Southampton Natural History Society

Annual Report 2024

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Cover photograph – Fig Leaf Skelotoniser

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The 2024 Annual Report

Jan Schubert, Secretary

Welcome to the Annual Report of the Southampton Natural History Society for 2024. As always, this annual report contains a comprehensive record of the flora and fauna of the city area, and we are pleased to continue our relationship with iRecord for our online database.

We are delighted to have been able to provide a full range of guided walks during the year and our indoor meetings – whether face to face or by Zoom – continue to attract a wide range of support. As always, we would welcome your views on this and on any other aspect of the Society's work.

Please email us with any views to ***admin@sotonnhs.net***.

Don't forget to join our Facebook Group which has become a virtual meeting space – ***facebook.com/groups/SotonNatHistSoc***.

You can also find recordings of many of our online talks organised by Cath Corney on our YouTube channel at ***YouTube.com/@SotonNaturalHistorySociety***.

Membership Report for 2024

Joanne Budd, Treasurer

If you have previously agreed to Gift Aid being reclaimed on your membership payments and donations, please remember you should notify us of any changed financial circumstance – particularly if you no longer pay tax. You can contact our treasurer with any queries at ***treasurer@sotonnhs.net***.

We were pleased to welcome new members, including.

We were sorry to have received notice of the death of.

The total number of members as at 31st December 2024 was 121.

Members' Matters

Mike Creighton

It's been a busy year supporting the members of the Southampton Natural History Society, trying to ensure that you can participate fully in our events and activities and making it at easy and welcoming as possible to join the Society.

Your Newsletter

Probably the most visible change has been the introduction of a new monthly Members' Newsletter, delivered by email. Whilst this tends to keep to topical issues - events and field trips coming up for example - there is the ability to include short articles about wider issues. So if there is something you would like to see covered, simply email ***newsletter@sotonnhs.net*** and let us know. You can also use that email address to let us know if you've not been receiving these newsletters and we'll make sure you are added to the mailing list.

You might be interested to know that in 2024 we sent a total of 2,043 email newsletters to our overall membership, and on average just under 80 per cent were opened - although the number opened in time for the information contained to be of current use was closer 70 per cent.

Still, together with the fact that we had no reports of our newsletters ending up as spam, this hopefully means the newsletters are well received and we look forward to expanding their content in the coming months.

Your Membership

You may or may not have noticed but we now have a new partner to help manage our membership system - ***MemberMojo***. Dealing with the

administration of our members - who's in, who's out, who is contributing via gift aid etc etc - is a time consuming activity. And with most people managing their other subscriptions electronically your Committee decided it was probably time to make it easier for you to manage your membership of the Society.

If you visit the ***My Membership*** page of our website at ***sotonnhs.net*** you will be able to enter your email and request a one time use login link to let you access your membership details.

For people who already pay by standing order or bank transfer there will be little difference to the administration of your annual membership. For other individuals and family members you will be able to renew at the appropriate time using PayPal or bank card as you would elsewhere. And new standing orders or bank transfers can be established if required, as can payments by cash or cheque.

We would also like to remind those who have committed to gift aid that should there be any changes to your personal circumstances, particularly if you are no longer a UK tax payer, you should advise us via ***treasurer@sotonnhs.net*** or you may be liable to repay any tax benefit claimed.

Your Connections

Our Facebook Group is a vibrant place for sharing information about or asking questions. And for beginners and experts alike, no question or comment is too simple or unwelcome: ***facebook.com/groups/SotonNatHistSoc***

Our website is our main portal for advertising details of Field Trips and other events: ***sotonnhs.net***

And our Youtube Channel is our repository for recordings of talks and other information: ***youtube.com/@SotonNaturalHistorySociety***

First and latest – Recording Wildlife on iRecord

Mike Creighton

As most of you will know Southampton Natural History Society switched its method of recording natural history sighting to recording information directly on ***iRecord*** - one of the national databases for recording sightings. The main advantage is that sightings by our members are directly integrated with sightings from other organisations and individuals, and allows us easy access to monitor flora and fauna sightings across the city area.

It is possible to interrogate iRecord yourself to discover all sorts of information, from Southampton and further afield, but this article is a short analysis of the earliest and latest record for the Southampton area. Further such analysis will be reported as occasional articles in our monthly email newsletter. If you are not getting our newsletter, please make sure we have you email address by contacting ***admin@sotonnhs.net***.

Looking at the earliest record for the Southampton area, I found it to be from 1886 much to my surprise given that ***iRecord*** launched in 2012. But of course historical records have been added by individuals and organisations as they have

all sought to digitise their records as part of one of the largest citizen science projects currently underway.

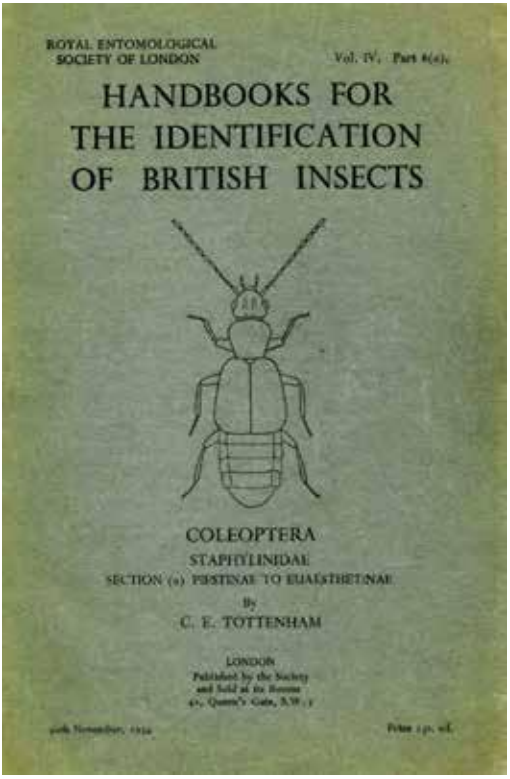
So what was this early record, and how did it come to be on ***iRecord***?

In July 2022 the Ground Beetle Recording scheme added, amongst other records, a sighting of a single *Harpalus affinis* (Schrank, 1781) - one of the Carabidae beetles. This was part of a significant collection from Reverend Charles Edward Tottenham (1895-1977) now with the Natural History Museum in London. It is dated as 1886 so presumably incorporated into his own collection from another source. The location name is given as Chilworth but there is only a 2 digit grid reference (SU41 - 10km square) covering pretty much the whole of Southampton.

The following is an extract from the short biography of Reverend Tottenham given on ***coleoptera.org.uk***.

> Born at Seldmere, Yorkshire. After acquiring his BA (1917) and MA (1922) he was ordained in the Diocese of Chichester and his early curacies included St John sub Castro and Bexhill on Sea; Coveney, Cambridgeshire; Hanley, Staffordshire; Richmond, Surrey; Rous Lench, Worcestershire; and East Ardsley, Yorkshire.
>
> He also lived at Thorpe Bay, Essex where he was Headmaster of Southend Grammar School.
>
> He gave up Holy Orders in September 1937, moved to London and then to West Ewell, Surrey, and again to Cambridge where took up another teaching post in 1942 and also became Curator of the Zurich collection at Cambridge University Museum. His interests apart from entomology included music, swimming and philately.
>
> Tottenham is best know to British Coleopterists for his volume on Piestinae to Euaesthetinae (1954) in the Handbooks for the Identification of British Insects series. This was part 1 of a proposed two or more volume publication on the British Staphylinidae and he was working on part 2 at the time of his death. He is also known for adding a number of new species to the British list including two which were new to science*: Philonthus jurgans* and *Gynpeta rubrior.* His major work on the Staphylinids, however, was largely confined to African *Philonthus*, to which he added many new species and sorted out several complications.

At the time of his death he was re-organising the NHM's collections of this genus, which had been arranged in alphabetical order, and he was also working on Peruvian Staphylinidae.



Hor ace Las t (a collector with an extensive personal collection of non-UK beetles) states that Tottenham 'kept his specimens in small ' trays' made by himself and which fitted into the shallow drawers of his home made cabinets. Each tray contained specimens of one species and were edged with differently coloured paper based on his own geographical key, but whole drawers were allocated to one species of British material, often a very common one, with each locality in its little tray with the county or vice-county symbol.

These are now in the Natural History Museum, London and Max Barclay, Senior Curator Coleoptera, provided the following further information about them: 'From memory Tottenham wrote data underneath the card, two letter vice-county code on top of card, pinned flat on the balsa wood of his home made unit trays... [he] usually wrote data on the first specimen of each series only, and left the remaining members of that series without data. This means that if specimens are moved from their original position in his collection, their data will be lost. Luckily it is in 'unit trays' of a sort. For smaller species he used a label, and larger (5mm up) wrote on the underside of the card. His habit of leaving most specimens without data has greatly slowed the incorporation

> of his collection. A volunteer, Miriam Thomas, has spent many years printing individual data labels and adding them to his specimens. His collection also needs to be re-pinned as he used copper-based cabinet points which have corroded.'
>
> There are also specimens collected by Tottenham in the general collection at Doncaster Museum.

So the beast that featured as our first record is *Harpalus affinis*, a flightless, solitary predator, built for quickness on the ground. A small to medium sized ground beetle at about 1cm long, they are shiny, black, green or bronze and fairly widespread in the south of England.

At the other end of the time-line as the last record (so far) for 2024 is *Lewinskya affinis* **Wood Bristle-moss** recorded by our very own Phil Budd. No doubt at some time in the future there will be similar biographies of the Chair of Southampton Natural History Society, but for the time being let's consider the record.

This is the extract of the species notes from The British Bryological Society

> Until recently this epiphyte was called *Orthotrichum affine*. However, recent taxonomic studies of *Orthotrichum* have divided the species – those with immersed capsule stomata being retained in *Orthotrichum*, whilst other monoicous species with superficial stomata have moved to the new genus *Lewinskya*. *L. affinis* is by far the commonest of these.
>
> *L. affinis* can usually be recognised in the field by a combination of characters; it forms loose, dull green tufts with stems 1-2 cms long and has capsules with 8 pairs of pale outer peristome teeth that are ribbed when dry concealed among the upper leaves. Other common species of *Orthotrichum* that frequently grow with it on the bark of trees and shrubs – *O. pulchellum*, *O. stramineum* and in some areas, *O. tenellum* – are all much smaller, neater-looking species. *O. diaphanum* is also small and is immediately recognised by its whitish leaf hair-points. *Lewinskya striata* (formerly *Orthotrichum striatum*) is more similar in size and habit to *L. affinis* but its capsules are smooth when dry and have 16 pairs of outer peristome teeth. Its leaves are also much sharper-looking.
>
> As a general rule, species of *Lewinskya* and *Orthotrichum* bear their capsules on a very short seta and in the majority of epiphytic species they are semi-concealed by the upper leaves. This makes them straightforward to separate from *Ulota* species, which often grow

alongside them and which always have capsules on long seta well above the leaves. All of the epiphytic species of *Ulota* have leaves that crisp untidily when dry, rather than lying neatly against the stems as species of *Orthotrichum* (with the exception of *O.pulchellum**) and *Lewinskya* do. **Orthotichum pulchellum*, uniquely among the genus, also has leaves that twist up when dry.

O. affine (now known as *Lewinskya affinis*) is the commonest *Orthotrichum* on trees and shrubs in districts with clean air. It is often abundant on the branches and trunks of a wide range of trees, especially ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and willow (*Salix*). It also sometimes grows on rock or concrete, especially in shaded places.

A common epiphyte growing as a pioneer on the exposed roots, trunks and branches of trees and shrubs, on roadsides and riversides and in scrub, fen carr and open woodland, but also in gardens and parks in towns. It favours sheltered but not heavily shaded localities, being most luxuriant in rather humid climates or microclimates and often occurring in abundance on twigs and young branches.

So, "a common species" but only two records on our database for Southampton. And, you guessed it, both found and recorded by Phil Budd.

Working for Wildlife

As a new departure for our Annual Report we are looking at three organisations working in the city area to help protect and restore the habitats for our flora and fauna.

In this issue we are really pleased to welcome contributions from organisations which reflect national, city, and local activities:

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

The Hawthorns Study Centre, and

The Sholing Study Centre.

The President of Southampton Natural History Society, Chris Packham CBE, has long championed the impact of groups and individuals working together.

> **"The single most important thing people can do is to realise they can make a difference."**
>
> **Chris Packham CBE**

"I can empower myself to make a difference by going into my back garden and feeding the birds. The realisation of self-empowerment is the most important thing.

It is a terrible cliché but if every single person makes one change, that combined can make a huge difference. I think that increasingly people are realising that."

Southampton Natural History Society
Founded 1907

Working for Wildlife

The first of a series of articles in this Annual Report highlighting the work of other organisations which have a beneficial impact on the natural history of Southampton and the wider area.

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust is working for a wilder future across our region, including Southampton and its surrounding area.

With the support of our members and volunteers, we protect over 65 nature reserves, restore precious habitats, and inspire communities to connect with local wildlife.

Several of these reserves are within close proximity to Southampton, including Testwood Lakes, Lower Test and Hythe Spartina Marsh Nature Reserves. These sites not only provide a haven for Hampshire's wildlife but also help build connections with the city and the natural world.

At Manor Farm, in the Lower Test Valley, we have worked in partnership with the Environment Agency to restore 90 hectares of floodplain meadow.

This site will act as a natural floodplain, protecting communities from flooding, whilst also providing a habitat for overwintering waders, migratory wildfowl, southern damselflies, and local fish species.

NATURE WITHIN THE CITY

Nature doesn't just exist outside the city boundaries, if given the chance it can flourish within inner city areas.

The Trust's bold vision is to mobilise one in four people for nature. Through Team Wilder, our community-driven initiative, people are coming together to connect with nature and transform urban spaces. By greening streets, creating wildlife habitats, and championing biodiversity, communities are helping to ensure that both people and nature thrive in our cities.

Within Southampton, our Wilder Southampton Project Officer, Jill Doubleday has already empowered several communities to take action. One of the major successes has been in Freemantle, where litter-strewn verges around the community centre have been transformed into wildlife-friendly flower beds and around 30 trees have been planted. Both habitat creation and community engagement have been strong.

In Woolston, Jill talked to traders and recruited volunteers to transform the high street with wildlife-friendly flower beds that have an emphasis on providing plants for pollinators. This has created very visible habitat, and the active volunteer group seize opportunities for engaging passersby. It's also brought the community closer together.

EXPLORE

For event listings, nature reserves, and more ways to connect with wildlife and support our work visit: ***hiwwt.org.uk***

The Falklands and South Georgia

Illustrated Talk, Keith Betton, March 2024

When Keith Betton, Chair of Hampshire Ornithological Society isn't travelling the world he is often relaying his tales of the natural history of far flung places to groups like ours. Note: On 5th March your chairman spoke to Keith and he said that he is presenting 15 talks in March 2025 alone!

We were enchanted by his descriptions of his travels close to the Antarctic - a 7, 000km 19 day odyssey to the edge of the world.

Keith also put great store by the human stories of the Antarctic. He told of visiting Shackleton's grave at Grytviken which is now the tourism centre of South Georgia.

But Grytviken is also a grizzly reminder that we allowed whaling to continue to operate from South Georgia from 1904 until 1966, with 175,000 whales hauled in for processing. This number included 41,000 **Blue Whales**.

Yes, 41,000! There currently estimated to be no more than 25,000, perhaps as few as 10,000, **Blue Whales** left in our oceans.

Shackleton is, of course, best remembered for his epic 800 mile journey from Elephant Island to Grytviken by ship's boat and foot after his expedition ship Endurance was crushed in the ice in the Weddell sea. Not one crew member

was lost. Keith tells us that the tradition is to take a wee dram at Shackleton's grave, but to give most of the glass to the grave.

One of the birds that Keith was keen to see during his trip south was the **South Georgia Pipit** which nearly went extinct a few years ago. The near extinction was almost entirely due to the number of rodents on the island, from shipwrecks and the whaling ships. Fortunately the island was once again declared rat-free in 2018 after a programme of eradication using poisoned bait.

Keith then took us on a trip round some of the 778 islands which make up the Falklands on his expedition vessel and their inflatable rib-boats. The coastal trip around South Georgia rings you spectacular views of Salisbury Plain. Not the plain more familiar to us with its tanks and **Hen Harriers**, but the home to some 300,000 King Penguins - adults and chicks - packed together on the beach and hillsides. Over a million **King Penguins**, a few shown below, can be found on South Georgia.

The worry for Keith is we know that Bird Flu has reached South Georgia and seabird colonies packed so tightly can be particularly vulnerable. No doubt the colony would recover but the immediate impact would be devastating.

Into another bay, and another penguin. If you thought a million **King Penguins** was a lot for an island roughly the size of Hampshire wait until you start counting **Macaroni Penguins** here. The current estimate is in the order of 3 million.

From flightless birds we move to the supreme flyers. The Albatross. Four species of Albatross breed at South Georgia and we see here a **Black-browed Albatross**, a species which some of you may have seen as a long staying individual at Bempton Cliffs - a little off its normal flight path. All albatross can fly enormous distances and length of time without touching down thanks to their unique flight mode of 'dynamic soaring'. The **Wandering Albatross** is known to travel 150,000km in a single year as it circumnavigates the south polar seas.

Away from these iconic birds of the far south there are more familiar faces. The **Brown Skua**, **Magellanic Oystercatcher**, and **Antarctic Tern** are very similar to birds we see on the south coast of Hampshire but are completely different species.

As you leave the Falklands and head south you start to see ice, some of which is 4 billion years old, formed as the earth cooled and has been there ever since. All visiting ships have to take care of the icebergs which break away from the great ice glaciers where 90 per cent of their bulk is hidden below the waves. Trips in Zodiac allow a close up and personal introduction to this exhilarating scenery.

Another landscape feature can be found on Deception Island where an active volcano means that there is a narrow strip of water where it is warm enough to have a quick paddle.

You have to keep your eyes open because although some birds may be seen in their thousands others may be like the single **Snow Petrel** that Keith encountered.

There are mammals to be seen as well.

Sometimes many **Humpback Whales** and **Orcas** can be seen from the boat and sleeping **Weddell Seals** are a feature of the landscape. Just make sure you don't confuse them with a **Leopard Seal** which would as happily eat you as it would one of the **Weddell Seals**.

So if you are inspired to go, go safely.

For more information from this talk including many, many more images of the birds and landscapes that Keith saw on his travels please watch the whole illustrated talk which is available, with many other talks, on our YouTube Channel.

youtube.com/@SotonNaturalHistorySociety

Working for Wildlife

The second of a series of articles in this Annual Report highlighting the work of other organisations which have a beneficial impact on the natural history of Southampton and the wider area.

This time we are hearing from Mac Ince, Vice-Chair of Sholing Valleys Study Centre with some of his personal reflections of 2024.

Sholing Valleys Study Centre

2024 has been as interesting a year as we could have hoped for at Sholing Valleys. There's far too much to mention, so I'll pick just a few of my personal highlights.

I'm pretty sure we've had more conservation volunteers join us this year than ever before and we broke one of our records with over 50 people joining a Friday session!

We also had around 190 sign-ins for workdays. This doesn't include our refugee friends from local colleges, or many of the 13 corporate groups that came along.

We had our first ever professionally lead session, with Stu Robertson from RH Countryside leading a hedge laying session (thanks to some wonderful funding from ***CPRE the Countryside Charity***).

Our first ever DNA Bioblitz was working with the National Biofilms Innovation Centre, through funding from University of Southampton. We used microscopes to find lots of micro fauna, thanks to Pedro Pires whose expert eye found some *Tardigrades*! (*Tardigrades*, known colloquially as water bears or moss piglets, are a phylum of eight-legged segmented micro-animals).

Apple Day in October was wonderful. Rare species were identified from local trees by the team at Sparsholt College. So rare, they will be taking cuttings to add to their nationally important collection.

I swear we had more apples after coming back from our foraging walk than when we left the centre! People kept donating kilos!

All this tells us that people care about nature, and want to feel they are making a difference. We are grateful they want to do it with us.

Helping maintain Miller's Pond as a place for wildlife.

The Plight of the Bumblebee

Illustrated Talk, Gill Perkins, December 2024

Gill Perkins, the Chief Executive Officer of the Bumblebee Conservation Trust started her very interesting talk by outlining why the familiar bumblebee is so important to the pollination of so much of the food that fills our grocery shelves. They are so important that we have import thousands upon thousands of boxes of commercially reared bumblebees to underpin the bees of this country.

And bumblebees are so important because they have a superpower. Buzz pollination!

Plants produce pollen so that they can fertilize other flowers and eventually produce seeds to make new plants. However, it takes a lot of energy for a plant to produce pollen, so they don't want it to be wasted. To reduce the amount of pollen being lost or taken by animals, some plants, like tomatoes, have developed the ability to hang on tight to theirs.

Most insects are unable to access this pollen, but bumblebees have a superpower. They are able to contract their flight muscles and produce strong vibrations which result in an explosion of pollen grains from the flower. Using her legs, the pollen covered bumblebee will then comb most of the pollen

grains from her fur into the pollen baskets on her hind legs. There are usually so many pollen grains that she will inevitably miss a few, but these won't go to waste. As the bumblebee continues to forage, the loose pollen falls off on and will go on to fertilise one of the next flowers she visits.

Blueberries, tomatoes, aubergines and kiwis are just some examples of the many plant species that require this form of pollination.

The various species of bumblebees also have a wide variety of tongue lengths, ranging from 2mm to 19mm in the **Garden Bumblebee**, which means they will visit a wide range of flowers - pollinating a greater number of plants than, for example, honeybees.

A great deal of research was undertaken, lead by Prof David Goulson, not only to establish the economic value of our pollinators but also to examine the decline of bumblebees in the UK. And a quarter of our bumblebee species were found to be at immediate risk.

The **Shrill Carder Bee,** once widespread, is now our rarest bee. The **Great Yellow Bumblebee** is now just clinging to a few scattered outposts in northern Scotland and Scottish Islands.

Of course, restoring and maintaining habitat is crucial to the long term health of our bumblebee population. But so is how we farm our crops. Systemic insecticides known as neonicotinoids, not only kill particular weevils that may damage sugar and rape crops but they also gets taken up into the pollen and nectar and then destroys the ability of bees to build nest or to forage.

When we were in the European Union these insecticides were banned. The last government then allowed their use, derogation, by sugar beat farmers and some rape farmers.

The current government has withdrawn these derogations and has set out legislative plans to ban the use of neonicotinoids.

Gill then went on to talk about the impact of Honeybees on our wild bees.

Honeybees are very efficient super-generalist foragers with a preference for highly-rewarding flowering areas and will compete strongly with wild pollinator species for pollen and nectar from a wide range of flowers. Pollen availability is thought to be the main limiting factor for wild bee populations: several studies have found that available pollen can be almost completely removed each day by wild pollinators. Honeybee colonies have been found to collect between 10.5 and 46.75kg of pollen annually, which means that each honeybee colony will reduce the amount of food available for wild pollinators.

It is possible to test for symptoms of competition between honeybees and wild bees, and it has been found that some wild bee species were scarcer, smaller, less reproductively successful, and fed on different flower species when co-occurring with greater numbers of honeybees. Wild bees have been found to forage more from less-abundant and less-rewarding flower species when honeybees have been present; and when honeybee hives have been removed from areas, wild bee abundances have increased.

Nevertheless, the honeybee is important for pollination and production of wax and honey. Honeybees are kept for both purposes in dedicated hives by commercial and hobbyist beekeepers, and virtually all honeybees in

agricultural landscapes originate from these hives. But keeping honeybees is not the same as conservation of wild pollinators, and may in some circumstances be detrimental to wild pollinator species such as bumblebees.

Finally Gill spoke with passion about we can do as individuals to help our bumblebees - **Bee the Change**.

Amongst other things she encouraged everyone to garden for bumblebees. Whether you have acres of land or a small window box everyone can play a part.

With 24 species of bumblebee in the UK, your gardening space, however small, can attract a surprising range of bumblebees. Here are three of Bumblebee Conservation's top tips to attract many different bumblebees:

• Provide flowering plants from early spring to late autumn and winter. Bumblebees forage for nectar and pollen for much of their annual lifecycle. Choose plants with long flowering times, and keep them flowering by 'deadheading' as flowers die.

• Grow flowers with different shaped flowers – some bumblebees with short tongues forage on open, simple flowers such as apple blossom while bumblebees with long tongues can forage on deeper tube-shaped flowers such as foxgloves.

• Plant flowers in clumps or clusters of the same type if you have space, to help bumblebees save energy and get from flower to flower more quickly.

Don't forget, to see the whole of this talk tune in to our YouTube channel you can find 'Plight of the Bumblebee' together with many other talks from Southampton Natural History Society.

youtube.com/@SotonNaturalHistorySociety

Working for Wildlife

The third of a series of articles in this Annual Report highlighting the work of other organizations which have a beneficial impact on the natural history of Southampton and the wider area.

This time we are hearing from the Ranger Team based at the Hawthorns Study Centre on Southampton Common.

Hawthorns

The Hawthorns Centre plays a significant role in demonstrating the ecological work that is carried out throughout our city. Once the site of a zoo, the Hawthorns Centre now showcases a snapshot of different types of habitats

that can be found across Southampton and the Hampshire area, such as chalk wildflower meadows boasting **Bee Orchids** in the summer, hazel banks, ponds, and even delicate habitats like heathland. The grounds are open to the public every Sunday 10am-3pm, allowing people a chance to explore these areas, some of which may not be ones they knew existed within Southampton and some of which may be right around the corner.

We use the Hawthorns to host fun and educational activities for all ages during the school holidays for which we also open Wednesdays 10am-3pm, including free wildlife trails held in the grounds. These trails vary on theme as the seasons change, providing accessible information for all ages on the plants and animals that may be found at that time of year; like butterflies in the spring, birds in the winter and maybe even a lizard in the summer if you're lucky.

Within the first few months of the year, we had **Green Woodpeckers**, **Scarlet Elf Cup** fungus, and our first newts of the year.

The newt population is especially important as a marker of the pond's health; it is crucial to keep our onsite ponds in good condition, particularly for the protected **Great Crested Newts**. The presence of these populations is what grants Southampton Common its designation as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Maintaining water quality is essential, and since newt populations have already been confirmed to be breeding within the Hawthorns ponds, then they may serve as breeding grounds for the **Great Crested Newts**. The nearby reed-beds also support diverse wildlife, including dragonflies like **Broad-bodied Chasers**. Conservation efforts are key to preserving this unique habitat.

The Hawthorns is also a base of operations for our Ranger Team, collaborating with volunteer groups within the centre and across the city to help maintain those habitats found within the Hawthorns on a wider scale. Working with the Green Volunteers every Tuesday, we conduct habitat maintenance in many different areas of woodland and meadows across Southampton, such as bramble cutback and removal of the invasive cherry laurel. The Common Volunteers work one Saturday a month, and the Hawthorns Volunteers every Sunday. These groups work very hard to keep Southampton Common and the Hawthorns grounds in excellent condition, benefiting wildlife and the public.

If you're interested in joining any of these amazing teams of volunteers, please email us at *hawthorns@southampton.gov.uk*. We are also reaching out to anyone interested in participating in wildlife surveys, so if this is something you would like to help out with, please email in as well.

We hope to see you soon!

A year in the Life of Keyhaven and Lymington Marshes

Illustrated Talk, Pete Durnell, November 2024

Pete Durnell can often be found either conserving, watching or sketching wildlife on one of the Hampshire Reserves for which he is responsible, but he probably best known for his work at Keyhaven and Lymington.

At about 500 acres this reserve is an extensive area of coastal grazing marshes, lagoons, scrub, a little bit of salt marsh here and there together with some reed bed. With the adjoining Wildlife Trust reserve it is one of the largest areas of protected coastal habitat in Hampshire. 500 years ago you would have been looking at an industrial landscape with 6,000 tons of salt a year being extracted.

Now the reserve is haven for wildlife throughout the year with the last encroachment in the 1970s when the yacht marina was dug out. Hopefully such developments wouldn't be allowed these days.

Instead, looking across the reserve you can see a healthy population of quite a quite rare plant nationally - **Golden Samphire** - flowering late in the year. Looking the other way toward the yacht haven you see the miles of small drainage channels that were put in place to try to improve the grazing for cattle that were driven off the New Forest each spring. Now there is an effort to block some of the 50 miles of channels to keep more water on the marsh in spring, a perfect habitat for our many breeding waders.

As well as the visual experience of the marshes, the auditory experience is second to none. 50- 60 pairs of **Lapwing** can take to the air with their extraordinary 'pee-wit' call, and if you are lucky you can hear the much rarer (in a Hampshire context) soft cooing of the male **Eider** trying to impress its mate.

Early migrants may include **Little Ringed Plover** which always struggle raise a brood as the tiny chicks make an ideal snack for any passing predator.

Garganey, surely everyone's favourite duck, sometimes arrive in good numbers and occasionally attempt to breed.

As you walk the sea wall admiring the birds making use of the many lagoons it is worth remembering that these are all 'borrow pits' which were dug out to create the sea wall you are standing on.

To stop the inundation of the marshes sea walls were built using the nearest available material and the lagoons are the result. Normandy Lagoon was the latest to be dug to reinforce the sea wall in 1991.

The Gorse and Hawthorn are often alive with the small birds - including **Stonechat**, **Linnet** and **Dartford Warbler**. The **Dartford Warbler** is a Mediterranean species on the edge of its range. It can suffer in extreme winters in the New Forest but it seems to thrive in the slightly milder coastal conditions - and because living in these linear strings of habitat is can be much easier to see than the bird disappearing across hundreds of metres of heath in the New Forest.

The raucous gull colony includes a good population of Mediterranean Gulls, as well as **Sandwich**, **Common** and **Little Terns**. The Common Terns usually nest on the off-shore gravel islands but they have recently taken to nesting on the specially created island in Normandy Lagoon and this has given protection to a pair of much less common **Roseate Terns** which turned up to nest in full view of everyone passing by. which meant a lot of effort was put in to wardening these birds which then went on to successfully raise two chicks.

As summer progresses chick fledge across the reserve. The adult **Avocets** act as fighter command, launching themselves into the air at any threat from predators and this has been a great benefit to the other waders raising young on the marshes.

In the reeds young **Reed Warblers** are preparing for their extraordinary flight across the Sahara, and if they make it back next spring they may even find their old nest. Not all such nests fledge **Reed Warbler** chicks. The **Cuckoo**, well established in reserve, enjoys nothing more than the comfort of a warbler nest and foster parents as a home for its nestlings.

Apart from the breeding birds the reserve is a bit like and international airport, with birds stopping off en-route somewhere else. **Osprey** stop off for a feed before travelling on to their wintering or breeding quarters. It may not be long before **Osprey** decides that this area would actually be perfect for a little local breeding.

The dispersal of juvenile **Kingfishers** on to the marshes heralds the advance of autumn and shortly the first of getting on for 2,000 **Wigeon**, thousands of **Brent Geese** and two or three hundred **Pintail** will arrive along with other wintering wildfowl. But no matter how many thousands of birds arrive, if there is a really cold snap at the marshes freeze over, all the birds leave. Apart from **Water Rail**. Everything else goes - some to the West Country, some to northern France.

But cold or wet the winter is a time to look to some of the other management of the reserve. With over 400,000 people walking the sea wall each year there is a fair amount of work keeping the paths in good condition and a lot of time is taken up just keeping it safe for everyone to enjoy.

There is also some 25-30 miles of fencing on the reserve, and

some of it is always on the point of collapse so repair and maintenance is always on the list of jobs to do. Special fox proof fencing encloses Normandy Lagoon with two strands of electrified fence at the top and additional laid fencing at the bottom to prevent digging. This fencing was paid for by the RSPB because of the significant numbers of breeding birds and it has proved enormously successful. There has been a steady increase in the number of waders and terns as a result of this work.

Pete also reflected on the changes since his predecessor Ed Wiseman was warden of the reserve.

Marsh Harriers, which would have required a visit to East Anglia to see, are now almost daily on the reserve.

Spoonbills are now a regular feature on the reserve with occasionally two or three dozen seen together.

Like **Little Egrets**, **Great White Egrets** are now becoming a more visible addition to our local bird population although it may still be a few years before we similar numbers to their smaller relations.

A recent flock of 13 **Cattle Egrets** is another addition from warmer climes.

And Pete reminded us that whilst some of these species may be increasing in numbers as they find the climate in south Hampshire more suitable, many other species face considerable threats through habitat loss and poor land management.

As always you can see much more of what Pate had to say with many beautiful images of the reserve and its wildlife in the full recording of his talk on our YouTube channel.

youtube.com/@SotonNaturalHistorySociety

Recording Officer's Report

Members Records and Weather Report 2024: Phil Budd

I would like to start by thanking the following individuals for submitting records and reports, from various sources, in 2024: Ian Bailey, Dawn Bannatyne, Andy Barker, Andy Binns, Zoe Birtle, Nic Burns, Diana Chapman, Andy Collins, Clare Conolly, Cath Corney, Mike Creighton & Jan Schubert, Viv Cronin, Terry Crow, Jill Doubleday, Geoff Frampton, Graham Harrison-Watts, Peter Hyde, Mark Jackson, Sue Lambert, Jenny Mallinson, Graham Manchip, Kate Martin, Mick Milner, Maria Moore, Julian Moseley, Darren Naish, Mark Painter, Gemma Paul, Josh Phangurha, Pedro Pires, John Poland, Peter Potts, Di & Andy Sawyer, Hannah Scully, Rod Ship, Jeremy Smallwood, Martin Smith, Mike Terry, Chris Townsend, Dennis Trunecka, Ian Watts, and Paul Winter. There are many others who have submitted records through various indirect means and a proportion of the records are my own. Richard Dickson (Fareham) and John Poland (West End) assisted greatly with insect and botanical identifications, respectively. Many determinations, mostly of the invertebrates were verified by national experts.

There sources of records on FACEBOOK including the following: Friends of Peartree Green, Wildern Nature Friends (formerly Friends of Wildern LNR), our own Southampton Natural History Society, Southampton Wildlife, and West End Nature and Diversity, The society continued to extract records for the Southampton area from *iRecord* and we thank the administrators of *iRecord* for this as this has proved to be a very valuable source of information, especially for insect records. Several recorders other than those listed above participate in submitting data to *iRecord.* Other sources of bird records in 2024 included *eBird* and the Hampshire Ornithological Society.

Please see our web-site: sotonnhs.net for on-going up to date reports during 2025. Many of the 2024 records were obtained via this web-site.

Thank you to everybody who contributed to recording wildlife in 2024.

Weather Report for 2024

We have obtained weather data from Southampton (Eastleigh) Airport: ***visualcrossing.com*** and have used this to create the weather summary table as shown below.

Key to months:

Pink background = warmer than average Blue background = cooler than average
Orange background = drier than average Green background = wetter than average
Grey background = cloudier than average Yellow background = sunnier than average
White background = near average **Red bold text** = year extremes

	Temperature and Humidity			Precipitation		Wind		Pressure	
	Average Max C	Average Min C	% Hum	Month Total mm	Type	Av wind speed kph	Av wind dir	Av Sea Level mbars	Cloud Cover %
Jan	**7.9**	**2.4**	82.5	75.4	Rain/ snow	28	SSW	1018	62
Feb	10.9	5.7	89.7	113.5	Rain/ snow	26	SW	1010	81
Mar	11.8	5.1	84.6	100.2	Rain/ snow	25	SSW	1008	76
Apr	12.8	7.2	78.1	73.7	Rain	28	SW	1014	72
May	16.8	10.0	80.9	71.5	Rain	19	SSW	1013	57
Jun	18.9	10.2	72.4	**11.4**	Rain	20	WSW	1015	58
Jul	20.4	12.9	78.6	65.8	Rain	21	SW	1014	69
Aug	21.1	**13.5**	78.2	35.4	Rain	23	SW	1014	**56**
Sep	17.9	11.2	83.0	**169.0**	Rain	21	SSW	1014	64
Oct	15.2	9.6	87.0	90.3	Rain	20	SSE	1014	73
Nov	11.6	6.3	87.4	89.6	Rain	20	S	1020	76
Dec	9.9	5.9	86.8	42.2	Rain/ snow	26	SSW	1023	**86**
Total	14.6	8.3		938.0					**69**

Overall, 2024 was a dull and wet year with mild winter conditions but the spring and summer were unusually chilly. February and March were particularly wet, whilst June, August and December were dry months. June was particularly cold this year. About half a dozen days saw over one inch of rainfall.

Species Reports

Myxomycota (slime-moulds)

There were fewer slime mould records in 2024 than there were in 2023 but most of the commonest species were found. Two species were seen that are new to the Southampton database and both were seen at Wildern LNR, these were ***Comatricha nigra*** on 21st March and ***Stemonitopsis typhina*** on 8th November.

Comatricha nigra

Fungi

2024 was a relatively poor year for fungi observations due to the very wet conditions at the start of the year and then dry spells in June and in early autumn, There was a strong flush in October that just extended into early November. In 2024 the quality of fungi exceeded quantity with several very interesting reports. Every year there is at least one species that is far more abundant than usual and in 2024 this was an ascomycete known as the 'jelly-babies' *Leotia lubrica*, in October they were present in leaf litter in woodland 'everywhere.'

In 2024 there were more records of powdery mildews, plant rusts and other micro fungi than normal, especially in the wet spring months. Of the plant rusts two species that were found near Cromarty Pond, Lordshill on 9th March were **Hart's-tongue Fern Rust** *Milesina scolopendrii* and **Bitter Chocolate Rust** *Uromyces ficariae* on **Lesser Celandine**. Not far away near to Tanglewood Pond, Rownhams the **Tutsan Rust** *Melampsora hypericorum* was found on 22nd April. The rust *Puccinia lapsanae* was found on Nipplewort at Sholing Road in Peartree on 2nd March, and **Moschatel Rust** *Puccinia adoxae* at Great Covert, near Nursling, on 24th March. The powdery mildew *Erysiphe galeopsidis* was found on **Marsh Woundwort** *Stachys palustris* at Wildern Moor, Hedge End, on 4th October and in the same area on 3rd September the insect parasite *Entomophaga grylli* was found on a moribund **Southern Oak Bush-cricket** *Meconema meridionale*.

The Recording Officer ran several fungus forays in autumn 2024. The first was at Southampton Old Cemetery on 13th October, but only 22 species were recorded – the highlights (and new to the site) were the **Aromatic Pinkgill** *Entoloma pleopodium* under nettles and the **Star Fibrecap** *Inocybe asterospora***.** On 16th November, another fungus foray was conducted here and the 17 species found were mostly the expected species but one addition to the site list was **Lilac Oysterling** *Lentinellus conchatus*. On 26th October, a successful foray was run with Wildern Nature Friends at Goodall's Meadow (actually a wet woodland) and around the recreation ground at/near Wildern LNR. A large haul of 53 species were identified and many were new to the site. Highlights included **Shield Pinkgill** *Entoloma clypeatum*, **Nitrous Pinkgill** *Entoloma politum***,** **Brown Cup** *Rutstroemia firma*, and at nearby Shafford Gardens, the **Tan Ear** *Otidea alutacea*. The latter species was also recorded in the nearby Charles Watts Way area on 14th October. The annual fungus foray on Peartree Green LNR was held on 2nd November. 34 species recorded, of which 8 species were new to the site list. Highlights here included **Porcelain**

Tan Ear *Otidea alutacea*

Fungus *Mucidula* (formerly *Oudemansiella*) *mucida* unusually on sycamore north of the church and **Hornbeam Milkcap** *Lactarius circellatus* under a hornbeam at the picnic area. Another record of the latter at a new site was of a substantial number under hornbeams at Warburton Road, Thornhill on 4th October. These are the third and fourth sites for this fungus in Southampton east of the River Itchen.

Lichens are fungi but continue to be poorly recorded in Southampton. However, a new (and the only known extant site) for **Golden-eye Lichen** *Teloschistes chrysophthalmus*, was a specimen on hawthorn at Dibden Bay, found on 10th January.

A sample of other noteworthy and interesting fungi records in 2024 are as follows:

Amanita pantherina, **Panther Cap**, Southampton University – Highfield Campus, 30th September
Boletus appendiculatus, **Oak Bolete**, Dumbleton's Copse, Thornhill, 26th August
Calocybe gambosa, **St George's Mushroom**, Dibden Bay – on a very early date, 6th March
Clathrus archeri, **Devil's Fingers***, Midanbury Lane – in a garden, 18th September
Clavulinopsis subtilis, **Slender Coral Fungus***, Southampton Common – near covered reservoir, 11th November
Cudoniella rubicunda, A disc fungus*, Wildern LNR – Woodland Walk, 15th October
Cyathus striatus, **Fluted Bird's-nest Fungus**, Midanbury Lane – 2nd Southampton record, 18th September
Dichomitus campestris, A bracket fungus*, Wildern LNR – Goodall's Meadow, 4th October
Favolaschia calocera, **Orange Ping-pong Bat Fungus***, Mayfield Park – on dead sycamore twigs, 23rd October. This species is a new colonist in the UK.
Ganoderma applanatum, **Artists Bracket**, Bridget Mary Walk, Hedge End, 6th February
Gymnosporangium sabinae, **Pear Rust**, Peartree Green LNR – new to site, 6th October
Hericium coralloides, **Coral Tooth Fungus***, Merryoak – 5 fruit bodies on beech log, 4th October
Hygrocybe reidii, **Honey Waxcap**, Hannay Rise, Thornhill, 10th October
Hypocrea pulvinata, **Ochre Cushion Fungus**, Netley Common – on razor strop fungus, 2nd March
Lactaris pallidus, **Pale Milkcap***, Riverside Park – at River Walk, 1st October

Lepista personata (=L.saeva), **Field Blewit**, Pilgrim Place, Swaythling – a large 'fairy ring', 10th December
Marasmius wynnei, **Pearly Parachute**, Lord's Wood Greenway – near Goldcrest Pond, 10th October
Perenneporia fraxinea, a bracket, Summer's Street Park, Northam – on dead lime, 19th January
Pleurotus cornucopiae, **Branching Oyster Fungus**, Hogsty Corner, Wildern LNR – 2nd Southampton record, 28th June
Rosellinia mammiformis, an ascomycete fungus*, Wildern LNR – on dead ivy, 11th February
Stereum sanguinolentum, **Conifer Bleeding Curtain Crust**, Deep Dene, Bitterne Park, 5th February

*A first record for Southampton area.

A lot more information on fungi can be found on certain web-sites such as those produced by the Hampshire Fungus Recording Group: ***hampshirefungi.org.uk***

Bryophytes and Pteridophytes

Another Bryophyte survey took place at the intensely recorded Wildern LNR, and this took place on the 29th January in the area known as Goodall's Meadow Woodland. 16 additions were made to the reserve list on this occasion. The most noteworthy records were of velvet feather-moss ***Brachythecium velutinum***, minute pouncewort ***Cololejeunea minutissima,*** bluish veilwort ***Metzgeria violacea*** (formerly known as ***M.fruticulosa***), and the elegant and the slender bristle-mosses ***Orthotrichum pulchellum*** and ***O.tenellum*** respectively.

Other 2024 Bryophyte (moss and liverwort) records of interest were as follows:

Bryum gemmiferum, **Small-bud Bryum,** Lydgate Road, Thornhill – on wood effect plastic, 5th January
Climacium dendroides, **Tree-moss,** Southampton Old Cemetery – south end, 18th February
Cryphaea heteromalla, **Lateral Cryphaea,** Coxford Copse, 5th December
Rhyncostegiella pumila, **Dwarf Feather-moss,** Southampton Old Cemetery – western wall, 5th February
Syntrichia papillosa, **Marble Screw-moss,** Peartree Green LNR – on ash in picnic area, 24th February
Tortula marginata, **Bordered Screw-moss,** Southampton Old Cemetery, 18th February

There were three records of Pteridophytes (ferns and allies) of interest in 2024. **Black Spleenwort** *Asplenium adiantum-nigrum* was found on a woodland bank by Lee Lane, Nursling on 17th August, this is an unusual habitat in the Southampton area. A holly fern species *Cyrtomium* was found but not determined to species, in a ditch by Charles Watts Way on 14th October. The species could not be determined as there were no sori present. A new species for the Southampton area was another alien, the **Krauss's Clubmoss** *Selaginella kraussiana* on a lawn at Archer's Road, Southampton on 29th August. The nearest previously known site for this species is at Holly Hill Park, Sarisbury Green.

Vascular Flora: Flowering Plants

Native Species

The single spike of **Lizard Orchid** *Himantoglossum hircinum* in a grass verge by a footpath in the Bursledon area flowered for a third year in a row in 2024. The annual **Pyramidal Orchid** *Anacamptis pyramidalis* count at Peartree Green LNR conducted by Ian Watts on 12th June reached a new record of 2,350 with six more found at a new site by Sea Road on a later date. A new **Pyramidal Orchid** site was found at Adanac Park, Nursling on 3rd July. Three **Green-winged Orchid** *Anacamptis morio* were found at a new location at Weston Meadows on 12th April.

2024 seemed to be a good year for **Bee Orchid** *Ophrys apifera*, no doubt helped by the wet weather in April. On Peartree Green LNR 26 were counted on 12th June – a high count by the standards of recent years. Two new sites were found but the flowering heads at both were mown down because their sudden appearance gave little time to communicate with the council. These were 8 rosettes (3 flowering) first found at Lydgate Road, Thornhill on 14th April, and 38 in Bitterne near to the leisure centre – these were particularly tall, Better luck with the mowers next year hopefully.

There is a strong tendency for early flowering – a **Lesser Celandine** *Ficaria verna* was out at Broadlands Road on 24th December (actually early for 2025!).

Other native flowering plants 2024 records of interest are as follows:

Alnus x hybrida, **Common Alder x Grey Alder**, By A27 at Mansbridge – found first in 2023, 5th January
Calamagrostis epigejos, **Wood Small Reed**, Peartree Green LNR – south end – new to site, 4th September
Crataegus laevigata, **Midland Hawthorn**, Windmill Lane, Bursledon – bird sown in hedge, 27th May
Ludwigia palustris, **Hampshire Purslane**, Southampton Sports Centre Pond – 2nd Southampton site, 24th July
Mycelis muralis, **Wall Lettuce**, Hollybrook Cemetery – small quantity in SW part, 27th June
Orobanche hederae, **Ivy Broomrape**, Peartree Green LNR – 15 found – new to site, 14th July
Orobanche minor, **Common Broomrape**, Newtown Road, Weston Park – 7 in a planter, 22nd May
Quercus petraea, **Sessile Oak**, West Wood – in Tickleford valley – one young tree, 10th July
Ranunculus sardous, **Hairy Buttercup**, Weston Shore – new defence works at NW end, 23rd June
Ranunculus sardous, **Hairy Buttercup**, Platform Road, Southampton, 3rd June
Rosa rubiginosa, **Sweet briar Rose**, Coxford Road by Bower's Meadow, Maybush, 5th November
Sambucus nigra, **Elder,** Sholing Common woodland – purple leaved variety, 28th May

Non-native Species

Thanks to the ongoing mild weather with the additional wetness of 2024 our non-native plants are flourishing.

A selection interesting records of naturalised flowering plants seen in 2024 are as follows:

Allium neapolitanum, **Naples Garlic,** Cemetery Road – near old cemetery entrance, 5th February
Allium trifoliatum, **Pink Garlic,** Lydgate Road, Thornhill – in hedge, 14th May
Carpobrotus edulis, **Sea Fig*,** Netley Cliff – abundant on crumbling cliffs, 10th March
Cordyline australis, **Cabbage Palm,** Lydgate Road, Thornhill – small plant in car park, 7th August
Cordyline australis, **Cabbage Palm,** Bursledon Road, Thornhill – opposite Orpen Road – 2 seedlings, 19th January
Crataegus coccinea, **Scarlet Hawthorn*,** Thornhill Roundabout area – one small bush in scrub, 14th October
Crocus vernus, **Dutch Crocus,** Southampton Old Cemetery – most purple crocus is *C.neapolitanus,* 18th February
Echinochloa colona, **Shama Grass*,** West End Street – at base of wall, 16th July
Erinus alpinus, **Fairy Foxglove*,** Montgomery Road, Bitterne – many naturalised on wall, 24th June
Euphorbia dulcis, **Sweet Spurge*,** School Lane, Bursledon, 27th May
Fraxinus ornus, **Manna Ash,** Hannay Rise, Thornhill – a small self-sown tree, 10th October
Galanthus woronowii, **Green Snowdrop,** St Monica Road, Sholing – several plants in churchyard, 13th January
Gnaphalium cf. purpureum, **American Cudweed**, Town Quay, Southampton – near Hythe Ferry Terminal, 10th January
Hedera colchica, **Persian Ivy**, Thornhill Park Wood near Jerome Court – spreading into woods, 8th November

Hypericum x inodorum, **Tall Tutsan**, Southampton Old Cemetery – one plant - new to site, 19th January
*Koenigia polystachya***, **Himalayan Knotweed***, Palm Road, Aldermoor – abundant in open space, 23rd October
Lathyrus latifolius, **Broad-leaved Everlasting Pea****, Peartree Green – return to site after several years absence, 29th June
Mahonia aquifolium, **Oregon Grape**, Dibden Bay – one bird sown in hedge, 6th March
Muscari latifolium, **Broad-leaved Grape Hyacinth***, Townhill Way, West End – becoming naturalised, 18th March
Phyllostachys viridiglaucescens, **Green-glaucous Bamboo***, Ivy Lane, West End, 11th January
Physalis peruviana, **Peruvian Ground Cherry**, Garton Road, Woolston – one plant on kerb, 18th October

Pinus radiata, **Monterey Pine**, Sports Centre – on south boundary of golf course, 17th March
Sausurus cernuus, **Lizard's Tail**, Shirley Pond – spreading but known for over 10 years, 25th March
Scilla (Chionodoxa) lucilae, **Boisser's Glory-of-the-snow**, Townhill Way, West End – becoming naturalised, 18th March
Scilla (Chionodoxa) sardensis, **Lesser Glory-of-the-snow**, Townhill Way, West End – becoming naturalised, 18th March
Skimmia japonica, **Japanese Skimmia***, Ivy Lane, West End, 11th January
Solanum crispum, **Chilean Potato Vine***, Ivy Lane, West End, 11th January
Symphytum asperum, **Rough Comfrey*,** West End Street – at base of wall, 5th April

*A first record for Southampton area.

** Formerly known as *Persicaria wallichii.*

For more details of botanical sightings in Hampshire please refer to the Hampshire Flora Group: ***hwt.org.uk/pages/-hampshire-flora-group***.

Fauna

Marine Life - Platyhelminthes (Flatworms)

There were fewer reports of flatworms in 2024 than there were in 2023 but nevertheless a new species to the Southampton area was found along the footpath from Mill Lane to Nursling Church on 21st March. This was the **Snake-headed Flatworm** *Rhyncodemus sylvaticus.* There were two records of **Five-striped Flatworm** *Kontikia ventrolineata*, and these were near Cromarty Pond, Lordshill on 21st March and at Goodall's Lane at Wildern LNR under Tupperware plastic on 24th October.

Annelida (Segmented Worms)

There were two leech records for 2024. These were of three adult *Glossiphonia sp.,* found at the Boating Lake on Southampton Common on 29th May and the species *Helobdella stagnalis* found at Miller's Pond, Sholing on the 'slime bioblitz' on 31st March.

Molluscs (Snails and slugs)

Two records of marine molluscs of interest were **Otter Shell** *Lutraria lutraria* off of Dock Head on 27th September and the marine mussel *Yoldia limatula*

Lutraria lutraria

at Southampton Container Dock in June. This latter species is native to North American coasts. A terrestrial snail that appears not to have been recorded in the Southampton area previously is the **Rayed Glass Snail** *Nesovitrea hammonis*. This species was new to Wildern LNR, Hedge End on 10th December as was **Hollowed Glass Snail** *Zonitoides excavatus* found at Gully Mead on 8th March. Four slug records early in 2024 were of significance and being so wet this year was good for slugs. **Iberian Tree Slug** *Ambigolimax*

valentianus was noted as abundant at Hum Hole, Bitterne on 19th February and **Worm Slug** *Boettgerilla pallens* was discovered in Lord's Wood on 26th February. At Dairy Lane, Nursling the **Rusty Keeled Slug** *Arion (Cariarion) fasciatus* was identified on 10th February and **Crimean Keeled Slug** *Tandonia cf. cristata* was also found there on 16th March.

Other non-insect invertebrates

The millipede *Cylindroiulus caeruleocinctus* was identified at Deacon Road, Bitterne on 23rd July and appears to be the first Southampton record. Another first for the Southampton database is the centipede *Lithobius melanops,* found at Telegraph Woods, West End, on 30th December. Also of interest was the rarely reported **House Centipede** *Scutigera coleoptrata* at the Midlands Estate in West End on 5th August. Two harvestman (Opiliones) records of interest in 2024 were of **Black Harvestman** *Nemastoma bimaculatum* at Home Covert, Stoneham on 17th February and of the harvestman *Odiellus spinosus,* new to Peartree Green LNR and found on the old basketball court there on 21st September.

The was an 'explosion' of records of mites (*Acarae*) in 2024. The highlights are as follows. There was an adult of the black mite *Euzetes globulus* found at Wildern LNR on 10th December and the ID was confirmed by Stewart Bevan. The other records were of mite galls including *Cecidophyes rouhollahi* on **Cleavers** (**Goosegrass**) near Cromarty Road Pond on 24th February, galls caused by *Phytoptus avellanae* on hazelbuds at Home Covert, Stoneham on 1st February, and galls on Italian alder *Alnus cordata* leaves caused by *Aceria inangula* at Lydgate Road, Thornhill on 18th August

There were a number of new or interesting spider records from the thoroughly recorded Wildern LNR site in Hedge End in 2024. These included *Zora spinimana* on 4th March**, Swamp Crab Spider** *Xysticus ulmi* on 18th March, *Micaria micans* (part of the *Micaria pulicaria* complex) on 6th April, *Ozyptila practicola* on 12th April, **Raft**

Spider *Dolomedes fimbriatus* on Coltsfoot Pond on 1st May and **Black Lace-weaver Spider** *Amaurobius ferox* at Hogsty Corner on 16th June. The raft spider was the first record on the database from the eastern side of Southampton. A first for Hampshire was the **Marbled Cellar Spider** *Holocnemus pluchei* at West End on 16th December.

The winter was mild but even so a **Garden Cross Spider** *Araneus diadematus* on it's web at the Sports Centre was a surprise on 12th January, and a little later the **Triangle-Web Spider** *Hyptiotes paradoxus* was a good find on yew in Southampton Old Cemetery on 2nd February.

The spider *Alopecosa pulverulenta* was of interest at Cromarty Road Field, Lordshill on 29th April, the spider *Kochiura aulica* was a new site record at Miller's Pond LNR on 2nd June, the **Angular Orb-web Spider** *Araneus angulatus* was found off hawthorn at Peartree Green LNR on 16th June, and an *Ero* species, probably *E.aphana* and new to Southampton was found in a Bitterne Park garden on 18th June.

Hexapoda: Insects

Collembola (Springtails)

There has been a significant increase in the interest in springtails in 2024 but most of the records currently available and all of those listed here are from the very well recorded Wildern LNR site at Hedge End. On 15th February *Tomocerus vulgaris* was recorded at Wildern Moor. A survey here on 10th December revealed the following species are particular interest: *Entomobrya albocincta, Entomobrya nivalis, Isotomurus cf. unifasciatus,* and **Belted Springtail** *Orchesella cincta.* There will be more springtails to come in 2025!

Belted Springtail
Orchesella cincta

Odonata (Dragonflies and damselflies)

2024 was a very good year for Odonata as it was for many insects with larval or nymphal stages in water, no doubt at least partly due to the excessive rainfall this year and last.

The **Willow Emerald** *Chalcolestes viridis* continues to increase in the Southampton area, a maximum count of 17 was seen at the strong colony at Coltsfoot Pond, Hedge End on 13th September. A new site was discovered at Hum Hole, Bitterne (see below) and a winter survey for ovipositing scars on 5th January detected these at Cheltenham Road Pond, near Hedge End Station, and at Mansbridge Reservoir. A new dragonfly species for the Southampton area was **Southern Migrant Hawker** *Aeshna affinis*, a male was found at Wildern Moor on 29th July and another at Coltsfoot Pond on 27th August. **Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly** *Ischnura pumilio* seems to have become well

established in two areas. They were found at Clam's Ditch, Rownhams from 11th August to 19th September and at nearby Dymer's Pond, where four individuals were seen on 22nd June. Not to be outdone one **Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly** was emerging (proof of breeding) at Coltsfoot Pond, Wildern LNR on 16th May and a mating pair was seen at the Fen Meadow Pond at nearby Wildern Moor on 16th August. This species was new to Wildern LNR in 2023.

Some records of earliest dates for selected Odonata species in 2024 include the following:

Willow Emerald *Chalcolestes viridis*

Brachytron pratense, **Hairy Dragonfly,** Lower Test Reserve, 26th April
Chalcolestes viridis, **Willow Emerald,** Coltsfoot Pond, Wildern LNR, 19th July
Coenagrion puella, **Azure Damselfly,** Wildern LNR, 20th April
Ischnura elegans, **Blue-tailed Damselfly,** Wildern LNR, 7th May
Lestes sponsa, **Common Emerald,** Coltsfoot Pond, Wildern LNR, 13th July
Libellula depressa, **Broad-bodied Chaser,** Coltsfoot Pond, Wildern LNR, 28th April
Libellula quadrimaculata, **Four-spotted Chaser,** Wildern LNR, 7th May
Pyrrhosoma nymphula, **Large Red Damselfly,** Bevois Valley & Coltsfoot Pond, 30th March
Sympetrum sanguineum, **Ruddy Darter,** Hamble Common, 6th June
Sympetrum striolatum, **Common Darter**, Wildern LNR, 21st June

Some records of latest dates for selected Odonata species in 2024 include the following:

Aeshna cyanea, **Southern Hawker,** Hedge End garden near Wildern LNR, 14th November
Aeshna mixta, **Migrant Hawker,** Wildern LNR, 24th October
Chalcolestes viridis, **Willow Emerald,** Hum Hole, Bitterne - male, 27th October
Sympetrum sanguineum, **Ruddy Darter,** Coltsfoot Pond, Wildern LNR, 28th September
Sympetrum striolatum, **Common Darter**, Fen Meadow Pond, Wildern LNR, 25th November

Other Odonata records of interest in 2024 include the following:

Calopteryx virgo, **Beautiful Demoiselle,** Dumbleton's Copse, Thornhill – in small stream, 19th May
Ceriagrion tenellum, **Small Red Damselfly,** Dymer's Pond, Rownhams, 29th June
Ceriagrion tenellum, **Small Red Damselfly**, Ornamental Pond, Southampton Common – new site, 30th July
Cordulia aenea, **Downy Emerald**, Dymer's Pond, Rownhams – a new site – 1 seen, 22nd June
Libellula depressa, **Broad-bodied Chaser,** Weston Meadows – at slightly brackish pool – 2 seen, 23rd June
Orthetrum coerulescens, **Keeled Skimmer**, Wildern LNR – 2 seen, 25th June

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Orthoptera & Dictyoptera

An adult **oak bush cricket** *Meconema thalassinum* was found near to the Cowherds on Southampton Common on the exceptionally late date of 7th December. **Woodland Grasshopper** *Omocestus rufipes* was found at Hamble Common on 18th July. Two cockroach species were recorded for the first time on the SNHS database in 2024, firstly the **Amber Wood Cockroach (= Garden Cockroach)** *Ectobius vittiventris* in a Bevois Valley garden on 21st June and then the **Variable Cockroach** *Planunucus tingitanus sensu lat.,* at a location on the eastern side of Southampton on 5th August.

Hemiptera (Bugs)

Hemiptera records of interest in 2024 included the following:

Allygus mixtus, A leafhopper, Cromarty Road Pond area, 10th July
Aphelocheirus aestivalis,* An aquatic bug, River Itchen – near Mansbridge, 25th September
Arocatus roeselii, a ground bug, Wildern LNR – near to Coltsfoot Pond on alder, 6th March

Chartoscirta cincta, a shore bug, Wildern Moor, 17th March
Cyphostethus tristriatus, **Juniper Shieldbug,** Southampton General Hospital, 18th September
Eremocoris podagricus, a ground bug, Wildern Moor, 17th March
Eurydema - probably E.ventralis,* a shield bug species, Lidl, Banister Road – an import on vegetables, 11th June
Halyomorpha halys,* **Marmorated Shieldbug,** Bitterne Park garden, 26th June
Nezara viridula, **Southern Green Shieldbug,** A27 at Stoneham Cemetery – nymph on *Lathyrus,* 16th August

Southern Green Shieldbug
Nezara viridula (nymph)

Peribalus strictus, **Vernal Shieldbug,** Peartree Green LNR - new to site, 13th April
Physatocheila dumetorum, **Hawthorn Lace bug,** Bitterne Park garden, 17th August
Phytocoris dimidiatus, a Mirid bug, Lydgate Road - at UV light, 18th July
Phytocoris dimidiatus, a Mirid bug, Itchen Valley Country Park, 20th July
Rhyparochromus vulgaris, a ground bug, Whites Road, Bitterne – 3rd Southampton record, 29th December
Scolopostethus grandis, a ground bug, Wildern Moor, 4th March
Sehirus luctuosus, **Forget-me-not Shieldbug,** Bevois Valley garden, 19th April
Sigara dorsalis, a water boatman, Itchen Valley Country Park – at UV light – 4 seen, 19th July
Synophoropsis lauri,* a leafhopper, Bitterne Park garden – nymph on *Cotoneaster*, 21st August
Typhlocyba quercus,* a leafhopper, Rownhams Lane and near Cromarty Road Pond, 18th August
Velia caprai, a water cricket, Hum Hole Pond – confirmed to species, 19th February

*A first record for Southampton area.

The web-site ***micropics.org.uk*** is very useful in the determination of adult Hemiptera. Another useful site which provides abundant, up-to-date information on Hemiptera is the site ***britishbugs.org.uk***

Coleoptera (Beetles)

We shall start with the phenological records.

The first report of a **Rose Beetle** *Cetonia aurata* was at Bitterne Manor on 21st March (and another there on 13th May), another early one was seen at Banister's Patk on 6th April and seven were counted in a garden near Sholing Station on 11th May. The first **Stag Beetle** *Lucanus cervus* was seen on the western side of Totton on 28th May where there were two, and the last report was at Deacon Road, Bitterne on 4th July. The first record of the abundant **Red Soldier Beetle** *Rhagonycha fulva* was of three at Weston Meadows on 23rd June. On 14th June two specimens of the **Mediterranean Spotted Chafer**

Oxythyrea fenesta in a species rich grassland at Segensworth, only about 3km SE of the edge of the Southampton recording area. This species has previously been found in the Portsmouth area and is likely to turn up closer to Southampton in the future.

Mediterranean Spotted Chafer
Oxythyrea fenesta

A selection of the other beetle records received in 2024 include the following:

Agapanthia villosoviridescens, A longhorn beetle, Peartree Green LNR – new to site, 14th July
Arhopalus rusticus, **Dusky Longhorn Beetle**, Itchen Valley Country Park – 2 at U.V. light, 19th July
Anisosticta novemdecimpunctata, **Water Ladybird**, Coltsfoot Pond, Wildern LNR – on reedmace, 10th June
Bruchidius villosus, **Broom Beetle,** Miller's Pond LNR, 28th May
*Bruchus rufimanus**, **Broad Bean Beetle**, Peartree Green LNR – new to site, 18th May
*Cassida hemisphaerica**, A tortoise beetle, Weston Common, Shoreburs, 17th September
Chrysolina americana, **Rosemary Beetle**, Rownhams Church – on rosemary, 5th October
Cychrus caraboides, **Snail Hunter**, Lord's Wood – first record here since May 1980, 6th April
*Enochrus melanocephalus**, A water beetle, Itchen Valley Country Park – at U.V. light, 19th July
Hydrobius fuscipes, A water beetle, Itchen Valley Country Park – at U.V. light, 19th July
Melanotus castinipes, A click beetle, Itchen Valley Country Park – at U.V. light, 19th July
*Meloe proscarabaeus**, **Black Oil Beetle**, Eastleigh garden near east end of Chestnut Avenue, 22nd March
Paracorymbia fulva, **Tawny Longhorn**, Peartree Green LNR – new to site, 6th July
*Paropsisterna selmani**, **Tasmanian Eucalyptus Beetle**, Western Esplanade – adults on *Eucalyptus,* 7th June. This species might already be widespread on its exotic foodplant.
*Phratora laticollis**, A leaf beetle, Peartree Green LNR – off of aspens, 16th June
Prionus coriarius, **Tanner (=Sawyer) Beetle**, Itchen Valley Country Park – female at U.V. light, 19th July
Pycnomerus fuliginosus, A beetle (a recent colonist), Wildern LNR, 10th December
*Silis ruficollis**, A soldier beetle, Wildern Moor, 6th June
*Sitara muralis**, **Flame-shouldered Beetle**, Chandler's Ford garden – 50 seen - a rare beetle, August (unknown date but prior to the 19th)
*Stenagostus rhombeus**, A click beetle, Itchen Valley Country Park – at U.V. light, 19th July
Stictoleptura rubra, **Red Pine Longhorn**, Telegraph Woods – 4th Southampton record, 2nd August
*Trechus rubens**, A ground beetle, Lydgate Road – U.V. light – also other *Trechus sp*.,* 29th July
Trichosirocalus troglodytes, A weevil, Peartree Green LNR, 16th June
Typhaeus typhoeus, **Minotaur Beetle,** Portsmouth Road garden at Weston Park, 17th May

*First for Southampton

Hornet Hoverfly *Volucella zonaria*

Raphidioptera

There was one snake-fly record in 2024. *Atlantoraphidia maculicollis* near Hogsty Pond at Wildern LNR on 31st May

Diptera (Two-winged Flies)

Earliest dates for selected common Diptera species in 2024 are as follows:

Bombylius major, **Dark-edged Bee-fly**, Wildern LNR – dead in a spider's web but seen live on 20th, 9th March
Episyrphus balteatus, **Marmalade Hoverfly**, Wildern Moor, 7th January
Eristalis intricaria, a drone fly, Wildern LNR, 8th March
Eristalis tenax, a drone fly, Hinkler Green, Thornhill– 6 on *Mahonia japonica,* 26th January
Meliscaeva auricollis, a hoverfly, Wildern Moor, 6th January
Volucella zonaria, **Hornet Hoverfly**, Hollybrook Cemetery, 4th June

Latest dates for selected common Diptera species in 2024 are as follows:

Chrysotoxum bicinctum, A hoverfly, Cromarty Road Field, Lord's Hill, 3rd October
Ectophasia crassipennis, A fly, Cromarty Road, Lord's Hill, 19th October
Episyrphus balteatus, **Marmalade Hoverfly,** Gilpin Close, Thornhill - on *Fatsia,* 8th November
Eristalis tenax, A drone fly, Hill Lane, Southampton Common – on ivy, 12th November
Volucella zonaria, **Hornet Hoverfly,** Bitterne Manor Open Space, 19th September

A selection of the many other interesting Diptera records from 2024 are as follows:

Anasimyia lineata, A hoverfly, Wildern LNR, 3rd May
Brachypalpoides lentus, A hoverfly, Wildern LNR, 1st June
Chrysopilus laetus,* **Tree Snipe Fly**, Coltsfoot Pond, Wildern LNR – first for Hants, 11th June
Chrysops relictus,* **Twin-lobed Horse Fly**, Woolston, 11th July
Chrysotoxum cautum, a hoverfly, Peartree Green LNR, 16th June
Cordilura albipes,* a fly, Wildern Moor, 23rd July
Drosophila suzukii,* **Spotted-winged Drosophila**, Hampton Park area, 7th December
Ectophasia crassipennis, a Tachinid fly, Southampton Old Cemetery – a new site - female, 8th September
Eloeophila maculata,* a cranefly, Wildern LNR, 29th April
Eristalinus sepulchralis, a hoverfly, Peartree Green LNR, 18th August
*Eudasyphora cyanella**, a fly, Wildern LNR – on cherry plum blossom, 3rd March
*Gymnocheta viridis**, a fly, Wildern Moor, 1st March
Hercostomus nigripennis,* a fly, Bitterne Park garden, 26th June
*Hybomitra bimaculata**, **Hairy-legged Horsefly**, Wildern Moor, 10th July
Hybomitra distinguenda,* **Bright Horsefly**, Wildern Moor, 5th June
Hylemya nigrimana,* a fly, Wildern Moor, 11th January
Hylemya nigrimana, a fly, Itchen Valley Country Park, 20th July
Liancalus virens,* a long-legged fly, Bevois Valley garden, 29th June
Meligramma euchromum, a hoverfly, Bevois Valley garden, 4th May
Meligramma guttatum,* a hoverfly, Wildern LNR - a scarce hoverfly, 16th August
Minnetia longipennis, a fly, Peartree Green LNR, 16th June

*Muscina levida**, a fly, Telegraph Woods, West End, 15th September
Muscina stabulans, **False Stable Fly**, Bitterne Park garden, 6th April
*Nemoraea pellucida**, a Tachinid fly, Peartree Green LNR, 18th August
*Nephrotoma cornicina**, a cranefly, Gully Mead, Wildern LNR – a scarce species, 2nd July
Nyctia halterata, **Dark-winged Flesh Fly**, Peartree Green LNR, 18th August
*Ochthera mantis**, **Mantis Fly**, Goodall's Meadow Woodland, Wildern LNR, 3rd September
Oxycera rara, **Four-barred Major**, Parker's Farm, Rownhams, 18th August
*Periscepsia spathulata**, a Tachinid fly, Bitterne Park garden, 29th March
*Pherbiellia schoenherri**, a fly, Wildern Moor, 30th October
*Scatella paludum**, a fly, Fen Pond, Wildern Moor, 30th June
*Tachypeza nubila**, a dance fly, Wildern LNR, 5th April
*Tephritis formosa**, a Tephritid fly, Peartree Green LNR - male, 16th June
*Tipula pagana**, a cranefly, Wildern Moor, 18th October
*Tricyphona immaculata**, a fly, Wildern Moor – likely ID, 24th September
*Zygiobia carpini**, a gall fly, Cromarty Pond area – leaf galls seen, 9th July

*First for the Southampton data base (these are mostly flies from under recorded groups)

Hymenoptera (Bees, Wasps, Ants etc.)

2024 was not as good a year for Hymenoptera as was 2023, especially for bees, but nevertheless there were some interesting records. Not so welcome in 2024, was the expected arrival of a severe menace of beekeepers and others. This took the form of the **Asian hornet (or Yellow-legged Hornet)** *Vespa velutina.*. In September, a nest was tracked down in central Shirley and another was found and then removed from Southampton Old Cemetery.

The earliest dates in 2024 for selected Hymenoptera species are as follows:

Andrena fulva, **Tawny Mining Bee,** Green Lane area, Millbrook, 30th March
Andrena scotica, **Chocolate Mining Bee,** Green Lane area, Millbrook, 4th April
Anthophora plumipes, **Hairy-legged Flower Bee,** Hogsty Corner, Wildern LNR, 7th March
Apis mellifera, **Honeybee,** Highfield Campus, Southampton University, 2nd February
Bombus lapidarius, **Red-tailed Bumblebee,** Wildern LNR – a queen, 12th February
Bombus pascuorum, **Common Carder Bee,** Lapstone Farm area, Horton Heath, 20th March
Bombus pratorum, **Early Bumblebee,** Wildern Moor, 10th February
Osmia bicornis, **Red Mason Bee,** Bevois Valley garden, 30th March
Vespa crabro, **Hornet,** Eling Churchyard, 8th April
Vespula vulgaris, **Common Wasp,** Green Lane area, Millbrook, 17th March

The latest dates in 2024 for selected Hymenoptera species are as follows:

Apis mellifera, **Honeybee,** Dibden Bay – active nest in a metal post, 13th November
Vespa crabro, **Hornet,** Wildern LNR, 24th October
Vespula vulgaris, **Common Wasp,** Hinkler Green, Thornhill, 26th November

A selected list of the other Hymenoptera records received for 2024 are as follows:

Anthidium manicatum, **Wool Carder Bee,** Princess Anne Hospital grounds, 18th June

Tenthredo notha

Anthidium manicatum, **Wool Carder Bee,** Wildern Moor – on **Marsh Woundwort**, 19th July
*Apsilops cinctorius**, An ichneumon, Coltsfoot Pond, Wildern LNR, 2nd August
*Caliroa cerasi**, **Pear Sawfly,** Green Lane area, Millbrook, 14th April
*Cladius pectinicornis**, A sawfly, Bitterne Park garden, 6th April
Colletes hederae, **Ivy Bee,** Hollybrook Cemetery – thousands seen, 17th September
Cimbex femoratus, **Birch Sawfly,** Freemantle Lake Park – 2nd Southampton record, 12th April
*Cymodusa declinator**, An ichneumon, Wildern Moor – confirmed by Malcolm Storey, 21st September
*Diplazon laetatorius**, An ichneumon, Bitterne Park garden, 3rd August
*Dolerus triplicatus**, A sawfly, Goodall's Meadow, Wildern LNR, 18th May
Enicospilus ramidulus, An ichneumon, Wildern Moor – 2nd Southampton area record, 27th October
Gorytes laticinctus, A digger wasp, Wildern LNR – 3rd Southampton area record, 7th June
Heteropelma aminctum, An ichneumon, Wildern LNR – 2nd Southampton record, 19th July
Hoplitis claviventris, **Welted Mason Bee,** Sholing garden near Sholing Station - female, 1st June
Lestiphorus bicinctus, A solitary wasp, Bitterne Park garden, 18th July
*Macrophya duodecimpunctata**, A sawfly, Wildern LNR, 19th May
Megachile leachella, **Silvery Leafcutter,** Wildern Moor – on bird's-foot trefoil, 21st August
*Megastigma aculeata**, **Rose-hip Chalcidoid Wasp,** Bevois Valley garden, 22nd June
*Mesoneura opaca**, A sawfly, Cromarty Road Field, 29th April
Nomada panzeri, **Panzer's Nomad Bee,** Peartree Green LNR – new to site, 13th April
*Ophelimus maskelli**, A chalcid wasp, Western Esplanade – galls on *Eucalyptus,* 23rd October
*Ormyrus nitidulus**, A micro-wasp, Wildern Moor, 24th August
*Osmia cornuta**, **White-faced Mason Bee,** Salem Street area, Shirley, 5th April. A distinctive species that is recently new to the UK.
*Pseudoneuroteris saliens**, A Hymenoptera gall, Near Tanglewood Pond, Rownhams – gall on Turkey oak leaves., 10th September
Sapyga quinquepunctata, A parasitic wasp, Bitterne Park garden – at a bee-hotel, 18th May
Tenthredo notha, A sawfly, Grange Fields, Netley – on hogweed, 10th July
*Tenthredo temula**, A sawfly, Cromarty Road Field, 29th April
Tenthredo thompsoni, A sawfly, Southampton Old Cemetery – on hogweed, 21st August
*Xiphydria camelus**, **Alder Sawfly,** Mayfield Park, 5th August

*First for Southampton

Lepidoptera: Butterflies

2024 was a very bad year for butterfly numbers and a poor year for most individual species. There were no records of **Long-tailed Blue** *Lampides boeticus.* in Southampton Old Cemetery or at any other location around Southampton. The **Small Tortoiseshell** seemed to have been particularly scarce in 2024. Apart from in the lower Test valley area the only records that I could find was at Bitterne and on Peartree Green.

There were no reports of **Clouded Yellow** that have come to me (and I saw none at Dibden Bay - this is unusual) but there were several records of **Painted Lady** starting at Hamble Point on 13th July. There were also no records of **Small Blue** at Peartree Green LNR this year but the **White-letter Hairstreaks** there gave a relatively good showing in June. There was only one other record of **White-letter Hairstreak** – see below.

The earliest records of selected butterfly species in 2024 are as follows:

Brimstone at Southampton University (3) and Wildern LNR (6) on 15th February
Brown Argus at Wildern Moor on 18th May
Comma at Bitterne on 23rd February
Gatekeeper at Moorcourt in the Test valley on 23rd June
Green-veined White near Cromarty Pond, Lordshill and at Wildern Moor on 8th April
Holly Blue at Highfield Lane (very early) on 4th March
Large Skipper at Cromarty Road Field, Lordshill on 1st June
Marbled White at Nursling Substation on 10th June
Meadow Brown at Peartree Green LNR on 1st June (widely reported on 2nd June)
Orange Tip at Weston Shore (a very early male) on 30th March
Peacock at Swaythling (very early) on 22nd January
Purple Hairstreak at Peartree Green LNR on 24th June
Red Admiral at Swaythling on 22nd January (widely reported on 26th & 27th January)
Small White at Testwood Lakes on 17th March
Small Tortoiseshell at Lower Test Reserve on 17th March
Speckled Wood at Frog's Copse, Townhill (very early) on 4th March

The latest dates of selected butterfly species in 2024 are as follows:

Brimstone near to Fen Meadow Pond, Wildern LNR on 14th November
Brown Argus at Weston Shore on 21st September
Comma at Merritree Bushes, Southampton Common on 12th November
Common Blue at Donkey Common, Thornhill on 4th October
Green-veined White at Lower Test Reserve on 28th September
Large White at Peartree Green LNR on 19th October
Painted Lady at Sholing/Thornhill (SU 4611) on 29th November – latest ever date on SNHS database
Peacock at Cromarty Road. Lordshill on 1st October
Red Admiral at Fen Meadow, Wildern LNR on 19th December
Ringlet at Southampton Old Cemetery on 11th August
Small Copper at Wildern LNR on 29th October

Small White at Freemantle Common, Bitterne on 17th October.
Speckled Wood at both Southampton Old Cemetery and Jurd's Lake, Shoreburs on 13th November

A selection of the few other interesting butterfly records of interest in 2024 were as follows:

Chalkhill Blue, Peartree Green LNR – one more sighting this year, 16th August, ,
Common Blue, Lydgate Green, Thornhill – a wanderer from Hannay Rise?, 19th July, ,
Gatekeeper, Dibden Purlieu – 17 in one single garden, 28th July, ,
Ringlet, Wildern LNR - *ab.caeca* (Frohawk, 1934) with no rings on underwing, 6th July, ,
White-letter Hairstreak, Dairy Lane, Nursling – 8 seen, 20th June, ,

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Lepidoptera: Moths

Nationally a poor season for moths and certainly the quantity of them were less but there were still many records worth mentioning.

The **Bloxworth Snout** was mentioned in the 2023 report and there were further records in 2024 from St Denys, West End, and Thornhill, indicating that this moth is now widely established. There were **Hummingbird Hawkmoth** records from Rownhams as early as 14th April, from Winchester Road (Upper Shirley) on 13th September and from Bitterne on 17th September. **Jersey Tiger** continues to plentiful with the earliest report of this species in a Bitterne Manor garden on 1st July and the last one at a U.V. light at Swaythling on 28th August. The first **Scarlet Tiger** moth of the year was seen in the Moorcourt area of the Lower Test valley on 23rd June. There were very early dates for **Oak Nycteoline** in a Sholing garden on 15th February and for **Pale Mottled Willow** in a Shirley garden on 24th February. Again, the **Five-spot Burnet** *Zygaena trifolii* was recorded in Southampton at Miller's Pond LNR on 29th May. This species used to be much scarcer and is not to be confused with the moderately common **Narrow-bordered Five-spot burnet** *Zygaena lonicerae* which is more widespread and tends to fly later in June and into early July.

In July there were two moth lamping events that are worth mentioning

separately. Firstly, on 13th July the conditions were cool after rain, but 25 species of moth were identified at Newtown Road, Weston Park plus a few other common insects. There was nothing of particular note there except **Marsh Dowd** *Blastobasis rebeli*. A large event at Itchen Valley Country Park on the 19th/20th July occurred in warm conditions after a balmy day. I haven't counted the total number of moth species for this event where at least six moth lamps were deployed. There were several macro-moths of interest from this session, and they included **Bulrush Wainscot, Cream-bordered Green Pea, Least Carpet, Lesser Cream Wave,** and the rarest moth seen – **The Triangle** and seemingly the first Southampton area record of this moth which is related to the **Festoon Moth**. The micro-moths seen at this event were more standard but there were some interesting beetles and other insects, which are listed elsewhere in this report.

A selection of other interesting macro moth records from 2024 are as follows:

August Thorn, Glebe Copse, Highfield, 19th July
Beautiful Yellow Underwing, Netley Common – on heathers, 29th July
Blair's Mocha, Swaythling garden – at U.V. light – a recent colonist, 1st November
Chamomile Shark, Parker's Farm, Rownhams – larva on ox-eye daisy, 28th June
Cloaked Carpet, Cromarty Road, Lord's Hill, 16th July
Dotted Border, Swaythling Garden & Sports Centre Pond, 15th & 19th February
Kent Black Arches, Cromarty Road, Lord's Hill, 9th & 20th July
Lesser Cream Wave, Near Sports Centre Pond – seen in daytime, 24th July
Lesser Treble Bar, Bevois Valley garden, 10th August
Light Crimson Underwing, Swaythling garden – at U.V. light, 10th August
Lunar Hornet Moth, St Denys garden (2) & Swaythling garden (1), 26th & 29th June
Marbled Green, Bevois Valley garden, 26th July & 10th August
Pinion-streaked Snout, Cromarty Road area, Lordshill, 6th September
Red-tipped Clearwing, Wildern LNR, 12th June
Red-tipped Clearwing, Cromarty Road Field, 29th July
Silver-ground Carpet, Lee Plantation, Nursling, 9th May
Small Ranunculus, Bevois Valley garden, an adult, 11th July
Small Ranunculus, Hythe – near shore – 2 larvae on prickly lettuce, 29th August
The Streamer, Bitterne Park garden, 12th April
Toadflax Brocade, Melrose Avenue, Shirley – larva seen, 27th August
The Vestal, Swaythling garden – at U.V. light, 28th August
The Vestal, Southampton Civic Centre – flowery grassland, 18th October

Although 2024 was a poor moth year it was good for the few species of micro-moth that pursue an aquatic lifestyle. This is consistent with the good showing of dragonflies, certain Diptera, and caddis-flies, which are also strongly associated with water. There were records for **Brown China-Mark** *Elophila nymphaeata* at Coltsfoot Pond, Wildern LNR on 4th June and at Mansbridge Reservoir on 16th August. **Beautiful China-Mark** *Nymphula nitidulata* was found

at South Stoneham on 23rd July. **Ringed China-Mark** *Parapoynx stratiotata* was abundant at Itchen Valley Country Park on 19th/20th July and four more were seen at the Boating Lake on Southampton Common on 29th May, where there was also an abundance of **Water Veneer** *Acentria ephemerella*.

Other selected micro-moth records of interest are as follows:

Argyresthia cupressella, ***Cypress-tip Moth,*** Lydgate Road, Thornhill – at Actinic light, 3rd June
Aristotelia ericinella, A Gelechid moth, Netley Common , 26th July
Choreutis nemorana, **Fig-leaf Skeletonizer,** Winchester Road, Bishop's Waltham – larvae/adult, 26th June – picture of this species on the front cover of this report.
Choreutis nemorana, **Fig-leaf Skeletonizer,** Bevois Valley garden, 29th July
Dichrorampha alpinana, A tortrix moth, Bitterne Park garden – a male, 29th June
Ectoedemia erythrogenella, A leaf miner on bramble, Peartree Green LNR – leaf mines, 6th October
Elachista canapenella, Speckled Grass Miner, Wildern LNR, 27th April & 3rd May
Epinotia abbreviana, A tortrix moth, Peartree Green LNR – off of hawthorn, 16th June
Epinotia immundana, A tortrix moth, Wildern LNR – ID by Mike Wall, 12th April
Eudonia angustea, **Narrow-winged Grey,** Southampton General Hospital – an unusual date, 14th February

Metalampra italica, A micro moth, Barnfield Way, Weston, 8th September
Musotima nitidalis, **Marbled Fern Moth,** Swaythling garden – at U.V. light, 7th October
Oegoconia quadripuncta, **Four-spotted Obscure,** Bevois Valley garden, 26th July
Spoladea recurvalis, **Banded Sable = Beet Webworm,** Weston Shore – on sea beet, 24th September
Tortricodes alternella, **Winter Shade,** Weston Shore, 18th February

A very good web-site for more information about both macro moths and micro moths is ***ukmoths.org.uk*** and for up-to-date and more local information ***hantsmoths.org.uk*** is a very good site.

Trichoptera (caddis flies)

2024 was a good year for these aquatic insects and there are five records of particular note to report. Two species identified at Wildern LNR are *Adicella reducta* and *Limnephilus sparsus* on 3rd May and 27th April, respectively. *Stenophylax permistus* was identified at West End on 13th March and *Limnephilus auricula* at Dairy Lane, Nursling on 20th April.

A female of the caddis fly *Goera pilosa* was among several commoner species at the lights at Itchen Valley Country on 19th July. One of the other species here was at the largest UK caddis – the **Large Red Sedge** *Phyganea grandis.*

Vertebrates

Amphibians

The first report of **Common Frog** spawn was again at Wildern LNR on 31st January and simultaneously at three sites - 3 days later than in 2023 and the same date as in 2023. **Common Toad** is much scarcer these days, but a breeding population was found in a pond on the north-western edge of Southampton on 19th February. At least 15 **Palmate Newts** found in Hum Hole Pond, Bitterne on 19th February – an increase after pond clearance work. An unusual pale leucistic variant of **Smooth Newt** was reported at Coltsfoot Pond, Wildern LNR on 30th November. The most interesting revelation in 2024 was the recording of alien **Alpine Newt** in three ponds/water bodies in the NW of the Southampton area in February and March.

No records of note, of either fish or reptiles, in 2024.

Birds

The below list is a summary of bird records in Southampton in 2024 and there are plenty of other sources of information on birds seen in the Southampton area, including the annual Hampshire Bird Report and the Kingfisher magazine produced regularly by the Hampshire Ornithological Society: ***hos.org.uk***. There are also a lot of up-to-date sightings on the web, including our own site: ***sotonnhs.net*** site and, particularly the very good Hampshire Going Birding site: ***goingbirding.co.uk/hants*** as well as ***havantnature.net*** for the Portsmouth area. The Southampton Wildlife FaceBook page is particularly useful for detailed and up-to-date reports. In fact, a considerable proportion of our reports come from this source.

Several species of birds are currently increasing in the Southampton area at the present time, these and other species that had good years in 2024 are highlighted as follows:

Black Redstart – Last year (2023) most of the records were in the Weston to Hamble area but in 2024 there were many reports from elsewhere. A lucky resident in Upper Shirley saw a male bird feeding on their bird table on 25th February. Later in the year there were numerous records of female/juvenile birds from 29th October to 3rd December in the west side of the city. Locations included Test Lane, Adanac Park, and Southampton General Hospital.
Black Swan – Continues to be resident on River Itchen between Windy Bay and Riverside Park.
Diver species – **Great Northern Diver** continues to be as common it has ever been in Southampton Water and up the estuarine Test. In January and February up to 9 individuals were counted at any one time and they were being seen up to 27th April. Up to at least 3 birds were present later in the year from

25th October. The two **Black-throated Divers** on Southampton Water/Test estuary were present to at least 9th May and reappeared from 12th December when one was seen at least as far up the River Itchen at Chessel Bay. I am not aware of any sightings of **Red-throated diver** in 2024.

Egret species – Little Egret continues to be generally widespread and there was a temporary roost at Cemetery Lake on Southampton Common in August with a maximum of 46 there on 9th August. Small numbers (usually 2) **Great White Egret** regular in the Lower Test/Testwood areas. On 21st August one **Cattle Egret** was with two great white egrets.

Egyptian Goose – the Lower Test valley flock reached 20 at Skidmore on 9th November and there was one at Dibden Bay on 1st February, and again on 28th November.

Grebe species (except Little Grebe) – Great crested grebe continues to be the commonest non-breeding season grebe in Southampton Water and the estuaries with over 10 at a time not unusual. The maximum count reported was 27 off Weston Shore on 16th November. Later in the year there was at least one **Slavonian grebe** in Southampton Water from 10th November and into 2025. On 29th January, a **Black-necked Grebe** was seen off of Weston Shore and two were there in breeding plumage on 5th May. None were reported later in the year. Most interestingly a rare **Red-necked Grebe** was present 26th November and into 2025. There were sightings of this species off Weston Shore, off Hythe, and at Dock Head.

Hawfinch – A single bird regularly seen sitting atop of the grafted Chinese silver pendant lime tree in the centre of Southampton Old Cemetery from 24th October and into 2025, sometimes associating with greenfinches. Another bird near to Testwood scrapes on 29th October.

Mandarin – There were many sightings in the first half of 2024. In the Test valley at least 4 birds (2 males and 2 females) were reported at various sites between Testwood and Moorcourt between 16th January and 18th May. A bird was occasionally seen in the Cemetery Lake, but my only dated record here is for 18th March. There was a male duck on the River Itchen by St Denys Sewage Works on 1st May also.

Marsh Tit - There is a definite upturn in status for this species as there were records in a Sholing garden adjacent to Mayfield Park on several October dates and in a Weston area garden on 20th September. Recorded also at Testwood Lakes and well known in the woodland areas south of Romsey.

Osprey – Probably the best ever year for sightings of this raptor. Three birds were present in the Lower Test Marshes and Eling Great Marsh area on 11th September. Otherwise, mostly single birds reported at these sites and many other including Dibden Bay, Southampton Common and the Hamble area between 3rd April to 11th September.

Pintail – A good year for this wintering duck. 45 were counted a Dibden Bay on 25th January. Later in the year two were seen at Testwood Lakes on 30th September. A male was present and apparently commuting between Dibden Bay and Weston Shore between 13th November and 28th November.

Ring-necked Parakeet – A resident flock present in Cemetery Road/Southampton Old Cemetery at least from 31st January. There were at least 8 birds in this flock on 31st February. A larger flock is resident in the Woodmill area of the Itchen valley, where an unusual blue morph bird was present on 16th November. At least one bird was seen at Mayfield Park on 10th November and so far this is a less regularly locations for sightings.

Sanderling – A flock continues to be regular at Hamble Point. A maximum of 7 seen between 24th March and 24th April and back again late in the year, when a maximum of 20 were seen there on 27th December.
Shag – No reports later in the year but a bird, presumably the same one as seen in 2023, was reported in the Hamble estuary and off Netley Shore on various dates up to 7th January.
Spotted Flycatcher – There was a large autumn migrant influx in September and the records began on 25th August.
Stonechat – Another bird that is responding positively to the trend towards milder winters. A maximum count of 29 at Lower Test Reserve on 25th September and a male seen near to Cemetery Lake on 17th February – seldom seen on Southampton Common.

Of Interest, a selection of high counts of common birds are as follows:

Canada Goose, 670 north of Redbridge Causeway , 15th September
Carrion Crow , 752 counted at Weston Shore, 16th November
Common Sandpiper, 15 north of Redbridge Causeway, 7th July
House Martin, 400 at Skidmore, Test valley, 30th August
Jackdaw, 162 at Southampton Old Cemetery, 16th August
Linnet, 200 at Skidmore, Test valley, 3rd January
Pied Wagtail, 250 at Chicken Hall (Eastleigh) Sewage Works, 13th January
Redwing, 800+ over in morning at Southampton Common, 17th October
Sandwich Tern, 13 off Weston Shore and 21 off Hamble Point, 21st September
Teal, 750+ at Dibden Bay, 28th February
Turnstone, 56 at Weston Shore, 14th December

A selection of the many other bird reports in the Southampton area during 2024 included:

Avocet, 2 records at Weston Shore, 27th May & 25th November
Barnacle Goose, 2 with Greylag Geese at Dibden Bay, 28th November
Bar-tailed Godwit, 7 at Weston Shore, 5th May
Black Tern, Southampton Water between Hythe and Hamble, 5th to 8th September
Cetti's Warbler, Southampton Common – near Ornamental Lake – rare here, 29th October
Common Snipe, Weston Shore – unusual here, 3rd November
Common Tern, Southampton Common – Ornamental & Cemetery Lakes, 25th & 26th May
Cuckoo, Dairy Lane, Nursling – heard several times, 27th April to 8th June
Cuckoo, Jurd's Lake, Weston – unusual here, 6th May
Dartford Warbler, Weston Shore at northwest end – in gorse bushes, 24th July
Eider, River Test estuary – rare here – a pair seen, 11th May

Sandwich Tern
Sterna Sandvicensis

Fieldfare, Thornhill Park – a rare garden record in 2024, 16th November
Golden Plover, Weston Shore – 3 seen – unusual here, 3rd November
Goldeneye, River Test off Mayflower Park – rare here these days, 24th December
Goosander, Weston Shore – 3 birds, January & November
Goshawk, Itchen Valley – over Mansbridge – an interacting pair over, 16th August
Guillemot, Weston Shore to Dock Head and seen up Itchen at Chessel Bay, 27th February to 10th April
Hawaiian Goose (Ne-Ne), Lower Test north of Redbridge – escapee with Canada Geese, 4th October
Honey Buzzard, Southampton Common – being mobbed by 2 raven, 11th August
Hoopoe, Lakeside Country Park, 9th April
House Martin, Adanac Park, Nursling – the first record we have in 2024, 9th April
Kittiwake, Off Weston Shore, 14th May
Kittiwake, Cemetery Lake, Southampton Common – juvenile seen, 20th July
Kittiwake, Off Hythe – 3 storm driven individuals, 24th November
Leach's Storm Petrel, Off Weston Shore – flying south, 9th October
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Woodland near Hamble Cliff – now an uncommon bird, 27th January
Lesser Whitethroat, Redbridge Wharf Park – singing male in urban location, 1st May
Little Gull, Little Testwood Lake, 9th March
Manx Shearwater, Off Dock Head and the mouth of the Itchen, 29th September
Merlin, Test valley at Moorcourt Farm, 4th February
Pied Flycatcher, Peartree, Southampton – in a garden, 24th September
Pochard, Off Weston Shore – a male – unusual here, 27th December
Purple Heron, Testwood Lakes & Lower Test Marshes, 26th April
Razorbill, Off of Weston Jetty, 27th January
Sedge Warbler, Shirley Pond – singing male – an unusual location, 18th April
Shoveler, Off Weston Shore – a female – unusual here, 27th December
Spoonbill, Lower Test Reserve – over passing south, 3rd September
Spotted Redshank, Mercury Marsh, Hamble , 25th October
Stone Curlew, Lee, Nursling – in a field – rare in Southampton area, 29th June
Swift, Shirley Pond – first of the year, 26th April
Swift, 2 in the Stoneham area and 1 over Southampton Old Cemetery, 7th September – last of year
Waxwing , Botley/Hedge End area – 20 – the only report in 2024, 28th February
Wheatear, Wilton Road, Shirley – an unusual location, 30th August
White Stork, Testwood Lakes – 2 over – likely to be Sussex birds, 23rd April
Wigeon, Cemetery Lake- Southampton Common – a male – rare here, 14th November
Willow Warbler, Cemetery Lake- Southampton Common – first of year , 18th March
Willow Warbler, Waterloo Road, Shirley – singing male at an unusual location, 1st April
Wood Sandpiper, Testwood Lakes – very unusual in spring, 22nd April
Woodcock, Southampton Common near Ornamental Lake , 2nd June
Yellow-browed Warbler, Thornhill Park **– 2023 record**, **12**th N**ovember 2023**
Yellow-browed Warbler, Southampton Common near Ornamental Lake, 27th October
Yellow-rumped Warbler, Southampton Docks – a ship assisted American species, 30th May
Yellowthroat, Southampton Docks – a ship assisted American species, 30th May

Mammals

Relatively few mammal records of note were reported in 2024 and nothing of interest regards bats. **Common (Harbour) Seals** continue to be regularly reported and there were a few **Grey Seal** sightings in Southampton Water

between Hamble and Hythe. There were mustelid records in 2024, the most interesting being **Stoat** at Ensign Way, Hamble on 20th April.

A **Weasel** was then seen Testwood Lakes on 14th October, but it is not so unusual in that area.

Muntjac (Deer) continue to increase in Southampton with one record in a particularly urban location at Portsview Road, Midanbury on 31st August, this animal was seen in broad daylight. The main place where **Fallow Deer** can be seen near Southampton is at Dibden Bay, Hythe, where as many as 40 were seen on 28th November.

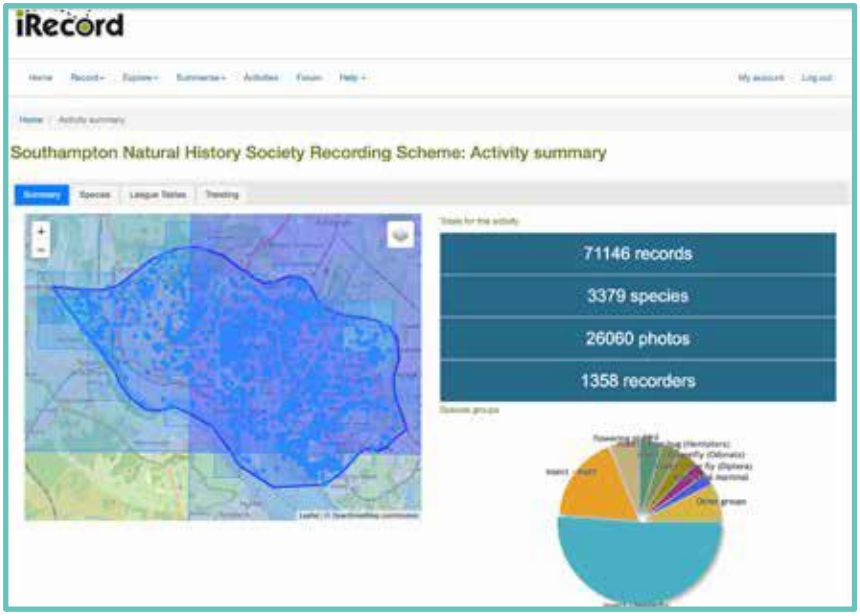
There is still a good population of **Brown Hare** in the countryside of the Test valley with as many as 7 animals reported in the Lee area on 17th May.

Nine **Wood Mouse** of various ages seen in the mammal study session in the southern half of Peartree Green LNR on 20th September, but no voles or shrews seen there during this survey.

A **Grey Squirrel** was feeding on the shore at the very undisturbed Dibden Bay site on 11th September. I consider this to be unusual.

2023/2024 was a very mild winter and a **Hedgehog** was reported active in a garden at Orchards Way, Portswood on 1st January.

P.A.Budd February 2025.



There are now over 70,000 records on ***iRecord*** for the area covered by Southampton Natural History Society, with contributions from over 1,000 people. We look forward to inviting many of these people join the Society in the future.

Field Trips in and around Southampton

Join us in person for a walk on the wild-side

During 2024 we again hosted a variety of walks throughout the year, sometimes jointly with other organisations. We are particularly grateful to all those who help lead these field trips, including Julian Moseley and Phil Budd, and – in particular – Mark Trigwell who ensures we have a full programme of events coming up. Below is a simple list of all the field trips in 2024, and you can see details of future events on our website at ***sotonnhs.net***.

Early Winter Walks

Peartree Green: Winter tree walk
Southampton Old Cemetery: Trees in Winter
Hamble Shore: Bird Walk
Southampton Old Cemetery: Mosses and Ferns
Peartree Green: Mosses and Lichens

Spring Walks

Southampton Old Cemetery: Early Spring Flowers & Insects
Worth Matravers: Dorset Seabirds
Turf Hill: Dawn chorus
Millyford Bridge: Spring Ramble
Sports Centre, Lords Wood Greenway: Bird Walk
Warblington: Waders & Wildfowl

Summer Walks

Anson Grove and Portchester Common: Chalkland Flora & Butterflies
Peartree Green: Bug Walk
Farley Mount Country Park: Insects & Flora
Old Cemetery, Southampton: Late summer flowers & insects
Netley Common and Dumbleton's Copse: General Wildlife Interest
Swanwick Lakes: General Wildlife Interest
Southampton Garden: Moth Lamp
Itchen Navigation: General Wildlife Interest
Southampton Old Cemetery: Summer Tree Identification
Peartree Green: Summer Flora Walk
St Giles Cemetery: Moth Evening
Whiteley Pastures and Botley Wood: Woodland Flora & Butterflies

Autumn Walks

Peartree Green: General Wildlife Walk
Great & Little Posbrook Farm: Bird Walk
Hayling Oyster Beds: Autumn birds
Southampton Old Cemetery: Fungus Foray
Bramdean Common: Lichen Walk
Thornhill & Netley Common: General Urban Wildlife Walk

Late Winter Walks

Thornhill: General Urban Wildlife Walk
Keyhaven: Winter Birds, Wildfowl & Waders
Fritham and Dockens Water: Woodland Birds
Southampton Old Cemetery: Fungus Foray

Everyone is welcome to attend our events, so invite your friends. We hope anyone who attends three or more would want to join the Society. All events are free of charge. Field meetings may be cancelled at short notice in the event of bad weather or other unforeseen circumstances – please check our website.

Notes from a Field Trip

Hayling Oyster Beds

Bathed in optimistic October sunshine an enthusiastic crowd of 25 people wandered away from the car park in an approximately north easterly direction. The shingle shore was gathering a small flock of waders, including Dunlin, Oystercatcher and Redshank with a couple of Grey Plover putting in an appearance later. Great Crested grebes bobbed on the surface further out and gulls such as Black Headed, Herring and one Great Black backed floated above the waterbirds.

Little Egret kept appearing, Brent Geese cruised down to the waterline, and someone saw a couple of Ringed Plover close to the water's edge. A gull flying in to the beach turned out to be a Sandwich Tern and another appeared later on. Cormorant were eventually seen and Godwits were represented by a sole Bar Tailed. Land birds were Meadow Pipit, Robin, Starling, Blackbird, the inevitable Cetti's warbler, a Linnet secreting itself in meadow scrub and raptors represented by Kestrel and Buzzard.

A putative Black necked grebe was suggested by one observer but opinion seemed to be divided amongst the group. Trying to look obliquely into the sun for ID characteristics did not help nor did the bird's frequent dives for food! The assembled lines of Oystercatchers and other species were gradually pushed off their gravel perches as the tide rose.

A Kingfisher was picked up as it peeped across the water, one of the Egrets turned into a Great White, and three Shelduck paddled quietly across the rising lagoon. A Common Scoter was spotted out on the open water, with the usual constraints on visual ID for a sea duck.

Southampton Natural History Society

President:	Mr C Packham CBE	Events Officer	Mr M Trigwell
Chair:	Mr P Budd	Committee Members:	Ms C Corney Mr G Manchip Mr J Moseley Mr N Smith
Secretary:	Dr J E Schubert		
Treasurer:	Mrs J Budd		
Membership Secretary:	Vacant	Digital:	Mr M Creighton
Recording Officer:	Mr P Budd		

You can contribute to future annual reports by recording your sightings on the Southampton Natural History Society website.

sotonnhs.net

Southampton Natural History Society

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