

## AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2016

### INDOOR MEETINGS PROGRAMME 2016/2017

#### **5 October Landscapes, Flora and Fauna of the American West**

An illustrated account of two trips to Coastal California (including Monterey Bay pelagics), Salton Sea, Southern Arizona, Saguaro National Park, Carlsbad Caverns, Petrified Forest, Painted Desert, Grand Canyon and Yosemite National Park.

**Dr John R Mather BEM**

#### **19 October Signal Crayfish**

I will cover the issues regarding White Clawed & Signal Crayfish, looking at identification, habits and impact. I will also cover what is being done locally to help and the possible future for both species. If there's time I'll also try to briefly cover other invasive aquatic invertebrates and potential consequences for native species.

**Don Vine, YWT**

**2 November Eastern Europe – Looking at Wildlife Before It's Too Late** Since most of the countries referred to in the talk are now in the EC and also their farming systems in the CAP, it's interesting to compare a before and after, and how the agricultural impetus has affected the farming outlook. Some of the countries within the Iron Curtain region were pretty run down prior to Gorbachov giving them independence, so there have been big changes in both the wildlife and people's living standards.

**Colin Slator, HDNS**

#### **16 November An Ethiopian Episode**

Ethiopia is a fascinating country, very different from much of Africa. The talk will visit some of the best bird and mammal watching sites, along with the scenery and people.

**Tom Lawson, RSPB**

#### **30 November Harvest Mice in Leeds Area**

The distribution of harvest mice in the Leeds Area as carried out for an MSc dissertation in 2002/2003. With information on habitat use and requirements, leading to conservation management recommendations.

**Ann Hanson, Yorkshire Mammal Group**

### **2017**

#### **11 January Goshawks to Humpbacks – Wildlife of the North York Moors National Park**

An illustrated talk with high quality images focusing on the wide diversity of wildlife from orchids, through birds of prey to whales found in this beautiful National Park. An insight into the ecology and top tips of where to go and what to find!

**Richard Baines, Yorkshire Coast Nature**

**25 January Barn Owls of the Lower Derwent Valley NNR**

Senior Reserve Manager of Natural England's Lower Derwent Valley NNR, ornithologist and author Craig Ralston will reveal the wealth of wildlife and the management he and his team undertake to ensure the Lower Derwent Valley NNR remains one of the jewels in the crown of British wildlife sites. He will take us through one of the successful projects undertaken around the reserve – their amazing work on Barn Owls.

**Craig Ralston, Senior Reserve Manager**

**8 February Orchids of the Harrogate Area**

Introduction to native British orchids and Yorkshire habitats by a local enthusiast. What makes an orchid an orchid, different genera of orchids and their growth cycles, with slides of locally-growing orchids

**Charlie Philpotts, Harrogate Orchid Society**

**22 February A Naturalist with a Camera (2)**

From home to three islands: Skokholm, Fair Isle and Stora Fjadderagg. The places and their wildlife.

**Paul Irving, HDNS**

**8 March Birds in a Cage**

This is the story of an obsessive quest behind barbed wire. Through their shared love of birds, a group of British POWs overcome hunger, hardship, fear and stultifying boredom. Their experiences leave them scarred, but set them on a path to becoming greats of the conservation movement.

This tale is not just about birds or war, but about the human spirit. The story takes us through the despair, the suffering, the hope, and the laughter, showing us how a love of the natural world can help us in good times - and in bad. You don't need to be an ornithologist to enjoy this talk!

**Derek Niemann**

**22 March 1280 Species and Counting – the Flora of the HDNS Area**

I will review the history of recording the flora of the HDNS area over the past 150 years with a focus on the current flora and how it has changed. I intend to cover groups of plants including those we have lost, those we have gained (invasive aliens), ubiquitous species and specialities of the area. I also give an update on plans for producing a new flora for the area and how it will contribute to the BSBI's next atlas of the British and Irish flora.

**Kevin Walker, BSBI**

**26 April Annual General Meeting**

## FIELD MEETINGS 2016

**Tuesday 25th October**

### **PATELEY BRIDGE TO GUISECLIFF WOOD**

A walk along the bank of River Nidd from Pateley Bridge to Glasshouses, then up into Guisecliff Wood, looking for fungi, mosses, liverworts and other wildlife. Weather permitting, this will be a full day outing covering at least 6km of paths, the first half on the level, later expect some moderate inclines. Meet in the long term pay and display carpark in Nidd Walk (OS GR: SE 15846547) at 10am. Bring packed lunch. Leaders: Nick Gaunt and Andy Woodall.

Please confirm your intention to attend with Nick Gaunt (email or text).  
email: drnickgaunt@gmail.com                      mobile: 07587 226336

## FIELD MEETINGS 2017

Leader (except 13th June): June E Atkinson. June has done a sterling job arranging these trips for us and they are always worth attending.

**Field meetings** are open to **members only**. All members are welcome giving opportunities to pursue specific interests and learn about biodiversity in different habitats and the relationships between species involved. Reports of past excursions can be found on this website (under NEWS items). See also under CALENDAR – top menu – for lists of events

Field meetings for 2017 are listed below. There is also a list (and booking forms for the bus trips) in the **printed copy** of the Spring Newsletter. This also has full contact details.

**NOTE THIS CHANGE: New pick-up point** (the *only* pick-up point) for minibus and coach outings: meet at York Place Car Park, off York Road, Knaresborough – behind Marquis of Granby pub. Car-parking charge: £1.60 all day. Please have exact money for the machine.

Please note the following precautions: stout footwear and suitable outdoor clothing should always be worn. Bring plenty of food and drink, with sun blocker and insect repellent when relevant. Members take part entirely at their own risk and are responsible for their personal safety and the security of their personal belongings. The vehicles, where used, will be a 16-seater minibus and a 33-seater coach, each with a hired driver. Various field guides will be available on most trips.

**Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> January                      NOSTERFIELD LNR**  
**and LINGHAM/FLASK COMPLEX    (a.m. & p.m.)**

Meet at Nosterfield car park at 10 a.m. (in cars), for a 'Wild Goose Chase'! and for other wildfowl. After lunch, transfer to Lingham car park to explore this area.

**Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> February                      HARTLEPOOL, TEESMOUTH**  
**and RSPB SALTHOLME    (a.m. & p.m.)**

Minibus trip (*booking required – see blue form*). Meet at York Place car park, Knaresborough, at 8.30 a.m. Looking for divers, grebes, winter ducks, other seabirds and, hopefully, white-winged gulls. RSPB members should have their membership cards with them.

**Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> April                      GOUTHWAITE RESERVOIR, SCAR HOUSE**  
**and ANGRAM    (a.m. & p.m.)**

Meet at Gouthwaite Reservoir main car park at 9.30 a.m. (in cars). Looking for waders and spring migrants. Continue to Scar House, stopping en route for raptors, Pied Flycatcher, Dipper. Scar House car park for lunch, looking for Ring Ouzel, Wheatear etc. A walk then to Angram for those who so wish.

**Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> June                      WYKEHAM FOREST RAPTOR WATCHPOINT**  
**and RSPB BEMPTON    (a.m. & p.m.)**

Minibus trip (*booking required – see blue form*). Meet at York Place car park, Knaresborough, at 8 a.m. A stop at Wykeham for Honey-buzzard and other raptors, Turtle Dove, Tree Pipit, Common Crossbill. On to RSPB Bempton for the myriads of breeding seabirds. RSPB members should have their membership cards.

**Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> June    EVENING WALK FOR NIGHTJARS and RODING**  
**WOODCOCKS IN STAINBURN FOREST, Little Almscliffe (Cars)**

Leader: Robert Brown

Meet in Stainburn car park at 9 p.m. The walk is approximately 1 mile each way on a good forestry track. Please bring a torch for the return walk, and midge repellent is essential.

**Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> September    YWT SPURN NNR**

Coach trip (*booking required – see blue form*). Meet at York Place car park at 8 a.m. Looking for passage migrants, seabirds and waders. Hopefully we may coincide with more unusual species. Butterflies and dragonflies will be of interest .

Note: There is now no vehicular access along the peninsula to the Point, but those wishing to undertake the walk, may do so.

## FIELD MEETING REPORTS

Kindly note the full versions of these reports are on the HDNS website including photographs taken by members

### **FAIRBURN INGS & ST AIDAN'S            15 March 2016**

It was a cold and slightly overcast day for our minibus trip to Fairburn where 12 members hoped to find some wintering birds. We walked to Charlie's Hide on Village Bay where we had views of Goosander, Snipe, Pochard and beautifully singing Song Thrush. At the Pontoon near the car park we were lucky to find a Water Rail. At the Centre we saw Tree Sparrow, Reed Bunting and a resplendent male Bullfinch. At the Pickup hide we saw a flight of a Little Egret and a large communal breeding colony which included Cormorant and Heron. At the Lin Dike Hide we watched displaying Goldeneye and Great Crested Grebe and Pintail. There were three Peregrines sitting on two towers in the distance. After looking for it all day, a female Smew finally revealed itself for at least ten seconds before disappearing behind the reeds.

We set off to the former opencast mine at St Aidan's near Allerton Bywater. Skylarks sang, myriads of Gulls screeched and we enjoyed a long walk through the wetlands adding Stock Dove, Wigeon, Gadwall and Lapwing to our growing list. There were large numbers of Canada and Greylag Geese. We were lucky to see the Greenland White-fronted Goose with its beautifully deeply scored underbelly and prettily white-edged bill. By the time we left, we had 67 species for the day.

**Sue Harrison**

### **POTTERIC CARR & HATFIELD MOORS            12 April 2016**

Shortly after we arrived at the Potteric Carr Yorkshire Wildlife Trust reserve the heavens opened and subjected us to a thoroughly miserable couple of hours weather-wise. The birds brightened our spirits somewhat, especially when we heard Cetti's Warbler singing and Bittern booming. Later we had good views of a pair of Black-necked Grebes and a drake Garganey. After lunch we set out for the National Nature Reserve at Hatfield Moors. The rain had abated somewhat by this time as we walked to the viewpoint overlooking the bleak expanse of peat bog which is the main feature of this Natural England reserve. Unfortunately there was little to see apart from a drake Mandarin Duck which gave good views. The species total for the day was 66, surprisingly good considering the weather.

**Will Rich**

### **SPA GILL WOOD                                    12 May 2016**

We wandered up the valley of River Skell from Fountains Bridge, through Skell Bank Wood towards Spa Gill Wood, in search of mosses, vascular plants and other wildlife. On a fine spring day there were several flowering plants showing well, including Nodding Rush, Ramsons, Bluebell and Comfrey. Bird Cherry was in full blossom. A good variety of bryophytes were found, including a fine cushion of *Didymodon tophaceus* on a retaining wall with seepage, *Neckera complanata* and *Mnium stellare* on an old stone bridge parapet, and some nice epiphytes including *Zygodon conoideus* and *Orthotrichum pulchellum*. The river hosted typical species including *Fontinalis antipyretica* and *Platyhypnidium riparioides*. **Nick Gaunt**

## **GREAT WHERNSIDE**

**17 May 2016**

We took the steep walk from Wharfedale stopping to watch the first of several Golden Plover, a striking bird in summer plumage, and we examined some interesting plants including a club moss. We used HDNS Botanical Recorder Kevin Walker's list as he has surveyed the Great Whernside area, and we tried to identify as many as we could. We were pleased to observe Dotterel in flight as this was the wader we had been most hoping to see, as they are rare, or at least under-reported, for this area. At the top of Great Whernside we were pleased to see a female Dunlin, which was obviously protecting young.

As we descended into Nidderdale more Golden Plover and Curlew were viewed but there were far more waders breeding around the reservoir and moorland edge than on the upper moorland. Lapwing, Redshank, Snipe, Oystercatcher and Common Sandpiper and Wheatear were seen. We saw Meadow Pipit and also a male Ring Ouzel, calling from a tree across the valley and a distant cuckoo was heard. Our day finished as it had begun on the shores of Gouthwaite, with great views of Red Knot, Ringed Plover and Little Ringed Plover. Raptors were scarce, only one buzzard the whole day!

**Sue Coldwell**

## **SCOTTON BANKS**

**23 June 2016**

Nine of us walked down the track from Scotton Banks car park and eastwards through Scotton Banks woodland to the 'Drummer boy' seat where there is exposed Magnesian Limestone. From there we scrambled down to the bank of the River Nidd where we enjoyed lunch before returning via the riverside footpath. Floral highlights included Common Spotted Orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*), Common Twayblade (*Neottia ovata*), Sanicle (*Sanicula europaea*) and Wood Dock (*Rumex sanguineus*). Bryophytes included the ancient woodland indicators *Thamnobryum alopecurum* and *Eurynchium striatum*; calcicoles such as *Ctenidium molluscum*, *Leiocolea turbinata*, *Anomodon viticulosus* and *Rhynchostegium murale*; and river littorals *Mnium marginatum* and *Fissidens pusillus*.

**Nick Gaunt**

## **FOULSHAW MOSS**

**28 June 2016**

We stopped off first at Hellifield Flash where there were Common Sandpiper, Ringed Plover, Lesser Black-backed Gulls, Common Gulls, Black Headed Gulls and Shelduck with two well grown ducklings. Our next stop was near Kirkby Lonsdale at Devil's Bridge spanning a beautiful stretch of the River Lune. We saw Goosander, Grey Wagtail, Common Sandpiper, Grey Heron and brief views of Spotted Flycatcher here. Foulshaw Moss is a raised peat bog run by Cumbrian Wildlife Trust. This is a huge area created by felling trees and made accessible by a board walk. The Warden's hut has a screen running a video of the reserve's most famous summer visitors.....a pair of breeding Osprey. Cameras had recorded the story of the three eggs and the two remaining chicks. From the viewing platform we saw one adult bird fly from the nest and perch near its partner some distance from the nest, through our scopes. As we walked along the board walk we also got great views of Tree Pipit. Later at Warton Craggs we viewed two of three juvenile Peregrine Falcons, both sitting it out hoping for better weather.

We continued to RSPB Leighton Moss where we saw a very smart Black - tailed Godwit. Coffee and cake and a rummage through the second hand books in the cafe rounded the trip off nicely and a surprising 66 birds were seen. Sadly no dragonflies or butterflies due to the rain, but a good trip nevertheless: what else would you do on a wet afternoon?

**Sue Coldwell**

## **THORNE MOOR**

**12 July 2016**

Thorne Moor is now managed for wildlife, as part of the Humberhead Levels NNR. We found typical flora of calcareous grassland such as Yellow-wort, Centaury, Hop Trefoil, Hairy Tare, Restharrow and plentiful Common Spotted Orchids and a few Pyramidal. Ringlet butterflies abounded and Small and Large Skippers were seen. Walking on into the moor the surroundings became more marshy and the beautiful Emerald Damselfly, Large Red Damselfly, Southern Hawker and Four-spotted Chaser were observed although in very small numbers. Colin alerted us to the purring of Turtledoves in the adjacent shallows but of course they were impossible to see, but those at the front of the party were rewarded with two glimpses of Adders, then a common lizard nearby. The route now led between open ditches of peaty water with Sphagnum and Polytrichum Moss in abundance, Phragmites reeds and Marsh Pennywort. Deer were spotted in the distance and Marsh Harrier, Red Kite and Whitethroat were seen. We travelled around to the Lincolnshire side of the moor. There were some interesting Cheviot goats being grazed here as part of a conservation project and Linnet and Yellowhammer were added to the bird tally, Climbing Corydalis to the plant total. To round off the day we hopped over to Blacktoft Sands RSPB reserve and got Bearded Tits, an immature Water Rail, a Barn Owl in its box, Little Grebe with chicks, Marsh Harrier, Teal, Lapwing, Little Egret, Heron, a Spotted Redshank and a Black Tailed Godwit. The vegetation here as everywhere was particularly luxuriant with Hemlock plants as tall as trees – a result of this wet summer?

**Muff Upsall**

## **ALKBOROUGH FLATS & BLACKTOFT SANDS 16 August 2016**

First call, North Cave, where we saw a nicely challenging cryptic juvenile Ringed Plover, Greenshank, a Snipe and a lone Common Tern. After crossing the Humber we had good views of Read's Island. There were hundreds of Avocets who breed there in relative safety from predators; large numbers too of Shelduck, Lapwing, Redshank, Golden Plover; and fewer Curlew. Alkborough Flats is situated at the confluence of the rivers Trent and Ouse which form the Humber. At least half of the vast stretch of low-lying arable land (nearly 990 acres) has been given a new intertidal habitat by breaching the old flood defences, allowing tidal water to flood the area providing reed beds and lagoons. We saw amazing amounts of Avocets! 753 were counted by one member. We also saw 12 Spoonbill and a mixture of waders: Black Tailed Godwit, Ruff, Greenshank and a pair of Turnstone. The ducks were harder work being in eclipse but gave us several different species. There were Bearded Reedling and Yellow Wagtail in the base of the reeds beyond the water's edge. The Tower hide provided an extensive view of the reserve. A Water Rail confidently worked the area in front of us, allowing us to see at least two of its young – one second brood and one first brood. They were also watched by a pair of young Marsh Harrier who were, fortunately, not quite on form yet. At our last destination, Blacktoft Sands, a similar collection of birds awaited us but we also found a Dunlin at last to complete our wader

list. By the end of this marathon trip we had 80 species in total which included 14 species of wader.

**Sue Harrison**

## MOTHS

Spring and early summer were very uneventful, the cool weather affecting the numbers of moths caught, echoing 2015. A small catch at Ellington Banks in May was disappointing, but the numbers of species noticeably started to increase during June, with moth trapping events at Fountains Abbey and Nosterfield NR, where at the latter site, a catch of 108 species included no fewer than four of the beautiful pinkish-coloured Netted Pug (all other Society records have been single moths). By mid-July, accompanying the mini heat wave, there was a marked improvement in the situation, with 90 and even 100 different species recorded in our garden moth traps! Varied Coronet at Sharow and Scarce Footman at Hutton Conyers were both second records for the Society and also the most north-westerly records in Yorkshire.

Other catches were made at High Batts NR (for the Open Day in early July) and in early August at Sawley (for HDBAG). Further visits were also made to Nosterfield reedbed, which resulted in three new Vice County 65 records and for two species, Twin-spotted and Brown-veined Wainscot, they are also the most north-westerly records in Yorkshire.

There was a notable influx of the tiny Diamond-backed moth (a micro) from the Continent in early June, which according to one ill-informed daily newspaper, would apparently devastate our crops of brassicas! On 7th June, one recorder's garden moth trap contained over 300 of this distinctive but diminutive species.

Female moths are renowned for using pheromones to attract males, in some cases, over quite considerable distances. There are usually just a handful of records for the very attractive Emperor moth (an upland species on the wing in late April/early May) every year. An afternoon on the moors in our area during May was very productive – some male Emperors reacting within 60 seconds of a newly developed artificial pheromone lure being deployed! (*A strict time limit was used and the lure re-boxed quickly*).

*All will be detailed in full in the 2016 annual report.*

Follow us on Twitter: *@JillWarwick* or *@DoubleKidney*

**Jill Warwick & Charlie Fletcher**



## FARNHAM NEWS

The first Chiffchaff was seen on 19<sup>th</sup> **March** and three Sand Martins appeared next day. Twenty-nine Whooper Swans flew west on 26<sup>th</sup>, on which date the first Barn Swallow was seen. Redwings were still being recorded until 29<sup>th</sup>, when a female Common Scoter was on the North Lake. Chiffchaff numbers increased to 13, and 20 Sand Martins were present by the month-end. A Peregrine Falcon was recorded four times during the month.

An Osprey was watched for ten minutes on 2<sup>nd</sup> **April**, while next day, as the management team was working, a Sandwich Tern flew in and the first brood of 11 Mallard ducklings appeared. Due to the high water level, the Great Crested Grebes were having little success in anchoring their nest and it was washed away after the third attempt. Twenty Chiffchaffs were singing on 5<sup>th</sup>, a Willow Warbler and two Blackcaps were seen and three Whooper Swans flew over on 7<sup>th</sup>. A Brambling was at the feeding station on 10<sup>th</sup> – a scarce visitor this winter. Two Common Sandpipers were present on 16<sup>th</sup> and a Greenshank on 17<sup>th</sup>. Five Common Terns appeared on 21<sup>st</sup>, on which date Ian Walker could not believe his eyes when he saw a pair of Serins on the East Bank in the morning. This was a new record for the HDNS recording area. Unfortunately, they could not be re-located later in the day, but he did find them again on the West Side, feeding on goat willow on 23<sup>rd</sup>, when I had a brief view before they disappeared again. An Osprey was seen during the morning of 25<sup>th</sup> and an Arctic Tern in the afternoon; a Black-tailed Godwit flew through on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**May** began well with two Arctic Terns, an adult Little Gull and a Hobby on 1<sup>st</sup>. During the first week, three Egyptian Geese were seen, also three more Little Gulls and a male Pied Flycatcher – an unusual visitor to Farnham. Another Little Gull appeared on 7<sup>th</sup> when, surprisingly, the male Serin re-appeared and sang briefly, after which it was not seen again. Thick fog until 10 a.m. on 8<sup>th</sup> was not a good start to our annual bird census day; warblers topped the list with 21 Chiffchaffs, eight Willow Warblers, eight Garden Warblers, two male Reed Warblers (present for a second year), 33 Robins, 80 Sand Martins and five Common Terns. A Black Tern flew in at 11.30, being joined by 13 more at 2 p.m., part of an influx into the country on the south-east wind. Two more Little Gulls were seen on 10<sup>th</sup>, making a total of eight in ten days, and an Arctic Tern flew through on 12<sup>th</sup>, after which a change in the weather brought an end to the spring passage. Three Common Terns were having problems finding suitable breeding sites due to the high water level covering the small islands. The tern platform had been taken over by Black-headed Gulls and so a small boat, which had been given to us by the Angling Club, was boarded over, covered with sand and gravel and towed out to provide a nest site for the terns, which was successful. The pair of Great Crested Grebes, at the fourth attempt, managed to find a secure nest site on the South Lake. Another pair was breeding on the North Lake, a Kestrel was breeding in a nest box and a pair of Nuthatches was feeding young in a tree nest hole. A pair of Oystercatchers, breeding on the tern platform, hatched their first chick which fell prey to a Black-headed Gull.

A strong northerly wind blew for the first three days in **June**, but did not deter two Reed Warblers from singing in the *Phragmites* below the hide. Two pairs of Common Terns chose the converted boat as a nest site with a third pair on the main island. The pair of Oystercatchers, which bred unsuccessfully on the tern platform, nested with the terns on the boat. Two Egyptian Geese flew in on 11<sup>th</sup> and a pair of Mute Swans reared only one cygnet. A Little Egret was present on 15<sup>th</sup>.

Two House Sparrows seen on 17<sup>th</sup> were, believe it or not, a rare occurrence at Farnham. The pair of Great Crested Grebes hatched two young. A Black Tern was present until early evening on 23<sup>rd</sup>. Sand Martins were doing well in the wall, with 59 holes occupied. A few years ago, the North Lake anglers erected several nest boxes and this year a pair of Kestrels occupied one of them with Tawny Owls in another, chicks being seen in both. The owl boxes in the copse and West Field contained only Jackdaws. Out of 23 small nest boxes, only nine were occupied, four by Great Tits and five by Blue Tits - a cold May and lack of suitable food may have contributed to the low breeding numbers. A Hobby was seen chasing Sand Martins at the month-end.

The water level in **July** remained high restricting breeding sites for ducks, a pair of Gadwalls, however, succeeded in rearing six ducklings and a Tufted Duck was seen with five. Seventeen Oystercatchers flew in on 3<sup>rd</sup>, when three Common Sandpipers were present, another House Sparrow was seen, a Hobby caught a Sand Martin and carried it to a tree where it was watched for fifteen minutes. The pair of Oystercatchers breeding on the old boat hatched three chicks on 7<sup>th</sup>. Next day a Pied Flycatcher was seen and an adult Little Gull flew in. On 10<sup>th</sup> the Oystercatcher chicks were led by their parents from the boat onto the island, but were not seen again after 15<sup>th</sup>; the three breeding pairs were all unsuccessful due to predation. A Spotted Flycatcher, seen on 17<sup>th</sup>, was an early passage bird. During the same afternoon, an Otter was watched as it climbed onto the boats and then made its way onto the tern platform where it ate Black-headed Gull chicks. I have not made reference to the Otter problem previously but they have certainly contributed to the breeding failure of the terns, gulls and other water birds; from 40 pairs of breeding Black-headed Gulls only one fledged. We will take steps to protect the tern platform but can do little for the rest of the site. Two Green Sandpipers were present on the evening of 17<sup>th</sup> and a few Common Redstarts were on passage from 21<sup>st</sup>.

During the first week of **August**, three Common Redstarts, a Spotted Flycatcher, a Green Sandpiper and a Hobby put in an appearance, while a pair of late-breeding Reed Warblers was feeding young in the nest. Second broods of Sand Martins were being fed in the wall, with 59 holes again occupied. A Hobby was seen on 15<sup>th</sup> and, on the same day, an Osprey flew in during the afternoon, and was seen to catch a Perch at 5 p.m. A newly fledged Reed Warbler was seen on 17<sup>th</sup>. Eight Common Buzzards were in the air together on 20<sup>th</sup>, a 'cream-crown' Marsh Harrier and a Hobby were also present. During the third week, Common Redstarts and Spotted Flycatchers continued to move through. An Osprey was seen by an angler early in the morning of 21<sup>st</sup>, with a Green Sandpiper and a notable flock of 200 Goldfinches feeding on knapweed and thistles on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

On 4<sup>th</sup> **September**, an Osprey flew over and a Black-tailed Godwit was seen. A female Mandarin Duck was present on 8<sup>th</sup>. An Osprey, observed over the lake on 11<sup>th</sup>, made several unsuccessful attempts to catch a fish. On the same day, three Common Redstarts were seen, a Greenshank flew over and the first autumn sighting of a Peregrine Falcon was in the evening when six Dunlins flew through – the first for the year. What little wader habitat is available because of the high water level, is currently occupied by 300 Greylag Geese and over 100 Canada Geese. It has been a disappointing year in many respects; the high water level due to the winter rains, and also the breeding failure of the Common Terns and other species due to the depredation by the Otters. We can only remain optimistic for the coming year.

**Butterflies** In March, single Brimstone, Peacock and Orange Tip were recorded while Small Tortoiseshell and Peacock were seen in small numbers during April. There was a slight improvement in May when Red Admiral and Speckled Wood were added to the list. The first Common Blue was seen on 5<sup>th</sup> June when three Painted Ladies were also present; the first Ringlet was on 19<sup>th</sup>. Two more Painted Ladies were present on 23<sup>rd</sup> and, by the end of the month, Meadow Browns and Ringlets were increasing. The first Gatekeeper was seen on 10<sup>th</sup> July, when ten Small Heaths were counted. A butterfly count around the South Lake on 23<sup>rd</sup> July revealed 59 Small Skippers, 164 Gatekeepers, 159 Meadow Browns and 74 Ringlets, with eight Small Tortoiseshells, a Red Admiral and a Painted Lady – eleven species in all. White-letter Hairstreaks were scarce, with only three recorded on 17<sup>th</sup> and a male Common Blue next day. Four Red Admirals, four Painted Ladies, three Peacocks, six Common Blues and a Holly Blue were present at the beginning of August. Single Walls were seen on 8<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> – this is becoming a scarce species. On 11<sup>th</sup> September, six Red Admirals, 20 Speckled Woods and a Comma were seen.

**Damselflies and dragonflies** The first Common Blue Damselfly appeared on 27<sup>th</sup> May along with two Four-spotted Chasers. Fifty Common Blue Damselflies were counted as they rested among grasses on a dull day in early June and an Emperor Dragonfly was seen on 4<sup>th</sup>, with Black-tailed Skimmers on the wing by 7<sup>th</sup>. A Large Red Damselfly, a species normally associated with acid water and so a scarce visitor to the site, was found by a young lady observer at the pond on 22<sup>nd</sup>. By the first week of July, Common Darters and Green Emerald Damselflies were seen and Four-spotted Chasers were still in evidence, the last named in small numbers this year. During mid-month, 17 Black-tailed Skimmers were counted, whilst Southern and Brown Hawkers were on the wing. On 20<sup>th</sup> August, ten Brown Hawkers, 20 Common Darters and one Common Hawker were recorded. The first Migrant Hawker was seen on 25<sup>th</sup> August.

**Amphibians** Frog spawn was noted in the pond on 18<sup>th</sup> March, much later than most other sites due to the early low temperatures at Farnham G.P. Three Great Crested Newts and a Smooth Newt were seen on 20<sup>th</sup> April, observations being restricted this year as the pond was almost covered with blanket weed. A small open area on 9<sup>th</sup> May revealed 12 Great Crested Newts including an egg-laying female.

**Mammals** Otters were present throughout the winter with up to three seen in January and March, sightings continuing into April and May. Two were present in June on the old boat put out as a breeding platform for birds, and then seen on the main island where the Black-headed Gulls were breeding, one Otter carrying off a gull chick. During the next two weeks all the gulls vacated the island as did two pairs of Common Terns. Roe Deer were sighted in January and May and deer slots were regularly seen on the paths. Bank Voles regularly visited the bird-feeding station as did Common Rats and Grey Squirrels. A Red Fox with two cubs and a family party of Stoats were seen in June. The Rabbit population is well down this year due to myxomatosis, making them easy prey for the Stoats. Two young Common Shrews feeding in front of the hide on 15<sup>th</sup> July, was an entertaining sight.

**June E. Atkinson**

Chairman, Management Committee & Honorary Warden



## **FARNHAM MANAGEMENT DAYS - ALL SUNDAYS**

2016      16 October    20 November    11 December  
2017      15 January    19 February    19 March    9 April

Meet at the hide at 10 a.m.  
Further details from June on 01423 885612.

The considerable work-load always falls on a few willing members and help from more volunteers would be greatly appreciated.

### **Can you spare some time to help?**



## **HIGH BATTS WINTER LECTURES 2016-7**

We have a reciprocal agreement with High Batts to publish our lecture program

The Golden Lion, Allhallowgate, Ripon; Monday evenings, 7.30pm. Entry £2.

17 October **Britain in Focus**

Wildlife and landscapes from around the UK  
Whitfield Benson

21 November **From Camo to the Courtroom**

Howard Jones RSPB Investigations Officer

12 December **Red Kites in Yorkshire**

Doug Simpson

*No lecture in January*

6 February **A Journey North**

Shetland    David & Dorothy Morland

6 March **Birding the Dots**

Welcome to Texas      Roger Parrish

## STARBECK LIBRARY HDNS DISPLAY

It is the turn of Starbeck Library to host a display for HDNS during the October half term holiday from Saturday 22 to Saturday 29 October.

Any members willing to lend or donate photographs or information for the event please contact Sonia Starbuck at [soniastarbuck50@gmail.com](mailto:soniastarbuck50@gmail.com)

## WHARFEDALE NATURALISTS' SOCIETY

The WNS holds its fortnightly meetings at 7.30pm on Tuesdays, at Christchurch, The Grove, Ilkley. Their next lecture is on:

11 October, **The Golden Eagle**, lecturer Alan Fielding.

For the full programme, go to [www.wharfedale-nats.org.uk](http://www.wharfedale-nats.org.uk)

## BTO NEWS

Our next BTO Yorkshire Birdwatchers' Conference will take place on Saturday 18 March 2017 at The Ron Cooke Hub, University of York. We are still working on the programme and details can be obtained from me: [mikebtorep@gmail.com](mailto:mikebtorep@gmail.com) or, in due course: [www.bto.org](http://www.bto.org)

**Mike Brown**

BTO Regional Representative for Yorkshire-Central.  
[mikebtorep@gmail.com](mailto:mikebtorep@gmail.com)

## DISCOUNTS

**Black's** 10% discount on fully priced items.

**Cotswold & Leeds North Face Store** 15% discount (excluding sale goods, gift vouchers, carriage) in store, online or mail order. Quote the affiliation/promotional code AF-HDNS-W3.

**Bass & Bligh** Flexible discount, including photo printing and services.

**Valerie Holmes, Hon. Treasurer**

## HARROGATE NATURALISTS' FORUM

Get the very latest wildlife news from our area, recent sightings, reminders of HDNS meetings, members' photos (and even sound files!), advice, explanation, good natured discussion and humour. The more members who join the Forum the more useful it becomes as a means of communication within our Society. So, if you have use of a computer you really must visit

[http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/Harrogate\\_Naturalists/](http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/Harrogate_Naturalists/) and sign up.

Contact **Robert Marshall** for more information:  
email: [hdns.wildwatch@btinternet.com](mailto:hdns.wildwatch@btinternet.com)

## HARROGATE NATURALISTS' WEBSITE

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

Remember to check the Sightings page on our website. There have been some interesting observations during September. Just follow the link from the front page menu. When you get to the sightings then scroll down to view. Please add any interesting sightings. This is the time of year when winter migrants start to arrive: Redwing, Fieldfare and later we may get Waxwings.

You need to supply your email address but this is not shown on the webpage.

We always welcome submissions for our photo gallery – click ContactUs on the front page menu and then click 'submit a photograph'.

**Malcolm Jones**

### **CONTACT DETAILS for the society:**

**General Secretary: Mrs Sue Coldwell**

email: [gen.sechdns@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:gen.sechdns@yahoo.co.uk)

**Membership Secretary: Ms Val Smith**

email: [memsec.hdns1@talktalk.net](mailto:memsec.hdns1@talktalk.net)

**Website:** [www.hdns.org.uk](http://www.hdns.org.uk)