

HUNTINGDONSHIRE
FAUNA & FLORA SOCIETY

29th
ANNUAL REPORT
for 1976



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HUNTINGDONSHIRE FAUNA AND FLORA SOCIETY

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ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1976

No. 29

Secretary's Report

The 1976 Annual General Meeting was held at 7.30 p.m. on Saturday, 20th March at Huntingdon Research Centre. Mr. T.C.E. Wells took the Chair and 43 other members attended.

Minutes of the previous A.G.M. held on 15th March 1975 had been circulated and were accepted.

The Secretary's Report contained in the Annual Report No. 28 and the Treasurer's Report and balance sheet were accepted.

Officers and Ordinary Members of the Committee were elected and are listed at the beginning of the Annual Report.

Retiring Recorders, Prof. Worden and Mr. Gilbert, were thanked and new Recorders for mammals, fungi and lichens were welcomed.

Trophy for children's contribution to natural history. Ideas were discussed for implementing this suggestion, made at the 1975 A.G.M., and it was agreed that the committee should spend up to £25 on a trophy and decide how it was to be awarded.

A painting of Great Crested Grebe by Mrs. Rosemary Parslow was subsequently chosen and framed at a total cost of £20. It was arranged that it should be presented at the Annual Exhibition of the Cambridgeshire Association for Environmental Education, which was held at the St. Ivo Centre in July — the first time in the Huntingdon area. By tradition the Exhibition is non-competitive and it was decided to award the trophy to the Association in recognition of its excellent work in promoting environmental education in our primary and secondary schools. During this school year each school contributing to the Exhibition will be holding the picture for a week. Committee members and other members of the Society attended the opening of the Exhibition and appreciated the high standard of presentation and depth of study. The future of the trophy has still to be decided.

St. Neots Common study project. Mr. Tom Collins told the meeting about his ideas for an ecological study of some aspects of St. Neots common and asked that anyone interested should contact him.

Following the business meeting Dr. John Mason spoke on "Wildlife Photography".

Meetings

The following four ordinary meetings were held during the year:—

- 15 January "The bird life of Iceland" by Mrs. Susan Limentani at Huntingdon Research Centre.
- 20 February Members Evening with wine and cheese, at Monks Wood Experimental Station.
- 26 October "Wildlife in South Africa" by Dr. Colin Welch at Monks Wood Experimental Station.
- 19 November Members Evening with wine and cheese, at Huntingdon Research Centre.

The following nine field meetings were held:—

- 15/16 May Deer watching and dawn chorus at Woodwalton Fen. Accommodation for sleeping bags was provided in the Fen Bungalow by kind permission of the Warden. Leaders Mr. J. Limentani (birds) and Mr. H. Arnold (deer).
- 12 June Barnack Hills and Holes for orchids. Leader Mr. T. Patston.
- 26 June Lady's Wood. Evening meeting at which Mr. J. Heath operated a light trap for moths.
- 3 July St. Ives meadows. Botany and general interest. Leader Mr. T. Wells.
- 24 July Sacrewell Farm (Royal Agricultural Society) Thornhaugh. By kind permission of Capt. D.O. Powell. General interest. Leader Mr. M. Ward.
- 8 August Great Paxton, scrub and waste ground between railway and river for general interest. Leader Mr. E.T. Lees. Afterwards tea was kindly provided by Mrs. While at "Bankside".
- 21 August Savages Spinney and Creek (N.W. corner of Grafham Water) for general interest. Leader Mr. T. Wells.
- 25 September Connington Rubbish Tip for alien weeds. Leader Dr. J. Mason.
- 9 October Fungus Foray at Waresley Wood. Leaders Mrs. S. Wells and Mr. S. Carter.

BOTANICAL NOTES

T.C.E. Wells

The first eight months of 1976 were the driest and among the hottest in living memory. In Huntingdonshire only 8.9 inches of rain fell in the first eight months of the year, which is about half of what is normally expected. The effect of the drought was accentuated by the series of dry winters which preceded this year. High temperatures and long cloudless days all added to the accumulative effect of the drought. At Monks Wood weather station, a maximum temperature of 92°F was recorded in June, and July was characterised by more than 10 days in which the maximum temperature in a Stevenson Screen was above 85°F.

The effect on plant life was noticeable, especially in the signs of drought among many of our more common species — Common Elder (Sambucus nigra) was noticeably limp, with the leaves withered and dead. Hawthorn was largely unaffected, although some bushes turned yellow prematurely, and birch began to shed its leaves in June.

During 1976 there were two outstanding botanical events. First, was the discovery by the Peterborough Museum Society of the Marsh Helleborine (Epipactis palustris) in disused claypits near Pickpocket Bridge, Woodston. A single plant in flower was found on a field excursion on July 9th and Mr. Lewin, who has kept an eye on it ever since informs me that it set seed. As the clay pit was scheduled for infilling, Mr. Lewin arranged for a digger to transfer the block of soil containing the specimen to another pit. The Marsh Helleborine was last recorded in the county in 1896 by E.W. Hunnybun, the locality being Holme Fen. It is of more than passing interest that the only other record, by Mrs. Bird in the second half of the nineteenth century, was from Yaxley, possibly near to the site of the present find. Unfortunately we shall never be sure whether our specimen is a descendent of Mrs. Bird's plant or has originated from seed blown in from afar.

The second outstanding event has been the discovery of two colonies of the Greater Dodder (Cuscuta europaea) growing on nettles alongside the River Ouse, at Great Paxton, on a H.F.F.S. outing and at Eynesbury, by Peter Walker. The only other record for this species this century is from Easton. The Great Dodder is a nationally rare species and it would be worth while searching other stretches of the Ouse for this parasite of nettles.

Records are given in the same form as in previous reports, the 4 or 6 figure grid reference accompanying each record, the 100 km square 52 (TL) being omitted. The following initials are used for the recorders:— Dr. B.N.K. Davis (B.N.K.D.), Mr. R. Elloway (R.E.), Mr. P. Walker (P.W.), Mrs. S.E. Wells (S.E.W.), Mr. T.C.E. Wells (T.C.E.W.).

Phyllitis scolopendrium (L.) Newm. Hart's-tongue Fern. One plant on a moist, shady bank on the plateau of Waresley Wood, 264545, May 1 (P.W. and R.E.).

Ophioglossum vulgatum L. Adder's tongue. One plant with sporangium, old meadow grass-land, Hemingford Grey, 292692, June 2 (T.C.E.W.); old meadow grassland, Bankside, Great Paxton, 212653, May 15 (P.W.); many plants, some fertile, on woodland ride in Waresley Wood, 263545, May 1 (T.C.E.W.).

Helleborus viridis L. Bear's-foot. Ancient deciduous woodland, now replanted with conifers. Single, non-flowering plant. 149697, May 22 (S.E.W.). The only recent record from old woodland.

Ranunculus ficaria L. ssp. bulbifer (Marsden-Jones) Lawalree. Lesser Celandine. A special search for this subspecies, which reproduces vegetatively by means of bulbils in the leaf axils, produced the following records: banks of Alconbury Brook, at Upton, 152794, May 22 (S.E.W.); stream bank, Great Gransden, 252559, May 16 (T.C.E.W.); grassland cut annually for hay, Bankside, Great Paxton, 212653, May 15 (S.E.W.); park grassland, shaded hedgerow, Lattenbury Hill, Papworth St. Agnes, 269657, May 15 (T.C.E.W.); ditch bank, Great Staughton, 126647, June 1 (T.C.E.W.). More records of this subspecies would be welcome.

Papaver lecoqii Lamotte Babington's Poppy. Recognised by its yellow latex, and the petals not overlapping at base. Waste ground, Hail Weston, 152635, June 1 (T.C.E.W.).

Rorippa microphylla x nasturtium-aquaticum (R. x sterilis) Airy-Shaw. A triploid hybrid of watercress. Frequent in dried out mud at edge of lagoon, St. Neots Common. Plants with a few or no seeds in pods, 184615, July 1 (T.C.E.W.).

Arabidopsis thaliana (L.) Heynh. Top of old brick wall, Manor House, Papworth St. Agnes, 269647, May 15 (T.C.E.W.).

Coronilla varia L. Crown Vetch. Naturalized around Eaton Socon Mills, 173588, June 14 (P.W.).

Pyrus communis L. Pear. Four large trees by roadside, remote from present-day habitation, 097784, April 26; 1 large tree in flower, Steeple Gidding, 142813, May 4 (T.C.E.W.).

Daphne laureola L. Spurge Laurel. Abundant in hedgerow at top of hill, Breach Road, Ellington, 161699, May 22 (T.C.E.W.).

Conopodium majus (Gouan) Loret Pignut. Frequent in ridge and furrow grassland, Great Staughton, 153635, June 1 (T.C.E.W.).

Heracleum mantegazzianum Somm. and Lev. Giant Hogweed. Roadside verge, Upton, 100607, May 25 (T.C.E.W.).

Rumex acetosella L. Sheep's Sorrel. Frequent in market garden on the Lower Greensand, Waresley, 241539, May 16 (T.C.E.W.).

Rumex pulcher L. Fiddler Dock. Not infrequent around St. Neots, where it has been known since at least 1950. Uncommon elsewhere in the county. Shady Lane Playing Field, 187604, July 20; riverside grassland, Coneygeare, Eynesbury, 182597, July 7; Cromwell Road, Eynesbury, grass verge, 188592, July 13; grassland, Eaton Socon village green, 170588, August 1. All records by (R.E.).

Helxine soleirolii Req. Mind-your-own-business. Naturalized around damp edge of abandoned house, St. Ives, 309704, June 2 (T.C.E.W.).

Quercus cerris L. Turkey Oak. Planted tree, parkland, Great Staughton, 126647, June 1 (T.C.E.W.).

Lymphytum x uplandicum Nyman Blue Comfrey. Abundant, and of an unusual blue colour, on waste ground near River Kym, Great Staughton, 136646, June 1, (T.C.E.W.).

Cuscuta europaea L. Large Dodder. Two records of this nationally rare species growing on nettles among vegetation fringing the River Ouse, 206645, August 8 (H.F.F.S.); Eynesbury, 174591, July 14 (P.W.). Only other recent record (1970) from Easton.

Datura stramonium L. Thorn-apple. A species which always attracts attention and probably benefited from the unusually hot weather. Allotment garden, east of Yaxley, 193922, September 12 (F.J. Lewin); about 20 plants in a vegetable garden. Common Lane, Hemingford Abbots, 274714, August (Stanley Carter); in garden, after excavations for main drainage, 3077, "Highbanks", Church Street, Oldhurst, August 14 (C.M. Johnson via L. Farrell).

Verbascum thapsus L. Aaron's Rod. About 15 plants on roadside, Little Paxton, 184625, August 4 (R.E.).

Rhinanthus minor L. Yellow-Rattle. Old meadow grassland, Hemingford Grey, 292692, June 2 (T.C.E.W.). A once plentiful species which is becoming uncommon with the destruction of old meadows.

Galeobdolon luteum Huds. Yellow Archangel. Many plants on ditch bank on east side of Waresley Wood, 241537, May 16 (T.C.E.W.).

Lamium hybridum Vill. Cut-leaved Dead-nettle. Fallow land, Abbots Ripton, 235773, June 2 (B.N.K.D.).

Campanula rotundifolia L. Harebell. About 5 plants in dry, alluvial grassland, St. Neots Common, 184614, July 1 (R.E.). A welcome record of a locally uncommon plant.

Scabiosa columbaria L. Small Scabious. About 20 plants, some in flower, in dry, sandy bank, St. Neots Common, 182613, July 1 (R.E. and T.C.E.W.).

Lilybium marianum (L.) Gaertn. Milk-Thistle. In re-seeded grassland, Alconbury Weston, 1 plant, 175769, May 22. Found by Mrs. M.E. Brooks, seen also by T.C.E.W.; several plants on Conington rubbish dump, the first record since 1904.

Sagittaria sagittifolia L. Arrow-head. Edge of River Ouse, Great Paxton, 206645, August 8, (H.F.F.S.); 1 plant in flower, Eaton Meadows, 180597, July 9 (R.E.).

Butomus umbellatus L. Flowering Rush. Backwater, Eaton Meadows, 180597, July 9; River Ouse at Great Paxton, 206645, August 8 (H.F.F.S.).

Ornithogalum umbellatum L. Star-of-Bethlehem. About 10 plants in flower, near site of old house, Great Staughton, 126647, June 1 (S.E.W.); two groups, possibly planted, in old meadow, Hemingford Grey, 292692, June 2 (T.C.E.W.).

Epipactis palustris (L.) Crantz. Marsh Helleborine. Edge of old clay pits, with Juncus effusus and Schoenus lacustris, near Pickpocket Bridge, Woodston, 184947, July 9, 1 plant in flower. Found by the Peterborough Museum Society and shown to me on July 11.

Listera ovata (L.) R.Br. Twayblade. In old meadow grassland, Hemingford Grey, 292692, June 2 (T.C.E.W.).

Dactylorhiza incarnata (L.) Vermeul. Meadow Orchid. Many hundreds of plants in flower, grazed grassland, Compt. 127, Woodwalton Fen, 225835, July 18; 1 plant in fruit, wet meadow grassland, Lammas Meadow, St. Neots, 180609, July 1 (T.C.E.W. and R.E.).

Schoenoplectus lacustris (L.) Palla Bulrush. Frequent in River Kym, Hail Weston, 155639, June 1 (T.C.E.W.).

Carex disticha Huds. Brown Sedge. Frequent in meadow grassland, Bankside, Great Paxton, 212653, May 15 (T.C.E.W.).

Poa nemoralis L. Wood Poa. Streambank and under trees, Great Gransden, 252560 and 252559, May 16 (T.C.E.W.).

Poa palustris L. Frequent in Copper Field and on ride east of mere, Woodwalton Fen N.N.R. This rare species is still widespread and abundant at this site, 232849, July 18 (T.C.E.W.).

Briza media L. Quaking Grass. Base-rich grassland around family tomb, Great Staughton churchyard, 125648, June 1 (S.E.W.).

Koeleria cristata (L.) Pers. Crested Hair-grass. Dry sand bank, between meadows, Lammas Meadow, St. Neots, 182613, July 1 (T.C.E.W.). The fourth record since 1956. Still very rare in the county.

Helictotrichon pubescens (Huds.) Pilger. Hairy Oat. Old meadow grassland, Hemingford Grey, 292692, June 2; dry grassland, Lammas Meadow, St. Neots, 182613, July 1; base-rich grassland by River Kym, Great Staughton, 153635, June 1, all records by (T.C.E.W.).

Phalaris canariensis L. Canary Grass. Bird seed alien, waste ground, Cromwell Road, Eynesbury, 192595, June 8 (R.E.).

FUNGI

Sheila Wells

The very wet autumn which followed the long summer drought resulted in an unusually abundant fruiting season of fungi, both in numbers of species and in the quantity of fruit bodies produced.

Edible species were plentiful. The field mushroom, horse mushroom and wood mushrooms appearing in large numbers over a long period. The very large species Agaricus macrosporus (F.H. Møller & J. Schaeff.) Pilát, was recorded for the first time from Raveley, Waresley and Wistow Woods. Agaricus xanthodermus Genevier — the Yellow Stainer was abundant, often forming rings as seen on the Society foray to Waresley Wood. The other yellow staining species Agaricus placomyces Peck, which has black scales on the cap is less common, but was recorded from Holme Fen and Castor Hanglands.

Lawyers Wig (Coprinus comatus (Müll. ex Fr.) S.F. Gray is a member of the group known as the Ink Caps which respond more rapidly than any other genus to wet conditions, fruited vigorously on roadside verges and waste ground. Thousands of fruit bodies were found on the Connington Dump when visited by the Society in October. Lepiota rhacodes (Vitt.) Quél. considered by many to be the most delicious of the edible fungi appeared in all the woods, spinneys and many fields and fruited for an unusually long period.

Of the other species recorded on Society forays and by individual collectors, the following are of particular interest:—

Rhodotus palmatus (Bull. ex Fr.) Maire — a rather uncommon species which grows on fallen elm and has an apricot pink, gelatinous cap which is often wrinkled in the early stages was found on the Waresley Wood foray.

Lentinus tigrinus (Bull. ex Fr.) Fr., also a lignicole, white, with decurrent gills and black scales on the cap and stem, was recorded from Woodwalton Fen and Lady's Wood by two different collectors on the same day!

Lepista irina (Fr.) Biglow which has a distinctive smell of violets or orris root, is a new county record and was found at Waresley Wood and Castor Hanglands.

Oudemansiella longipes (Bull. ex St. Amans) Moser — a species considered to be rare, has a white cap and gills and a distinctive velvety brown stem which is spindle shaped, was also found at Waresley Wood.

Conocybe striaepes (Cooke) Lundell — a species not often met with was discovered by the recorder under a Hebe bush in an Upwood garden and subsequently found in abundance on the sports field at the Ailwyn School, Ramsey, is also a new county record.

Flammulina velutipes var. lactea Quéf. — a white form of the very common Velvet Shank was collected in Wistow Wood in October. It is extremely uncommon and material from the collection has been deposited in the Herbarium at Kew.

Phlegmacium silvamonachorum Reid, Murton and Westwood Sp. nov. — is a member of the very large and difficult genus Cortinari which was collected in Monks Wood in 1974 by Nigel Westwood and Dr. R. Murton. It has been found to be a species new to science and is illustrated and described by Dr. D.A. Reid in the Annual Report of the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology 1975.

NEW, RARE OR INTERESTING HUNTINGDONSHIRE LICHENS — 1

P.M. Earland—Bennett

INTRODUCTION

The number of published lichen records for Huntingdonshire is small compared with many other English counties. Contributions by Laundon (1957, 1972 and 1973), Gilbert (1958) and Earland—Bennett (1976) have helped to rectify this situation (127 taxa altogether), but in the last few years recording has been undertaken by several workers, the result of which have remained unpublished. This paper, which is to be the first of a series, is an attempt to publish the more important of these records.

In the following list thirty—one species and one variety are published as occurring in Huntingdonshire for the first time. Seven of these new records and another nine taxa are reported here as additional to the list for Monks Wood (excluding the Experimental Station itself) compiled by Laundon (1973), making fifty species in all. Where only a single published record existed prior to this paper, all additional ones are listed here. Notes are also given on a few species of particular interest. New Huntingdonshire records are prefixed by an asterisk (*) and new records for Monks Wood by a dagger (†). Specimens now in the Bankfield Museum, Halifax, and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh are indicated by the letters HFX and E respectively. The author was responsible for all records unless otherwise stated. Recorders are abbreviated as follows:—

BJC = B.J. Coppins
PMEB = P.M. Earland—Bennett
JLG = J.L. Gilbert
CJBH = C.J.B. Hitch
MRDS = M.R.D. Seaward
TDVS = T.D.V. Swinscow

SPECIES LIST

- * Acarospora fuscata (Nyl.) Arnold — First recorded 18.11.75, 52/090987, Stibbington, top of sandstone headstone in churchyard, PMEB, HFX; also noted from churchyards at Elton (52/089936), Morborne (52/139915), Catworth (52/088733), Tilbrook (52/080692), Grafham (52/159691), Hamerton (52/137796) and Winwick (52/105806).
- *† Arthonia spadicea Leight. — 7.9.74, 52/17, Monks Wood, shaded bole of Fraxinus, BJC, E.
- * Bacidia umbrina (Ach.) Bausch — First recorded 20.6.74, 52/116947, Chesterton, mortar of bridge over Billing Brook, PMEB; also noted from Elton (52/089936), Morborne (52/139915), Brampton (52/214707), Grafham (52/178694) and Alconbury Weston (52/175771).
- *† "Bacidia" sp. = "Bacidia sp. B" of Rose and James (1974); 7.9.74, 52/17, Monks Wood, on Corylus, Fraxinus and Salix, BJC, E.
- * Buellia aethalea (Ach.) Th. Fr. — 30.6.76, 52/214707, Brampton, top of sandstone headstone in churchyard, PMEB.
- B. canescens (Dicks.) DNot. — This normally sterile species was found fertile on a sandstone headstone in Hamerton Churchyard, 52/137796, 4.8.76, PMEB, HFX.
- Calicium viride Pers. — 7.9.74, 52/17, Monks Wood, on Acer campestre, BJC, E; 14.10.75, 52/27, Monks Wood, MRDS & CJBH; 4.8.76, 52/28, East Edge, Monks Wood, on Quercus, PMEB, HFX; 4.8.76, 52/18, Hotel Ride, Monks Wood, on Fraxinus, PMEB, HFX.
- Caloplaca teicholyta (Ach.) Steiner — Laundon (1957) noted that sterile forms resembling this species were abundant in the churchyards at Barham, Great Gidding and Keyston. I have also found this to be true and have noted sterile forms in the churchyards at Elton (52/089936), Morborne (52/139915), Caldecote (52/141884), Catworth (52/088733), Brampton (52/214707), Grafham (52/159691), Hamerton (52/137796) and Winwick (52/105806). However, on the 4.8.76 I noted a single fertile specimen growing amongst many sterile ones on the oolitic limestone walls of Upton church (52/105804), confirming that the sterile forms are in fact this species. It is of interest to note that in the churchyards I have visited up to the present time this species is better developed and more numerous on the oolitic limestone walls of the churches than on the oolitic limestone gravestones. Frequently growing with this species on church walls is Caloplaca aurantia, which I have also only rarely recorded on gravestones. It is also of interest to note that I found Caloplaca teicholyta in the centre of Huntingdon (52/240718) growing on an asbestos—cement roof.

- C. variabilis* (Pers.) Müll. Arg. — First recorded 24.11.75, 52/089936, Elton, oolitic limestone tombstone in churchyard, PMEB, HFX; also noted on an oolitic limestone headstone in the churchyard at Brampton (52/214707) and on a concrete trough in a pasture at Winwick (52/109807).
- Candelariella aurella* (Hoffm.) Zahlbr. — First recorded by MRDS, 29.4.67, 52/27, Monks Wood Experimental Station; I have recorded this species from Water Newton (Earland—Bennett, 1976), Little Stukeley (52/27), Chesterton (52/116947), Huntingdon (52/240718), Easton (52/137716) and Alconbury Weston (52/175771).
- * *C. coralliza* (Nyl.) Magnusson — 30.6.76, 52/080692, Tilbrook, vertical surface of sandstone gravestone in churchyard, PMEB (a single fertile specimen).
- C. reflexa* (Nyl.) Lett. — First recorded from Water Newton (Earland—Bennett, 1976); also found on trunk of *Salix* in pasture, 52/134797, Hamerton, 4.8.76, PMEB, HFX.
- * *Catillaria chalybeia* (Borr.) Massal. — 19.8.76, 52/109807, Winwick, concrete trough in pasture, PMEB, HFX.
- * *C. lenticularis* (Ach.) Th. Fr. — 24.11.75, 52/139915, Morborne, oolitic limestone gravestone in churchyard, PMEB, HFX.
- * *Cladonia conistea* (Del.) Asah. — 10.9.74, 52/1989, Holme Fen, soil of ride, BJC, E.
- *† *Coniocybe sulphurea* (Retz.) Nyl. — 7.9.74, 52/17, Monks Wood, on *Acer campestre*, BJC, E.
- † *Dimerella diluta* (Pers.) Trevis — 7.9.74, 52/17, Monks Wood, shaded bark of *Acer campestre* and *Corylus*, BJC, E.
- * *Diploschistes scruposus* (Shreb.) Norm. — 24.11.75, 52/089936, Elton, vertical surface of sandstone gravestone, PMEB.
- *† *Graphis elegans* (Borr. ex Sm.) Ach. — 7.9.74, 52/17, Monks Wood, one plant seen on *Corylus*, BJC.
- * *Gyalecta jenensis* (Batsch) Zahlbr. — 18.11.75, 52/090987, Stibbington, partially shaded oolitic limestone wall in churchyard, PMEB, HFX (imperfect state only).
- *† *Gyalideopsis anastomosans* P. James & Vězda — 7.9.74, 52/17, Monks Wood, BJC, E. (sterile).
- * *Haematomma ochroleucum* var. *ochroleucum* (Neck.) Laund. — First recorded 24.11.75, 52/089936, Elton, vertical surface of oolitic limestone gravestone in churchyard, PMEB; also noted in churchyards at Tilbrook (52/080692), Brampton (52/214707), Grafham (52/159691) and Hamerton (52/137796).

- * *H. ochroleucum* var. *porphyrium* (Pers.) Laund. — First recorded 18.11.75, 52/090987, Stibbington, vertical surface of sandstone gravestone in churchyard, PMEB; also noted in churchyards at Elton (52/089936), Morborne (52/139915), Brampton (52/214707) and Grafham (52/159691).
- † *Hypogymnia tubulosa* (Schaer.) Hav. — 7.9.74, 52/17, Monks Wood, on decorticate branch, BJC.
- Lecania erysibe* f. *erysibe* (Ach.) Mudd — First recorded from Water Newton (Earland—Bennett, 1976); also noted at Stibbington (52/090987), Elton (52/089936), Huntingdon (52/240718) and Upton (52/174785).
- L. erysibe* f. *sorediata* Laund. — First recorded from Water Newton (Earland—Bennett, 1976); also noted in churchyards at Stibbington (52/090987) and Morborne (52/139915).
- Lecanora atra* (Huds.) Ach. — First recorded for VC 31 by Watson (1953); I have found this species on oolitic limestone and brick of a church wall at Morborne (52/139915) and on sandstone gravestones and the sandstone coping of the churchyard wall at Catworth (52/139915).
- † *L. chlarotera* (Ach.) Nyl. — 7.9.74, 52/17, Monks Wood, BJC.
- * *L. gangaleoides* Nyl. — 4.8.76, 52/174785, Upton, oolitic limestone gravestone in churchyard, PMEB, HFX.
- * *L. intricata* var. *soralifera* Suza — First recorded 24.11.75, 52/089936, Elton, sandstone gravestone in churchyard, PMEB; also noted in churchyard at Morborne (52/139915).
- * *L. sp.* — A consistently distinct taxon closely related to *L. polytropia*, but differing in morphology, ascocarp detail, distribution and, in some areas, in substrate preference. In West Yorkshire this taxon is common in the highly polluted urban areas and is mainly to be found on calcareous substrates (mortar, asbestos—cement, calcareous siltstone). It occurs more sparingly on non—calcareous substrates (mainly siltstones) outside the urban areas (rarely inside) and outside West Yorkshire it appears, for the most part, to be a churchyard species of moderately polluted areas. I have noted this taxon from VC's 18, 19, 31, 53, 54, 55, 56, 60, 62, 63 and 64. In VC 31 I have recorded it in the churchyards at Hamerton (52/137796) and Winwick (52/105806).
- * *Lecidea fuscoatra* var. *grisella* (Flörke ex Schaer.) Nyl. — 24.11.75, 52/089936, Elton, sandstone tomb in churchyard, PMEB, HFX.

- L. tumida Massal. — First recorded from Water Newton (Earland—Bennett, 1976); also noted in churchyards at Stibbington (52/090987), Elton (52/089936), Morborne (52/139915), Catworth (52/088733), Brampton (52/214707), Winwick (52/105806) and Upton (52/174785).
- * Lecidella scabra (Tayl.) Hertel & Leuckert — 4.8.76, 52/137796, Hamerton, sandstone headstone in churchyard, PMEB; also noted in churchyards at Upton (52/174785) and Winwick (52/105806).
- L. stigmata (Ach.) Hertel & Leuckert — First recorded 29.4.67, 52/27, Monks Wood Experimental Station, asbestos—cement roof, MRDS; also noted at Little Stukeley (52/27), Water Newton (Earland—Bennett, 1976), Brampton (52/214707), Huntingdon (52/240718), Hamerton (52/137796), Winwick (52/109807), Upton (52/174785), Easton (52/137716) and Alconbury Weston (52/175771).
- † Lepraria candelaris (L.) Fr. — 7.9.74, 52/17, Monks Wood, on Acer campestre, BJC.
- L. sp. — This undescribed bright green Lepraria was first recorded for VC 31 from Water Newton (Earland—Bennett, 1976); also noted in crevices of oolitic limestone wall by churchyard at Stibbington (52/090987).
- *† Micarea prasina Fr. — 7.9.74, 52/17, Monks Wood, frequent on most trees and shrubs, BJC, E; 14.10.75, 52/27, Monks Wood, MRDS & CJBH; 4.8.76, 52/28, East Edge, Monks Wood, on Carpinus, PMEB, HFX.
- * Opegrapha gyrocarpa Flot. — 4.8.76, 52/174785, Upton, base of vertical sandstone gravestone, PMEB.
- *† O. ochrocheila Nyl. — 7.9.74, 52/17, Monks Wood, abundant on an old Acer campestre, BJC, E.
- Parmelia revoluta Flörke — First recorded from Monks Wood (Laundon, 1973); also noted 7.9.74, 52/17, Monks Wood, BJC.
- Pertusaria coccodes (Ach.) Nyl. — First recorded from Monks Wood (Laundon, 1973); also noted 7.9.74, 52/17, Monks Wood, BJC.
- Physcia nigricans (Flörke) Stiz. — First recorded 14.10.75, 52/27, Monks Wood Experimental Station, asbestos—cement roof, MRDS & CJBH; also noted on inclined Fraxinus in pasture at Hamerton (52/134797) and on asbestos—cement roof and concrete wall in farmyard at Easton (52/137716).
- † P. tenella (Scop.) DC. em. Bitt. — 7.9.74, 52/17, Monks Wood, BJC.
- Placynthium nigrum (Huds.) Gray — First recorded from Water Newton (Earland—Bennett, 1976); also noted in churchyards at Stibbington (52/090987) and Elton (52/089936).

- † Platismatia glauca (L.) Culb. & Culb. — 7.9.74, 52/17, Monks Wood, on decorticate branch, BJC; 14.10.75, 52/27, Monks Wood, MRDS & CJBH.
- Polyblastia dermatodes Massal. — First recorded from Water Newton (Earland—Bennett, 1976); also noted on oolitic limestone gravestone in churchyard at Stibbington (52/090987).
- *† Porina chlorotica var. carpinea (Pers.) Keissl. — 7.9.74, 52/17, Monks Wood, on Acer campestre, BJC, E.
- Protoblastenia rupestris (Scop.) Steiner — First recorded 29.4.67, 52/27, Monks Wood Experimental Station, asbestos—cement roof, MRDS; also noted from Water Newton (Earland—Bennett, 1976), and in churchyards at Elton (52/089936), Catworth (52/088733), Upton (52/174785) and Winwick (52/105806).
- * Rhizocarpon obscuratum (Ach.) Massal. — 24.11.75, 52/089936, Elton, sandstone and granite tombs in churchyard, PMEB, HFX.
- Rinodina exigua (Ach.) Gray — First recorded January 1955, 52/06, Kimbolton, on Ulmus, TDVS; also noted from Water Newton (Earland—Bennett, 1976), Chesterton (52/116947), Stibbington (52/086986) and Winwick (52/109807).
- * R. teichophila (Nyl.) Arnold — 30.6.76, 52/080692, Tilbrook, sandstone gravestone in churchyard, PMEB, HFX.
- Sarcogyne regularis Körb. — First recorded 1960, 52/09, Stibbington, limestone wall, JLG; also noted from Water Newton (Earland—Bennett, 1976), on oolitic limestone gravestone in churchyard at Upton (52/174785) and on concrete in farmyard at Easton (52/137716).
- * Thelidium decipiens (Nyl.) Kremp. — 4.8.76, 52/174785, Upton, oolitic limestone gravestone in churchyard, PMEB, HFX.
- Toninia aromatica (Sm.) Massal. — First recorded from Water Newton (Earland—Bennett, 1976); also noted in churchyards at Stibbington (52/090987), Elton (52/089936), Morborne (52/139915), Brampton (52/214707) and Upton (52/174785).
- * Trapelia coarctata (Turn. ex Sm.) Choisy — 24.11.75, 52/089936, Elton, sandstone tomb in churchyard, PMEB, HFX.
- * Verrucaria coerulea DC. — 19.8.76, 52/105806, Winwick, oolitic limestone wall, PMEB, HFX.

V. glaucina Ach. — First recorded from Water Newton (Earland—Bennett, 1976); also noted in churchyards at Stibbington (52/090987), Catworth (52/088733) and Upton (52/174785).

V. hochstetteri Fr. — First recorded from Water Newton (Earland—Bennett, 1976); also noted on oolitic limestone wall at Stibbington (52/090987).

† V. muralis Ach. — 4.8.76, 52/28, Main Ride, Monks Wood, sandstone block in ground along ride, PMEB.

† V. nigrescens Pers. — 4.8.76, 52/28, East Edge, Monks Wood, concrete block in ground along ride, PMEB, HFX.

V. sphinctrina Ach. — First recorded from Water Newton (Earland—Bennett, 1976); also noted in churchyards at Brampton (52/214707), Grafham (52/159691), Upton (52/174785), and Winwick (52/105806).

V. viridula f. viridula (Schrad.) Ach. — First recorded from Water Newton (Earland—Bennett, 1976); also noted in churchyards at Stibbington (52/090987), Grafham (52/159691) and Catworth (52/088133).

V. viridula f. tectorum (Massal.) Laund. — First recorded from Water Newton (Earland—Bennett, 1976); also noted on oolitic limestone wall at Stibbington (52/090987).

Xanthoria elegans (Link) Th. Fr. — First recorded 14.10.75, 52/27, Monks Wood Experimental Station, asbestos—cement roof, MRDS & CJBH; also noted from Water Newton (Earland—Bennett, 1976) and on farmyard asbestos—cement roof at Alconbury Weston (52/175771).

X. fallax (Hepp) Arnold — First recorded from Water Newton (Earland—Bennett, 1976); also noted on bole of Ulmus in pasture at Catworth (52/085736).

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RECENT COLEOPTERA RECORDS FROM HUNTINGDONSHIRE WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO MONKS WOOD AND WOODWALTON FEN

NATIONAL NATURE RESERVES

R. Colin Welch

Monks Wood Experimental Station

In last year's Annual Report I gave details of a number of early records of Coleoptera collected by Rev. C.E. Tottenham which pre-dated known published records. A further record has since come to my attention. Tottenham's notebooks list Agonum muelleri (Hbst.) as collected in Monks Wood on 3 June 1950, well before my first record in 1966 (Welch, 1970). In Monks Wood, A Reserve Record (Steele & Welch, 1973) 13 species of Staphylinidae are daggered, indicating that they have not been recorded since the publication of the Victoria County History (Omer—Cooper, 1926). However, Tottenham's manuscript lists record Philonthus succicola Thom., also on 3.6.50, whilst the remaining twelve species are all recorded from Monks Wood during May but with no indication of the year. Omer—Cooper, referring to Tottenham's contribution states that it was "from his manuscript list of Coleoptera collected by himself in the autumn of 1924". Thus the May records must be from some date after 1926. Apart from the above two dates at present no other collecting dates for Monks Wood have been found although Tottenham was certainly active in other parts of the county between 1939 and 1952. A study of his collection, deposited in the British Museum (Natural History), may provide the answer.

In the following list four species are recorded from Monks Wood for the first time since 1926, and ten species are new to Woodwalton Fen N.N.R. The latter were all extracted from sedge refuse collected by J.N. Greatorex—Davies on 19.3.76 along Bungalow Drive at the edges of compartments 45 and 49. Four of these, together with one species collected elsewhere appear to be the first records from this county.

Nomenclature follows Kloet & Hincks (1945) and Tottenham (1949) for the Staphylinidae.

† species previously not recorded in Monks Wood since 1926, i.e. the dagger can be removed from the list in Steele & Welch (1973).

* indicates a new record for Woodwalton Fen N.N.R.

+ indicates new record for Vice County 31 (Huntingdonshire).

PTILIIDAE

† Ptenidium nitidum (Heer) 13.6.75, MW, 1 male in rabbit's nest in burrow in Southedge Ride.

MICROPEPLIDAE

* Micropeplus fulvus Er. 1 male, 1 female WWF.

* M. staphylinoides (Marsh.) 1 female WWF, together with one unidentified Micropeplus larva.

STAPHYLINIDAE

* Platystethus nitens Sahlb. 2 male, 4 female WWF.

*+ Euaesthetus ruficapillus Lac. 7 WWF.

*+ Quedius (Microsaurus) nigrocaeruleus Fauv. 1 female WWF.

*+ Q. (Sauridus) scintillans (Gr.) 2 male, 1 female WWF.

† Gyrophana (s.str.) nana (Pk.) 8.9.75, MW, 1 male in Polyporus squamosus on ash stool in compt. 14b, Owl Ride (Coll. J.N. Greatorex-Davies).

* Amischa forcipata (Muls. & Rey) 2 male, 1 female WWF.

* A. decipiens (Shp.) 5 female WWF.

*+ Calodera aethiops Gr. 1 female WWF.

PTINIDAE

+ Ptinus sexpunctatus Pz. 23.9.75, one specimen collected by J.H. Cole in his house at Brampton. It died with its wings protruding from the elytra which may indicate that it flew to light.

RHIZOPHAGIDAE

† Monotoma brevicollis Aubé 20.6.75, MW, 1 male in heap of cut grass by garage (Field Plot 15).

CRYPTOPHAGIDAE

* Atomaria lewisi Reitt. a single specimen, WWF.

COCCINELLIDAE

Scymnus (Pullus) haemorrhoidalis Hbst. This species should have been daggered in Steele & Welch after a specimen swept in Stocking Close Ride in 1965 was re-identified as Pullus auritus (Thnb.) (Pope, 1973). However, this specimen has recently been confirmed when one was swept on 6.6.75 from Ajuga etc. in Sallow Ride adjacent to compt. 26.

MELANDRYIDAE

Hypulus quercinus (Quens.) 6.6.75, MW, a single specimen swept beneath ash in Badger Ride at the edge of compt. 24. This is the first record of this species since June 1939 (Tozer, 1947).

BRUCHIDAE

Bruchus affinis Froeh. erroneously recorded as a new county record (Welch, 1975) under the generic name Callosobruchus. A single female was taken on 12.8.76 in the Rothamsted Light Trap in the meteorological enclosure at Monks Wood.

ANTHRIBIDAE

Platystomos albinus (L.) 4.5.75, Brampton Wood, a single specimen recorded by M.J.L. Skelton on an aspen trunk.

ATTELABIDAE

Byctiscus betulae (L.) The present status of this species remains doubtful. Dr. M.G. Morris never found it and believed it to be extinct in Monks Wood. Until recently the only record known was in a manuscript list prepared by D. Tozer in 1958 in which he described it as "not common on birch" but gave no date. I have now seen

a single specimen taken by H.E. Henson on hazel in Monks Wood on 19.5.57. He also has seven specimens taken at Castor Hanglands N.N.R. on 23.5.53.

SCOLYTIDAE

† Hylesinus oleiperda (F.) 6.6.75, MW, one by sweeping Ajuga etc in Hotel Ride at the edge of compt. 20.

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MONKS WOOD BUTTERFLIES 1976

M.L. King, E. Pollard

In 1976 the butterfly census continued in Monks Wood. The butterfly numbers are counted over a fixed route through the wood, weekly from April 1 until the last week in September. The method is described in detail by Pollard et al (1975).

The weather last summer made 1976 a particularly interesting year. Following the fine summer of 1975, some of the rarer species of butterfly have done particularly well, for example, the Black hairstreak, (none were recorded on the transect in 1975) and the White admiral. Also the Red admiral, which migrates to Britain from the continent in the early spring, has been much more abundant as again, none were recorded on the transect in 1975 (Fig. 1).

Many of the commoner species, which favour sheltered fields, woodland edge and glade habitats, have also increased their numbers since the particularly poor summer of 1974, for example, the Meadow brown, Hedge brown and Ringlet (Fig. 2).

Conversely, one of the more shade loving species, the Green-veined white, has apparently been adversely affected by the high temperatures. The Wall too, may have been adversely affected by the drought conditions, after its rise in numbers in 1975, as the open fields and grasses on which it lays were badly scorched by the time the adult butterflies of the second brood had emerged (Fig. 3). The numbers of Large whites fell considerably during the year possibly reflecting the poor survival and quality of the brassica crops.

It will be interesting to see what effect the drought has had on other grass and herb feeding species. Numbers of many species could well be low in 1977 due to the drying up of food plants in 1976.

Below is a table showing the index of abundance of the species occurring in Monks Wood.

TABLE 1

Index of abundance of species occurring in Monks Wood 1976. If more than one flight period can be distinguished, index values are given separately. Previous years values see Pollard et al (1976).

Species	Index	
Small skipper <u>Thymelicus sylvestris</u> (Poda)		12.1
Large skipper <u>Ochlodes venata</u> (Br. & Grey)		5.7
Grizzled skipper <u>Pyrgus malvae</u> (L.)		3.6
Wood white <u>Leptidea sinapis</u> (L.)		0.2
Brimstone <u>Gonepteryx rhamni</u> (L.)	19.8	19.0
Small white <u>Pieris rapae</u> (L.)	1.7	14.9

TABLE 1

(continued)

Species	Index		
Orange tip <u>Anthocaris cardamines</u> (L.)		11.6	
Purple hairstreak <u>Quercusa quercus</u> (L.)		1.5	
White-letter hairstreak <u>Strymonidia w-album</u> (L.)		2.1	
Small copper <u>Lycena phlaeas</u> (L.)		5.0	
Common blue <u>Polyommatus icarus</u> (Rott.)	0.2	1.7	
Holly blue <u>Celastrina argiolus</u> (L.)		0.0	
Small tortoiseshell <u>Aglais urticae</u> (L.)	4.0	6.0	1.0
Peacock <u>Inachis io</u> (L.)	13.0	18.8	
Comma <u>Polygonia c-album</u> (L.)	1.2	1.5	1.0
Speckled wood <u>Pararge aegeria</u> (L.)		8.7	
Small heath <u>Coenonympha pamphilus</u> (L.)		76.4	

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FIGURE 1

Index values for Red admiral Vanessa atalanta (L.), White admiral Ladoga camilla (L.), and Black hairstreak Strymonidia pruni (L.).

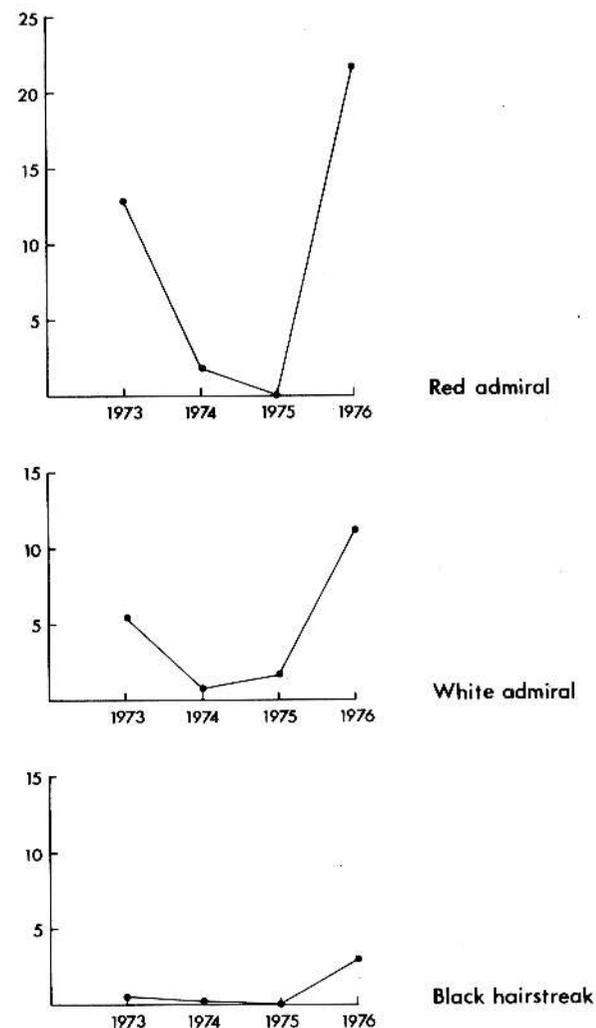


FIGURE 2

Index values for Meadow brown Maniola jurtina (L.), Hedge brown Pyronia tithonus (L.), and Ringlet Aphantopus hyperantus (L.).

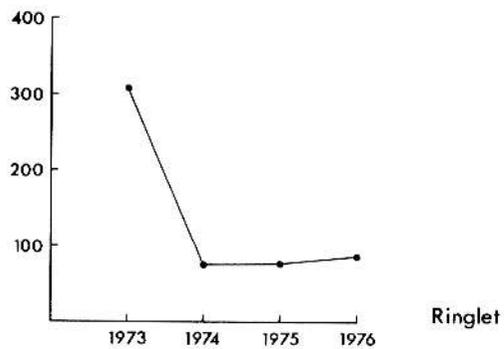
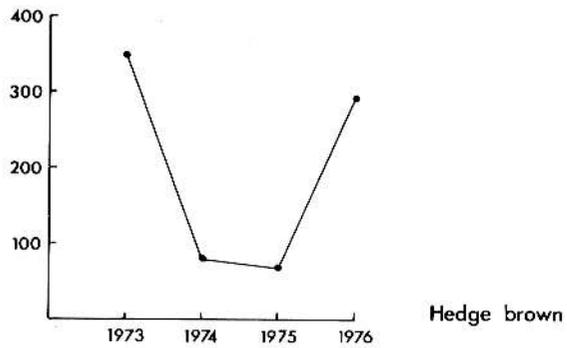
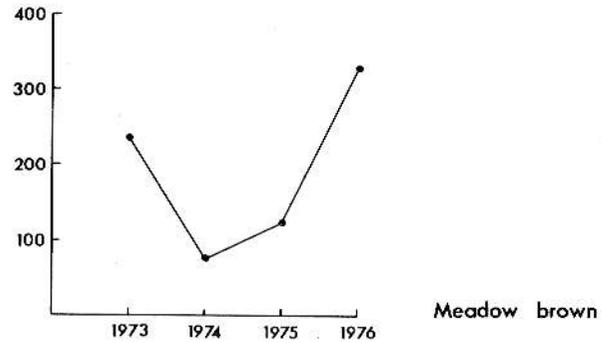
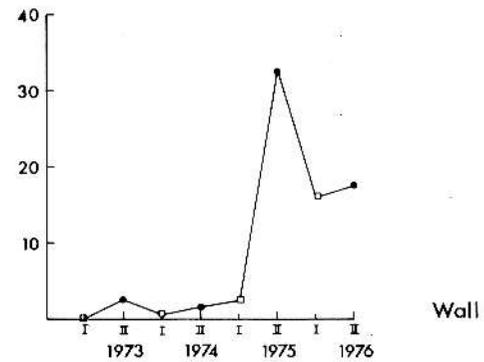
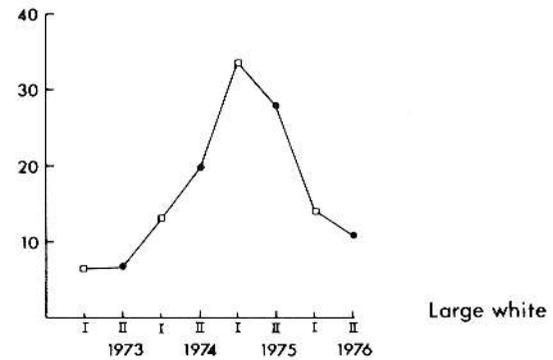
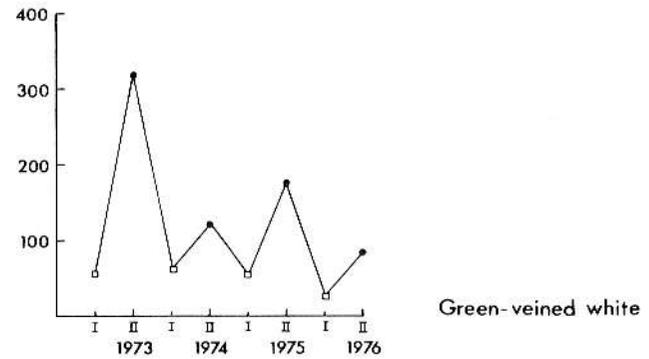


FIGURE 3

Index values for Green-veined white Pieris napi (L.), Large white Pieris brassicae (L.) and Wall Lasiommata megera (L.).



LEPIDOPTERA — 1976

J. Heath

Monks Wood Experimental Station

This year has been notable for the number of rare immigrants reported. Nationally the arrival of large numbers of the Camberwell Beauty butterfly (Nymphalis antiopa L.) has been the outstanding occurrence. Some 250 individuals have been recorded throughout Britain (the greatest number since 1872 and only the third time more than 50 have been seen in any one year), two of which, at Alwalton, Nr. Peterborough 3 September (Andrew Guthrie) and Westwood, Peterborough, 22 August (G.E. Higgs) were seen in Huntingdonshire. The Camberwell Beauty migrates to Britain from Scandinavia where there has been a westward extension of its range in recent years. Large numbers were seen flying out to sea from Jutland, Denmark immediately prior to its arrival in Britain this year.

The Convolvulus Hawk moth (Herse convolvuli L.) was seen in Meadow Lane, St. Ives on 4 September (R. Parslow) and at Fletton, Peterborough on 10 September (per J. Heath) and the Hummingbird Hawk moth (Macroglossum stellatarum L.) at Stilton, 29 August (D.W. Scott), Woodwalton Fen (N.N. Mason) and Grafham Water, 7 July, 25 September (P. Marsh).

A further specimen of the Wood White butterfly (Leptidea sinapis L.) was seen in Monks Wood National Nature Reserve on 21 May 1976 by Dr. E. Pollard. As this is the second successive year in which this species has been recorded in Monks Wood it is interesting to speculate as to whether it will become established.

On the occasion of the Society's moth night at Lady's Wood, 26 June, a total of 69 species was recorded including the Brown Tail, (Euproctis chryorrhoea L.) a species new to the county. Additions to the Pingle Wood Cutting list are the Maple Prominent, (Ptilodontella cucullina D. & S.), Square Spot, (Ectropis consonaria Hb.) and Brown Scallop (Philereme vetulata D. & S.).

An interesting record from 1975 omitted from last year's report is that of the occurrence of the Clouded Yellow butterfly (Colias croceus Geoff.) at Grafham Water where a single specimen was seen on 10 October 1975, the first record of this migrant species in the county since 1960 (J.E.H. Blackie).

DIPTERA OF HUNTINGDONSHIRE (9)

J.H. Cole

Huntingdon Research Centre

This part completes the sub-order Brachycera. Two families, the Xylophagidae and Acroceridae with three species each, have not been recorded from the county although one species of each may occur. The records are my own except where stated otherwise, and the nomenclature follows Kloet and Hincks (1975).

GP = Gravel Pits
NR = Nature Reserve
NNR = National Nature Reserve
MWS = Specimens recorded from Dr. Michael Service's suction traps in Monks Wood 1971-72.

XYLOMYIIDAE

The adults resemble saw-flies and the larvae are found in rotting logs and stumps. There are 3 British species.

Xylomyia marginata (Meig.) Woodwalton, no date (Oldroyd 1969).

RHAGIONIDAE

A family of varied appearance and biology. There are 7 British species.

Chrysopilus aureus (Meig.) Brampton, Ouse flood meadow 27.7.66. Monks Wood NNR 25.8.72. Yelling 16.7.66.

Chrysopilus cristatus (Fab.) Widespread June and July. Brampton, Easton, Hemingford Gray, Monks Wood NNR, Pidley and St. Neots.

Ptiolina obscura (Fall.) Monks Wood NNR 10.7.72 (MWS).

Spania nigra Meig. Waresley Wood NR 18.5.74.

Rhagio lineola Fab. Orton Longueville, Jone's Covert 10.7.66.

Rhagio scolopacea (L.) Brampton, Ouse flood meadow 28.5.66. St. Neots Holt 22.6.71.

Rhagio tringaria (L.) Elton Furze Wood 12.6.71. Monks Wood NNR 7.66 (Wills 1968), and 6.7.68. Orton Longueville, Jone's Covert 10.7.66. Sawtry Roughs 19.6.66. Woodwalton Fen NNR 12.6.68.

TABANIDAE

Horse flies, the females are well known as vicious biters. There are 28 British species but only 3 are at all common in Hunts.

Chrysops caecutiens (L.) Common June–August. Brampton, Easton, Huntingdon, Monks Wood NNR, Pidley, Warboys.

Chrysops relictus Meig. Common and widespread June–August.

Haematopota pluvialis (L.) Common and widespread June–August.

Atylotus rusticus (L.) Monks Wood NNR, no date (Oldroyd 1969).

Hybomitra bimaculata (Macqu.) Brampton 4.7.68. Monks Wood NNR (MWS). Woodwalton Fen NNR (Davis 1965).

Tabanus autumnalis L. Woodwalton Fen NNR, no date (Oldroyd 1969).

Tabanus bromius L. Monks Wood NNR 12.7.66 (Wills 1968), and 6.7.68.

THEREVIDAE

Uncommon flies rather like the next family. Only one of the 13 British species has been recorded from Hunts.

Thereva nobilitata (Fab.) Hemingford Gray, Marsh Lane GP 17.6.63. Ramsey Heights Clay Pits NR 17.6.73. Sawtry Roughs 19.6.66.

ASILIDAE

Robber flies. Medium to large rather conspicuous predatory flies. Again poorly represented in the county, there are 27 British species.

Dioctria atricapilla Meig. Sawtry Roughs 19.6.66.

Dioctria linearis (Fab.) Huntingdon, Hinchingsbrooke Park 13.8.72.

Dioctria rufipes (Deg.) Brampton Race Course 16.6.67. St. Neots Holt 15.6.71.

Leptogaster cylindrica (Deg.) Little Paxton GP 20.7.75.

BOMBYLIIDAE

The only common members are the early bee flies often seen feeding while hovering at primrose flowers, and whose larvae are parasitic in the nests of solitary bees. There are 11 British species.

Bombylius discolor Mikan Brampton Wood 10.5.68.

Bombylius major L. Brampton Wood 1.5.66 and 12.4.71. Easton, Hartham Street and Monks Wood NNR 3.65 (Davis 1965). Waresley Wood NR 18.5.74.

SCENOPINIDAE

Uncommon small black flies usually only found in buildings where their larvae are predatory on the larvae of clothes moths and fleas. There are 3 British species.

Scenopinus fenestralis (L.) Alconbury, Huntingdon Research Centre building 9.7.71.

Scenopinus niger (Deg.) Alconbury, Huntingdon Research Centre building 19.6.69.

DOLICHOPODIDAE

A large but rather uniform family of small to very small predaceous flies, characteristically metallic green and often conspicuous when present in numbers on low vegetation in damp places, or hunting over water. The typical larval habitat is in marshy soil and the mud at the margin of ponds. There are about 250 British species.

Sciapus longulus (Fall.) Brampton, River Lane GP 14.6.66. Hemingford Gray, Marsh Lane GP 30.7.72.

Sciapus platypterus (Fab.) Monks Wood NNR 12.7.66 (Wills 1968). Abbots Ripton, Bevills Wood 11.6.72. Elton Furze Wood 12.6.71. Raveley Wood NR 8.7.73.

Dolichopus andalusiacus Strobl. Little Paxton GP 31.8.74.

Dolichopus brevipennis Meig. Brampton, River Lane GP 2.7.66 and 23.7.66, Race Course 16.6.67. Gt. Paxton, Bankside NR 25.7.66. Elton Park 24.6.72. Stibbington GP 3.6.67.

Dolichopus campestris Meig. Easton, Hartham Street 10.8.69. Stibbington GP 18.8.74.

Dolichopus claviger Stann. Woodwalton Fen NNR 4.7.72

Rhagio tringaria (L.) Elton Furze Wood 12.6.71. Monks Wood NNR 7.66 (Wills 1968), and 6.7.68. Orton Longueville, Jone's Covert 10.7.66. Sawtry Roughs 19.6.66. Woodwalton Fen NNR 12.6.68.

TABANIDAE

Horse flies, the females are well known as vicious biters. There are 28 British species but only 3 are at all common in Hunts.

Chrysops caecutiens (L.) Common June—August. Brampton, Easton, Huntingdon, Monks Wood NNR, Pidley, Warboys.

Chrysops relictus Meig. Common and widespread June—August.

Haematopota pluvialis (L.) Common and widespread June—August.

Atylotus rusticus (L.) Monks Wood NNR, no date (Oldroyd 1969).

Hybomitra bimaculata (Macqu.) Brampton 4.7.68. Monks Wood NNR (MWS). Woodwalton Fen NNR (Davis 1965).

Tabanus autumnalis L. Woodwalton Fen NNR, no date (Oldroyd 1969).

Tabanus bromius L. Monks Wood NNR 12.7.66 (Wills 1968), and 6.7.68.

THEREVIDAE

Uncommon flies rather like the next family. Only one of the 13 British species has been recorded from Hunts.

Thereva nobilitata (Fab.) Hemingford Gray, Marsh Lane GP 17.6.63. Ramsey Heights Clay Pits NR 17.6.73. Sawtry Roughs 19.6.66.

ASILIDAE

Robber flies. Medium to large rather conspicuous predatory flies. Again poorly represented in the county, there are 27 British species.

Dioctria atricapilla Meig. Sawtry Roughs 19.6.66.

Dioctria linearis (Fab.) Huntingdon, Hinchingsbrooke Park 13.8.72.

Dioctria rufipes (Deg.) Brampton Race Course 16.6.67. St. Neots Holt 15.6.71.

Leptogaster cylindrica (Deg.) Little Paxton GP 20.7.75.

BOMBYLIIDAE

The only common members are the early bee flies often seen feeding while hovering at primrose flowers, and whose larvae are parasitic in the nests of solitary bees. There are 11 British species.

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A large but rather uniform family of small to very small predaceous flies, characteristically metallic green and often conspicuous when present in numbers on low vegetation in damp places, or hunting over water. The typical larval habitat is in marshy soil and the mud at the margin of ponds. There are about 250 British species.

Sciapus longulus (Fall.) Brampton, River Lane GP 14.6.66. Hemingford Gray, Marsh Lane GP 30.7.72.

Sciapus platypterus (Fab.) Monks Wood NNR 12.7.66 (Wills 1968). Abbots Ripton, Bevills Wood 11.6.72. Elton Furze Wood 12.6.71. Raveley Wood NR 8.7.73.

Dolichopus andalusiacus Strobl. Little Paxton GP 31.8.74.

Dolichopus brevipennis Meig. Brampton, River Lane GP 2.7.66 and 23.7.66, Race Course 16.6.67. Gt. Paxton, Bankside NR 25.7.66. Elton Park 24.6.72. Stibbington GP 3.6.67.

Dolichopus campestris Meig. Easton, Hartham Street 10.8.69. Stibbington GP 18.8.74.

Dolichopus claviger Stann. Woodwalton Fen NNR 4.7.72

Dolichopus festivus Halid. Common and widespread 19.6 – 16.8.

Dolichopus griseipennis Stann. Little Paxton GP 19.7.75.

Dolichopus latelimbatus Macqu. Bluntisham, Berry Fen 12.7.75. Earith GP 8.8.76. Hemingford Gray, Marsh Lane GP 14.6.70. Little Paxton GP 31.8.74. Monks Wood NNR 19.9.76.

Dolichopus longicornis Stann. Alconbury 12.8.70 and 25.7.75. Brampton, frequent 14.6. – 19.7. Earith GP 8.8.76. Stibbington GP 18.8.74.

Dolichopus nubilus Meig. Alconbury 11.6.74. Brampton, Ouse flood meadow 25.5.67. Earith GP 8.8.76. Monks Wood NNR 19.9.76. St. Neots Holt 15.6.71.

Dolichopus pennatus Meig. Brampton, River Lane GP 28.5.66 and 6.6.71. Bluntisham, Berry Fen 30.5.70. Ramsey Heights Clay Pits NR 27.6.71. St. Neots Holt 22.6.71. Woodwalton Fen NNR 12.6.68.

Dolichopus plumipes (Scop.) Bluntisham, Berry Fen 12.7.75. Earith GP 8.8.76. Hemingford Gray, Marsh Lane GP 14.6.70. St. Neots Holt 22.6.71.

Dolichopus popularis Wiede. Woodwalton Fen NNR 12.6.68 and 3.7.72.

Dolichopus trivialis Halid. Brampton, River Lane GP 2.7.66. Elton Park 24.6.72. Raveley, Lady's Wood NR 11.6.73.

Dolichopus unguatus (L.) Common and widespread June and July.

Dolichopus wahlburgi Zett. Elton Furze Wood 12.6.71. Raveley, Lady's Wood NR 11.6.73. Monks Wood NNR 7.8.66 (Wills 1968), and 11.8.74.

Hercostomus assimilis (Staeg.) Brampton, Ouse flood meadow 6.6.71. St. Neots Holt 15.6.71. Sawtry Roughs 19.6.66.

Hercostomus celer (Meig.) St. Neots Holt 14.5.71.

Hercostomus chrysozygos (Wiede). Ramsey Heights Clay Pits NR 27.6.71.

Hercostomus chalybaeus (Wiede.) Brampton, Ouse Flood meadow 30.6.68.

Hercostomus cupreus (Fall.) Holme Fen NNR 4.6.70.

Hercostomus fulvicaudis (Halid.) Earith GP 21.7.74 and 26.6.76. This is only the 4th British record, the others being single males from Bristol about 1804; Fowlmere, Norfolk 1933; Rockcliffe, Cumberland 1974 (Fonseca pers. comm.).

Hercostomus metallicus (Stann.) Brampton, Ouse flood meadow 23.5.76.

Hercostomus nanus (Macqu.) St. Neots Holt 15.6.71.

Hercostomus nigrilamellatus (Macqu.) Monks Wood NNR 25.6.71 (MWS).

Hercostomus parvilamellatus Macqu. Alconbury 4.6.74. Brampton Wood 23.5.67. Monks Wood NNR 28.6.71 (MWS) and 26.5.74.

Hypophyllus obscurellus Fall. Monks Wood NNR 7 – 8. 66 (Wills 1968), and 19.7.72 (MWS).

Poecilobothrus nobilitatus (L.) Common July and August. Easton, Grafham Water, Monks Wood NNR, Orton Longueville, Raveley Wood NR.

Hydrophorus litoreus Fall. Earith GP 8.8.76. Grafham Water NR 10.8.69.

Hydrophorus praecox (Lehm). Grafham Water NR 13.7.68.

Scellus notatus (Fab.) Brampton, River Lane GP 14.6.66. Glatton 2.7.67.

Medetera dendrobaena Kow. Monks Wood NNR 16.8.66 (Wills 1968). Holme Fen NNR 20.7.73.

Medetera diadema (L.) Alconbury 7.10.73. Brampton, Lenton Close 22.8.68.

Medetera flavipes Meig. Alconbury 8.7.66.

Medetera jacula (Fall.) Sibson 22.7.73.

Medetera pallipes (Zett.) Brampton Wood 21.5.66.

Medetera saxatilis Collin Sibson 22.7.73.

Medetera tristis (Zett.) Brampton, Ouse flood meadow 25.6.67.

Medetera truncorum Meig. Monks Wood NNR 8.66 (Wills 1968).

Medetera sp. indet. Holme Fen NNR 20.7.73, 2 females, possibly borealis Thuneb. only recorded as British in 1951 from 2 specimens from Braemar, and other unconfirmed females from Blackheath, Kent, in 1975 and 1976 (Fonseca pers. comm.).

Thrypticus pollinosus Verrall Brampton, Ouse flood meadow 27.7.66.

Rhaphium antennatum Carl. Earith GP 21.7.74. Stibbington GP 18.8.74.

Rhaphium appendiculatum (Zett.) Widespread May – August.

Rhaphium caliginosum Meig. Brampton, Ouse flood meadow 25.5.67. Brampton Wood 22.8.70. Elton Furze Wood 12.6.71. Raveley Wood NR 26.5.75. Woodwalton, Church End 5.8.67.

Rhaphium consobrinum Zett. Earith GP 21.7.74. Stibbington GP 18.8.74.

Rhaphium crassipes Meig. Huntingdon, Hinchinbrooke Park 18.5.73.

Rhaphium fasciatum Meig. Woodwalton Fen NNR 12.6.68.

Rhaphium laticorne (Fall.) Earith GP 21.7.74. Hemingford Gray, Marsh Lane GP 15.7.70 and 14.5.74. Little Paxton GP 20.7.75. Stibbington GP 18.8.74.

Rhaphium monotrichum Loew Hemingford Gray, Marsh Lane GP 14.6.70.

Rhaphium nasutum (Fall.) Stibbington GP 18.8.74.

Syntormon denticulatus (Zett.) Brampton, River Lane GP 30.4.67. Grafham Water NR 20.4.68. Monks Wood NNR 19.9.76.

Syntormon pallipes (Fab.) Widespread May – August.

Syntormon pumilus (Meig.) Easton, Hartham Street 22.6.69. Hemingford Gray, Marsh Lane GP 14.6.70. Stibbington GP 18.8.74.

Syntormon (Drymonoeca) aulicus (Meig.) Monks Wood NNR 8.66 (Wills 1968) and 19.9.76.

Systemus bipartitus (Loew) Monks Wood NNR 28.6.71.

Systemus pallipes (v. Ros.) Monks Wood NNR 22.6.71 and 14.7.72 (MWS).

Systemus scholtzii (Loew) Monks Wood NNR 14.7.72 (MWS).

Achalcus cinereus (Halid.) Brampton, River Lane GP 30.4.67.

Achalcus flavicollis (Meig.) St. Neots Holt 22.6.71. Woodwalton Church End 5.8.67.

Achalcus melanotrichus Mik Holme Fen NNR 14.9.74. Monks Wood NNR 25.6.72. (MWS).

Bathycranium bicolorellum (Zett.) Brampton Wood 22.8.67. Easton, Hartham Street 13.7.68. Glatton 2.7.67. Monks Wood NNR frequent 22.6. – 30.8.

Neurigona pallida (Fall.) Monks Wood NNR 26.6.72 (MWS).

Neurigona quadrifasciata (Fab.) Holme Fen NNR 4.6.70.

Diaphorus oculatus (Fall.) Brampton Wood 23.6.67. Monks Wood NNR 18.7.66 (Wills 1968).

Chrysotus blepharosceles Kow. Grafham Water NR 23.6.68. Monks Wood NNR 8.7.66 (Wills 1968) and 22.6.75.

Chrysotus cilipes Meig. Monks Wood NNR 17.7.66 (Wills 1968).

Chrysotus cupreus Macqu. Alconbury 14.6.66. Easton, Hartham Street 11.6.67.

Chrysotus gramineus (Fall.) Brampton, Ouse flood meadow 28.6. and 27.7.66. Elton Park 24.6.72. Monks Wood NNR 7 – 8.66 (Wills 1968) and 22.6.75.

Chrysotus microcerus Kow. Alconbury 10.8.66. Brampton 28.6.66.

Chrysotus neglectus (Wiede). Alconbury 28.6.70. Sawtry Roughs 19.6.66.

Chrysotus suavis Loew Earith GP 21.7.74. Little Paxton GP 19.7.75.

Melanotrichus melancholicus (Loew) Earith GP 21.7.74. This is only the third British record, the others being Woking, Surrey, 1875; and Monnow Valley, Herefs. sometime between 1904 and 1911. (Fonseca pers. comm.).

Argyra argentina (Zett.) Glatton 2.7.67.

Argyra argentella (Zett.) Easton, Hartham Street 22.6.69, Shepherds Close NR 2.7.70. Monks Wood NNR 23.7.66 (Wills 1968). Pidley 29.6.69.

Argyra argyria (Meig.) Brampton, Ouse flood meadow 23.5.76. Easton, Shepherds Close NR 2.7.70. Warboys Wood 21.5.67.

Argyra confinis (Zett.) Monks Wood NNR 17.7.66 (Wills 1968) and 6.7.68. Warboys Wood 24.7.66.

Argyra diaphana (Fab.) Bluntisham, Berry Fen 30.5.70. Monks Wood NNR 7 – 8.66. (Wills 1968). Raveley Wood NR 29.5.72.

Argyra leucocephala (Meig.) Huntingdon, Hinchinbrooke Park 16.6.72. Monks Wood NNR 7.66 (Wills 1968) and 19.7.66. Warboys Wood 24.7.66.

Campsicnemus curvipes (Fall.) Common and widespread March to September.

Campsicnemus scambus (Fall.) Brampton, Ouse flood meadow 10.9.67. Brampton Wood 22.8.67. Monks Wood NNR 19.9.76.

Sympycnus aenicoxa (Meig.) Hemingford Gray, Marsh Lane GP 15.7.70.

Sympycnus desoutteri Parent St. Neots Holt 22.6.71.

Teucophorus calcaratus (Macqu.) Brampton, Lenton Close 22.6.66. Earith GP 26.6.76. Hemingford Gray, Marsh Lane GP 15.7.70.

Teucophorus signatus (Zett.) Glatton 2.7.67. Monks Wood NNR 30.8.70 and 25.7.72 (MWS).

Teucophorus spinigerellus (Zett.) Stibbington GP 18.8.74.

Micromorphus albipes (Zett.) Monks Wood NNR 6.7.68. Warboys, Pingle Wood Cutting NR 11.7.69.

Xanthochlorus ornatus (Halid.) Brampton, River Lane GP 14.6.66.

Xanthochlorus tenellus (Wiede.) Woodwalton Fen NNR 6.7.70.

I am indebted to Mr. C.E. Dyte and Mr. E.A. Fonseca for help in naming some of the Dolichopodidae.

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BIRD REPORT FOR 1976

J.D. Limentani

This has been a notable year in many ways with the number of records that have been broken by unusually high counts of ducks and waders. Four new species for the county have been recorded, namely: Spotted Crake, Pomarine Skua, Mediterranean Gull and Alpine Swift. The number of records sent in has also increased to over 5,500.

The weather during 1976 was exceptional to such an extent that it affected the structure and size of some bird communities. The main features that caused these changes were the very low rainfall up to the end of August creating a rather dramatic drought, aggravated by above-average temperatures with new records being set in June, July and August. The combination of these two factors, and following the drought of 1975, caused the water levels in pits and reservoirs to fall considerably and in some cases to completely dry up. Grafham Water was no exception with its water level falling gradually to 22 feet below its top water, giving an ever-increasing area of mud. This mud, with its rich feeding areas, was taken advantage of by unprecedented numbers of waders during spring and autumn passage. The rainfall in September, October and December was well above average and resulted in the water levels rising rapidly to their pre-1975 levels. The effects on the wildfowl of this increase are described by Dr. A.S. Cooke in the following way at Grafham Water:

"The effect on the waterfowl in September and the first part of October was surprisingly slight, relatively normal numbers were present. The Reserve Creeks of Dudney and Littless, which usually attract the greatest waterfowl concentrations at that time of year, were dry, but most of the birds had gathered at the western end outside the creeks. The distribution was as near typical as could be expected.

November and December witnessed an unprecedented change. Mallard and Teal reached their highest numbers for many years, while numbers of Tufted Duck, Grafham's speciality during the previous stable 1970's, slumped drastically. This change was probably related to the availability of food. As the water level rose, seeds of the acres of weeds that had colonised the freshly exposed mud were a rich food source for species such as Mallard (which reached 2,900 in December) and Teal (1,400 in December). On the other hand, at Grafham, the Tufted Duck probably feeds mainly on Chironomid larvae and molluscs, which it catches by diving down to the muddy floor of the lake. Tufteds were evidently able to find plenty of food during September and early October, when probably more than 1,000 were feeding there regularly. As the water level rose, however, so the feeding grounds seem to have 'receded' out of depth for this species, which decreased accordingly".

I would like to thank Mr. B.S. Milne for supplying the figures for the BTO Nightingale census that was carried out during the summer; Dr. A.S. Cooke for the Grafham Water duck counts; Mr. J.E. Manser for the Meteorological records for 1976 and Mr. T. Collins for correcting the script.

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THE SYSTEMATIC LIST FOR 1976

Key: GP = Gravel Pit BP = Brick Pit
NNR = National Nature Reserve BF = Beet Factory

Great Northern Diver (*Gavia immer*): Grafham Water — single on 19 December (MH, DR, AWC).

Red-throated Diver (*Gavia stellata*): Little Paxton GP — single on 26 January (MH), Nene Lake Orton — single possibly a juvenile from 28 to 31 December (MC).

Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*): The maximum count at Grafham Water was 475 on 15 February which is the highest count to date; in the autumn the numbers built up slowly in November to a peak of 360 on 11 December. Breeding was recorded at Little Paxton GP (6 pairs), Brampton GP (2 pairs), Wyton GP (2 pairs), Marsh Lane GP (3 pairs), Fenstanton GP (1 pair), Earith GP (1 pair) and Lolham Bridges GP (2 pairs).

Red-necked Grebe (*Podiceps grisegena*): St. Ives GP — single from 7 November to 7 December.

Slavonian Grebe (*Podiceps auritus*): Grafham Water — 2 near the North shore on 21 November (AWC, RT), 2 near Mander Park on 20 December (DR).

Black-necked Grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*): Grafham Water — single near the Reserve on 22 February (KDM), Offord — single on the river below the sluice on 7 November (CJG).

Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*): Present in small numbers at most gravel pits, bred at Lolham Bridges GP where 9 young were reared, also bred at Earith GP, Little Paxton GP, Holme Fen. One was attacked by a pike in the river Nene near Stanground but escaped.

Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*): Grafham Water — present from January to April and September to December with a maximum of 14 on 4 January. Small numbers were also recorded at Fenstanton GP, St. Ives GP, Brampton GP and Nene Lake Orton. Grafham Water — on 21 November a dead bird was found that had been ringed on 20 June 1974 in North Berwick.

Shag (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*): St. Ives — the individual present on the river for most of last year remained until 7 June, on 22 January it was joined by 2 other birds and by one other on 14 February. Grafham Water — a juvenile on 20 January during high winds. Singles were also recorded at St. Ives GP on 8 February, Earith GP on 22 February, North Fen Nene River on 14 September, and Holme Fen NNR on 18 September.

Heron (*Ardea cinerea*): Hemingford Park — 26 nests were occupied on 6 April.

Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*): Marsh Lane GP — single present with Herons on 8 July (AJM). This is the second record for this species in Huntingdonshire.

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*): Grafham Water — In the autumn numbers increased dramatically over previous years with a maximum of 2,900 on 11 December due to the availability of large quantities of weed seed. Other maximum counts were: Fletton BP — 1,100 on 18 January, Fenstanton GP — 550+ in September, Little Paxton GP — 288 on 8 August, Woodwalton Fen NNR — 225 on 28 August, Stirtloe GP — 160 on 8 August, Nene Lake Orton — 150 on 18 November and Lolham Bridges GP — 130 on 26 September. These autumn numbers are generally considerably lower than in previous years. Grafham Water — at least 26 broods of ducklings were estimated for the Lagoons area.

Teal (*Anas crecca*): Grafham Water — less than 50 during the first part of the year; in the autumn numbers built up from 300 in early September to 1,400 on 11 December, again due to the availability of the weed seeds. Maximum counts were: Fenstanton GP — 90 on 18 September, Marsh Lane GP — 72 on 22 October, Lolham Bridges GP — 60 on 26 September and Nene Lake Orton — c50 on 27 December. Counts for other localities were under 40.

Garganey (*Anas querquedula*): Grafham Water — a pair on 31 March and a single on 30 June; between 19 August and 10 October up to 3 were seen on several occasions. Marsh Lane GP — 2 on 18 April.

Gadwall (*Anas strepera*): Small numbers at the beginning of the year at many localities. Grafham Water — 2 pairs bred in May but were not thought to be successful, however 2 more broods were seen in August. Grafham Water — 87 on 9 December, this is the highest count to date, Little Paxton — 44 on 13 November, Fenstanton GP — 28 on 4 December and Hemingford Grey GP — 22 on 18 November. Counts for other localities were of under 10.

Wigeon (*Anas penelope*): Highest numbers were in the first part of the year with Grafham Water — c600 on 22 February, St. Ives GP — 220 on 31 January and Little Paxton GP — 87 on 13 March. Autumn numbers were low only increasing in December: Grafham Water — 510 on 11 December, St. Ives GP — 80 on 24 December and Nene Lake Orton — 43 on 31 December. Counts at other localities were of under 15.

Pintail (*Anas acuta*): Very low numbers recorded this year with no large flocks. Maximum count at Grafham Water — 25 on 21 November and 5 December. Up to 3 were recorded at Nene Lake Orton, Earith GP, St. Ives GP and Little Paxton GP.

Showeler (*Anas clypeata*): Low numbers were recorded in the early part of the year except at Little Paxton GP — 279 on 13 March and Stirtloe GP — 100 on 13 February. At least 10 broods of ducklings were hatched in the Lagoon area of Grafham Water, a considerable increase on previous years. Autumn counts were Grafham Water — 300 on 9 September which is the highest count to date, the numbers did not remain high for long dropping below 100 by mid October suggesting a lot of birds were on passage.

Red-crested Pochard (*Netta rufina*): Grafham Water — single on 26 January; up to 3 between 12 September and 14 October.

Scaup (Aythya marila): Little Paxton GP – 2 on 17 January, St. Ives GP – single from 29 February to 28 March, Grafham Water – single males on 1 March and 30 March, and a pair on 27 March.

Tufted Duck (Aythya fuligula): Highest numbers in the early part of the year: Grafham Water – 2,500 on 14 February which is the highest count to date, Little Paxton GP – 1,030 on 17 January, Fletton BP – 369 on 18 January, Stirtloe GP – 120 on 17 January and Lolham Bridges GP – 102 on 22 February. In the autumn Grafham Water – 1,400 on 30 September dropping steadily to 300 in December as the water level rose, Nene Lake Orton – 200 on 17–18 December, Fletton BP – 196 on 12 September, St. Ives GP – 190 on 18 November. Counts of less than 100 were recorded at other localities. Breeding was recorded at the following places: Grafham Water (10+ broods), Little Paxton GP (8+ broods), Nene Lake Orton (6 broods), Marsh Lane GP (2 broods), Earith GP (2 broods), Somersham GP (3 broods), Stirtloe GP (1 brood), Buckden GP (1 brood) and Fenstanton GP (1 brood).

Pochard (Aythya ferina): Maximum counts for the early part of the year were Grafham Water – 230 on 17 January, Fletton BP – 281 on 18 January, Nene Lake Orton – c150 on 17 and 24 January and Lolham Bridges GP – 100 on 22 February. Autumn counts were Grafham Water – 380 on 9 December, Little Paxton GP – 370 on 11 December, Lolham Bridges GP – 114 on 14 November and Fenstanton GP – 111 on 17 October. Counts of under 100 were recorded at several other localities.

Ferruginous Duck (Aythya nyroca): Hemingford Grey GP – single males on 22 January and 27 March. The possibility of these birds being escapes cannot be ruled out.

Goldeneye (Bucephala clangula): In the first part of the year numbers were very high at Grafham Water with a maximum of 180 on 13 March which is the highest count to date. Autumn numbers were very low with a maximum of 48 on 11 November due to the rise in water level making feeding areas inaccessible. Also present in small numbers at the following places: Little Paxton GP, St. Ives GP, Earith GP, Marsh Lane GP, Fenstanton GP, Lolham Bridges GP, Fletton BP and Nene Lake Orton.

Common Scoter (Melanitta nigra): Grafham Water – 12 on 25 January and up to 3 females from 31 October to 11 November.

Ruddy Duck (Oxyura jamaicensis): Fenstanton GP – Up to 2 on several occasions from February to May.

Red-breasted Merganser (Mergus serrator): Grafham Water – single female on 9 March (PJM).

Goosander (Mergus merganser): In the early part of the year numbers were high at Grafham Water with 25 on 14 February, Nene Lake Orton – 15 on 17 January, Little Paxton GP – 5 on 13 March. In the autumn numbers were very low with up to 3 being occasionally present at Grafham Water and similar low numbers at other pits.

Smew (Mergus albellus): All records this year are from the period January to March.

Grafham Water – 5 from 8 to 15 February comprising one male, two females and two immatures, this is the highest count to date at Grafham Water and coincides with very cold weather in the Low Countries and west Baltic; for the rest of the period there were up to 2 birds present. St. Ives GP – single male from 30–31 January and single female from 1–7 February. Fenstanton GP – single on 14 February and 2 on 15 February. Little Paxton GP – single female on 14 February.

Mandarin Duck (Aix galericulata): Nene Lake Orton – highest numbers in the early part of the year with a maximum of 11 on 9 April; 4 pairs bred raising 2 young each (MC). Lolham Bridges GP – a female with 4 young on 6 June. Occasional records from St. Neots, Stanground and Mucklands Wood.

Shelduck (Tadorna tadorna): Grafham Water – less than 10 during the winter months with peaks at the end of April/beginning of May and in late July due to influxes of migrants; 32 on 6 May is the highest count to date. During the summer 2 pairs hatched 13 young but all were predated. Little Paxton GP – 14 on 4 March. Small numbers were also recorded at 8 other localities.

Egyptian Goose (Alopochen aegyptiacus): Grafham Water – 6 from 6 to 18 July and a single on 25 September.

Greylag Goose (Anser anser): A feral population based at Fenstanton GP which visits Marsh Lane GP, St. Ives GP and Hilton had a maximum of 23 birds with 2 hybrid Canada Geese; two pairs bred producing 9 goslings. A feral pair bred at Nene Lake Orton producing 4 goslings. A skein of 95 flew south over St. Ives on 9 May these were also thought to be feral.

White-fronted Goose (Anser albifrons): St. Ives GP – a family party of 6 flew off east on 31 January. Little Paxton GP – 4 on 1 February. Fenstanton GP – single in a field with Greylag Geese, possibly feral. Grafham Water – 32 flying east on 26 December.

Pink-footed Goose (Anser brachyrhynchus): St. Ives GP – 22 on 5 February, St. Neots Common – 6 flying north on 20 April, possibly escapes.

Brent Goose (Branta bernicla): Nene Lake Orton – One hit a pylon on 10 January but recovered (RIH). Grafham Water – single on 25 March, 3 on 28 September flying south-east and a single on 20 November (PJM, KDM, MH).

Barnacle Goose (Branta leucopsis): Grafham Water – single present from 14 October to 11 December, possibly an escape.

Canada Goose (Branta canadensis): Bred at Nene Lake Orton (3 pairs producing 11 goslings), Lolham Bridges GP (2 pairs with 4 goslings), Fletton BP (26 goslings), and Yaxley (nest robbed). Large flocks present at Fletton BP – 74 adults and 26 goslings on 3 July, Nene Lake Orton – 92 on 7 September, Butlers Pit – 50 on 27 January and Fenstanton GP – 25 on 8 August.

Mute Swan (Cygnus olor): Grafham Water — smaller autumn moulting flock with 70–76 birds being present. All other localities with less than 10. Breeding was recorded at many sites throughout the county.

Bewick's Swan (Cygnus bewickii): In the early part of the year Fletton BP — 23 flying over on 22 February, Bury Fen — 51 on 20 March and up to 4 at 5 other localities. In the autumn Grafham Water — 30+ circling at dusk on 31 October, St. Ives GP — 32 on 30 October, Earith GP — 14 including 3 immatures on 16 December, and Holme Fen NNR — single on 11 December.

Buzzard (Buteo buteo): Hilton and Fenstanton — singles on 8 February, probably the same bird (JPF, JSC). St. Ives — single on 28 April (BSM). Portholme — single on 7 July (JDL). Hinchingsbrooke — single on 21 September (JSC). Great Staughton — single being mobbed by Rooks on 26 September (DR). Castor Hanglands NNR — single on 4 October (JR). Monks Wood — single on 16 October (JW).

Sparrow Hawk (Accipiter nisus): Monks Wood — single seen five times between February and October (JW). Diddington Wood — single on 1 March (RL). Waresley Wood — single male on 26 June (TC). Fenstanton GP — single female on 4 December (JSC).

Marsh Harrier (Circus aeruginosus): Grafham Water — single on 25 May (RL). Yaxley Fen — single female on 9 September flying west (GEDA). Woodwalton Fen NNR — single on 15 November (GM). Holme Fen NNR — single female on 20 August, immature male and adult female on 1 September (PB).

Hen Harrier (Circus cyaneus): Earith GP — single male flying west north west on 5 November (CAEK).

Osprey (Pandion haliaetus): Spring passage records for: Grafham Water — single which was seen to catch a fish on 22 April and another single on 28 April (PJM). Little Paxton GP — single drifting south on 6 May (RWHG). Woodwalton Fen NNR — single on 9 May (GM) and Fenstanton GP — an adult being mobbed by Terns on 22 May (JSC). Autumn passage records for: River Welland and New Cut Peakirk on 9 and 10 September (possibly the same bird) (WAC). Grafham Water — a first year bird flying south on 5 October and Offord — a sub-adult on 6 to 7 October by the River Ouse.

Hobby (Falco subbuteo): Grafham Water — singles on 13 June and 21 July when a Dunlin was caught and carried off with some difficulty, single on 8 August, on 11 September a pair chased and caught Swallows and Martins, on 25 September an immature was present. Sawtry — single on 16 May, Great Paxton — single adult on 22 August, Spaldwick — single juvenile on 4 October.

Peregrine (Falco peregrinus): Marsh Lane GP — singles on 8 July and 7 September (MJE). Fenstanton GP — single immature bird being mobbed by Lapwings and Herons on 18 September (JSC).

Kestrel (Falco tinnunculus): Numbers still increasing, recorded in 54 localities.

Water Rail (Rallus aquaticus): Reported from most Gravel Pits and from Grafham Water. Probably bred at Fenstanton GP and Marsh Lane GP.

Spotted Crake (Porzana porzana): Grafham Water — single heard calling in the Lagoon area on the night of 4–5 July. This is the first record for this species in Huntingdonshire.

Coot (Fulica atra): Autumn numbers generally a little higher than spring numbers. Most pits experienced a build up in numbers from August to a peak in November/December. Maximum counts were Grafham Water — 170 on 1 April and 3,050 on 13 November, Little Paxton GP — 362 on 4 March and 520 on 11 December, Earith GP — 179 on 22 January and 255 on 16 December. Fletton BP — 625 on 18 January, St. Ives GP — 309 on 22 January. Counts for other localities under 100.

Oystercatcher (Haematopus ostralegus): Grafham Water — recorded on 9 occasions between March and September, single birds except for 2 on 21 March and 5 on 25 September, Nene Lake Orton — single on 15 May and 5 on 17 December. Marsh Lane GP — 3 on 17 January. Hilton — 2 flying south west on 7 May.

Lapwing (Vanellus vanellus): Ortons/Fletton — 1,500+ in a flock during January and February. Bainton — 700+ on 24 January, Marsh Lane GP — 500+ in January and September. Fenstanton GP — 1,000 in September.

Ringed Plover (Charadrius hiaticula): Breeding recorded at Grafham Water (at least 12 broods), Nene Lake Orton (3 broods, 8 young), Lolham Bridges GP (1 brood), Fenstanton GP (possibly 1 brood). Highest counts, mainly due to passage migrants, at Grafham Water — 70+ on 20 May and 100+ on 25 September. Nene Lake Orton — 28 on 28 July.

Little Ringed Plover (Charadrius dubius): Breeding records at Grafham Water (at least 9 broods), Marsh Lane GP (3 broods), Fenstanton GP (3 broods), Nene Lake Orton (2 broods, 4 young), Lolham Bridges GP (1–3 broods), Little Paxton GP (1 brood), Godmanchester GP and Brampton GP probable breeding. Extreme dates were 26 March single at Grafham Water and 24 October single at Fletton BP. A small number of migrants were recorded in August at Grafham Water with a peak of 46 on 12 August.

Grey Plover (Pluvialis squatarola): Spring passage at Grafham Water between 1 April and 13 May when 13 individuals were recorded. Marsh Lane GP — single on 9 May. Nene Lake Orton — single on 24 May. Autumn passage was recorded at Grafham Water between 7 September and 20 October with a maximum of 7 on 9 October. Nene Lake Orton — single on 25 September and a wintering bird on 17 December.

Golden Plover (Pluvialis apricaria): Winter flocks were reported from Glatton/Caldecote — 390 in January and February, Haddon/Morborne — c590 on 15 February, Wyton Airfield — 400 in mid January, Broughton — 400 in January dropping to 200 in April with an influx in mid April of birds of the northern race. In December smaller flocks were reported at Wyton Airfield (300), Broughton (300), Caldecote (170), Grafham (170) and Portholme 250+ following floods in late December.

Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*): Grafham Water — a short spring passage between 20 April and 27 May with a maximum of 7 on 22 April, a solitary bird was recorded on 16 June probably summering. The autumn passage was between 16 July and 30 October with two peaks: 4 on 26 July and 8 on 2 September. Little Paxton GP — 2 on 8 August. A greater number of bird/days were recorded this year than any previous year due to the low level of Grafham Water.

Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*): Grafham Water — 140 on the south shore during cold weather on 2 February, one bird summered but is not thought to have bred. In the autumn the numbers at Grafham Water built up in September to a peak of 80+ on 3 October before dropping to about 20 in December. Ortons — c100 wintering in January and February, in the autumn numbers built up from c50 in November to 80 in December.

Jack Snipe (*Lymnocyptes minimus*): Grafham Water — 3 on 17 January and a single on 24 April, in the autumn recorded from 20 October to 24 December with a peak of 15 on 15 November, numbers fell as the water level rose. Small numbers also recorded at: Marsh Lane GP, Brampton race course, St. Neots Common, St. Ives GP and Earith GP during the early part of the year.

Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*): Recorded at 11 localities and thought to have bred at 3.

Curlew (*Numenius arquata*): Grafham Water — 4 flying over on 14 March, spring passage in late April when 11 individuals were recorded between 22 and 25 April, a summering bird on 16–17 June. In the autumn at Grafham Water up to 3 birds were recorded on several occasions between 9 July and 17 October. Up to 3 were also seen at Hilton, Fenstanton GP, Hemingford Grey, Monks Wood and Nene Lake Orton.

Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*): Grafham Water — spring passage with up to 3 between 21 and 30 April, 5 on 13 May and a single on 16 May, in the autumn a single on 28 August. St. Ives GP — singles on 25 April and 6 May.

Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*): Spring passage was recorded at Grafham Water between 21 April and 9 May; Godmanchester GP — single on 25 April. Autumn passage showed two peaks at Grafham Water one between 18 and 31 July and the other between 12 and 19 August. Nene Lake Orton — single on 3 to 6 July. Earith GP — single on 16 August.

Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*): Spring passage at Grafham Water between 20 April and 9 May with a peak on 22 April with 17 flying east half of which were in summer plumage. Little Paxton GP — single on 6 May. Hemingford Grey — single flew over on 9 May. Autumn passage at Grafham Water was between 16 September and 10 October with a peak on 19 and 21 September of 4.

Green Sandpiper (*Tringa ochropus*): Up to 4 wintering birds were recorded at: Nene Lake Orton, Peterborough BF, Lolham Bridges GP, Fletton BP, Fenstanton GP, Marsh Lane GP and St. Ives GP. Small spring passage at Grafham Water and Lolham Bridges GP in

the second half of April. Autumn passage began in a small way in July with one at Grafham Water and 5 at Fenstanton GP on 11 July. Peak passage was in late August falling off in September. Little Paxton GP — 9 on 12 and 19 August. Lolham Bridges GP — 9 on 26 August.

Wood Sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*): Grafham Water — single on 11 May. Autumn passage at Grafham Water between 15 August and 9 September with a peak of 9 on 24 August. Little Paxton GP — single on 8 August. Peterborough BF — 2 on 18–19 August. Nene Lake Orton — a late bird on 27 September.

Common Sandpiper (*Tringa hypoleucos*): Wintering records from St. Ives GP and Marsh Lane GP. Spring passage at Grafham Water between 21 April and 28 May, Nene Lake Orton between 15 April and 24 May. Autumn passage was generally recorded between the end of June and the beginning of October with peaks at middle/end July and middle/end August. Highest counts were: Grafham Water — 42 on 16 July and 30 on 19 August, Little Paxton GP — 12 on 12 August, Nene Lake Orton — 15 in mid August. Small numbers also recorded at: Peterborough BF, Lolham Bridges GP, Fenstanton GP, Earith GP, Buckden GP and Stirtloe GP.

Redshank (*Tringa totanus*): Small wintering population at Grafham Water, Nene Lake Orton, Lolham Bridges GP and Marsh Lane GP. Breeding (different population) at Grafham Water (up to 8 pairs), Nene Lake Orton (3 pairs). Considerable spring passage during April with Grafham — 35 to 40 on 18 April, Nene Lake Orton — c10 on 24 April and St. Ives — 20 to 30 flying from east to west at night on 1 April. A small autumn passage took place mainly in July and August.

Spotted Redshank (*Tringa erythropus*): Spring passage at Grafham Water consisted of a single bird on 28 April, another from 22–25 April and a third on 28 April. Marsh Lane GP — single on 27 April. Autumn passage at Grafham Water was from 12 August to 25 September, most records being for the last ten days of August with a peak of 5 on 25 August. Little Paxton GP — an early bird on 8 August.

Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*): Small numbers were recorded on spring passage at 4 localities between 23 April and 24 May. Autumn passage was recorded at 9 localities between 9 July and 16 October with a peak count at Grafham Water of 18 on 25 September. Very late birds were recorded at Portholme — 3 on 21 December.

Knot (*Calidris canutus*): Winter records at Grafham Water — singles on 1 February and 4 March; in spring a single on 20–21 May. Autumn passage at Grafham Water included 2 adults on 20–22 July and up to 11 birds between 28 August and 5 October including 5 juveniles. Nene Lake Orton — single on 26 September.

Little Stint (*Calidris minuta*): Several winter records at Grafham Water, small spring passage between mid June and mid July. Autumn passage at Grafham Water between 12 September and 9 October with a peak of 22 on 28 September. Up to 2 in the autumn at Earith GP and Nene Lake Orton.

Temminck's Stint (Calidris temminckii): Grafham Water — single on 27 May (TT, CAEK, RWHG).

Dunlin (Calidris alpina): Present in small numbers at most pits and lakes. Grafham Water — peaks of 145 on 17 January, 200 on 19 September and 7 October, numbers dropped to 20–30 in December as the water level rose. Little Paxton GP — c55 on 7 March.

Curlew Sandpiper (Calidris ferruginea): Grafham Water — a small autumn invasion with singles on 9 July, 18–21 July and 25 August, and up to 5 birds from 19 September to 17 October the peak being in September.

Sanderling (Calidris alba): Grafham Water — winter records of up to 3 between 1–3 February, spring records of up to 10 between 20 April and 16 June, autumn records of 2 on 5 September, 4 on 25 September and 3 on 26 September. St. Ives GP — single on 30 April. Little Paxton GP — single on 6 May.

Ruff (Philomachus pugnax): Grafham Water — small numbers seen regularly, peaks during autumn passages of 65 on 15 July and 61 on 19 September. Small numbers on spring and autumn passage at Nene Lake Orton, Fenstanton GP and Little Paxton GP.

Arctic Skua (Stercorarius parasiticus): Unusually high numbers during the autumn at Grafham Water — single adult intermediate on 8 August, 2 dark phase on 6 September, singles on 12 September, 25 October and 8 November usually after high winds.

Great Skua (Stercorarius skua): Grafham Water — single on 12 September (MJS, JSC). This is the second record for this species in Huntingdonshire.

Pomarine Skua (Stercorarius pomarinus): Grafham Water — single juvenile on 9–10 November (TT). This is the first record for this species in Huntingdonshire.

Lesser Black-backed Gull (Larus fuscus): Small numbers recorded at 9 localities, including Nene Lake Orton — c90 on 23 August, Grafham Water — 80 plus 3 dead on 30 September.

Common Gull (Larus canus): Nene Lake Orton — 9 on 27 March. Grafham Water — 144 of which 121 were adults in the Gull roost on 22 November.

Glaucous Gull (Larus hyperboreus): Little Paxton GP — single on 21 March. Fenstanton GP — single on 16 October. Grafham Water — single on 17 December.

Mediterranean Gull (Larus melanocephalus): Grafham Water — single on 21 July and 24 October, possibly the same bird, on the second occasion it was in the evening Gull roost (PJM). These are the first records for this species in Huntingdonshire.

Little Gull (Larus minutus): Grafham Water — a vagrant bird on 11 February, spring passage comprised 6 birds between April and June, an extended autumn passage from 7 July to 19 October with peaks of 7 on 27 July and 15 on 22 September including 7 juveniles. Most of the birds present at Grafham Water were second year birds. Fenstanton GP — an immature on 4 September. Little Paxton GP — single on 26 September.

Black-headed Gull (Larus ridibundus): Peterborough Fengate rubbish tip — 1,500 on 26 January. St. Ives GP — 1,000+ roosting in January and February. Grafham Water — one found dead with an Estonian (USSR) ring on the 9 November.

Kittiwake (Rissa tridactyla): Grafham Water — a vagrant second year bird on 21 January, some passage birds with 2 on 12 May and one dead first year bird, autumn passage started with a dead juvenile on 12 August and a dead adult on 19 September, an adult on 12 September and a juvenile on 7 October. St. Ives GP — a dead adult on 12 February.

Black Tern (Chlidonias niger): Grafham Water — spring passage between 28 April and 29 May with up to 4 apart from 109 on 24 May during south east winds, autumn passage between 9 July and 10 October with up to 6 present at a time. Nene Lake Orton — 2 on 24 May, single on 25 September. St. Ives GP — single on 5 May. Earith GP — single on 25 September. Little Paxton GP — single on 20 September.

White-winged Black Tern (Chlidonias leucopterus): Grafham Water — single on 20 September (CJG). This is the first record for this species in Huntingdonshire.

Common Tern (Sterna hirundo): Grafham Water — spring passage began on 20 April with small numbers up to the end of May. Breeding recorded at Grafham Water, Nene Lake Orton (4 pairs), Lolham Bridges GP (5–6 pairs), Fenstanton GP (3 pairs), Yaxley (1 pair), St. Ives GP (2 pairs) and Little Paxton GP (c10 pairs). The autumn passage at Grafham Water lasted from August to the end of September with up to 25 in mid August.

Arctic Tern (Sterna paradisaea): Grafham Water — small numbers were positively identified between 20 and 29 April with a maximum of 11 on 25 April, on the same day c180 'comic' terns passed through in the evening and about 30% could have been Arctic Terns. Other sightings at Grafham Water — single on 24 May, 2 on 11 July and an immature on 19 September.

Roseate Tern (Sterna dougallii): Grafham Water — single from 6–8 July (PJM). This is the second record for this species in Huntingdonshire.

Little Tern (Sterna albifrons): Grafham Water — up to 4 between 22 and 27 April (PJM), 2 on 8 August (ECBN). Nene Lake Orton — single on 4 July (MC).

Sandwich Tern (*Sterna sandvicensis*): Grafham Water — 3 on 29 April, singles on 6 May, 8 August, 7 September and 25 September. Hilton — 2 in the Gull roost after gale force winds on 9 September. Nene Lake Orton — 7 in winter plumage on 24 September.

Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*): Extreme dates were 19 April at Holme Fen and 19 September at Grafham Water.

Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*): First record on 13 April at Monks Wood.

Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*): Recorded in 15 localities. Single birds killed on the road near Waresley and Nene Lake Orton.

Little Owl (*Athene noctua*): Recorded in 20 localities. Breeding at Waresley (possibly 2 pairs). Birds killed on the road near Grafham Water (2) and Nene Lake Orton.

Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*): Recorded in 24 localities, successful breeding reported from Lady's Wood and Hemingford Grey. Birds killed by trains at Bankside and Lolham Bridges GP and on the road at Grafham and Croxton.

Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*): Following an invasion by continental birds at the end of 1975 roosts were reported at Bury Fen (2 birds), Farcet (8+ birds), Fletton BP (5 birds), 2 roosts at St. Ives (one with 5 birds). Dead birds were found at St. Ives and Papworth which were probably poisoned and 3 were killed on the new Huntingdon by-pass by the traffic. Breeding was confirmed at Hemingford Grey (2 young), Holme Fen and suspected at Fletton BP. Summer birds seen at Fenstanton in April, Waresley Wood in May. Steeple Gidding — single on 2 December.

Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*): Bury Fen — 3 on 7 March, Fletton BP — c10 roosting in January, and singles on 14 February and 14 March. Wyton airfield — single on 15 October. Wennington — single on 20 October. Grafham Water — single on 14 November.

Swift (*Apus apus*): Extreme dates were 6 May at Orton and 14 October at Grafham Water many records were received for September birds and singles at 4 localities in October. Grafham Water — up to 5,000 on 19 May.

Alpine Swift (*Apus melba*): Huntingdon — single in with Common Swifts on 22 June (AHP). This is the first record for this species in Huntingdonshire.

Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*): Recorded at 24 localities. Breeding records from Lolham Bridges GP, Marsh Lane GP and Fenstanton GP.

Bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*): Earith — single sitting on a branch on 19 August (RW). This record was not accepted by the Rarities Committee on the principle that a description was not supplied.

Green Woodpecker (*Picus viridis*): Recorded at 33 localities.

Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*): Recorded at 13 localities.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos minor*): Recorded at 10 localities.

Wryneck (*Jynx torquilla*): Unprecedented numbers during the autumn with singles being seen at Hemingford Abbots on 21 August (SC), Offord Cluny on 29 August (DM), Monks Wood and Castor on 3 September (AAB, GEDA), Eynesbury on 8 September (PEGW), and Grafham Water early in September. (PJM).

Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*): Extreme dates were on 3 April at St. Ives and on 13 November at Nene Lake Orton.

House Martin (*Delichon urbica*): Extreme dates were 9 April at Grafham Water and 26 October at Grafham Water. Grafham Water — c3,000 were feeding low over the water during a north-west gale on 9 September.

Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*): Extreme dates were 28 March at Hemingford and 20 October at Earith GP. Fenstanton GP — c1,000 in roost on 23 July. Grafham Water — 2 to 3,000 congregated on 28–29 August.

Golden Oriole (*Oriolus oriolus*): Grafham Water — 2 on 2 May (MH). This is the sixth record for this species in Huntingdonshire.

Hooded Crow (*Corvus corone cornix*): St. Ives GP — single roosted at this gravel pit and fed at Dry Drayton GP from February to 20 April. Little Raveley — single on 22 February. Hinchingsbrooke — single on 11 November.

Magpie (*Pica pica*): Recorded at 21 localities. Nests found at Buckden (3), Offord, Hemingford, Little Paxton, Houghton and Lolham Bridges GP.

Blue Tit (*Parus caeruleus*): Nene Lake Orton — c30 in a feeding flock on 24 January. Fletton BP — 50+ in one bush on 16 February. This species appeared to have a very poor breeding season with small clutches and a poor fledging rate.

Bearded Tit (*Panurus biarmicus*): Earith GP — a pair on 1 and 11 January and 22 February. Grafham Water — 5 on 29 February and 8 including 3 males on 9 March. In the autumn small and variable numbers were seen between 5 October and 21 November with a maximum of 6.

Nuthatch (*Sitta europaea*): Orton Longueville — single on 5 February, the first seen in this part of the county (GEDA).

Fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*): Extreme dates were 2 May at Hilton and 30 October at Woodwalton Fen NNR.

Redwing (Turdus iliacus): Extreme dates were 30 April at Wyton GP and 10 October at Monks Wood.

Ring Ouzel (Turdus torquatus): Brampton – single male on 20 March (CS).

Blackbird (Turdus merula): Houghton – a male was seen to catch and eat two minnow in shallow water over a weir off the main river on 18 August.

Wheatear (Oenanthe oenanthe): Spring passage between 27 March and 28 May with ones and twos recorded at 12 localities. Grafham Water – 7 on 2 May. Autumn passage between 11 August and 20 October with mainly singles at 6 localities.

Stonechat (Saxicola torquata): Singles in January and February at Nene Lake Orton, Peterborough BF, Bretton and Eaton Ford. The first autumn birds on 10 October at Grafham Water. Grafham Water – present through November and December with up to 9 at the beginning of December. Present also at Nene Lake Orton, Peterborough BF and Belham Wood.

Whinchat (Saxicola rubetra): Spring passage between 25 April and 21 May with up to 3 birds at Peterborough BF. Autumn passage between 3 August and 20 September with a peak of 10+ at Grafham Water on 25 August.

Redstart (Phoenicurus phoenicurus): Autumn passage : Lolham Bridges GP – single on 8 August, Diddington Wood – single on 2 September, Castor Hanglands – single male on 19 and 23 September, Grafham Water and St. Ives – singles on 27 September and Nene Lake Orton – single female on 7 and 8 October. Holme Fen NNR – 2 during the summer.

Black Redstart (Phoenicurus ochruros): Peterborough – one pair possibly bred, 2 juveniles present from 11 July to 25 August (RIH). Grafham Water – singles on 28–29 March and 11 September. Brampton Wood – single male on 11 September.

Nightingale (Luscinia megarhynchos): First heard at Woodwalton Fen NNR – on 11 April. The counts of singing birds carried out for the BTO census are as follows: Woodwalton Fen NNR 60–70, Holme Fen NNR 26, Monks Wood 6–7, Castor Hanglands 5, Denton Covert 2, Jones Covert 3, Milton Ferry 2, Brampton Wood 8, Beville's Wood 3, Diddington Wood 1, Littleless Wood 1, Lolham Bridges GP 5, Coppingford Wood 1, Archers Wood 4 and Marsh Lane GP 1.

Grasshopper Warbler (Locustella naevia): Recorded at Southey Wood, Ashton, Coppingford Wood and Grafham Water. Breeding at Woodwalton Fen NNR (4 pairs), Helpstone (4+ pairs) and Buckden (1 pair).

Reed Warbler (Acrocephalus scirpaceus): Extreme dates were 10 May at Lolham Bridges GP and 2 October at Grafham Water.

Sedge Warbler (Acrocephalus schoenobaenus): Extreme dates were 4 April at St. Neots Common and 16 September at Grafham Water.

Blackcap (Sylvia atricapilla): Extreme dates were 21 April at Monks Wood and 8 October at Nene Lake Orton. One overwintering at Bankside was caught and ringed on 14 November.

Garden Warbler (Sylvia borin): First recorded on 2 May at Waresley Wood. Numbers appear to be down on previous years.

Whitethroat (Sylvia communis): Extreme dates were 25 April at Grafham Water and 26 October at Peterborough. Breeding records from: Lolham Bridges GP (10–12 pairs), Southey Wood (10+ pairs), Helpstone (10+ pairs), Ortons (9 pairs), Belham Wood (1 pair), Woodwalton Fen NNR, Houghton, Buckden, Earith, Hemingford and Godmanchester, Holme Fen NNR (13 territories).

Lesser Whitethroat (Sylvia curruca): Extreme dates were 21 April at Helpstone and 26 September at Lolham Bridges GP. Breeding recorded at 11 localities.

Willow Warbler (Phylloscopus trochilus): Extreme dates were 1 April at Monks Wood and 19 October at Grafham Water. Large numbers singing at Woodwalton Fen NNR in May.

Chiffchaff (Phylloscopus collybita): Extreme dates were 28 March at Marsh Lane GP and 19 October at Nene Lake Orton. Appeared to be less common in several of its regular haunts during the breeding season. Fenstanton GP – single wintering on 18 December which showed characteristics of the British race.

Wood Warbler (Phylloscopus sibilatrix): Waresley Wood – single seen and heard on 2 May (PJT).

Firecrest (Regulus ignicapillus): A pair probably nested in the county with 1–3 birds being present during the breeding season (MH).

Spotted Flycatcher (Muscicapa striata): Extreme dates were 7 May at Godmanchester and 23 September at Castor Hanglands.

Pied Flycatcher (Ficedula hypoleuca): Bankside Great Paxton – single juveniles caught and ringed on 22 August and 2 October.

Meadow Pipit (Anthus pratensis): Spring passage was recorded at Grafham Water from 1 April with 150+ followed in April by a steady 70–100, three distinct forms were thought to be present. Nene Lake Orton – c100 on 6 April.

Tree Pipit (Anthus trivialis): Passage birds were seen at Grafham Water in April, May and September. Summer birds were seen at St. Neots Common, Helpstone (1 pair), Peterborough (1 pair), Southey Wood (3 pairs, one feeding young) and Holme Fen NNR.

Rock Pipit (Anthus spinoletta petrosus): Grafham Water — 2 on 29 January, singles on 8 February and 1 April, small autumn passage between 28 September and 11 November with a peak of 5 on 20 October. Little Paxton GP — 2 on 1 April. St. Ives GP — singles on 21 March, 26 September and 28 November.

Water Pipit (Anthus spinoletta spinoletta): Grafham Water — singles on 8 January and 18 March, the latter being in summer plumage (PJM).

Pied Wagtail (Motacilla alba yarrelli): Autumn roosts reported at St. Neots Common and Marsh Lane GP.

White Wagtail (Motacilla alba alba): Nene Lake Orton — 3 on 28 April, singles on passage were also reported from Grafham Water, St. Ives GP and Little Paxton GP between 4 April and 6 May. Farcet Fen — single on 3 September.

Grey Wagtail (Motacilla cinerea): Small numbers of wintering birds were reported from all parts of the county with a late one on 9 July at Grafham Water. The first autumn record was 9 October at Grafham Water.

Yellow Wagtail (Motacilla flava flavissima): Extreme dates were 1 April at Grafham Water and 20 October at Grafham Water.

Blue-headed Wagtail (Motacilla flava flava): Grafham Water — single male on 20 April (PJM). Nene Lake Orton — single on 24 May (MESR).

Waxwing (Bombycilla garrulus): Peterborough — 6 in January and 3 on 8 February.

Great Grey Shrike (Lanius excubitor): Singles present during winter months at Holme, Castor Hanglands, Woodwalton Fen, Grafham Water and St. Neots Common.

Hawfinch (Coccothraustes coccothraustes): Kimbolton — 3 on 10 October (CWW).

Siskin (Carduelis spinus): Grafham Water — up to 20 in January. Monks Wood — present from 17 January to 8 March with a peak of 45 on 21 February. Holme Fen NNR — 100+ from January to March.

Linnet (Acanthis cannabina): Small autumn roosts of up to 300 at Nene Lake Orton and Lolham Bridges GP. Grafham Water — c3,500 feeding on knot grass in September.

Twite (Acanthis flavirostris): Grafham Water — singles on 4 January and 4 March. Earith GP — single on 4 April.

Redpoll (Acanthis flammea): Grafham Water — c100 on 1 March. Southey Wood — 50+ flying over on 18 April. Bred at Lolham Bridges GP, Southey Wood and the Ortens. Holme Fen NNR — 500+ in March.

Mealy Redpoll (Acanthis flammea flammea): Grafham Water — single in a flock of Redpolls on 1 March during a period of high winds.

Bullfinch (Pyrrhula pyrrhula): Grafham Water — a pair with eight young on 8 August.

Brambling (Fringilla montifringilla): Late birds were seen on 25 April at Grafham Water. Peterborough BF — over 300 in the middle of February dropping to 50+ in early March.

Yellowhammer (Emberiza citrinella): Milton Hall — 100+ on 14 February in a field with sheep.

Corn Bunting (Emberiza calandra): Reported from 14 localities during the breeding season.

Snow Bunting (Plectrophenax nivalis): Grafham Water — single male on 20 November (PJM, RNH).

Tree Sparrow (Passer montanus): Yaxley Fen — c300 on 27 April. Nene Lake Orton — c200 on 12 October.

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The following species were also recorded in the county during the year but not included in the systematic list:

Red-legged Partridge, Common Partridge, Moorhen, Great Black-backed Gull, Herring Gull, Stock Dove, Woodpigeon, Collar Dove, Skylark, Carrion Crow, Rook, Jackdaw, Jay, Great Tit, Coal Tit, Marsh Tit, Willow Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Tree Creeper, Wren, Mistle Thrush, Song Thrush, Robin, Dunnock, Goldcrest, Starling, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Chaffinch, Reed Bunting and House Sparrow.

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The following exotic 'escapes' were also reported:

Flamingo (Chilean race): Grafham Water — single from 15 April to 3 June.

Marble Teal: Grafham Water — single on 13 June.

Ring-necked Parakeet: Grafham Water — single on 13 November. Ramsey Heights — single from 19 December to the end of the year.

Red-headed Bunting: Grafham Water — single on 15 May.

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SPARROW HAWK REFLECTIONS

E.T. Lees

My first experience of finding a sparrow hawk's nest was in the first week of May 1919 in Perry Wood, on the right hand side going towards Gt. Staughton. My father was friendly with the game keeper who lived in the cottage, which still exists on the other side of the road. This country gentleman took us for a walk into the wood and pointed out a nest built of twigs resting on the small branches of a larch tree about two thirds of the way up the tree and close to the trunk. I volunteered to investigate and was soon rewarded by peering over the side of the nest and discovering two beautifully marked eggs. This was the start of her clutch which when completed would have been 5 or 6 eggs. I can only guess the fate of this particular nest as the keepers in those days had no mercy on the fascinating hawk family — kestrel, sparrow hawk and the delightful hobby, all met the same sad fate.

During this period sparrow hawks were fairly common in spite of persistent persecution and in the years between the two world wars my father and I acquired a good record of breeding sites in a large portion of the county. The wooded area in the Alconbury, Upton, Coppingford and Sawtry district was the most consistent and on 23 May 1939 we found 4 nests with complete clutches in two hours in Upton and Coppingford Woods. Brampton Wood usually contained 2 pairs in spite of being "keepered" and one incident in this wood is worth recording. It happened on 23 April 1925 when I was giving the keeper a hand to clear some of the carrion crows, which in the spring have a passion for pheasants eggs. Seeing a nest smaller than a crow's, he asked me to investigate. To my great surprise it was a sparrow hawk's nest and more surprising it contained 2 newly hatched young and 3 hatching eggs. The ideal date for the birds to complete their clutches and start to incubate is May 22 so this particular bird was at least 7 weeks before average, most unusual for this species and worth recording.

Pairs also bred regularly in the spinnies on the Spaldwick—Thrapston Road, the spinney at Alconbury Weston going towards Buckworth and in Buckworth Wood before it was cut down and replanted. Strangely enough we never found a nest in Salome Wood in spite of conditions being excellent before 1939, and only one in Monks Wood. Other sites were in the

spinney on the left going from Buckden to the Grafham Water River Intake Works. This was known as Double Arch to the locals, as the original bridge over Diddington brook running alongside was built with two brick arches. Offord had its regular site in the spinney, adjacent to the old bridle road linking Godmanchester with Graveley. Toseland Wood was also a regular breeding site. Odd sites used a few times were in old overgrown withy beds at Godmanchester, the Paxtons and Offord, and in the orchards at Colne and Bluntisham.

In most cases new nests are built and are usually placed on the side of a tree, supported by a few small scrubby branches and when in a large wood, the site tree is invariably adjacent to a clearing or ride thus giving vital visibility. A nest which is built in a position similar to a carrion crow, in the upper branches of a tree, is the exception. The size of the nest is normally half as big again as that of the wood pigeon being slightly hollowed like a shallow saucer and lined with about 20 small pieces of thin bark. Once incubation starts small downy breast feathers are evident on the side of the nest, known as "fleck" to the keepers and often providing a clue which led to the undoing of the sitting bird. Five or six eggs are the normal clutch size and during the period of my observations I only saw one clutch containing 7 eggs. If the first clutch is destroyed a repeat laying is usual, starting about a fortnight after disturbance but the clutch in most cases falls to 4 or 3.

After the war birds were about in the usual haunts but 1947 saw a marked decline which was the beginning of the end and 1948 was a sad realisation of that end. I found two nests, one in Coppingford Wood and the last in Hermitage Wood by the side of the Alconbury airfield. Both contained 3 eggs and both had disappeared without trace when I checked a week later. The 1949 season confirmed my fears. There were no signs or clues in any of the regular breeding sites. What the pole trap and the "sporting gun" had failed to achieve in a century the scientist with his pesticides had accomplished in two short years. A sad fate for a beautiful noble bird but I am confident that the next decade will see many of the old haunts occupied once again, as man in his wisdom ceases to be their enemy.

MAMMAL REPORT FOR 1976

D.J. Jefferies

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and

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DEER IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

Huntingdon is not a good county for deer but the two species most likely to be seen here cannot be seen in some other counties in which the larger deer are common. These are the Muntjac (Muntiacus sp.) and the Chinese Water Deer (Hydropotes inermis). These introduced deer are both small; the Muntjac stands about 40 cm at the shoulder and the Chinese Water Deer about 10 cm higher. Chinese Water Deer are antlerless. Male Muntjac have short unbranched antlers (sometimes with a short single brow tine) which arise from fur covered projections from the skull known as pedicles. The pedicles, which form straight lines convergent on the muzzle, are continued down the skull as two ridges which show as dark lines on the face of the living animal. In both species the males have prominent upper canines which also occur, though less prominently, in female Chinese Water Deer. Muntjac are reddish brown in summer (winter coat is grey-brown) and have a white rump with a long tail, dark on top and white beneath. They have a marked angular hump-backed appearance and often walk with head down. Chinese Water Deer are bright chestnut in summer (winter coat is more yellow brown) with a pale (but not obviously white) rump and very short dark tail. They have the appearance of very small Roe does.

Muntjac: Both Indian (Muntiacus muntjak) and Chinese (M. reevesi) Muntjac were introduced to Woburn in the period 1890 - 1900 and then established outside the park. Following this the latter species (or its hybrid with the Indian Muntjac) became feral in counties surrounding Woburn. Whitehead (1964) reported that north-east of Woburn the spread of this animal was not spectacular and reports in Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire were scarce. However, the Deer Group Newsletter 23 (March 1961) suggested that it had been a breeding species in Huntingdonshire since 1959 and the following records suggest that it is now widespread and firmly established in this county:

1. Male seen crossing the road near Agden Green (4.2.73) (TL 1266) (DJJ).
2. Group seen in Brampton Wood (31.8.76). Several have been seen here before and since, (Squares TL 1770, 1769, 1870, 1869) (ML).

3. Two seen among the trees bordering Houghton Poultry Research Station and "The Dingle" (26.8.76) (TL 2971) (BSM).
4. One small deer found in a garden near Houghton Mill. Description suggests Muntjac (-.7.76) (TL 2872) (CF).
5. During the last two months (December, January) three muntjac have been seen regularly in the gardens of Houghton Poultry Research Station (TL 2972) (BSM).
6. Two small deer have been seen in the gardens of homes in The Drive off Westwood Road, St. Ives, near the Thicket (reported in the Hunts Post, Dec. 16, 1976). In view of 3, 4 and 5 above, these are almost certainly Muntjac (TL 3071).
7. Male seen at the Wilderness hedge, Monks Wood Experimental Station (5.2.75) (TL 2079) (DJJ). They have also been reported in Monks Wood itself (squares TL 1980, 1979 and 2080) and Bevills Wood (TL 2079).
8. The following records for Muntjac have been collected from past reports:
 - (a) a skull was found in Littless Wood on the Grafham Water Nature Reserve (22.8.70) (TL 1268) (Worden 1970)
 - (b) one was seen in the Alconbury brook (-.8.70) (TL 1973) (Worden 1970) and
 - (c) Clarke (1973) gives records of Muntjac seen near Southoe, Brington, Holme and Covington (no detailed map references were given but these villages are in squares TL 1864, 0875, 1887, 0570).

Muntjac have been recorded at Woodwalton Fen but these may have been in error for the resident population of Chinese Water Deer which are readily visible there.

Chinese Water Deer: This species was also introduced to Woburn at the turn of the century and the present British population originates from escapes (Whitehead, 1964). It appears to be much more restricted in the county than the previous species and the only definite records we have are for the Woodwalton Fen NNR where there is a thriving population. There have been records for Chinese Water Deer in the Monks Wood area but no convincing ones have come to our notice yet in the light of the known occurrence of Muntjac.

Of the larger deer, Red, Roe and Fallow have all occurred in the county in historic times but there are few recent records.

Red Deer (Cervus elaphus): One stag appeared in Monks Wood in 1965 and stayed for 4 months from early March to early July before disappearing again (Ginn 1965). There were no more records until the Cambridge Evening News told DJJ of another single animal seen in the west of Bluntisham on the evening of October 13, 1974. This one again stayed for a few days

before disappearing. The most likely origin of these individuals is the Thetford area where there is a large herd of some 80 animals. The way in which an animal the size of a donkey can move around the fenland appearing and then disappearing completely is somewhat amazing.

Roe Deer (Capreolus capreolus): Mr. Taylor Page received a report of Roe Deer near Kimbolton (Whitehead, 1964) and one was reported just outside the county in Potton.

Fallow Deer (Dama dama): Whitehead notes that Fallow are not resident in Huntingdonshire today. However, they occur at Castor Hanglands and Potton just outside the county, to the north and south respectively, so it is likely that odd individuals could stray into the county.

Any records of deer are of interest but those for the Muntjac and Chinese Water Deer are particularly useful in that they would enable an accurate map of the counties two 'resident' species to be prepared. The more detailed the description, the more easy it is to identify the species concerned.

SEALS IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

Professor J. Harrison of the Wildfowl Trust reported that on 19 October 1976, he saw a seal just downstream of the AWA's temporary dam across the New Bedford (Hundred Foot) River near Earith (TL 3974). This was almost certainly a Common Seal (Phoca vitulina) as the much larger Grey Seal does not penetrate very far down estuaries whereas there are many recordings of isolated Common Seals in our large estuaries (Lawrence and Brown, 1973). They have penetrated the Thames as far as London and Goldsmith (1971) noted an individual which spent a week in the River Yare in November 1971, reaching Breydon Water. However, the above record for Earith and that of Clark (1973) who reported a confirmed sighting of a Common Seal in the River Ouse at St. Ives Staunch in early August 1973 must be among the deepest land penetrations recorded for this species; 60-65 km from the Wash. Whether there is any significance in the fact that all these reports are for autumn is not known.

HARVEST MICE IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

There are at least ten recent records for the Harvest Mouse (Micromys minutus) in the county. These records are as follows:

Vicinity of Grafham Water 1964, Woodwalton Fen NNR 1964, Vicinity of Mcnks Wood 1964, 1968 and 1970, Brington 1968, Shillow Hill 1972, Easton 1976, Raveley Wood 1976, Ramsey Heights Clay Pits 1976.

Since relatively little effort had been put into searching for this animal it is probably more common than ten records in twelve years would suggest.

The best time to search for signs of Harvest Mice is early autumn to late spring, when the previous season's breeding nests can be found. Areas of tall grass, reed or sedge are the best places to search, as the animal builds its nests from the leaves of these monocotyledonous plants. The leaves are shredded lengthwise and woven into a nest, which, if used for breeding, is about the size and shape of a cricket ball. Non-breeding nests, which are probably used for a few nights, are much smaller - golf ball size - and much less permanent. The lengthwise shredding of the leaves used to build the main framework of the nest, and the fact that these leaves are left attached to the plant so that they support the nest, are both diagnostic features of Harvest Mouse nests.

The Harvest Mouse is the subject of a current Mammal Society Survey which has shown the species is more common and widespread in Britain than was previously thought. Can you help add a few more records to the list? Details of the above records will be given later.

SMALL MAMMALS

We would like eventually to prepare a map of the distribution of small mammals of Huntingdonshire similar to that of Corke and Harris (1972) (The Small Mammals of Essex). Records can be obtained by searching for skeletons in old bottles, from live traps, from the victims brought home by the cat and by examining Barn Owl pellets (this species is fairly sedentary). Please return records to either of us at the above addresses. If any difficult subjects occur, please send the body or skull for identification.

MUSTELIDS

Otter (Lutra lutra): As is well known by now, the population of the otter is thought to have declined considerably in eastern counties since 1957. One of us (DJJ) is collecting all records for this species - both past and recent for a future article. Could you send any information, giving approximate date, time and locality together with details of what they were doing. Try not to confuse this with the next species which is now common on the Ouse. The adult male otter is some 4 feet from nose to tail tip whereas the mink is less than half that.

Mink (Mustela vison): We have had many records for the American Mink in the St. Ives/Huntingdon area during 1976 and would like to receive more, giving the same information as for the otter. Distribution details will then be reported later.

Stoat (Mustela erminea) and Weasel (M. nivalis): DJJ is very interested in the relative numbers and activity of these animals and would like all sight records with date (date and month) and locality - particularly where seen running across the road or as victims of road accidents. The black tip of the tail of the stoat is of course diagnostic.

Badger (Meles meles): Please report date, locality and sex of any road accident victims.

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Lewin—Smith, J.M. Abbey Cottage, Fordham, Ely, Cambs.

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Priestley, A.C. (Mrs.) The Coneygarths, Buckden, Huntingdon.

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Woodhead, F.A. (Mrs.) 18 Little Moor, Fenstanton, Cambs.
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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 £1 payable on January 1st 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 A.G.M., 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 hold 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.