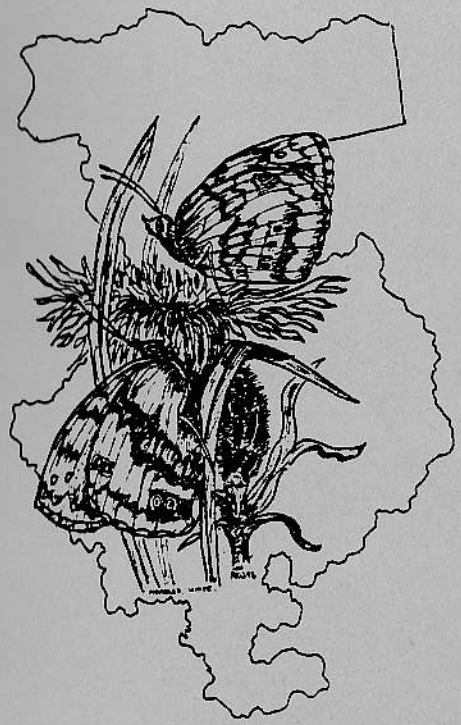
HUNTINGDONSHIRE FAUNA & FLORA SOCIETY

50th ANNUAL REPORT for 1997



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50th

ANNUAL REPORT

for 1997

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HUNTINGDONSHIRE FAUNA AND FLORA SOCIETY

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SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Secretary's Report is shorter this year as a report on the summer and winter meetings follows.

Once again the membership numbers have changed very little and we are not recruiting new members as quickly as we would like.

The A.G.M. was held on Saturday 22 March 1997 at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, Godmanchester. The meeting started at 7.30pm. Colin Welch retired as Chairman and was replaced by Brian Eversham. Peter Walker retired as a Committee member and two new members, Howard Hillier and Stuart Irons, were voted onto the Committee. Graham Elliot retired as Bird Recorder and was replaced by John Clark. Howard Hillier was appointed as a second Odonata Recorder.

Mrs Blackie compared the fairly amateur Society of almost fifty years ago with the present Society made up of many professionals as well as keen amateurs. She was happy to stay on as President until the 50th Anniversary.

David Leach, a renowned wildlife photographer, gave an excellent, well illustrated talk entitled 'The Complete Owl'. The usual refreshments were enjoyed afterwards.

EVENTS SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Society had eight meetings arranged for the summer of 1997. In April, Terry Wells led the walk across Portholme Meadows. The fritillaries were found, although they were past their best. The day culminated with tea and cakes at Hilary and Peter While's house, for which all were very grateful. Thank you to them for their hospitality. In May, many turned up to visit Little Paxton Wood, and the resultant list, which took some prising out of some members, came to a staggering 272 species on the day. In fact, I have received complaints that they needed more time. The June meeting at Holme Fen was very well attended, and despite the events secretary confusing everybody as to the start off point, a good time was had by all.

The day at Hinchingbrooke Park, for a 24 hour watch, had to be cancelled through lack of support in terms of leaders. It was hoped to raise funds for the Society and advertise our involvement with wildlife to the public. In July, a meeting of the British Entomological and Natural History Society was organised, to which we were invited. John Cole obtained an excellent list of Diptera species, and Barry Dickerson and I added to the moth list. My thanks to Redlands, for their beer and barbecue, and Peter Prince, for all his support.

In late July we visited the Dragonfly Museum at Ashton, which is much more than just about Dragonflies. The history of the Rothchilds Estate proved a fascinating insight into a very enlightened and advanced use of water and power generation for all levels of the population. The Society was represented by eight stalwarts, and those that do volunteer work, for the museum. It proved a fascinating visit, and my thanks to Rory Mackenzie-Dodds for showing us round.

In September we visited Great Merribelle Wood, in Leicestershire. Three local volunteers turned up from the Leicester Wildlife Trust, but sadly, only six members from the Society. I promised the Trust to supply lists of species, and I regret that due to the poor turnout, I am unable to respond. However, our Chairman and Alan Robbins rallied to the cause, and their knowledge soon impressed, our guides. The plants we had come to see had gone well over, but we found the wood fascinating, and very wet. The annual fungus foray at Bedford Purlieus was very cold. Sheila Wells and her group had been there all day when Barry Dickerson, Colin Welch and I turned up. No further members appeared, so we all split up into our various factions to visit the wood.

The winter meetings have been very well attended, and my thanks to Ian Johnson for his talk on Agro chemicals, Peter Walker for stepping into the breach, at the last minute, to talk of his visit to Costa Rica and finally Chris Beere, for his amazing work on whales in the Azores.

Due to the poor turn-out at some sites in the summer, I consider it very necessary to ask all of the members for their advice. I would like to know what sites they would like to visit, especially those outside of the County. It is very disheartening, for me to get local people to turn up, having enthused them with the importance of our Society, and how we can help them with their recording, only to be let down by a poor turn-out. We are all so busy these days, and I know we have to make time to enjoy ourselves, so I leave this matter open to you all, and encourage you to respond direct to me, with your ideas.

MEETINGS

The following lecture meetings were held during the year:

23 January	"The Arctic Summer" by Ian Meiklejohn
18 February	"Fishing, Conservation and Recreation on the Great Ouse and other East Anglian waters" by Mike Evans
22 March	"The Complete Owl" by Michael Leach.
23 October	"Pesticides and Wildlife. The use and abuse of Agro-Chemicals" by Dr Ian Johnson.
13 November	"Costa Rica. The Land of Wonder" by Peter Walker.
11 December	"Sperm Whales and Dolphins in the Azores" by Chris Beere.

The following field meetings were held:

27 April	Portholme Meadows, to look for the Fritillaries. Leader Terry Wells.
11 May	Little Paxton Wood for general interest. Leader David Evans
1 June	Holme Fen Reserve, looking at heather areas. Leader Barry Dickerson.
5 July	Cow Lane Pits, looking at invertebrates with moth trapping at night. A joint meeting with The British Entomological and Natural History Society. Leader Barry Dickerson.
27 July	The National Dragonfly Museum. Leader Mr Mackenzie-Dodds.
7 September	Great Merribelle Wood, Leicestershire. For violet helleborine and giant bellflower. Leader Alan Robbins.
12 October	Bedford Purlieus, Fungi foray. Leaders Sheila Wells and Alan Robbins.

WEATHER REPORT 1997

Teresa Heath

Based on records taken in Eynesbury

JANUARY's average day and night temperatures were a degree lower than normal. There were frosts throughout the first ten nights of the year. The coldest night was on the 2nd when the temperature fell to -8°C. There was light snow on the 3rd and 7th, and on the 9th 10mm of snow fell. The middle of the month was mild with day temperatures reaching 11°C on the 13th. On the 15th there was freezing fog and the day time temperature reached 1°C. The end of the month was sunnier with some frosts again. There was 11.5mm of rain this month, about a quarter of the expected.
The London Weather Centre stated that this was the driest January for over 200 years; since 1779.

FEBRUARY rainfall was average. Both day and night temperatures were three degrees above normal. The start of the month was mixed with cloud, drizzle, sun, frosts on three nights and wind. On the night of the 6th the temperature remained at 10°C but on the following night it fell to -3°C. In the middle of the month there were gales particularly on the night of the 19th calming on the 20th. Gales and rain again on the 23rd and storms on the 24th. The gales lasted until the 27th.

MARCH's rainfall was well below average with only 3.5mm of rain all month. Most fell on the 4th when 2mm was recorded. At the start of the month there were light frosts and it continued windy after the gales on the 1st. There was fog on the 10th and 11th. The middle of the month was dull and cloudy. The end of the month was sunny with a cold wind. The temperature reached 15°C and above on 11 days and reached 20°C at the end of the month.

APRIL's rain was again well below the expected with only 9mm collected. The rain fell mainly on the 25th and 26th. The beginning of the month was dry and cloudy. Windy on the 5th. There was more sun during the second week of the month before it became cloudy again. There were frequent frosts throughout April, the coldest on the night of the 20th at -3°C. Night temperatures for the month were average but the day temperatures were 3°C above the expected. The warmest day was on the 9th when the temperature reached 23°C.
The London Weather Centre stated that this is the driest start to the year since 1929.

MAY started sunny and the temperature reached 28°C on the 2nd. Four days later the temperature only reached 11°C and that night there was a frost. For the month the average day temperature was again 3°C above expected although the night temperatures were a degree below average. The latter part of the first half of the month was wet. This was followed by a sunny period and the month ended variable with cloud and sun, but remained dry. The total rainfall for the month was still 20mm below average.

JUNE's day and night temperatures were average. The month started sunny and became muggy by the 6th which ended in a thunderstorm at 22-30hrs. There were also thunderstorms on the 8th and 11th. The middle of the month was cloudy with rain. The end of the month was dull and cloudy with constant rain on the 26th and 27th totalling 51mm. In total 127mm of rain fell in June, 77mm above normal.

The London Weather Centre stated that this was the wettest June since 1860 and the dullest since 1990.

JULY's average day temperature was over 3 degrees higher than expected. Temperatures varied between 20 and 30° C throughout the month. Night temperatures were a little under average for the month although they stayed between 9 and 15°C. The start of the month was sunny and cloudy. It warmed towards the 8th when temperatures reached 29°C. The weather then became cloudy and variable until the end of the month. It was humid on the 23rd and 24th and windy from the 24th to the 26th. Rainfall was 20mm below average.

AUGUST was very warm and this was reflected in the average day temperature for the month being 5 degrees above expected with a 26.1°C average. The hottest days were the 8th and 12th when temperatures reached a maximum of 34°C. There was a thunderstorm on the 13th. After the 20th the temperatures fell to around 20° C and it became wetter. Most of the rainfall recorded for this month was collected during the last week of the month. The total rainfall for the month was 39mm, 14mm below the expected. Night temperatures were 1.5 degrees above the average. The warmest nights were on the 12th, 22nd and 23rd where temperatures remained at 18°C.

SEPTEMBER's day and night temperatures were back to around normal. After a sunny start the rest of the month remained cloudy, windy and dull but dry. The rainfall for this month was well below average with only 16mm of rain being collected. 9mm of this fell on the 19th.
The London Weather Centre stated that this had been the driest September for 11 years.

OCTOBER had a sunny dry start. The period from the 6th to the 15th was wet with continuous rain on the 8th and strong winds on the 9th. As a consequence the total rainfall for the month was collected during this period; totalling 58mm, 15mm above expected. Day time temperatures were average but night time temperatures were nearly 2 degrees below average. There were frosts from the 21st almost every night to the end of the month. The most severe frost was on the night of the 28th when the temperature fell to -6°C. There was fog on the 19th. The end of the month was sunny.

NOVEMBER had average rainfall spread throughout the month. Both day and night temperatures were a little above average. The month started frosty, foggy and sunny and then become dull and rainy. In the middle of the month the weather become sunny and frosty again quickly returning to being dull, cloudy and wet. The London Weather Centre stated that this year so far had been the warmest globally since records began.

DECEMBER started with snow on the 1st, which started to fall at 22-00hrs, about 10mm fell. Night temperatures were nearly 2 degrees above average. Although there were frosts on a number of nights they were never below -1°C. The warmest night was on the 23rd when temperatures stayed up to 9°C. Day temperatures were also a degree above average. The warmest day was on the 10th at 13°C and the coldest day on the 17th at 1°C. It was wet through most of the latter half of the month but rainfall was only a little above expected. The winds this month were very cold and there were strong to gale force winds on the 24th and 25th.

Day and night temperatures for the year were above average by 2°C and 0.2°C respectively. The total rainfall for the year was 84% of the expected amount.

BOTANICAL NOTES

T.C.E. Wells

The Atlas 2000 project, which started last year, has stimulated the systematic recording of the county's flora resulting in a few new sites for species which have become rare or were on the verge of extinction in the county. Whilst this is encouraging, our surveys strengthen the view that our native flora is still under considerable threat from intensive agricultural activities; most of our unusual or uncommon weeds are more or less confined to the corners of fields (which sometimes escape herbicidal sprays) or to disused airfields and the edges of trackways. Many crops, particularly cereals, are almost weedless and some of what were once common weeds are only found in crops such as sugar-beet, potatoes or rape. Once common grassland species are now mostly restricted to nature reserves and a few roadside verges and even these are threatened by encroachment from arable agriculture or by disturbance from utilities such as the laying of water mains, electricity cables and most recently from cable television. I have the impression that many verges are now much more grassy than they were thirty years ago, possibly as a result of increased nitrogen deposition emanating from a variety of sources. Changes in the management of verges has also occurred and may in part be responsible for the decline in many broad-leaved species.

It is essential that we continue to make detailed site records and I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who are helping with the Atlas 2000 project and to encourage others to take part. All records are of value, even of the common species, as these may become our rarities in the future!!

Records are given as in previous years, the 100km reference being omitted. Initials of recorders are as follows: Brian Davis (BNKD), Jane Croft (JC), Ron Elloway (REE), Peter Walker (PEGW), Sheila Wells (SEW), Terry Wells (TCEW).

Ophioglossum vulgatum L. Adder's-tongue.
Many plants on roadside verge and ditch bank, between Sawtry and Steeple Gidding, 144831, 31 July (SEW).

Phyllitis scolopendrium (L.) Newman Hart's-tongue.
Three large plants on bank of recently cleaned out ditch, Thicket Path, Houghton, 286720, 29 June (TCEW). A new "native" location for this uncommon fern.

Asplenium ruta-muraria L. Wall-rue.
Five plants growing in mortar chinks of old brick wall, Model Farm, Old Weston, 098774, 16 August (TCEW).

Ceterach officinarum DC. Rustyback.
Many plants growing with *Asplenium ruta-muraria* on brick wall, Model Farm, Old Weston, 098774, 16 August (TCEW). Recorded previously in the county from three other sites.

Thalictrum flavum L. Common meadow-rue.
Several plants amongst waterside vegetation, River Ouse, Little Paxton, 209650, 10 July, (REE).

Ceratocapnos claviculata (L.) Liden = *Corydalis claviculata* (L.) DC. Climbing Corydalis.
Large patches in flower, scrambling over blackberry bushes, growing beneath birch, compartments 12 and 17, Holme Fen NNR, 202891, 1 June (TCEW and HFFS members). The only site in the county for this acid-loving species. First recorded in 1989 by Maurice Massey from almost the same locality. A species which appears to "disappear" for a few years and then reappear in some quantity.

Myrica gale L. Bog Myrtle.
Scattered plants under cleared birch, Holme Fen NNR, 202898, 3 April (TCEW). Known only from this site and Woodwalton Fen NNR.

Carpinus betulus L. Hornbeam.
Six trees (probably planted) on parish boundary, Little Paxton LNR, 196635, 1 July, (REE). An uncommon species in VC 31.

Atriplex littoralis L. Grass-leaved Orache.
Growing in gutter (with *Puccinellia distans*) by roadside, locally abundant, Offord Cluny, 227683, 23 July, (SEW); forming a narrow band along the new A14 trunk road for about a mile, centred on Ellington, 170718, 25 July 1996, (BNKD), identification confirmed by C.D. Preston. A halophyte which appears to be spreading rapidly along major highways. NEW COUNTY RECORD.

Erophila verna (L.) DC. Common Whitlowgrass.
Scattered in gravel along path edges in short grass, Little Paxton LNR, 198630, 10 April, (REE).

Cardamine amara L. Large Bitter-cress.
About ten plants in flower in wet area under *Salix viminalis* and *S. purpurea*, by river Ouse, Offord Cluny, 214670, 23 April, (TCEW). A new site for this uncommon species.

Calluna vulgaris (L.) Hull Heather.
Locally plentiful in areas cleared of birch scrub, Holme Fen NNR, 2088, 1 June, (TCEW). Good to see that positive efforts are being made to create the right conditions for the continued survival of this locally uncommon species.

Erica tetralix L. Cross-leaved Heath.
Scattered plants in areas cleared of birch scrub and at edge of birch woodland, Holme Fen NNR, 199897 and 2088, 3 April, (TCEW). Still surviving at one of only two sites in the county.

Crassula helmsii (Kirk) Cockayne New Zealand Pigmyweed.
Plentiful around edge of pond, Houghton, 289719, 29 June, (TCEW). The fifth record of a species which first appeared in the county in 1985.

Vicia parviflora Cav. Slender Tare.
In rough grassland, with *Vicia tetrasperma*, Kimbolton airfield, 106696, 24 June, (BNKD).

Lathyrus sylvestris L. Narrow-leaved Everlasting-pea.
Plentiful on the main ride running west to east through the wood, West Wood, Ellington, 153698, 9 July, (TCEW). The only other record for VC31 is from Brampton Wood, where it still survives.

Ononis repens L. Common Restharrow.
Plentiful over a distance of 50m on southern side of roadside verge between Sawtry and Steeple Gidding, 144831, 31 May, (TCEW).

Trifolium ochroleuchon Hudson Sulphur Clover.
About ten plants in flower, Woodwalton Marsh, 213812, 10 July, (TCEW). Still present where I first saw it about 15 years ago; in pasture, Horse Close, Midloe Grange Farm, 163647, 30 May 1996, (D.A. Wells).

Trifolium arvense L. Hare's-foot Clover.
Small group of plants on bare gravel, Diddington, 208658, 16 November, (REE). The fourth record for the county.

Lythrum portula (L.) D.Webb Water-purslane.
Three small patches on a wet, muddy bridleway, much cut-up by horses, West Wood, Ellington, 153701, 9 July, (TCEW). Only known elsewhere in the county from Brampton and Monks Wood.

Daphne laureola L. Spurge-laurel.
About twenty good-sized plants, under oak, Savages Spinney, 133692, 1 March, (TCEW).

Geranium rotundifolium L. Round-leaved Crane's-bill.
Several plants on a disused railway track, Huntingdon station, 233716, 30 August, (BNKD). Growing with *Chaenorhinum minus*.

Sanicula europaea L. Sanicle.
One plant, Savages Spinney, 134692, June 1996, (BNKD).

Scandix pecten-veneris L. Shepherd's-needle.
About 20 plants with young fruits, edge of rape field, near Monks Hardwick, 218616, 26 July, (PEGW & TCEW). A welcome find of an arable weed which is now extremely rare in the county.

Pimpinella saxifraga L. Burnet-saxifrage.
Scattered over a 50m stretch of roadside verge, Toseland, 228625, 23 July, (TCEW).

Petroselinum segetum (L.) Koch Corn Parsley.
One plant in flower and fruit, on dry south-facing bank below hedgerow, Old Weston village, 099772, 16 August, (TCEW); many plants growing in a narrow band in stubble near to edge of road, Easton, 136708, 9 September, (BNKD). Two new records for the county of a nationally rare weed, the only other record being from Broughton in 1979.

Torilis nodosa (L.) Gaertner Knotted Hedge-parsley.
Among gravel at edge of path leading to Offord Darcy church, 217664, 23 July, (SEW); edge of sugar beet field, near Monks Hardwick, 205613, 26 July, (PEGW & TCEW); between concrete runway and arable field, Upwood airfield, 261831, 30 July, (TCEW & SEW), more than 100 plants; between a track and arable field, Beltons Hill Spaldwick, 128736, (BNKD & JC), many plants.

Centaurium pulchellum (Sw.) Druce Lesser Centaury.
Several plants growing in hardcore on ride, Bevill's Wood, 203795, (BNKD & JC).

Hyoscymus niger L. Henbane.
About twenty plants in flower, edge of wheat field, abutting the southern edge of West Wood, but in parish of Grafham, 153697, 9 July, (TCEW).

Calystegia pulchra Brummitt and Heyw. Hairy Bindweed.
Scrambling over hedgerow, Godmanchester, 239700, 26 July, (TCEW).

Lithospermum officinale L. Field Gromwell.
Eight plants in rough grassland, Kimbolton airfield, 110695, 24 June, (BNKD).

Verbena officinalis L. Vervain.
Four plants in flower, edge of verge, Offord Darcy, 218665, 23 July, (TCEW). Known only from five other sites in the county.

Lathraea clandestina L. Purple Toothwort.
Many plants just emerging under *Salix cinerea,* Little Paxton LNR, 195630, 19 April, (A. Robbins & TCEW); on island at confluence of rivers Kym and Ouse, 182615, 15 May, (P. Gibbs).

Orobanche minor Smith Common Broomrape.
Six plants attached to *Trifolium repens* on roadside verge, Brington, 084751, 16 August, (TCEW).

Cruciata laevipes Opid Crosswort.
One large patch by hedgerow, Far Close, Houghton, 293717, 29 June, (TCEW). This population seems to be maintaining itself at one of its few sites in the county.

Cirsium acaule (L.) Scop. Dwarf Thistle.
Locally plentiful in calcareous grassland at Woodwalton Marsh NR. 213812, 10 July, (TCEW).

Senecio sylvaticus L. Heath Groundsel.
Several plants in recently felled woodland, Bevill's Wood, 203792, 24 July, (BNKD & JC). Uncommon in VC31.

Inula helenium L. Elecampane.
A large clump in a wet situation, Hartham Street, next to Calpher Wood, 143698, 1 March, (TCEW & SEW). Known from this site for at least 30 years.

Stratiotes aloides L. Water-soldier.
Abundant in Hayling Lake, Little Paxton LNR, 193624, 12 July, (REE). Almost certainly originating as a garden throw-out.

Elodea nuttallii (Planchon) H. St. John. Nuttall's Waterweed.
Abundant and in flower in small pond, near Thicket Path, Houghton, 289719, 29 June, (TCEW); abundant in flooded, disused gravel pit, Meadow Lane, St.Ives, 326713, 30 June (TCEW). More records of a species which is still spreading.

Schoenoplectus lacustris (L.) Palla Common Club-rush.
Abundant in farm pond, Bottom Farm, Little Gidding, 140826, 31 May, (TCEW).

Poa compressus L. Flattened Meadow-grass.
Road verge, Kimbolton airfield, 110696, 24 June, (BNKD).

Poa nemoralis L. Wood Meadow-grass.
Woodland edge, West Wood, Ellington, 150698, 9 July, (TCEW).

Helictotrichon pratense (L.) Besser Meadow Oat-grass.
In pasture, Horse Close, Midloe Grange Farm, 163647, 30 May 1996 (D.A. Wells).

Aira praecox L. Early hair-grass.
Abundant along paths in Compartments 12, 17 and 18, Holme Fen NNR, 2088, 1 June, (TCEW).

Typha angustifolia L. Lesser Bulrush.
Two large stands around edges of lake, Little Paxton LNR, 193626, 9 September, (REE).

Listera ovata R.Br. Twayblade.
Four plants with flowering shoots, roadside verge between Sawtry and Steeple Gidding, 144831, 31 May, (SEW).

Anacamptis pyramidalis (L.) Rich. Pyramidal Orchid.
One plant in flower, calcareous grassland, Woodwalton Marsh, 213812, 10 July, (TCEW).

Ophrys apifera Huds. Bee Orchid.
Six plants in flower under planted *Alnus,* open grassland by road, Brington, 090769, 16 August (SEW); fifteen plants in flower, rough grassland, Kimbolton airfield, 110695, 24 June, (BNKD); about 50 plants scattered among coarse grassland, mostly in flower, Meadow Lane Gravel Pits, St.Ives, 325700, (TCEW).

THE OUSE VALLEY WILLOWS

David Evans

The willow tree often is the most obvious natural feature of lowland rivers, standing on flood meadows. In the Ouse valley it is the only tall feature in the riverine landscape, apart from distant views of church spires. The willow that seems synonymous with this pastoral view of a 'Constable' scene is often the willow pollard. Not to be confused with the Victorian anachronism to be seen on the streets of cities, planted to give some relief to the urban sprawl. The willow pollard was the best answer to the problem of providing small diameter roundwood in a river valley, within the grass areas of the flood plain. Instead of taking up valuable grazing land with woods, the willow pollard is an almost unlimited renewable resource in the hedges. Willows, planted next to ditches and dykes, also served to stop bank erosion. Coppicing the trees at ground level would have allowed the cattle to graze the regrowth, so the trees were cut above cattle head height.

In historical terms the references to the cutting of willow pollards are very few and far between. There is little doubt that the products of willow, for baskets, hurdles, the wattle for housing uses and coracles, have been used for thousands of years. The practice of pollarding willows coincides with the pastoral system of using the flood meadows for growing hay for winter feed for cattle, and late grazing following the removal of the hay crop. Such practices are referred to during the 13th century, especially on the Anglian Fens, where willows were often the only source of timber. Mr. Oliver Rackam, the landscape historian, has several references, including the unfortunate schoolmaster who drowned while cutting willow rods to control his unruly pupils.

The willow pollards were cut on a regular basis, depending on what product was to be made out of the cut material. Larger diameter wood was easily carved into planks for carts, being very resilient to impact and surprisingly long lasting. The uses of willow around the home seem endless, for bowls, spoons, bungs, reels for winding wool, even spinning tops for the children. Because of the light weight the first artificial limbs were made of willow. In the rural landscape, thatchers and hedgers use willow withies for pegs and binders. Early bank revetments were made of green willow poles, which of course easily rooted, binding the banks with roots. During my quest for information I have talked to many people. Mr. Bill Goulty, a farmer of Godmanchester, was told by his father of a disastrous hay crop in 1921 on Godmanchester Common. To save the animals from starving during the coming winter, they cut bundles of willows and green ash as a substitute feed. What was surprising was the large diameter wood that cattle could chew, often between three to four inches thick. The cattle thrived, and it subsequently became a regular practice in the farming year. The list of uses for the willow pollards was long, but when the practice of pollarding stopped, all of the willow based products ceased to exist. Baskets from osiers continued to be made up to the late fifties. One of the main users was the railway network. Those of us old enough to remember can possibly recall the huge variety of baskets used by the Royal Mail for the transport of smaller items. Mr. Harrison, who manufactured baskets in St. Ives, told me they had to grow specially bred willows to make the frames of the larger baskets. He even propagated his own named types for particular purposes.

So why did the pollarding stop? There are no written records of this phenomenon. Yet it must have been a major event, to cease so abruptly. Certainly no person I have talked to, including Mr. Oliver Rackham, and many other leading authorities, have any idea. Between the wars, synthetic materials, such as plastic- remember bakelite?-and many other products became available. I presume that the practise of pollarding just fell by the wayside because the products of the willows had been superseded. This however is by no means the whole truth. Perhaps, if the market for willow products had been active, the trees would have continued to be pollarded, but pollarding of the old willows came to an abrupt halt.

I felt it was necessary to investigate this further and decided to do some research. The commons around Huntingdon are of ancient lineage, and I presumed that there must be some written record of the use of the commons. This proved to be The Court Leete book of Godmanchester Commons, Eastside and Westside. I was shown to a dusty, dingy room at Winters, the solicitors for the Commoners, and given huge volumes to pore over. The most relevant references were to the statement of receipts and expenditure. Sadly, I found no written references throughout the hand written sections to pollarding prior to 1800. The practice was however, very active. By 1890, a typical reference would be, 39 willow heads for 13 shillings and 4 pence. By 1902 Mr. J. Allin was paying 9 pence (9d) a willowhead or 30 for £1 - 2s - 6d. (as we used to write.) There are, other fascinating references to all sorts of things, but I particularly like the one for 'Minstrel entertainment' for the Women and Children at the Coronation of King Edward VII £2 - 7s - 0d. The last record of pollarding, for Godmanchester Common, is the 1922 Eastside Common report for sale of willowheads valued at £1, then all references cease. All other tasks and practices went on, but not pollarding. Folk songs and poems of this period, during and after the First World War, began to refer to the hedges growing free, and pastures uncut. Following the war there was an obvious lack of labour available for many tasks in the country. Rabbit populations expanded rapidly, as did 'vermin', in the gamekeepers vernacular. Following a discussion with Mr. Jack Mason, whose family have been commoners for generations, he said "It stopped because the men were dead!". Apparently, the local men had joined up to do their duty, and not returned, as so many others, and these had included those that 'did the pollarding'. There is no way to prove this theory for the cessation of pollarding, but it was confirmed by Mr. Harrison of St. Ives that no cutting of the willows, outside of the osier beds, was done between 'The Wars'. The reasons for the pollarding coming to an end were, being unable to cut the willow trees, and the willow products being substituted by other materials. Like so many of the 'Cottage Industries', it ceased to exist.

You may ask why should this matter, why not do away with the awful practice of pollarding? I, as a Tree Officer, spend much of my time condemning this practice, especially on urban trees. Following some survey work on the Ouse Valley Way I noticed that many of the huge trees were falling apart. The cause was easy to see. The former pollards had grown huge crowns, with massive limbs, radiating from the old pollard points. Those areas where the trees were cut, had of course, rotted with the help of age, fungi and beetles etc. With wind pressure the trees could no longer support their crowns and consequently are being blown apart. I decided to do a survey of the largest concentration, near to hand, to try to see the scale of the problem.

Godmanchester Common, both Eastside and Westside, still have numbers of old willows. I proposed to do a survey of these trees, and record their condition.

This was completed during March 1994. It was fun wading through the shallow water of the flood plains trying to keep the survey sheets, and me, above water. It is very hard to see the edges of a dyke, when all you can see is water. I measured their height and trunk diameter, taking notes of their condition. It was at this time I first saw the fantastic shapes that collapsed willow trees make. It may well be worth a trip to see just how tenacious some of these trees are in hanging on to life. Trying to gauge the extent of decay, and ability to withstand the elements, was difficult, but a pattern started to emerge, allowing me to make categories of the various problems. I had already realised that many of the trees could not possibly hold on to their crowns much longer. Of the 500 trees surveyed, a third were about to collapse, another third could probably stand 4-5 years, the rest could go within ten years, maximum. One other valuable piece of information came from the reading of The Court Leete Book of the commoners. The Commoners commissioned the Ordnance Survey to do a survey of Godmanchester Common in 1896. As was the rule, in those days, the survey included the major trees. Through experience I have taken these old indications of trees with a pinch of salt, but they really came up trumps. I could still locate all the trees on my 1994 survey on their 1896 survey. There was one other huge difference. All of the trees must have been regularly pollarded at that time, and were in situ until just after the first world war, as can be shown from later maps. On the 1896 survey I counted 1500 trees on the Eastside and Westside Commons. This compares with the 500 trees found in my 1994 survey. I can only conclude that we have lost two thirds of the trees in the last seventy years. The problem is clearly very urgent.

What to do? To me it was clear that the trees should be repollarded, but the scale of the problem is immense. What of the affect on the landscape, losing those towering willows, and the knock on effect on the wildlife? Also not forgetting the greatest problem of who was going to pay for the work. I could not see the land owners agreeing to spend up to £100 per tree, just to make it safe. Why! the trees will fall down for nothing, soon. I mentioned these issues to my friends at English Nature, The Wildlife Trust, and the new Environment Agency (River Authority). After some discussion it was clear that the important part, in terms of wildlife habitat, was the trunk or bole. Another factor was, if the trees were to be cut, this would require phasing; not do too much in one place at the same time. This would allow wildlife to accommodate to the new regime, and reduce the complaints from the anti-tree-felling lobby. After due consideration I was given leave to initiate the project, to save the Ouse Valley Willows.

I had some concern that although the willows had this great tenacity to survive, the dramatic effect of losing their crowns might prove too much, if they were already under stress from drought, fungi and other agencies. I decided that some research might prove valuable. How do you re-pollard ancient willows? Following a small disaster at Earith, some years ago, my concern was justified. Several willows next to the road at Earith were pollarded. At least half of them died following the treatment. This work was slated by several at English Nature, and their thoughts put into print. Sadly, they were unaware, that the cause of the trees demise was honey fungus, and not the pollarding of the trees. In other places in East Anglia I found cases of enthusiastic work on ancient trees resulting in their death and swift disintegration. As for written references, there are none! Yes, I do mean none at all. I wrote a scathing report on the re-pollarding of the ancient beeches and hornbeams in southern England some years ago. The trees were ancient trees previously pollarded, but the practice had ceased over two hundred years ago.

Some people thought it would be a good idea to revive the flagging health of these trees, that were dying though extreme age, by re-pollarding them. Well! they certainly assisted their demise by killing 95% of the pollarded trees. Any forester could have guessed what would happen. Without a crown, how could the trees survive. The answer is to gradually reduce the crowns, leaving some growth. This is precisely what I am telling people that have drought affected trees. Reduce the tree's crown to get it back in balance with what is left of the root system, and the tree will have the best chance to survive. It is possible that this technique could be used with willows. Willows are noted for growing aggressively, when cut, but we felt it necessary to test out these theories. It was planned for the winter of 1995 to have a trial area on Godmanchester Common.

The trial site, at Westside Common, was chosen as it had 26 willows, all pollards, not pruned for at least 70 years. Some were very decrepit, others had no low growth, looking like maiden trees, and all were within an overgrown hawthorn hedge. The overall premise is to pollard the trees as close as possible to the original pollard point. The limiting factor being that point beyond which, if the trees were cut, they would not survive. Whilst this clearly varied from tree to tree I hoped to arrive at some general rules, which could then be given as advice to willow owners. The ideal situation would be to recut the trees at the original pollard points. It was essential to cut the trees back as far as possible, because to pollard the trees at high levels can only be tackled by highly skilled tree contractors. The trees appeared to dictate where they should be cut by their condition, and if there were branches and foliage at lower levels on the trees. Of the 26 trees, 18 were cut at various levels. Where the trees could be cut back to the pollard points, metre stumps of the larger trunks, were left to support the regrowth. With further funds from the District Council, some younger, but large, trees were cut on Riverside Park, Huntingdon; all these trees responded well to the treatment of pollarding at low levels, back to just above the old pollard points.

The trees were cut in February 1996, and within six months all of the trees were regrowing. All the high pollarded trees had regrowth at levels in the trees between the old pollard points, and the new cuts. The more severely cut trees had also responded well; with some notable exceptions on which the growth was not as vigorous as the other trees. The limiting factor of where to cut the trees had been proven, in terms of regrowth. The trees with younger branches at lower levels all regrew well. Also trees with new callous growths at lower levels supported regrowth. After a year I surveyed all the trees, to determine where the regrowth was most prevalent. After climbing all the trees it was clear that a major limiting factor to the tree putting out adventitious buds, which would develop as shoots, was the thickness of bark. The thicker the bark the fewer shoots were found. Trees with calluses, scars and tension and compression wood of recent origin all supported much growth. Three particular trees appeared not to be reacting like most of the trees. These were all cut severely, but were not regrowing at all well. The surrounding growth of hawthorn branches was above the level of the cut willows, and were now shading the willow trunks. Obviously, unobstructed sunlight is a necessary trigger to regrowth. Following a meeting of the partners to see the site, we concluded that we had the basic formula right though the trees could generally be cut more severely, if the surrounding vegetation was also reduced.

English Nature had paid for the work on the trial site, and the National Rivers Authority agreed to support a programme of pollarding for the next four

years. The Wildlife Trust agreed to co-ordinate the further surveys of the willows, and promotion of the project. Jenny Bell, for the District Council, and I collaborated, and produced a 'Strategy For the Future'. This was reproduced in Natures Place, a journal published by English Nature. This produced many responses from all over England, and even France. Following an exchange of letters, to M et Mme F. Steimer concerning the management of willows, I was asked if we had any problems with beavers?. This was because locally released beavers in northern France, apparently love using willows for their dams. Not a problem for us for the near future; I suggest.

This year four sites were chosen for the programme. These were Riverside Park, Huntingdon, two sites on Eastside Common, Godmanchester close to Cow Lane osier beds opposite Hartford Church, and Hemingford Lock. All of the trees have responded well to the treatment, and Jenny Bell has produced a 'Two Years On' statement. The Landscape Project 2000, at St. Neots, is also pollarding willows following our advice and I am grateful for the help of Paul Wynne of the project for his support. The sites for this year are in Earith, Houghton and Godmanchester and more work in St. Neots.

In 'Conservation' the buzz word is sustainability. I would not have started this project unless there was a possibility of the produce from the pollards being used. I am well aware that basket makers have to go to the Somerset Levels for basket making material. However, thanks to the foresight of Terry Daunt, of The Nene Park Trust, who has been pollarding willows, and maintaining osier beds, there are some local materials. My thanks to him for his pioneering work. I have recently been approached by several users of willow for material of various sizes, which is very encouraging for the future. During the last year many others have recognised the importance of the lowland willow pollards and are pollarding their trees. This includes several farmers along the Ouse valley and I congratulate them for their efforts to save these fine trees.

I would also like to thank my colleagues at English Nature, Jo Thomas for The Wildlife Trust, Geraldine Daly and Sue Loverett of the Environment Agency, formally the National Rivers Authority, Paul and Phillipa, at Landscape 2000, and of course, Mrs. Jenny Bell, to whom I owe a great debt, supporting my efforts and keeping me to deadlines.

FUNGUS NOTES

Sheila Wells

Fruiting in fungi is very much dependent on weather conditions and particularly on rainfall. Thus the dry spring of 1997 meant that very few of the spring fruiting species were to be found, other than in the wettest areas of our woods. The wet weather in June and early July brought a welcome crop of fungi which included some species such as *Coprinus flocculosus* that are not often seen. At Woodwalton Marsh, I collected an ink-cap which, despite the fact that it was a large species and there was an abundance of specimens, I was unable to identify. Because it looked interesting and unusual, I have sent it to a professional mycologist for identification.

The autumn was also unusual in that the woodlands were very dry from the hot summer weather and just as they were becoming moistened there were some hard frosts which halted fungal growth for a time. However, mild conditions returned and continued up to the end of the year to the extent that a foray at Woodwalton Fen on 30 November produced a list of 40 species. This list included six new records for the reserve which already has some 340 species recorded. The most exciting find was *Mycena belliae*, a species which has not been reported from England since it was described by P.D.Orton in 1956 from Wheatfen Broad in Norfolk, although it occurs more frequently on the continent. It has a very specialised habitat, growing on dead reed stems at the edge of water, just above the water level. It was described as being abundant at Wheatfen Broad, but only six fruit bodies were found at Woodwalton although a more thorough search might have revealed more. It is certainly a species to search for in this area in November and December.

During the autumn, the Huntingdon Fungus Group held forays at Warseley Wood, West Wood, Savages Spinney, St Ives Gravel Pits, Chippenham Fen, Woodwalton Fen and Bedford Purlieus and foray lists are available from all these sites. The Hunts. Fauna and Flora Society's annual foray was also held at Bedford Purlieus where several new species were added to an already extensive list - a total of 114 species were recorded for the day. One species of particular interest was *Clitocybe hydrogramma*. This was collected by Richard Shotbolt and noted as "something different" because of the unusually strong, rancid smell. The unusual structure of the cap skin, when examined under the microscope, confirmed it as a species we had not encountered before. The new records for Bedford Purlieus do not appear in the following list of new county records as HFFS recording for fungi has always been restricted to VC31.

In the following list of new county records, the tetrad reference is given, excluding the TL prefix. Collection and identification is by the recorder unless otherwise stated. Initials of recorders are: Alan Robbins (AR), Richard Shotbolt (RS), Terry Wells (TCEW), Sheila Wells (SEW).

Agaricales

Clitopilus hobsonii (Berk.& Br.) Orton
Numerous brackets on a rotten log, Woodwalton Fen, 2282. 30 November.

Collybia ocior (Pers.) Vilg.& Mill.
A species in the *C.dryophilla* group. Little Paxton Wood, 1662. 11 May.

Conocybe appendiculata Lange & Kuhn.:Watling
On soil, Top Ride, Monks Wood, 1878. 8 July. Coll. TCEW.

Conocybe sordida (Kuhn.:) Kuhn.& Watling
On soil on Top Ride, Monks Wood, 1878. 8 July

Coprinus auricomus Pat.
On soil beside ride, Little Paxton Wood, 1662. 11 May. Also in West Wood, 1468. 18 October.

Crepidotus applanatus (Pers.) Kummer
On woody debris, West Wood, 1468. 11 October. Coll. TCEW.

Crepidotus inhonestus Karst.
On twigs, Monks Wood.1878. 8 July. Coll. & det. TCEW Also in West Wood, 1468. 11 October.

Entoloma lividocyanulum Kuhn.& Noordel.
In grassland, Upwood Meadows, 2482. 28 June Coll. & det. TCEW. Conf. SEW.

Galerina marginata (Batsch.:Secr.) Kuhn.
On conifer wood, West Wood, 1470. 18 October.

Hygrocybe konradii f. *subglobispora* (Orton) Boert.
In grassland, Woodwalton Marsh, 2080. 11 July.

Inocybe flavella Karst.
On soil on Top Ride, Monks Wood, 1878. 8 July. Coll. TCEW.

Marasmius torquescens Quel.
On elm and ash leaf litter, Ladys Wood 2482. 22 July. Coll.and det. TCEW. Conf. SEW.

Mycena belliae (Johnson)
Orton On dead reed stems, just above the water level. Woodwalton Fen, 2284. 30 November.

Naucoria salicis Orton
Under willows, Meadow Lane Pits, St Ives, 3270. 25 October.

Psilocybe inquilina (Fr.:Fr.) Bres.
In short peaty grassland, Woodwalton Fen, 2284. 15 May.

Aphyllophorales

Cerocorticium molare (Chaill.:Fr.) Jul.& Stalp.
Savage's Spinney 1268. 11 October.

Gloeophyllum abietinum (Bull.:Fr.) Karst.
Several brackets on an old fence post near bird hide, Grafham Water NR 1266. 23 February.

Gloeoporus dichrous (Fr.) Bres.
On birch logs, Littless Wood, 1268. 19 October.

Junghuhnia nitida (Fr.)Ryv.
On underside of a large, fallen hazel branch, Littless Wood, 1268. 23 February. Coll. TCEW.

Phlebiopsis gigantea (Fr.) Jul.
Covering the surface and sides of a pine stump, Savage's Spinney, 1268. 1 March.

Ramaria ochraceo-virens (Jungh.) Donk
On soil under conifers, West Wood 153698. 18 October. Coll. & det AR. Conf. SEW.

Stereum subtomentosum Pouz.
On rotting blackthorn log in wettest part of Ladys Wood 2482. 16 November. Also from Woodwalton Fen, 2282. 30 November, on alder logs - its usual host. This species looks like a luxuriant form of the common *Stereum hirsutum* but can easily be distinguished in the field because, instead of being broadly attached to the substrate, it has a narrow, stalk-like attachment. Worth looking out for in damp parts of woodland.

Uredinales (Rusts)

Puccinia allii Rud.
Abundant on leaves of chives in garden, Upwood 2582. 3 October.

Puccinia caricina v. *urticae-acutiformis* (Cleb.) Henderson
Teleutosori on leaves of *Carex acutiformis* Five-arches Bridge NR, 2084. 3 March.

Puccinia oxalidis Diet.& Ellis
Uredosori on leaves of *Oxalis rosea* in garden, St.Neots, 1858. 26 July.

Puccinia polygonum-amphibii var *convolvuli* Arth.
Uredosori on leaves of *Polygonum convolvulus* at edge of sugar beet field, Monks Hardwick, 2060. 26 July.

Puccinia porrii (Sow.) Wint.
Uredosori on leek crop in garden, so abundant that the soil below was coloured orange by the fallen spores. Upwood, 2582. 3 October.

Puccinia recondita f.sp. *bromina* Eriks.
Uredosori and teleutosori on leaves of *Bromus commutatus* at edge of footpath to Ladys Wood, 2482. 22 June.

Puccinia sessilis Schroet.
Teleutosori on dead leaves of *Phalaris arundinacea,* Monks Wood, 2080. 6 March. Also aecidia on leaves of *Arum maculatum,* Little Paxton Wood, 1662. 11 May.

Phragmidium mucronatum (Pers.) Schlecht.
Uredosori on leaves of Rosa canina, Paxton Pits 1862. 19 April

Uromyces betae Kickx
Uredosori on leaves of spinach-beet, in garden, Upwood, 2582. 3 October.

Ascomycotina

Ciboria betulae (Woronin) White
Tiny fruit bodies arising from a sclerotium attached to seeds of *Betula*. Woodwalton Fen, 2282. 2 April.

Cudoniella clavus (Alb.& Schw.:Fr.) Dennis
On buried bits of *Alnus* twigs in wet peat. Woodwalton Fen, 2282. 2 April.

Cyathipodia corium (Wels.) Boud.
A black, stalked cup fungus growing on gravel in *Salix* scrub. Paxton Pits, 1862. 19 April. Coll. Paul Claydon.

Hypoxylon mammatum (Wahl.) Miller
Small groups of black perithecia on dead twigs of *Salix cinerea* Hartham Street, 1270. 1 March.

Leptosphaeria herpotrichoides de Not.
On dead stems of *Phalaris arundinacea,* beside a pond, Little Gidding, 1282. 31 May.

Pezizella gemmarum (Boud.) Dennis
On old, fallen bud of *Populus x serotina,* Woodwalton Fen, 2284. 2 April.

Rhopographus filicinus (Fr.) Nitsch: Fuckel
Abundant on dead stems of bracken, Holme Fen, 2088. 1 June.

Schizothecium aloides (Fuckel) Lundq.
A black pyrenomycete on cow dung, Upwood Meadows, 2582. 30 April.

Nomenclature follows:
Moser, Keys to the Agarics and Boleti. 1983
Ellis & Ellis, Fungi without gills. 1990
Ellis & Ellis, Microfungi on Land Plants. 1997

LEPIDOPTERA REPORT FOR 1997

Barry Dickerson

Although the year started dry there was a large number of air and ground frosts until early May. Also during the first months there were periods of strong to gale force winds, all detrimental to the recording of butterflies and moths. Temperatures improved during May encouraging butterflies to take to the wing and moths to become more active at night. The dull and very wet weather in June did quite a lot of damage to the insects, but their foodplants certainly enjoyed the extra rainfall as they grew more luxuriously than usual. As the weather improved throughout the summer numbers of butterflies also increased and most of those that fly during the second half of the year were seen in good numbers. However, moths did not fare so well. Many normally common species were down in numbers, some as much as 75%, but as with all seasons and all types of weather a few species appeared to benefit. It became windier and wetter in the autumn and although some butterflies were seen on the wing well into October the night temperatures dropped decreasing the moths activity making them difficult to find. This was also true with the leaf-mining lepidoptera. Many of the commoner species were difficult to find, whereas some of the rarer ones were much more abundant than usual and several new county records were made.

Butterflies

I received several telephone calls reporting early sighting of butterflies during January. On 26 January Mrs Huggins of Woodhurst rang to say that a Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*) was flying around her lounge and expressed concern about its ability to survive until the warmer weather. I advised her to feed it on a weak solution of honey water. This she did each evening letting the butterfly roost in the curtains by day. The butterfly survived and was liberated on a warm sunny day in April.

Further early sightings were of a Small Tortoiseshell (*Aglais urticae*) and Peacock (*Inachis io*) on 28 January at Old Fletton by Howard Hillier and a Brimstone (*Gonepteryx rhamni*) on 5 February in Waresley Wood by Brian Righton and Bill Puttick. All these species had reasonable a year, as did the Comma (*Polygonia c-album*). Small Tortoiseshells and Peacocks were still seen on the wing in October by several recorders.

Holly Blue (*Celastrina argiolus*) records started to come in during the last week in March and continued until the end of August. The usual numbers of Common Blues (*Polyommatus icarus*) and Small Coppers (*Lycaena phlaeas*) were reported throughout the year, although some recorders failed to see them, others found them in good numbers.

The Orange-tip (*Anthocharis cardamines*) was not as common as last year, but all the 'whites' did well. The Green-veined White (*Pieris napi*) exceptionally so with one recorder sending in records of 112 sightings. The Essex Skipper (*Thymelicus lineola*) was very common along roadside verges during the last two weeks of July and the first week of August. The Large (*Ochlodes venata*) and Small Skippers (*Thymelicus sylvestris*) were also seen but not as commonly as the previous species.

The White Admiral (*Ladoga camilla*) was, once again, found on a new site, this time in Highfield Spinney, on 19 July, where I watched it for several minutes

feeding from bramble flowers. Following the sighting last year in Holme Fen by Andrew Frost another was seen there this year by Peter Smout in July. It continues to do reasonably well in Brampton Wood and Monks Wood and it is hoped that the ride management in Brampton Wood will encourage the butterfly to build up its population there. The Red Admiral was not as common as it was in 1996, but I still received a reasonable number of records. In complete contrast to its abundance last year the Painted Lady (*Cynthia cardui*) was extremely scarce during this year; at the time of writing only two records have been received.

The Marbled White (*Melanargia galathea*) continues to do well at Priory Hill, St Neots and has been discovered at several other places in the county. While visiting the Wildlife Trust's nature reserve Woodwalton Marsh on 7 July David Evans found four Marbled Whites flying around the reserve. After the word spread amongst the members of the Hunts Moth and Butterfly Group Nick Greatorex-Davies and Brian Eversham visited the site and followed the road back along the railway towards Huntingdon and found the Marbled White at various places along the railway embankment right up to the back of the Tesco supermarket along St Peter's Road, Huntingdon. The numbers seen suggest that this butterfly has been there for some while, but how such a large distinctive butterfly can be overlooked for what must have been several years is a mystery. On 16 July a Marbled White was found by Jo Thomas feeding from a flower close to the Wildlife Cabin in Mander car park, Grafham, and stayed there long enough for Peter Smout to arrive and confirm its identity. Later another was found along a ride on the reserve at Grafham.

Very few records of Hairstreaks have been sent in this year. I suspect that the very wet June had a detrimental effect on them. However, I did receive one record of the Black Hairstreak (*Satyrium pruni*) in Brampton Wood which was seen on 29 June by Peter Smout and Howard Hillier saw a few at Jones's Covert. Peter also found the Purple Hairstreak (*Quercusia quercus*) at a new site just south of Gt Staughton Church on 22 July and Howard also discovered a colony at Morbourne, just north of Folksworth.

Once again the Brown Argus (*Aricia agestis*) has been found in new areas, but generally numbers appear to be lower than in previous years. Again this could be because of the very wet June, which is when the young larvae, of the second brood, would be feeding, so it is possible that many drowned in the heavy rain.

The Speckled Wood (*Pararge aegeria*), Meadow Brown (*Maniola jurtina*) and Gatekeeper (*Pyronia tithonus*) have all been reported in good numbers, but the Small Heath (*Coenonympha pamphilus*) was not as common as usual. The Ringlet (*Aphantopus hyperantus*) was found in its usual haunts and also in a few of the new areas surveyed including along a couple of roadside verges. As in 1996 there have been very few sightings of the Wall Brown (*Lasiommata megera*) and all of these were second brood.

Moths

I start with an addition to the 1996 records. Two Least Carpets (*Idaea vulpinaria*) were found in the Rothamsted trap in Monks Wood; the first on the 23 July and the second on the 25. These are the 2nd and 3rd county records.

Despite the terrible weather in June which had an adverse effect on the moths recorded later in the year 1997 has turned out to be quite a successful year.

Several new species have been added to the county list and two new recorders have started sending in records. Two all night and one shorter moth trapping sessions were held at Wood Walton Fen to see if any of the rarer species that were recorded on the Fen in the past were still there. This met with some success when the larvae of the Marsh Carpet (*Perizoma sagittata*) was found in reasonable numbers and the Rush Wainscot (*Archanara algae*) came to light in good numbers. Another moth worth reporting is the Gold Spot (*Plusia festucae*) which was found in one of the traps on 15 June. A full report on the Wood Walton Fen trapping sessions can be found in the annual report of the Hunts Moth and Butterfly Group.

Several new sites have been recorded for the first time this year. These include a small area of woodland near Kimbolton School, and several members gardens. Some of which have produced some very interesting records including a couple of new county records, but more of these later.

The Scarce Prominent (*Odovtosia carmelita*) was the first addition to the county list, and the only new macro-moth to be added this year. It was seen on 24 April in Hazelcroft, the section of Gamlingay Wood in VC31, Huntingdonshire. A Broom-tip (*Chesias rufata*) came to light on 3 May at Grafham Water, this is the first county record since 1982. The larvae feed on wild broom, which is rare in the county, so what this moth was doing at Grafham is a mystery. Grafham also provided me with a unusual record on the 23 August when *Ancylosis oblitella* was recorded on my moth trapping sheet. This moth is usually found on saltmarshes and waste ground near the sea, although the larvae feed on goosefoot which is also common inland.

The tortrix moth *Cnephasia genitalana* was first recorded in the county on 5 August 1995 and has been seen there each year since. This year I have found it in Little Paxton Wood on 25 July and Gransden Wood on 7 August. I am certain that this moth is overlooked in the county as it is almost impossible to tell apart from several of the other members of the *Cnephasia* unless the genitalia are inspected. I would urge all those interested in the micro-moths to have a closer look at the *Cnephasia* moths that turn up in their traps to see if they can find any *C. genitalana*. The male and female genitalia are quite distinctive from the other *Cnephasia* species; I can provide the relevant information if required.

After hearing of research done by Ian Simms of Reading into the larval habits of *Nemapogon clematella* I decided to search for the larvae locally. Ian discovered that the larvae feed on the fungus *Diatrype disciformis* growing on dead hazel wood. Many of our local woods have derelict hazel coppice in them, so in early May I looked at this and found the larval workings in Waresley and Gransden Woods, Little Paxton Wood and Brampton Wood. I collected some of these workings and stored them in large plastic bags and lent them against my the side of my shed. The moths emerged during the first week of July; an addition to the county list.

Mark Sterling, from St Albans, visited on the 24 May and we decided to look at the fungus *Hypoxylon multiformea* growing on Silver Birch because we had heard that the moth *Nemapogon wolffiella* fed on this in a similar manner to the previous species. Some suitable pieces were collected and again stored in plastic bags. Mark had the first to emerge on 7 June. This is the first county record since the V.C.H.

While walking round Little Paxton Pits Andrew Booth found a Red-tipped Clearwing (*Synanthedon formicaeformis*) on a bramble bush to the east of the workings and while walking round Monks Wood Nick Greatorex-Davies found the tortrix moth *Commophila aeneana*. This is the first recent record of this species; the only known previous record is mentioned in the first volume of the British Tortricoid Moths, published by the Ray Society, but no reference is given as to where that record originated.

Alan Bowley reports seeing the Forester (*Adscita statices*) at Holme Fen on 15 July, this is another first record since the V.C.H. Three Great Brocades (*Eurois occulta*) were recorded this year. Two at Little Paxton Pits on 6 August by Stephen May and Faith Darlow with the third being recorded by John Chance on 8 August at Sawtry. This is an immigrant species which is rarely recorded this far inland, being most commonly found on the east coast. Also recorded at Little Paxton Pits, for the first time, was a single Small Elephant Hawk-moth (*Deilephila porcellus*). Nick Greatorex-Davies also recorded three in his garden. The Small Elephant Hawk-moth was missing from the county for many years, but just recently has made a come back. Let's hope that this delightful moth will re-establish itself in the county.

Since moving to Hemingford Grey, early in the year, Nick has been running a moth trap in his garden and has produced a most impressive list of moths, some of which I list here. The May Highflyer (*Hydriomena impluviata*) was seen on 3 May (I also recorded one at Ferry Meadows on the 18 May) a rarely recorded moth locally. The Netted Pug (*Eupithecia venosata*) turned up on 31 May and on 5 June a Light Brocade (*Lacanobia w-latinum*) was recorded. The 24 June saw two local rarities appeared in his trap; the Treble Brown Spot (*Idaea trigeminata*) and the Golden Plusia (*Polychrysia moneta*). Nick recorded the V Moth (*Semiothisa wauaria*) on the 13 and 15 July and on the 25th a Juniper Pug (*Eupithecia pusillata*) was found in the trap. On the 22 July and the 6 August he recorded the Gem (*Orthonama obstipata*) and on the 22 August he found a Hedge Rustic (*Tholera cespitis*) in his trap. The first record of this species for several years.

A second garden trap that proved quite successful during the year was the one run by Andrew Frost in his garden at Yaxley. Andrew recorded the Pale Lemon Sallow (*Xanthia ocellaris*) on 21 September, the first county record since October 1985 when it was recorded at the then Wildlife Trust reserve at Breken Pits, Norman Cross. He also took a Cacao Moth (*Ephestia elutella*) on 24 September, another unusual moth for the county.

A third 'new' garden trap was run by me with the assistance of Bridget Smith at Hemingford Road, St Ives. This trap produced two new county records. The first on the 6 June when *Telechrysis tripuncta* was found in the trap and the second on 3 August when *Caryocolum fraternella* was recorded. This is the first member of the *Caryocolum* genus to be recorded in the county, although twelve species occur in Britain.

Finally, as far as garden moth traps are concerned, two traps that have been running for a number of years have also recorded some interesting species during the year. On 3 May the Hilton trap produced two new county records *Plutella porrectella* and *Eucosma pauperana* and on the 30 May a *Enicostoma lobella* was found in the Gt Staughton trap. This is the first county record of this moth since the V.C.H.

During the first week of September I received a telephone call from David Manning, the micro-moth recorder for Bedfordshire telling me that *Antispila petryi* appeared to be unusually common in his county this year. There was only one previous record for Bedfordshire and now he had found it on several sites. The larvae mine the leaves of Dogwood and when mature cut a small hole 4mm to 5.5mm across next to the edge of the mine. They use the leaf fragment that they cut out to construct a pupal case and then descend to the ground to overwinter. I visited several sites where I knew dogwood grew and found it in Brampton Wood on 14 September, Gransden Wood on 21 September and also on the same day along the roadside just outside Pingle Wood. The only previous record for Huntingdonshire I have been able to find is from Monks Wood on 21 October 1981 by A. Maitland Emmet.

Several leaf-miners were added to the county list during the year. The first, *Phyllonorycter cydoniella* has, at last, been found in the county. This moth mines the leaves of crab apple trees forming a blister in the leaf. It then pupates inside the leaf, emerging the following August from the remaining leaf litter. This is identical to its close cousin *Phyllonorycter blancardella,* which is common in the county. To separate these two mined leaves have to be collected in late October and November and kept in suitable conditions. When the moth emerges the genitalia has to be examined. After several years of looking the first *P. cydoniella* were found in leaves collected in Pingle Wood on 26 October 1996.

Other leaf-miners recorded for the first time include *Phyllonorycter cerasicolella* which feeds on Wild Cherry; recorded in Hilton on 19 October. *Phyllonorycter quinnata* found in Hinchingbrooke Country Park on 23 October and *Phyllonorycter leucographella,* the Firethorn leaf-miner, which has been mentioned in previous reports as spreading across the country and heading our way. It has now arrived and was first recorded in St Neots on 6 September and has subsequently been found at Great Paxton and Eynesbury.

I would like to thank all those recorders who have sent in their records for 1997. I have received around 2000 butterfly records and several thousand moth records. The more records received gives a truer picture of the distribution of our lepidoptera, so I ask you all to keep up the good work and look forward to receiving your records for 1998.

I list below the new county records and those updated from the Victoria County History for 1997

Adscita statices (Linn.) The Forester - Holme Fen, TL1888, 15 July, A. Bowley. First record since V.C.H.

Nemapogon wolffiella (Karsh. & Niel.) - Waresley Wood, TL2654, 24 May, B. Dickerson & M. Sterling. First record since V.C.H.

Nemapogon clematella (Fabr.) - Waresley and Gransden Woods, TL2645 & TL2655, 11 May, B. Dickerson. New County Record.

Phyllonorycter cydoniella ([D.&S.]) - Pingle Wood, TL3181, 26 October 1996, B. Dickerson. New County Record.

Phyllonorycter cerasicolella (H.-S.) - Hilton, TL2966, 19 October, B. Dickerson. New County Record.

Phyllonorycter leucographella (Zell.) - St Neots, TL1860, 6 September, B. Dickerson. New County Record.

Phyllonorycter quinnata (Geoff.) - Hinchingbrooke Country Park, TL2271, 23 October, B. Dickerson & D. Evans. New County Record.

Plutella porrectella (Linn.) - Hilton, TL2966, 3 May, B. Dickerson New County Record.

Coleophora coracipennella (Hb.) - Gransden Wood, TL2655, 7 August, B. Dickerson. First record since V.C.H.

Coleophora paripennella (Zell.) - Lt. Paxton Wood, TL1663, 25 July, B. Dickerson. First record since V.C.H.

Telechrysis tripuncta (Haw.) - St Ives, TL3070, 6 June, B. Dickerson. New County Record.

Enicostoma lobella ([D.&S.]) - Gt Staughton, TL1364, 30 May, B. Dickerson. First record since V.C.H.

Caryocolum fraternella (Dougl.) - St Ives, TL3070, 3 August, B. Dickerson. New County Record.

Eucosma pauperana (Dup.) - Hilton, TL2966, 3 May, B. Dickerson. New County Record.

Pammene albuginana (Guen.) - Grafham Water, TL1367, 3 May, B. Dickerson. New County Record.

Ancylosis oblitella (Zell.) - Grafham Water, TL1367, 23 August, B. Dickerson. New County Record.

Odontosia carmelita (Esp.) Scarce Prominent - Hazelcroft, TL2453, 24 April, B. Dickerson. New County Record.

FURTHER NOTABLE COLEOPTERA RECORDED FROM HUNTINGDONSHIRE AND THE SOKE OF PETERBOROUGH DURING 1996 AND 1997

R.Colin Welch

A few species collected during 1996 were omitted from last year's Annual Report (Welch, 1997a) and have been incorporated in the following list of 43 species. With the exception of the last named bark beetle which attacks spruce and pine, both relatively rare trees in Huntingdonshire, all the preceding species have Nationally Notable (36spp.) or Red Data Book (6spp.) status. These categories are shown after the name of each species.

Unless otherwise stated the records are my own. During two field surveys with the Peterborough Biological Recorders Group Dr Peter Kirby concentrated on collecting aquatic species and considerably added to the number of water beetle records in the following list:-

CARABIDAE

Bembidion (s.str.) *quadripustulatum* Serv. **Nb**
Recorded by Peter Kirby at Norman Cross Brick Pits (TL1690) on 16 August 1997, and in pitfall traps at Dogsthorpe Star Pit, Eye, (TL2102) between 15 & 21 September 1997.

DYTISCIDAE

Hydroglyphus pusillus (Fab.) **Nb**
2 on mud at west end of Dogsthorpe Star Pit (TL205023) on 6 September 1997.

Coelambus nigrolineatus (von Steven) **Na**
Recorded by Peter Kirby at Dogsthorpe Star Pit, 6 September 1997.

Coelambus parallelogrammus (Ahrens) **Nb**
Recorded by Peter Kirby at Dogsthorpe Star Pit, 6 September 1997.

Agabus conspersus (Marsh.) **Nb**
Recorded by Peter Kirby at Dogsthorpe Star Pit, 6 September 1997.

Ilybius fenestratus (Fab.) **Nb**
Recorded by Peter Kirby at Dogsthorpe Star Pit, 6 September 1997.

HYDROPHILIDAE

Georissus crenulatus (Rossi) **Na**
Recorded by Peter Kirby at Norman Cross Brick Pits on 16 August 1997.

Hydrochus elongatus (Schal.) **RDB3**
1 on mud at west end of Dogsthorpe Star Pit on 6 September 1997.

Cercyon convexiusculus Steph. **Nb**
Recorded by Peter Kirby at Dogsthorpe Star Pit, 6 September 1997.

Cercyon sternalis Shp. **Nb**
4 sieving moss at edge of Norman Cross Brick Pits on 16 August 1997; 1 sieving moss among *Juncus* at west end of Dogsthorpe Star Pit on 6 September 1997.

Laccobius sinuatus Motsch. **Nb**
Recorded by Peter Kirby at Dogsthorpe Star Pit, 6 September 1997.

Helochares lividus (Forst.) **Nb**
Recorded by Peter Kirby at Norman Cross Brick Pits on 16 August 1997, and at Dogsthorpe Star Pit on 6 September 1997.

Enochrus halophilus (Bedel) **Na**
Recorded by Peter Kirby at Dogsthorpe Star Pit, 6 September 1997.

Enochrus isotae Heb. **RDB3**
1 female seived from moss at margin of Norman Cross Brick Pit on 16 August 1997.

Chaetarthria seminulum (Hbst.) **Nb**
4 sieving moss at edge of Norman Cross Brick Pits on 16 August 1997; 1 in moss at base of *Juncus* at west end of Dogsthorpe Star Pit on 6 September 1997.

Berosus affinis Brullé**Nb**
1 on mud at west end of Dogsthorpe Star Pit on 6 September 1997.

HYDRAENIDAE

Ochthebius viridis Peyr. **Nb**
Recorded by Peter Kirby at Dogsthorpe Star Pit, 6 September 1997.

STAPHYLINIDAE

Platystethus nodifrons (Man.) **N**
1 male at base of Phragmites at west end of Dogsthorpe Star Pit on 6 September 1997.

Sepedophilus testaceus (Fab.) **N**
1 male in rotten wet base of bracket fungus at base of dead standing *Salix* at White Water Reservoir, Wittering (TF038034) on 5 October 1996; 1 male in rotten fallen *Betula* in Holme Fen N.N.R. (TL2089) on 1 June 1997.

Gyrophaena munsteri Strand **RDBK**
7 males and 6 females with *G.affinis* Man.in *Polyporus squamosus* on rotten fallen *Ulmus* in Little Paxton Wood (TL169634) on 11 May 1997. Only previously recorded in the County from Holme Fen in 1969.

TROGIDAE

Trox sabulosus (L.) **Na**
1 dead part specimen sieved from dry heart rot in hollow *Quercus* in Milton Park (TL148999) on 17 May 1997.

LIMNICHIDAE

Limnichus pygmaeus (Sturm) **Na**
Recorded by Peter Kirby at Norman Cross Brick Pits on 16 August 1997, and at Dogsthorpe Star Pit on 6 September 1997.

ELATERIDAE

Ampedus quercicola (du Buysson) **Nb**
1 adult in a rotten fallen *Betula* branch, 1 larva under bark of fallen *Alnus glutinosa* (TL2089)in Holme Fen N.N.R. (TL2089) on 1 June 1997.

CLERIDAE

Korynetes caeruleus (Deg.) **Nb**
1 dead part specimen under bark of dead standing *Acer pseudoplatanus* in Abbot's Wood, Thornhaugh (TF065013) on 11 October 1997.

DERMESTIDAE

Ctessias serra (Fab.) **Nb**
Tony Drane found 1 larva and I sieved 1 larval exuvium from dry heart rot of old *Quercus* in Milton Park on 17 May 1997, where I first recorded it in 1995 (Welch, 1996). 6 larvae under bark of dead standing *Acer pseudoplatanus* in Abbot's Wood, Thornhaugh (TF065013) on 11 October 1997.

BIPHYLLIDAE

Diplocoelus fagi Guér.-Men. **Nb**
1 in *Polyporus squamosus* bracket fungus on dead standing *Ulmus* in Abbot's Wood, Thornhaugh (TF063012) on 11 October 1997.

COCCINELLIDAE

Adonia variegata (Goez.) **Nb**
Recorded by Peter Kirby at Norman Cross Brick Pit, 16 August 1997.

LATHRIDIIDAE

Lathridius consimilis Man. **N**
3 under bark of *Acer pseudoplatanus* dying from sooty bark disease in Milton Park (TL149996) on 17 May 1997.

Enicmus brevicornis (Man.) **N**
Recorded by Tony Drane under bark of sooty bark disease infected *Acer pseudoplatanus* in Milton Park (TL1499) on 17 May 1997.

TENEBRIONIDAE

Diaperis boleti (L.) **RDB2**
A thriving population of at least 8 adult beetles was found associated with *Piptoporus betulinus* bracket fungi on a dead standing *Betula* and fallen branch at Holme Fen N.N.R. within Ballard's Covert (TL2089) on 1 June 1997. This appears to be the first record since this species was first discovered elsewhere in this Reserve in 1985. On 26 September 1997 Brian Eversham and other members of the Monks Wood Biological Records Centre recorded a few adult beetles in Woodwalton Fen N.N.R., at the site where I originally discovered it in May 1996, and later released 30 specimens in August 1996 (Welch, 1997b). This species was found at three sites in Suffolk in 1996 (Alexander & Edwards, 1997) and at one in Norfolk in 1997 (Denton, 1997).

Prionychus ater (Fab.) **Nb**
5 distinctive larvae were found in a wet rot hole in a low bough on an ancient *Quercus* in Milton Park (TF147001) on 17 May 1997.

MELANDRYIDAE

Osphya bipunctata (Fab.) **RDB3**
Retaken at Milton Park, Castor, on 17 May 1997 from *Crataegus* blossom at Ferryhill Plantation (TL148986). In Welch (1997) this site was given incorrectly as TL148996; similarly the roadside verge locality also given in that Annual Report should be corrected to TL152985.

MORDELLIDAE

Tomoxia bucephala Costa **Na**
1 landed on J.N.Greatorex-Davies in Hotel Ride, Monks Wood N.N.R. on 9 June 1997 (TL1980); apparently the first record from this Reserve, and only the second from the County (see Welch, 1997a).

OEDEMERIDAE

Ischnomera cyanea (Fab.) **Nb**
1 male, 1 female beaten from *Crataegus* blossom at Milton Park (TL1499) by Tony Drane on 17 May 1997.

CERAMBYCIDAE

Aromia moschata (L.) **Nb**
Bridget Smith captured a specimen of this Musk beetle on 8 August 1996 beneath an old pollarded willow at Hemingford Grey (TL308706).

Anaglyptus mysticus (L.) **Nb**
Recorded for second year running from Milton Park, Castor, on 17 May 1997; 1 beaten from *Crataegus* blossom in Park (TL149996); 1 beaten from *Sorbus* flowers on north edge of Ferryhill Plantation (TL150985 - NB. not 150995 as given in Welch, 1997).

Tetrops starkii (Chev.) **RDBK**
After recording only the second known British specimen from a site near Mildenhall, Suffolk, on 28 May 1997 I checked specimens in my collection identified as *T. praeusta* (L.). Among these I found 1 male and 1 female swept beside a ride in Monks Wood N.N.R. on 15 June 1995 at TL202799. An account of these records will be published elsewhere (Welch, in press).

CHRYSOMELIDAE

Epitrix atropae Foud. **Nb**
1 on *Atropa belladona* at White Water Reservoir, Wittering (TF038034) on 5 October 1996.

Mantura chrysanthemi (Koch) **Na**
1 sweeping *Leucanthemum* in clearing in Holme Fen N.N.R. (TL204893) on 1 June 1997.

ANTHRIBIDAE

Platystomus albinus (L.) **Nb**
1 under bark of dead standing *Acer pseudoplatanus* in Abbot's Wood Thornhaugh (TF065013) on 11 October 1997.

APIONIDAE

Perapion affine (Kirby) **Na**
1 sweeping *Rumex* in *Calluna/Erica* glade in Holme Fen N.N.R. (TL203890) on 1 June 1997.

SCOLYTIDAE

Scolytus mali (Bech.) **Nb**
3 dead adults, 2 larvae, 4 pupae in base of dead standing *Crataegus* in Milton Park (TL149996) on 17 May 1997.

Polygraphus poligraphus (L.)
4 male 5 female, many larva and few pupae under bark, of felled *Picea* in Little Paxton Wood (TL169364) on 11 May 1997. This appears to be the first record of this species from Huntingdonshire.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to Peter Kirby for permitting me to publish details of some of the more interesting beetles which he recorded during 1997 Field Meetings of the Peterborough Biological Recorders Group; also to Bridget Smith, Nick Greatorex-Davies, and Tony Drane for allowing me to include records of their captures.

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DIPTERA IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE - A REVIEW

Jonathan Cole

The first known records of flies from Huntingdonshire are those of Prof. C.C. Babington who collected in Monks Wood in 1828-29 (Welch 1978) and who left a manuscript list of some 20 species, many of which are still present in the county, if not in the wood itself. Over the next 130 years only a few scattered references to flies appear in the literature, and it was not until this society had been in existence for 15 years that there was any systematic recording of flies. Dr Brian Davis noted in the introduction to his first list of hover flies (Davis 1965) that Huntingdonshire was one of the few remaining English counties for which no list of flies had been published. In 1965 Brian was appointed recorder for hover flies and the following year I was also appointed recorder for flies, and we have remained joint recorders to the present. Brian continued to add to the hover flies and included some of the more conspicuous members of other families for the next four years (Davis 1966-69) after which his interests moved into other areas.

I began recording in the county when I moved to Brampton in 1965 and produced a first list of two families, Tipulidae (crane flies), and Empididae. Then after a gap of three years I began to cover the whole order, a few families each year, for most of the next 15 years followed by four years of additions (Cole 1967, 1970-79, 1982-85, 1987-88). These lists include about 1750 species and during the last ten years continued recording has added another 250 species, making the county list roughly 30% of the British fauna. I hope to begin putting these additions on record in next year's Report.

During the 1960s most recording was centred on the National Nature Reserves, particularly Monks Wood, by the staff of the recently established Experimental Station. Howard Wills (1968) published a first list for Monks Wood, and was followed by a much expanded list in "the Monks Wood book" (Steele & Welch 1973) in which Dr Michael Service dealt comprehensively with the various families of biting flies and Brian Davis with hover flies while Howard Wills and I covered the remaining families. The suction traps which Michael Service used in his studies of the biting fly fauna also captured large numbers of other flies and was particularly rich in fungus gnats (Mycetophilidae sens. lat.) which produced a list of 150 species (Cole & Chandler 1979) of which three were new to science and two others new to Britain. One of the former (*Sciophila nonnisilva*) was given its specific name from the latin for Monks Wood (Hutson 1979). Several other species have been added to the British fauna from Huntingdonshire specimens, three of which were from a study of the leaf and stem mining flies (Agromyzidae) of Woodwalton Fen (Griffiths 1963), two from Brampton Wood (Cole 1988 and Freeman 1990) and one from Earith gravel pits (Cole 1985).

Lack of records from the first half of this century prevents any estimate of the changes in the fly fauna which must have taken place in the second half in common with other forms of wildlife, however the extensive gravel extraction workings during and since the second world war, in various stages of regeneration all along the River Ouse flood plain, may have compensated for any losses from intensive farming methods etc. in recent decades. These pits with their complex of habitats have proved to be particularly rich in fly species; for example last summer at the Society's meeting at Cow Lane Pits,

Godmanchester, six species new to the county were found in an area I had not visited before.

I have received records from only three people over the years (Steven Falk, Dr Ian McLean and Alan Stubbs to whom many thanks); is there no one else with county records? A national group, the Dipterist's Forum, was established in 1994 to promote the study of flies and in particular to help and encourage beginners; if anyone would like to develop an interest in this large, very diverse and extremely interesting group, please contact me.

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ODONATA NOTES

Howard Hillier

The season had an early start this year. The warm sunny days of April and May produced a string of early records. The weather deteriorated in June making it a very poor month for recording, with the spring specialists suffering. July saw an improvement in the weather and overall it stayed fine until late October when dragonflies were still on the 'wing. Many species enjoyed an extended flight period this year.

The Variable Damselfly (*Coenagrion pulchellum*) was seen at St Ives on April 20th, an early emergence date. It was also recorded at Fletton B.P., Orton Newt Reserve and Cow Lane Pits. This species has a very patchy distribution in the county and is possibly under-recorded, as it is difficult to separate from the Azure Damselfly (*Coenagrion puella*).

The Hairy Dragonfly (*Brachytron pratense*) is continuing to expand its range in the county. It was on the wing early in May at Woodwalton Fen, Holme Fen, Fletton, Yaxley and Norman Cross B.P.s, St. Ives G.P., Hail Weston and Orton Newt Reserve.

The White-legged Damselfly (*Platycnemis pennipes*) has had an excellent season. It has been recorded at more sites than ever before. At its stronghold in the Ouse Valley it was recorded at Godmanchester, Huntingdon, Hartford, Houghton, Hemingford, Paxton Pits and Cow Lane G.P. At St. Ives it occurs at two sites on the main river, has colonised the old river and is now found at two sites on the gravel pits. The most unusual record for a sighting of this species is at Brampton Wood, well away from its recognised habitat. Searches in the north of the county for this damselfly have proved unsuccessful. It is hoped that this delicate damselfly will continue to expand its range and in the near future will be found at suitable sites on the River Nene.

The Scarce Chaser (*Libellula fulva*) has had a good season, being seen on the wing from early May. It was recorded at Woodwalton Fen and St. Ives Gravel Pit in exceptionally high numbers. It was also seen at Cow Lane Pits, Brampton A1 Pits, Brampton Wood and Holme Fen. This species has been expanding its range in recent years and it is hoped that even more sites in the county will hold populations of this rare dragonfly in the forthcoming years.

The Broad-bodied Chaser (*Libellula depressa*) did not have as good a season as it did in 1996. It was recorded from very few sites and in low numbers. It was seen at Orton Newt Reserve, Folksworth, St Ives G.P., Paxton Pits and Bury. This species is regarded as being at the edge of its range in our county, being restricted to southern Britain. Its optimum habitat is ponds and our county has experienced a high loss of ponds due to agricultural development and pollution in the recent past. It is not surprising that garden ponds are a vital source of habitat.

The Large red Damselfly (*Pyrrhosoma nymphula*) is another species of Odonata that is not recorded at many sites in the county, even given that its numbers are known to fluctuate from year to year, the low number of sightings this year is very disconcerting. It was recorded in low numbers at Hail Weston, Woodwalton Fen and Crown Lakes.

Once again the Banded Demoiselle (*Caloptrex splendens*) has enjoyed an excellent year, being recorded in very high numbers along the Rivers Nene and Ouse. It was also recorded at Hail Weston, Gt. Staughton and Mortons Leam.

All three Hawker species enjoyed a good year. The Migrant Hawker (*Aeshna mixta*) was recorded in exceptionally high numbers at a number of sites, 300 at Raveley Wood and 100 at Flag Fen being the most notable. It was also recorded at Standens Pits, Wansford, St. Ives, Aversley Wood, Brampton Wood, Hinchingbrooke Country Park, Holme Fen, Crown Lakes, Gt. Staughton and the brick pits of Fletton, Yaxley and Norman Cross. The Southern Hawker (*Aeshna cyanea*) was recorded at Folksworth, Aversley Wood, Morborne, Holme Fen, Yaxley, Fletton and Norman Cross brick pits, Crown Lakes, Gt. Staughton, Brampton Wood and at a number of sites along the Rivers Nene and Ouse. The Brown Hawker (*Aeshna grandis*) was present at the same sites as the Southern Hawker, with additional records from Hail Weston, Kings Delph, Farcet Fen and Woodwalton Marsh.

Once again I haven't received any records for the Common Hawker (*Aeshna juncea*). Although its habitat requirements are restricted to very few sites in the county, there are records from the mid 1980's.

Both the Common Darter (*Sympetrum striolatum*) and Ruddy Darter (*Sympetrum sanguineum*) enjoyed a successful year, with the Ruddy Darter being the more abundant species at a number of sites. The following sites are just a selection of records received; Fletton, Yaxley and Norman Cross brick pits, Orton Newt Reserve, Aversley Wood, Holme Fen, Brampton Wood, River Kym, Paxton Pits and at numerous sites along the Rivers Nene and Ouse. The Common Darter was recorded up to the third week of October at several sites.

The Red-eyed Damselfly (*Erythromma najas*) has had a good season, being recorded in very high numbers along our two main watercourses. It was also recorded at Holme Fen, Ramsey Forty Foot, Benwick, Paxton Pits, Brampton A1 Pits and Gt. Staughton.

The Four-spotted Chaser (*Libellula quadrimaculata*) appears to have had an indifferent year, with only a few records received from Fletton, Yaxley and Norman Cross brick pits, Washingley Lake, Paxton Pits, Crown Lakes, Holme Fen and Standens Pits Wansford.

Black-tailed Skimmer (*Orthetrum cancellatum*) enjoyed a good season, being recorded at numerous sites in the county along with the Blue-tailed Damselfly (*Ischnura elegans*), Common Blue Damselfly (*Enallagma cyathigerum*), Azure Damselfly (*Coenagrion puella*), Emerald Damselfly (*Lestes sponsa*) and the Emperor Dragonfly (*Anax imperator*).

I will close with a plea for Odonata records. These will help to swell the database for the County Atlas of Odonata.

My thanks go to Andy Frost, Stuart Irons, Brian Milne and Mary Smout whose seasonal summaries were used to compile this report.

A SURVEY OF SMALL MAMMALS AT GRAFHAM WATER, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Tom Maddox, Richard F. Shore and Tony Turk

Introduction

The Grafham Water Nature reserve is located around the western edge of Grafham Water (TL1568) in Cambridgeshire. The reserve consists of a mosaic of habitats including grassland, ancient hedgerow, young plantations, conifer stands and deciduous woodland dominated by Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Oak (*Quercus robur*).

There have not been any systematic surveys of the small mammals on the reserve although, given the reserve supports breeding pairs of Kestrels and various species of owl, it might be expected that small mammals are reasonably abundant in the area. This paper reports the results of a small mammal survey carried out on the Grafham Water Nature Reserve in the summer of 1997.

Methods

Twelve sites on the reserve (Table 1) were trapped between the 30 June and the 7 July 1997. At each site, 1m 2 and pin quadrats were used to assess vegetation structure (ground cover, vegetation height) and small mammals were captured using 20 Longworth traps set at 6m intervals in a 4 x 5 grid.

This formation was varied where necessary; for instance, traps were laid in a single line along an ancient hedgerow. Traps were baited with a mixture of wheat, carrot and castors and set on prebait for three nights. They were then replenished with food and set to catch for four nights. Morning and evening traps rounds were carried out and captured animals were identified, sexed (except juvenile shrews), weighed, marked by fur clipping and then released.

One further area, away from the reserve, was also surveyed in 1997. Small mammals were trapped in June in a 10-12ha oak/ash plantation located just south of Grafham village. The plantation has a 100% ground cover of grass and was thought likely to support large numbers of Field Voles (*Microtus agrestis*). Single lines of twenty Longworth traps were set in four different areas of the plantation, traps in each line being spaced at 5-6m intervals. The trapping regime was the same as in the main study except that there were only two nights of trapping.

Results and Discussion

Four Common Shrews (*Sorex araneus*) only were captured in June on the plantation near Grafham village, despite the apparent suitability of the site for Field Voles. In contrast, three rodent species (Wood Mice (*Apodemus sylvaticus*), Bank Voles (*Clethrionomys glareolus*) and Field Voles) and two shrew species (Common Shrews and Pygmy Shrews (*Sorex minutus*)) were captured on the twelve main trapping sites in the Grafham Water Nature Reserve (Table 1). Although not trapped in this survey, Harvest Mice (*Micromys minutus*) are also known to occur on the reserve (Jo Thomas pers. comm.) and it is possible that Water Shrews (*Neomys fodiens*) and Yellow-necked Mice (*Apodemus flavicollis*) may also be present; Water Shrews have been captured on road

Table 1. Vegetation characteristics and number of individual small mammals trapped on each site

site	habitat	mean ground vegetation height (cm)	% ground cover	wood mouse *Apodemus sylvaticus*	bank vole *Clethrionomys glareolus*	field vole *Microtus agrestis*	common shrew *Sorex araneus*	pygmy shrew *Sorex minutus*	total animals	no spp
1	Grassland	46	100	2	0	0	6	0	8	2
2	Grassland/ scrub	105	100	0	1	0	7	0	8	2
3	Hedgerow (c. 1700)	not applicable	<10 and leaf litter	2	8	0	8	0	18	3
4	Grassland (with marshy fringes)	96	100	0	5	0	9	0	14	2
5	Grassland	53	100	0	5	0	7	0	12	2
6	Woodland (30 yr old)	0	<10 & leaf litter	0	2	0	1	0	3	2
7	Woodland (55 yr old)	25	50-75	0	9	0	2	0	11	2
8	Ancient woodland (Littless wood)	13	25-50 (moss)	0	3	0	0	1	4	2
9	Woodland (lime and ash understory removed)	103	100	1	13	0	10	0	24	3
10	Grassland /plantation (8 yr old)	81	100	0	1	8	9	3	21	4
11	Grassland	74	100	1	0	0	3	0	4	2
12	Savage's Spinney (150 yr old woodland)	16	25-50	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
	Total			6	48	8	62	4	128	
	number of sites in which recorded			4	10	1	10	2		

verges in the area (Shore unpub. data) and Grafham Water is on the edge of the range of the Yellow-necked Mouse (Montgomery, 1991).

The numbers of animals and species composition varied markedly between the twelve sites on the reserve. Bank Voles and Common Shrews were the most abundant species, comprising 37.5% and 48% of the total number of animals captured. These species were also the most widely distributed, both occurring on 83% of sites (Table 1). Common Shrews were the more numerous of the two species, their abundance reflecting the annual population peak that occurs in the summer (Churchfield, 1991a), and they were more evenly distributed between different habitats. Similar numbers of Common Shrews occurred in woodland, grassland, scrubby grassland and young plantation, reflecting the ability of this species to utilise diverse habitats (Churchfield, 1990). In contrast, Bank Voles were mostly found in woodland sites, where ground cover was good, and in the hedgerow (Table 1). The importance for Bank Voles of ground cover in woodland habitats has been observed previously (eg. Southern & Lowe, 1968) and hedgerows are also known to be important habitat for Bank Voles in arable areas (Pollard & Relton, 1970; Tew *et al.*, 1994).

Pygmy Shrews, Wood Mice and Field Voles were captured in low numbers and in few sites. Pygmy Shrews occur at much lower densities than Common Shrews in lowland habitats (Churchfield, 1991b) and may be underestimated when, as in this survey, treadle ramps are not used in Longworth traps (Shore *et al.*, 1995); hence low numbers, compared with those for Common Shrews, were expected. In contrast, Wood Mice are normally found extensively in woodlands but, unexpectedly, were not captured in three of the four woodland sites on the Grafham reserve. However, trapping was carried out at the time of year when populations are normally at a minimum (Flowerdew, 1985) and the relatively short time period of the present survey may have been insufficient to detect very low densities of mice. Field Voles were recorded only on the plantation site on the reserve. Young plantations are known to support large numbers of Field Voles (Gipps & Alibhai, 1991) but it is uncertain why Field Voles were not recorded in any of the other grassland sites on the reserve where ground cover was good. It was also extremely surprising that Field Voles were not trapped in the plantation near Grafham village, given the suitability of the habitat. It can be speculated that this might reflect poor dispersal of this species in an intensively arable landscape. The plantation is bordered by Grafham Water and arable fields and there may be few nearby source areas supporting Field Vole populations and few links or corridors into the plantation along which dispersing animals may move.

The limited nature of the survey makes it difficult to draw any conclusions about the importance for small mammals of the different habitats in the Grafham Water Nature Reserve; indeed the number of species present in the different habitats was remarkably consistent across the different sites. There was a general trend of more animals being detected in areas with the most extensive ground-cover, although this may be less apparent in other seasons when Wood Mice are more abundant as this species utilises more open ground. However, the results of the present study do suggest that the numbers of Bank Voles and Common Shrews are impoverished in woodlands where there has been little or limited management and, as a result, there is poor ground cover.

In conclusion, it is clear that the Grafham Water Nature Reserve supports a diverse small mammal fauna. Given concerns over the losses of rank grassland

habitat in southern Britain (Harris *et al.*, 1995) and the associated loss in Field Voles, further studies on the distribution of Field Voles around Grafham

Water, and the constraints that may exist on their ability to disperse into the wider arable landscape, would be of especial interest.

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MAMMAL REPORT FOR 1997

H.R. Arnold and D.J. Jefferies

INTRODUCTION

The most exciting news about local mammals in the last twelve months, and, indeed, a fitting landmark for the 50th Annual Report, has been the return of the Polecat (*Mustela putorius*) to the old county of Huntingdonshire.

Harding (1926) noted in that year that he had been unable to find any record of its capture in this county "in recent years" though it appeared to have been "not very uncommon" in the district thirty or forty years prior to the time he was writing. Barclay (1938) agreed that the Polecat was extinct in Cambridgeshire and that the last wild specimen had been taken at Wisbech in May 1905 (now in the BM(NH)). So it was with some pleasure that we heard from Dr Johnny Birks, who is carrying out a survey of the Polecat for the Vincent Wildlife Trust, that there were new records of the species from the extreme north-west of the county near Wansford and on the Northamptonshire border (see Systematic Section). These reports are largely due to the work of Richard Eckton, who has been searching for road casualties and also live-trapping in local woods. The survey map produced by Dr Birks (Birks *et al* 1997) shows that the nearest neighbouring records are east of Wellingborough, at least fifteen miles away. Why are there no records in the gap between? Have they just not been noticed (not improbable), or were they transported by deliberate human intervention?

Our Huntingdonshire Polecats have been declared as of "pure pelage pattern" by Dr Birks, and so are phenotypically Polecats. The genetics of these and other English Polecats are currently being studied by the Vincent Wildlife Trust.

We made the point in last year's report (Arnold and Jefferies, 1997) that the number of Badger records, particularly of road casualties, was high. This year's figure is higher, which supports the suggestion of a continuing increase in Badger numbers in the county, in line with the reported national increase between the surveys of 1985-88 (Cresswell *et al,* 1990) and 1994-97 (Wilson *et al,* 1997).

The newspapers have been fairly quiet about large feral cats in north Huntingdonshire this year, though reports reached us at the end of the year of several December sightings in the Hilton area of a 'puma', including one observation where it was said to have caught and carried off a Muntjac. We await further details of these sightings. The 'Rutland panther' was seen feeding at the side of the A1 near Wansford in August (Anon 1997). This report was of a "large black cat with distinctive long tail". This is different from the lynx-like animal described in last year's report (Arnold and Jefferies, 1997) as occurring in adjacent Leicestershire and identical to that of other observations for the northern part of our county including the Wansford area (Arnold and Jefferies, 1995).

SYSTEMATIC LIST

Acute readers will note that a few of these reports are from outside vice-county 31 or the Soke of Peterborough. It was simpler in the time available to include them all!

INSECTIVORA

Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*)
Over one hundred road casualties were reported; it is not possible to list them all here. The most fateful month was July, with twenty-seven victims, followed by April, with twenty. None was reported in January or December.

One was found drowned in the village pond at Hilton, (TL290660), (27.7.97).

Live animals were reported from Wansford, (TL073993), (3.4.97); Wansford, (TL073993), (6.11.97); Eynesbury, Parklands Estate, (TL186584), (5.5.97); Eynesbury, Mountford Close, (TL187592), (30.5.97); Perry (two), (TL147673), (7.7.97); Grafham Water, (TL141670), (9.7.97); Eynesbury, Potton Road, (TL191585), (3.8.97); Toseland, (TL240625), (3.8.97); Grafham Water, near dam, (TL166664), (8.8.97); St Neots, Shaftesbury Avenue, (TL189604), (16.8.97); Eynesbury, Andrew Road, (TL188588), (21.8.97); St Ives, (TL27), (1.12.97); Eynesbury, Andrew Road, (TL187587), (3.12.97); Woodston, (TL187970); Fletton, (TL198975) and they were seen from May till September in St Ives (TL27).

Common Shrew (*Sorex araneus*)
Common Shrews were found dead at Hilton, (TL290660), (28.6.97); Perry, (TL147673), (21.7.97); Sawtry, (TL170829); Little Paxton Wood, (TL171635) and live trapped at Hilton, (TL277661), (.3.97); Papworth, (TL273653), (.3.97); Broughton, (TL289762), (.3.97); Ellington, (TL181717), (.3.97); Alconbury Hill, (TL185787), (.3.97); Brampton, (TL196706), (.3.97); Hemingford, (TL286694), (.3.97); Sawtry, (TL188813), (.3.97); Sutton Heath, (TF083031); Aversley Wood, (TL157818); Aversley Wood, (TL163819); Stibbington, Standens Pits, (TL085995); River Nene, Boardwalks, (TL181981); Aversley Wood, (TL165825); Ailsworth Wood, (TF118019) and Bainton Gravel Pit, (TF106075).

Pygmy Shrew (*Sorex minutus*)
One was found dead at Hilton, (TL290660), (27.7.97). Others were live trapped at Hilton, (TL277661), (.3.97); Papworth, (TL273653), (.3.97); Ellington, (TL181717), (.3.97); Alconbury Hill, (TL185787), (.3.97); Hemingford, (TL286694), (.3.97); Broughton, (TL289762), (.3.97); Monks Wood, (TL211800), (.3.97); Sutton Heath, (TF083031); Aversley Wood, (TL163819); Stibbington, Standens Pits, (TL085995); Aversley Wood, (TL165825); Bainton Gravel Pit, (TF106075); Ailsworth Heath, (TF118019) and Aversley Wood, (TL157818).

Water Shrew (*Neomys fodiens*)
One was found dead at St Ives, Holt Island, (TL37), (14.9.97) and another at Embankment End Marsh, (TL203982). One was live trapped at Stibbington, Standens Pits, (TL085995).

Mole (*Talpa europea*)
Mole hills were noted at Rippington Manor, Great Gransden, (TL272556), (3.2.97); Upwood to Ramsey road, (TL270830), (3.2.97); Bury, Upwood road, (TL277833), (14.2.97); Ellington, Manor Farm, (TL167713), (24.2.97); Wood Walton Fen, (TL230850), (30.3.97); Ramsey, Conifer Farm, (TL280860), (13.4.97); Holme, Hod Fen, (TL195887), (13.4.97); Hemingford Abbots, by river, (TL277715), (17.4.97); St Neots playing fields, (TL186614), (9.7.97); Houghton, Water Works Lane, (TL27), (13.11.97); Bainton, (TF106075); Stanground, (TL207977); Crown Lake, (TL195945); Aversley Wood, (TL157818); Water Newton, (TL103978); River Nene, (TL205979); Southorpe Meadow, (TF083031); Bedford Purlieus, (TL037992); Wittering Coppice, (TF025005);

Coppingford Wood, (TL175803); Embankment End Marsh, (TL203982); Holme Fen, (TL215883); Holme Fen, (TL205892); Holme Fen, (TL205885); Holme Fen, (TL199886); Sutton Wood, (TF095009); Lounds Wood, (TF062012); Lounds Wood, (TF057012); Abbots Wood, (TF064012); West Wood, (TF055012); West Wood, (TF055009); Bedford Purlieus, (TF045002); Bedford Purlieus, (TL045995); Warboys Wood, (TL297821); Monks Wood, (TL195797); Monks Wood, (TL195805); Monks Wood, (TL203805); Littleless Wood, (TL217779); Bunch Wood, (TL215785); Fletton, (TL198975); Hayley Wood, (TL291529); Eversden Wood, (TL345529); Over and Lawn Woods, (TL641485); Over and Lawn Woods, (TL635485); Over and Lawn Woods, (TL628485); Langley Wood, (TL605425); Balsham Wood, (TL590455); Balsham Wood, (TL588495); Little Widgham Wood, (TL663552); Lady Grove and Dudney Wood, (TL125675); Plunder Wood, (TL665548); Out Wood, (TL658548); Sparrows Grove, (TL670550); Overhall Grove, (TL338630); Kingston Wood, (TL323537); Kingston Wood, (TL325545); Warboys Wood, (TL302818); Warboys Wood, (TL299818); Holme Fen, (TL199885) and Archers Wood, (TL172811).

CHIROPTERA

Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*)
A bat, almost certainly of this species, was seen in flight at Wansford, (TL073993), (18.10.97).

Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*)
An adult male was found dead at Houghton, (TL27), (8.6.97).

LAGOMORPHA

Brown Hare (*Lepus capensis*)
Road casualties were found at the following places: east of A1, (TL169869), (8.5.97); Sapley, on by-pass, (TL27), (11.5.97); Wistow to Kings Ripton road, (TL267791), (15.5.97); Wistow to Kings Ripton road, (TL266790), (29.5.97); near Stukeley Lodge, (TL241753), (3.7.97); Morborne, old Bullock Road (two), (TL118911), (8.7.97); B1095 north of Pondersbridge, (TL241933), (13.7.97) and near Wennington Lodge Farm, (TL228798), (19.6.97).
One was found dead at Great Raveley, (TL28), (8.9.97).

The following live sightings were recorded: by side of road,Wennington Lodge Farm, east of, (TL224797), (3.7.97); Raveley to Upwood road, (TL258813), (14.2.97); Wennington Wood, east of, (TL248796), (17.2.97); Dillington, Corner Farm, (TL134660), (18.2.97); Wennington Lodge, near, (TL225799), (22.3.97); Great Staughton, (TL128651), (27.5.97); Wistow to Kings Ripton road, (TL269800), (12.6.97); Sapley, Town Council Field, (TL250750), (12.6.97); two, by side of road near Wennington Lodge Farm following a short but heavy shower of rain, (TL221796), (3.7.97); Great Raveley, White House Farm near, (TL247816), (9.7.97); Ellington, Rectory Farm near, (TL190715), (13.7.97); Aversley Wood, (TL165825); West Wood, (TF055012); Sutton Wood, (TF095012); Sutton Wood, (TF095009); Lady Grove and Dudney Wood, (TL125675); Over and Lawn Woods, (TL641485); Over and Lawn Woods, (TL628485); Balsham Wood, (TL590455); Balsham Wood, (TL588495); Ten Wood, (TL664558); Littleless Wood, (TL217779); Bunch Wood, (TL215785); Wennington Wood, (TL248788); Agden Green Wood, (TL126658); West Wood, (TF055009); Jones Covert, (TL161938); Upton, (TF100006); Wittering Coppice, (TF025005); Little Paxton Wood, (TL165635); two at near Newpond Farm, (TL108642), (12.2.97); two at Crane Hill, (TL199552), (19.7.97) and thirty in a field at Hilton, (TL290660), (29.1.97).

Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*)
Droppings were reported from Sparrows Grove, (TL670550); and Lady Grove and Dudney Wood, (TL125675).

Sight records were reported from Godmanchester, nr West Farm, (TL237697), (15.2.97); Marsh Lane Pits, (TL304696), (10.4.97); Hail Weston, nr, (TL167623), (13.4.97); Lymage Bay, (TL138672), (16.4.97); Diddington Wood, (TL173665), (20.4.97); Cow Lane Pits, (TL261716), (6.5.97); Little Paxton Wood, (TL169635), (11.5.97); Hemingford Meadows, (TL301712), (7.6.97); Little Staughton, Manorial works, (TL116632), (8.6.97); Little Paxton Pits, (TL198634), (8.6.97); Stow Longa, nr, (TL108706), (28.6.97); Brampton Wood, (TL181273), (29.6.97); Hemingford Grey, The Manor, (TL290706), (7.7.97); Great Paxton, Skew Bridge, (TL202623), (20.7.97); Wyton Airfield, (TL276749), (20.7.97); Godmanchester, (TL242702), (20.7.97); Offord, (TL218656), (20.7.97); West Farm, B1043, (TL237698), (20.7.97); Waresley Wood, Mears Ride, (TL262546), (8.8.97); Brampton Wood to Grafham, (TL170693), (12.8.97); Grafham Water, (TL137671), (23.8.97); Great Paxton, Skew Bridge, (TL202623), (21.9.97); Wansford, (TL073993), (5.11.97); Hill Wood, (TL205787); Long Coppice, (TL208775); Bunch Wood, (TL215785); Littleless Wood, (TL217779); Monks Wood, (TL195805); Warboys Wood, (TL297821); Monks Wood, (TL195797); Little Widgham Wood, (TL663552); Plunder Wood, (TL665548); Out Wood, (TL658548); Ten Wood, (TL664558); Overhall Grove, (TL338630); Kingston Wood, (TL323537); Kingston Wood, (TL325545); Warboys Wood, (TL302818); Little Paxton Wood, (TL171635); Little Paxton Wood, (TL165635);Jones Covert, (TL161938); Pococks Wood, (TF158023); Aversley Wood, (TL165825); Archers Wood, (TL172811); Aversley Wood, (TL157818); Kings Dyke Brick Pit, (TL239978); Kings Dyke Brick Pit, (TL241978); Norman Cross Brick Plt, (TL162908); Crown Lake, (TL195945); Stanground, (TL207977); Bainton Gravel Pit, (TF106075); British Sugar, (TL181979); Beebys Brick Pit, (TL185937); Hicks Brick Pit, (TL194963); Fletton Lake, (TL198965); Eversden Wood, (TL345529); Over and Lawn Woods, (TL641485); Over and Lawn Woods, (TL628485); Over and Lawn Woods, (TL635485); Langley, (TL605425); Balsham Wood, (TL590455); Balsham Wood, (TL588495); Stibbington, Standens Pit, (TL085995); River Nene, Boardwalks, (TL181981); Aversley Wood, (TL163819); Eye Green, (TF232037); River Nene, (TL205979); Embankment End Marsh, (TL203982); Southorpe Meadow, (TF083031); Water Newton, (TL103978); Lounds Wood, (TF062012); Lounds Wood, (TF057012); Abbots Wood, (TF065012); West Wood, (TF055012); West Wood, (TF055009); Bedford Purlieus, (TF045002); Bedford Purlieus, (TL045995); Bedford Purlieus, (TL037992); Waresley Wood, (TL261547); Gamlingay Wood, (TL242534); Buff Wood, (TL282503); Hayley Wood, (TL291529); Holland Wood, (TL240786); Wennington Wood, (TL248788); Perry Ash Wood, (TL141666); Perry West Wood, (TL133664); Agden Green Wood, (TL126658); Sutton Wood, (TF095012); Sutton Wood, (TF095009); Wittering Coppice, (TF025005); Coppingford Wood, (TL175803); Holme Fen, (TL215883); Holme Fen, (TL205892); Holme Fen, (TL205885); Holme Fen, (TL199886); Holme Fen, (TL199885); Chesterton,(TL125948); Warboys Wood, (TL299818); Monks Wood, (TL203805); through year, Houghton Meadows Reserve, (TL2971); eight, Great Staughton, near Town Bridge, (TL124646), (21.7.97); five, Dillington, (TL136656), (4.6.97); four, Agden Hill, (TL118662), (3.7.97); ten or more, Stonely, (TL110670); two, Hartford, nr, (TL259728), (15.2.97); two, Brampton Hut, (TL195718), (7.3.97); two, Perry, (TL146673), (7.7.97); two, Cretingsbury, (TL114632), (11.7.97); two, Mare Lane, (TL197696), (12.7.97); two, Bigrams Farm, nr, (TL117695), (28.7.97).

RODENTIA

Bank Vole (*Clethrionomys glareolus*)
One was caught by a cat at Fletton, (TL189968) and specimens were live-trapped at Hilton, (TL277661), (.3.97); Alconbury Hill, (TL185787), (.3.97); Papworth, (TL273653), (.3.97); Monks Wood, (TL211800), (.3.97); Hemingford, (TL286694), (.3.97); Broughton, (TL289762), (.3.97); Castor Hanglands, (TF118011); Stibbington, Standens Pits, (TL085995); Aversley Wood, (TL163819); Aversley Wood, (TL165825); Southorpe Meadow, (TF083031); Aversley Wood, (TL157818).

Feeding signs (opened hazel nuts) were found at Perry Ash Wood, (TL141666); Buff Wood, (TL282503); Gamlingay Wood, (TL242534); Perry West Wood, (TL133664); Sutton Wood, (TF095009); Abbots Wood, (TF065012); West Wood, (TF055012); West Wood, (TF065009); Archers Wood, (TL172811); Coppingford Wood, (TL175803); Long Coppice, (TL208775); Eversden Wood, (TL345529); Lady Grove and Dudney Wood, (TL125675); Ten Wood, (TL664558); Hill Wood, (TL205787); Hayley Wood, (TL291529) and Holland Wood, (TL240786).

Field Vole (*Microtus agrestis*)
Field Voles were live trapped at Hilton, (TL277661), (.3.97); Ellington, (TL181717), (.3.97); Alconbury Hill, (TL185787), (.3.97); Brampton, (TL196706), (.3.97); Papworth, (TL273653), (.3.97); Southorpe Meadow, (TF083031); Bainton, (TF106075) and one was seen alive at Hilton, (TL290660), (25.5.97).

Brown Rat (*Rattus norvegicus*)
Just three road casualties were reported, at Wennington, (TL237794), (3.2.97); Wood Walton village, (TL213810), (27.5.97); Perry, (TL151669), (25.11.97) and one was found dead at Bainton Gravel Pit, (TF106075).

Grey Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*)
Black squirrels were seen this year at four sites: St Ives, Houghton Hill, (TL2972), (25.10.97); Hemingford Grey, Marsh Lane, (TL27), (11.11.97); Huntingdon, Castle Hill, (TL241714), (4.6.97) and Hartford, The Grove, (TL257725), (3.7.97).

Road casualties were noted on the Wansford to Yarwell road, (TL069990), (1.3.97); Bury, (TL281840), (27.5.97); Wennington, (TL237794), (1.10.97) and one was found on a gamekeeper's gibbet at Ten Wood, (TL664558).

A drey was noted at Archers Wood, (TL172811).

Feeding signs (opened hazel nuts) were reported from Sutton Wood, (TF095009); Long Coppice, (TL208775); Coppingford Wood, (TL175803); Bedford Purlieus, (TL045995); Out Wood, (TL658548); Eversden Wood, (TL345529); Langley Wood, (TL605425); Sparrows Grove, (TL670550); Bedford Purlieus, (TL037992); Bunch Wood, (TL215785); Hill Wood, (TL205787); Sutton Wood, (TF095012).

Numerous sight records were received: Old Sulehay Forest, (TL066986), (21.1.97); Ramsey Heights, (TL245848), (0.3.97); Perry Wood, (TL143665), (2.3.97); Peterborough, roundabout nr Railway Br, (TL188987), (3.3.97); Old Sulehay Forest, (TL066987), (16.3.97); Broughton churchyard, (TL281779), (21.3.97); Kimbolton, Duchess Walk, (TL099677), (5.4.97); Brampton Wood, (TL179703), (12.4.97); St Neots, Church Street, (TL185602), (24.4.97); Huntingdon, Portholme, nr, (TL239713), (27.4.97); Waresley Wood, (TL263546), (31.5.97); Ramsey, Bury Road, (TL284844), (31.5.97); Old Sulehay Forest, (TL066986), (3.6.97); Fenstanton Post Office garden, (TL314684), (29.6.97); Bluntisham, Colne Road, (TL368749), (29.6.97); Stamford, in carpark, (TF028067), (7.7.97); St Neots, Shortsands Day Centre, (TL194602), (9.7.97); Waresley Wood, nr entrance, (TL260549), (8.8.97); St Ives, London Road, (TL309704), (10.8.97); St Neots, Market Square, (TL182602), (18.8.97); Old Sulehay Forest, (TL064987), (22.8.97); Wansford, Old Leicester Road, (TL073993), (31.8.97); Brampton Wood nr, (TL178695), (14.9.97); Wansford, (TL073993), (17.9.97); Wansford, (TL073993), (19.9.97); Wansford, (TL073993), (20.9.97); St Neots, Riverside Park, nr, (TL179602), (23.9.97); Old Sulehay Forest, (TL067988), (4.10.97); Longthorpe, (TL157985), (19.11.97); Grafham, Sludge Lagoons, nr, (TL157667), (3.12.97); Old Sulehay Forest, (TL064986), (11.12.97); Old Sulehay Forest, (TL064986), (14.12.97); Paxton Pits, (TL200634), (14.12.97); Old Sulehay Forest, (TL063986), (20.12.97); Old Sulehay Forest, (TL066987), (25.12.97); Old Sulehay Forest, (TL067988), (26.12.97); Houghton Church, roof of, (TL281721), (27.12.97); Abbots Wood, (TF065012); Holland Wood, (TL240786); Buff Wood, (TL282503); Waresley Wood, (TL201547); Monks Wood, (TL203805); Littleless Wood, (TL217779); Bedford Purlieus, (TF045002); British Sugar, (TL181979); Stibbington, Standens Pits, (TL085995); Aversley, (TL163819); Little Paxton Wood, (TL171635); Little Paxton Wood, (TL165635); Pococks Wood, (TF158023); Aversley Wood, (TL165825); Aversley Wood, (TL157818); Overhall Close, (TL338630); Kingston Wood, (TL323537); Kingston Wood, (TL325545); Warboys Wood, (TL302818); Warboys Wood, (TL299818); Warboys Wood, (TL297821); Monks Wood, (TL195797); Lady Grove and Dudney Wood, (TL125675); Over and Lawn Woods, (TL641485); Over and Lawn Woods, (TL635485); Over and Lawn Woods, (TL628485); Balsham Wood, (TL590455); Balsham Wood, (TL588495); Little Widgham Wood, (TL663552); Plunder Wood, (TL665548); Monks Wood, (TL195805); Gamlingay Wood, (TL242534); Hayley Wood, (TL291529); Wennington Wood, (TL248788); Agden Green Wood, (TL126658); Perry Ash Wood, (TL141666) and Perry West Wood, (TL133664). Two were seen at St Ives, Park Road, (TL315714), (21.7.97); many at Hinchingbrooke Park, Bobs Wood, (TL27), (.12.97) and seven at Little Paxton, Redlands site, (TL186682), (6.6.97). As well as removing all the Walnuts (again!) at Shillow Hill (TL288822), up to three at a time raided the bird table in the last quarter of the year. They destroyed the standard wire peanut holders, but have so far been unable to gain access to new heavy duty ones. They have, however, been gnawing the branches from which the holders are hung, presumably out of squirrelly bad temper! They were seen throughout the year at St Neots, Priory Park, (TL190612) and in the St Ives area, (TL27).

Harvest Mouse (*Micromys minutus*)
One was killed by a cat at Cross Guns, (TF346015), (11.10.97) and another was live trapped at Bainton Gravel Pit, (TF106075). An old nest (from 1996) was found at Shillow Hill (TL288822) in the spring.

House Mouse (*Mus domesticus*)
One was live trapped at Ramsey Heights, Chapel Drove, (TL244848), (28.2.97).

Wood Mouse (*Apodemus sylvaticus*)
Wood Mice were live trapped at Hilton, (TL277661), (.3.97); Papworth, (TL273653), (.3.97); Broughton, (TL289762), (.3.97); Ellington, (TL181717), (.3.97); Alconbury Hill, (TL185787), (.3.97); Hemingford, (TL286694), (.3.97); Monks Wood, (TL211800), (.3.97); Sawtry, (TL188813), (.3.97); Castor Hanglands, (TF118011); Stibbington, Standens Pits, (TL085995); River Nene, Boardwalks, (TL181981); Aversley Wood, (TL163819); Bainton Gravel Pit, (TF106075); British Sugar, (TL175979); Southorpe Meadow, (TF083031); Aversley Wood, (TL165825); Sutton Heath, (TF086003); Aversley Wood, (TL157818).

Yellow-necked Mouse (*Apodemus flavicollis*)
One was live trapped at Aversley Wood, (TL165825), the first record in the county since 1970.

CARNIVORA

Badger (*Meles meles*)
Twenty-nine road casualties were noted this year; Burghley Park nr, on A1, (TF040043), (2.3.97); southbound A1, (TF049033), (8.3.97); A14 east of Catworth junction, (TL092744), (20.3.97); Ellington village, A14, (TL165718), (20.3.97); Southoe, A1 northbound, (TL185637), (21.3.97); Keyston, Browns Farm, A14, (TL033769), (22.3.97); Collyweston crossroads nr, on A47, (TF030007), (22.3.97); Sutton nr, on A47, (TL085997), (29.3.97); Croxton, nr, on A428, (TL238602), (3.4.97); Ailsworth nr, on Castor bypass, (TL123993), (14.4.97); Bedford Purlieus nr, (TF043005), (14.4.97); Ellington, on A14, (TL155722), (10.5.97); Sibson, near railway bridge,A1, (TL091978), (13.5.97); Water Newton junction, A1, (TL110971), (13.5.97); Low Harthay access, A14,westbound, (TL178718), (28.5.97); Low Harthay access, A14,eastbound, (TL178719), (28.5.97); Bury, Manor Farm, (TL290830), (11.6.97); A1 southbound, (TL193734), (10.7.97); Catworth nr, on A14, (TL088746), (13.7.97); Leighton Bromswold turn, A14, (TL106739), (16.7.97); Alwalton to Water Newton, on A1, (TL122967), (27.7.97); Thornhaugh turning nr, on A47, (TF055002), (15.8.97); Longthorpe roundabout nr, on A47, (TL153985), (21.8.97); Wansford, Sacrewell Farm nr, on A47, (TL081997), (15.11.97); Castor, (TL101993); Milton, A47, (TL145984); Alwalton, (TL125965); Rice Wood, (TL121050) and a juvenile at Woodhurst, Somersham Road, (TL37), (16.5.97).

Active setts were noted at Great Gransden, Rippington Manor, (TL271555), (3.2.97); Somersham, Dove Cote Farm, (TL37), (3.5.97); Little Paxton Wood, (TL165635); Bainton Gravel Pit, (TF106075); Aversley Wood, (TL165825); Waresley Wood, (TL261547); Kingston Wood, (TL325545); Overhall Grove, (TL338630), (..97); Warboys Wood, (TL302818); Orton Pit, (TL176957) and Eye Green, (TF232037).

Bedding was found at Brampton Wood, (TL17), (20.5.97) and tracks were seen at Eversden Wood, (TL345529), and Lady Grove and Dudney Wood, (TL125675). Just one live sighting was made, at Elton Furze, Round Covert, (TL111943), (10.6.97).

Ferret (*Mustela furo*)
A ferret was found dead on the road at Wansford, on A47, (TL056999), (12.4.97).

Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*)
Road casualties were reported as follows: Castor, nr on A47, (TL138986), (24.1.97); Godmanchester nr, (TL235697), (18.2.97); A1 southbound north of Brampton Hut, (TL194719), (20.2.97); Offord to Godmanchester, B1043, (TL228685), (2.4.97); Southoe, on A1, (TL187642), (5.4.97); West Perry, (TL1427), (24.4.97); A604 eastbound at Stukeley, (TL215734), (16.5.97); Ramsey, St Marys Road, (TL270872), (3.6.97); Ramsey, St Marys Road, (TL277864), (5.7.97); Spaldwick, A14 eastbound, (TL134728), (9.7.97); Hail Weston, (TL158625), (12.7.97); Ellington nr, on A14, (TL167719), (13.7.97); A1 southbound, Alconbury interchange, (TL189769), (5.8.97); St Ives, Needingworth Road, (TL27), (21.9.97); Caxton, A428, (TL37), (1.11.97); between Monks and Bevills Woods, (TL204797), (25.11.97) and Castor, A47, (TF120996).

Fox droppings were found at Ramsey Heights Claypits NR, (TL243848), (29.3.97); Five Arches Pits, (TL203829), (17.4.97); Hicks Brick Pit, (TL194963); Bainton Gravel Pit, (TF106075); Kings Dyke Brick Pit, (TL239978); Kings Dyke Brick Pit, (TL241978); Stanground, (TL207977); Crown Lake, (TL195945); Embankment End Marsh, (TL203982); Archers Wood, (TL172811); Overhall Grove, (TL388630); Holland Wood, (TL240786); Coppingford Wood, (TL175803); Stibbington, Standens Pits, (TL085995); River Nene, (TL205979); Pococks Wood, (TF158023) and feeding signs at Norman Cross Brick Pit, (TL162908); Buff Wood, (TL282503) and Langley Wood, (TL605485).

A young one was found dead at St Ives, Houghton Hill, (TL2972), (18.8.97) and the characteristic smell was noted at Old Sulehay Forest, (TL0698 and TL0699), (12.1.97).

Live animals were seen at Offord to Godmanchester road, (TL233695), (18.2.97); Somersham, Dove Cote Farm (a vixen with three cubs), (TL37), (3.5.97); Morborne nr, (TL123913), (9.5.97); B1095 near Pondersbridge, (TL249929), (25.5.97); Houghton Meadows (four), (TL292718), (3.6.97); Evans Spinney, Ramsey, (TL279862), (7.6.97); Shillow Hill (two), (TL288821), (18.8.97); Colne (two), (TL3775), (21.10.97); Hemingford Abbots, Common Lane, (TL27), (24.10.97); St Ives, Thicket footpath, (TL27), (6.12.97); Hinchingbrooke Country Park, (TL27), (23.12.97); Fletton Lake, (TL198965); Beebys Brick Pit, (TL185987); Ten Wood, (TL664558); British Sugar (two adults with three cubs), (TL181979); frequently during January at Hilton, (TL290660), Fenstanton Gravel Pits, (TL305681) and St Ives Gravel Pits, (TL323715), (.1.97).

Mink (*Mustela vison*)
Scats were found at Embankment End Marsh, (TL203982) and live animals were seen at Houghton Meadows Reserve, (TL2791), (3.6.97) and Hemingford Grey, Marsh Lane Pits, (TL2970), (5.11.97).

Otter (*Lutra lutra*)
Spraints were found at Bainton Gravel Pit, (TF107069) and Lolham Bridges, (TF110069).

Polecat (*Mustela putorius*)
See the introduction for notes on these records: Road casualties at Wansford, Sibberton Lodge nr, on A47, (TL064998), (25.7.97); Bedford Purlieus nr, (TL055991), (10.9.97) and a third live trapped at Bedford Purlieus, (TL04-99-), (19.12.97);

Stoat (*Mustela erminea*)
Road casualties from Wood Walton Hill, nr, (TL213801), (21.3.97); Easton, Shepherds Close, (TL133706), (4.6.97); Abbots Ripton, B1090, (TL222784), (4.7.97); Ramsey, St Marys Road, (TL280861), (27.7.97); Sapley Park Farm, (TL248743), (5.8.97); between Monks and Bevills Woods, (TL205797), (6.8.97).

A juvenile was caught by a cat at Great Stukeley, (TL27), (18.10.97) and live animals were seen at Hilton, (TL290660), (28.1.97); Glatton to Sawtry, (TL162847), (15.7.97); Hilton, (TL290660), (7.9.97); chasing a rabbit at St Ives, Thicket footpath, (TL27), (22.11.97) and one in ermine at Monks Wood NNR, Main Ride, (TL196802), (.1.97).

Weasel (*Mustela nivalis*)
Road casualties from Woodhurst to Bluntisham, (TL331754), (18.2.97) and Wennington, nr, (TL231797), (30.9.97).

One was found dead at Hemingford Abbots, Rideaway Drive, (TL27), (11.11.97), and live animals were seen at Brampton, (TL2170), (1.1.97); Godmanchester, Cow Lane Gravel Pit, (TL260710), (25.1.97); Hail Weston to Paxton road, (TL171626), (30.1.97); Grafham Water Reserve, (TL16), (25.2.97); Godmanchester, Cow Lane Gravel Pit, (TL260710), (31.3.97); Gravely, east of, (TL253643), (29.5.97); Hilton, (TL290660), (2.10.97); Old Sulehay Forest, (TL067988), (11.12.97); Wansford, (TL090998); Grafham Water, Mander Hide, near, (TL139671), (18.1.97); Stamford, Burghley Park, nr, (TF035052), (9.4.97). The latter two animals were carrying prey.

PINNIPEDIA

Seal
A seal, most likely a Common Seal (*Phoca vitulina*) was seen in the river at Brownshill Lock, Needingworth, (TL3672), (18.1.97).

ARTIODACTYLA

Roe Deer (*Capreolus capreolus*)
A road traffic victim waa reported to one of us (HRA) shortly after it occurred, at Bury, near Manor Farm, (TL290828), (5.8.97). By the time the scene was reached, only a few minutes later, all that remained were the shattered antlers on the road; no doubt the carcase was heading for someone's freezer!

Live animals were reported from Ten Wood, (TL664558); Outwood, (TL658548); Little Widgham Wood, (TL663552); Langley Wood, (TL605425); Over and Lawn Woods, (TL628485); Plunder Wood, (TL665548) and Sparrows Grove, (TL670550).

Chinese Water Deer (*Hydropotes inermis*)
Four road casualties at: the A14 westbound, (TL103739), (7.5.97); A14 westbound, (TL101740), (28.5.97); A14 westbound, (TL273698), (29.7.97); and Yaxley to Holme road, (TL193895), (5.2.97). One was seen to be hit by car, but ran off on the Wistow to Kings Ripton road, (TL267795), (18.2.97);

Fallow Deer (*Dama dama*)
Sight records were reported from Barnack to Southorpe, (TF082039), (5.12.97); Gamlingay Wood, (TL242534); Langley Wood, (TL605425); Eversden Wood, (TL345529); Over and Lawn Woods, (TL628485); Kingston Wood, (TL323537); Kingston Wood, (TL325545); Ailsworth Heath (five), (TF118019); Castor Hanglands (six), (TF113024) and Castor Hanglands (three), (TF126013).

Muntjac (*Muntiacus reevesi*)
Road casualties were reported from the following sites: Wansford, Sacrewell Farm nr, on A47, (TL080997), (7.1.97); Hemingford Abbots, A14 westbound, (TL698275), (25.2.97); Bedford Purlieus nr, on A47, (TF047004), (26.2.97); Grafham village, A1 northbound, (TL198698), (21.3.97); Keyston, A14, (TL058750), (22.3.97); Longthorpe nr, on A47, (TL154985), (3.4.97); Southoe to Buckden, on A1, (TL188659), (12.4.97); Keyston, A14, (TL047757), (14.4.97); Wansford to Kingscliffe, (TL063993), (16.4.97); Caldecot junction, A1 northbound, (TL165877), (29.4.97); Woodhatch Farm, Ellington, A14, (TL185719), (30.4.97); Raby Farm, Huntingdon, A14, (TL218727), (4.7.97); Bury,

(TL283844), (9.7.97); Water Newton nr, on A1, (TL100973), (27.7.97); Brampton Wood to Grafham, (TL170693), (12.8.97); between Monks and Bevills Woods, (TL205797), (17.11.97); Hemingford Abbots service station, A14, (TL275698).

One was found dead at Hilton, (TL290660).

A muntjac was heard barking at Shillow Hill several times during November (TL287822), (4.11.97); (TL288821), (11.11.97), (12.11.97) and (22.11.97).

Live animals were reported from well over fifty localities; it is not possible to list them all here.

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BIRD REPORT 1996

John S. Clark

The following report highlights the main ornithological events in Huntingdon and Peterborough. For a fuller account see the Cambridgeshire Bird Report 1996.

Cold weather in the first winter period resulted in record numbers of Bitterns (mostly displaced from Europe) and Waxwings. The strong winds that accompanied this cold spell drove three species of auks inland, and resulted in higher numbers than usual of wild geese, waders and Arctic gulls. Two species new to Hunts, Black-throated Thrush and Arctic Redpoll, also appeared during this period. A pair of Lesser Black-backed Gulls bred in Hunts, the first breeding record for the whole of Cambridgeshire.

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*
Two records: a single flew east at St.Ives GP on January 28th (JSM, BSM) and an oiled individual was noted at Woodwalton Fen on March 24th (WDC).

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*
An adult, moulting out of summer plumage, was noted at Hinchingbrooke from November 23rd-24th and again on December 5th (JSC). The same individual flew south over Cow Lane GP on November 24th (JSC) and was seen at Diddington GP from November 26th-28th (JH).

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*
One at Bainton GP from January 1st-28th (MAW, MLB) first appeared on December 30th 1995. Almost certainly the same individual had previously been recorded in the Ouse Valley from November 1994 to December 29th 1995 (see CBR 69: 11). A first winter was noted at Grafham Water on November 9th, 13th and 24th (RMP, TG).

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*
Breeding pairs reported as follows: Barleycraft GP 4, Little Paxton GP/Diddington GP 4, Cow Lane GP 2+, Grafham Water 0-2 and singles at Buckden (pond), Colne Fen GP, St.Ives GP and Somersham GP. The Ouse Valley gravel pits population (including Fen Drayton) peaked at 155 in late October (JLFP).

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*
Breeding pairs were reported as follows: Marsh Lane GP 10 (2 broods), Cow Lane GP 7 (2 broods), Grafham Water 51 (16 nests, 9 broods), Little Paxton/Diddington GP 16 (4 broods, compare one brood at Diddington with 10 in 1995), Barleycraft GP 2 (both failed, compare 11 successful in 1995), St.Ives GP 6, Bainton GP 3 and singles at Hinchingbrooke and Woodwalton Fen. Marked reductions at Barleycraft and Diddington illustrate how quickly prey items decline after the initial surge in newly flooded pits.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*
At least five records. Up to two present at Little Paxton/Diddington GP from February 25th-April 7th were thought to have involved a total of 3-4 individuals (m.o.). Singles were noted at Marsh Lane GP from Feb 25th-March 24th (MJE), Barleycraft on March 12th (DJG, DMG) and Grafham Water on November 16th (RMP).

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*
At least 10 records, the majority in the first part of the year (compare 14 in the exceptionally severe winter of 1979). Up to two present at Little Paxton/Diddington GP from January 28th-April 20th were thought to have involved a minimum of three individuals. Singles at Marsh Lane GP, January 27th-31st and March 10th-26th; Grafham Water, February 21st, March 6th and 29th, April 21st and November 18th; Buckden GP, March 17th-20th; Hemingford Grey and St.Ives (River Ouse), February 2nd-3rd; St.Ives GP, February 13th, 21st and March 1st, and North Bank GP, December 22nd.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*
A single at St.Ives GP on January 3rd (NBM) and up to three in March at Little Paxton GP were the only records for the first part of the year (m.o.). In autumn singles were noted as follows: Diddington GP, August 7th-19th, 26th and September 1st; Buckden GP, September 4th; Grafham Water, September 16th; St.Ives GP, September 29th-October 20th, and 1-2 at Cow Lane GP, July 20th-August 2nd (m.o.).

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*
Strong northeasterly winds resulted in a total of 2-3 records (bringing the Hunts total to 15-16). One found alive between Hilton and Papworth Everard on September 8th was later released unharmed (per JSC). Another, flying southwest over Fletton BP on December 30th (AH, RMP, SLC), was the first record for the Peterborough area since 1881. Possibly the same individual was seen the next day resting at Brampton GP (JLFP).

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*
One at Grafham Water from July 11th-22nd (RFP) is the 14th record for Hunts. This, the longest staying individual, regularly joined tern concentrations as it dived for fish.

Gannet *Sula bassana*
Two autumn records: a juvenile flew southeast over Colne Fen on October 26th (JLFP) and an adult at Ferry Meadows from November 14th-15th (DG, RMP).

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*
A total of 218-220 pairs bred at Little Paxton GP. Colour-ringed birds, noted at Barleycraft GP in April/May, were from colonies in Denmark (same individual as in 1994-95), Netherlands (same individual as in 1992-94) and South Wales.

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*
An influx in January/February after strong easterly winds: Dog-in-a-Doublet Sluice, one until January 19th (JPT); Little Paxton GP, four on January 31st (TGG); River Ouse (Little Paxton), one on February 4th (SM) and Ferry Meadows, one from February 14th-15th (DG).

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*
A record influx of at least 11-13 individuals (compare previous highest, 6+ in 1979). In the first half of the year noted at eight sites (all singles unless stated otherwise): Grafham Water, February 2nd (first for the site); Little Paxton GP, January 1st-early March; St.Ives GP, January 13th-28th; Marsh Lane GP, March 3rd; Ferry Meadows, January 2nd-3rd; Wansford, January 3rd; Woodwalton Fen, January 1st and two on January 26th, and Cow Lane GP, January 17th, February 6th-10th, two on February 27th and a single on March 14th. In the second half of the year noted at five sites: Fenstanton GP, mid November-December; Little Paxton GP, November 26th-December 31st; Grafham

Water, December 28th and on the River Ouse at Offord Cluny and St.Ives, both on December 31st. Towards the end of December, the Fenstanton individual, together with 9 Grey Herons, was seen hunting for voles on setaside.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*
The Fen Drayton GP individual was noted at Fen Drayton West GP on June 20th and July 5th (RMP, SJH). This is only the eighth record for Hunts.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*
Nest counts received as follows: Milton Park 32, Little Paxton GP 7 (compare 14-15 in 1995), Brampton 12 (compare 4+ in 1994).

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*
Singles drifting south towards Peakirk on May 12th (per AFB) and roosting on a telegraph pole at Cow Lane GP on May 15th (ABr) probably refer to the same individual. The origin of this individual is in doubt, as one seen on both the Ouse and Nene Washes in April had previously escaped from a Norfolk collection.

Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus*
In the first part of the year small parties were noted in January as follows: 20 at Bury Fen on 10th, 11 at St.Ives GP on 14th, 4 at Hilton on 15th and 5 at Holme Fen on 17th. In February a large party of 230 was observed at Thorney Toll on 25th and in March two were present at Bury Fen on 10th. In the second half of the year first recorded at Grafham Water, where five noted on November 16th. In December noted as follows: singles at Ferry Meadows and Little Paxton GP; a very large roost of 280-590 at Colne Fen from 21st-31st (most feeding on carrots near Chatteris Fen during the daytime); 16 at Diddington GP on 29th, and hard weather movements on the 31st included 30 east at Marholm, 16 west over Castor Hanglands and 39 over Helpston.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*
Noted at six sites in the first half of the year: Bury Fen, 7-9 from January 10th-11th and 3 on March 10th; Barleycraft GP, 4 on January 7th and one on March 17th; Holme Fen, 2 on January 17th; Diddington GP, 2 on February 20th; Dogsthorpe, 3 on January 18th and Yaxley, 2 from March 23rd-30th. In the second half of the year noted at eight sites: Earith, 6 on November 10th; Ferry Meadows, 4 on November 12th; Buckden GP, singles on November 17th, December 15th and 29th; Barleycraft GP, 3 on November 19th; St.Neots, 9 on December 13th; Maxey GP, 5 on December 15th; Little Paxton GP, 5 northeast on December 22nd, and Dog-in-a-Doublet, 3 east on December 18th.

Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*
A party of 10, the largest recorded in Hunts, was noted at Thorney Toll from January 21st-25th (JPT). A single nominate *fabalis* at Cow Lane GP on August 2nd-14th and at Fen Drayton West GP on September 17th was almost certainly the same suspected escaped/feral bird recorded in 1994-95 (JLFP).

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhyncus*
The following, seen in February, were considered to have been wild: Thorney Tolls, three on 25th; Helpston, two on 3rd and Bainton, two on 3rd. In the spring, 35 northeast over Helpston on April 4th, were returning to their breeding grounds.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*
Very cold weather during both winter periods produced an influx of genuinely

wild birds: Little Paxton/Diddington GP, up to 9 from January 11th-March 24th, 32 southwest on December 12th (in 2 flocks) and 5 northeast on December 22nd, and Marsh Lane GP, 20 (previously seen at Fen Drayton GP) on January 28th.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*
A total of 646 goslings in 121 broods in the Ouse Valley represented an increase of around 30% compared with 1994 (JLFP).

Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens*
A white phase bird flew in from the west high up at Cow Lane GP on November 4th (JLFP).

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*
Individuals showing the characters of one of the smaller races of Canada Goose were noted at Barleycraft GP on September 14th, Fenstanton GP on November 4th and Marsh Lane GP on December 22nd (JLFP, MJE).

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*
Probable wild birds were recorded as follows: 4 at Little Paxton GP on April 13th (which arrived with wild Whitefronts) and 10 at Ferry Meadows on April 13th (the largest flock ever recorded in Hunts).

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*
Two singles, both nominate dark-bellied race: Little Paxton GP from April 5th-8th (RES) and Barleycraft GP on December 29th (DJG, DMG).

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiacus*
In the Ouse Valley, up to 3 were noted at a total of five gravel pits: Cow Lane and Marsh Lane, two on April 28th; Little Paxton/Diddington GP, two in April, three on May 21st and two from May 30th-June 3rd, and Brampton, two on May 21st. A single was also seen at Woodwalton Fen in May.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*
A pair flew east at Grafham Water on September 9th (JLFP).

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*
Bred at Grafham Water (3 pairs successful), Barleycraft GP (2 broods) and St.Ives/Holywell (1 brood). In recent years a pair also bred on farmland adjacent to Little Paxton GP (per TGG). A pair were also present in the breeding season at Somersham GP.

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*
Although breeding was not confirmed at any site, pairs were seen in the breeding season at Morborne and Marholm. Peak counts at Milton Park of 17 in January, 12-14 in March/April and 11 in December were reduced, probably as a result of the severe cold (compare 13 in 1981 and 10 in 1991, following severe winters). In the south of Hunts noted as follows: a male at Marsh Lane GP from April 18th-19th and, at Cow Lane GP, two on September 25th and one on December 4th.

Wigeon *Anas penelope*
Birds were noted at three sites in the Ouse Valley during the late spring/summer: Cow lane GP, breeding possibly occurred as a pair were present up to May 18th, followed by the male throughout the summer; Diddington GP, a female from May 14th-21st and Barleycraft GP, three from May-July. A survey of

the Ouse Valley pits (including Fen Drayton) revealed 6000+ in late February and 9600 at the end of December (JLFP).

Gadwall *Anas strepera*
Broods were recorded as follows: Grafham Water 6, St.Ives GP 2 (probably a site first), Barleycraft GP 1 and Little Paxton GP, probably 1. A total count of between 1034-1090 in the Ouse Valley pits (including Fen Drayton) during November/December, was the highest since December 1989, and included 622-649 in the Buckden/Little Paxton area (JLFP).

Teal *Anas crecca*
The count of 1450 at Grafham water in January is the highest ever recorded in Hunts.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*
Noted at six sites in the spring/early summer as follows: Grafham Water (all in May), two pairs on 8th, a pair on 12th and a male on 23rd; Fen Drayton West GP, a pair on June 6th; Bury Fen, a male from April 13th-14th; Barleycraft GP, a male on April 14th and Little Paxton GP a male on May 16th. Singles were recorded at four gravel pit sites in August/September: Cow Lane, Little Paxton, Buckden and Marsh Lane.

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina*
Reported in the first half of the year as follows: Little Paxton GP, a female from January-March, and again on May 31st; Cow Lane GP, a male from March 16th-17th and Fen Drayton West GP, a male from May 25th-early June. In the second half of the year recorded as follows: Little Paxton GP, a female irregularly from July-September; Fen Drayton West GP, a female from September 30th-November 13th and a male from October 29th-November 5th; Diddington GP, a male from November-December and a female on December 13th; St.Ives GP, a male on December 30th; Hinchingbrooke a female on December 31st and Bainton GP, both male and female several times from November-December (considered to be from the feral population at Langtoft in Lincolnshire).

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*
A male at Bainton GP from May 20th-June 1st and June 9th (MHi *et al*), had previously been seen at Tallington GP (Lincs) in February/March. This is the seventh record for Hunts.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*
A survey of the Ouse Valley pits produced 80 broods totalling at least 449 young (JLFP).

Scaup *Aythya marila*
Only 2-3 records, all single males, as follows: one at Barleycraft GP on January 21st, a first winter at Little Paxton GP on February 3rd, an adult at Buckden GP on February 21st and a first winter at Cow Lane GP on November 13th.

Eider *Somateria mollissima*
Two records (bringing the Hunts total to 10): a male found dead by the roadside near Somersham on January 1st (per JSC) and a female at Little Paxton GP from January 29th-February 3rd (JTW, SME).

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*
Singles noted in February at St.Ives GP on 24th and Dog-in-a-Doublet Sluice on

25th. Spring passage was recorded at three sites as follows: Grafham Water, 8 on March 3rd, 10 on March 31st and 16 on April 7th; Little Paxton GP, 3 on April 7th, and St.Ives GP in March, 2 on 24th and 4 on 31st. In the autumn recorded at three sites: Little Paxton GP, 3 on July 7th; St.Ives GP, 4 on July 20th, and Grafham Water one on July 23rd and 4 on October 1st.

Smew *Mergus albellus*
The majority were recorded at eight sites in the first part of the year as follows: Little Paxton/Diddington GP, up to 6 from January 1st-April 7th; Buckden/Stirtloe GP, up to 3 on four occasions from January-March: St.Ives GP, up to 4 from January 24th-February 8th; Grafham Water, 3 on February 21st; Cow Lane GP, one from January 10th-29th and 3 on February 2nd, and Bainton GP, 3 on January 1st. In the second winter period recorded at two sites in December as follows: 5 at at Little Paxton GP on 22nd and 2 at St.Ives GP from 27th-31st.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*
Three records of singles: Grafham Water, a male on January 28th (RFP) was reported to have stayed throughout February; Bainton GP, a male on January 1st (CJ, MLB) and Fletton BP, a redhead on December 29th (CJ).

Goosander *Mergus merganser*
The highest counts were in late January/early February were as follows: Little Paxton GP 60 (site record) and Grafham Water 40 (when 39 additional birds at Little Paxton GP).

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*
Noted in all months at Ouse Valley pits (including Fen Drayton), with 1-15 at each of nine sites, mostly August-December. Although no broods were seen, 1-2 pairs probably attempted to breed (JLFP). Maximum counts at Grafham Water were 26 in February and 24 in December. In the Peterborough area, a pair probably bred at Frank's Pit (near Bainton); up to five were present at Ferry Meadows in February and singles at Bainton GP in May/June and Fletton BP in December.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*
A total of at least six records of singles (compare 3 in 1995, 0 in 1994) as follows: Monks Wood on February 29th (KJW); Grafham Water on March 17th and June 2nd (JT), and possibly the same bird at Great Staughton/Perry on June 6th (MPS, PS); Royce Wood, Helpston on March 15th and 21st (MLB); a wing-tagged individual at Marholm on April 25th (MLB) and one at Hilton on May 12th with two Buzzards (JSC).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*
Singles were recorded at five sites in the spring as follows: Woodwalton Fen, March 27th and April 20th-25th; Fletton BP, west on April 15th; Little Paxton GP, an immature male north on April 8th ; Grafham Water, a male on April 28th, and St.Ives GP north on May 20th. In August, out of five roosting at the Nene Washes, several appeared in Hunts. Birds were also recorded in the autumn as follows: Woodwalton Fen, up to 2 from August 27th-September 6th and one September 15th-20th; Barleycraft GP 2 juveniles west on August 4th; Grafham Water/Buckden GP, a juvenile/female on August 5th and a male at Grafham Water on September 1st.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*
Maximum counts at the Woodwalton Fen roost were as follows: January 1,

February 6, March 4, April 1, November 2 and December 0. Singles were recorded in February at Fen Drayton/Fenstanton on 3rd and at Little Paxton GP on 22nd, and 2 males were present at Barleycraft GP on March 31st. In the second half of the year singles were noted at Stirtloe GP on October 26th and, in November, at Farcet Fen on 3rd and Hilton on 25th.

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*
A total of 2-3 records (compare 1990-93 0, 1994 2 and 1995 2) as follows: single females in May at Southoe on 12th (JH, MS) and near St.Neots on 22nd (DI) possibly refer to the same individual. A female on the Nene Washes was noted in Hunts on July 27th and 31st (CK, CJ).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*
Apart from an unsubstantiated sighting at Grafham Water, there were two records: a female at Milton Park on February 15th (MLB) and an immature female at Cow Lane GP on July 15th (PAP, TP).

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*
Sites with the maximum number of breeding pairs were: Woodwalton Fen 3 and Oxey Wood 2. Prey items in the Helpston area included Green Woodpecker and Collared Dove, and one female attempted (unsuccessfully) to take an adult Pheasant.

Buzzard *Buteo buteo*
There were unconfirmed reports of summering birds in the Catworth/Molesworth area (a pair, plus a young bird in August/September) and at Southey Wood (up to three). In the first part of the year singles occurred at Castor Hanglands on January 8th and March 31st, Lattenbury Hill on February 10th, Grafham Water on February 12th (dead from gunshot wounds) and 17th, Peterborough on April 9th (with jesses), Little Paxton GP on April 8th, Orton Waterville on April 20th. Two were noted at Hilton on May 12th and singles at Pilsgate on May 29th, Sutton Wood in June/July and Monks Wood on June 23rd. In the second part of the year singles were noted at Marsh Lane GP on July 9th, Cow Lane GP on August 31st, Lattenbury Hill on September 14th and November 6th, Frank's Pit (Bainton) on September 27th (with jesses), Woodwalton Fen on September 12th, Little Paxton GP from September 22nd-29th and Fenstanton on December 5th.

Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus*
One flew east at Grafham Water on December 21st (RFP).

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*
Recorded in the first part of the year as follows: a total of 2-3 at Grafham Water on March 31st, April 2nd and May 20th; singles at Marsh Lane GP on April 21st, Orton Waterville on May 12th and St.Neots on June 10th. In the second half of the year noted as follows: 1-2 at Grafham Water from August 16th-September 6th and September 14th-16th; singles at Brampton on August 31st, Bainton GP from September 3rd-13th (a Scottish youngster with a red ring) and Helpston from September 7th-13th.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*
A pair nested on a cliff face at Ben Johnson's lime pit, near Helpston.

Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus*
A first summer female at Barleycraft GP from July 28th-August 18th (JLFP), and again from September 3rd-6th (AH et al) was noted briefly at Holywell/Fen

Drayton GP on September 1st (JSC). This, the tenth record for Hunts, has been accepted by the BBRC.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*
Recorded from eight sites in the first winter period. Singles were noted in January at Huntingdon on the 1st, Dogsthorpe on 2nd, Lattenbury Hill on 15th, Somersham GP on 20th , Abbotsley on 31st; in February at Folksworth on 25th and in March at Norman Cross on 8th and Marsh Lane GP on 24th. Recorded at seven sites in the second winter period: singles in October at Barleycraft GP on 5th, Alwalton on 16th; in November at Waresley on 1st, Colne Fen on 9th, Cow Lane GP on 18th and 24th, and in December at Ben Johnsons pit on 24th and Woodwalton Fen on 29th.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*
Breeding was suspected at a minimum of 11 sites. Although in some cases food carrying was observed, breeding was confirmed at only three sites, two in the Peterborough and one in the south of Hunts. A total of 4 were seen over Woodwalton Fen on June 2nd. A sudden spell of cold weather in September resulted in 3 casualties brought to the Raptor Foundation from Little Raveley, Old Hurst and Bluntisham on 19th/20th. All were juveniles, perhaps deprived of their dragonfly food. Extreme dates were April 25th (Woodwalton Fen) and September 28th (Somersham).

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*
Singles recorded at three sites in the first winter period: Earith on February 21st and March 6th; Knarr Fen on February 25th and Woodwalton Fen on March 17th. A late individual (or an escape) was seen resting at Bainton GP on May 6th. A very early bird (possibly an escape) was present at Wintringham on July 30th, then singles from a further four sites in the second period: Little Paxton GP on August 31st, Diddington GP in September, Milton Park on October 8th, Colne Fen on October 10th and Upton on Octber 20th. The Colne Fen bird was seen to strike at a *Columba* pigeon.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*
At Manor Farm, Southoe, the breeding density of this species was estimated at 14-33 pairs/km2 compared with 1-2 pairs/km2 for Grey Partridge.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*
Single pairs bred/seen in the breeding season at Little Paxton GP, Ramsey Mereside, Morborne Hill, Southoe and Yaxley Fen. A covey of 12 at Abbotsley in November was the only one reported. In the Helpston area a total of 300+ were released by a local shoot.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*
Two records: calling males at Hail Weston in June (AP) and at Tick Fen (between Ramsey and Chatteris) on August 12th (SJH).

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*
Breeding was confirmed at Cow Lane GP (single brood of four) and suspected at Grafham Water. Out of the breeding season, recorded at seven sites with maximum counts of 10 at Little Paxton GP, 6 at Cow Lane GP and 1-2 at Ferry Meadows, Bainton GP, Somersham GP and Grafham Water. There were very few sightings at Woodwalton Fen. In addition, following two days of very strong winds, one was seen walking along the High Street at Orton Waterville on February 21st.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*
A total of 8 pairs bred (compare 6 in 1995, 5 in 1994 and 3 in 1993) as follows: Cow Lane GP 2 (1 brood), Barleycraft GP 2 (1 brood) and one each at Fen Drayton West GP, Fenstanton GP, Brampton (no broods) and Diddington GP (no broods). There were autumn/winter records from Grafham Water, Milton Park and Hinchingbrooke. There were no reports of any sizeable flocks.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*
One at Grafham Water on May 25th (RFP). There have only been four records in Hunts during the last seven years.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*
A survey of the Ouse Valley revealed a total of 8 pairs breeding at five sites (JLFP). A further two pairs bred at two sites in the Peterborough area. Birds were also present in the breeding season at an additional site in the Peterborough area. At Grafham Water a maximum of 11 was noted on August 25th. Extreme dates were March 24th and September 13th (both at Diddington GP).

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*
A total of 17-20 pairs bred at six sites, all except one in the Ouse Valley (JLFP). An additional pair bred at a site in the Peterborough area. Site maxima included 24 at Diddington GP on April 8th and 47 at Grafham Water on September 3rd. The earliest was noted on February 13th at Portholme Meadow. An immature at Grafham Water in mid July had been ringed as a chick on Snettisham beach. It was later recorded at Brittany the following September.

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*
In the first winter period the only sizeable flocks were 2800 at Portholme Meadow on January 6th and 700 over St.Ives GP on January 14th. In the second half of the year peak counts at Portholme Meadow of 1500 on November 23rd and 420 on December 5th preceded a period of severe frosts. Hard weather movements west were observed over Hilton in mid December, after which few Golden Plover remained in Hunts.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*
Singles, noted in January over Holme Fen on 15th, at Portholme Meadow on 24th and at Little Paxton GP on 28th, were displaced by severe weather. Singles were also noted in the spring as follows: Grafham Water on March 11th, Little Paxton GP on March 24th, Cow Lane GP on April 13th, Barleycraft GP on May 1st and Fen Drayton West GP on May 7th. One at Barleycraft GP from September 22nd-29th was the only autumn record.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*
Breeding pairs were recorded as follows: Diddington GP 14, Grafham Water 6, Barleycraft GP 6, St.Ives GP 5, Fen Drayton West GP 2+, Woolley 2 (in sugar beet) and Cow Lane GP 1. In addition, a further 13 pairs were located in the Helpston/Marholm area as follows: Ben Johnson's pit 5, Swaddywell pit 2 and Marholm/Etton/Woodcroft 6. Counts during the first winter period were low, e.g. 800 at Portholme Meadow on January 24th, and were very low during the second winter period, with peaks in November of 400+ at Buckden GP, 300 at Pondersbridge, but only 100 at Portholme Meadow. Hard weather movements west over Hilton were noted from December 14th-22nd with very few birds left in Hunts by the end of the year.

Knot *Calidris canutus*
Recorded at four sites in the first half of the year as follows: three at

St.Ives GP on February 15th and at Diddington GP, singles February 24th-March 17th, March 28th and May 17th, and Cow Lane GP on March 20th. Recorded at two sites in the autumn: one at Grafham Water from August 15th-18th and two west over Hilton on November 8th.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*
Singles, seen from January 6th-March 3rd at four sites in the Ouse Valley (Cow Lane GP, St.Ives GP, Fen Drayton GP and Portholme Meadow), probably refer to the same individual (which also frequented the Cambs part of Fen Drayton GP). In May three were noted at Grafham Water on 12th and 1-2 at Diddington GP from 14th-18th. Grafham Water provided the only autumn records as follows: singles from August 22nd-25th, and in September, 2-4 from 9th-14th and 1-2 from 20th-23rd. In the second winter period there were records of singles from November 27th-December 31st at three sites (Grafham Water, St.Ives GP and Cow Lane GP), probably referring to the same individual.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*
A single spring record of two in summer plumage at Diddington GP on May 18th. Recorded at seven sites in the autumn during strong northeasterly winds, with unprecedented numbers in the second half of September. First noted at Grafham Water on September 3rd, then daily from September 14th-October 20th with the last on November 3rd. Peak counts in September were 12 on 16th, 64 on 22nd, 106 on 25th, and in October, 66 on 1st and 27 on 4th (previous highest count, 26 at Grafham Water in 1973). Also recorded in September as follows: Colne Fen GP from 19th-26th, peaking at 9 on 19th and 31 on 21st; Barleycraft GP, 8 on 22nd; Diddington GP, 2 on 23rd and Brampton GP, 2 on 25th. Recorded at Frank's Pit (Bainton) from September 13th-October 1st, with peaks of 11 on September 23rd, 16 on September 27th and 5 on October 1st. At Cow Lane GP there were two on September 22nd and 1-2 from October 2nd-5th and a single on 14th.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*
There were records from four sites in the autumn: Dog-in-a-Doublet Sluice, one on August 12th (CJ); Bainton (Frank's Pit), one from September 7th-10th (CJ); Colne Fen GP, two on September 14th (JLFP) and Grafham Water, 2-3 from September 16th-21st (m.o.).

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*
One present at Grafham Water on September 15th (JSM) is the seventh record for Hunts and the sixth for this site. It fed amongst the rocks reinforcing the north shore.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*
In the first winter period up to 160 were present at Portholme Meadow on January 10th but there were there were no records in the second winter period.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*
Recorded during the first winter period as follows: 4 at Portholme Meadow on January 19th, 2 at Diddington GP in January, and singles at Cow Lane GP on January 17th and February 27th. Three at Diddington GP in May were the only spring records. There were reports from six sites in the autumn with peak counts of 30+ at the Dog-in-a-Doublet on August 15th, 10 at Grafham Water on August 31st, 3 at Cow Lane GP on August 24th, 5 at Colne Fen GP on September 14th, 4 at Fen Drayton West GP on September 6th and 3 at Diddington GP from September 20th-23rd. There were no records during the second winter period largely because of low water levels on the Ouse Washes.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocryptes minimus*
A poor year with records from only three sites in the first part of the year and two in the second half. Singles were noted at Dogsthorpe on January 18th, Buckden GP from January 21st-25th and on March 14th, Barleycraft GP on March 31st, Orton BP on December 8th and Little Paxton GP on November 22nd and December 22nd.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*
Two pairs bred at Sutton Heath but there were no breeding/drumming birds at Woodwalton Fen. Peak counts in the first half of the year were as follows: 90 at Ferry Meadows on February 2nd, and in March, 330 at Portholme Meadow on 15th, 190 at Cow lane GP on 17th, 55 at St.Ives GP on 16th and 30+ at Buckden GP on 20th. One at Diddington GP on June 24th preceded a light passage in September/October at a few sites. The only concentrations reported in the second winter period were 14 at Ben Johnson's pit on December 6th and 35 at Ferry Meadows on December 21st.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*
The highest counts of roding birds were Woodwalton Fen 7 and Castor Hanglands 4-5. At Milton Park 3 were seen feeding in the open in snow on January 27th.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*
Spring records were from six sites: on March 3rd there were 38 at Diddington GP and 3 at Buckden GP. Peak numbers, however, occurred during April, with 5-50 from 13th-16th, then 178 on 18th, at Bury Fen; 28 at the Dog-in-a-Doublet on 21st and singles at Stirtloe GP on 15th and Cow Lane GP on 6th. Autumn records were from three sites with 11 at Colne Fen GP on August 17th; one on July 21st and 1-3 from September 15th-29th at Grafham Water, and one at Somersham GP from August 18th-19th.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*
In the winter one was recorded at Portholme Meadow on January 9th, and in the spring there were singles at Diddington GP on April 28th, Barleycraft GP on May 1st and Grafham Water from May 17th-21st.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*
Spring passage was recorded from April 4th-June 23rd at seven sites with singles at Little Paxton GP on April 4th and 28th, Ben Johnson's pit on May 18th, Grafham Water on May 17th and June 23rd, Cow Lane GP on May 11th and Fen Drayton West GP on May 1st. In addition there were parties of 3 at Marsh Lane GP on April 21st and 5 east at Barleycraft GP on April 21st. Autumn passage was recorded from July 7th-September 23rd at nine sites with singles at Grafham Water on July 7th and August 19th, over Oxey Wood on August 18th, Ben Johnson's pit on August 25th, Orton Waterville on August 9th, St.Ives GP from July 20th-23rd, Little Paxton GP on September 23rd and Hilton on July 28th. In addition there were parties in August of 3 over Helpston on 5th and 2 at Marsh Lane GP on 18th.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*
Recorded at five sites in the first winter period, seven sites in the spring and 10 sites in the autumn.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*
In the spring singles were noted at Earith on March 6th and at the Dog-in-a-Doublet on April 21st. In the autumn there were records from Diddington GP, with one from August 31st-September 23rd and 2 on September

13th, and from Cow Lane GP, with one on September 3rd. Two northwest over Hemingford Grey on December 22nd were probably displaced by severe weather.

Redshank *Tringa totanus*
Breeding pairs were confirmed at six sites as follows: Little Paxton/Diddington GP 6+ (12-13 pairs displaying), Barleycraft GP 4, Grafham Water 3, Cow Lane GP 2, Fen Drayton West GP 1+ and a single pair at St.Ives GP.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*
Spring passage recorded at seven sites and autumn passage at 14-15 sites with a maximum of 11 at Grafham Water.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*
As well as small numbers during both winter periods and in the spring there was a maximum count of 11 at Cow Lane in August.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*
Recorded at five sites in the autumn (August 10th-October 5th). The majority were in August with 3-4 at Grafham Water (one on 11th, 3 from 14th-21st and 2 until 25th), 2 at the Dog-in-a-Doublet Sluice on 10th and singles at Barleycraft GP from 17th-26th and at Cow Lane GP on 14th. Singles were also seen at St.Ives GP on September 28th and at Cow Lane GP on October 5th.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*
One at Bainton GP on February 2nd was probably an overwintering individual. Spring passage was recorded at nine sites and autumn passage at 13 sites with maximum of 23 at Grafham Water in August.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*
Recorded in winter at three sites: 2 at Grafham Water on January 2nd and singles at Portholme Meadow from January 22nd-24th and at Diddington GP on February 11th. (There is only one previous winter record for Hunts: January 4th 1973). There were spring records from five sites: Diddington GP, singles on April 20th and May 7th, and 6 on May 18th; Grafham Water, 4 on May 12th; Cow Lane GP, 1-2 from May 3rd-5th and one on May 19th. At both St.Ives GP and Fen Drayton West GP there were 2 from May 16th-18th. In the autumn there were records from only two sites: Grafham Water, 7 on July 28th and one on August 31st, and St.Ives GP, 2 on August 25th.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*
A pale phase adult at Grafham Water on September 14th (RMP).

1995 Out of three records submitted only one was published. Corrected list as follows: 2 juveniles at Grafham Water on September 19th, a pale phase (JSC, KJW) and a dark phase (RFP); 2 south high over Fen Drayton West GP on August 27th (JSC).

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*
A total of at least seven records (compare previous highest totals, 5 in 1992 and 1995). Single first winter birds were recorded at Dogsthorpe on January 18th (MAW), Grafham Water on February 3rd (RMP) and, probably the same individual, at Little Paxton GP on February 4th. At Diddington GP, a first summer was noted on April 5th (SM) and a second summer on May 7th (MJE), and, at Grafham Water, one was reported on August 25th and an adult on December 22nd (RMP). The Dogsthorpe individual (see above) and a first winter at

Fletton BP on December 30th (RMP, ALC, AH), were only the second and third for the Peterborough area.

Little Gull *Larus minutus*
Noted in the winter at Fletton BP with 2 on January 20th. Spring passage (April 7th-May 17th) was recorded at four sites. In April there were records from Diddington GP, with 1-2 from 7th-8th and 4 on 20th; Maxey GP, one on 13th; Ferry Meadows, singles on 7th and 12th-13th, and in May from Grafham Water, with 1-2 on 1st, 8th, 12th and 17th. Autumn passage was only noted at Grafham Water where 1-2 occurred from August 11th-September 19th (involving at least 6 individuals), 7 on September 20th and one to September 26th.

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*
Estimated numbers of breeding pairs were as follows: 100-175 at Cow Lane GP and 100-150 at Barleycraft GP, producing a combined total of at least 300 fledged young.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*
A pair bred in the Black-headed Gull colony at Cow Lane GP, the first breeding record for Hunts/Cambs. Despite the death of one of the parents (which occasionally preyed on Black-headed Gull nestlings), two young eventually fledged. Maximum roost count at Grafham Water was 3800 on August 17th.

Yellow-legged Gull *L.(a.)cachinnans*
A total of 13-16 individuals (compare 0-4 annually from 1992-95) were recorded at six sites. There were five winter records of single adults: Somersham GP on January 7th (AH), Dogsthorpe tip on January 19th (CJ), Grafham Water on January 21st (m.o.), Fletton BP on February 15th (CJ) and Cow Lane GP on November 24th (JSC). In the spring a second summer was recorded at Barleycraft GP on May 29th (AH). In the autumn at Grafham Water a total of at least 7 individuals (3+ adults, 2 third summers and single second and first summers) were noted as follows: singles from July 19th-28th, 3 from August 7th-25th and 1-2 from August 27th-September 14th (SLC, RMP). Three adults were present at Brampton landfill site on October 2nd (MC). The rapid increase in records can be partly accounted for by a greater confidence in identifying immature birds.

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoides*
A single first winter at Fletton BP from January 27th-28th, February 9th and 17th (CJ, NJC, ARF) was the eighth record for Hunts. This species has been recorded annually since 1994.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*
A total of at least 4 individuals equals the previous highest annual total in 1942. A first winter flew into Hunts from Fen Drayton GP (see above) on February 11th (SLC). A second year bird was recorded at both Cow Lane GP (NH) and Grafham Water (JTW, SME) on March 30th. In the second winter period at least 2 individuals fed on the Dogsthorpe tip and roosted at Fletton BP from December 29th-30th. They were recorded as follows: a first winter at Fletton BP on 29th (CJ) and at Dogsthorpe tip on 30th (JPT); adults at Dogsthorpe (JPT) and Fletton BP (SLC), both on 30th, probably referred to the same individual.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*
At Fletton BP 200-300 were noted in January and 460+ on December 30th; at Buckden GP there were up to 320 on December 29th.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*
An adult at Fletton BP on February 12th (CJ), one of the few records for the Peterborough area. In the spring there were counts at Grafham Water of 25 on March 17th (RWG, HKG), 11 on April 29th and one from 11th-12th May (JLFP). A single flew north at Buckden GP on July 6th (GDE) and 4 adults were noted at Grafham Water on November 10th (SLC), with one remaining until 13th.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*
One at Buckden GP on March 26th (JLFP) is the earliest record for Hunts (previous earliest April 4th 1991).

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*
A total of 76 pairs bred on Ouse Valley pits (compare 60-67 in 1995), producing over 120 young (JLFP). Pairs bred as follows: Cow Lane GP 30, Little Paxton GP 24 (including failed breeders from Diddington GP), Barleycraft GP 18, Fen Drayton West GP 4 and Grafham Water 2 (both failed).

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*
Recorded in the spring at five sites (all in May unless stated otherwise): Grafham Water, three on 1st and six on 9th; St.Ives GP, six on 8th; Little Paxton, three on 4th; Fen Drayton West GP, two on 16th and Cow Lane GP, two on April 17th and one on May 8th. Only recorded in the autumn at Grafham Water with singles on July 24th and August 11th.

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*
A single at Cow Lane GP on June 10th (JLFP) was the only record.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*
Recorded at five sites in the spring as follows: Little Paxton/Diddington GP, up to eight from April 20-21st; Barleycraft GP, 5 on April 21st; Grafham Water, one on April 29th, 1-3 from May 1st-5th and three on June 16th; Ferry Meadows, 1-2 from April 23rd-25th and Fen Drayton West GP, one May 16th-17th. Recorded at three sites in the autumn: Grafham Water, singles July 18th-22nd and up to 19 in early August, and singles at Little Paxton GP in late August and Barleycraft GP on July 21st.

Guillemot *Uria aalge*
Persistently strong easterlies produced one at Diddington GP on February 20th (MD) and an unconfirmed report of another at Peterborough around the same period. These are the 7th (and possibly the 8th) records for Hunts.

Razorbill *Alle alle*
Storm driven individuals appeared in February at Grafham village around the 20th (KGS) and at Marsh Lane GP on 21st (MJE). These are the 4th and 5th records for Hunts.

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*
Two records of storm driven birds: a moribund bird was found in a South Bretton garden on January 17th (per RGC); a first winter, picked up by a dog at Great Gransden on February 21st, was later released unharmed on the coast (per RES). These are the 14th and 15th records for Hunts.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*
The roost at Little Paxton GP peaked at 1500 in February and 2000 in December (compare maximum counts of 750 in 1994 and 900+ in 1995). Similar increases have been noted at the Cormorant roost at Abberton Reservoir.

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*
Many observers noted a reduction in numbers compared with previous years. At St.Ives GP, where up to seven were seen together on June 18th, a thorough examination by NJW of over 245 Reed Warbler nests failed to reveal any parasitised nests (compared with three in 1995).

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*
Breeding was confirmed at Helpston and Woodcroft and birds were seen in the breeding season at Etton, Upton, Sawtry and Abbots Ripton. Road casualties were noted at Bythorne, Sawtry, St.Ives, Ramsey, Abbots Ripton, Huntingdon and near Fen Drayton.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*
Breeding pairs were confirmed as follows: Woodwalton Fen 5 (in baskets), Grafham Water 1-3 and Castor Hanglands 1. Roosting birds were noted at Barleycraft GP (up to four in November), Castor Hanglands (3 in February), Cow Lane GP (one in November) and Bury Fen (one in February). There were road casualties at Farcet in February and Alconbury in April.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*
Recorded at only three sites in the first part of the year and five sites in the second half. Singles (unless stated otherwise) noted as follows: Cow Lane GP, from January 4th-17th; Barleycraft GP, two from January 18th-February 29th; Grafham Water, May 25th; Toseland, September 11th (road casualty); Castor Hanglands, October 5th-December 31st; Cow Lane GP, October 7th (soaring high overhead); Grafham Water, November 25th and Barleycraft GP, December 27th.

Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*
A single was noted hunting around the wader scrape at Ferry Meadows in late May (per MLB). Of the 4 records in the last 10 years, 3 have been in the Peterborough area.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*
A single near Warboys from May 13th-19th (Mrs Collins). This is the 23rd-24th record for Hunts and only the second in the last seven years.

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*
One in a garden at St.Neots on September 5th (CWE) is the ninth in the last seven years.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*
Breeding was confirmed at Marholm and suspected at Little Paxton GP (1-2 pairs), Milton Park (seen in the breeding season), Bedford Purlieus (drumming in April) and Grafham Water.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*
At Manor Farm, Southoe, a total of 16-19 pairs held territory (on or near setaside) representing nearly 28 pairs/km2. In comparison, at Hilton, where 177 territories in 1973 represented 38 pairs/km2, virtually none were present.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*
A total of around 1127 occupied nest holes (compare 875 in 1994).

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*
Some reports suggest that the breeding population continues to decline.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*
Five records of passage birds (last held territory in 1992 and bred 1989). Singles noted in April at Diddington GP on 12th-13th (SM, FD), Hemingford Grey on 14th (MJE) and Milton Park on 25th (MGF). In the autumn, one at Buckden GP on August 31st (GDE) and two at Woodwalton Fen on September 19th (KJW).

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*
Two pairs bred near Helpston, a pair held territory at Manor Farm, Southoe, and birds were seen in the breeding season at Little Paxton GP.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*
A total of 5-6 records (3-4 in the spring and two in the autumn). Recorded in March as follows: Cow Lane GP, one on 1st (PAP, NH); Diddington GP, 2-3 from 17th-26th (TGG, JLFP) and Fen Drayton West GP, one on 25th (JLFP). Singles were noted at Grafham Water on October 25th (TG) and November 4th (JSM).

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*
A total of 2-3 records of singles, all in March as follows: Diddington GP on 18th, moulting into summer plumage (MD), Buckden GP from 17th-18th (GDE), and, almost certainly the same individual, at Portholme Meadow on 24th (JSC).

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*
Breeding pairs were confirmed as follows: Helpston/Etton area 7-8, Little Paxton/Diddington GP 3, Manor Farm (Southoe) 2 and singles at Buckden GP and Grafham Water. Declines were noted at St.Ives Meadows (4-5 pairs in 1970s but none since the early 1990s); Offord/Huntingdon and Ramsey. A male Blue-headed Wagtail *M.f.flava* was identified at Ferry Meadows on April 17th (DG). A male showing the characters of Syke's Wagtail *M.f.beema* (probably a hybrid) was present at Maxey GP on April 13th (RCET).

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*
Breeding was confirmed at Bainton GP, Wansford, Alwalton, Little Paxton Mill and thought likely at Marholm. In addition there were April records from Ferry Meadows and Buckden SF (a pair from 8th-14th), a May record from Houghton Meadow and a June record from Bainton GP.

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*
A large scale invasion, with at least 118 individuals (compare previous highest, 69 in 1965/66 and 59 in 1975/76) at a total of 16 sites. In January recorded as follows: up to 8 at Bury Fen from 18th-21st, 5 at Somersham GP on 20th, one at Little Paxton GP on 19th then 1-2 until early March, one at Hemingford Grey from 28th-31st, 3 at Peterborough from 28th-29th, 2 at Eaton Socon on 29th. In February: 2 at Werrington on 3rd, 7 at St.Neots (Longsands School) from 18th-19th, 3 at St.Neots (Industrial Estate) on 21st. In March: up to 7 at Hemingford Grey from 9th-30th, up to 48 at Bretton Woods School from 11th-28th, 12 at Wood Green (Godmanchester) on 15th, 5 at Fenstanton on 11th, and up to 5 at St.Ives from 12th-13th. In April: 10 at Bretton on 5th and one at Alconbury on 12th. A single at Grafham Water on December 8th was the only record in the second half of the year.

Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*
First recorded on April 10th at Little Paxton GP. A total of 77 singing males was recorded. Singing males were noted as follows: Little Paxton GP 25 (at least 15 pairs thought to have bred), Woodwalton Fen 13+, Grafham Water 12+, Castor Hanglands 6, Oxey Wood 6, Bainton GP 6 and singles at Hayes Wood,

Belham Wood, Orton Waterville, Ramsey Heights, Marsh Lane GP, Maxey GP and Stillwell Pit. In addition, two were seen in June at Monks Wood.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*
Three spring records: a male at Warboys on March 27th (AH) and single females at St.Ives GP on March 31st (JSM) and Little Paxton from April 6th-8th (SM, TGG).

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*
A total of 9 singles at eight sites. Recorded in April at Little Paxton GP on 8th, Priory Park on 14th, Alconbury on 16th and Woodwalton Fen on 20th. In the autumn noted at Grafham Water on August 25th and September 9th; and also in September, at White's Wood on 2nd, and Buckden and Barnack, both on 8th.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*
Recorded at six sites in the spring and eight in the autumn. Spring records were noted as follows: Tick Fen 2-3 on April 25th and one on May 3rd, Castor one on April 27th, Ferry Meadows one on April 29th, Little Paxton GP 2 from May 5th-6th and one May 19th, Diddington one on May 12th and Maxey GP one sometime in May. In the autumn noted as follows: Barleycraft GP one on August 18th, 1-2 from September 14th-15th and 3 on September 22nd; Cow Lane GP 2 on August 28th, Helpston one on August 31st, Grafham Water singles on September 1st and 25th, Hinchingbrooke 2 on September 12th, Morborne Hill 3 on September 12th, Colne Fen one on September 15th, Woodwalton Fen one on 19th-20th and Somersham 2 on September 22nd.

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*
Only four records: Little Paxton GP, a male on 17th and a female on 31st March (SM, TGG); Helpston, a male from September 29th-October 3rd (MLB), and Woodwalton Fen, a male from October 22nd-December 31st (KJW).

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*
Spring passage was noted at 18 sites, the first on March 11th at Diddington GP. There were peaks in late March and late April/early May (including birds showing the characters of the Greenland race). Autumn passage of 1-2 was noted at seven sites from August 8th-September 22nd.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*
Recorded in the spring at six sites: Helpston, a male on March 26th (MLB); Ben Johnson's pit, a male on April 22nd and a female on May 18th (MLB); Buckden GP, a male on April 14th (GDE); Orton Waterville one on April 15th (RGC); Woodwalton Fen, a female from April 17th-18th (KJW) and Maxey GP, a male on April 21st (RCET).

Black-throated Thrush *Turdus ruficollis*
A male frequented a garden in Werrington, Peterborough from January 29th-March 17th (A. & Mrs A. Beeken *et al*). This, the first record of this Central Asiatic species in Hunts, has been accepted by the BBRC.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*
This species was thought to be showing signs of an increase in the Little Paxton area, and at Buckden GP, productivity was apparently as good as in recent years.

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cettia*
One singing intermittently at St.Ives GP from November 23rd-December 9th (JSM,

BSM) was the first record for the site and the 14th-15th for Hunts.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*
First noted on April 16th at Little Paxton GP and Woodwalton Fen. Although reported as more numerous than usual in the Helpston area, continues to decline in some areas, with singing birds reported from 11 sites as follows: Woodwalton Fen 12+, Little Paxton GP 1-3 (probably failed to breed for the first time for many years), Bainton GP 2, Oxey Wood 2, Grafham Water 2 and singles at Marsh Lane GP, Ferry Meadows, Brakes Wood, Helpston, Thistlemoor and Caldecote Wood. Last noted on August 22nd (Brakes Wood).

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*
A thorough survey by NJW of most of St.Ives GP revealed a total of 245 nests representing well over 100 pairs (compare 196 nests in 1995).

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*
A single passage bird at Little Paxton GP from May 4th-5th (LR, SM) was the only record.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus*
Two spring records of singles: Waresley Wood on April 8th (MPS, PS) and Little Paxton GP on May 12th (TGG, GDE).

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*
One spring and two autumn records: a male at Orton Waterville on April 17th (RGC); another at Little Paxton GP from August 9th-10th (JM, SM) and a first year female at Priory Park on August 11th (RES).

Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*
Five noted at Woodwalton Fen on November 28th (LM) were the first records for the site since 1992 (and only the sixth for Hunts in the last seven years).

Willow Tit *Parus montanus*
Breeding was confirmed at Cow Lane GP, Milton Park (all woods) and Woodwalton Fen, and birds were seen in the breeding season at Washingley. Two were seen at St.Ives GP from January 1st-March 2nd.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*
In the Huntingdon area, breeding was confirmed at Hinchingbrooke (one pair, probably the first for the site), Perry West Wood and Littleless Wood. Birds were seen in the breeding season at Buckden GP. In the Peterborough area breeding was confirmed at Milton Park (2+ pairs), Ferry Meadows and Bedford Purlieus. In September, a total of 7 were seen at Brakes Wood, and a single at Bainton GP on 14th was the first for the area.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*
An influx was noted from October 7th-11th, with parties moving west as follows: Marholm (two flocks of 7 and 6), Orton Waterville (2), Hilton (2) and Yelling (3). At Orton Waterville further movements were noted at the end of October, and a party of 6 there on November 14th, was described as unprecedented. These movements coincided with the arrival of thousands in northeast France (Brit. Birds 90: 249), the first large scale movements there since 1983 (when large numbers passed through East Anglia).

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*
An increase was apparent at a number of gravel pits, e.g. 100-200 at Cow Lane,

40 at Marsh Lane and 17 at Diddington. There were large roosts at Milton Park (400+) and Oxey Wood (335). A Hooded Crow *C.c.cornix* was seen at Colne Fen from December 21st-27th (JLFP). This is only the third record in the last seven years.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*
Breeding density in intensively farmed areas remains low. In contrast, numbers remain fairly buoyant at suitable gravel pits and in suburban areas.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*
A flock of 65 at Alconbury Hill in February was the largest reported in the first part of the year. Some of the largest concentrations recorded since the 1980s were noted during the harvest at the end of August: 80-100 at Hilton, 150+ at Grafham Water and 160+ at Cow Lane GP. At Hemingford Grey 40-50 were noted from September-December and in the Marholm/Helpston area there were counts of 35 in January and 51 in August.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*
Pairs bred as follows: Milton Park 2, Helpston 1 and singles were seen at Morborne on April 2nd and Ramsey Forty Foot on May 25th. The remaining records were confined to the winter months as follows: Grafham Water, 3 on January 4th and one on November 25th, and between Grafham and Brampton, 3 on December 15th.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*
One at Cow Lane GP on June 23rd was the first summer record for Hunts.

Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*
The only breeding record received was of a pair at Cow Lane GP. An influx of Mealy Redpolls *C.f.flammea*, during the winter of 1995/96, resulted in the identification in early 1996 of record numbers of birds showing the characters of this race. Redpoll flocks were reported in the first winter period as follows: Woodwalton Fen, up to 100+ (60+ *flammea*) from January 1st-April 4th; Holme Fen, 140 (races not determined) on January 3rd; Dogsthorpe, 80 (races not determined) on January 11th; Hemingford Grey, 35 (all *flammea*) from January 1st-14th; Little Paxton GP, up to 56 (races not determined) in February, and 3-6 during January/February at Ferry Meadows (probably *flammea*), Werrington (probably *flammea*) and Hilton (*cabaret*). In the second half of the year 1-7 (all *cabaret* unless stated otherwise) were noted as follows: Priory Park (July and October), Buckden (November), Cow Lane GP (December), Hemingford Grey (December) and a single *flammea* at Grafham (December).

1995 35 Mealy Redpolls at Hemingford Grey in December.

Arctic Redpoll *Carduelis hornemanni*
Up to 3 were identified at Woodwalton Fen from January-April in a very elusive Redpoll flock, consisting largely of Mealy Redpolls *C.f.flammea*. Arctic Redpolls were identified there as follows: singles on January 25th (RMP) and March 17th (RMP, AH), and 3 on April 8th (RMP, AH). These records, which have been accepted by the BBRC, are the first for Hunts. Probables were also noted there in March on 13th (AH) and 24th (WDC).

Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*
Only one record received, a single at Hemingford Grey on April 13th (MJE).

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*
Breeding was suspected, but not confirmed, in the Peterborough area. There were up to 7 at Ferry Meadows on March 30th (RGC), 1-3 at Milton Park on May 8th/10th (MLB) and singles at Orton Waterville on April 4th (RGC) and Castor Hanglands on May 18th (RMP, AH). In the south of Hunts a calling bird was noted at Brampton Wood on July 13th (MAW) and a single at Hinchingbrooke on November 18th (RE), the first for the site.

Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*
One flew west over Woodwalton Fen on November 15th (KJW). This is the eleventh record for Hunts.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*
Although in some areas the population continues to decline, in others it appears to have stabilised.

Corn Bunting *Miliaria calandra*
Singing males were reported as follows: Portholme Meadow 9, Southoe 3, Etton/Woodcroft 3, Yaxley Fen 2 and Fenstanton 2, Little Paxton GP 2, Hail Weston 2, Folksworth 2+ and singles at Offord, Toseland, Cow Lane GP and Buckden. One near Castor Hanglands was the first for some 14 years. A reduction in singing males was reported from both Ramsey and Buckden.

CONTRIBUTORS:

Barton I., Beeson M.L., Bowley A., Bradshaw A (ABr), Brown A.F., Calvert J., Capper L., Carter I., Cawthrow A., Clark J.S., Clark R.G., Cooke A.S, Cooper S.L., Crewe M., Crossman N.J., Cumberpatch I., Curtis W.D., Daniels K.J., Darlow F., Darlow W., Davis M., Dawson I., Eeles C.W., Elliot G.D., Elloway R.E., Elsom S.M., Everett M.J., Ferris M.G., Frost A.R., Gambie T.J., Gardner D., Garner D.J., Garner D.M., Garner H.K., Garner R.W.H., Gibbs M., Gibbins C.J., Gilligan T. (TGi)., Guiccosson T., Gunton T.G., Harrison N.M., Henderson S.J., Hillier M. (MHi), Hitchins A., Hodgson M., Holbrook H., Holding J. (JHo), Hughes J., Huin N., Hume R.A., Ireland D., Jones C., Kirtland C.A.E., Kitchen C., Lack A.G., Lane C., Lippett P., Mackman J., Martin B., Martin G., Marshall L., Mason K.D., May S., Miller J., Milne B.S., Milne J.S., Milne N.B., Newberry P., Pankhurst T., Parslow J.L.F., Patient R.M., Payne A., Pearson A., Porter R.F., Prince P.A., Robinson R.M., Rose L., Rosewarne K., Ross .B, Scott R.E., Seaton T.H., Sims J.F., Smith B., Smith K.G., Smout M.P., Smout P., Smout T.C., Southgate K., Southgate M., Stevenson J., Stone B. (BSt), Taylor J.P., Thomas J., Titman R.C.E., Ward M.A., Warrington K.J., Webb S., Westwood N.J., Whitehouse M.J., Wilding D., Williams J.T., Young S.P.

MEMBERSHIP LIST AMENDMENTS

The following membership changes have taken place during 1997:

New Members

Rose Pride	37 Bevis Hall, Paston Ridings, Peterborough PE4 7PS
Nina Coker	16 Gold Pits, Warboys, Huntingdon, Cambs PE17 2TF

Lapses and Resignations

Mr M. Wilkinson

Change of Address

Mr A. Colston Mrs R. Parslow	15 Lode Lane, Wicken, Ely, Cambs CB7 5XP 15 Lode Lane, Wicken, Ely, Cambs CB7 5XP
Mr I. Dawson	100 Hayling Avenue, Lt. Paxton, St Neots, Huntingdon, Cambs PE19 4HQ
Mr B. Eversham	6 Roscrea Terrace, Huntingdon, Cambs
Miss L. Farrell	Scottish Natural Heritage, 1 Kilmory Estate, Lochgilphead, Argyl PA31 8RR
Mr G. Wyatt	c/o 91 High Street. Buckden, Huntingdon, Cambs PE18 9TA

GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

All contributions should, if possible, be typed, double-spaced on A4 paper with margins at least 3cm wide. Top copy only should be submitted but a carbon or photocopy retained by the contributor.

Tables are very expensive to typeset and should be kept simple and to a minimum.

When localities are named, the National Grid reference should normally be given as 10km square, tetrad, 1km square or eight figure references, e.g. TL37, TL37B, TL31-71- or TL315718.

References in text should be cited as (Smith, 1976) or Smith (1976) states..... and in the references at the end of the paper in the form Smith, A., 1976. Plants of Pingle Wood *Rep.Huntingdon.Fauna Flora Soc.*, **30**, 20-25 in the case of a paper or Smith, A., 1976. *Plants of Pingle Wood*. 320pp., 5pls, 10 figs. London, in the case of a book.

Drawings should be in black waterproof ink, enlarged, but not more than twice the size to be reproduced.

Articles can also be submitted on floppy disk in the format of an ASCII file. They should be formatted to a line width of 65 characters and should contain no printer commands or other functions. They should be on 5 1/4 double density disks or 3 1/2 double density or high density disks. If submitting articles on disk a hard copy should also be submitted to the editor.

Long articles would be particularly welcome on disk as this saves time and cost. Further information is available by ringing Barry Dickerson on Huntingdon 475689.

All materials for publication should be submitted to the Editor not later than 31 December.

THE HUNTINGDONSHIRE FAUNA AND FLORA SOCIETY

(The County Natural History Society)

The Society exists to promote the study, preservation and recording of wildlife by the encouragement and publication of the results of research, the holding of meetings and such other activities as may forward the above-mentioned purposes of the Society within the former county of Huntingdon and Peterborough.

Membership is open to all who are interested in natural history, for a subscription of £5 payable on 1 January each year.

The affairs of the Society are conducted by a Committee consisting of a President, a Chairman, a Treasurer, one or more Honorary Secretaries and eight ordinary members (exclusive of co-opted members), elected by the members of the Society at the Annual General Meeting, usually held in March. The Committee annually elects recorders to assist with the identification of specimens and to prepare contributions to the Annual Report, which members receive free.

The Society holds field meetings at sites of interest at regular intervals during the summer and autumn, and indoor meetings during the winter.

If you are interested in the work of the Society and would like to join, please contact the Secretary or Treasurer.