



# The Norfolk Natterjack

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Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society



... Researching  
Norfolk's Wildlife

**November 2021**  
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# Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society

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Cover image: The leaf beetle, *Galeruca laticollis* at Wheatfen (Kevin Radley - See page 7)

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

I trust you have had a good summer despite the rather indifferent weather - certainly judging by the articles in this edition some of you have been looking at nature with a keen eye. This leads me into a little fun quiz which you will find on page 25 which is all about recognising eyes. My thanks to all the contributors who have taken time to send in their interesting observations and records. It is very surprising what turns up, such as a new beetle and moth for Norfolk, or what is noted even from well watched sites, such possible new feeding habits of a rare beetle or the appearance of a migrant damselfly. Lastly, please note a change of County Recorder for Lacewings etc. and an updated email address for the Amphibian/Reptile recorder. All the best for 2022.

FF

## A Slime Mould

Dorothy Cheyne

On 11<sup>th</sup> of May my eye was caught by a shiny white blob clinging to the bark of an old pear tree in my garden. It measured about 5 cm in diameter and on first inspection, in my ignorance, I thought it must be the nest of a scarily large spider, as lozenge-like lumps pressed against the silky outer cocoon.

After considerable trawling through the Internet looking at spider nests, I happened upon it's true identity. Not a spider at all, but a False Puffball slime mould *Reticularia lycoperdon*. I gather it is not rare, but I had never seen one before.

Two days later the white outer casing was dissolving revealing a brown lump underneath which, over the next week, itself begun to disintegrate as the spores blew away.

When I next went to look, on June 7<sup>th</sup>, it was as if it had never been.



False Puffball *Reticularia lycoperdon* showing how its appearance changed in less than a month / Dorothy Cheyne

The involvement of the Society in the new Broadland Country park project, has given members the opportunity to explore various type of woodland, heathland, grassland and wet areas, and appreciate the rich array of species that abound there. As I have walked around the various habitat compartments in the last few months, I have been pleasantly surprised by the number of fruiting bodies of the curiously named Wolf's Milk *Lycogala epidendrum*, and Flowers of Tan *Fuligo septica*, which is also sometimes called Scrambled Egg slime, and in North America, by the much less flattering name, Dog Vomit slime. There is a little confusion regarding Wolf's Milk, with some authorities insisting that there are two very sim-



Wolf's Milk *Lycogala epidendrum*, and Flowers of Tan *Fuligo septica* / Hans Watson

ilar species *Lycogala epidendrum* and *L. terrestre*, and others insisting that there are just two slightly different versions of *L. epidendrum*. In the past all of these organisms were regarded as types of fungi, and were often included in fungi identification books. Even the great Carl Linnaeus is said to have regarded Wolf's Milk as a kind of small Puff-ball, placing it in the genus *Lycoperdon*. However, we now know that they are not fungi, but Plasmodial Slime Moulds or *Myxomycetes*.

Studies in more recent years have revealed that the life-cycle of these organisms is very different to fungi. For much of their lives, they exist as a colony of multi-nucleic amoeba-like cells, creeping about, unnoticed, in damp leaf litter or under bark of dead trees, searching for food in an almost animal-like fashion. Some can move several feet in 24 hours. When conditions are right, they move to a drier location, and produce their often brightly coloured fruiting bodies, which are not slimy but dry and sometimes quite brittle. Spores are formed inside these, and

are eventually released to be dispersed by air currents, in similar fashion to fungi spores. It is thought that there are between seven hundred and a thousand species of slime moulds worldwide, and a growing number of scientific studies are revealing more and more amazing facts, such as the ability of Flowers of Tan to happily tolerate levels of zinc that would kill other organisms. Scientists believe that these previously neglected organisms, may provide answers to many questions relating to a wide variety of subjects, such as bio-electrics, computing, and medical research. As they say, 'watch this space'.

## Year of the Fox

Carl Sayer & Peter Robinson

Every year the UCL Pond Restoration Group undertakes aquatic vegetation surveys of farmland ponds restored by the Norfolk Ponds Project (NPP). Following restoration by major scrub and sediment removal or via pond re-excitation for "ghost ponds" old seedbanks are disturbed and perfect conditions can be presented for wetland plants of long gone days to re-appear, sometimes including scarce and threatened species such as Water Violet *Hottonia palustris*, Grass-poly *Lythrum hyssopifolium* (Sayer & Parmenter, 2020) and seldom seen stoneworts such as Clustered Stonewort *Tolypella glomerata*, Tassel Stonewort *Tolypella intricata* and Slimy-fruited Stonewort *Nitella capillaris*, the latter of which was thought to be extinct in the British Isles until very recently (Hawkins, 2019).

Scarce plants continue to be found in NPP restored ponds and in summer 2021, while brushing through a bed of Common Spike-rush at a pond restored four years previously in Bodham, we encountered an unfamiliar, distinctively orange flowering wetland grass. This was quickly identified as Orange Fox-tail *Alopecurus aequalis*. Ease of differentiation of *A. aequalis* from the very similar Marsh Foxtail *Alopecurus geniculatus* is afforded by much longer awns in the latter, as well as very distinctive bright orange anthers in *A. aequalis*. This



*Alopecurus aequalis* doing its orangy thing in a pond recently restored by the Norfolk Ponds Project /

Carl Sayer

was the first time we had recorded this plant at a Norfolk farmland pond. The next day saw us find the fantastic fox at three further North Norfolk ponds, two tiny marl pits in East Beckham that we had restored two years previously and a medieval fishpond at Baconsthorpe Castle. The four new *A. aequalis* records fall in three new monads and three new tetrads. Maybe the highly unusual weather patterns of winter-spring 2021 created perfect hydrological conditions for the fox to do its thing? Or maybe, due to its rarity, we have somehow missed this species in past surveys? Either way we hope to hunt this attractive grass down in a few more sites next year. But we also ask others of the NNNS – was this the year of the fox?

### References:

Hawkins, J. 2019. The discovery and conservation of rare stoneworts in Suffolk's farmland ponds 2019. Transactions of the Suffolk Naturalists Society, 55: 109-125.

Sayer, C.D. & Parmenter, J. 2020. Resurrection of a Norfolk pond gem: Grass-poly *Lythrum hyssopifolia* L. Transactions of the Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists Society, 53(1): 71-74.

## A chance observation and a third English record

Tony Leech

When Milly Kenward was recording fungi in Broadland Country Park (for the NNNS Research Committee project), she photographed a Hoof Fungus *Fomes fomentarius* adorned with cocoon-like objects. I was unable to tell her what they might be but passed the photo on to Tony Irwin in the hope that he might be able to tell us what order of arthropod had made them. He did better than that, replying that he thought they might be the cocoons of a fungus gnat. He had noticed a larva in the photograph which looked to him like that of *Sciophila rufa*, a species occurring in the Scottish Highlands.

Tony passed the photograph to Peter Chandler, the national fungus gnat expert, who confirmed that they were indeed the cocoons of *S. rufa* and that this was in fact the second Norfolk record (the first was from Thompson Common in 2019 by Judy Webb) and only the third occurrence in England.

*Sciophila rufa* cocoons on  
Hoof Fungus, BCP Sept.  
2021 / Milly Kenward



The Hoof Fungus, a parasite of birch trees, is very common in Scotland and the north of England but did not make an appearance in Norfolk until 2008. Since then, it has become widespread, especially in the north and west of the county.

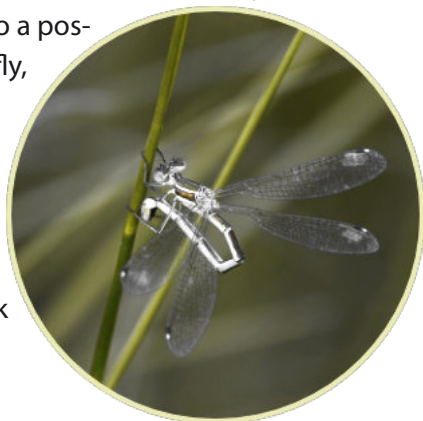
Larvae of *Sciophila rufa* make webs on the *Fomes*, and apparently feed on the spores (some other web-forming fungus gnat larvae are predatory). The bright orange adults are on the wing May to September.

The morals of this tale are: be observant, take a camera and share both ignorance and knowledge.

## Another Unexpected Find

Francis Farrow

At around 4pm, 19<sup>th</sup> August, I was walking along a path on the east side of the central marsh at Beeston Common when I noticed a pale damselfly perched on a rush stem. As I watched it drew itself up into a position that suggested oviposition. The damselfly, obviously a female, looked unfamiliar and I checked the pterostigmata (small coloured panels at the outer top edge of the wings). They were two-tone ie half black and half white. This immediately registered as something I had seen in a book but could not think which of the rarer damselflies it could be. I managed to get some pictures before it flew off into the marsh. I checked as soon as I returned home and confirmed my suspicions that it was indeed a rare damselfly, the Southern Emerald *Lestes barbarus*. Next day I re-found the damselfly and managed to get some further pictures. This was another unexpected find and a new species for me.



Southern Emerald Damselfly / Francis Farrow

Southern Emeralds were first found in Norfolk at Winterton in 2002, when they were also new to Britain. Geoff Nobes found three males between July 30<sup>th</sup> and August 7<sup>th</sup>. It is thought that they may have come from the Netherlands as they have been doing well in dunes on the western coast. Over the last 20 years the damselflies have been recorded almost annually, mainly at coastal sites between Sussex and Norfolk and generally as singletons although breeding has occurred.

My actinic moth trap never seems to catch any rare moths, but on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2021 it did attract a rare and very beautiful beetle. I'd already placed the perspex lid over the trap and when I came to move the trap into a shaded part of the garden I noticed a leaf beetle (Chrysomelidae) sitting on the lid. This was quickly potted and I knew straight away that it was the very distinctive *Paropsisterna selmani*. It looks superficially like a tortoise beetle (Chrysomelidae:



Cassidinae) but the head is entirely exposed rather than completely hidden. In sunshine, the elytra are seen to be beautifully patterned with red or purple and golden or yellow markings on a reddish or tawny background.

This beetle has an interesting back story. It was first detected in 2007 infesting eucalyptus plantations in southern Ireland,

Tasmanian Leaf Beetle, West Runton 2021 / Andrew Duff

where eucalyptus is grown mostly for the floristry trade. Entomologists figured out that it was a member of the Australasian genus *Paropsisterna* but it didn't match any of the described species and was in fact new to science! Later it was matched with a misidentified Tasmanian species and was named *selmani* after the late British entomologist Brian Selman who had been working on the taxonomy of the genus. We therefore know for sure that it originated with eucalyptus trees imported from Tasmania, and because of its economic importance it has been given the name Tasmanian Eucalyptus Beetle.

The first British record of this beetle was from London in 2012. Since then it quickly spread in southeast England, from West Sussex to East Kent and north to Bedfordshire. Martin Collier, the Norfolk beetle recorder, informed me that a specimen was photographed in a Swaffham garden on 30th July 2020 and another in Norwich the following day. Mine is only the third Norfolk record, but I believe it is likely to become widespread in Norfolk quite quickly.

Adults and larvae feed on the foliage of a wide range of eucalyptus trees and can be detected by obvious damage to the leaves. The adults have been recorded from April until November, with active dispersal in the warmest months. If you find this beetle, please send a photo with the locality, grid reference and date by e-mail to Martin at [norfolk.beetles@gmail.com](mailto:norfolk.beetles@gmail.com).

## Observations on the Feeding Habits of the Leaf Beetle *Galeruca laticollis* (Chrysomelidae)

Kevin Radley & Hannah Breach

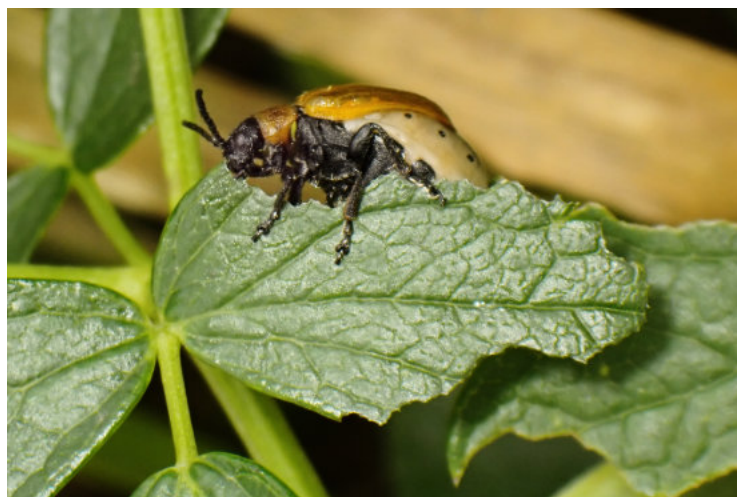
Whilst the larval food-plant of the leaf Beetle *Galeruca laticollis* is known to be Common Meadow-rue *Thalictrum flavum*; the adult is purportedly reliant solely on *Cirsium* species thistles for their food source (exclusively Creeping Thistle *Cirsium arvense* at Wheatfen – the only known site in the UK where the Beetle occurs).

That the adults do feed on Creeping Thistle there is no question. However, in 2021, at Wheatfen, we found numerous instances of them feeding on the leaves of Common Meadow-rue. Indeed, where Meadow-rue co-existed with Creeping Thistle, there appeared to be a preference for the former plant; to the extent that it was difficult to find Beetles feeding on the latter.

This phenomenon persisted from first observation of the adult Beetles, on 10<sup>th</sup> August, well into September (18<sup>th</sup>); with Beetles seen feeding on both species of plant.

It was also noted that along one path where the Beetles had been seen feeding freely (mostly) on Meadow-rue, they were later found feeding on Thistle – where over-zealous (?) clearing of the pathway edges had eliminated the Meadow-rue, but had left the, lower growing, Creeping Thistle intact.

It remains unclear whether this activity may represent a change in the feeding habits of *G. laticollis* adults; or whether their feeding on *T. flavum* has been heretofore unobserved.

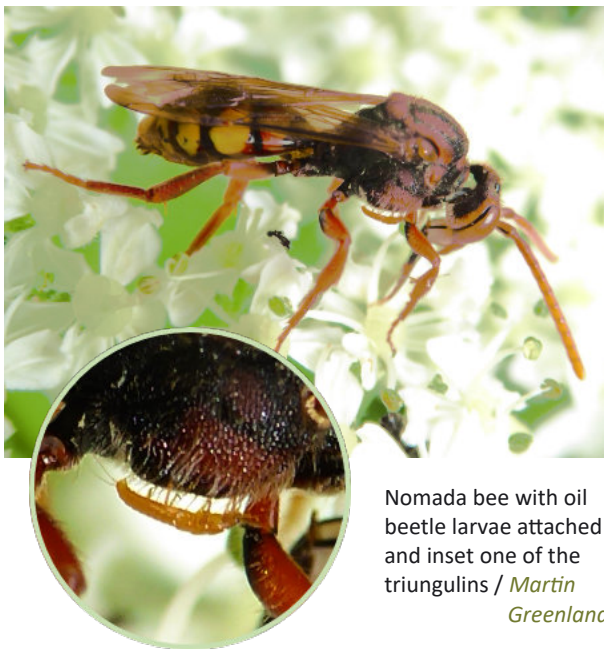


Is *Galeruca laticollis* changing its food-plant? / Kevin Radley

## Oil Beetle

Martin Greenland

Sometimes you spot something in a photo you didn't know was there. Clinging to this female *Nomada* bee at Walsingham are two triumgulins - larvae of an oil beetle (in this case, Black Oil Beetle *Meloe proscarabaeus*). One is under the thorax; the other at the top of the hind leg. They are hitching a ride to a solitary bee nest, where they will consume the eggs and pollen store. Since the *Nomada* is a cuckoo, it is likely to lay its own egg in the nest as well.

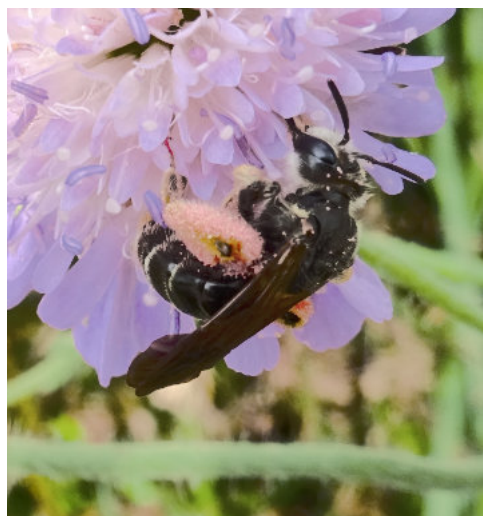


Nomada bee with oil beetle larvae attached and inset one of the triumgulins / Martin Greenland

## Solitary Bee

Stephanie Witham

I took a photo of a solitary bee in the sandy area of Felmingham Cutting on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> July and wondered what it was. I don't really try and do bees, but was attracted by the large amount of pink pollen from the Field Scabious!



Having seen a recent image taken by Francis Farrow of a bee with large yellow pollen baskets I thought it must be the same - *Dasypoda*? I sent my picture to Francis who identified the bee as a female Large Scabious Mining Bee *Andrena hattorfiana*. This is the UK's largest mining bee and Felmingham may be a new Norfolk location for the species.

Large Scabious Mining Bee - Britain's largest mining bee found at Felmingham / Stephanie Witham

## Egg-laying Silver-washed Fritillary

Andy Clarke

I have been visiting coastal Norfolk since the early 1960s, and have lived here since 2010. Until the last few years I had never seen a Silver-washed Fritillary in the county, though I had seen them often enough in the New Forest. For the past three years, however, the occasional wandering individual has graced our Sheringham garden. Usually we see them flying strongly through without



Silver-washed Fritillary (female)

stopping, or nectaring on *Buddleia*. On 5<sup>th</sup> August this year, however, I spotted a female Silver-washed Fritillary patrolling the herbaceous border at the base of the north-facing wall of the house. She rested occasionally (see photo) but mostly she was flying low over the ground, every now and then dipping down as if to check something, before moving on. This border contains violets so I

decided to watch in case she was looking for an oviposition site. Sure enough she eventually flew back towards me, and proceeded to lay several eggs in the stem of a climbing *Hydrangea*. This plant is well established for it was a large plant when we moved in over a decade ago and it has a fairly robust stem which is rough with plenty of chinks and crevices (see photo). The egg-laying behavior was very distinctive. Having settled onto the stem about 30 cm above the ground, she probed gently with the tip of her abdomen. On two or three occasions the abdomen was held still and then pulled away in a gentle but distinctive movement, presumably indicating successful deposition of an egg. I estimate she laid three eggs before flying strongly out of the garden and we never saw her (or any other individual) again this summer. I tried to locate the eggs, but frustratingly could not; I will keep a careful lookout for the caterpillars next season.



Oviposition site - trunk of established climbing *Hydrangea*

Images / Andy Clarke

## Dingy Flat-body Moth *Depressaria daucella*, in Norfolk

Kevin Radley & Hannah Breach

Examining the fauna on Hemlock Water-dropwort *Oenanthe crocata* plants on 19 June, 2021, which grow in a small area at Wheatfen (Ted Ellis Trust), we noticed 'leaf-rolling' activity consistent with that of certain Depressariidae (micro) moths – whose larvae roll the leaves of various Umbellifers with spun-silk into a 'tube' in which to feed out of sight.

I (KR) had experienced these before on Milk Parsley plants and had bred a couple of the larvae found on them through to adults – in that instance *Agonopterix heracliiana*. However, whilst showing Hannah a fleeting glimpse of one of these 'new' caterpillars, it struck me that its coloration was not familiar to me: having a rather black coloured dorsum; as opposed to the pale, greenish, dorsum found on *A. heracliiana* – or the similar *A. ciliella*. Also, some of the larvae had spun together the flower-heads (umbels) of the Hemlock Water-dropwort in which to feed – which I had not seen previously on Milk Parsley.

Later, persuaded by Hannah that I should breed a couple of the larvae through to adult for identification, we returned on 22 June to find them less abundant – the larvae probably having pupated; though we did manage to find two examples: one which had spun its 'tent' in a flower-head in which to feed; the other in a rolled leaf.

On arrival at home, after a rather bumpy cycle ride, I found the two larvae exposed in their clear containers. This gave me the opportunity to see them more clearly and to take a couple of photographs. These I sent to Hannah, whose initial investigations provisionally identified the larvae as looking like those of the Dingy Flat-body moth *Depressaria daucella*; with the caveat that these had apparently not been previously recorded in Norfolk.



The two larvae of the Dingy Flat-bodied moth collected from Wheatfen

Carefully checking the containers for their pupae on 1 July, revealed one in a rolled-up leaf; the other, which had been feeding in the flower-head, was found to have pupated in the hollow stem of the food-plant (see photos). The first adult emerged on 12 July; the second a few days later.



The larvae pupated in a rolled-up leaf and hollow stem of the food-plant

At this point Hannah sent details and photos to Ken Saul (Norfolk Moth Survey) and thereafter to Jim Wheeler (Norfolk moth recorder), who confirmed their identity as *D. daucella*; which, it transpired, was a new record for Wheatfen, and, indeed, a new county record.

Our thanks to Will Fitch (Wheatfen Warden); and to Ken Saul and Jim Wheeler for their help.



One of the Dingy Flat-body moths that emerged - a new record for Norfolk

Images / *Kevin Radley*

# Nature Gallery

2021

A female Purple Emperor sitting on a Sallow leaf at a possible new north Norfolk site, 27 Jul / *John Furse*



While gardening at home in Flordon I was distracted by a number of parasitic wasps including *Gateruptio jaculator* with its impressive ovipositor 02 Aug / *Janet Negal*



Lesser Bulb Fly - either *Eumerus funeralis* / *strigatus* - can only be determined by close examination. Found on Beeston Common, 04 Aug / *Mark Clements*



A White-letter Hairstreak nectaring on Bramble at a second location on Beeston Common, 03 Aug / *Francis Farrow*





Tortoise Shieldbug *Eurygaster testudinaria* (final instar),  
Beeston Common, 10 Aug /  
*Mark Clements*



A brightly-coloured bug, *Corizus hyoscyami*, sometimes known as the Cinnamon Bug, was present at Raveningham Hall, 27 Aug /  
*Bernard Webb*



The beautiful bumblebee mimic hoverfly, *Sericomyia superbiens* turned up after some three years since a last sighting, Beeston Common, 29 Aug / *Francis Farrow*



The attractive but at times destructive Rosemary Beetle first appeared in the UK in 1994 and is happily making a home in the garden, Loddon, 06 Sept / *Bernard Webb*

## Personal encounters with some of Norfolk's Wonderful 150...

### Spider *Marpissa radiata* and its relatives *Jeremy & Vanna Bartlett*

Jumping spiders (family Salticidae) are some of our most charismatic arachnids. They are active during the day, using their superb eyesight to hunt for prey which they agilely pounce upon. Many are strikingly patterned and their large forward facing eyes make them an appealing group to look out for.

There are three species of *Marpissa* jumping spider in Britain and all of them can be found in Norfolk. Two are listed as Nationally Scarce while the third, *Marpissa radiata*, is Nationally Rare. This species is arguably the most handsome of the three and quite rightly is featured in "Norfolk's Wonderful 150".

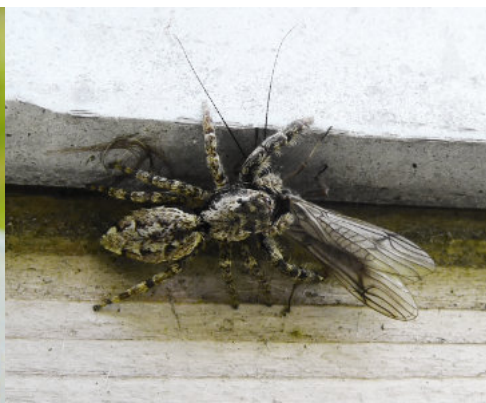
*Marpissa* spiders characteristically have an elongated abdomen and the front pair of legs are darker and thicker than the others. We have been fortunate to see all three species, tracking down the last elusive one this year.

*Marpissa muscosa* is the largest of the three and probably the easiest to find; in fact it was our first species of *Marpissa*. The common name Fencepost Jumping Spider tells you all you need to know about where to look for it. In Norfolk it is largely confined to the Brecks (we spotted our first on a fence post near Grimes Graves in 2019). This year we found one on a wooden gate at Foulten Common.

The spider's abdomen is greyish brown with a pattern of dark and light markings, reminiscent of Sarah Lund's Faroese jumper in "The Killing". Males are 6 – 8 mm long; females 8 – 10 mm, making them our largest salticid. We have usually seen them in April or May but adults can be found until September.



*Marpissa muscosa* (male)



*Marpissa muscosa* (female)

*Marpissa radiata* is known as the Reed Jumping Spider and it is pretty much confined to fens and other damp areas where common reed is found (females like to spin their egg-sacs in the heads of reeds). We were lucky to find both males and females on reeds on the riverside path at Redgrave and Lopham Fen in July 2020 (Jeremy also had a very brief glimpse of a male on Hedge Bind-weed in the same area in August 2021).

As previously stated, these are extremely attractive spiders. The males we saw had a lovely orange colour abdomen with paler golden markings. The females were similarly coloured but were much paler with profuse white hairs the abdomen had two dark longitudinal stripes. The overall flecked appearance made them blend in well on old reed stems.

Males are around 6 – 7 mm long and females 8 – 10 mm, thus giving *Marpissa muscosa* a run for its money in the largest jumper stakes. They can be seen from April to October although the number of adult females peaks in June.



*Marpissa radiata* (male)



*Marpissa radiata* (female)



Drawing showing  
*Marpissa radiata* and  
other reedbed wildlife

***Marpissa nivoyi***, the Dune Jumping Spider, is a coastal species and a specialist of sand dunes. In Norfolk it is restricted to the Holkham area. It is by far the smallest of the three (rarely exceeding 4 or 5 mm) and certainly proved the most elusive to find. They are usually found amongst Marram Grass but in Norfolk they are also associated with reeds. Pip Colyer had passed on details of where to look but it wasn't until July this year that we actually managed to find one.

Luckily we had bumped into the reserve warden, Andy Bloomfield, and he told us to try looking amongst the litter at the base of the reeds we were searching. The tiny male we eventually found looked more like a pseudo-scorpion than a spider, with its elongated abdomen and large dark forelegs that it held outstretched in front of it as it moved along. Later that day Andy managed to find one on Marram Grass in the dunes.



*Marpissa nivoyi* (male)

Images and drawing / *Vanna Bartlett*

Males have been found in April, August and September and females most of the year. Numbers peak in October.

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On 20 August, 2021, I arrived at the North end of Salthouse Beach Road at just before 0700 hours, to park and then make the walk out to Gramborough Hill. I had no great expectations, as the first two-thirds of August had been the worst I'd known for migration, with only one each of Wheatear and Chiffchaff and nothing that could be labelled as 'notable'.

Uncharacteristically, I took a few minutes to ready myself for the arduous trek, then set off East along the fence. Within the first 5 metres, I heard a *choo* call (which I recognised as that of an Ortolan Bunting) overhead and saw a bird fly down on to the top wire of the fence, around 30 metres back (south) along the road. I hadn't remembered about its call being alternating (which is what I then heard) and this second, more squeaky, sound puzzled me. My confusion was compounded when I looked through my binoculars to see the bird facing away, with only its back on view. Was this, in fact, a Pipit ? Were there two birds ? These were the questions that flashed through my mind. It called a few more times, enabling me to pinpoint this bird as the one making the calls. It then turned its head so I was able to see its lateral throat stripes. **Bingo !** My first hunch had been correct. A veteran birder told me long ago that this is usually the case.

My view was ever so slightly impeded by thistle heads, but I hadn't wanted to move, in case I caused the bird to fly. Several quick bursts from my camera nailed the bird for posterity, so I shifted surreptitiously to the left to have a clearer photographic view. I was thwarted in this when it was spooked by a fisherman returning to his vehicle and flew off West.



A 'notable' migrant - Ortolan Bunting / John Furse

Ortolans have become increasingly rarer during my lifetime (not least because they were a much-publicised, favourite delicacy of French Presidents) and the last one I saw was more than ten years ago.

In late July of this year myself and two friends went up to Bempton cliffs on the East coast of Yorkshire, just for the day, this was a rare excursion out of Norfolk for me. The main object of our nine hour round trip drive was the Black-browed Albatross that had taken up residence there, known as 'Albert Ross', it had been there for some time, and was on good terms with the local gannets, flying, and perching on the cliffs with them. It should have been down in the Southern Ocean, but somehow had got its 'Sat Nav' in a pickle. As far as I can tell it's the only one known of in Europe.

On our arrival at the RSPB reserve the wardens were asked where the best places were for seeing this amazing bird, only to be told that it hadn't been seen for almost two days, so we resigned our selves to lesser targets. As there were plenty of Gannets, Fulmars, and round the reception area, a colony of Tree Sparrows, we settled for them. With a very fresh north-easterly blowing it was difficult to hand hold our cameras steady, but the birds behaved well, and some good images were obtained.

Then about mid afternoon the word went round that 'Albert' had been seen, so off to the other end of the reserve we went. There it was, this magnificent ocean wanderer, with impossibly long wings flying with the gannets, the light was good, and we managed to get some reasonable shots of it, our day was complete.



Gannets



Fulmar



Tree Sparrow

Images / *Tony Howes*



Black-browed Albatross

When I first visited Weybourne Camp on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1972, little did I know that it would become the focal point of much of my birding activity for the next 49 years. In 1987 the owners at the time, Mr Berry Savory and Major Anthony Gurney, kindly allowed me to develop part of the Camp as a permanent reserve for wildlife by planting several thousand trees and most importantly by generously paying for the creation of a small freshwater pool immediately behind the beach that was fed by a natural spring on Muckleburgh Hill. Unfortunately over recent years, the pool had dried out and the area had been taken over by scrub and stunted willows. However, in September 2020 an experienced digger driver created a new scrape over a period of three days. At the end of the work, we simply had an earth-filled shallow bowl, but fortuitously it then rained more or less continuously for the next week or so and it gradually filled with rain water, which has remained throughout the summer.



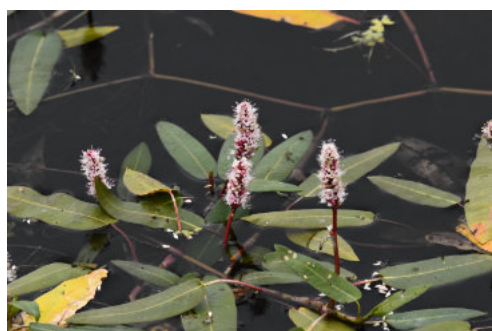
The scrape which was completed in three days - in winter and the following spring

The first duck to take advantage of this newly created area of water was a female Scaup on 4<sup>th</sup> November, followed six days later by a female Pintail, since when a total of eight species of wildfowl has been recorded, and both Mallard and Gadwall have nested successfully. A pair of Little Grebes first appeared in February and has raised two broods, while a pair of Moorhens has gone one better rearing three broods. The muddy fringe around the scrape has also proved attractive to eight species of wader, the best being a Little Stint.

But it is not only birds that are benefiting from the new scrape. During the course of this summer, no fewer than 13 species of dragonfly have been recorded on and around the scrape, and two other species in the surrounding area: Brown Hawker *Aeshna grandis* and far less expected a Norfolk Hawker (Green-eyed Hawker) *Anaciaeschna isosceles*, which flew in from the north and landed on brambles before flying off a minute later on Aug 10<sup>th</sup>. Its wings were



The Norfolk Hawker that came in off the sea  
a single immature male Hairy Dragonfly *Brachytron pratense* photographed in early June was a pleasing find. Occasional sightings of two of my favourites: Small Red-eyed Damselfly *Erythromma viridulum* and Banded Demoiselle *Calopteryx splendens* were unexpected.

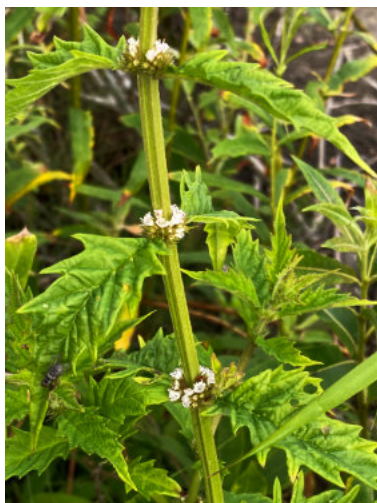


Amphibious Bistort

As part of our environmental survey of the Camp we also recorded over 100 species of wild flowers during the spring and summer, several being confined to the scrape. Common Water Crowfoot *Ranunculus aquatilis* graced the central open areas while spikes of Amphibious Bistort *Persi-*

*caria amphibia* adorned the shallows by the northern bank. It was fascinating to see how the Celery-leaved Buttercups *Ranunculus sceleratus* occupied the areas of exposed mud as the water level fell. Other characteristic waterside plants included the labiate Gypsywort *Lycopus europaeus* with its whorls of minute white flowers circling the stem at the bases of the leaves, the attractive sweet-smelling Water Mint *Mentha aquatica* and the unmistakable large flowers of Yellow Iris *Iris pseudacorus*.

Throughout the year there has always been something to admire.



Gypsywort

Images / Moss Taylor

Ever heard of a Buttle, Billy-wix or Harnser? These are all local names in Norfolk dialect for birds: bittern, tawny owl and heron. There is a wealth of dialect names some still in use around the county; those above are commonly known but others have died out. There is poetry and sometimes an interesting yarn behind a name like Tis-n-taint, a sow thistle, it is and isn't a thistle. A name recorded for monks-hood amuses me 'Nathan-driving-his-chariot' - there must be a good story there too.

We started 'collecting' local wildlife names out of interest. When the list reached a hundred or so we thought that it could be the beginnings of a book, and with a young child perhaps an illustrated alphabet of Norfolk names would be a good idea. NNNs publications committee kindly agreed to publish a book produced along these lines, suggesting that it be expanded to cover habitats and landscape features (Broad, Ligger, Loke, Pightle) and include a comprehensive list of words along with their origins etc, both of which we thought interesting ideas. Over the past year we've been trawling old local texts and talking to people across the county who continue to use local names or remember others using them. It became clear that many words have all but been lost to time and others are well on their way, whereas words such as Harnser, Dodderman and Bishy-barnabee will be familiar to most in Norfolk, certainly within this society. Possibly less so words such as Peggles, Polywiggles and Popelar while Dickadilver, Dindleblingle and Iron-Hards may be virtually extinct.

We'd like help with the next step of the project to verify that rare or unusual words are genuine and record how frequently the words are still used. This is the point at which we would like to request the assistance of NNNs members – we are seeking people to review our list and tell us where in the county you know each word from, when you last heard it used, and what it means to you – and to provide additions, suggestions of obscure texts or people to talk to. If you are interested in reviewing this list of 260 words please contact us.

We would really like to have images to accompany a chosen animal or plant for each letter of the alphabet so we are looking for artists and photographers who would like to be involved and provide an illustration for the book (with full credit). This could be paintings, lino cuts, photographs.. whatever your chosen medium may be. Please get in touch for the list of things we'd like pictures of - (Email: [mushroom\\_alex@hotmail.com](mailto:mushroom_alex@hotmail.com) / Tel: 01508 470968)



How many local dialect names do you know for species in this image? / *Alex Prendergast*

## Naturalists' Library opens at Wheatfen



*Tony Leech -  
NNNS Chairman*



Nick Acheson, NNNS President opening the Naturalists' Library at Wheatfen / *Bernard Webb*.  
Part of the Library (inset) / *James Emerson*

Although online resources can be useful for identifying specimens, printed guides are often essential. But they can be expensive. Fortunate naturalists may acquire specialised literature in their own field but lack what is needed when they stray into other areas. A full list of the library's books will be published on the NNNS website.

When the Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society received a substantial legacy from the estate of the late Basil Ribbons, it was decided to use some of it to equip a reference library available to members and anyone else seeking information. A request to locate it at Wheatfen was welcomed by the Ted Ellis Trust which shared the cost of shelving to house the library. There it can be consulted by anyone by prior arrangement with the Warden, Will Fitch ([info@wheatfen.org](mailto:info@wheatfen.org) / Tel: 01508 538036).

Basil Ribbons was born in 1926 and attended the City of Norwich School. Soon after gaining a Botany degree at the University of London he took up an appointment in the School of Botany at the University of Glasgow where he became a Lecturer and remained until his retirement in 1988. Subsequently he returned to Norfolk where he died in 2017.



The Library was formally opened on September 12<sup>th</sup> by Nick Acheson, NNNS President 2021-2022, after a short but typically lively speech. He introduced Guest-of-honour John Watt, long-term partner of Basil Ribbons, who had returned to Norfolk with him. As students, they had visited Wheatfen and got to know the Ellis family so it was entirely appropriate, if serendipitous, that the library was located there.

Following a successful season of Malaise, pitfall and vane trapping across all 16 Compartments of the NNNS priority research site, Broadland Country Park, a team of twelve NNNS entomologists gathered at Wheatfen Study Centre on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> September to sort the material for onward transmission to specialist County Recorders.



The NNNS Entomological team at Wheatfen.

What began as 42 jars of specimens ended up as hundreds! Under Tony Irwin's guidance we steered them all in the right direction with flies, beetles, sawflies, bees, ants and many others all packed up and shipped off to the specialists for identification.



Nick Owens and Martin Greenland sorting out the aculeates and Diptera.

Andy Musgrove, County Recorder for sawflies, has already identified the first records of males of a pine-feeding predominantly Scottish species, *Gilpinia frutetorum* as well as several species unrecorded since the 1980s and 90s. An unusual fly, the Drab Wood-soldierfly *Solva marginata*, whose larvae feed on rotten poplar, also turned up.

Nick Owens, meanwhile, identified two aculeates on the northern edge of their range, a handsome spider-hunter *Priocnemus pusilla* and a bug-hunting solitary wasp, *Astata boops*. Much work remains to be done over the winter and plans are afoot for next season using different collecting methods.

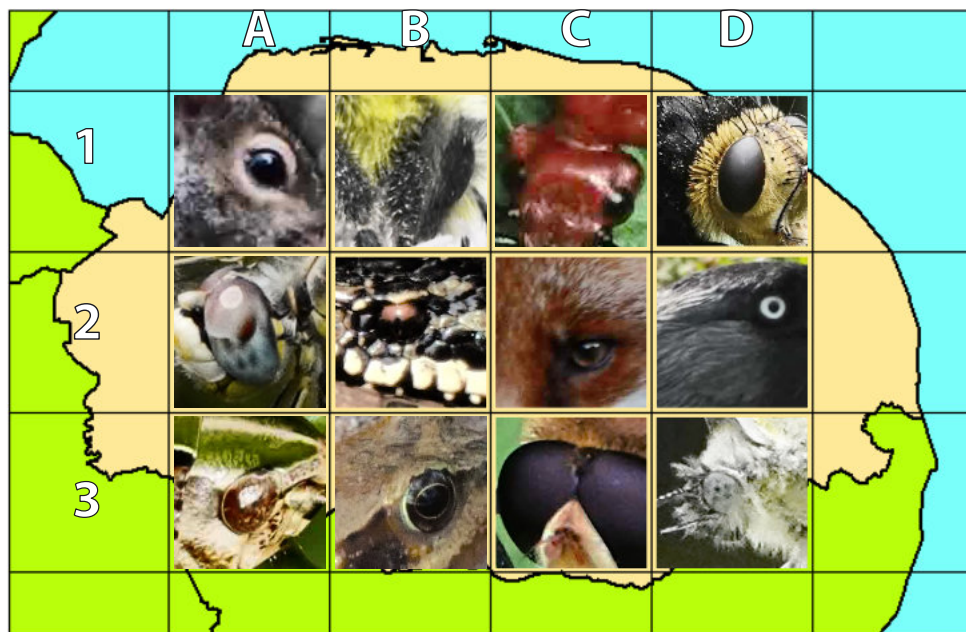


Sorting is a laborious business - but more fun in good company.

## 'Getting your Eye in' Quiz

Francis Farrow

Below are the eyes of 12 Norfolk species. Can you name them?



If you need some help I have listed 24 species where half are correct and half are wrong. Another way to play is to put the 'eye' into a group eg mammal, reptile, hoverfly etc. See page 26 for the answers.

- |                          |                              |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Adder                    | Muntjac                      |
| Carrion Crow             | <i>Nowickia ferox</i>        |
| Common Darter            | Orange-tip                   |
| Common Frog              | Rabbit                       |
| Common Green Grasshopper | Red-headed Cardinal Beetle   |
| Common Lizard            | Red-veined Darter            |
| Common Toad              | Red Soldier Beetle           |
| Fox                      | <i>Sericomyia superbiens</i> |
| Garden Bumblebee         | Small White                  |
| Grey Squirrel            | <i>Tachina grossa</i>        |
| Jackdaw                  | <i>Volucella zonaria</i>     |
| Lesser Marsh Grasshopper | White-tailed Bumblebee       |

## New County Recorder - Lacewings and allies

The NNNS was sorry to receive Paul Cobb's resignation as a County Recorder, but not entirely surprised as Paul now lives in Scotland. The Society offers a very warm welcome to Paul's replacement, Dave Appleton, who lives in mid Norfolk and has been recording lacewings and allies for several years. Dave is now the recorder for Lacewings, Spongeflies, Waxflies, Antlions, Alderflies, Snakeflies, Scorpionflies and Snow Flea. Dave's wildlife recording interests began with birds but after broadening his attention to moths he has become increasingly interested in other insect groups especially those that he encounters while in pursuit of moths.



A Waxfly

Please send your records of Lacewings and allies to Dave at [norfolklacewings@gmail.com](mailto:norfolklacewings@gmail.com) or by post to: 44 Eastgate Street, North Elmham NR20 5HD.

## 'Getting your Eye in' Quiz

## ANSWERS



Bee-wolf

Images / *Francis Farrow*

- A1 - Grey Squirrel / Mammal
- A2 - Red-veined Darter / Dragonfly
- A3 - Common Green Grasshopper / Grasshopper
- B1 - White-tailed Bumblebee / Bee
- B2 - Adder / Reptile
- B3 - Common Frog / Amphibian
- C1 - Red-headed Cardinal Beetle / Beetle
- C2 - Fox / Mammal
- C3 - *Sericomylia superbians* / Hoverfly
- D1 - *Tachina grossa* / Parasitic Fly
- D2 - Jackdaw / Bird
- D3 - Small White / Butterfly



The next issue of 'The Norfolk Natterjack' will be **February 2022**

Please send  
**all articles / notes and illustrative material**  
to the editor as soon as possible by  
**January 1<sup>st</sup> 2022** to the following address:

Francis Farrow, 'Heathlands', 6 Havelock Road, Sheringham,  
Norfolk, NR26 8QD. Email: [francis.farrow@btinternet.com](mailto:francis.farrow@btinternet.com)

*All photographs / images are very welcome, especially to accompany an article or document a record, occasionally however, because of space limitations, preference may have to be given to Norfolk-based images, or to those subjects depicting interesting or unusual behaviour, or are less commonly (or rarely) seen in print.*

## Membership subscriptions

The N&NNS membership year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March. During this time members will receive four copies of the quarterly newsletter, 'The Norfolk Natterjack', and annual copies of the Transactions of the Society, and the Norfolk Bird & Mammal Report. A full summer programme of excursions and a winter programme of talks are also organised annually.

**New memberships and renewals** can be made by credit card or 'PayPal' by visiting the Society's website at [www.nnns.org.uk](http://www.nnns.org.uk)

Alternatively a cheque payable to  
**'Norfolk & Norwich Naturalist's Society'** can be sent to:

Jim Froud, The Membership Secretary, Westward Ho, 4 Kingsley Road,  
Norwich NR1 3RB

Current rates are £20 for individual, family and group memberships  
(£30 for individuals living overseas).

# Contents



Toad-in-the-hole...	Page 1
A Slime Mould <i>Dorothy Cheyne</i> (False Puffball slime mould)	
Wolf's Milk and Flowers of Tan <i>Hans Watson</i>	Page 2
Year of the Fox <i>Carl Sayer &amp; Peter Robinson</i> (Orange Fox-tail)	Page 3
A chance observation and a third English record <i>Tony Leech</i> (Fungus Gnat)	Page 4
Another Unexpected Find <i>Francis Farrow</i> (Southern Emerald Damselfly)	Page 5
Tasmanian Eucalyptus Beetle <i>Andrew Duff</i>	Page 6
Observations on the Feeding Habits of the Leaf Beetle <i>Galeruca laticollis</i> (Chrysomelidae) <i>Kevin Radley &amp; Hannah Breach</i>	Page 7
Oil Beetle <i>Martin Greenland</i>	Page 8
Solitary Bee <i>Stephanie Witham</i> (Large Scabious Mining Bee)	
Egg-laying Silver-washed Fritillary <i>Andy Clarke</i>	Page 9
Dingy Flat-body Moth <i>Depressaria daucella</i> , in Norfolk <i>Kevin Radley &amp; Hannah Breach</i>	Page 10
Nature Gallery 2021	Centre
Personal encounters with some of Norfolk's Wonderful 150...	
Spider <i>Marpissa radiata</i> and its relatives <i>Jeremy &amp; Vanna Bartlett</i>	Page 14
Ortolan Bunting – Salthouse <i>John Furse</i>	Page 17
Bempton Cliffs, Yorkshire <i>Tony Howes</i>	Page 18
Weybourne Camp Scrape re-incarnated <i>Moss Taylor</i>	Page 20
Norfolk Words <i>Alex &amp; Amy Prendergast</i>	Page 22
Naturalists' Library opens at Wheatfen <i>Tony Leech - NNNS Chairman</i>	Page 23
Invertebrate Sorting Day..... <i>Mark Collins</i>	Page 24
'Getting your Eye in' Quiz <i>Francis Farrow</i>	Page 25
New County Recorder - Lacewings and allies	Page 26
'Getting your Eye in' Quiz ANSWERS	