



# The Norfolk Natterjack

The quarterly bulletin of the  
Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society



... Researching  
Norfolk's Wildlife

[www.nnns.org.uk](http://www.nnns.org.uk)

**August 2023**  
Number 162



# Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society

Founded 1869

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Cover image: Small-flowered Catchfly - *Cornel Howells* (See page 1)

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	Psyllids	James Emerson, 106 Sleaford Green, Norwich, NR3 3JT Email: jamesemerson2007@gmail.com
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<u>Woodlice, Pseudoscorpions, Centipedes &amp; Millipedes</u>		<i>Position vacant</i>

NB: Please check <https://norfolknaturalists.org.uk/wp/recording/county-recorders/> for updates

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Email: rob@wildfrontier-ecology.co.uk
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- Other Taxa Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service, Community and Environmental  
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## Special interest groups

- NNNS Photographic Group:* C H Watson, 28 Spencer Close, Lingwood, Norwich, NR13 4BB.  
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- Norfolk Flora Group:* West Norfolk: S Harmer / R Carter, 67 Doddshill Rd., Dersingham, King's Lynn, PE31 6LP.  
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## Toad-in-the-hole...

Welcome to the summer edition of 'Natterjack'. Within its pages we meet newcomers to Norfolk, look into the complexities of parasitism and celebrate an array of wildlife. My thanks to all who have contributed and invite other members to do so. Please check out the Society notes as Council and Recorder volunteers are needed. **FF**

## Small-flowered Catchfly: Back from the brink *Cornel Howells*

I have written before on the fluctuations in the population of this arable weed, *Silene Gallica*, and in particular its susceptibility to the vagaries of climate, changes in rabbit populations and the encroachment of scrub.

I returned to the Felmingham railway cutting in June this year and was astonished to see a haze of small white, red, and pink flowers along the whole length of the northern embankment.



Felmingham cutting showing a profusion of the Small-flowered Catchfly

Prominent amongst them was the attractive variant *quinquevulnera* with its white flowers blotched with red.

The Northeast Norfolk Conservation Volunteers can take some credit for this healthy population in their work cutting back Bramble and removing Rosebay Willowherb which seeds freely from the opposite embankment. Rabbits, too, although much fewer on the ground than previously, may have played their part.

Another factor may have been last year's exceptionally hot summer followed by

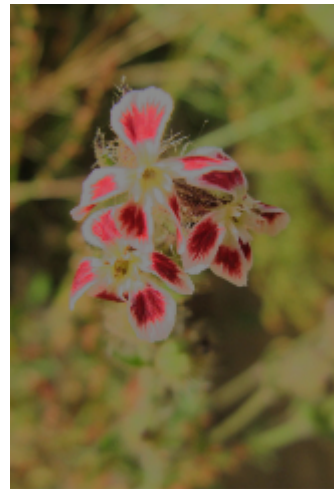
a run of milder than average months. This would benefit a plant on the northern edge of its range.

On the downside, it is unfortunate that the nearby Knapton cutting which had a small population of the catchfly, has been overrun with scrub and no plants were found when visiting the site in June.

### Reference:

'The Norfolk Natterjack' (No. 138) Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists Society, 2017

Images / *Cornel Howells*



Small-flowered Catchfly var. *quinquevulnera*

The Firebug (*Pyrrhocoris apterus*) is a large, brightly coloured and highly distinctive bug. It is quite common on the continent where it forms huge aggregations in the spring before mating. It was considered a great rarity in the UK, being confined to a single site on an island off the coast of Devon where it was found feeding on the seeds of Tree Mallow (it also feeds on the seeds of lime trees).

In Britain it is usually brachypterus (making it incapable of flight) and the occasional mainland records were thought to have been accidentally introduced. Recently however, macropterus forms have started appearing



Cluster of mating Firebugs (*Pyrrhocoris apterus*) including at least one macropterus individual  
Image / Vanna Bartlett

making it likely that the bug will disperse and colonise new areas.

I have encountered these bugs in the past, having seen a large number of them together in France in June 2009 and then in May 2022 I found two in a Suffolk churchyard. I was still surprised though when a photograph of one appeared on

Twitter taken in the Rosary Cemetery in Norwich on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 (posted by James Rowland). I usually visit the Rosary Cemetery a couple of times each spring to look for solitary bees so when I was there a few weeks later on 22<sup>nd</sup> April I had a little look around some lime trees as I was leaving. It was overcast and rather cool by this time so I didn't expect to find any Firebugs so was more than pleased to see a single one on the base of a gravestone.

I returned on the afternoon of 30<sup>th</sup> April, a much sunnier day, in the hope that warm weather might entice one or two more out. Straight away I spotted a mating pair on the main driveway and then realised there were numerous clusters of them in the adjacent flower border. A rough tally of numbers came to over 160 with a good number of macropterus individuals and several mating pairs. A day or so later Chris Lansdell saw around 350 Firebugs in the same area.

## ***Meligramma euchromum*:** **Another hoverfly species expanding its range**

David White

On 29<sup>th</sup> April 2023 at Lower Ashwellthorpe Woods SSSI, I found and photographed a hoverfly that I immediately recognised as being a male of the species *Meligramma euchromum*. I had been hoping to find a male of this species this year, having located a female in 2022 which was subsequently found to be the first record of this species for Norfolk. The female was photographed sunning itself on an oak leaf at the edge of New Buckenham Common SSSI on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

*Meligramma euchromum* is a slim hoverfly with uncertain affinities. In the recent past, it has been placed in the *Epistrophe* genus or even in its own genus *Epistrophella*. It is believed that the larvae predate arboreal aphids although the precise predator prey relationship has yet to be established.

*M. euchromum* has a strange distribution in the UK; it is mainly a southern species although there are records as far north as Cumbria, but strangely there have been no previous records from the east. It is assessed as nationally scarce (Ball & Morris: 2014, JNCC Species Status No. 9).



*Meligramma\_euchromum\_(male & female)\_Ashwellthorpe and New Buckenham\_*  
Images / David White

## A Full House:

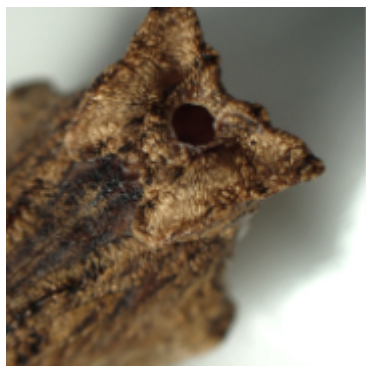
Kevin Radley & Hannah Breach

### Parasitism of, and within, a Swallowtail butterfly pupa

With a deathly pallor and evident fungal patches, an initial diagnosis that a Swallowtail butterfly pupa, found at Wheatfen in October 2022, had fallen victim to an entomogenous fungus, was tempered somewhat by the discovery of a small, neat, apical hole through its cuticle; where, ordinarily, there wouldn't be one.



Swallowtail (*Papilio machaon*) pupa; found October 2022.



Hole at apex of pupa.

Swallowtail pupa husk. These were kept for hopeful identification of the adult flies when they emerged.

Subsequent emergences from these puparia (in May, 2023) proved not to be the expected phorid flies; but braconid wasps. Details and photos were again

On dissection, the cavity within the pupa's integument was found to be occupied by the numerous pupal(?) remains of, what appeared to be, chalcidid wasps; these also being covered by a thin layer of a white fungus. Photos of the more identifiable examples were sent to Dr Mark Shaw (? semi-retired—of National Museums Scotland), who identified them as possible/most likely *Pteromalus puparum* (Hymenoptera: Pteromalidae); a parasitoid of the prepupae/pupae of various Lepidoptera. These had, it seems, succumbed to an entomogenous fungus; though some had apparently survived: as it would have been their exit/emergence hole made at the apex of the host (Swallowtail) pupa.

Further investigation of the 'contents' of the Swallowtail pupa revealed several, live, larvae, which appeared to be feeding on, or amongst, the pteromalid corpses. These, Dr Shaw suggested, were likely the larvae of saprophagous Diptera, probably Phoridae ('scuttle' or 'coffin' flies), which invade dead but still moist insects – through the emergence hole made by the pteromalids, presumably.

It was found that two of these fly larvae had recently pupated – their puparia also being amongst the contents of the 'original' host



sent to Dr Shaw, who concluded that they were possibly a species of *Aspilota* (Braconidae: Alysiniinae); a common larval/pupal parasitoid of Phoridae.



One of the chalcid (? *P. puparum*) corpses found inside host Swallowtail pupa - with mm-scale



Phorid-fly puparium - with mm-scale.



Braconid 'wasp': emerged from phorid-fly puparium: May 2023. (5mm square background scale).

In summary, it would seem the Swallowtail butterfly prepupa/pupa had been parasitized by a pteromalid (*P. puparum*), some of whose progeny emerged successfully, though others had perished through an entomogenous fungus. A phorid fly (or flies) had subsequently entered the Swallowtail pupa-husk via the emergence-hole made by the surviving pteromalids and deposited their eggs amongst the remaining corpses. Some of their larvae were then, in turn, parasitized by a braconid wasp; which, again, had entered the original host Swallowtail pupa-husk via the pteromalids' emergence-hole.

Although in these instances it was not possible to narrow down the insects (and fungus) to species level (apart from the original *Papilio machaon* host pupa), this tale nonetheless illustrates rather well the intricate and often convoluted relationships that prevail in nature.

We are indebted to Dr Mark Shaw for his knowledge and help on this subject.

*Images / Kevin Radley*

## A Mixed Bag

Bernard & Carol Webb



An Inkcap, *Coprinopsis romagnesiana*  
- 3<sup>rd</sup> County record

A fungus that appeared outside our front door on the green at Loddon (6<sup>th</sup> May, 2023) was unknown to us. We sent a picture to Tony Leech who identified it, after a further photo of the stem was sent, as an inkcap, *Coprinopsis romagnesiana*. This turned out to be only the third report of this fungus in Norfolk. Apparently they grow on buried wood and had appeared just where an oak tree was (controversially) removed during construction of the estate. Since then three more have surfaced.

We found a female Broad-bodied Chaser in a garden centre just over the border in Suffolk, 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2023. There was black plastic material laid between the rows of plants, presumably as a weed suppressant and the dragonfly was ovipositing on it. Obviously a confused dragonfly that had mistaken the shiny plastic for water.



Broad-bodied Chaser flying in to start ovipositing, but not into water but on to black plastic!

A small tree on the B1150 at Crostwick (opposite) was found to have been stripped and covered in a protective web by the caterpillars of the Small Ermine moth (4<sup>th</sup> June, 2023).

Images / Bernard Webb





A Firecrest (left) was one of the first spring visitors to Salthouse's Gramborough Hill. It turned up on April 14<sup>th</sup> and sang on and off for most of the day from the Sycamores.

A very tired Sparrowhawk (right) sat on the shingle just east of the hill on April 26<sup>th</sup>. I was able to approach to within 20 m - amazing.



As I was turning towards Gramborough at the bottom of the beach road on June 9<sup>th</sup> a very flighty and striking insect caught my eye. It was reluctant to perch but eventually I managed to get a shot. It is the Orange-sided Comb-horn *Ctenophora pectinicornis*, a crane fly.

Not Salthouse but Beeston Bump near Sheringham at Easter (April 13<sup>th</sup>) when there was a mini-invasion of Alpine Swifts. There were around 3 or 4 in the north Norfolk area at the time.



Images / John Furse

Trying to get out before the sun reaches its peak usually pays dividends with the wildlife. It was very hot whilst Barry and I were at Buxton Heath looking for Silver - studded Blue butterflies. We were lucky there was so many flitting around the gorse bushes as well as on the heather flowers. We saw a few pairs mating whilst listening to the song of a Yellow Hammer.



Silver-studded Blues - mating pair.

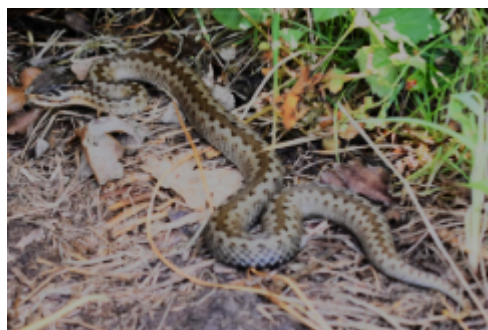
Hickling as usual had lots to see. It was nice to see a pair of Black-winged Stilts out on the marsh, alongside Plovers, Great White Egrets. Bar-tailed Godwits and Lapwings. Several Spoonbills were up high in the trees and there were Herons flying everywhere. A Stoat came bounding towards me as I stood listening to the Beaded Tits in the reedbed.



Yellow Hammer at Buxton Heath



Hickling really disappoints: a pair of Black-winged Stilts and an energetic Stoat



A fine Adder seen at Hickling

Adders were about with a Grass snake down at the Hibernacula.

Cley was lovely with a bit of a sea breeze. Sitting in Bishops Hide was very interesting watching a pair of Little Egrets chasing their parent demanding food. They looked so aggressive with their beaks wide open. I felt sorry for the adult. You could see some of its feathers missing

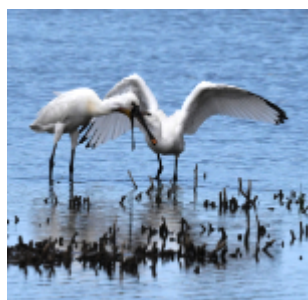


Juvenile Little Egrets begging for food

from its neck. A young Spoonbill was also begging for food, unlike the egrets, its parent was more obliging and fed the bird. It seemed incredible to think that long spoon shaped bill could be put so far into the mouth of the parent bird. A few Sandwich Terns (1) were flying over the sea diving for fish and Skylarks (2) were singing in their numbers as they hovered high up in the sky before diving down hiding in the shingle between the horned poppies. Further along the beach a handsome male Linnet (3) was singing and posing for me.



1



Juvenile Spoonbill being fed by adult

Finally, I am very privileged to be able to go to a farmyard in the next village to where I live and watch the Sand Martins in the sandbank the farmer had created. The young are now all getting ready to fledge. The few which have fledged seemed surprised as they left the nest!! It was lovely looking at their little faces peering out of the nest holes (left).



2



3

Images / Elizabeth Dack

Recently a friend and I had a visit to the old quarry at Trimmingham to watch the Bee-eaters for a while. There are three of these exotic visitors there for the



One of the three Bee-eaters at Trimmingham

second year running, all three were actively flying about and sitting on the power line wires but it is thought that the nesting has failed. They tend to keep well away from the viewing point, making it difficult to get good images, but a few flying shots were managed.

We then moved on to Cley, it's always good for waders there. The Dauke hide was our starting point, the central one of three out in the middle of the marsh, it gives a good all round view of the two large expanses of water out front. The



Black-tailed Godwit in summer plumage

water was low, but the waders were there in numbers, Avocet, Black-tailed Godwit, Lapwing, Redshank, Little Egret, and a few Curlew were standing about or feeding in the shallow water. We were happy photographing each of these when a large group of Spoonbills dropped in over the far side of Pats pool very close to the Bishop hide, we decided to walk round. On arrival at the hide ten minutes or so later, the Spoonbills



Adult Spoonbill feeding juvenile

Spoonbills are doing well in Norfolk, breeding at various places now, its a great privilege to watch these charismatic birds, long may they prosper in our wetlands. A Shelduck mother leading her offspring across the marsh made a fitting end to a great day (see below).



Images / *Tony Howes*

## A Spring Surprise

*Steve & Karin Hale*



We had a lovely Hawfinch with us feeding really well (up to 12 times daily) and resting in our garden at High Kelling for three days in April. Fingers crossed for it going on to breed successfully.

Images / *Steve & Karin Hale*

## **A Norfolk man's herpetological 'adventures'** *Garth Coupland* across the Globe

What differentiates an adventure from an excursion? Is it that an element of risk is involved? Does it depend on how high the level of potential danger is? Does that risk have to be fulfilled and the danger manifest itself in death, injury or incarceration before it can be called an adventure – or would that then become a new adventure additional and superceding the original risky one? These were questions that I asked myself when I was once requested to write for a Sydney magazine on my 'adventures' seeking the cold company of Amphibians and Reptiles.

I concluded that there has to be an element of risk, real or perceived, by both the adventurer and the reader of any account. Only then will the writer excite the interest or even the admiration of the reader. However, every naturalist will risk death and destruction as they clamber over slippery rocks or hike through difficult terrain, in pursuit of their chosen taxa or prize. The quest for deadly snakes has obvious, serious consequences and travelling in many countries can be dangerous in itself. So there must be more to this adventure writing than just the risks. I think that one can truly name it an adventure when genuine, palpable fear is involved or the danger starts to manifest itself, whether the adventurer escapes or not. And so very few of my tales are true adventures... but I do recall a few; and some quite humourous incidents as well!

The World seems to always be owned by someone and not me. Fences are everywhere. It is not practical for a travelling herpetologist to seek out those who may give permission to look for stuff - or may not. And so I trespass quite a bit. Not in a nasty way, I simply go in to investigate a likely spot in a lonely location. It's not as if I go into peoples' gardens, well, occasionally I have, I suppose, if there's something really intriguing, maybe! Anyway, I will slither through a fence like a pet-stealing snake and once on the wrong side all one's senses are immediately alert. You expect a shout, a bullet or a host of slavering hounds at any minute. The stress and anxiety is, of course, horrible but exhilarating at the same time. But this makes the prize more delicious. At night you are particularly vulnerable because of using torchlight and when you suddenly realise that your camera flash will be seen for miles the anxiety turns to cold fear and you know that you are on an adventure! On the Texas - Louisiana border I was head-torching for frogs in the swamps under these circumstances. I'd been told that if they suspect you are deer poaching the locals will shoot first and ask questions later, or maybe just bury you and 'fergit the questions'. When my head-torch illuminated a White-tailed Deer I really started to worry! I survived and found seven frog species that night that I'd

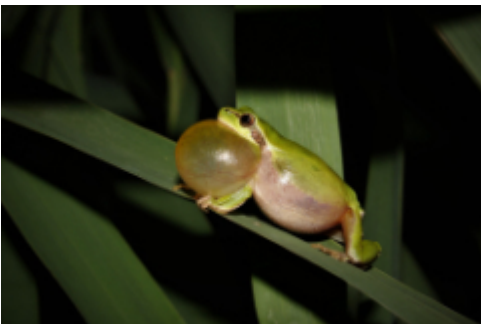


never seen before. It was totally thrilling and I also found that I was rather pleased that I'd had the guts to do it.



Gray Tree Frog – *Hyla versicolor* and Southern Leopard Frog – *Rana sphenocephala*.  
Caddo Lake, Texas

I was trespassing in a wet meadow in southern France one night trying to locate a calling Tree Frog. Suddenly, the farmhouse nearby disgorged the largest dog I've ever seen. A Pyrennean Mountain dog I think; bred to protect sheep from wolves! With a deep, hellish bay it charged towards me, dismayingly faster than I charged away from it. After a race of about fifty metres, him closing rapidly upon my retreating rear, I leapt the fence that I had crawled under, no doubt propelled by adrenalin, just as the beast caught up with me. As it barked viciously from his side I laughed at him and gave him the finger from the other....then started to shake. Eventually I did find Tree Frogs in the Camargue in Mediterranean France. I only trespassed just off the road into a field there and got by with a polite exchange in French with the landowner. Speaking the lingo helps. Always learn the words for frog, lizard and snake in whatever country you are in and make sure that you have some herpetological images on your camera to show people. They are then reassured that you are simply mad and not up to no good!



Stripeless Tree Frog – *Hyla meridionalis*, male and female.  
Gimoux, Camargue, France

Near the Mexican border in Arizona this showing of images saved me twice from serious interference from the U.S. Border patrols. They did not like me and my head-torch one little bit as I poked around looking for frogs on a major drug-smuggling and illegal immigrant route. In the end I reluctantly had to



Western Diamondback  
Rattlesnake – *Crotalus atrox*.  
Benson, Arizona.

give up due to their understandable harassment and went back to my motel where I promptly found the only Rattlesnake of my entire ten week trip across the West under a dumped armchair! The Lord works in mysterious ways in Arizona! Neither did the Border Guards like me as I entered the U.S. from Canada. My equipment and account of myself, as a lone, travelling herpetologist, was clearly beyond their experience and I was interrogated for an hour and my car and all my possessions searched by them and then sniffed by their drug sniffing dog. The way the dog lingered lovingly over the bag I kept my dirty clothing in was most

embarrassing! When I informed them that I painted pictures of the frogs I find they told me I was 'peculiar' in their very polite, American way!

Having a stomach bug can lead to some true adventures of disgustingly comical nature when you are miles from anywhere, let alone a toilet. So horrendously vile were three such incidents during my herpetological forays



Garter Snake – *Thamnophis sirtalis*.  
Crescent Lake, Nebraska

across the 'Wild West' that I couldn't possibly write of them and must leave you to let loose your imagination's most diabolical hounds to do the job for you; although they are truly funny in retrospect! One such incident followed my finding of a Garter Snake hibernation site on the virtually treeless plains of Nebraska. Having witnessed and photographed their mass eruption from their hibernaculum into the spring sunshine I experienced an eruption of

my own of terrible proportions!

There's an expression that means something is obvious – 'do bears sh\*t in the woods?' Well, they do. In the trackless woods of Minnesota I found tons of it so when I got hopelessly lost, twice, because I don't learn lessons quickly, the bears were very much on my mind! In order to avoid detection by deer hunters



American Toad – *Anaxyrus americanus*.  
Remer, Minnesota

I had turned my car's headlamps off as I went searching for Frogs. Without the lights to guide me back I became completely disorientated and started wandering directionless through the undergrowth, fighting against entangling briars and a rising, disabling panic. It was not just the bears that concerned me, it was the thought of the hundreds of miles that I might have to blunder, eating roots and berries and drinking swamp water, before reaching a road, that really had me badly scared. I did

eventually find a track that led to my car but I was a long way from where I had entered the woods. The lesson was then thoroughly learned. Got some nice photos of a Toad though!

Socorro, New Mexico, is a centre for U.S. Military arms design and also has an institute that studies explosives and does the forensics on terrorist bombing incidents from around the World. Explosions in the hills nearby had been going on all day when I visited the town. I knew this as I went head-torching around some ponds at the rear of the institute. Strangely it was on public land with no need to trespass. There I found my first American Bullfrogs. I was in awe of these amazing amphibians and my flash bulb was going like a lighthouse. Then the cops arrived! I had to run and hide behind a tree while they scoured the ponds with their lights. They gave up far too easily so I went back the next night. I painted this picture which will always remind me of that night. A true herpetological adventure!



American Bullfrogs, male (right) and female. - *Rana catesbeiana*. Socorro, New Mexico

On Kangaroo Point by the Brisbane River in Queensland, I climbed about thirty feet up a smooth rock to photograph a large Gecko. Up had been relatively easy but down was quite the opposite! I slithered backwards and twisted myself as I hit the ground which ended up with a Morphine-dulled 'Ambo' ride to hospital two days later. I got the photo though!

One black night, from a creek bottom in Queensland's Tropical North, the call of the endangered Mist Frog lured me to my doom. I am approaching old age and quite arthritic so as I climbed down into the creek I messed up and fell, eight feet, headfirst through the blackness onto the rocks below. I knew that I was going to die and thus was most surprised to find that Providence had landed me between two rocks and given me only a .fractured wrist and many cuts, grazes and bruises to teach me a lesson. I went back to look at the site in daylight and, 'for the life of me' cannot understand how I survived. I never did get that photo. Lucky I already had one!



Robust Velvet Gecko – *Nebulifera robusta* and Mist Frog – *Litoria rheocola*.  
Kangaroo Point, Brisbane and Babinda Boulders, Queensland

Being out alone, particularly at night, in many places, can be risky. The potential for being robbed of expensive camera gear is always present. Being attacked by the 'night shift' high on drugs or blinded of sense and morals by alcohol is never far from the mind. Getting lost, injuring oneself and being challenged by law enforcement, or anyone for that matter, brings its own anxieties and problems. But all this makes our quest for finding nature's jewels more exciting. Our quest is full of adventures! You are all adventurers!



## Norfolk naturalists return rare blue butterfly to its former home Mark Collins

On 18<sup>th</sup> June 2023 naturalists translocated 35 Silver-studded blue butterflies from Buxton Heath to their former haunt at Broadland Country Park (BCP), near Horsford, after an absence of more than 70 years. This lovely but scarce and delicate species has been lost from more than 80% of its former habitats in the past century as heathland was converted to forestry and housing. It is currently found at only four Norfolk locations.



Silver-studded Blue (m)  
Images / *Hans Watson*



Dave Weaver, Alan Dawson & Mark Collins  
preparing butterflies for translocation

The site at BCP was the original source of butterflies introduced to Horsford Rifle Range, Buxton Heath and Kelling Heath, but the original population was destroyed in the 1950s when plantation forestry took over. With the trees now removed, heather and black ants (*Lasius niger*), which the butterflies need to complete their life-cycle, have returned, and the species should once again thrive in its former home.

The project involved several partners. This is a protected species, and we had permission from Natural England and vital support from the Norfolk Wildlife Trust, who manage Buxton Heath, and Butterfly Conservation, which has unrivalled experience of such translocations.

The ants protect the caterpillars from predators and parasites, taking them down into their nests, where they pupate and over-winter before emerging as adults in June. A detailed survey was done to ensure that the ants were present in good numbers, and the heather was in good condition for the nectar-feeding adults, but it will be a while before we know whether the re-introduction has fully succeeded. Monitoring at the Park will continue for at least five years.

BCP was established by Broadland District Council just a few years ago and, with careful management, will become important for nature recovery and biodiversity in Norfolk. During a three-year research project with NNNS, more than 2000 species of plants and animals have been found, and the return of the iconic Silver-studded blue to its former home is a moment of great pride to the Society.

## Wendling Beck - an emerging opportunity for NNNS naturalists

Mark Collins

The Wendling Beck Environment Project is a pioneering initiative in central Norfolk that aims to reverse the damage that intensive agricultural techniques have caused since the 1950s. It's a diverse area covering about 8 sq km and involves several landowners, NGOs, government agencies and the nearby Gressenhall Museum, which itself is creating a new Environment Hub for education and research.

On 28<sup>th</sup> June, twenty NNNS recorders and officers met with the project leaders and toured the site to learn more. We heard that soil degradation through intensive blackcurrant and arable farming has caused carbon and soil fauna loss, accelerating the climate and biodiversity crises. But the processes are reversible if land-use management is changed. At



Wendling Beck, marginal land will be taken out of production, waterways will be connected and restored. They aim to maintain food production through regenerative practices and grass-fed cattle and sheep farming, which will also build habitat diversity. These practices, it is believed, can increase both financial and environmental resilience, encouraging other farmers to join in and bring back biodiversity and carbon storage at a landscape scale.



Already a range of valuable habitats are in transition, including heathland, parkland, meadows, fen, wet woodlands and chalk streams.

For farmers to support nature networks and nature recovery, new financing policies are needed, involving environmental credits that can sustain farming communities. But those improvements must be measurable. Policymakers will accept proxies, and the search is on for easy ways to estimate and record change over time. Survey transects, light-trapping and bioacoustics are in vogue. But when it comes to the crunch, hard evidence about species and populations is needed before and after the changes.

This is where naturalists come in. Only through volunteers, citizen scientists and field naturalists can we really know that this approach is making a difference. Perhaps this was just the first of many visits to Wendling Beck by our teams of enthusiasts and experts.



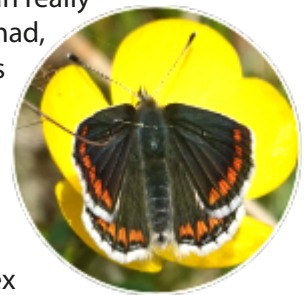
Ground Beetle *Carabus granulatus* and Essex Skipper  
Images / *Hans Watson*

## Butterfly perturbation - part 2

*Francis Farrow*

In the last 'Natterjack' (May 2023) I introduced the concern that scientists had expressed about certain butterfly populations not fearing well following the high temperatures experienced in the UK in July 2022. I can really only look locally at my patch at Beeston Common, which had, as much of the East coast did, a prolonged cold spring this year which delayed many butterfly species emerging. Locally, however, most of the butterflies seem to have done as well if not better than this time last year. The number of spring generation Brown Argus has been the best for years and all the grassland butterflies, Meadow Brown, Ringlet and Gatekeeper are in good numbers. Essex Skipper and Large Skipper have been ok too, although Small Skipper may be down or just late in building up its numbers. The only butterfly that is really down in numbers appears to be Green-veined White and maybe Small Copper as this also is not as prevalent as usual around the common.

There has been, up to mid-July, some 26 species recorded on Beeston Common so far this year.



Brown Argus (above)  
Green-veined White (below)

Images / *Francis Farrow*

# Society Notes

## **Secretary and Treasurer**

The Norfolk & Naturalists' Society was founded in 1869 and has been a mainstay in researching Norfolk's natural history ever since. This long history is due to dedicated members of Council that run the Society for its members. Two of the Council's officers are retiring shortly and new volunteers are required to take on the roles of Secretary and Treasurer. If you wish to play a part in shaping the future in the 21<sup>st</sup> century of this long established Society and are able to offer your services in one or other of these positions please contact NNNS Chair Tony Leech initially for details, Email: tonyleech3@gmail.com

Members of Council normally meet four times a year on an evening in Norwich to discuss the Society's business and plan its course of action for the year ahead.

## **County Recorders**

There are three positions currently vacant for County recorders:

- Terrestrial Heteroptera (Land Bugs, excluding Aphids, Leaf-hoppers etc.)
- Spiders
- Woodlice, Pseudoscorpions, Centipedes & Millipedes

If you have a particular interest and would like to take on one of these roles please contact NNNS Research Chair Mark Collins, Email: collinsmark@gmail.com

## **A reminder from the Treasurer**

If you have forgotten to renew your membership please do so as soon as you can - details on how to proceed are on the inside back cover.

*Jim Froud, Treasurer.*

## **LEGACY**

Philip William Strachan lived in Brooke and had been a member of the Society since 1989. He died in October 2022 and has generously left the Society £5000.



## NNNS Events Programme 2023 - August to December

The following programme of events are those arranged up to publication of this edition of 'Natterjack'. Please check the events listing online at [www.nnns.org.uk](http://www.nnns.org.uk) for up to date information and any other events/excursions. Wear suitable clothing/footwear for the conditions and bring your own refreshments. Most of the events are on Saturdays or Sundays. The Broadland Country Park event is on a Thursday. **Please try to car share or arrive by public transport.**

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> August. 10.30 - afternoon

**Weasenham Woods.** Toby Cook will talk about the management of his Woods and then will take us on a conducted tour. Weasenham woods are a classic type example of old well-developed alternative silviculture in Britain, being one of the few and oldest examples of true single tree selection. In the afternoon stay to peruse the surrounding heathland verges and Common. Parking Weasenham Woods are off the A1065. There are large signs. GR-TF8442620094 / 52.746996,0.730907. Small crossroads in the middle of woods to the North towards Lynn direction leads you to the car park on your left.

Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> September, 10.00 - afternoon

**Insect Studies at Broadland Country Park** with leaders Tony Irwin and Mark Collins. This is the third of three opportunities to join County Recorders and other experts in sampling the insects and other invertebrates on five ecological transects that have been laid out in Broadland Country Park. Parking NR10 4DF/TG1823517574  
**NB: To express an interest and get involved as we plan the work in more detail, please register with Mark Collins, Chair, NNNS Research Committee ([collinsmark@gmail.com](mailto:collinsmark@gmail.com)), with a copy to Tony Irwin ([dr.tony.irwin@gmail.com](mailto:dr.tony.irwin@gmail.com)).**

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September 10.30 - 15.30

Visit to **BTO Nunnery Lakes Reserve, Thetford.** Leader Robert Jacques (BTO Garden Birdwatch Supporter Development Officer). Joe will show us around until lunch and then he will accompany us afterwards, when we can study on our own or with others. Park in the BTO car park, The Nunnery, Thetford, IP24 2PU

Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> October. 19.30 - 21.30

**A talk by Carl Chapman** 'The ten best sites I have visited in my Wild Life'. All members welcome. St. Andrew's Hall, 41 Church Lane, Eaton, Norwich, NR4 6NW.

Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> October 10.30 - 15.30

**Holt Country Park.** Leader Tony Leech. A Fungi Foray in this area of mixed woodland. After lunch carry on with a general walk over Holt Lowes. Parking NR25 6SP (nearest)/ TG080376 0.5km South of Holt on the B1149. Car park charge of £2 to £3.

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> October 19.30 - 21.30

**NNNS Photographic Group meeting** - 'Show your own'. All members welcome. St. Andrew's Hall, 41 Church Lane, Eaton, Norwich, NR4 6NW.

Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> November 10.30 start.

**Litcham Common** with Rob Yaxley, County Lichen Recorder. Learn your Lichens. Meet at Litcham Common car park PE32 2NT (nearest) / TF887172 - The car park is located near the top of Dunham Road, the turn off for which can be found at the Church Street / Dereham Road junction south of Litcham.

Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> November 19.30 - 21.30

**A talk by Nick Acheson** 'Title to be announced'. All members welcome. St. Andrew's Hall, 41 Church Lane, Eaton, Norwich, NR4 6NW.

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> November 10.00. – afternoon

**Wheatfen: The Ted Ellis Trust Reserve.** Leader Will Fitch, the head warden. An introduction first by Will who will then take us around the fen. After lunch you can continue at your leisure, enjoy our library there and the microscopes will be available so feel free to bring specimens. Park in TET car park NR14 7AL (nearest) / TG324056 (The Covey, Surlingham, Norwich)

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> November 19:30 - 21:00

**NNNS Photographic Group meeting** - 'Autumn in the USA' with Hans Watson. All members welcome. St. Andrew's Hall, 41 Church Lane, Eaton, Norwich, NR4 6NW.

Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> December 19.30 – 21.30

**A talk by Tony Leech** 'Norfolk's Fabulous 150' followed by our normal refreshments maybe with a festive twist! All members welcome. St. Andrew's Hall, 41 Church Lane, Eaton, Norwich, NR4 6NW.

## NNNS Events 2023 (August to December)





The next issue of 'The Norfolk Natterjack' will be  
**November 2023**

Please send all  
**articles / notes and photographic material**  
to the editor as soon as possible by  
**October 1<sup>st</sup> 2023** to the following address:

Francis Farrow, 'Heathlands', 6 Havelock Road,  
Sheringham, Norfolk, NR26 8QD or  
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).

*The FSC - Forest Stewardship Council - label indicates that materials used in the production of this bulletin are recyclable and sustainably sourced.*



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