ladybird is a very variable species with many different colour and pattern forms. The three commonest forms are: *succinea* which is orange with 15 to 21 black spots; *spectabilis* which is black with four red spots; and *conspicua* which is black with two red spots.

Form not recorded: 18th March, 11th April & 2nd June, Trevor Baker; 11th April Adrian Bennett. 25th & 13th June, Chris Hardy. These beetles were abundant in both the toilet and Pond Hide on the 11th April. 20th April, Jill Warwick.

Form *succinea*: 3rd & 17th May, 14th & 30th August, 6th & 27th September, 4th October, Eric & Linda Ward. Larva, 5th July, Eric & Linda Ward. Pupa, 2nd August, Eric & Linda Ward.

Form *spectabilis*: 17th May, 9th & 30th August,
18th October (10+), Eric & Linda Ward.

Form *conspicua*: 14th June & 4th October, Eric &
Linda Ward.

Orange Ladybird *Halysia sedecimguttata*
26th July, Xander Parrish. **NRR**



Orange Ladybird, Roger Parrish

Oedemeridae: False Blister Beetles

Oedemera lurida

4th June, Eric & Linda Ward.

Pyrochroidae: Cardinal Beetles

Red-headed Cardinal Beetle *Pyrochroa serraticornis*
30th April & 16th May, Chris Hardy; 10th & 17th May, Eric & Linda Ward; 2nd June,
Trevor Baker.

Cerambycidae: Longhorn Beetles

Wasp Beetle *Clytus arietis*
10th May, Eric & Linda Ward; 13th June, Chris Hardy.

Black and Yellow Longhorn Beetle *Rutpela maculata*
13th & 27th June, Chris Hardy; 21st June, 5th July, Eric & Linda Ward; 18th July, Nick &
Linda Mercer.

Golden-bloomed Grey Longhorn Beetle *Agapanthia villosoviridescens*
13th June, Chris Hardy.

Lime Beetle *Stenostola dubia*
13th June, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Chrysomelidae: Leaf Beetles

Willow Leaf Beetle *Lochmaea caprea*
17th May, Eric & Linda Ward. **NRR**

Chrysolina polita

13th June, Chris Hardy; 21st June, Eric & Linda Ward.

Donacia clavipes

30th May, Adrian Bennett. **NRR**

Donacia simplex

13th June, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Hawthorn Leaf Beetle

Lochmaea crataegi

6th May, Eric & Linda Ward.

Alder Leaf Beetle

Agelastica alni

16th February, Eric & Linda Ward; 22nd February, Rob Adams, several in the bark crevices of an Alder to which a new Goosander box was being affixed; 30th March, Trevor Baker; 5th April, Roger Parrish; 11th April, Adrian Bennett & Trevor Baker; 26th April, 3rd May, 4th, 11th & 18th October, Eric & Linda Ward (numerous beetles along The Ride); 8th May, Daz Mendoza; 25th May, Chris Hardy; 5th October, Pam & Trevor Baker (several beetles at the top of the Reserve near The Mound). The Reserve seemed to be covered with these beetles on the 11th April. When Adrian & Trevor were checking nest boxes and attending to the wildlife cameras they came across Alder Leaf beetles on fences, bushes, tree trunks and low vegetation.



Hawthorn Leaf Beetle, Eric Ward

Cereal Leaf Beetle

Oulema duftschmidi/melanopus agg.

3rd May, Eric & Linda Ward.

Heather Beetle

Lochmaea suturalis

16th May, Chris Hardy.

Curculionoidea: Weevils

Willow Weevil

Dorytomus longimanus

18th March, Trevor Baker. This is a tiny weevil, about 4.5mm in length. A lovely little creature when viewed under a microscope.

Nedys quadrimaculatus

21st April, Edgar Maily.

Entiminae: Broad-nosed Weevils

Tanymecus palliatus

17th May, Eric & Linda Ward. **NRR**



Willow Weevil, Trevor Baker

Green Nettle Weevil

Phyllobius pomaceus

26th April & 13th May, Eric & Linda Ward; 16th May, Chris Hardy; 2nd June, Trevor Baker.

Green Leaf Weevil

Phyllobius maculicornis

30th April, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Phyllobius glaucus

30th April, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Phyllobius sp.

26th April, Eric & Linda Ward.

Liophloeus tessulatus

16th May, Chris Hardy; 17th May, Eric & Linda Ward; 2nd June, Trevor Baker. **NRR**

Trichoptera: Caddisflies

Hydropsychidae

Hydropsyche contubernalis

16th May, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Mecoptera: Scorpionflies

Panorpidae

Panorpa germanica

30th April & 16th May, Chris Hardy; 3rd, 13th & 17th May, 14th, 21st & 28th June, Eric & Linda Ward; 2nd June, Trevor Baker.

Panorpa communis

17th May, 14th & 21st June, 9th, 16th & 30th August, Eric & Linda Ward; 2nd June & 17th July, Trevor Baker; 13th June, Chris Hardy.

Diptera: Flies

Rhagionidae: Snipeflies

Black Snipefly

Chrysopilus cristatus

2nd June, Trevor Baker; 14th & 28th June (both male & female), Eric & Linda Ward.



Marsh Snipefly, Eric Ward

Little Snipefly *Chrysopilus asiliformis*
25th May, 5th, 13th June, Chris Hardy; 21st,
28th June (mating pair), Eric & Linda Ward.

Marsh Snipefly *Rhagio tringarius*
13th May & 28th June, Eric & Linda Ward; 25th
May & 5th June, Chris Hardy.

Small Fleck-winged Snipefly *Rhagio lineola*
17th May, Eric & Linda Ward.



Iridescent Centurian, Trevor Baker

Downlooker Snipefly *Rhagio scolopaceus*
13th & 17th May, Eric & Linda Ward; 16th May,
Chris Hardy.

Stratiomyidae: Soldierflies

Iridescent Centurian *Sargus iridatus*
June, Colin Slator (caught in moth trap).

NRR

Broad Centurian *Chloromyia formosa*
5th, 13th & 27th June, Chris Hardy; 17th July, Trevor Baker. **NRR**

Long-horned Black Legionnaire *Beris geniculate*
30th April, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Common Orange Legionnaire *Beris vallata*
16th May, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Bombyliidae: Bee-Flies

Dark-edged Bee-fly *Bombylius major*
30th March, Trevor Baker; 11th April, Sally Driscoll; 19th, 26th April, Eric/ Linda Ward.

Asilidae: Robberflies

Kite-tailed Robberfly *Machimus(Tolmerus) atricapillus*
2nd, 9th & 16th August, Eric & Linda Ward; 28th September, Trevor Baker. On the 28th
September, my wife and I were sat at the picnic table next to the Dragonfly Ponds
when the Robberfly sat next to me. When I looked at it closely it had another fly in
its clutches. It kept flying off but nearly always came back to the same place on

the bench. It allowed me to get very near to observe it, but I have not been able to identify the prey species.



Common Awl Robberfly *Neoitamus cyanurus*
31st May (male & female), 7th & 21st June, Eric & Linda Ward; 5th June, Chris Hardy.

Brown Heath Robberfly *Machimus cingulatus*
14th June, Eric & Linda Ward. **NRR**

Striped Slender Robberfly *Leptogaster cylindrica*
13th June, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Kite-tailed Robberfly, Trevor Baker

Empididae: Dance Flies

Empis livida

17th July, Trevor Baker. **NRR**

Empis tessellata

30th April & 16th May, Chris Hardy; 2nd June, Trevor Baker.

Dolichopodidae: Long-legged Flies

Poecilobothrus nobilitatus

14th & 28th June, Eric & Linda Ward; 25th May & 27th June, Chris Hardy.

Dolichopus festivus

17th May, Eric & Linda Ward. **NRR**

Argyra diaphana

16th & 25th May, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Calypterates

Scathophagidae: Dung-flies

Yellow Dung-fly

Scathophaga stercoraria

24th March, Roger Parrish; 19th & 26th April, 3rd & 17th May, 6th & 27th (male) September, Eric & Linda Ward; 8th May, Daz Mendoza; 25th May, Chris Hardy.

Anthomyiidae: Root-maggot Flies

Delia radicum

13th May, Eric & Linda Ward.

Delia sp.

26th April & 6th May, Eric & Linda Ward.

Hydrophoria lancifer

2nd June, Trevor Baker. **NRR**

Tabanidae: Horseflies

Splayed Deerfly

Chrysops caecutiens

30th April, 25th May & 13th June, Chris Hardy; 21st June, Eric & Linda Ward.

Conopidae: Thick-headed Flies

Myopa buccata

26th April, Roger Parrish; 25th May & 5th June,
Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Sicus ferrugineus

7th June, Eric & Linda Ward; 13th & 27th June,
Chris Hardy.

Conops quadrifasciatus

15th & 26th July and 9th August, Eric & Linda
Ward.



Myopa buccata, Chris Hardy

Psila fimetaria

2nd June & 17th July, Trevor Baker. **NRR?**

Tephritoidea

Tephritidae: Picture-Winged Flies

Celery Fly/Hogweed Picture-winged Fly

Euleia heraclei

30th April, 16th & 25th May, Chris Hardy; 1st May,
Edgar Maily; 3rd May, Eric & Linda Ward; 8th May,
Daz Mendoza.



Celery Fly/Hogweed Picture-winged Fly, Eric Ward

Dryomyzidae

Dryomyza anilis

4th October, Eric & Linda Ward.

Sciomyzidae: Marsh or Snail-killing flies

Tetanocera elata

17th May, Eric & Linda Ward. **NRR**

Brown-winged Millipede Killer

Pelidnoptera fuscipennis

16th May, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Tipulidae

Spotted Cranefly

Nephrotoma appendiculata

17th May, Eric & Linda Ward.

Long-palped Cranefly

Tipula lunata

17th May, Eric & Linda Ward.

European or Marsh Cranefly

Tipula paludosa

30th August & 6th September, Eric & Linda Ward.

Tipula oleracea

17th May & 21st June, Eric & Linda Ward; 25th May, Chris Hardy.

Tipula vittata

11th April, Chris Hardy.

Tipula vernalis

16th & 25th May, Chris Hardy.

Tiger Cranefly

Nephrotoma flavescens

16th May, Chris Hardy; 21st June, Eric & Linda Ward.

Cylindrotomidae

Nephrotoma crocata

13th May, Eric & Linda Ward.

Limoniidae: Short-Palped Craneflies

Limonia phragmitidis

6th May, Eric & Linda Ward.

Phylidorea ferruginea

16th May, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Ptychopteridae: Phantom Craneflies

Fold-winged Cranefly

Ptychoptera contaminata

10th May, Eric & Linda Ward.

Ptychoptera lacustris

17th May, Eric & Linda Ward. **NRR**

Sciaridae: Black Fungus Gnats

Sciara sp.

26th July, Eric & Linda Ward. **NRR**



Fold-winged Cranefly, Eric Ward

Chironomidae: Non-biting Midges

Chironomus plumosus

19th April, Eric & Linda Ward.

Muscidae: Houseflies

Phaonia sp.

19th & 26th April, Eric & Linda Ward.

Calliphoridae: Blowflies

Common Greenbottle

Lucilia sericata

2nd June, Trevor Baker; 27th June, Chris Hardy.

Awkward Clusterfly

Pollenia rudis

5th June, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Sarcophagidae: Flesh Flies

Sarcophaga carnaria

8th May, Daz Mendoza; 2nd June, Trevor Baker.

Bibionidae

St. Mark's Fly/Hawthorn Fly

Biblio marci

3rd May, Eric & Linda Ward.

Syrphidae: Hoverflies

Melanostoma scalare

16th May & 13th June, Chris Hardy.



Common Banded Hoverfly

Syrphus ribesii

16th May, 13th & 27th June, Chris Hardy;
17th July, Trevor Baker; 27th July & 6th
September, Roger Parrish.

Syrphus sp.

14th June, Eric & Linda Ward.

Ragwort Blacklet

Cheilosia bergenstammi

16th May, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Orange-shinned Blacklet

Cheilosia fraterna

Ragwort Blacklet, Chris Hardy

16th May, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

13th June, Chris Hardy.

Burdock Blacklet

Cheilosia impressa

25th May & 13th June, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Cheilosia scutellata

16th May & 13th June, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Cheilosia variabilis

13th June, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Cheilosia pagana

25th May, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Large Burdock Blacklet

Cheilosia vulpina

25th May, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Pipiza austriaca

25th May, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Meliscaeva auricollis

13th & 27th June, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Ramsons Hoverfly

Portevinia maculata

30th April & 16th May, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Helophilus pendulus

20th April, Roger Parrish; 27th & 31st May, 14th & 21st June, 5th July, 2nd August, 4th October, Eric & Linda Ward; 5th & 27th June, Chris Hardy.

Leucozona lucorum

3rd & 31st May, 7th & 28th June, Eric & Linda Ward.

Dasysyrphus venustus

30th April, Chris Hardy; 3rd May, Eric & Linda Ward.

Chrysotoxum festivum

7th June, Eric & Linda Ward. **NRR**

Marmalade Hoverfly

Episyrphus balteatus

13th, 17th & 31st May, 14th June, 5th July (male), Eric & Linda Ward; 25th May, Chris Hardy.

Epistrophe eligans

16th May, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Xylota sylvarum

27th June, Chris Hardy.

Syritta pipiens

25th May & 5th June, Chris Hardy.

Platycheirus clypeatus

11th April, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Hoverfly Stripe-faced Dronefly

Eristalis nemorum

31st May & 5th July, Eric & Linda Ward; 27th June, Chris Hardy.

Great Pied Hoverfly

Volucella pellucens

27th May, 9th August & 6th September, Eric & Linda Ward; 2nd June, Trevor Baker; 5th, 13th & 27th June, Chris Hardy.



Volucella bombylans

25th May, 5th, 13th & 27th June, Chris Hardy; 7th & 14th June, Eric & Linda Ward.

Volucella zonaria

15th July, Roger Parrish.

Sphaerophoria scripta

27th May, Eric & Linda Ward; 27th June, Chris Hardy.

Sphaerophoria sp.

6th September, Eric & Linda Ward.

Hoverfly (Common Dronefly)

Eristalis tenax

3rd & 31st May, 14th & 21st June, 2nd August, Eric & Linda Ward; 27th June, Chris Hardy. **Pennycroft:** 17th August, Alwin and Tony Knowles.

Tapered Drone Fly

Eristalis pertinax

24th March, Roger Parrish; 5th & 13th June, Chris Hardy; 5th July (male), 9th & 16th August, Eric & Linda Ward; 17th July, Trevor Baker.

Eristalis arbustorum

5th June, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

'Batman' Hoverfly

Myathropa florea

31st May & 27th September, Eric & Linda Ward; 5th, 13th, 27th June, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Parhelophilus versicolor

5th June, Chris Hardy. Although widespread, this is not a common hoverfly to see. **NRR**

Anasimyia contracta

13th June, Chris Hardy. **NRR**



Anasimyia contracta, Chris Hardy

Eupeodes corollae

20th June, Roger Parrish. **NRR**

Scaeva selenitica

21st June & 5th July (female), Eric & Linda Ward.

Criorhina floccosa

13th June, Chris Hardy. **NRR**



Eupeodes corollae, Roger Parrish

Tachinidae: Parasitic Flies

31st May & 30th August, Eric & Linda Ward.

Tachina fera

5th June, Chris Hardy; 7th June, Eric & Linda Ward.

Dexiosoma caninum

25th May & 13th June, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Exorista rustica

Hemyda vittata

June, Colin Slator (insect caught in moth trap). An uncommon fly, first recorded in Britain in the 1950s. Its distribution was restricted to woodland in a few counties of the south-east, though its range seems to have expanded in recent years. **NRR**

Hemyda vittata, Trevor Baker



Hymenoptera: Bees, Wasps and Ants

Symphyta: Sawflies and Wood Wasps

Argidae: Argid Sawflies

Bramble Fusehorn

Arge cyanocrocea

3rd & 17th May, Eric & Linda Ward; 16th & 25th May, Chris Hardy; 2nd June, Trevor Baker.

Bronze Fusehorn

Arge ustulata

25th May, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Meadowsweet Fusehorn

Arge ciliaris

25th May, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Tenthredinidae

Tenthredo sp.

3rd May, Eric & Linda Ward.

Tenthredo mesomela

2nd June, Trevor Baker; 25th May, 5th & 13th June, Chris Hardy.

Tenthredo arcuata

10th May, Eric & Linda Ward; 16th May & 13th June, Chris Hardy.

Tenthredo livida

13th May, Eric & Linda Ward; 2nd June, Trevor Baker; 16th & 25th May, 13th June, Chris Hardy.

Tenthredo ferruginea

5th June, Chris Hardy.

Tenthredopsis litterata

16th May, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Tenthredo temula

25th May, Chris Hardy.

Tomostethus nigrinus

25th May, Chris Hardy.

Allantus calceatus

6th May, Eric & Linda Ward.

Selandria serva

16th May, Chris Hardy; 17th July, Trevor Baker. **NRR**

Aglaostigma aucupariae

30th April, Chris Hardy.

Pachyprotasis rapae

5th June, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Alder Sawfly

Eriocampa ovata

16th May, Chris Hardy.

Macrophya annulata

30th April, 16th & 25th May, Chris Hardy; 17th May, Eric & Linda Ward; 5th June, Chris Hardy.

Macrophya alboannulata

16th & 25th May, 27th June, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Rhogogaster scalaris

17th May, Eric & Linda Ward.

Rhogogaster sp.

3rd May, Eric & Linda Ward.

Rhogogaster chlorosoma

5th & 13th June, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Rhogogaster punctulata

25th May, Chris Hardy.

Dolerus sp.

30th April, Chris Hardy.

Turnip Sawfly

Athalia rosae

17th & 27th May, Eric & Linda Ward; 25th May, Chris Hardy.

Athalia circularis

16th May, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

16th May, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Apocrita: Bees, Wasps & Ants

Apidae: Bees

Chocolate Mining Bee *Andrena scotica*

5th April, Roger Parrish; 11th & 30th April, 16th May & 13th June, Chris Hardy.

Tawny Mining Bee *Andrena fulva*

22nd & 30th March, Trevor Baker; 8th April, Roger Parrish; 19th & 26th April, Eric & Linda Ward; 19th & 30th April, 16th May, Chris Hardy.

Sandpit Mining Bee

8th April, Roger Parrish.

Orange-tailed or Early Mining Bee

2nd June, Trevor Baker; 5th June, Chris Hardy.

Hawthorn Mining Bee

2nd June, Trevor Baker.

Small Sallow Mining Bee

19th March, Edgar Maily said that there were plenty on the Reserve on this day.

Gwynne's Mining Bee

8th April, Roger Parrish. **NRR**



Chocolate Mining Bee, Roger Parrish

Andrena barbilabris

Andrena haemorrhoa

Andrena chrysosceles

Andrena praecox

Andrena bicolor



Sandpit Mining Bee, Roger Parrish



Gwynne's Mining Bee, Roger Parrish

Grey or Ashy Mining Bee

Andrena cineraria

15th April, Roger Parrish; 13th June, Chris Hardy. **NRR**



Red Mason Bee, Chris Hardy

Common Mini-miner

Andrena minutula

15th April, Roger Parrish; 19th April, Eric & Linda Ward; 2nd June, Trevor Baker. **NRR**

Short-fringed Mining Bee

Andrena dorsata

30th April, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Andrena sp.

3rd May, Eric & Linda Ward.

Megachilidae

Red Mason Bee

Osmia bicornis

19th April & 16th May, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

White-tailed Bumblebee

Bombus lucorum

2nd June, Trevor Baker; 14th June, Eric & Linda Ward.

Common Carder Bumble Bee

Bombus pascuorum

2nd June, Trevor Baker; 25th May & 5th June, Chris Hardy. **Pennycroft**: 17th August, Alwin & Tony Knowles.

Vestal Cuckoo Bee

Bombus vestalis

26th April & 31st May, Eric & Linda Ward; 16th May, Chris Hardy.

Red-tailed Bumblebee

Bombus lapidarius

2nd June, Trevor Baker; 14th June, Eric & Linda Ward.

Tree Bumblebee

Bombus hypnorum

2nd June, Trevor Baker; 13th & 27th June, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Early Bumblebee

Bombus pratorum

2nd June, Trevor Baker; 4th June, Eric & Linda Ward. **NRR**

Nomad/Cuckoo Bee

Nomada flava

26th April & 3rd May, Eric & Linda Ward; 19th & 30th April, 25th May, Chris Hardy.

Gooden's Nomad Bee

Nomada goodeniana

19th April, Eric & Linda Ward. **NRR**

Common Bee Wasp

Nomada ruficornis

30th April, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Nomada fabriciana

25th May & 5th June, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Honey Bee

Apis mellifera

18th March and 2nd June, Trevor Baker; 5th June, Chris Hardy.

Halictidae: Blood Bees

Sphecodes sp.

Possibly Sandpit Blood Bee (*Sphecodes pellucidus*), 10th May, Eric & Linda Ward.

Orange-legged Furrow Bee

Halictus rubicundus

5th & 13th June, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Common Furrow Bee

Lasioglossum calceatum

16th May, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Ichneumonidae: Ichneumon Wasps

Ichneumon stramentor

6th May, Eric & Linda Ward; 27th June, Chris Hardy.

Campopleginae

Campopleginae indet.

3rd May, Eric & Linda Ward.

Dusona sp.(possible)

27th May, Eric & Linda Ward.

Chrysididae: Cuckoo Wasps

Jewel or Ruby-tailed Wasp

Chrysis sp.

5th July (possibly ignita), Eric & Linda Ward.

Vespidae: Social, Potter and Mason Wasps

Common Wasp

Vespula vulgaris

11th April, Trevor Baker.

German Wasp

Vespula germanica

6th December, Eric & Linda Ward.

Saxon Wasp

Dolichovespula saxonica

16th May, Chris Hardy.

Symmorphus bifasciatus

June, Colin Slator (insect caught in moth trap). **NRR**

Ancistrocerus trifasciatus

15th July, Eric & Linda Ward; 27th June, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Hornet

Vespa crabro

15th February, Trevor Baker, Adrian Bennett & Andrew Rider; 11th April, Adrian Bennett & Trevor Baker; 16th August, Edgar Maily; 30th August & 6th September, Eric & Linda Ward; 19th September, Chris Hardy; 5th October, Trevor Baker when one was six inches away from my face inside the window of the Riverside Hide!

Pennycroft: 17th August, Alwin & Tony Knowles.

A huge Hornet was discovered at the entrance to a box like structure near the bridge at the beginning of The Ride whilst three Thursday volunteers were working.



Symmorphus bifasciatus,
Trevor Baker



Hornet nest, Adrian Bennett



Hornet, Trevor Baker

Happily for us, it was a bit drowsy and we were able to observe it for a while. Due to its size, it is likely that it was a Queen. Adrian Bennett discovered a Hornet in nest box S3 when we were checking nest boxes. At the beginning of September, several people noticed Hornets coming out of the Owl box on the telegraph pole by the bridge over the stream. When Adrian and I cleaned out the nest box we were able to extract the Hornet nest without too much damage to it.

Crabronidae: Digger or Sand Wasps

Two-girdled Digger Wasp

Argogorytes mystaceus

2nd June, Trevor Baker; 25th May & 5th June, Chris Hardy.

Large-spurred Digger Wasp

Nyssus spinosus

16th May, Chris Hardy. **NRR**

Mollusca: Snails and Slugs

Hygromiidae

Kentish Snail

Monacha cantiana

19th April, Jill Warwick.

Helicidae

Brown-lipped Snail

Cepaea nemoralis

11th April, Trevor Baker & Adrian Bennett. When Trevor and Adrian were checking nest boxes, they came across scores of these snails on the tree trunks where the nest boxes were. The wet weather that had been constant over a period of weeks may have resulted in the snails climbing the trees in such numbers. There were all sizes, patterns and colours as can be seen in the photos on the right by Trevor Baker.



White-lipped Snail

Cepaea hortensis

19th April, Jill Warwick.

Garden Snail

Cornu aspersum

19th April, Jill Warwick.



Lymnaeidae

Greater Pond Snail

Lymnaea stagnalis

18th October, Martin Hammond.

Arionidae

Leopard Slug

Limax maximus

Pennycroft: 11th April, John Harriott.



Leopard Slug, John Harriott

Diplopoda: Millipedes

Glomeridae

Pill Millipede

Glomeris marginata

26th April, Eric & Linda Ward.

Arachnida: Spiders and allies

Araneidae

Walnut Orb-weaver

Nuctenea umbratica

2nd June, Trevor Baker.

Larinioides cornutus

20th May, Trevor Baker.

Pisauridae

Nurseryweb Spider

Pisaura mirabilis

20th April, Jill Warwick; 17th July, Trevor Baker. Jill saw a number of these in the taller vegetation, on the slope from the upper to lower car parks by the Photography Hide, basking in the sunshine. In Jill's photo, you can see that it is a male because of the large bulbus pedipalps.



Nurseryweb Spider, Jill Warwick

Dictynidae

Nigma walckenaeri

3rd September, John Drewett. **NRR, NS**

It's not every day that you get a real surprise and see something exceptional but that's what happened to John when he noticed a deformed seedhead. Here is what he reported to me:-

“When I visited the Reserve on 31st August I noticed a couple of Nettle-leaved Bellflowers beside the main ride, both with very deformed seedheads. I took photos & made notes thinking that they may be galls. Having checked gall literature & contacted other galling friends, I was satisfied that they were not galls. Perhaps they were an example of plant fasciation? The literature on this is rather diffuse, but I did find something similar seen in Hampshire about thirty years ago.



To progress further I needed to a specimen, so returned to the Reserve to collect one. Back home, I took some photos before breaking up the deformed head under the microscope. This revealed no evidence to suggest a gall, just a plethora of seeds & deformed tissue. However, sheltering towards the centre was a small



The fasciated seedhead (top) and the spider (below) John Drewett

spider around 2mm long. I quickly took a couple of photos before it became active and disappeared into my study! Not expecting an identification, I sent the pictures to Geoff Oxford of the British Arachnological Society. Shortly after he replied, telling me it was Nigma walckenaeri. Apparently it is one of the few small spiders identifiable from a photograph! Geoff says that in recent times it has been found in several places in North Yorkshire, including his garden in York, but was once thought confined to Box Hill in Surrey – a fact that was of interest to me as that was where I grew up and took my first interest in natural history back in 1967!”

Recorder’s note: Guide books on spiders all say how this spider is really restricted to the south east of England so this is a fantastic find.

Thomisidae

Crab spider

Xysticus ulmi

2nd June, Trevor Baker.

Phalangiidae: Harvestmen

Leiobunum rotundum

17th July, Trevor Baker.

Fish, Amphibians, Reptiles & Crustacea

Ron Weeks



Pisces: Fishes

Minnow

Phoxinus phoxinus

A small shoal was seen at Little Studley Meadows in May.

Three Spined Stickleback

Gasterosteus aculeatus

A shoal was reported in the Stream Pond in September.

Chub

Squalius cephalus

A small shoal of chublet were present in the North Pond during the summer and Chub were also present in the Stream Pond.

Pike

Esox lucius

A Pike was reported in the Stream Pond in July.

Malacostraca

Signal Crayfish

Pacifastacus leniusculus

Signal Crayfish were caught in large numbers throughout the summer in both the Stream and the Stream Pond during de-silting and de-weeding works.

Water Hoglouse

Asellus aquaticus

Reported in the North Pond in October.

Amphipod Shrimp

Crangonyx pseudogracilis

Reported in the North Pond in October.

Amphibia: Amphibians

Common Frog

Rana temporaria

The first sighting of the year along with spawn was at Lower Studley Meadow on 10th May. They were then noted throughout the year in both the North & South Clearings and the North Pond until 18th October.

Common Toad

Bufo bufo

The first sighting of the year was of tadpoles at Lower Studley Meadow on 9th May. Toads were reported in Oscar's Wood (Pennycroft), the Reserve, Barn Paddock and Lower Studley Meadow throughout the summer. The last of the year was in the North Clearing on 18th October.

Previous page: Common Frogs, John Drewett. Photo not taken at Reserve.

Birds

Patricia Rumbold & Peter Bowman



Note: In this report any reference to numbers counted during WeBS refers to a count across the entire Recording Area.

Canada Goose

Branta canadensis

The majority of records were from Pennycroft with Lightwater Pool and Bellflask also featuring. The highest count of the first winter quarter was 25 in the wider Recording Area on 8th February; 35 in the Recording Area was the highest count during the breeding season. Just one breeding record was received, of a pair with three young at Pennycroft on 15th June. Post breeding WeBS counts of 50 on 6th June and 25th July were noted. On 15th August 117 were in the Recording Area (300 last year on 17th August) although subsequent WeBS records indicated no more than 20 present to the year end.

Snow Goose

Anser caerulescens

On 15th August two were seen in the Recording Area during a WeBS count.

Greylag Goose

Anser anser

There were low single figure counts from the Hotel Hide in the first quarter, with WeBS counts at this time recording a maxima of 336 in the Recording Area on 11th January, reducing to 165 during the survey on 7th March. A pair frequented the Hide Pond from 25th March, three pairs were at Little Studley Meadow on 27th March and two pairs were in the Reserve on 1st April. The first breeding record was one adult and four young at Pennycroft on 21st April followed by a goose and five goslings at Little Studley Meadow a day later. Seven goslings were at Pennycroft on 1st May and two goslings were at Lightwater Pool the following day. On 15th June a count at Pennycroft noted 100+ adults and 25 young. From then until the year end five counts of 100-300 were made in the Recording Area originating from Pennycroft, Badger Bank, Bellflask and Sleningford with single figure counts noted in the Reserve at this time. Five seen from the Hotel Hide on 31st December were the year's last.

Pink-footed Goose

Anser brachyrhynchus

Recorded in the first and second winter quarters. Sixty were over the Recording Area on 2nd January followed by totals of 135 over the Reserve on three subsequent January dates; a further 35 were on two dates in February and 72 on two dates in March. September saw the first of the autumn passage when 30 were over Ripon Parks on 10th followed by a total of 335 on five later dates in September, including 200 over Little Studley Meadow on 18th. October passage saw a total of

67 over the Recording Area followed by 73 in November and 101 on 20th December of which 80 were over Little Studley Meadow.

White-fronted Goose

Anser albifrons

Four were at Pennycroft on 17th August and two were in the Recording Area during the November WeBS count on 14th.

Mute Swan

Cygnus olor

Low, single figure counts at the start of the year were from the Hotel Hide, Lightwater Pool, Little Studley Meadow & the Dubb. Fifteen in the Recording Area on 11th January increased to 20 on 4th April. Cygnets were recorded from 6th June when 12 adults & ten young were in the Recording Area. Low, single figure counts predominated in the second half of the year; WeBS records in these months noted a maximum of 29 in the Recording Area on 12th December.

Whooper Swan

Cygnus cygnus

On 2nd March 23 were over Badger Bank. Later in March twelve were seen over the Reserve on 11th, 54 on 17th and a further 10 overflowed the Pond Hide on 25th. Two records received from the second winter period comprised one in the Recording Area on 19th October and eight at Bellflask on 14th November.

Shelduck

Tadorna tadorna

Almost half of the records were of birds seen in May. The year's first were five in the Recording Area on 11th January followed by two pairs at Little Studley Meadow on 13th. In the first quarter, eight were in the wider Recording Area during WeBS counts. Little Studley Meadow was the favoured location for paired birds, but two pairs were also at Pennycroft on 1st May. Thirteen were in the Recording Area on 9th May; one to three were at Bellflask and Sleningford during the month also. On 16th June two adults & eight ducklings were at Pennycroft. After this date just four low counts were received, including five at Bellflask on 25th July. None were noted after 15th August except for three at Bellflask on 12th December.

Mandarin Duck

Aix galericulata

In 2014 no records were received and in 2015 just two records. In 2017 a male & female were at Black-heath Pond on 5th October, but the next year there were again no records. However, this year there were 195 records in total! Early records indicated the river by the Hotel as the favoured pre-breeding site; in January up to four males and five females gathered here on 1st, increasing to 18 on 21st. On 3rd March the first pair were at Hide Pond and from then until 12th May, one to six were along the river or at Hide Pond, the exception being four drakes & four ducks at the

south end of the Reserve on 20th April. The first ducklings were seen on 13th May when an adult & seven young were at Hide Pond, although over the following two months just four ducklings were recorded regularly until 17th July. In the latter half of the year up to six individuals were seen regularly, usually at Hide Pond; highlights included five males & four females on the river on 22nd October & 11 adults at Hide Pond on 13th November. Two pairs were on the river near the Hotel on 9th December. Finally, four males & a female were there on 30th December.

Shoveler

Anas clypeata

From 11th January the twelve records in the year represented every month except March, indicating up to three in the Recording Area. Locations included the river near the Hotel, the Dubb and Bellflask. A WeBS survey on 6th June noted 14 in the wider Recording Area. A pair was at the Dubb on two dates in April but no breeding records were received from any site. Two were at Bellflask on 12th December.

Gadwall

Mareca strepera

Eleven were in the Recording Area on 11th January with three remaining on 8th February. One was in the Reserve on 12th February. In the following two months a pair was regularly along the Stream & at the Hide Pond. Although two pairs were in suitable habitat at Pennycroft on 31st March there were no breeding records from any location. Seven were in the Recording Area on 15th August. Subsequent records from the Recording Area were single figure counts, usually at Little Studley Meadow, except for 20 here on 7th September. In the last quarter 15 were in the Recording Area on two dates. Fifteen were at Bellflask on 12th December.



Gadwalls, Steve Black

Wigeon

Mareca penelope

Sixteen records were received in the year, eleven more than last year; these included two counts of 100 in the Recording Area on 11th January and 8th February. Singles and twos remained in the Recording Area until 13th May, with the species seen at Pennycroft, along the river at the Hotel Hide and at Bellflask. Numbers increased from 26th July when ten were in the Recording Area; 12 were at Little Studley Meadow on 19th September. Later highlights in the Recording Area included approximately 50 on 24th October, 100 during the WeBS count on 14th November and 101 on 12th December.

Mallard

Anas platyrhynchos

Singles & twos were in the Reserve in the first winter quarter, usually at the Hide Pond. Little Studley Meadow held the largest counts in the period including 32 on 25th January; a WeBS count on 11th January indicated 178 in the Recording Area. A pair was at Hide Pond from 12th February and three pairs at Little Studley Meadow on 27th March. The first ducklings were recorded on 23rd April when a pair with four young were at the Hide Pond. Eight adults and five ducklings were at Little Studley Meadow on 18th June, an adult and three young were at Pennycroft on 26th June with a further adult and four ducklings at Little Studley Meadow on 27th June. Three days later a duck and seven ducklings were at the Hide Pond although just one duckling remained with an adult on 4th July. Highlights of counts in the wider Recording Area later in the year were 265 on 14th November and 135 on 12th December, these being similar to counts made on the equivalent dates last year.

Teal

Anas crecca

Little Studley Meadow produced the majority of records during the first quarter. Notable counts included 42 in the Recording Area on 11th January & 38 at Little Studley Meadow on 13th January; up to five frequented the stream in the Reserve. Records were much reduced in the breeding season & no breeding records were received; there was just one count of two birds in the Recording Area on 9th May. From August to the year end, Little Studley Meadow held the largest gatherings with up to 20 noted regularly and 42 on 20th December. In the Reserve up to seven frequented the Hide Pond and Stream. A total of 73 were in the Recording Area during a count on 12th December.

Pochard

Aythya ferina

Fifteen were in the Recording Area on 11th January, followed by seven on 8th February. Three records from the second winter quarter noted two males at

Pennycroft on 7th September, one in the Recording Area on 19th September and three in the Recording Area on 14th November.

Tufted Duck

Aythya fuligula

Small numbers of records each month confirmed the species' presence in the Recording Area, the majority of these noting Pennycroft as the favoured site. Fifty-three were in the Recording Area on 8th February, reducing to 30 on 4th April. Four pairs were at Pennycroft on 26th April. No breeding records were received from any location. In June, 30 were in the Recording Area on 6th with low single figure counts at Pennycroft in the following two months. Later WeBS records from the Recording Area indicated 30 on 19th September and 24th October, and 50 on 14th November and 12th December.

Scaup

Aythya marila

One was in the Recording Area during a WeBS count on 19th September.

Goldeneye

Bucephala clangula

Counts in the Recording Area in the early part of the year indicated seven on 11th January, ten on 9th February, nine on 7th March and a final count of the year of seven on 4th April; these compare favourably with the single record of one at Bellflask on 19th January last year.

Goosander

Mergus merganser

In the first half of the year up to six were on the river at the Hotel Hide; a WeBS count on 7th March indicated just seven in the entire Recording Area. The first young were seen from the Hotel Hide on 22nd May when an adult and unrecorded number of young were present; a day later an adult and eight young, were possibly the same group. By 2nd June there were just three young, reducing to two by 1st July. Between one & six birds were on the river near the Hotel Hide until the year end.

Grey Partridge

Perdix perdix

Just four records were received. A female was at North Lees on 15th June; two were at Pennycroft a day later; an individual was in the Reserve car park area on 20th May; and a pair was at the side of the haul road crossing on 29th July.

Pheasant

Phasianus colchicus

First winter quarter counts from the Recording Area indicated up to 100 present with up to 20 at the Pond Hide feeders or near the Hotel Hide. Low single figure counts were the norm in the breeding period, again from the Pond Hide or Hotel; up to three juveniles were seen in the Reserve. From 27th July the access track



Stock Dove, Paul Newey

was favoured by newly-released poults with at least 100 seen on five dates in August. From the start of September all records were of birds at Hide Pond or Hotel feeders; single to low double figure counts were the norm.

Red-legged Partridge

Alectoris rufa

Twenty-two were on the track at the west of the Reserve on 18th January, although the majority of subsequent records comprised no more than six at locations including North Stainley, Sleningford, North Lees and Pennycroft. The only exceptions were 25 at Little Studley Meadow on 27th March and 30 in the Recording Area on 6th June. Two pairs were at Pennycroft on two occasions in the breeding period but no young were recorded from any site. Low, single figure counts were noted from Pennycroft, Sleningford, the access track and the Pond Hide until the end of the year.

Swift

Apus apus

Just twelve counts were made between 20th May when three birds were over the Reserve and 25th July when 20 were over Bellflask. In the intervening months two were over Pennycroft and the Hotel Hide on 30th May and four in the Recording Area on the same date. On 6th June, ten were over the Recording Area, followed by four over the Reserve on 8th and two at North Lees on 29th. Five were over the Reserve on 4th July, two in the Recording Area on 11th.

Stock Dove

Columba oenas

Recorded in ones and twos in the Reserve & Recording Area from 8th February. Two were at Sleningford on 13th February & one at North Parks Farm on 3rd March. A pair was in the Reserve, at the Barn area, the Pond Hide and the Hotel Hide on four dates in April. In May three pairs were in the Reserve, one of which had a nest near the Stream on 13th. On June 8th, six - including one singing & calling - were in the Reserve and nearby. A nest with two eggs was in the Reserve on 13th June; two adults and two young were near the Pond Hide on 23rd July. Eighteen were in the Recording Area on 25th July and in the latter half of the year between one and six were in the Reserve; singles and twos were at Pennycroft and Badger Bank. The last of the year were two at the owl box opposite the Pond Hide on 26th December.

Woodpigeon

Columba palumbus

One of the most widely recorded species in the Reserve & Recording Area, usually in single figures in the Reserve, especially at the Pond Hide feeders. Highlights of Recording Area counts during the first quarter included 135 on 11th January, 500 at the west side of Canada Bottom on 28th January and 450 on 7th March. In the Reserve 30 were present on 13th March. Sixty-six were in the Recording Area on 4th April; during the breeding period up to six frequented the Reserve although no breeding records were received from any location. In the latter half of the year, single figure counts in the Reserve were the norm with the Hotel and Pond Hides featuring. Year end aggregations in the Recording Area were noted from 24th October when 200 at Badger Bank formed part of the 339 total recorded during a WeBS count. Eighty were in trees at Pennycroft on 30th November and 245 were in the Recording Area on 12th December.

Turtle Dove

Streptopelia turtur

One was seen near Ripon Tennis Centre on 26th July. At times this bird, or another, was seen feeding in a garden during the summer in the southern part of the Recording Area. Robert Adams was fortunate to hear “purring” from this rapidly declining migrant at Ure Bank Top in Ripon on 5th August.

Collared Dove

Streptopelia decaocto

Up to 16 were in the Reserve during January and February, usually around the Pond Hide feeders. After that, no more than four were recorded here until August when six were seen on 8th & 19th. One was on a nest on 29th August at North Parks Farm. The Pond Hide feeders continued to attract up to six in the last quarter of the year, exceptions being 12 on 11th November and 14 on 10th December.

Water Rail

Rallus aquaticus

Two were at Pennycroft on 11th January, followed by two in the Recording Area on 8th February & one at Bellflask on 7th March. From 27th October, most records were of singles and twos at Little Studley Meadow, although one was at Bellflask on 12th December. There were no records from the Reserve during the year.

Moorhen

Gallinula chloropus

Up to six were in the Reserve during the first winter period, usually at the Hide Pond; 14 were in the Recording Area on 7th March. Breeding records were received from 22nd April when an adult & three young were at Little Studley Meadow, followed on 26th, by two active nests at the Hide Pond. In May, an adult and four young were at Little Studley Meadow on 15th & two adults with two young were in the Reserve on 22nd. On June 18th two broods were at Little Studley Meadow, where there were three broods on 24th; on 2nd July sixteen mixed adults & juveniles were at the site. In the Reserve during June & July no fewer than 25 records were received of adults with young at the Hide Pond; at least two successful pairs produced up to 15 young between them; six juveniles were here on 21st September. Post breeding, 12 adults & 14 juveniles were at Little Studley Meadow on 31st August & up to ten birds were at the Hide Pond on 10th September. From October until the year end the Hide Pond and Little Studley Meadow featured mainly single-figure counts, but 18 were at the Hide Pond on 10th December.

Coot

Fulica atra

Recorded in all months of the year in the Reserve and Recording Area although only 20 records were received in total; counts indicate a steady decline year on year. A count at the start of the year produced a total of 122 in the Recording Area and counts from the Reserve in the first winter quarter showed no more than two birds. No evidence of breeding was noted. Counts from the Recording Area in the second half of the year noted 30 on three occasions and 37 on 12th December.

Little Grebe

Tachybaptus ruficollis

In the first half of the year counts of just one or two were the norm with the Stream in the Reserve producing most of the records. Ten were in the Recording Area on 11th January reducing to two on 4th April. Just one record per month was received from the Recording Area from May to September with six on 25th July being the highest count. An individual returned to the Reserve Stream by 15th October; from then until the year end one or two were seen regularly at the Hide Pond and Stream. Just four were in the Recording Area on 12th December.

Great Crested Grebe

Podiceps cristatus

Pennycroft, and occasionally Bellflask, were the favoured locations with 14 at Bellflask on 7th March. A pair was at Pennycroft on 1st May and throughout the breeding period, followed by eight pairs at Bellflask four days later. One was on a nest at Pennycroft on 3rd July and 13 adults & 10 juveniles were at Bellflask on 25th July – the year's only record of successful breeding. Ones & twos continued at Pennycroft into August. Up to 13 were in the Recording Area on 19th September reducing to seven on 12th December.

Oystercatcher

Haematopus ostralegus

Sixty-one records were received, all but two from the first eight months of the year. No records were received in September and October and only one from each of November and December, when one and two respectively were noted. Pennycroft produced the majority of records usually featuring single figure counts. Twenty-seven were in the Recording Area on 8th February with a similar number here on 4th April. In the breeding period, singles and twos were at several locations in the Recording Area including the Reserve and Middle Parks. At Pennycroft a pair were displaying on 8th April followed by one at a nest on 1st May; a pair with young were in the fen area at Pennycroft on 11th June. On 4th July around 20 were at Ripon Parks after which just single figure counts came mostly from Pennycroft, the Hotel Hide and the Hide Pond.

Avocet

Recurvirostra avosetta

In June, one was at Pennycroft on 11th, and three were at Ripon Parks on 25th. One in the Recording Area on 19th September was the only other record in the year.

Golden Plover

Pluvialis apricaria

Thirty-three birds at Pennycroft on 24th July were the year's first with no further records until four at Ripon Parks on 6th October. Four were just outside the Recording Area on 13th October. Five were in the Recording Area & four at Sleningsford on 24th. Forty flew north over the Reserve on 6th November.

Little Ringed Plover

Charadrius dubius

Just three records were received, these being of a pair at Pennycroft on 8th May, two at Pennycroft on 10th July and one at Bellflask on 25th July.

Lapwing

Vanellus vanellus

Notable counts included 400 in the Recording Area on 11th January, reducing to 69 on 7th March; Ripon Parks & Pennycroft each held up to 38 in this period. On 4th April, eighteen remained in the Recording Area. Five single-figure counts were

made in the Recording Area during the breeding period. Post-breeding gatherings included 300 at Bellflask on 18th July and a similar number at Pennycroft on 1st August. Between 20 and 150 were at Pennycroft during September. About 100 were on fields near Lightwater on 10th October increasing to 300 on 13th. 500+ were at Sleningford a fortnight later. On 12th December, 76 were in the Recording Area. Thirty were at North Lees on 31st December.

Curlew

Numenius arquata

The majority of records were of birds at Pennycroft, with counts also made at Bellflask, Middle Parks, Sleningford and Badger Bank; flyovers were seen from the Hotel and Pond Hides. Early in the year, there were regularly 100-300 at Pennycroft, similar to 2023; 405 were in the wider Recording Area on 11th January. Numbers reduced to 50 by 13th March and just one by 31st March. Singles were noted in the Recording Area in April & May. There were no June records but WeBS in July and August noted 16 & 42 respectively. Winter aggregations included 300+ in the Recording Area on 24th October, 238 at Bellflask on 14th November, 100+ at Pennycroft on 30th November and 210 in the Recording Area on 12th December.

Bar-tailed Godwit

Limosa lapponica

One was at Bellflask on 14th November.

Black-tailed Godwit

Limosa limosa

Two records were received. Three were in the Recording Area during a WeBS count on 4th April and six were here on 24th October.

Jack Snipe

Lymnocyptes minimus

Two were in the Recording Area on 11th January. Singles were at Bellflask on 24th October, 14th November and 12th December.

Woodcock

Scolopax rusticola

Nine records were received from the months of January to March and from November to December. One was at Pennycroft and one in the Reserve on 4th January, then singles in the Reserve on 21st January and 15th March; one was at Pennycroft on 24th February. One was at the Dubb on 20th November followed by three in the Recording Area and two in the Reserve on 12th December. The last of the year was one in Oscar's Wood on 14th December.

Snipe

Gallinago gallinago

Three in the Recording Area on 11th January were the year's first, followed by two at Little Studley Meadow and two at the Dubb on 25th February. Singles were again at

Little Studley Meadow on 24th March and 20th July. During WeBS counts in the Recording Area, one was counted on 19th September, three at Bellflask on both 24th October & 14th November, and three in the Recording Area on 12th December.

Common Sandpiper

Actitis hypoleucos

Birds were recorded from April, with a pair & two singles at Pennycroft on 21st. In May, one flew upriver at the Reserve on 6th, two were in the Recording Area on 9th. & two pairs were at Pennycroft on 13th; no breeding records were received. In June, four were in the Recording Area on 6th, followed by one on the river at the Hotel on 18th, and one at Pennycroft on 26th. Two were at Pennycroft on 10th July & four at Bellflask on 25th. In August one was at Pennycroft on 3rd. One was at the Hide Pond on 13th September and one was in the Recording Area on 19th.

Green Sandpiper

Tringa ochropus

Three in the Recording Area during a WeBS count on 9th May were the year's first followed by one at Pennycroft on 10th July and one at Bellflask on 14th November.

Redshank

Tringa tetanus

No records were received from the Reserve. One to two birds formed most of the ten records from the Recording Area, the first being two on 8th February. In March, one was at Bellflask on 7th & a gathering of about 50 on passage were at Pennycroft on 13th; just five remained on 4th April. Singles were at Pennycroft on 3rd & 10th July. Two to four were in the Recording Area during three counts in the last quarter.

Greenshank

Tringa nebularia

Two were in the Recording Area on 19th September.

Ruff

Calidris pugnax

Two were at Bellflask on 16th November.

Dunlin

Calidris alpina

Four were in the Recording Area on 8th February and an estimated 100 were at Pennycroft on 15th February, after which time counts reduced considerably. In April just four were in the Recording Area on 4th & two in the Reserve on 26th; three were in the Reserve on 10th June. Monthly counts from then until 12th December indicated between one & seven in the Recording Area.

Common Tern

Sterna hirundo

One was seen from the Pond Hide on 26th May; three were in the Recording Area on 6th June; three were at Bellflask on 25th July, followed by two in the Recording Area on 15th August.

Black-headed Gull

Chroicocephalus ridibundus

Pennycroft produced the majority of records with the first notable count being 200 flying between Pennycroft and North Parks on 11th February and 80-100 here on nine dates later in the month; 340 were noted on 24th. In March, about 300 were still in the Recording Area, but numbers then reduced so that 100 were at North Stanley on 21st & a similar number were at Pennycroft on 31st. Just 66 remained in the Recording Area on 4th April; 50 were at North Parks on 2nd May. The Hide Pond, Pennycroft & Little Studley Meadow produced single figure counts in the breeding period with later gatherings including 200 at Blue Cap Wood on 18th September, 138 in the Recording Area on 24th October and 179 at Bellflask on 12th December.

Common Gull

Larus canus

Considerably more records were received this year compared with 2023. The first were 17 in the Recording Area on 11th January. A juvenile was with Black-headed Gulls in the Pennycroft & North Parks area on 11th February. Four April counts included ten in the Recording Area on 4th; 25 flying over the Reserve on 14th; ten in the Recording Area on 17th; and two at the Hide Pond on 29th. Two were also at Hide Pond on 2nd June. On 15th August ten were in the Recording Area; a flock of 20 flew over the Pond Hide on 28th September. In October ten were at Sleningford on 13th; 38 (including 29 at Sleningford) were in the Recording Area on 24th. Singles were in the Recording Area on 14th November and 12th December.

Herring Gull

Larus argentatus

Records and counts of the species from the Recording Area are declining year on year with just six records, all from the latter half of the year, received in 2024. One at Little Studley Meadow on 18th June was the year's first, with singles and twos noted on four subsequent dates to the end of the year. Three at Pennycroft on 14th December were the year's last.

Great Black-backed Gull

Larus marinus

Eight flying from Pennycroft to Bellflask on 18th January were the first of the year. In the wider Recording Area, one was present on 8th February, followed by 20 on 4th April. A single was in the Recording Area on 25th July and 50 were noted on 15th August. Just four records were received from the Recording Area in the second winter quarter with only singles or twos seen in this period.

Lesser Black-backed Gull

Larus fuscus

Recorded from March to December with counts of one to ten the norm in the Recording Area. Just two records from the Reserve: one flying over on 19th March

and five also flying over on 12th September. Fifty were in the wider Recording Area on 15th August and about 40 were at North Lees on 31st August. In September, 60 were at Blue Cap Wood on 18th and 165 were noted during a full survey of the Recording Area and Ripon Quarry on 19th. Ten at Pennycroft on 17th October was the last double figure count of the year.

Cormorant

Phalacrocorax carbo

Widely recorded during the year with the majority of records in the first and second winter periods and originating from the river at the Hotel and Riverside Hides; the Hide Pond, Pennycroft, Lightwater Pool and North Parks also occasionally featured. Singles, twos and occasional threes were the norm at any location, although eight were in the Recording Area on 11th January and four were at the Hotel Hide the following day. In September, twelve were in the Recording Area during the WeBS count and ten remained throughout on 12th December.

Bittern

Botaurus stellaris

Three records from Bellflask indicated singles present on 7th March, 19th September and 24th October.

Little Egret

Egretta garzetta

Recorded throughout the year with an average of nine records per month; August & September counts predominated, with the Hide Pond & Hotel Hide producing the majority. In the wider Recording Area Bellflask, Pennycroft & Little Studley Meadow were also represented, with singles and twos the norm at any location, although WeBS counts in July & August noted 23 in the Recording Area and 22 at Bellflask respectively; these were much higher than the single figure counts of 2023. No evidence of breeding in the Recording Area was received. At the end there were just six in the Recording Area on 12th December.

Great White Egret

Ardea alba

Twelve records were received in the year comparing favourably with the two last year. The records commenced in June when one was in the Recording Area on 6th followed by one (the same bird?) at Ripon Parks on 13th July. One was in the Recording Area on 15th August and at Little Studley Meadow on 18th September. In October singles were at the Hide Pond, The Dubb and Ripon Parks. However, a WeBS count on 24th October indicated two in the Recording Area on that date. No records were received in November and the five December counts noted singles at the Hide Pond, Ripon Parks and Little Studley Meadow. Two were at Ripon Parks on 16th and one at Little Studley Meadow on 20th December was the year's last.

Grey Heron

Adrea cinerea

Recorded throughout the year from many locations including the Hide Pond, the Hotel & the Dragonfly Pond in the Reserve, from Pennycroft, Wath, Bellflask & Little Studley Meadow. No records of heronries or breeding were received. WeBS counts in the Recording Area included 18 on 7th March and 25 on 24th October.

Osprey

Pandion haliaetus

Spring passage was recorded from 4th April when two were in the Recording Area. Singles were at Pennycroft on 16th May and 19th July. One was in the Recording Area on 15th August and the year's last was over Manor Farm Lake, East Tanfield on the late date of 20th November.

Sparrowhawk

Accipiter nisus

The majority of sightings were at the Hide Pond feeders with singles regularly here throughout the year. Exceptions in the Reserve included two on 9th & 23rd March, a pair on 1st April and three near the Car Park on 13th April. Elsewhere at this time, singles were in the Recording Area, although four were counted on 4th April. Other locations with singles included Palace Road & Little Studley Meadow. No breeding records were received. All later records were of one (sometimes two) at the Hide Pond feeders or Hotel. Three were in the Recording Area on 14th November.

Marsh Harrier

Circus aeruginosus

Four counts were made in the Recording Area, all from the second winter quarter. One was at Pennycroft on 7th September, followed, in October, by one at the Dubb on 7th and one at Bellflask on 24th. One, again at Bellflask, on 14th November was the year's last.

Harrier sp.

One, possibly a female Hen Harrier, was seen from the Pond Hide as it flew over the Reserve on 24th August.

Red Kite

Milvus milvus

As in previous years records and counts were sparse, with 22 records in the year, usually of just single birds, overflying locations that included the Reserve, Pennycroft, Little Studley Meadow, North Lees and North Stainley, with a WeBS record of 6th June noting just three in the Recording Area.

Buzzard

Buteo buteo

Widely and frequently recorded from the Reserve and wider Recording Area. One (and up to four) regularly seen at various locations throughout the year. Highlights

of the first winter quarter include seven in the Recording Area on 7th March and 13 overall on 4th April. Pairs were noted from 26th April when two birds, likely with young, were at North Parks Farm; two pairs were also over Norton Conyers on 16th May. In June two juveniles were over the Reserve on 5th and an adult and one juvenile flew over Pennycroft on 22nd July. Singles and twos were the norm in the last quarter of the year. Nine in the Recording Area on 24th October and eight on 12th December being the only counts of note in these months.

Barn Owl

Tyto alba

It is pleasing to note an increase of records year on year from both the Reserve and Recording Area with records received from every month except May and June. In the early part of the year, singles were in the Reserve on eleven dates until the end of March with birds recorded at the north end of the ride, behind the Pond Hide and near the Hotel Hide. Elsewhere in the Recording Area in these months, singles were at the access track, North Stainley and Pennycroft. For the first time since 2019 a successful breeding record was received, of a pair with three young seen at Hutton Conyers on 21st July. In the following months singles continued to be recorded from North Lees, Bellflask and the access track. Two were in the Reserve near the Pond Hide on 27th August with one here again on 22nd November and 31st December.

Little Owl

Athene noctua

Unfortunately no records of this delightful but now declining species were received in the year.

Short-eared Owl

Asio flammeus

One was recorded at Bellflask on 7th March.

Tawny Owl

Strix aluco

Calls, presumably from one bird, were heard near the Pond Hide from 1st January and calling continued to be heard from here, the Hotel and the south corner of the Reserve during the first six months of the year. On 15th February two were in the Reserve, one at the north end and one at the south, and on 7th March two were at Bellflask and one was in the Reserve. In spite of the many records received, no breeding was recorded in the Reserve and the only breeding record from the Recording Area was of a pair with two young at King's Mead, Palace Road on 21st July. Records of singles & twos continued until the year end, the majority originating from the Pond or Hotel Hides or at the north end of the Reserve.

Kingfisher

Alcedo atthis

As in previous years this species was recorded on many occasions in the year with records of singles and twos from the Pond and Hotel Hides predominating. The first juveniles of the year were two at the stream in the Reserve on 16th June and on the same day three adults and two juveniles were seen at the silt lagoon. From July and until the end of the year, singles and twos continued to be seen in the Reserve, or on the river at the Hotel Hide. A juvenile was still in the Reserve on 24th August with a possible three individuals in the Reserve on 12th September.

Great Spotted Woodpecker

Dendrocopos major

Possibly one of the most recorded species in the Reserve with the Pond Hide feeders regularly attracting singles and twos throughout the year. In February, a pair was at the Hotel Hide on 12th and “drumming” was heard in the Reserve from 17th; a pair were at the Hotel Hide again two days later. A WeBS count on 7th March counted five in the Recording Area and, also in March, paired birds were at the Pond and Hotel Hides on 12th, with pairs continuing to be seen at these locations during the following two months. The year’s first juvenile was with an adult at the Pond Hide feeders on 15th June and single juveniles continued to be recorded here and at the Hotel until July. Unfortunately, on 17th July, observers at the Pond Hide recorded an adult with two young, one of which looked sick or exhausted and which later died during the observers’ visit. Ten days later an adult and one juvenile were again at the Pond Hide feeders and a juvenile was still in the Reserve on 5th October. Year-end records mirrored those of the early months with singles or twos frequenting the Reserve feeders. Two males and a female were in the Reserve on 5th November and 14th December, with a male and female in the Reserve on 31st December being the year’s last.

Green Woodpecker

Picus viridis

The majority of counts were from the first half of the year commencing on 11th January when two were in the Recording Area during a survey, while the Reserve’s first of the year was one at the Pond Hide on 15th February. Calling was heard in the Reserve on 17th & 18th February and single birds continued to be recorded in the Reserve, usually near the Hotel Hide and occasionally from over the river, until mid-June. On 16th July three - comprising a pair with a juvenile - were in the Reserve and two adults and one juvenile (the same family party?) were at Bellflask two days later and again on 25th July. After this date, the six records to the end of the year comprised three in the Recording Area on 15th August, singles at the Pond

Hide feeders and at North Parks on three dates in October, two in the Reserve on 9th November with one in the Recording Area on 12th December.

Kestrel

Falco tinnunculus

In the early part of the year three were in the Recording Area on 11th January and singles were seen at the Reserve car park and access track, at Pennycroft and at Sleningford. Two were over the access track on 12th January and four were in the Recording Area on 7th March. Similar records continued throughout the year with four the maximum in the Recording Area during later WeBS counts, and with singles at the above locations plus Little Studley Meadow, North Lees and over the Hide Pond. No evidence of breeding was recorded in the year.



Kestrel from High Batts Car Park, Paul Newey

Merlin

Falco columbarius

One was in the Recording Area during a WeBs count on 4th April.

Hobby

Falco subbuteo

The first of the year was one at Pennycroft on 3rd May followed by a single at North Lees on 16th and one over the Reserve four days later. Singles were over Pennycroft and Bellflask on two dates in July and August. The last of the year were two, which flew over the Barn area on 29th August.

Peregrine

Falco peregrinus

One flew over the Reserve on 23rd May and one was in the Recording Area on 25th July.

Jay

Garrulus glandarius

Records were received from every month with July and August producing the least number of records. In the first winter period singles and occasional twos were regularly in the Reserve, usually around the Hotel Hide and singles were also recorded at Pennycroft and Wath, the exception being five in the wider Recording Area on 7th March. Singles and twos continued to be recorded in the breeding season at the majority of the above locations although no evidence of breeding was noted. Counts in the post-breeding and second winter period mirrored those of the early months with the Hotel area again the favoured location in the Reserve and with six in the wider Recording Area during a survey on 14th November.

Magpie

Pica pica

Recorded throughout the year from the Reserve and Recording Area with the majority of counts originating from the Pond and Hotel Hides where just one or two were present. Seven were in the Recording Area on 11th January and 14 were at Little Studley Meadow on 19th February. From then until the end of the year no counts in the Recording Area exceeded single figures and singles and twos continued to be seen in the Reserve.

Jackdaw

Coloeus monedula

Notable counts in the first winter period included 85 in the Recording Area on 11th January, 80 on 31st January & 50 on 11th February; singles or twos were in the Reserve at this time, although five were here on 26th February. Five pairs were in the Recording Area on 24th March and a count of 58 was made there on 4th April; ten were in the Reserve on 4th May. The only breeding record received was of a nest with young at the Dragonfly Pond on 13th June. Post-breeding highlights included 134 in the Recording Area on 15th August & 80 at North Parks on 7th September. 85 were in the Recording Area on 24th October and about 80 at Pennycroft on 14th December was the last high count of the year.

Rook

Corvus frugilegus

January counts included 30 in the Reserve on 4th, 170 feeding on invertebrates in fields at North Parks on 28th and 50 at Pennycroft on 31st. In February 135 were in the Recording Area on 8th. At least 20 were nest building at the rookery in the Reserve on 29th February of which twelve nests were occupied on 3rd March, increasing to 34 occupied nests on 25th March. Low single figure counts formed the majority of records in the Reserve in the post breeding months although 60 were estimated to be in the Reserve and at Pennycroft on 30th May. Single figure

counts were then the norm in the Reserve until the end of the year. In the Recording Area between 20 & 60 were noted and the year's last high count was 139 on 12th December.

Carrion Crow

Corvus corone

On 11th January, 125 were in the Recording Area during the WeBS count and up to five frequented the Reserve regularly in the first quarter of the year; however, about ten were noted at the Pond Hide feeders on 19th March and on three dates in April. No breeding evidence was recorded although counts increased after the breeding period and 200+ were along the access track on 30th June. Eighty were at North Parks on 7th September and winter counts included 46 around the Reserve on 10th November, although up to ten was the usual count at this time. The last notable count of the year was of 116 in the Recording Area on 12th December.

Raven

Corvus corax

One flew over the Dubb on 14th September.

Coal Tit

Periparus ater

Recorded regularly throughout the year in the Reserve, usually at the feeders and, as last year, with one to three forming the majority of counts. Exceptions in the Reserve in the early months included five or six on three dates in the first quarter and at least ten in the Reserve on 12th February. During a WeBS count on 11th January, 22 were in the Recording Area. In the summer months the majority of reports in the Reserve noted just singles and twos although five were counted on 10th June and on 15th June one adult and a fledgling were at the Hotel. All subsequent counts noted just singles and twos to the year end.

Marsh Tit

Poecile palustris

Almost mirroring the number of records as the previous species and a regular at the Reserve feeders throughout the year, the majority of counts were of singles and twos in the Reserve, but with four seen on five dates during the first winter period. No juveniles were recorded in the year and singles and twos were regularly in the Reserve in the second half of the year, the exception being four on 21st July. Four were in the wider Recording Area on 12th December.

Blue Tit

Cyanistes caeruleus

Notable counts in the first winter period included 40 at Green Lane, Melmerby on 4th January and 25 to 30 in the Reserve on four dates in January. A survey on 8th February recorded 60+ in the Recording Area on that date. Counts at the Reserve feeders in the breeding period noted just one to four regularly, although three

counts of six were made and just five were in the Recording Area on 9th May. On 5th June two fledglings were at Pennycroft and a “large” family party was at the Pond feeders on 12th June followed by an adult and three fledglings here three days later. Single figure counts formed the majority of records from the Reserve feeders in the latter half of the year although four counts of ten were made in the period and 14 were in the Recording Area on 14th November.

Great Tit

Parus major

Up to 20 were at the Reserve feeders on six dates in the first winter quarter, although single figure counts were the norm. In April, seventeen were in the Recording Area on the 4th followed by ten in the Reserve on 14th. Numbers then reduced in the breeding period with singles and twos frequenting the feeders, although four were here on 4th May. Four days later a family party of two adults and one fledgling attended the feeders; eight individuals were in the Reserve on 20th May. Two family parties were in the Reserve on 15th June when an adult and four fledglings were at the Hotel and an adult & three fledglings were at the Pond feeders. Following the breeding months, counts of no more than six were again recorded in the Reserve until the year end, usually at the Pond feeders, although post breeding highlights in the Reserve included 22 on 21st July & 15 on 8th August. Counts from the Recording Area at the year end included 14 on 14th November.

Skylark

Alauda arvensis

Recorded at Pennycroft from the middle of February until May, with the exception of ten recorded on the WeBS count on the 10th October. Ten were seen on the 18th February and six on the 5th May, the latter thought to be three pairs. Birds were recorded by the East Dales Ringing Group on Ripon Parks, mostly in the autumn, flying east/west and vice versa.

Sand Martin

Riparia riparia

Four early birds were over the Reserve/Hotel Hide on 4th March. The next sighting was of two over the Reserve on 14th March. The peak count for this summer migrant species was about 150 during 4th April WeBS count; about ten were recorded during May's count. On subsequent WeBS counts, 118 were recorded in June, 61 in July and 27 in August. Twelve were seen on the 28th September, with the last six birds seen on the 5th October.

Swallow

Hirundo rustica

The first birds of 2024 were four over Pennycroft on 13th April; the rest of April's sightings were around the south end of the Reserve/Pennycroft and North Parks

Farm where a few pairs breed. All April & May counts were in single figures; the June WeBS count produced 13 birds. The highest number of the summer was 15 during the August WeBS count. October passage south was noted on Ripon Parks, with 12 on 2nd, 25 on 7th, 14 on 8th & finally four on 13th.

House Martin

Delichon urbica

The first sighting of the year was one at the south end of the Reserve on 20th April. Nine were recorded during the WeBS count on 9th May with 21 on 30th May, a day of a fresh north-westerly wind. Ten were recorded on the August WeBS count. The last birds of the year were 40 around the south end of the Reserve on 14th September.

Cetti's Warbler

Cettia cetti

All records came from Bellflask between early March and 31st December when three were recorded. The highest count of four was on 29th October.

Long Tailed Tit

Aegithalos caudatus

This species was seen in every month of the year. Reserve counts included: 10 on 2nd January, 15 on 13th February, 10 on 13th March, 10 on 14th July, about 24 on 2nd October, 20 on 19th October & 22 on 16th December. All other counts in the Reserve were of single figures. WeBS counts were: 32 on 11th January, 25 on 15th February, 21 on 7th March, about 15 on 17th October, 27 on 24th October, 20 on 14th November and 27 on 12th December. The author found a nest in a coppiced hawthorn on the main track through the Reserve. It was unclear whether the young fledged or the nest was predated.

Yellow-browed Warbler

Phylloscopus inornatus

The first ever record of this species at the Reserve was a bird caught and ringed at the Dubb, Ripon Parks by the East Dales Ringing Group on 1st October. They were rewarded again when another was caught on 13th October. One was present in Little Studley Meadows, heard & seen by Colin Slator on 15th October.

Willow Warbler

Phylloscopus trochilus

This harbinger of spring for some folk was first heard in the Reserve on 24th March, with numbers rising to four by 14th April. One to three were regular in the Reserve and Pennycroft throughout the summer, although four were recorded around Pennycroft on 1st May and five in the Reserve on 20th May. Eleven were recorded during the WeBS count on the 6th June and the East Dales Ringing Group ringed 108 on Ripon Parks throughout late summer, the last being ringed on 1st September.

Chiffchaff

Phylloscopus collybita

Overwintering birds were found in Little Studley Meadows on 18th January, Pennycroft on 21st February and in the Reserve on 26th February. A presumed migrant was in the Reserve on the 11th March with singles recorded on the 14th & 15th March. By 19th March nine were singing in the Reserve and on 24th March fourteen. During the WeBS count on 4th April an incredible 83 were recorded. Numbers in the Reserve remained in single figures throughout the rest of April, with the exception of ten on 25th. Chiffchaff numbers during the WeBS counts were 21 in May, 20 in June, 12 in July & 17 in September. Eleven were around the Pond Hide on 24th September. The East Dales Ringing Group caught and ringed 260 in total with the last one processed on the 26th October.

Sedge Warbler

Acrocephalus schoenobaenus

The highest count at Bellflask was five on 9th May.

Reed Warbler

Acrocephalus scirpaceus

One was heard at Bellflask on 9th May and small numbers were recorded throughout the rest of the summer. A bird was recorded at times during the summer in the *Phragmites* at the North Dragonfly pond.

Grasshopper Warbler

Locustella naevia

One was “reeling” along the Entrance Track/West Game Belt on 22nd and 24th April.

Blackcap

Sylvia atricapilla

The first bird of the year was on the 26th March, with numbers rising to ten by the 4th April. Numbers remained in single figures in the Reserve throughout the summer. WeBS counts of 11 were recorded on 9th May and 22 on 6th Jun. Twenty-one were caught and ringed in the Reserve on 21st July by East Dales Ringing Group; a further 101 were caught throughout late summer/autumn on Ripon Parks, with the last ringed 1st November.

Garden Warbler

Sylvia borin

The first of the year was near the Pond Hide on 25th April. Others soon arrived with one at Pennycroft on 1st May and one in Oscar’s Wood, Pennycroft on 2nd May. The WeBS count on 9th May recorded four; six were in the Reserve on 16th June. The last of the year was on Ripon Parks on 31st August.

Lesser Whitethroat

Sylvia curruca

One was recorded on 24th April on the way from North Stainley to the Reserve. Three were ringed by East Dales Ringing Group on Ripon Parks in late summer.

Whitethroat

Curruca communis

The first of the year was heard on 8th April, with another six days later. One or two were recorded throughout the summer, with three on 30th May. Five on 21st July could have been a family party. WeBS counts produced four on 9th May & six on 6th June. EDRG ringed nine on Ripon Parks, the last on 31st August.

Goldcrest

Regulus regulus

One to three were seen throughout the year in the Reserve. At Ripon Parks, East Dales Ringing Group ringed 39 between 27th July and 9th November.

Nuthatch

Sitta europaea

One or two were regularly seen during the year, with three or four encountered on some occasions. Six near the Hotel on 12th June could have been a family party. Five were recorded on 28th September and four on 4th November.

Treecreeper

Certhia familiaris

Mostly ones or twos recorded throughout the year, with three seen on 18th March and ten around Pennycroft. Six on 1st June could have been a family party. One was regular in the near the Pond Hide, feeding under the fish scrap feeder.

Starling

Sturnus vulgaris

The first WeBS count of the year produced 87; about 570 were recorded on February's WeBS. Numbers then dropped away as birds dispersed back to their breeding grounds. The next treble figure count of about 500 in July would have included juvenile birds. The WeBS count in August produced 500 with 2000 in October, 1000 in November and 700 in December. Between 20 and 50 started feeding on the fish scraps on the hanging feeders at the Pond Hide and food thrown out over the southern boundary of the Reserve and Long Hedge in Pennycroft from November to the end of the year.

Song Thrush

Turdus philomelos

A maximum of four were heard unseen from January to March; seven were encountered during the WeBS on 4th April. During the rest of the year one to four birds were regularly counted with a peak count of 15 on Ripon Parks on 5th October.

Mistle Thrush

Turdus viscivorus

One or two were recorded throughout the year in the Reserve and Recording Area. After the breeding season Ripon Parks was often a good place for a gathering of juveniles, with about 50 seen on 18th July.

Redwing

Turdus iliacus

January's WeBS count produced 197; about 100 present were present west of the Reserve on 31st January. February saw 20 near the old Slurry Lagoon and about 50 were on Ripon Parks on 14th March. The last of the spring were two on 4th April. Returning autumn birds were seen from 12th October with one near the Pond Hide. This species was in relatively low numbers this autumn, the highest counts being about 100 on the 16th October and a similar number on Ripon Parks on 6th November. The November WeBS produced 190 and the final highest count was 111 on the December WeBS.

Blackbird

Turdus merula

The highest count of the first winter period was about 40 on 8th January. About 20 were recorded on 11th February, ten on 15th February and on 8th of March. Occasionally through the rest of March and the Spring, four or five were singing in the Reserve. Some of the WeBS counts were 47 in January, 13 in February (a wet day), 43 in March, 30 in April, 27 in June, 12 in August, 11 in October, 79 in November and 54 in December. The November and December counts would include continental birds here for the winter.

Fieldfare

Turdus pilaris

Fifty were noted on 4th January & 103 during January's WeBS. The last of the winter – 14 birds - were seen during the WeBS count on 7th March. Six were in Ripon Parks on 17th October. The highest total was 129 during the December WeBS count.

Spotted Flycatcher

Muscicapa striata

One was near the Pond Hide on 12th August.

Robin

Erithacus rubecula

Mostly counts of one to three throughout the year in the vicinity of the Hotel Hide and Pond Hide. In the Reserve from February to April, around ten could be seen and heard. Young birds in speckly plumage were recorded from the end of May to the end of August. A selection of the WeBS counts were 26 in March, 10 in October, 15 in November and 12 in December.

Redstart

Phoenicurus phoenicurus

One was at Ripon Parks on 21st April and two there on 25th. Two birds were ringed by East Dales Ringing Group.

Stonechat

Saxicola rubicola

Four were at Bellflask on 24th October.

Wheatear

Oenanthe oenanthe

A male was seen near the Old Slurry Lagoon on 11th April.

Dipper

Cinclus cinclus

Occasionally a single bird was seen along the river between West Tanfield and Sleningford Caravan Park, with the odd one seen passing the Reserve.

Tree Sparrow

Passer montanus

Birds were seen at the Pond Hide and Long Hedge feeders throughout the year, with up to 20 during the winter/spring and autumn/winter periods. The nest boxes at the south end of the Reserve, around the Lower Car Park and on the fence at the side of the quarry track are always well used.

House Sparrow

Passer domesticus

This species is becoming commoner in and around the Pond Hide feeders and the Long Hedge feeder, with up to ten seen at times. Twelve were around North Parks Farm at the end of August, with thirteen counted on the WeBS in July.

Dunnock

Prunella modularis

As with the Robin, most of the counts were of one to four made around the Pond Hide and Hotel Hide. On 3rd March the author walked around the Reserve and recorded twelve. The WeBS counts noted nine on 8th February (a wet day) and 12 on the 12th December; all the other WeBS counts were of eight and below.

Yellow Wagtail

Motacilla flava

Three sightings of single birds; one over the Barn on 2nd May and near the Golf Course on 18th July and 29th August.

Grey Wagtail

Motacilla cinerea

Single birds, sometimes two, visited the Pond Hide at various times during the year. The WeBS count was ten on 25th July, after the breeding season.

Pied Wagtail

Motacilla alba

One to three were regularly recorded in the vicinity of the Reserve and Pennycroft. A pair were going into the Wood Store in the Barn Compound; no records were provided as to whether they reared any young. The highest WeBS count was twelve on 24th October.

Meadow Pipit

Anthus pratensis

Six were near the Old Slurry Lagoon on 24th February. Six were recorded during the WeBS count at Bellflask on 7th March, with one there on 24th October; three were

recorded on the WeBS in November. The East Dales Ringing Group were tape luring birds at Ripon Park to attract them to their walk in traps for ringing purposes; 80 were caught and ringed throughout September, the peak month for their southbound migration. The 29th September was the peak passage with about 500 birds in flocks, grounded before they flew on.

Tree Pipit

Anthus trivialis

East Dales Ringing Group ringed six on Ripon Parks, the last on 1st September.

Chaffinch

Fringilla coelebs

Good numbers were seen at the Pond Hide feeders; up to 25 can be present with the highest counts usually during the first winter period. The highest count in the autumn/second winter period was circa 15.

Brambling

Fringilla montifringilla

Into 2024, birds continued to be seen at the sunflower field in Ripon Parks, with circa 150 noted in early January; 100 were seen on 28th January & 91 were present on 11th February. In the Reserve Pond Hide area, one or two were seen to mid-April with four recorded on the 15th March and three on 22nd March. Singles were again in the Reserve on 6th November and 12th December.



Brambling, Trevor Baker

Hawfinch

Coccothraustes coccothraustes

Six flew into the Copse in Ripon Parks where the East Dales Ringing Group have mist nets; one was caught and ringed on 17th October.

Bullfinch

Pyrrhula pyrrhula

In and around the Reserve one or two birds was the norm, with three seen on 10th June (2 males & 1 female). Three were in Oscar's Wood on 12th September and 18th October. Four were seen on 4th January, 4th September (all juveniles) and 6th November, and five on 5th October (2 males, 2 females, 1 juvenile). Some WeBS counts produced six to eight with eleven on 11th January & ten on 14th November.

Greenfinch

Carduelis chloris

Twenty five on 4th January on Ripon Parks were the remnants of the autumn of 2023 when up to 200 could be found in a field of sunflowers. In the Reserve most counts were of one or two birds at the Pond Hide feeders; five were present on the 5th November.

Linnet

Carduelis cannabina

The highest counts were made from January to the end of March, usually in and around Pennycroft. The maximum counts were of 50 on 8th March, about 35 on 2nd January, 30 on 22nd March, 40 early in September and again on 28th September.

Redpoll

Acanthis flammea

This small brown finch belongs to a taxonomically complex group that formerly consisted of three or more redpoll species which were treated separately in previous reports. However, a recent taxonomic review concluded that there is just one Redpoll species, so all Redpolls are now treated together.

Numbers were mainly in single figures at the Hide Pond feeders throughout January and February; ten were noted on 8th February and about 50 on 18th. Counts throughout March and April were generally higher as birds moved through to their breeding grounds; there were ten to twenty until the last of the spring on 3rd May. Four summer birds were seen on 25th July. Autumn sightings began with three on 2nd October and continued with about 20 on 17th. Throughout the rest of the autumn, singles were recorded.

Goldfinch

Carduelis carduelis

Throughout the year at the Pond Hide feeders numbers varied, with the highest counts between January and March and from October to the year end. The highest count was 30 on 13th March.

Siskin

Carduelis spinus

January saw birds numbering only in single figures, but about 30 were present on 11th. In February and March many birds were at the Pond Hide feeders with others singing in the trees as spring approached. Eighty were present on 15th February, but 30 to 50 birds were estimated to be about during these months. The birds in the Reserve were part of a countrywide influx migrating north. Autumn counts were in single figures. They were also regular feeders at a garden in North Stainley.

Yellowhammer

Emberiza citrinella

January saw single figure counts at the feeders as food in the countryside diminished. From February to April, numbers started to increase with a peak of 15 birds, with one or two birds visiting the feeders throughout the summer. Two adults and a juvenile were along the Long Hedge on 17th August. Fifteen were present near Middle Parks Farm, Ripon Parks on 21st of November.

Reed Bunting

Emberiza schoeniclus

One to four were regulars at the Pond Hide feeders during the first winter period and up to mid April, with a count of five recorded on 25th January. Twelve were recorded at Bellflask on 31st December. The maximum WeBS count was eleven on 8th February.

Bird Ringing Report 2024

East Dales Ringing Group

HIGH BATTS NATURE RESERVE

Some early-nesting Tree Sparrows prompted some nestbox checking on the unusually early date of 2nd April and it proved to be a busy year for the High Batts Nestbox Team, who made their last visit on 11th July. The data collected, which can include additional species not utilising the nestboxes (e.g. Pied Wagtail, Blackbird and Robin) was submitted electronically to the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) Nest Record Scheme. This year, the 45 completed nest record 'cards' included: three Mandarin Duck (an increase from 2023, although only one brood fledged), three Stock Dove, three Jackdaw, two Nuthatch, and 11 Tree Sparrow (one less than last year!).

In addition to ringing the chicks in the nestboxes (see *Totals* below), mist net ringing took place on 18th February (154 birds processed), 20th April (16 birds processed) and 21st July (82 birds processed). Highlights included 17 Blackcap, 11 Chiffchaff, five Whitethroat and a single Garden Warbler on the latter date – it is particularly rewarding to ring summer migrants from which we've had some very interesting recoveries over the decades, e.g. Blackcap to both Morocco and West Africa. Also notable were 43 Siskin and 21 Lesser Redpoll (all ringed on 18th February); several years have elapsed since such numbers were last ringed – 2008 (Siskin) and 2016 (Lesser Redpoll).

Seven ringed birds, i.e. Siskin, Lesser Redpoll and two Great-spotted Woodpeckers were reported by several photographers, who posted their pin-sharp photos on the High Batts Photography Facebook site, enabling these birds to be individually identified. These records were also added to the database.

A nationwide project launched in 2023, encouraged ringers who have sites with a healthy Moorhen population, to try to catch and ring/colour-ring as many as possible. The individually identifiable orange colour rings, engraved with letters/digits, help to track the birds' movements/dispersal. A baited, specially-designed trap was used: apart from two Moorhen, three adult Rooks, tempted by the grain, were also caught and ringed – the first of the latter species since one was ringed in 2009!

TOTALS FOR BIRDS RINGED AT HBNR 2024

Species	Full Grown	Pulli	Retraps	Totals
Barn Owl	0	0	1	1
Blackbird	2	0	1	3
Blackcap	17	0	0	17
Blue Tit	45	21	12	78
Bullfinch	1	0	0	1
Chaffinch	8	0	1	9
Chiffchaff	11	0	0	11
Coal Tit	4	0	0	4
Dunnock	2	0	0	2
Garden Warbler	1	0	0	1
Goldfinch	1	0	0	1
Great Spotted Woodpecker	0	0	4	4
Great Tit	33	26	3	62
House Sparrow	1	0	0	1
Jackdaw	0	5	0	5
Long-tailed Tit	1	0	0	1
Marsh Tit	6	0	1	7
Moorhen	2	0	1	3
Nuthatch	1	6	0	7
Redpoll (Lesser)	21	0	5	26
Reed Bunting	5	0	0	5
Robin	2	0	0	2
Rook	3	0	0	3
Siskin	43	0	1	44
Sparrowhawk	1	0	0	1
Tree Sparrow	8	28	0	36
Treecreeper	4	0	0	4
Whitethroat	5	0	0	5
Willow Warbler	2	0	0	2
Wren	2	0	0	2
Yellowhammer	4	0	1	5
Totals	236	86	31	353

HIGH BATTS NATURE RESERVE SELECTED RECAPTURE HISTORIES – 2024

Ring No.	Type	Age	Capture	Date	Details
Marsh Tit					
Z026036	N	5		03/04/2016	High Batts NR
	R	4	Recaptured	01/05/2016	High Batts NR
	R	6	Recaptured	18/02/2024	High Batts NR
<i>Note – Z026036 was also recaptured at HBNR in 2017 and 2018</i>					
Lesser Redpoll					
BFB6443	N	3		16/11/2023	Airy Holm Reservoir, Northumberland
	R	4	Recaptured	18/02/2024	High Batts NR, 82km

MOD RIPON PARKS

It was definitely a year of contrasts, with some “lows”, but definitely some high points and an overall total of 1682 birds processed, 1000 less than in 2023! The anticipated arrival of migratory thrushes, particularly Redwing, never occurred as in previous years, resulting in well under 300 ringed. Since EDRG members started using specially designed elevator nets on site, in 2013, it was the second lowest-ever number of Redwing ringed. The other species which was noticeably scarce was Lesser Redpoll – barely 40 were ringed, the lowest tally since 2011 (just 16 were ringed).

However, on the bonus side, two new species for the site were ringed on the same day; on 13th October, a small flock of six Hawfinch (a scarce species in our area) flew over the elevator nets – except one misjudged its flight path and was caught! The excitement intensified when a Yellow-browed Warbler was found in a mist net, attracted by a sound recording of the call. These Goldcrest-sized warblers originate from Asia and have become more common on the eastern side of the UK in recent autumns. Chiffchaff numbers even surpassed the record year of 2023 (see *Selected Recapture Histories*), whilst Willow Warblers were low in number for the second year in succession.

With a mixed flock of finches still feeding in the area at the start of the New Year, another 14 Brambling were ringed – it might be ten or more years before such numbers over-winter in the area again!

TOTALS FOR BIRDS RINGED AT MOD RIPON PARKS 2024

Species	Full grown	Pulli	Retraps	Total
Blackbird	120	0	9	129
Blackcap	103	0	1	104
Blue Tit	48	0	15	63
Brambling	14	0	9	14
Bullfinch	12	0	10	22
Chaffinch	33	0	1	34
Chiffchaff	267	0	53	320
Coal Tit	8	0	1	9
Dunnock	13	0	7	20
Fieldfare	2	0	0	2
Garden Warbler	6	0	0	6
Goldcrest	39	0	9	48
Goldfinch	21	0	0	21
Great Spotted Woodpecker	4	0	3	7
Great Tit	54	8	12	74
Hawfinch	1	0	0	1
Lesser Whitethroat	3	0	0	3
Long-tailed Tit	27	0	27	54
Marsh Tit	5	0	2	7
Meadow Pipit	80	0	0	80
Mistle Thrush	12	0	0	12
Nuthatch	1	0	0	1
Redpoll (Lesser)	40	0	0	40
Redstart	2	0	0	2
Redwing	277	0	3	280
Reed Bunting	5	0	0	5
Reed Warbler	1	0	1	2
Robin	44	0	19	63
Sedge Warbler	2	0	0	2
Siskin	3	0	0	3
Song Thrush	66	0	2	68
Sparrowhawk	2	0	0	2
Spotted Flycatcher	2	0	0	2
Tree Pipit	6	0	0	6
Tree Sparrow	0	3	0	3

Treecreeper	9	0	7	16
Whitethroat	9	0	0	9
Willow Warbler	108	0	3	111
Woodpigeon	4	0	0	4
Wren	17	0	10	27
Yellow-browed Warbler	2	0	0	2
Yellowhammer	4	0	9	4
Total	1476	11	195	1682

KEY

Red – best year/new species; Amber – 2nd best year; Green – 3rd best year

RIPON PARKS MOD SELECTED RECAPTURE HISTORIES - 2024

Ring No.	Type	Age	Capture	Date	Details
Long-tailed Tit					
HLD881	N	2		22/09/2018	Ripon Parks
	R	2		11/11/2023	Ripon Parks
	R	2		17/10/2024	Ripon Parks
<i>Note – HLD881 was also retrapped in 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2023</i>					
Chiffchaff					
RHD556	N	3J		26/08/2024	Ripon Parks
	C	3	Recaptured	03/10/2024	Letchworth, Herts. 257km
RHD702	N	3		04/10/2024	Ripon Parks
	C	5	Recaptured	12/04/2025	Holme Bird Obs., Norfolk 191km
RHD709	N	3		04/10/2024	Ripon Parks
	C	4	Recaptured	06/04/2025	Lime Tree Farm, Grewelthorpe 9km

The retraps are self-explanatory; for such small birds, weighing approx. 7.8 grams, Long-tailed Tits can live well beyond the average life expectation of two years. The record for a ringed bird is 8 years 11 months – could HLD881 surpass this? The Chiffchaff recoveries show direction of dispersal (RHD556) and a possible local breeder (RHD709) but where was RHD702 heading when it was recaptured in Norfolk in early spring?

Mammals

Robert Adams



Nomenclature and order follows Harris & Yalden (2008) Mammals of the British Isles: Handbook, 4th edition.

Rodentia: Rodents

Grey Squirrel

Sciurus carolinensis

Thirty-four records of this non-native mammal were submitted in 2024. Records were from virtually every part of the Recording Area with the maximum number seen together being three on four dates spread throughout the year. An active drey was being used in Little Studley Meadows in February with one animal seen entering on 24th February. There were three records of road casualties during the year. Obviously a very successful species, present throughout the year and throughout the Recording Area.

Bank Vole

Myodes glareolus

One was taken by a Grey Heron at the side of the Hide Pond Stream on 11th March. Another was taken, again by a heron, in the same place on 21st July. A cat took one from in front of the Pond Hide on 23rd July. Another Bank Vole was seen on Pennycroft on 12th September. The final record of the year was of three, disturbed by grass cutting at the north end of the Reserve, on 18th October.

Field Vole

Microtus agrestis

One was in a bag of tree stakes in Oscar's Wood, Pennycroft on 25th January & two were disturbed by grass cutting at the north end of the Reserve on 18th October.

Wood Mouse

Apodemus sylvaticus

A Wood Mouse was taken by a Stoat in the Reserve on 19th February. Another, similarly taken by a Stoat was at the north end of the Reserve on 18th October. One was in the Photographic Hide on 28th November.

Common Rat

Rattus norvegicus

The presence of Common Rats in the Reserve was evidenced by droppings and prints seen throughout the year. A dead animal was on the A6108 near the Lightwater entrance on 18th January. On 23rd May a Stoat chased a Common Rat under the wheels of a car near the Old Slurry Lagoon, killing the rat. Another road casualty was on the A6108, near Ripon Golf Club on 10th August. Live individual animals were seen near the Photographic Hide on 23rd November and in the Reserve on 8th December.

Previous page: Brown Hare, Paul Newey

Lagomorpha: Rabbits and Hares

Rabbit

Oryctolagus cuniculus

Relatively few records in 2024 of this once ubiquitous species. Only 23 animals reported between February and October, mostly from the Reserve and surrounding fields. No more than three together at any one time.

Brown Hare

Lepus europaeus

2024 was a very good year for Brown Hare sightings. No fewer than 50 records were received from both sides of the River Ure. The first record was of two near West Tanfield on 8th January & the last, again two, across the river opposite the Hotel Hide on 9th December. There were four together at Middle Parks on 28th January. There were as many records of two or three together as there were of singletons. A leveret was recorded as a road casualty on the A6108 at North Lees on 27th June and a live leveret was near the Old Slurry Lagoon on 2nd July.

Insectivora: Hedgehogs, Mole and Shrews

Hedgehog

Erinaceus europaeus

A very unusual record was of a live Hedgehog in the Reserve on the 8th & 17th August. The only other records were of road casualties on 15th May and 3rd September, both in the same place near the Clock Tower on Palace Road, Ripon.

Mole

Talpa europaea

Mole hills were reported from all parts of the Recording Area throughout the year. The damp grassland at Little Studley Meadows, is a favoured habitat, with a great deal of activity reported from there. Two dead animals were found on the Reserve Access Track at the point where the Quarry Track crosses, on 27th June.

Common Shrew

Sorex araneus

A freshly dead animal was in Oscar's Wood, Pennycroft on 21st July. One was disturbed by grass cutting at the north end of the Reserve on 18th October.

Chiroptera: Bats

Pipistrelle sp.

Pipistrellus sp.

In early April two nest boxes were found to contain a number of bats, which were either Soprano or Common Pipistrelles, both of which are known to occur on the Reserve. Thereafter, the boxes were left undisturbed.

Bat sp.

An unidentified bat was seen flying over Little Studley Meadows on 19th February.

Carnivora: Carnivores

Red Fox

Vulpes vulpes

Evidence of fox presence in the form of footprints and scats was found throughout the year from the larger part of the Recording Area. A great deal of yapping and squabbling between two foxes was heard in the Reserve, during daytime on 3rd February. The only reported sighting of an animal was one in Little Studley Meadows on 6th June.

Badger

Meles meles

Footprints and latrines were reported from several parts of the Recording Area. Activity was taking place from January to November. Happily there were no records of road casualties in 2024. At least five occupied setts within the Recording Area.

Otter

Lutra lutra

Twenty-one sightings of Otter were reported from the Reserve in 2024. Mostly these were single animals in the river between the Hotel & Riverside Hides; two together were seen on seven occasions during the first quarter. One was in the Hide Stream on 7th September. Footprints of Otters were found at Little Studley Meadows during the first half of the year, the last being seen on 2nd July. A non-member, who walks across North Bridge, Ripon to work each morning, reported that up to three animals were present in the River Ure, upstream of the bridge, regularly throughout 2024. A very healthy and observable population of Otters appears to be present on the river in the southern part of the Recording Area.

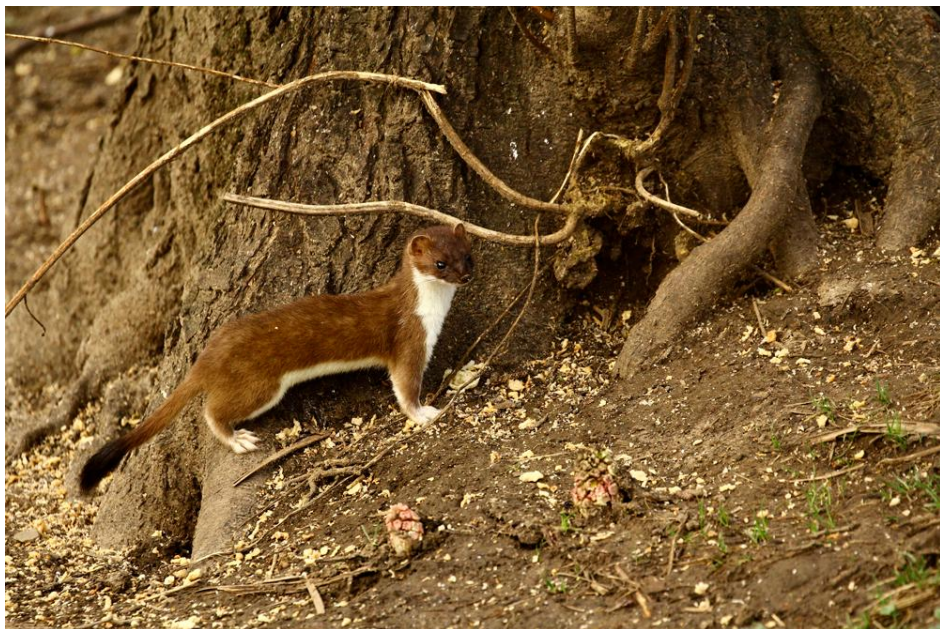


Otter, Darren Holliday

Stoat

Mustela erminea

A Stoat caught a Wood Mouse on the Reserve on 19th February. One was seen near the Old Slurry Lagoon on 23rd March as noted under Common Rat. Another was in undergrowth near the Hotel feeders on 27th April. In May a Stoat was seen alongside the Norton Conyers boundary wall, near Wath on 5th May. Another animal was at Pennycroft on 15th June. A Stoat in the Reserve on 28th August, and a very young animal in front of the Pond Hide were the final records of the year.



Stoat, John Barber

Mustelid sp.

A large mustelid, ostensibly displaying a Polecat *Mustela putorius*- like pelage was found dead on the roadside near the entrance to West Tanfield Cricket Club on 14th April. Most probably a Ferret *Mustela furo*, though without DNA or anatomical investigation the possibility of a hybrid, or Wild Polecat, cannot be conclusively dismissed.

American Mink

Mustela vison

Singletons seen, either swimming or on the bank of the River Ure, between the Hotel and Riverside Hides on eight dates from 8th January to 11th April. Two

sightings, again of singletons, in the Hide Pond on 21st January and 2nd March. Thereafter not recorded again until one on the river on 12th October; one was also reported on the river on 17th December. Two records in March were of a distinctly large, black animal.

Domestic Cat

Felis catus

A stray or feral cat was seen on the west side of the Reserve on 22nd February. It, or another, was seen in Pennycroft on 27th February and 8th June. One was in Little Studley Meadows on 31st August.

Artiodactyla: Even-toed Ungulates

Roe Deer

Capreolus capreolus

There were 33 records of Roe Deer submitted in 2024 from across the greater part of the Recording Area. Only four of these records were of single animals. One was in the Silver Birch area of the Reserve on 5th March; a buck was at Little Studley Meadows on 7th March; a buck swam across the river in front of the Hotel Hide on 21st July; and one was near North Stainley Village Hall on 5th October. Four Roe Deer were in the Reserve Car Park on 16th February & two were in fields west of the Reserve on 9th May. A road casualty corpse was near the junction of the A6108 and the Quarry Access Track on 13th July and four were in fields west of the Reserve on 25th November. All other records were from Little Studley Meadows: groups of three, four and five regularly from 13th January through to 18th December. Two fawns were first seen on 25th June and continued to be seen until 7th September.

High Batts Nature Reserve

GENERAL INFORMATION

High Batts is a Private Nature Reserve (PNR) comprising some 12.5 ha. (31 acres) of mixed woodland. It was formerly an island in the River Ure - the word 'batts' means island. When the course of the river changed, the Reserve was left as an integral part of the west bank of the river.

The Reserve is situated on the Magnesian Limestone belt with the immediate substrate being mostly alluvial gravels. This determines a diverse flora and fauna; the woodland comprises Ash, Birch, Alder etc. with Hawthorn scrub, and dry limestone grassland clearings. It is intersected by a small stream, and ponds have been created for the encouragement of water birds and aquatic life. An extensive Recording Area has been designated surrounding the Reserve which complements and extends the records from the Reserve proper. Maps of the Reserve and the Recording Area are published on the inner covers of this Report. An agreement was concluded with the Norton Conyers Estate in 1973 enabling the area to be managed as a nature Reserve, and it was designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 1983. Additional land at the south end of the Reserve was leased from Lightwater Holdings in 1995 and this is used for storage buildings, work area and car parks. A Pond Hide, a Riverside Hide and the Hotel Hide have been provided for the use of visitors to the Reserve. Since 2017 High Batts has also been involved in habitat creation and species monitoring on Pennycroft, the former agricultural land now being quarried by Hanson Aggregates which abuts the Reserve to the south.

The Reserve lies to the east of North Stainley village, near Ripon. Access for visitors is by a private track leading to the Hanson Aggregates quarry complex. The entrance (Grid Ref. SE 289761) is on the eastern side of the A6108 road between the entrance to Lightwater Valley and North Stainley. Access to the Reserve is limited to its Members, and to groups and individuals by prior arrangement. Access to the Reserve is by key code to be used on the padlocked gate at the track entrance and on the digital locks on each Hide. The Recording Area extends beyond the boundaries of the Reserve but members and visitors have no privileged access to this area except on public roads, rights of way and public access land.

The Reserve is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and its operation and membership arrangements are defined in its Governing Document adopted in April 2013.

Membership of High Batts

Membership of High Batts is open to any individual interested in the area and the work of the Charity, who makes formal application and pays the annual subscription.

Membership rates

Individual £11, Family £15, Junior/Student £5

Enquiries about membership should be made to:-

Marian Wooding, Membership Secretary,
55, Kirkby Drive, Ripon, HG4 2DP
Tel. 07920 282003

Email: membershipsecretary@highbatts.org.uk

All other enquiries including those relating to individual or group visits should be made to:-

Jane Mathewson, Secretary,
5 Victoria Terrace, North Road, Ripon, HG4 1JP
Tel. 07568 399093

Email: jane.mathewson@highbatts.org.uk

Enquiries can also be made to:-

Colin E Slator, Reserve Manager,
Broadacres, Kirby Hill, Boroughbridge, YO51 9DH
Tel: 07935 352890

Email: colin.slator@highbatts.org.uk

The High Batts Nature Reserve website

<https://highbatts.org.uk>

X (formerly known as Twitter)

High Batts – In at the Start project @highbatts

Facebook High Batts Nature Reserve, Sightings & Photography

Administrator: Andrea Mapplebeck at info@andreacm.co.uk

LOCATION NAMES SHOWN ON RECORDING AREA MAP

No.	Site Name	No.	Site Name
1	Tanfield Weir	32	Norton Mills
2	Tanfield Mill	33	Wilderness Wood
3	Tanfield Cricket Club	34	Guinea Hill
4	Sleningford Caravan Park	35	Rockley Hill
5	Sleningford ex-quarry fields	36	(NPF) Long Bank Wood
6	Mill Batts	37	Top Island
7	Sleningford Grange	38	Plaster Pitts Wood
8	East Tanfield	39	Silver Hill
9	Low Green	40	Low Batts
10	Sewage Farm	41	Fox Covert
11	Willow Garth	42	Yew Tree Hill
12	Bellflask House	43	Snipe Fields
13	Bellflask Trout Fishing Lake	44	Maple Hill and Pond
14	Village Belt	45	Black-heath Pond
15	Willow Biomass	46	Figure-8 Pond
16	Quarry Plant	47	The Dubb
17	Silt Lagoon	48	Green Lane Ponds
18	Quarry Game Belt	49	The Sike
19	Simons Wood	50	Round Hill
20	West Game Belt	51	Sike Wood
21	Sewage Treatment Plant	52	Hall Garth Ponds
22	Home Farm Copse	53	Willow Garth (YWT)
23	Roadside Copse	54	Hutton Mill Deep
24	Lightwater Pond	55	Backwater (Ripon Piscatorial fishing)
25	Upper Lightwater	56	Disused Railway track (permissive path)
26	Mill Bank	57	Ure Bank Caravan Site
27	Mushroom Farm Wood	58	Ure Bank Bottom
28	Mushroom Farm	59	Bathing Pavilion (site of)
29	Graycrofts Bridge	60	Nunwick floods
30	Norton Cottages	61	Blue Cap Wood
31	Tunstall Bridge	99	Crow Wood