



The Norfolk Natterjack

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Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society



... Researching
Norfolk's Wildlife

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Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society

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Reg. Charity No. 291604

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Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society Recorders

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Toad-in-the-hole...

A New Year and a new look - well slightly as more colour is embraced and a certain amount of standardisation is included thanks to recently updated DTP software, which has enabled some of the changes. My thanks to all contributors and I trust as we live through another lockdown there will be more garden and local patch discoveries to share next time.

FF

Chairmanship of the Society.

*Carl Chapman - Chairman
Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society*

I am writing this in November 2020. At the current time nobody has indicated they wish to step forward to replace me as Chairman of the Society at the AGM in spring 2021. I have loved being chairman and indeed the rules were changed so I could continue in the role for a year longer than the previously allowed three years. However, all good things come to an end and I must soon hand the mantle over to others.

No member of council has so far indicated they would like to step up to the plate so I am writing this as an open letter to the membership to ask if anyone would like to put their name in the hat. I am particularly steering my request to those who have served on council previously but who are no longer trustees, or perhaps someone who has not previously been a trustee that has recently retired and fancies another challenge.

I would not want our wonderful Society to not have a chairman going into the 20's and anyone offering themselves up for the role can be sure they will have the full support of James Emerson, our secretary, as well as myself.

If you would like to talk over the situation, please give me a call on 07833 463034.

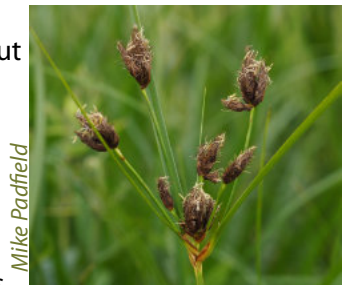


Inland Club-rush

Mike Padfield & Marilyn Abdulla

The first record of the Nationally Scarce Inland Club-rush *Bolboschoenus laticarpus* has been confirmed for Norfolk on Beeston Common SSSI / SAC .

A small clump of Sea Club-rush *Bolboschoenus maritimus* had been recorded since 2006 on the margin of a pond, but had been mis-identified. Marilyn Abdulla observed the club-rush in June 2020 and queried it as possible *B. laticarpus*. Local botanist Mike Padfield collected samples in early September 2020 and identified it as *B. laticarpus*, using guidance in an article in BSBI Volume 1 of British & Irish Botany (Rumsey et al., 2019). Ripe nutlet samples were sent to Fred Rumsey who confirmed it as this species.



Mike Padfield

Reference : F.J. Rumsey, H.J. Crouch, R.V. Lansdown, M.A. Spencer (2019) Pedunculate Club-rush *Bolboschoenus laticarpus* (Cyperaceae) – an overlooked native or a spreading neophyte? In BSBI Volume 1 of British & Irish Botany Issue 2 May 2019.

Notes from my natural history journal

- 22nd August 2017 - Waxham Dunes - Sea Holly

- 23rd June 2018 Woodbastwick Fen - Cowbane

Garth Coupland

Taxonomy is a beautiful discipline. It is the describing of species by their physical characteristics which allows Science to also describe each species' relationship to other species, both living and back through the evolutionary continuum.

Taxonomists also name the evolutionary journey to each individual species in Greek, Latin or Latinised modern language.

Sometimes Taxonomists discover extraordinary similarities between species that would appear, to the eye, to be from a completely different evolution, but

are, in fact, not. The example here are two gorgeous members of the Family Umbelliferae (Carrot family). Sea Holly - *Eryngium maritimum* and the deadly Cowbane - *Cicuta virosa*.



These two very dissimilar looking plants - Sea Holly (above) and Cowbane (right) share enough characteristics to belong to the same Family / *Garth Coupland*

Drepanepteryx phalaenoides confirmed as a Norfolk lacewing

Paul Cobb

In my paper on Norfolk lacewings in the 2016 Transactions I referred to a sighting of the brown lacewing *Drepanepteryx phalaenoides* which could not be confirmed as it escaped by falling into long grass. There were no previous Norfolk records, so without the evidence of a specimen or photograph I was unable to justify adding it to the county list.

There has now been a second sighting, but this one did not escape, and we have its photograph as proof. Now that we know the species really is present in Norfolk I consider the previous record has now become acceptable.

Norman Fuller found it in Haveringland Great Wood (TG158214) on 5 September 2020, by tapping the branches of a small sycamore tree in an area of more mixed woodland, and photographed it before releasing it where he found it.

The previous one was found by Tim Strudwick at Rose Walk, Brundall (TG324082) on 16 August 2013. It was swept from oak foliage before its escape.

It looks remarkably like a dead leaf, and most (but not all) records are from deciduous woodland. It is an apparently scarce species with rather few records, and no others from East Anglia so far as I know, yet its distribution is widespread, albeit very disjunctive.

It could just be elusive, and under-recorded because of its habits of pretending to be a dead leaf and falling into long grass. Look more closely at dead leaves next summer and see if you can find it!



The dead-leaf look-alike that is a rarely seen lacewing. The first confirmed Norfolk sighting of *Drepanepteryx phalaenoides* was from Haveringland Great Wood / Norman Fuller

Many members will be familiar with the Woodlouse spider *Dysdera crocata*. This rather pallid looking spider often finds its way into our houses, where it occasionally meets an untimely end, either at the hand of an alarmed house-owner, or simply because our modern centrally heated homes are nothing like the environment that the spider is accustomed to, and they dehydrate and die. Recently, I found one hiding under a box that had been left overnight in my lounge, so I scooped it up in a plastic container and took it into the garden to



The powerful jaws of the Woodlouse spider are capable of inflicting a painful bite on humans / Hans Watson

liberate it in a suitable spot where it could hide. Upon liberation, instead of running to the nearby cover, it began to run in the opposite direction across a paved path, and when I tried to redirect it by blocking its path, it stopped and opened wide its chelicerae (jaws) in threat. Seeing these jaws open made me understand why a friend of mine who specialises in spiders, said he would not handle one. Apparently the spider is quite capable of inflicting a painful bite, but this is not generally harmful to humans, however it certainly is for a Woodlouse.

Notes from my natural history journal

- the Girdled Snail *Hygromia cinctella*

Garth Coupland

On 19th November last year, as I went to open my front door in the terraced backstreets of Lakenham, Norwich, something caught my eye on the doorstep. It was a small snail. My excitement grew as I looked more closely and saw the white band around the keeled periphery of the shell. Excellent! I had another record for *Hygromia cinctella* in Norfolk.

Naturalists will understand this excitement, but most people do not; particularly when the discovery concerns the less studied or less favoured taxa. However, this snail had a history with me.

On 2nd June 1994 I found the snail in a wood near Penzance and submitted the most westerly record for the species to date. It had been introduced to Paignton, Devon, probably with imported Mediterranean plants, and first recorded in the wild there in 1950.



Travelling at a snail's pace! Found in Norfolk
50 years after its first discovery in Devon /
Garth Coupland

On 9th October 2000 I found a specimen in Acle, Norfolk; the most easterly record. It had taken fifty years to get here....but it is a snail after all! Later I found a thriving colony at the Acle location. So far from the outer edge of its spreading distribution was this find that the Natural History Museum asked to see a specimen before the record could be confirmed. That first individual travelled alive to London via Royal Mail in a moss-filled film pot. It was returned and lived in captivity until dying on 21st August 2003 whereupon I rendered its shell into my collection. (I don't kill unless absolutely justified on conservation grounds). The illustration is of this specimen.

There are other records now in Norfolk and is a species worth looking out for. It seems to favour Brambles and

Stinging Nettles on so-called 'waste ground' and gardens and can be found in Dam- gate Woods, Reedham Road, Acle in herbage along the path near the entrance to the wood (Map Ref: 401/101). I have found the snail here on dates ranging from July to November. Good hunting!

- the Smooth or Common Newt – *Lissotriton vulgaris*.

*What is that darting shape I see,
silhouetted by the green?
It is the first newt of the year,
that I have just seen.
Hah! My year has started.
The Spring has now begun.
I'll go to get my newtling net
and have some newtling fun.*

A wondrous, 1950s childhood memory for me is encapsulated in that small poem. Nowadays, I cannot, in all conscience, encourage the netting for newts anymore in our species-impoverished landscape. However, a pair of close-focus binoculars can put you right in the water with these gorgeous amphibians. I regularly spend joyous times observing them hunting prey, courting, mating and egg-laying in the many ponds around the County where they still occur in good numbers. We also have the two other British species in Norfolk; the Palmate Newt – *Lissotriton helveticus* and the Great-crested Newt – *Triturus*

cristatus. Many good quality ponds hold Great-crested Newts but the Palmate Newt is, I believe, Norfolk's rarest amphibian; being known from only three small ponds.

My journal records dates for first seeing Smooth Newts in the water on 30th January last year and first seeing them in their terrestrial phase on 13th July. The species can vary greatly from these dates though.

The illustration shows the vibrantly coloured, crested male and his comparatively dull-coloured lady, as observed during the main breeding time between late February and mid-May. After this time the crest, foot webbing and bright colours are absorbed to prepare for life on land.



A highly coloured breeding pair of Smooth Newts
/ *Garth Coupland*

Evening Flight

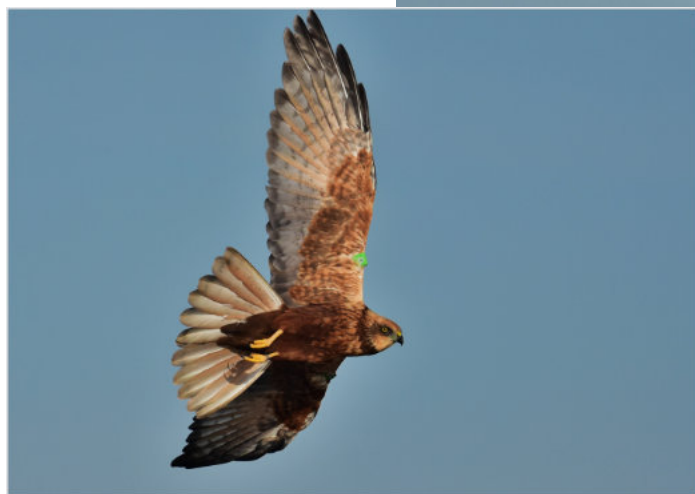
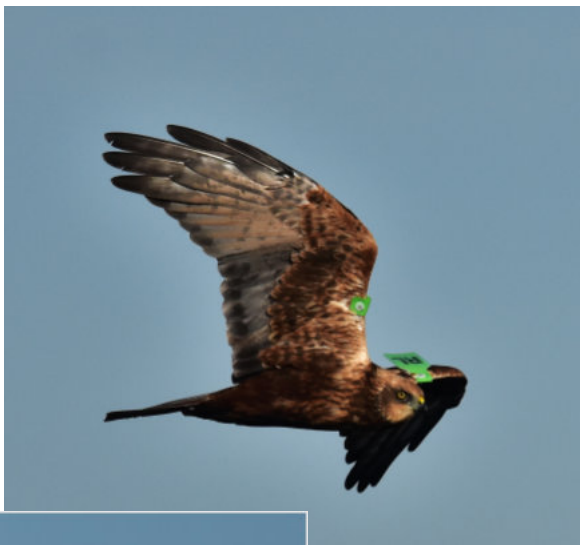
Francis Farrow

As the sun slipped below the horizon that early November evening the chill began to bite. In the still air nothing was stirring and all that could be heard in the half-light was the occasional 'bubbling' of a Curlew out on the vast Stiffkey marshes. Then perceptively a slight and distant clamour was building and as it intensified recognition came as the sound of geese, not just any geese but Pink-feet, with their distinctive high pitched 'wink-wink' notes. From the fields behind the beach the geese, which had been arriving in small groups during the afternoon, were lifting off as one and calling as they streamed over the marshes in front of a pink-tinged sky towards their roosting ground. Such sounds and images are evocative of this part of 'wild' Norfolk and can clearly be awe-inspiring!



Pink-footed Geese heading over
Stiffkey marshes, 02 Nov. 2020 /
Francis Farrow

On 6th November I spotted a Marsh Harrier flying back and forth over the River Yare between Strumpshaw and Rockland. Pale green wing tags were prominent and I later found out that it was one of two females, ringed as nestlings near Cantley in 2016, that has never left the county! The other female is similarly sedentary. The Marsh Harrier wing tag project is very interesting and Phil Littler explains below the history behind it.



A wing-tagged Marsh Harrier in the Yare valley proved to be a 'stay-at-home' bird having been ringed as a nestling near Cantley / *Elizabeth Dack*

Wing Tagging of Marsh Harriers in Norfolk

Phil Littler (North West Norfolk Ringing Group)

Introduction: In 2005 I ringed my first Marsh Harrier (MARHA) pulli in Norfolk, under the guidance of John Middleton from the North West Norfolk Ringing Group (www.nwnrg.co.uk). Subsequently I started to ring them from 2008, at Sculthorpe Moor Hawk and Owl Trust reserve, near Fakenham. By 2010 a total of 25 young had been ringed with a standard BTO metal ring on the leg. However, to date none of these birds have been recovered. Furthermore, of the 212 chicks ringed by North West Norfolk Ringing Group between 1990 and 2010, only six have ever been recovered.

So in 2010, Nigel Middleton from the Hawk and Owl Trust and I decided that the way forward, if we were to get any meaningful results, was to track them by wing tagging. Ideally, we would have liked to satellite tag them, but this was financially impossible, and so wing tagging was the only viable alternative. After approval from the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), a meeting was held at Sculthorpe with other ringers, and it was decided to go ahead with the project within the River Wensum valley. I was elected to be the trained person, and in 2011, Rod Smith from the Swale Wader Group (www.swalewaders.co.uk) came up from Kent and trained me to wing tag MARHA's.



Note the code on the tag being fitted to this MARHA pulli (un-fledged bird). In 2011 all birds were tagged with a lime green tag with white lettering.

Project: In 2011, having been given the colours to use on the tags, sourced the washers and dental wire, and spending hours making the tags, I was ready to go. I had given myself a “target” of a 10% return on the birds I tagged that year, a target that was out of my control as I would be relying on others to provide me with sightings. Fourteen birds were tagged, 8 at Sculthorpe, with a further 2 near the coast and the remaining 4 inland near Swaffham. At this point I must say thanks to the other ringers involved, Ray Gribble and Allan Hale, Gary Elton from the Norfolk Ornithologists Association (www.noa.org.uk) and John Middleton from the North West Norfolk Ringing Group. The tags used on the birds were lettered from AA to AS.

The first brood of six were tagged at Sculthorpe on 10 June 2011, with tags AA, AB, AC, AD, AF and AH – the first confirmed sighting came in on 24 August 2011 of AD at Holme. Then AA was spotted at Lakenheath RSPB reserve on 18 October 2011. At the end of the month, AD turned up on the Isle of Sheppey in Kent, 160km from Sculthorpe! This to me was ironic as it was not only on Rod Smith's patch, but had been spotted by one of his group. But AA proved to be the long stayer, as early in 2012 it was being reported on the Ouse Washes at Welney, and also near Boughton Fen. AP, one of a brood of two from Sculthorpe, was seen nearby at Pensthorpe in October 2011. So in all, 3 out of the 14 birds were confirmed away from their nest site, over a 20% return, far better than I had hoped for. At this point I am relying on confirmed sightings – sightings where the tag can be read. I had received sightings of lime green tagged MARHA from Thornham and North Wooton, near Kings Lynn. The one negative side of tagging is that the tags are difficult to see when the bird is in

***Norfolk and Norwich
Naturalists' Society***



ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Founded 1869

Registered Charity 291604

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(members served throughout the year except where stated otherwise).

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Elected council members:

Retiring 2020: T Frost, T Hodge, R Hawke
(All to 10.3.20)

Retiring 2021: D Ashton, W Fitch, M Goddard

Retiring 2022: J Higgins, T Kemp, T Williams

Retiring 2023: A. Liddle
(All from 10.3.20)

Co-opted Members: To be invited following the first meeting of the new council.

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NORFOLK & NORWICH NATURALISTS' SOCIETY . . .

The Society was founded in 1869 and became a registered charity in 1985 with registration number 291604. Its governing instrument is the constitution adopted on 4 March, 1983 as amended on 22 March, 1985, 16 March, 1999, 21 March, 2006, 10 March, 2015, 12 March, 2019 and 10 March, 2020.

The management of the affairs of the Society is in the hands of a Council consisting of Vice Presidents, officers and elected members as listed opposite.

The Society President is nominated by Council to serve for one year and is a person who has made a significant contribution to the understanding of natural history.

The objectives of the Society are:

- to promote, organise, carry on and encourage education of the public and study and research for the advancement of knowledge in natural sciences and to protect endangered species.

To furtherance of the above objects but not further or otherwise the Society may:

- publish papers on the natural sciences, especially those relating to Norfolk.
- encourage the exchange of information between naturalists by means of meetings and excursions.
- protect endangered species by the collection of information, co-operative surveys, investigations and the dissemination of the useful results of such investigations.
- do all such other lawful things as shall further the attainment of the above objects.

. . . ***Researching Norfolk's Wildlife***

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The council of the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society has pleasure in presenting this Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending December 31st 2020. This was in every way a very difficult year.

Membership at the end of 2020 stood at 653 (619 at the end of 2019). The number of new members totalled 56 during the course of the year. Of course, several members left or sadly died during the course of the year but one new member per week is very pleasing. The majority of our subscriptions and purchases are now received by Paypal making this much easier to administer.

The Society ended the year with general account reserves of £107,527.29 (£101, 862.52 at the end of 2019). The Society continues to receive legacies for which we are very grateful. These donations have enabled the Society's publications to be of an extremely high standard. Indeed, they have been widely acclaimed.

Our membership may be assured the Society's finances continue to be in a very healthy position. I am pleased, under Jim Froud's auspice as Treasurer, the finance committee once again did an excellent job in balancing the books.

A sensible move this year was to consolidate the work carried out by the former Membership and Programme Committees. The result was the new Membership and Events Committee.

Education is something to which the Society is committed. Talks are a substantial part of what the society does to promote the wildlife within the county and despite restrictions a programme of talks was resurrected by way of Zoom technology. Members and others could still contribute to these events without any travel being involved. A benefit to the planet. The contribution by the speakers is once again very much appreciated; Mark Ollett, Tony Howes, Simon Barnes, Julia Burton, James Parry and Mike Jones did a good job. I was even called in as a last-minute replacement myself during early March. Many of the events were organised initially by Stephen Martin and more latterly by Danielle Engelbrecht. Thank you both.

The programme of workshops and field meetings throughout the summer months however had to be foregone but they are in the process of being rescheduled for 2021.

Our thanks must go to Geoff Price who took us through our year as president.

The Research Committee led by Tony Irwin continued to do good work. Tony retired from his position as chair during the year. He will be sorely missed but we will continue to use his knowledge from afar I'm sure. The committee will be for the time being in the safe hands of Mark Collins.

Tony Leech once again led the Publications Committee and pulled together the 2019 Bird and Mammal Report. The articles and photographs included are a tribute to Andy Stoddart who once again acted as the report and photographic editor. Richard Moores once more produced a marvellous mammal report. The mammoth undertaking by Tony overseeing the publication of Transactions, which hit members doormats just

before Christmas, and the 'Emma Turner' and of course 'Norfolk's 150' occasional publications cannot be understated. Indeed, during the year Tony, as I'm sure you are aware, was the recipient of the Sydney Long medal for contributions to the county's wildlife. A well-deserved accolade given collectively by both the NNNS and the NWT.

The Norfolk Natterjack, our quarterly newsletter continues to be excellently edited and compiled by Francis Farrow.

The Society's Facebook page has increased from 1700 members at the end of 2019 to 2900 members at the end of 2020. Thanks are due again to Andy Musgrove for acting as our administrator. This is a means of contacting members and others immediately of any changes or events and its importance now, and increasingly so in the future, cannot be understated.

The Society's website remains our 'shop window' to the world and is aptly maintained by Jim Froud. One of the well-used resources are the species guides and these have been updated during 2020 by David Richmond.

The Liaison Committee continues to fill into its remit and objections were raised to several planning projects where the county's wildlife was put at undue risk. The Society continues to act hand in hand with the Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT) in this respect. Our relationship with the Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service (NBIS) is a strong one. The overseeing of the County Recorders network is an ongoing process. The role of our county recorders is a difficult one. Often a thankless task. My thanks go to every single one of them.

In 2020 several trustees came to the end of their term in office or have stood down as members of council and I thank them wholeheartedly for their service; Joe Hubbard (Membership Committee Chairman), Dorothy Cheyne (Programme Committee Chairman), Dr Stephen Martin (Programme Committee Secretary), Dr Tony Irwin (Research Committee Chairman), Teresa Frost (Council member), Rob Hawkes (Council member), Greg Bond (Council member), Ewan Carr (Council member). I extend my gratitude to these and all who have contributed.

If it were not for James Emerson, our secretary, I could not have continued as Chairman for the last four years. His accuracy and punctuality are legendary. Every charity needs a James Emerson. My personal thanks go wholeheartedly to him for his help and his continued service.

For various reasons it is better I step down as Chairman at our next AGM rather than fulfil the full term of a fifth year. At the time of writing the position of chairman is open to nominees. I shall still be heavily involved with the Society but must take this opportunity to say I have enjoyed immensely being part of an organisation which has always been stalwart in its aims. I hope you feel I have left it in a stronger position than when I was first elected as chairman. As we move into 2021 the world is faced with many challenges. I hope above all hope that we can all conquer those challenges together, become stronger for having faced them and enjoy a better world.

Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society

Registered Charity 291604

RECEIPTS 2020

RECEIPTS			2020	2019
A1.1	Voluntary sources	Subscriptions	13,141.47	12,657.25
A1.2		Grants / legacies	14,329.14	21,386.98
A1.3		Sundry donations	1,504.75	1,591.82
A2.1	Trading activities	Bird report sales (prev yr edn)	2,592.86	132.51
A2.2		Bird report sales (current yr edn)	1,524.46	1,446.02
A2.3		Sales of other publications	1,231.84	701.30
A2.4		Delivery / postage	0.00	0.00
A2.5		Workshop attendance fees	90.00	0.00
A3.1	Income from assets	Interest	526.05	872.38
Total receipts			34,940.57	38,788.26

PAYMENTS 2020

PAYMENTS			2020 Total	2019 Total
B1.1	Lectures & meetings	Room hire / speakers' expenses	448.00	535.00
B1.2		Workshops	100.00	345.92
B1.3		Programme card printing	308.75	322.80
B1.4		Exhibitions and publicity	0.00	2,898.14
B2.1	Publications	Transactions (incl postage)	7,541.92	2,959.94
B2.2		B&M - (incl postage)	6,496.74	5,923.16
B2.3		Sales expenses, fees, postage	45.39	65.51
B2.4		Occn Publications (incl postage)	7,520.29	2,511.69
B3.1	Membership services	Quarterly "Natterjack", print, postage & stationery	3,603.73	3,016.79
B3.2		Postage to members	286.07	243.17
B3.3		Paypal fees, reminders, new members	118.96	92.22
B3.4		Website	255.24	98.24
B4.1	Research & education	Research	349.00	1,023.01
B4.2		Education	0.00	0.00
C1.1	Governance	AGM expenses: print+post	402.20	106.46
C1.2		Public liability insurance	654.56	654.56
C1.3		Consumables, envelopes, labels	135.80	12.08
C1.4		2019 committee	865.27	4,668.65
C1.5		Publication sales postage (carried forward)	0.00	7.05
C1.6		Committee printing, stationery & postage	143.88	136.09
C1.7		Ind exam / miscellaneous	0.00	419.43
Total payments			29,275.80	26,039.91

Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society
Registered Charity 291604
STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

Movement in funds / end-of-year assets		2020	2019
		Total	Total
Movement in funds	Start of year balance	101,862.52	89,114.17
	Receipts	34,940.57	38,788.26
	Payments	29,275.80	26,039.91
End of year balance		107,527.29	101,862.52
Assets at period end	Represented by:		
	Cash at Barclays	13,273.29	7,098.13
	Paypal account	0.00	0.00
	Teachers Saving A/c	98,019.58	94,764.39
	Unbanked cheques	0.00	0.00
	Less uncleared cheques	-3,765.58	0.00
	End of year balance	107,527.29	101,862.52

Liabilities at period end:

Publications expenses incurred in December and cheques not yet cleared (as above).

Notes on variances:

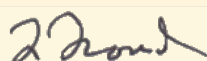
A1.2: Legacies of Veronica Larter, Paul Woolnough and Iris Calnon

A2.4 "Revenue" from PayPal postage was notional and is included in prices

A2.5 and B1.2: Workshops were pre 2020

**Note that in 2018 we discontinued to refer to "the Peet Fund" in accounts,
but continue to acknowledge its donor,
the Sarnia Trust, in our printed publications**

J Froud - Treasurer 04/01/2021



Annual General Meeting

Please Join us via Zoom for our
Annual General Meeting of the Society
at 7:30pm on Tuesday 23rd March 2021

Please see details on our website at
<http://norfolknaturalists.org.uk/wp/events-page/>

No pre-registration is required

followed by

"Wild Ken Hill - a Norfolk Ecological Restoration Project"

Illustrated talk by Dominic Buscall & Rod Pilcher



flight, or in some light conditions. After consultation with the BTO and Natural England, it was decided to change the lettering from white to black, and increase the tag width from 35mm to 50mm. At this point a fortunate meeting resulted with Barry Knott from BFK designs (www.bkfdesign.co.uk) of Corby being able to not only laser cut and profile the tags, but to use a high tech process to chemically bond the ink to the fabric, thus a permanent solution rather than the Blue Peter approach of sticky backed letters! In early 2012, I spoke at the Norfolk Ringers meeting about the project, and Paul Noakes from Great Yarmouth came on board, and the numbers of birds in his area swelled the numbers for that year.



Most birds are found at the pulli stage, as seen on the left. A special Schedule 1 licence is issued by the BTO on behalf of Natural England to “disturb” a rare or endangered species. Disturbance is kept to an absolute minimum, with most visits to any one nest voluntarily limited to two; the first is to recce the nest and to pinpoint exactly it’s location and at the same time to try and gauge the age of the young to time the return visit to enable ringing and tagging to be undertaken. A chick should be 21 days old, as the legs and feet are fully developed to enable measurements to be taken to sex the bird, and most of the down has been replaced by feathers, an ideal situation. At about 28 days old, the birds start to leave the nest and “explore” their surroundings, and fledge at about 38 days.

By 2012, a total of 40 birds had been tagged in Norfolk, from the Great Yarmouth area in the east, to Holkham in the north, and Swaffham in the south. One of the aims of this project is to see if birds return to their natal area, and if they do, do they nest in the same habitat in which they were raised? Rape fields seem to hold quite an interest to these birds now, so is it going to be more beneficial than reed?

Results: This started as a five year project, and sightings, both confirmed and un-confirmed, have exceeded expectations and it would be good to take it further, i.e. with the use of modern satellite technology, however, the cost of this is prohibitive, with each satellite tag costing in the region of £3,000. Wing tags therefore remain my only option and I will continue with as many as I can, like the one opposite.

To update, as of 31 December 2020, a total of 654 birds have been wing tagged, with 231 been recovered (seen) away from their natal area, giving a recovery rate of 35.32%. This is over 25% more than I ever hoped for.

Acknowledgements:

John and Jane Burton, David Dalton, Gary Elton, Ray Gribble, Allan Hale, Barry Knott, Paul Noakes, John Middleton, Nigel Middleton, David Moss, Rod Smith, Andy Thompson.



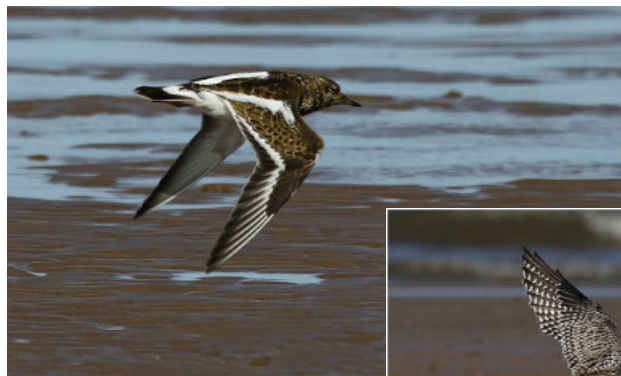
A wing tagged bird, which is one of two from an Oil-seed Rape field

The beach at Titchwell when the tide is dropping is always very good for waders, a 300yd long series of shell beds, mussels mainly, extends out from the beach for a considerable distance, these begin to show when the tide is about halfway out, the many species of waders that spend time here are well aware of this situation, and take full advantage to get among these shell beds for the rich pickings they offer.

The birds begin to arrive in numbers some time before the beds are above water and are to be seen standing about on the beach in small parties, or flying up and down the tide line to be first at the feeding area's as soon as they are exposed.

This beach is ideal for photography, especially on a bright, sunny day, the light is behind you and the waders are numerous. I always enjoy a few hours spent there when time and conditions permit. My preferred method is to walk out to a suitable spot among the shell beds (Wellies required) and just wait for the birds to come to you, I have often finished a session with up to thirteen species of wader's on the memory card. Provided you remain still they take little notice of you, especially the Turnstones and Sanderlings. Even Curlews will come well within photographic range.

It is advisable to have an 'Escape route' in mind, you can become so absorbed with the photography that the incoming tide can be infiltrating the channels around and behind you, and quickly cut you off. it happened to me once and I had to wade back in knee high very cold water.



Waders in flight along the tide-line (top) Turnstone and (right) Curlew / *Tony Howes*



Titchwell waders and a gull (clockwise): Black-tailed Godwit in flight, 3rd winter Herring Gull dropping a crab, possibly to break it open, a Curlew, an Oystercatcher and a pair of Black-tailed Godwits / *Tony Howes*

Unexpected Treat

Elizabeth Dack

Whilst walking to Waxham on 15th October, 2020 from our caravan at Sea Palling, I was lucky enough to meet some people who told me there was a Red-flanked Bluetail present. I walked until I saw people standing and then watched the bird as it flitted in and out of the trees and bushes feeding. This was a first for me and something of a rarity.

An unusual number of Red-flanked Bluetails turned up in the UK and particularly Norfolk in October 2020, which followed a very successful breeding season in Finland - Ed.



RFB at Waxham / *Elizabeth Dack*



The successful re-colonisation of Spoonbills and Common Cranes in our county, is doubtless the result of the conservation and protection work by wardens and land-owners at Holkham, and Hickling/Horsey. The success of the superb work at these two sites, has, in the last few years, made it possible to see both of these species in many other parts of Norfolk, and I am no longer surprised to see either of these species in the Yare Valley. In spring and summer, small parties of Spoonbills are becoming almost regular at various sites between Strumpshaw and Breydon, and it is hoped that they will one day join the Little Egrets already breeding. Spoonbills seem to like breeding alongside various other species, particularly Herons or Egrets, and in the Coto Donaña, I have noticed that they seem to prefer the white species like Squacco Heron, Cattle, Little, and Great White Egret, and on one occasion two pairs of White Stork. It would seem that the other species act as decoys, and at some sites artificial decoys have been successfully used to encourage Spoonbills to nest. A relative of the Spoonbill which also seems to prefer nesting in colonies of mixed species, is the Glossy Ibis, and with the increasing frequency that they are now being seen in Norfolk, who knows what will happen in the next few years.

Spoonbills may soon breed in the Yare valley as they are now seen regularly at various sites /

Hans Watson



Great Skua found at Walcott

Bob Cobbold

Whilst looking around my local patch at Walcott on 29th November, 2020 I came across a dead Great Skua (*Stercorarius skua*) near an access gate to a property on the sea wall.

Not only was I surprised to find such an interesting bird but it had identification rings on both legs. On the right leg was a normal metal ring no '3065285 Stavanger Museum Norway' and on the left leg was a blue plastic field identification ring with white letters KR4.



A Great Skua found dead at Walcott came from arctic waters / Bob Cobbold

From the birds condition it appeared to have died very recently. Had it been placed at the gate by someone who found it or had it actually flown into the gate perhaps chasing a night time migrant? Skuas are not normally seen flying along the beach in Norfolk.

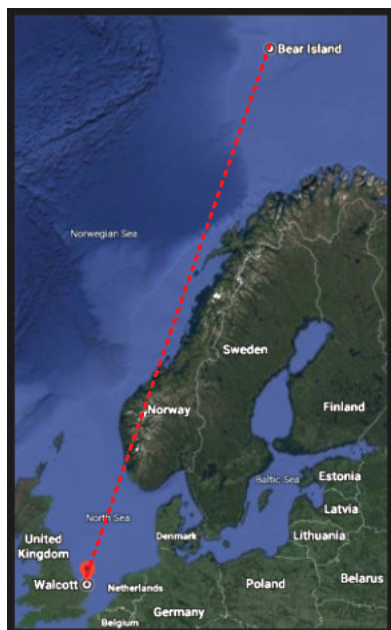
I decided to take it home to photograph. Assessing its overall condition it had obviously not died at sea and washed up on the beach. Its feathers were in perfect condition. I could not find any obvious injuries, apart from the head which was very 'floppy'; this could have resulted from a broken neck. It showed no signs of malnutrition and appeared to be quite 'fat'.

Thanks are due to Dave and Pat Wileman who kindly looked into and advised me of the ringing history, which is repeated here:-

"The Great Skua was ringed at the nest as a pullus (nestling) on 6th July 2020 on Bear Island in the Barents Sea. Bear island is situated between Northern Norway and the Svalbard islands".

Bear Island is approximately 2530Km NNE of Walcott.

Location map showing position of Bear Island relevant to Walcott / Imagery©2020 TerraMetrics Map data©Google



Nature Gallery

2020-21

Siberian Chiffchaff (*tristis*) (below) One of two which turned up with a Dusky Warbler on Beeston Common and stayed 11 - 17 Nov. / *Francis Farrow*



Dor Beetle *Anoplotrupes stercorosus* (det. Martin Collier) (above) This was a very late sighting from Gramborough Hill, Salthouse, 12 Dec. / *John Furse*



Jelly Ear Fungus *Auricularia auricula-judaes* (left), Titchwell 16 Dec. / *Elizabeth Dack*



Oyster Mushroom *Pleurotus ostreatus* (above) growing on old Gorse, Beeston Common 22 Dec. / *Francis Farrow*



Wren (above) showing some leucistic characters (lack of melanin pigment producing cells) in primaries, Beeston Common, 30 Dec. / *Mark Clements*



Short-eared Owl (left) hunting over marshes near Loddon, 31 Dec. / *Elizabeth Dack*



Barn Owl (below) caught in the process of coughing up a pellet, Hardley, 31 Dec. / *Elizabeth Dack*

Muntjac and Fox (below) basically ignoring each other even if not 'social distancing', Beeston Common, 01 Jan. / *Francis Farrow*



Jay (below) One of two visiting our High Kelling garden where they like to forage in the bug house, 09 Jan. / *Karin & Steve Hale*



Muntjac (left) A regular sighting in Bodham Wood, where up to nine have been seen, 09 Jan. / *Karin & Steve Hale*

Sydney Long Medal goes to Dr Tony Leech

The Sydney Long Medal is a joint award offered by the NWT and NNNS every two years for services to wildlife and conservation. I spent a day in less than hospitable weather at Thursford in North Norfolk during early November. It was a morning spent in pleasant company culminating in the Sydney Long Memorial Medal and citation being presented to Dr Tony Leech by Nick Acheson, NWT ambassador. The whole event was filmed for broadcast at the NWT 'virtual' AGM.

The citation reads as follows:

"Tony has made an outstanding contribution to natural history and conservation in Norfolk since he came to teach at Greshams School, Holt in 1978. His special interest has been in the study of fungi. In his role as county fungi recorder he has freely given his time and expertise to encouraging others to take up an interest and develop expertise. He has a talent for passing on his enthusiasm for the subject which he has conveyed through leading countless forays and more structured workshops and at events such as Wild About Norfolk. Tony has also played a major part in the continuing success of the Norfolk Fungus Study Group.

Tony has not confined himself to fungi but has also taken a wider interest in nature conservation in the county. Tony has mentored and inspired young people to take an interest in mycology and natural history including his contribution to the annual sixth form Biodiversity Conference at the Castle Museum. He has sat on the Council of Norfolk Wildlife Trust from 2011-17 and has supported NWT's community projects. For five years he was the Chair of the North Norfolk local group of the Trust and has been a regular speaker and events supporter across all of NWT's local groups. He has also sat on the committee of the highly successful River Glaven conservation group.

Tony has been an officer of the Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society for many years having been chairman and secretary in the past. He is currently the chairman of the publications committee and involves himself heavily in both editing Society publications and committing to field outings.

Accordingly, the Councils of the Norfolk Wildlife Trust and the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society have the greatest pleasure in awarding

Dr Tony Leech - The Sydney Long Memorial Medal - For the year 2020"

A well-deserved award to one of our county's great naturalists.



Dr. Tony Leech with his Sydney Long medal / *Carl Chapman*

Moss Taylor's *'My Birding Life'* is a fascinating and entertaining account of a lifetime of bird watching, bird photography and ringing. Moss's interest in birds began in 1949 with a '*Peter the Puffin*' book, this being a prize for 'attendance and good conduct'. Moss's early years were in Brixton before the family moved to Essex and from 1960 Moss was already involved in bird ringing, which he admits 'can be as addictive as alcohol and drugs'. Training at Romford Ringing Station led to a 'C' permit, then to a full 'A' permit in 1962, which resulted in a ringing expedition to Morocco. Birding visits to Norfolk began in the 1950s with Cley and Blakeney Point being main attractions. In 1969 Moss, now a qualified doctor, began work at Yarmouth Hospital before moving with his young family to Sheringham in 1972. These were the 'golden years' of birdwatching with Richard Richardson the 'guardian spirit of the East Bank' (as described in Moss's earlier excellent book). Moss's descriptions of the characters around at this time are as interesting as the birds. As some will remember, Nancy's Café in Cley was then the hub of the bird community, spreading the word about recent sightings and occasionally harbouring grudges and jealousies about rare birds missed. Despite his medical duties Moss was able to be much involved with the British Trust for Ornithology, as regional recorder and committee member, as well as continuing to ring at Dead Man's Wood and other coastal sites. Retirement allowed greater freedom to roam, involving leading overseas tours and lecturing on cruise ships. There are excellent descriptions and photographs of exotic birds encountered as well as details of some narrow escapes from disaster. Meanwhile Moss was able to write '*The Birds of Norfolk*' with three co-authors and '*The Norfolk Bird Atlas*' which was entirely Moss's initiative, both monumental works but only briefly mentioned in the current book. The chapter 'should I have been a scientist?' is a bit strange for he surely is an outstanding one. Moss dedicates the book to 'Robina Churchyard, my birding companion and soulmate for the last 13 years'. One of the photos shows 'Robina birdwatching at Mindelo sewage farm on her birthday', which sums up her good nature. Together, Robina and Moss have established a charity 'Love for Leo' which supports children with cerebral palsy in Norfolk and Suffolk. Profits from the sale of this book will go to the charity.

To order, email moss.taylor@btinternet.com

My Birding Life

Moss Taylor

198 pages, 138 colour & 16 black & white photos
£20 incl. P&P or £18 collected from the author



Forthcoming Events

We are delighted to announce our events programme for March to September 2021 below. Please note that talks will be held via Zoom unless government guidance changes; keep an eye on norfolknaturalists.org.uk for any changes and additions.

Where possible, we will record events for members that are unable to join us via Zoom, please see the website under 'Past Presentations' for recordings to date.

<i>Date and Time</i>	<i>Event Title</i>
Tuesday 9th March 1915hrs	"Biodiversity Audit of the North Norfolk Coast" <i>Illustrated talk by Dr Robert Hawkes, Prof. Paul Dolman, Dr James Gilroy and Daniel Salliss, UEA</i>
Tuesday 23 rd March 1915 hrs	NNNS AGM followed by 'Wild Ken Hill - a Norfolk Ecological Restoration Project' <i>Illustrated talk by Dominic Buscall and Rod Pilcher</i>
Tuesday 18 th May 1915 hrs	"Nine Chalk Rivers" <i>Illustrated talk by Jonah Tosney, Operations Director Norfolk Rivers Trust</i>
Tuesday 22nd June 1915 hrs	"Wild Ken Hill: rewilding, regenerative farming, and traditional conservation" <i>Illustrated talk by Dominic Buscall</i>
Sunday 11 th July 10:00 hrs	Morning wildlife walk mainly for insects at Earlham Cemetery, Norwich. <i>With Jeremy and Vanna Bartlett & the Friends of Earlham Cemetery</i>
Tuesday 13th July 1915 hrs	"Wildlife information - where it comes from, where it goes, and why it is so important" <i>Illustrated talk by Sam Neal and Liam Smith, NBIS [Norfolk's Local Environmental Records Centre (LERC)]</i>

Workshops

Provisional arrangements are being made to hold the following as circumstances permit. Each will be full-day (10.00am - 4.00pm) and cost £15. Further details and booking arrangements will be on the NNNS website but expressions of interest are invited - contact Tony Leech (tonyleech3@gmail.com) who will send further details when available.

Sedge Identification (Bob Ellis). Wheatfen. June or July (date to be arranged)

Moth Identification for Beginners (Greg Bond), Cley. July 10

Fungus Identification for Beginners (Tony Leech) Wheatfen October 3



The next issue of 'The Norfolk Natterjack' will be **May 2021**

Please send
all articles / notes and photographic material
to the editor as soon as possible by
April 1st 2021 to the following address:

Francis Farrow, 'Heathlands', 6 Havelock Road, Sheringham,
Norfolk, NR26 8QD. Email: 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 1st April to 31st 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

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).

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