



Southampton Natural History Society
ANNUAL REPORT
2003



SOUTHAMPTON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
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CONTENTS

	Page
Chairman's Comments	2
Southampton Wildlife Link	3
Membership Secretary's Report	4
Field Meetings	4
Indoor Meetings	8
Members' Articles	
<i>New Forest Crayfish Survey</i> by John Poland	9
<i>Portsmouth to Bilbao</i> by Andy Collins	10
<i>The Ladybirds of Southampton and Area</i> by Phil Budd and Andy Collins	15
<i>What's Brewing at Kew?</i> by Mary Smith	20
Weather Records 2003	20
Members' Records for 2003	23
<i>Mycota</i>	24
<i>Flora</i>	27
<i>Fauna</i>	31

Cover: 16-Spot Ladybird
Photograph: Peter Burford

Chairman's Comments

One of the highlights of 2003 was the Activity Day held at Netley Marsh on 6th September. This event was more ambitious than anything we have attempted for at least fifteen years and was well supported by our members. That we should attempt such an event is a sure sign of our increasing activity.

We continued to develop the society website, which was set up by Andy Collins in 2002. Also, in the autumn, the Venning Memorial Fund was used for the first time in ten years to help fund a crayfish survey in the New Forest. On the debit side our first society computer broke down permanently early in the year and was replaced by a new one in April.

Our traditional activities also continued. There was another full programme of about twenty field meetings. Several local venues, unfamiliar to most of our members, were visited. These included Marlhill Copse, Woodmill Salmon Pools and the Old Bursledon Nature Haven. We also explored the flora of the old town walls in Southampton and held joint events with several other groups. We held our usual quota of seven indoor meetings, but the last three, from October to December, were held at a new venue—the Edmund Kell Hall. It was the first time in ninety years of the SNHS that we had stopped using the Friends Meeting House.

We continued our usual recording of flora and fauna, with many local sightings appearing on our new website. We also completed the surveying for our dragonfly project and our findings will be contributing to the new book on Hampshire Odonata, which is currently under preparation.

Our membership increased slightly, but we have still not reached 100 yet, despite an exceptional 'burst' of membership applications early in the year. Sadly three members passed away during the year. There were few changes on the committee except that, in the summer, Kathy Emmott filled the last remaining vacancy.

Nature decided on a drier year for us in 2003. From February to October there was surprisingly little rainfall but much warm and sunny weather. This led to an outstanding year for insect life, especially during the heat of August, but the arid autumn was really quite dreadful for fungi. Most of our wildlife conservation activity was carried out through the Southampton Wildlife Link. However, at the end of the year, the committee commented on the Biodiversity Action Plan consultation papers produced by the city council.

Phil Budd

Southampton Wildlife Link

The Southampton Wildlife Link is now a branch of our society and it meets approximately every two months. During 2003 various changes were forced upon 'The Link'. In particular, there was a requirement to change the venue for our meetings from the Civic Centre to the Sholing Valley Study Centre during the summer. Our last meeting at the Civic Centre was held on 12th May and the first at Sholing was held on 7th August. The main reason for the change of venue was the anticipated large increase in cost of the facilities at the Civic Centre. We are most grateful to the Sholing Valley Study Centre Association for allowing us to use their hall free of charge.

The other organisations which currently send representatives to the SWL meetings are the Hawthorns Wildlife Association, Sholing Environmental Group, Sholing Valley Study Centre and the Southampton Commons and Parks Protection Society. We have also formed close links with the Percy Road Residents Association, Green Gym (a branch of the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers) and the Friends of Shirley Valley. The SWL has links to the city council through Ian Barker, the City Ecologist. Our Conservation Officer, John Poland, and Secretary, Jan Schubert, represent the SNHS on this committee.

Our largest project in 2003 has been an ecological survey of the twenty-three allotment gardens in the city. These cover nearly 100 acres of land in total. Many of the allotments are partly unused and therefore contain wildlife and habitats of interest. We thought that we would survey these areas to establish what wildlife they contain. Such knowledge would be useful in the event of any future change of use of these sites. We have already looked at the flora, insects and reptiles of many of these sites and a full report will be produced later in 2004.

There are plans to start a churchyard survey after this project has been completed. Flora lists have also been compiled for other sites such as Woodmill Salmon Pools, Shirley Park and Rollesbrook Greenway. On the evening of 9th June two link representatives visited Rollesbrook Greenway.

We have also followed planning applications, and other issues, which affect the greenways and open spaces of the city.

Phil Budd

Membership Secretary's Report

Membership for 2003 was 93, an increase of 15, plus the associate members of Sholing Valley Study Centre, Hawthorns Wildlife Association and Percy Road Residents Association.

Our efforts at publicity seem to be having results, but we would very much welcome more people attending the evening and field meetings.

New members are as follows:

Lisa Aitken, Firgrove Road, Freemantle, Southampton
Tehmina Bhote, Avenue Road, Southampton
Mike Doyle, Clandon Drive, Boyatt Wood
Joanna Haigh, South Front, Romsey
Joan and Mike Harrison, Wessex Gate, Northlands Road, Southampton
Mary Parker, Mews Lane, Winchester
Dr Albert Roberts, Hiltingbury Road, Chandlers Ford
Julie Vaclauik, Channels Farm Road, Southampton
George Vence, Chelwood Gate, Southampton
Alison Washbrook, Berkeley Close, Southampton

We sadly miss the friendship, help and knowledge of the following members who died in 2003: Madge Goodall, Alan Jones and Peter Selby.

We send good wishes to Mr and Mrs Sambells, who have moved to Somerset, but, I am delighted to say, wish to remain members and keep in touch.

Barbara Thomas

Field Meetings

Twenty field meetings were successfully held during 2003 and there was one cancellation. The Southampton Common (North) foray arranged for the morning of 2nd November was cancelled when nobody turned up following the heavy rain. Also, for the first time, our field meetings were advertised on our website as well as on the traditional coloured programme cards.

As usual we held a wide variety of events: five bird watches, two winter wildlife walks, five flora events, one spring wildlife walk, five insect 'forays', three fungus forays, two summer wildlife walks, one event to look at seashore life and another to look at reptiles and amphibians.

Fourteen of our field meetings were SNHS-only events, although many were advertised more widely. We held joint meetings with the Hawthorns Wildlife Association (HWA, three), Hampshire Ornithological Society (HOS), Friends of Park Wood (at Waterlooville) and one public event at Royal Victoria Country Park (RVCP).

Sadly it was down to me to lead over half of the field meetings (twelve in total). This reflects a problem yet to be solved, as it is often difficult for people to commit to fixed and published dates well in advance. Andy Collins kindly led three other meetings. The other leaders were Nick Smith, Mary Smith, Chris Oliver, Greg Alexander and Gerry Wilding. We also thanked John Horne for permission to search for Glow-worms at Old Bursledon, and also Tasha Feddery for guiding us around Woodmill Salmon Pools.

We were fortunate with the weather during our 2003 programme. On eleven meetings the weather was mostly clear or sunny. Overcast, but dry, conditions were experienced on six other occasions. There were showers on just three of our events but no substantial soakings. We also had no thunderstorms, snow, strong winds or dense fog to put up with, but there were one or two very hot days.

We seldom hold all-day meetings, but there were two of this type in 2003. There were also nine morning meets, five afternoon events, three evening meetings (including one late evening/night) and one for early morning risers.

Attendances at our field meetings averaged ten and were typically between seven and twelve. As usual spring events and fungus forays were generally the best supported. The lowest crowd was just two for the December walk at RVCP, casting doubt again on the wisdom of arranging meetings before Christmas. The highest attendance was eighteen for the April walk at Nursling.

The findings at all of our meetings were recorded and full lists are available from the Recording Officer or myself. Some of the more interesting records are highlighted in the systematic records or appear in the list of events below.

January: Bunny Meadows, Warsash, 19th: Twenty-seven species of birds, including Greenshank, were recorded on this short walk led by Andy Collins.

February: Furzey and Half-moon Commons, 8th: Those who came to this meeting heard four singing Woodlark and looked at fungi, lichens and mosses.

March: Droxford and Upper Swanmore, 9th: A joint meeting with HOS. Thirty-eight species of birds and fifteen flowers in bloom, including naturalised Pleated Snowdrop at Upper Swanmore.

April: Southampton Common, 6th: Early risers on the Common heard twenty-seven wild birds and identified the ornamental duck on Cemetery Lake. Joint with HWA. **Nursling, 13th:** Eighteen members joined Greg Alexander on a fine spring day. Twenty-two species of bird and six species of butterfly were seen. A Dark Arches Moth caterpillar and naturalised Italian Bluebell (see colour page 2) were other highlights. **Marhill Copse and Frog's Copse, 27th:** Two new venues for the society. We compared the flora of two sandy woodlands on the northeast edge of the city. Marhill Copse is noted for many ornamental species.

May: Old Town Walls, Southampton, 6th: Another unusual venue for us. We carried out a full flora survey on this visit and found the Hants BAP (Biodiversity Action Plan) grass *Polypogon monspeliensis* and three Hants Notable species. **New Forest Reptiliary, 11th:** Joint with HWA, led by Nick Smith and an attendance of seventeen. Three Adders and a Sand Lizard were showing despite the cloud. **Royal Victoria Country Park, 27th:** Our regular seashore trip. Plenty of Butterfish on show, also the pink sea squirt *Dendrodea grossularia*.

June: Little Testwood Lake, 15th: A first society visit to this newly constructed lake. Seven species of Odonata and six species of butterfly were seen on an exceptionally hot June morning. Our leader was Andy Collins. **Crockford Bridge, 28th:** Fifty-one species of vascular plant listed, including New Forest specialities like Coral Necklace and Pond Bedstraw. However, we could not find the rare fern *Ophioglossum azoricum*.

July: Woodmill Salmon Pools, 8th: Another new venue. On a muggy evening we looked at flora and pond life. Of the latter, we fished two interesting aquatic bugs—Water Scorpion and Water Sick Insect from a pond. **Old Bursledon Nature Haven, 18th:** Plenty of wildlife at this private site including seven Glow-worms and the spider *Meta merianae* in a former Badger den. **Titchfield Haven, 26th:** Forty species of birds, including a Heron eating a Moorhen chick! Other wildlife included a dead Grass Snake. Led by Chris Oliver.

August: Lakeside Park, 2nd: Another hot sunny morning walk. We saw eight species of butterfly and seven species of Odonata. Short-winged Conehead was a surprise discovery so far inland. **Wilverley, 17th:** Gerry Wilding showed us the large Field Gentian colony near Naked Man, but they were shrivelled in the drought. However, a lot of insects were seen, including Grayling butterfly and Shiny Dor Beetle *Geotrupes pyrenaicus*.

October: Park Wood, Waterlooville, 12th: Thirty-two species of fungi were seen on this foray despite the dryness. This former wooded garden covering 8 acres at Waterlooville has been restored by the Friends of Park Wood in the last three years.

Mayfield Park, 18th: No fungi on the dry gravel of St Mary's Wood, but we found twenty-seven species along a wet bank at Mayfield Park. Hornets and Speckled Woods were flying in the autumn sunshine.

November: Southampton Common, 2nd: Still too dry for fungi and twenty species seen, the fewest in thirteen years. However, seven species were 'new' to the Common.

December: Royal Victoria Country Park, 6th: A two-mile circular walk including the Military Cemetery. Birds, fungi and ornamental trees identified. Afterwards we 'forayed' along the stands of the Christmas Trade Fair.

This year we had a problem filling a gap in our programme for September. Then we came up with the idea of holding an **Activity Day**. This took place on **Saturday 6th September** at the Netley Marsh headquarters of Tools for Self Reliance. This venue was chosen because it is the workplace of our Treasurer, Jan Kidd. In fact, Jan was the main organiser of this event but most of the committee, and several other members, played their part. Thirty members attended this event. We had two speakers. Our guest speaker in the afternoon was Graham Bowering of Linden Hedgehog Rescue, who brought along some live specimens of contrasting temperaments. In the morning I gave a talk on the wildlife and habitats of Southampton. Chris Oliver led a circular walk around the local area during which John Poland discovered a colony of Musk *Mimulus moschatus*, an attractive yellow flower (see colour page 3), in a ditch by the main road.

There were a number of displays on show at the Activity Day and opportunities for people to participate. Chris and Mike Pawling brought along their bat display and there were also displays about flowers, seashore life and moths. There were live specimens of moths caught at the site by Andy Collins and me the previous night. I also took a group around the meadow to identify the remaining flora on show. By then the heavy hail showers had cleared! Peter Burford could not be there but had previously prepared a Power Point display of pictures of various items of wildlife. Also during the dry spells attendees could use the telescopes perched on the upper-floor balcony to view passing birds and other wildlife. Refreshments, winter programmes and tours of the workshops were also available.

I would like to thank all leaders, land owners and people involved in the September Activity Day for their part in making the 2003 field meetings programme such a success.

Phil Budd

Indoor Meetings

We held our first meeting on the very cold evening of **7th January** and fourteen members attended. Jan Kidd arranged a quiz night and raffle. Afterwards I gave a short slide presentation on fungi and alien flora. A very unusual and successful meeting followed on **5th February**. Twenty-six turned up to watch Peter Burford's computerised presentation on orchids (and where to find them), complete with amusing sound effects! On **4th March** there was an audience of twenty-three for the re-arranged talk given by Dennis Charlton of Dibden Purleiu. Mr Charlton talked about owls without resorting to slides, but was ably assisted by a blind Tawny Owl!

Our AGM took place on **1st April** and was a rather sad occasion as it was our last meeting at The Friends Meeting House at Ordnance Road. The Southampton Natural History Society had first met there over ninety years ago! The business part of the meeting proceeded smoothly and our new and colourful Annual Report for 2002 was distributed. Afterwards there were brief slide presentations by Jim Earwood, Julie Watson and me. The attendance was eighteen.

On **7th October** a new chapter began for our society with our first meeting at the Edmund Kell Hall in Asylum Road, just a stone's throw from the Friends Meeting House. Twenty-one members attended to listen to another of my talks on the subject of a holiday on the Isles of Scilly in May 2002. Another very successful meeting was held at Edmund Kell Hall on **4th November** and there were twenty-one names in the fire-book. Bat wardens Chris and Mike Pawling, from Bishopstoke, jointly presented a talk for us. They also entertained us with live Pipistrelle and Noctule Bats. Our final meeting of the year on **2nd December** was a rather unfortunate one, due to the lack of parking caused by the football match, and the very late arrival of the man with the key. The original speaker had postponed his talk so it was left to me to entertain the thirteen members, who had braved the Carling Cup chaos, with a hastily arranged slide show. All was not lost, however, as the Saints beat Portsmouth 2-0!

The very sad news of the unexpected and premature death of Pete Selby was received in September. Mr Selby was not only a member of our society, but some of us may recall that he kindly gave a talk for us at our February 2002 meeting on the work of the organisation Plantlife.

Many thanks are due to all the speaker and organisers of our indoor meetings programme plus those that organise the refreshments, raffle, etc.

Phil Budd

New Forest Crayfish Survey

John Poland

During 2003 I began a survey to assess the distribution of crayfish in the New Forest. There is only one native species in the UK, the White-clawed Crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes* and one widespread introduction, the Signal Crayfish *Pacifastacus leniusculus* (although other rare introduced species exist). Prior to the survey only anecdotal records of both species existed for the New Forest. The White-clawed Crayfish is protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and therefore a licence from English Nature was required for survey work.

The White-clawed Crayfish is a globally threatened species and continues to decline despite conservation efforts. The main cause of the decline is the increase in Signal Crayfish populations, a species which out-competes its smaller native cousin and can host crayfish plague—a fungal disease lethal to White-clawed Crayfish. Signal Crayfish were introduced from North America in 1976 for commercial farming. However, animals readily escaped, or were deliberately introduced, into river catchments. During the early 1980s the first evidence of crayfish plague was recorded in White-clawed Crayfish, closely followed by a dramatic national population decline. There are now only six confirmed sites in Hampshire, mostly within chalk streams.

White-clawed Crayfish are found principally in calcareous streams and standing water of pH 6.5–9.0. In geological terms, the southern half of the New Forest supports the Headon Beds, which gives rise to calcareous streams such as Avon Water. These alkaline streams would seem the most likely sites to support crayfish populations. However, records exist for the more acidic northern half of the New Forest. Crayfish, being omnivorous, will also feed on detritus including fallen leaves, which may provide a useful source of calcium in more calcium-deficient waters. This may explain reports from fairly acidic streams in the New Forest.

Two methods were used to survey selected streams: active searching and night viewing. Active searching involved manually lifting large stones and other debris under which crayfish may seek refuge. However, many New Forest stream beds consist of gravel (too small to shelter crayfish) and instead crayfish may utilise dense aquatic vegetation and undermined banks, neither of which are easily checked. In contrast, night viewing involved surveying the stream bed at night, using a high-powered torch, when crayfish are most active.

Crayfish breed during the winter months and carry their eggs and young under their tail plate. It is important that crayfish are not handled, or unduly disturbed, during this period as the adults will flick their tails in an attempt to escape and inadvertently

scatter their dependant eggs or young. For this reason there is a survey 'close' season from late October to mid-July. Crayfish are also less active during the winter and consequently more difficult to survey. The survey ran throughout September and October until the water temperature dropped below 10°C, heralding the onset of the breeding season.

Unfortunately no White-clawed Crayfish were recorded during 2003, but populations of Signal Crayfish were discovered in a couple of localities, including the pond of a large hotel where they were served on the menu! It is equally important to identify the distribution of this aggressive alien invader if we are to conserve native crayfish. I have recently received reports of White-clawed Crayfish reliably seen in 1997, so populations may still remain undiscovered.

In 2004, harmless trapping equipment will be used to increase survey efficiency and further enhance our knowledge of crayfish in the New Forest.

Portsmouth to Bilbao

Andy Collins

The P&O line 'mini cruise' to Spain is the ferry journey beginning in Portsmouth, which crosses the Bay of Biscay ('the bay'), lands briefly in northern Spain at Bilbao and then makes the return leg. This regular service has in recent years provided an excellent short break for naturalists wishing to see pelagic wildlife (such as whales, dolphins and seabirds) and also to take the opportunity to see a little of the wildlife of northern Spain. I have made this journey in each of the last three years, and each trip has been very different. The main attraction for many is the opportunity to observe whales and dolphins (cetaceans), but the seabirds can also be extremely interesting. Another attraction is the low cost. With a little effort it is possible to take the mini cruise for as little as £45, even during the peak season. The possibility of seeing some of the twenty-seven or so species of cetacean recorded in the bay is certainly an exciting prospect and, during the summer and autumn, every trip is likely to produce sightings of several species.

However, it would be unrealistic to assume that viewing from the ferry is easy; indeed it has been described as 'extreme' wildlife watching. The difficulties are obvious as the purpose of the ferry is to get from Portsmouth to Bilbao and back, so it is clearly not possible to stay around a particularly interesting area or divert to follow up any distant sightings. The ferry is also very high and fast and the bay itself has a, well-deserved, reputation for severe weather. Furthermore, several hours spent on deck may produce very little, so a good deal of persistence is required. Anyone wishing to see as much as possible will, however, wish to spend most of

the daylight hours on deck to avoid missing anything. Birdwatchers unfamiliar with cetacean identification may face considerable frustration as the realisation dawns that the identification of animals that actually live *underwater* can be tricky. This is not too surprising, though, if you think about it!

Fortunately, experts surveying the cetaceans in the bay are always present and have the experience to identify many species confidently, given minimal information, such as the size and shape of a distant whale ‘blow’.

To give a flavour of these ‘cruises’ I will summarise the experiences from my three trips on a day-by-day basis.

Day One

After checking in to the boat in Portsmouth on the evening of day one the first task is to settle in to the cabin. The initial reaction on seeing the economy cabin is mild horror at the prospect of three nights in what appears to be a small box! Searching for a porthole to see some light is invariably unsuccessful and it is unfortunate that the endless rows of cabins bring back some memories of the movie “Titanic”! Fortunately the boat, which sails around 8.00pm, is well served with bars, restaurants and live entertainment so that minimal time is spent in the cabin. Day two is likely to get off to a slow start so a relaxing evening is in order!

Day Two

Dawn on day two sees the boat located in the western approaches to the English Channel. The northern part of the bay will not be entered until late morning. Sea watching at this point in the journey is relatively unproductive. It is therefore useful to get some rest and a good breakfast (usually a ‘Breakfast Panini’ which provides sufficient nutrition for most of the daylight hours). By 9.00am the boat is likely to be off Ushant, an island on the ‘corner’ of northwestern France. It is possible to see the odd dolphin here but, towards mid-day when the northern edge of the bay is entered, things may become much more interesting.

On our 2001 trip (5th August) we started seeing small numbers of Great Shearwaters from about 1.00pm and the first Common Dolphins at the same time. The remainder of that trip until dusk produced up to 120 or so of the latter. Many of these were ‘bow riding’, which allowed superb views. Other species typically seen at this stage of the journey include Bottle-nosed and Striped Dolphins. Other likely seabirds include Sooty and Cory’s Shearwater, Sabine’s Gull, Grey Phalarope, Skuas, Storm Petrels (more rarely Wilson’s Petrel) and there are oddities such as Sunfish, Tuna Fish and Basking Shark.

On our sailing of 8th September 2002 we saw the first Great Shearwater at 10.00am and 175 had been recorded by the end of the day, together with fifty or so Cory's Shearwaters.

The sailing on 27th July 2003 was distinguished by providing some excellent sightings of Long-finned Pilot Whale. These have a distinctively curved and slightly rounded dorsal fin and on surfacing these fairly small whales have a shiny rubbery appearance. Land birds on deck or flying over on this trip included Pied Wagtail, Common Sandpiper and Turnstone.

As the boat moves further into the bay the prospects for some of the larger whales increase. This is because the boat is moving into the deeper waters off the edge of the continental shelf, which are the feeding grounds for whales such as the Fin Whale. The Fin is second in size only to the Blue Whale. Its presence is often betrayed through distant blows, sometimes coming from a substantial group of individuals [there are records here of up to 100 animals (Cresswell and Walker, 2001)]. Good close views of this species are infrequent but can be excellent, as we found in 2001. Other species of large whales are possible towards dusk, so it is worth staying on deck for as long as possible.

Day Three

Day three of the four-day mini-cruise is in many ways the most exciting, but also the most physically demanding. The boat is only an hour or so away from the port of Bilbao at first light. Although it may seem to be a big effort, a tour around the boat, as it becomes light, may be worthwhile to see if any moths have been attracted during the crossing of the bay. This is also interesting on the return leg as dawn breaks in the western approaches.

In 2002 we noted small numbers of Silver Y, Dark Sword Grass, Turnip, Angle Shades, Rush Veneer and Diamond-backed Moth. These are all common species, but seeing them so far out to sea is still a remarkable demonstration of insect migration in action. Many more exciting species were reported in 2003, including Death's Head Hawk-moth (see colour page 4).

Bilbao typically has rather overcast skies on arrival at 8.00am and, being a large industrial port, does not look particularly inviting. However, a journey to the hill at Los Llanos, Santurtzi, during the four hours before the boat begins its return leg is well worthwhile. This area has been well studied by countless naturalists since it is a fairly easy walk and an interesting round trip before sailing. Details of the route to take and the natural history of this area have been well described (Brereton, 2001).

Interesting birds that are easily seen here are Red-backed Shrike, Sardinian Warbler, Melodius Warbler, Fan-tailed Warbler, Serin and Cetti's Warbler. Griffon Vulture

can be seen over distant hills and other raptors include Booted and Short-toed Eagles. Our 2001 trip also produced Goshawk and Hoopoe.

There are other possibilities. Insects also hold much interest. These include Jersey Tiger moth and Mole Cricket (both recorded on our 2001 trip); also Praying Mantis (recorded in 2002, when we saw one being eaten by a Tree Pipit!) A good range of butterflies has been recorded here, including Large Blue (Brereton. 2001). The Cleopatra butterfly, which resembles Brimstone but has a large amount of orange on the upper wing, was seen on our 2003 visit, along with Long-tailed Blue and 150+ Clouded Yellow (see colour page 1).

Amongst these was a fine Berger's Clouded Yellow. This is a very rare vagrant to Britain and the opportunity to observe it closely is infrequent. It is very similar to Pale Clouded Yellow, which also occurs rarely in Britain but does not appear to occur in Spain. It is fairly similar to the *helice* form of Clouded Yellow but, amongst other differences, the black on the upper surface of the hind wing is much reduced. These butterflies invariably land with wings closed and look very similar to Clouded Yellow but for a restricted area of rather bright green scales close to the body on the lower hind wing.

The return boat journey begins promptly at mid-day. This leg of the journey gives an opportunity to view the southern bay, which has been largely in darkness on the crossing so far. The edge of the continental shelf is close to northern Spain so that, within an hour or two, the boat is in the deep waters favoured by the larger whales.

The most exciting realistic prospect here is Cuvier's Beaked Whale. This species finally provided excellent views on my third (2003) crossing of the bay. This is a scarce and poorly known whale and is the largest of the 'beaked' whales. The bay is thought to be a calving ground and numerous observations from the ferry are adding substantially to the knowledge about the biology of this species. It is a curious looking species. The adults develop very pale heads, which contrast with the unusual orange-brown overall colouration. They particularly favour the deep-water canyons of southern Biscay (Cresswell and Walker, 2001).

Many other whales are possible on this part of the journey. In two of the trips we had (fairly distant) views of pods of Killer Whale, and in 2003, a small grey 'Beaked' whale which may have been the rare Northern Bottle-nosed Whale. A highlight for me, in 2003, was of a group of Sperm Whale. These were 'logging' (lying motionless on the surface), and the enormous breadth of the head of these animals was striking.

This near-legendary species is renowned for diving to enormous depths to feed on the (also legendary!) Giant Squid.

Birding in the southern bay can be very challenging and also exciting. It is challenging because it is entirely possible to spend (literally) hours without seeing any bird of any species! A long haul of three to four hours of patient searching may be eventually rewarded with just a Gannet or perhaps a migrating Swift. The problem is that if anything is seen here it might be something good. This is the best area for Little Shearwater, which is much sought after by birdwatchers. On our 2002 trip the birders present collectively recorded double figures for this species. Some remarkable seabirds have been reported here including, in 2003, a Masked Booby. This was only the third European record. In 2001 we recorded a *Pterodroma* petrel, presumably the very rare Fea's Petrel.

Land birds passing or landing on the boat can be fascinating. During 2002 we noted both Osprey and a very fragile looking Short-eared Owl heading south across the bay. They were both a very long way from land and had presumably already travelled a very considerable distance from England, Ireland or France.

Day four

The exertions of day three are likely to have taken their toll and aside from the (worthwhile) moth check around the lights a slow start is to be expected. In fact, by first light the boat will again be in the western approaches and the excitement of the bay will have been left behind. It is a day to take easy as relatively little of note is expected while sea watching. The boat finally arrives back in Portsmouth around 5.00pm, by which time you may already be planning your next trip!

An exciting extension is to take a car and have a few days in the Pyrenees, as we did in 2002. These mountains are a relatively easy drive from Bilbao. The birds here are excellent and, even as late as September, many interesting butterflies are still active.

References.

Cresswell G and Walker D (2001) *Whales and Dolphins of the European Atlantic* (Wild Guides, Old Basing, Hampshire)

Brereton T (2001) "Site Guide: Ferry Trips Through The Bay Of Biscay To Los Llanos, Santurtzi" *Atropos* 12 31-34

The Ladybirds of Southampton and Area

Phil Budd and Andy Collins

Introduction

The beetles we recognise as ladybirds belong to the family Coccinellidae, which has over 5,200 species worldwide. Only forty-two species are known to occur or have occurred in Britain as residents, along with about six others classified as vagrants, introductions or escapes. Two of the resident species are considered to be extinct in Britain.

Amongst the resident species twenty-three are recognisable as ladybirds by non-specialists and are relatively easy to identify and therefore a suitable group for study in our area. Other ladybird species are more uniformly coloured, but at least one species has been recorded in our area. For example, there are records of *Rhizobius litura* from West Wood on 17/4/87. Only one of the more obvious ladybirds (5-Spot Ladybird) is not found in southern England. There have been no systematic surveys in our area, but the following records have been gleaned from our annual reports and unpublished records in the hope that this will stimulate further interest in these fascinating insects. As can be seen from this list, casual recording gives a poor idea of distribution and abundance and there is clearly much to be learned about this group of insects. Listed here are all the species known or likely to occur in our area.

Species and records

24-Spot Ladybird (*Subcoccinella 24-punctata*) 2–3mm (1/10in)



This is one of the few vegetarian species of ladybirds and is the only one covered in a coat of fine hairs. This ladybird is russet in colour with black spots. A widespread species in southern Britain found in grasslands, meadows and salt marshes. Recorded at Mallard's Moor on 8/8/97, Royal Victoria CP on 7/7/00 and Southampton Cemetery on 4/8/00.

[*Henosepilachna argus*

This is one to look out for in Southampton and is a close relative of the above. This ladybird is a pest of melons and is common in southern Europe. Following its arrival in Britain in 1997 it has become established in south London and Surrey. This ladybird can be found on Ivy and White Bryony and is a bright pinkish orange with eleven large dark spots. More information can be found in *British Wildlife* Volume 13 No. 4 (April 2002). (See colour page 1.)]

16-Spot Ladybird (*Micrapsis 16-punctata*) 3mm (1/8in)

Widespread in southern England, found in damp grasslands and meadows.

This is a yellow or creamy species with black spots and lines. An interesting habit of this ladybird is that large numbers of individuals hibernate together under bark or on fence posts. There are records for

Titchfield Haven on 27/5/90, Lower Test on 13/4/91 and Lakeside Park on 8/8/02. (See cover.)



Adonis' Ladybird (*Adonia variegata*) 4–5mm (1/5in)



Widespread but local in England found on well-drained soils, often in coastal areas at the edge of water or in chalky habitats. This ladybird is red with irregular black spots. Recorded on Stinking Chamomile at Exton on 23/6/96 and on *Atriplex* at Lee on Solent on 12/9/02. These are the closest records to Southampton. (See colour page 1.)

Water Ladybird (*Anisosticta 19-punctata*)

Widespread in southern England, found on aquatic and waterside plants in wetlands, marshes and fens. A longish, yellow or buff, black-spotted ladybird. Recorded from Lower Test on 15/9/91 and Mansbridge on 15/6/00. At Stanpit Marsh, Christchurch, it was the commonest ladybird found in a survey in 2003.

Larch Ladybird (*Aphidecta oblitterata*)

Widespread throughout Britain and found in needled conifers. This species is dingy yellow to brownish in colour with variable, but often few, markings. Not often seen, but there are two local records: attracted to UV light at Bitterne on 30/10/1986 and beaten from Douglas Fir at Royal Victoria CP on 15/5/00.

2-Spot Ladybird (*Adalia 2-punctata*) 5mm (1/5in)



Widespread throughout Britain, a very common species found in diverse habitats particularly towns and suburbs. This is a very variable red and black species. Many records include Redbridge (31/5/79), Shatterford Bottom (5/6/82) and Otterbourne in 1984. Records from Milbury Crescent in



Bitterne in 1990 noted some of the colour pattern variants in this species. The first of the year was '*sublunata*' on 29/3 and other varieties were '*quadrimaculata*' on 28/4 and 22/8 and '*typica*' on 28/4 and '*annulata*' on 31/5.

10-Spot Ladybird (*Adalia 10-punctata*) 4mm (1/6in)



Widespread throughout Britain, associated with deciduous trees. The ladybird is variable cream, yellow, orange, red or brown with complex spotting in both colours and patterns. It can be distinguished from the otherwise similar 2-Spot Ladybird by its yellowish, as opposed to black,

legs and under-surface. Recorded from Otterbourne 10/11/89 and Milbury Crescent, Bitterne on 3/7 and 5/7/90.

7-Spot Ladybird (*Coccinella 7-punctata*) 6–7mm (1/4in)



The most abundant British ladybird and is found in diverse habitats. This ladybird is always red with seven black spots and on the ventral surface there are white spots under only two legs. A very common species with many records including Pitt's Wood (10/4/76), Redbridge (31/5/79), Itchen Valley CP (24/1/93), Otterbourne in 1984 and Bitterne in 1990.

(See colour page 1.)

11-Spot Ladybird (*Coccinella 11-punctata*) 4mm (1/6in)

Widespread throughout Britain, found in diverse habitats but mostly near the coast. This is a small red species with black spots. Recorded at Keyhaven on 4/5/85 and Lepe CP on 14/8/96 at UV light. It also lives on the railway clinker and gravel of the old railway line at Mayflower Park, it was found here on 8/4/01.



Scarce 7-Spot Ladybird (*Coccinella magnifica*)

This ladybird is found in coniferous woodland in southern Britain. It can be told from the 7-Spot Ladybird by the presence of white spots under four of its legs. The biology of this species is fascinating as there is an association with the Wood Ant (*Formica rufa*). Recorded from Telegraph Woods on 8/7/96.

[Hieroglyphic Ladybird (*Coccinella hieroglyphica*)

Widespread throughout Britain, found in association with heather. The ladybird is brownish with black stripes, spots and patches. No records on heath land in Hampshire as far as we know. However, John Poland has found this species in northern England.]

Cream-streaked Ladybird or 4-Spot Ladybird

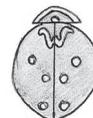
(*Harmonia 4-punctata*) 5–6mm (1/4in)



The distribution is expanding, most common in south-eastern and central England, favouring needled conifers, particularly Scots Pine. The ladybird is pink, yellow or orange and black spotted with paler 'streaks'. Reported from Royal Victoria CP on 15/5/00 and Southampton Old Cemetery on 4/8/00. Also known to be attracted to UV light.

18-Spot Ladybird (*Myrrha 18-guttata*) 5mm (1/5in)

Widespread in south and central England associated with mature Scots Pine. This ladybird is brown with cream spots. Recorded at UV light at Bitterne on 25/6/86 and at Bursledon (Windmill Lane) on 30/7/92. Also seen at Southampton Cemetery on 4/8/00.



Cream-spot Ladybird (*Calvia 14-guttata*) 5–6mm (1/4in)



Widespread throughout Britain, found in deciduous woodland and hedgerows. This ladybird is maroon with cream spotting. Recorded from Otterbourne on 12/7/95, at Lord's Wood on 27/4/96 and at Mercury Marsh, Hamble on 22/5/01.

14-Spot Ladybird (*Propylea 14-punctata*) 4mm (1/6in)

Widespread throughout England found in diverse habitats, but particularly associated with cultivated plants. Recorded at Bitterne on 28/6/90 and at Otterbourne on 13/4/93 and 17/6/94.



Striped Ladybird (*Myzia oblongoguttata*)

Widespread throughout Britain, associated with Scots Pine. This ladybird is chestnut in colour with cream stripes and spots. Recorded at UV light at Roydon Woods on 21/7/90 and from Fordingbridge on 18/8/95. Also at Roydon Common on pine on 1/6/99, but no records closer to Southampton.

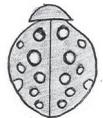
Eyed Ladybird (*Anatis ocellata*) 9mm (1/3in)



Widespread throughout Britain associated with needled conifers, particularly Scots Pine. This ladybird is russet-red in colour with black spots with cream rings. Recorded from Roydon Woods on pines (14/8/82), Ampfield Wood on 5/8/86, at UV light in Bitterne (6/5/89), Mark Way, New Forest (2/6/90) and Pitt's Wood (21/3/93).

Orange Ladybird (*Halyzia 16-guttata*) 6mm (1/4in)

Widespread in southern England, found in deciduous woodland, particularly Sycamore. The ladybird is orange with white spots. Recorded from the Leckford Estate in 1973, Bitterne on 17/6/89, Magdalen Hill at UV light on 23/9/94 and 16/12/98, Baddesley Common on 14/4/96, at Roydon in 1998 (very common), Sholing on 1/7/98 and 2003 at UV light and at Peewit Hill on 4/7/98 at UV light. (See colour page 1.)



22-Spot Ladybird (*Psyllobora 22-punctata*) 3–4mm (1/6in)



Widespread in Britain, found in grasslands, meadows and woodland edges. This ladybird is lemon yellow with numerous black spots. It is also a vegetarian, unlike most ladybird species. Recorded from Mansbridge on 3/6/83, at Otterbourne in 1994 and at Netley on 31/7/00.

Kidney-spot Ladybird (*Chilocorus renipustulatus*) 5mm (1/5in)

Widespread throughout England, associated with deciduous trees, especially willow and sallow. This ladybird is black with two large orange spots. It has been recorded at Shirley on 17/7/92, Bitterne Manor on 16/10/98 and at Royal Victoria CP on 7/7/00.



Heather Ladybird (*Chilocorus 2-pustulatus*) 4mm (1/6in)

Widespread in southern England found in heather heathland. This ladybird is black with two small red spots. Apparently uncommon but recorded at Netley Common on 12/3/00.



Pine Ladybird (*Exochomus 4-pustulatus*) 4mm (1/6in)

Widespread in southern England, associated with needled conifers and some deciduous trees. This ladybird is shiny black with four bright red spots. It is a common species and has been recorded at Highfield on 9/3/93, at Telegraph Woods on 8/4/96 and at Bitterne on 20/3/99.



Further reading

An excellent book is *Ladybirds* by Michael EN Majerus (Collins New Naturalist published in 1994). This book is still affordable second hand as a softback, but very expensive as a hardback. Another useful book for the illustrations is *Beetles* by KW Harde (Silverdale Books, 2000).

Recording

Please make a special effort to record all ladybird species in 2004.

What's Brewing at Kew?

Mary Smith

The Royal Botanic Gardens has been holding a demonstration of the production of the natural ingredients of real ale, in a miniature 'farm' in the entrance of the Princess of Wales Conservatory. By March 10th the barley in the field was a few inches high, and the weedy farmyard had a fine wagon, barrels, bits of farm machinery, sacks, etc. and a display of malting grain.

On September 2nd the sign of the Coach and Horses was welcoming visitors, the corn was beginning to ripen, the hop-vines were laden on their poles and there was now the crowning glory of an English hedgerow, completely natural with its hawthorn, field maples, weeds—silverweed, thistles, nipplewort, etc.—and straggling grasses. A masterpiece of Kew's gardeners, it might have been by a farm road from time immemorial. There was a realistic bit of (slightly) rusty piping by a gap in the hedge leading to the farm pond beyond the ditch. (Water is all-important for home brewing!) Visitors can sit on a comfortable wooden seat with their backs to the farmyard clutter, now full of hop-poles and brewing machinery, and admire the view. It is enchanting.

To complete the rural scene, while we were enjoying the prospect, a splendid Vapourer moth caterpillar appeared on a visitor's cardigan, to be carefully restored to its natural habitat.

Kew has been inviting us to Go Wild, but, in my view, the hay-meadows and cornfield outside cannot compare with the 'farm' by the Coach and Horses.

Weather Records 2003

Records made at 6 Thorold Road, Chandler's Ford (SU442221)

Keith Plumridge

Introduction

2003 was warm, dry and sunny. Weather records at Thorold Road began in 1998 and data comparisons for the six years from 1998 to 2003 are as follows:

1. The mean atmospheric pressure was the highest for the six years—1,016.8 millibars (mb).
2. 2003 was the sunniest of the six years—1,727 hours and 52 minutes of sunshine.
3. The mean wind speed was the lowest for the six years with no gales recorded.
4. 2003 was the driest of the six years—688.5mm rain recorded in total.

5. August 10th 2003 was the hottest day from 1998 to 2003—the temperature peaked at 34.0°C or 93.2°F.
6. September 2003 was the driest month from 1998 to 2003—only 5.4mm rain.

January was one of the most interesting months of 2003. The only significant cold spell of the year occurred during a period of easterly winds from the 3rd to the 12th. Both the coldest day and chilliest night of the year occurred during this period. The 8th January was the coldest day with a maximum of 0.8°C and the 12th saw the coldest night at with a -7.2°C minimum. An unsettled spell followed in mid-month. This included the wettest day of the year and the strongest wind gust of the year. The wettest day was the 18th when 24.8mm rain was recorded and the strongest wind gust on the 20th was a 43mph southerly.

February was rather dry for a winter month and the virtually rainless spell from the 13th to the 27th of the month marked the start of a prolonged dry period lasting until mid-October. Otherwise February was mild and unremarkable.

March was another interesting month and it was exceptionally dry, sunny and warm. Nationally it was probably the sunniest March ever recorded. The temperatures were close to the April average and by far the wettest day was the 7th when 11mm rain fell. High pressure caused these extremes and the average pressure for the month was 1,023mb and a maximum for the year of 1,040mb on the 16th.

April was warm and sunny with most of the two inches of recorded rain falling in the final week, especially on the 28th. In fact, the whole period from 8th March to 24th April was virtually devoid of rain other than the occasional light shower. Temperatures climbed to about 25°C on the 16th and 17th during a spell of warm Continental easterlies.

May was cool and unremarkable with frequent showery rain. There was some thunder and hail between the 12th and the 17th in particular. Winds of 60mph were reported along the south coast during the afternoon of the 2nd, but nothing exceeding 37mph at Thorold Road.

June was a warm and pleasant month but not particularly remarkable. Most of the months rain fell on the 6th/7th and the thunderstorms of the night of 21st/22nd. These storms brought about 20mm rain and followed on from the sunniest day of the year, the 20th, when 14.7 hours of sunshine were recorded.

July was fairly average but rather disappointing for sunshine compared to June and August. Although the rainfall was ‘average’ there was only one wet day between the 3rd and 23rd. 10mm rain early on 17th brought to an end a heat wave that had started on the 9th and peaked at 31.7°C or 89°F on the 15th.

Table 1. Summary of Weather Statistics for 2003.

Month	Mean Maximum Temp		Mean Minimum Temp		No of air frosts	Total sun (hours)	No of wet days	Rainfall	
	°C	°F	°C	°F				mm	ins
January	7.7	46	2.0	36	13	103	10	92	3.6
February	8.3	47	1.5	35	11	95	8	46	1.8
March	13.8	57	3.7	39	4	176	6	27	1.1
April	15.4	60	5.5	42	5	173	8	52	2.0
May	16.8	62	8.1	47	0	166	9	45	1.8
June	21.3	70	12.3	54	0	191	7	46	1.8
July	22.5	73	14.0	57	0	167	10	45	1.8
August	25.2	77	14.5	58	0	226	1	14	0.6
September	20.6	69	9.7	49	0	167	2	5	0.2
October	14.1	57	5.9	43	4	129	6	59	2.3
November	12.0	54	6.8	43	2	79	16	174	6.9
December	8.5	47	5.1	38	4	56	14	84	3.3
Means/Totals	15.5	60	7.9	45	43	1,728	97	689	27.2

Note. A ‘wet day’ is one on which more than 1mm of rain falls.

August was a real scorcher. It was a very dry month with almost all of the rain falling on the one wet day at the end of the month on the 29th. It was a particularly sunny month with 226 hours recorded, the most of any month in 2003. Recorded temperatures were exceptional during the heat wave of the 2nd to the 14th. Night minimum temperatures remained above 15°C or 60°F from the 4th to the 15th and the very warmest night occurred on the 6th, with a minimum of 20.8°C or 70°F. Eight consecutive days from 3rd to 12th recorded maximum temperatures exceeding 29°C or 84°F, with a maximum of 34°C or 93°F on the 10th. In north-west Kent 39°C or 101°F was a British all-time record on the same day!

September was yet another warm, dry and reasonably sunny month. Temperatures reached about 26°C on 16th and 17th. The atmospheric pressure mean of 1,021mb was the second highest of any month of 2003. September 2003 was the driest month in the six years from 1998 to 2003, with only two days which just registered as ‘wet’, the 10th and 22nd.

October was cooler and drier than average. The first frosts of the autumn occurred on the morning of the 21st with a minimum down to -2°C. There was a continuation of the 2003 drought as there was almost no rain from the 3rd to the 21st. Most of the rain fell from the 22nd onward. The lowest air pressure of 2003 at 976mb was recorded this month.

November was mild and very wet, but there were no gales in Chandler's Ford. The average air pressure of 1,012mb was the lowest for any month in 2003. There were no air frosts in Southampton and only two slight ones in Chandler's Ford. November was by far the wettest month of 2003 with 174mm of rain recorded on 18 days.

December was, by far, the cloudiest month of 2003 with only 56 hours of sunshine and 13 overcast days. It was 'average' month in terms of temperature and rainfall. There was a chilly -5°C minimum on the morning of the 16th.

MEMBERS' RECORDS FOR 2003

Compiled by Phil Budd (Flora) and Andy Collins (Fauna)

Contributors

ALB	Dr Andy and Linda Barker	KJP	Keith and Jane Plumridge
JB	John Bosworth	JP	John Poland
AB	Alan Budd	JS	Dr Jan Schubert
PB	Phil Budd	MS	Mary Smith
PRB	Peter Burford	RV	Robert Vincent
BC	Bob Clements	JW	Julie Watson
ARC	Dr Andy Collins	KEW	Keith Watson and Jim Earwood
RC	Ron Cooke	IW	Ian Watts
KE	Kathy Emmott	GW	Gerry Wilding
DG	David Green	EW	Ted Wills
GHW	Graham Harrison-Watts	MO	Many observers
NH	Neale Hider	WW	West Wood Team
CO	Chris Oliver	fm	field meeting
CPZ	Chris Piatkiewicz		

Abbreviation: CP Country Park

MYCOTA

MYXOMYCETES

Myxomycetes are commonly, but inappropriately, known as 'slime moulds' or 'slime fungi'. I have begun studying them in the past couple of years using a standard reference (Ing, 1999). It turns out that over 400 species of Myxomycetes have been found in Britain, of which about 125 species are reasonably common in southern England. I have so far found thirty-two species in Hampshire. The majority of species occur in woodland, especially on leaf litter and dead or rotten wood. There are species that prefer conifer needles and others that inhabit such substrates as straw, living grass, moss and damp soil. They may occur at any time of the year when the weather is suitably damp and mild, but peak occurrence is in the late autumn, and again in the spring.

In the first sentence I said that the names 'slime fungi' and 'slime mould' are inappropriate. There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, although these organisms are very soft and slimy, they are often very brightly coloured and attractive. Secondly, and more importantly, they are not fungi. They do resemble fungi in that they grow rapidly, reproduce by spores, resemble some fungi in general appearance and may grow in the same places and under the same conditions as many fungi. However, recent studies using electron microscopy have revealed a cellular structure which relates them to the amoeba and other Protozoans and places them firmly in the Protista Kingdom as opposed to the Fungi Kingdom. It is thought that Myxomycetes are very ancient organisms and might have originally evolved from amoeboid-flagellate protozoans that lived in the soil.

The life cycle of Myxomycetes is quite complex for such an ancient organism. Under suitable conditions of temperature and humidity a single-celled organism called a 'myxoflagellate' emerges from the initial spore. Feeding on bacteria, the myxoflagellate grows into a 'myxamoeba'. It is at this latter stage that Myxomycetes most resemble other Protozoans. If conditions become too dry, too hot or too cold the myxamoeba can transform into a temporary resting stage called a 'microcyst'. If allowed to grow, any two individual myxamoebae with differing genetic composition may fuse together. At this stage the nuclei of the two original organisms merge and then rapidly multiply to form the final feeding stage or 'plasmodium'. This plasmodium obtains its nutrition by ingesting bacteria, protozoans, fungal yeasts or algae. This plasmodium is the first stage that is visible to the human eye and takes the form of lumpy or string like and generally pale or brightly coloured slimy masses on leaf or needle litter, wood, bark, etc. Eventually, when the conditions are correct, feeding ceases and the plasmodium re-organises itself to form 'sporocarps'. The

sporocarp is the stage that is equivalent to the fruit body of fungi and it is these structures that enable separate species of Myxomycete to be identified. The sporocarp is usually no more than a few millimetres in height and may be stalked, sessile or form larger pulvinate masses called 'aethelia'. From the sporocarp or aethelium the spores are produced to complete the Myxomycete life cycle. The usual agents for spore dispersal are invertebrates, rain or the wind.

One of the largest Myxomycetes is the 'bark puffball' *Enteridium lycoperdon* that appears on tree trunks in the spring. This species starts out as a sphere of silvery grey slime about two inches across and then turns into a puffball-like mass of powdery brown spores. Another very common species, but visible in wet weather at any time of the year, is *Lycogala terrestris* (see colour page 2). This species is visible as clustered pink or pale orange spheres up to a half an inch across on dead wood. Several smaller species can be found on damp dead or rotten wood, especially in the winter months. Look out for the tiny bright reddish orange 'pins' of *Trichia decipiens* (see colour page 2), with their white stalks, clustered on wood. A related species, *Trichia scabra*, forms tiny brownish yellow clustered cushions about a millimetre high on wet wood. After the spores of *Trichia scabra* have dispersed, a minute honeycomb-like structure remains. A common species on grassland in late autumn is *Mucilago crustacea*. I have seen this species in Southampton Cemetery, but otherwise it prefers calcium-enriched chalk grassland. It grows over grass as white and very slimy growths, which resemble a cross between cuckoo spit and boiled rice!

Reference

Ing B, 1999 *The Myxomycetes of Britain and Ireland: An Identification Handbook* (Richmond Publishing, Slough)

Some records of Myxomycetes in the Southampton area in 2003 (all PB):

Arcyria oerstedtii The Moors, Bishop's Waltham 6/1 (an uncommon species)

Arcyria ferruginea Mayfield Park 20/9

Ceratiomyxa fruticulosa Peewit Hill 25/5 and Hut Wood 11/6

Didymium nigripes Upper Deacon Rd, Bitterne 14/12

Enteridium (=Reticularia) lycoperdon Bassett Wood 18/4 and Deacon Rd, Bitterne 25/4/1980

Mucilago crustacea Upper Northam Rd, Hedge End 11/12

Stemonitis fusca Mayfield Park 20/9 and Itchen Valley CP 22/10/1995

Trichia scabra Mayfield Park 20/9

Fifteen species of Myxomycete were recorded during the fungus surveys at The Moors, Bishop's Waltham in 2003 and fifteen species recorded at Kite's Croft, Titchfield in 2003. Twenty-three species were found at both of these sites combined.

FUNGI

2003 was an even poorer year for fungi than 2002 had been. Unfortunately the driest weather of a dry year occurred from early August to mid-October. As a result the season did not start properly until November and many larger Agarics and Ascomycetes growing from soil, especially *Helvella*, *Hygrocybe*, *Tricholoma*, *Amanita*, *Cortinarius* and *Enteloma* did not appear at all. However, it was a good season for agarics on wood, and some late grassland fungi, especially *Mycena*, *Psathyrella* and *Galerina*, put on a good show. The summer heat did encourage at least one unusual species: *Lentinus lepideus* on the wood of Scot's Pine at Caerleon Avenue on 3/8 and at The Moors, Bishop's Waltham on 27/9 (PB). This species is known as the 'Railway Breaker' in the USA and it is much more common there. Two other pine associates were particularly common around Christmas time: the small agaric *Baeospora myosura* on the cones of Scot's Pine in the New Forest and the edible Cauliflower Fungus *Sparassis crispa* (see colour page 2) at several localities around Southampton.

Despite the poor season, several fungi of interest were recorded at our field meetings, including *Agrocybe aegeerita* on a poplar trunk at Riverside Park on 27/4. It was still fruiting in the same place on 2/10 (PB). Our first proper fungus foray was held at Park Wood, Waterlooville on 12/10 and despite the drought several interesting species were found on wood, including the 'ring-less Honey Fungus' *Armillaria tabescens*, *Pholiota apicrea*, *Pholiota ochrochlora*, the 'Velvet-stemmed Agaric' *Flammulina velutipes* and, on Sycamore, the uncommon Ascomycete *Xylaria longipes*. On soil the most interesting species was 'Orange-peel Fungus' *Aleuria aurantiaca*.

At Mayfield Park on 18/10 we saw that the 'Tinder Fungus' *Fomes fomentarius* was fruiting abundantly on one of the dead Beeches. This scarce polypore was first recorded here in 1985. Most of the other fungi were seen on the wet banks by the footpath below the Beech hanger and included 'Crested Coral Fungus' *Clavulina cristata*, *Omphalina pyxidata* and 'Coconut Milk-cap' *Lactarius glycosmus*. Surprisingly, seven new species were added to the list for Southampton Common (South) on the regular foray there on 2/11. Of these only 'Field Mushroom' *Agaricus campestris* and 'Stinking Parasol' *Lepiota cristata* do not grow on wood. The *Hygrocybes* in the Old Cemetery were nowhere to be seen despite recent rain. The other 'firsts' on this foray included *Calocera glossoides*, *Crepidotus variabilis*, *Mycena oortiana* and *Xylaria polymorpha* (known as 'Dead Man's Fingers').

Records from individual members included a specimen of 'Chicken-of-the-Woods' *Laetiporus sulphureus* (see colour page 2) seen at Telegraph Woods on 25/5 (PRB)

and the uncommon *Pleurotus cornucopiae* photographed on a Beech log in Horns Drove Wood in June by a non-member and identified by PB. Plenty of *Peziza echinospora* were seen in a Bitterne Way garden on 6/5 and *Lactarius vietus* recorded in Bitterne village on 6/11 (MS).

The remaining records, of note, were all made by PB:

Agaricus albertii (= *Agaricus macrospora*) Hannay Rise, Hightown 25/5

Arrhenia tremulum Bitterne Rd Allotment 14/12

Chalciporus piperatus (**Peppery Bolete**) Hannay Rise 23/12 (a very late date)

Ganoderma resinaceum on *Robinia* (an unusual habitat), Donkey Common, Bitterne 26/9

Geastrum striatum (an **Earthstar**) under *Picea*, West Hoe, Bishop's Waltham 4/2

Hymenogaster tener (a **truffle**) Mayfield Park 20/9

Ischnoderma resinosum on *Betula*, Kite's Croft, Titchfield 24/5

Lepista saevum (**Field Blewit**) Shirley Valley 30/11

Pluteus umbrosus Mayfield Park 20/9

Pulcherricium caeruleum Littleton Copse, Corhampton 19/12

Ramana ochraceovirens under *Picea*, West Hoe, Bishop's Waltham 28/11

Rhodotus palmatus on *Alnus* log, Marlhill Copse 2/10

Russula flavoviridis Kite's Croft, Titchfield 1/8 (a scarce species)

Sphaerobolus stellatus (**Shooting Star Fungus**) Beaulieu Heath, Hilltop 19/11

FLORA

BRYOPHYTES

The recording of Bryophytes (mosses and lichens) was mainly confined to the wetter parts of the year, up to March and from November onward. Surveys by Rod Stern, Roger Veall and PB took place at Peartree Churchyard, Peartree Green and Mayfield Park on 11/3 and the most interesting discovery was the moss *Brachythecium mildeanum*. It was found to be plentiful on the damp introduced chalk in the centre of Peartree Green and had not been seen in Vice County 11 (South Hampshire) since 1961. Not so uncommon, but also of interest, was the moss *Anomodon viticulosus* and the liverwort *Porella platyphila* amongst other Bryophytes on a wall at Upper Swanmore on 9/3 (fm). Rod Stern, Roger Veall, JP and PB explored various wet habitats for Bryophytes on 18/12. We visited Lower Test Nature Reserve, Testwood Park and the area around Shirley Pond. The most interesting mosses were found on muddy willow bark at Lower Test Reserve and included *Fissidens crassipes*, *Leskea polycarpa* and *Orthotrichum tenellum*. On tree trunks at Testwood Park we found the liverworts *Metzgeria fruticulosa* and *Metzgeria*

temperata. Both of these species were growing with the much commoner *Metzgeria furcata*. Along the south side of Shirley Pond some of the mosses caused initial excitement, but proved to be very common species in the end. However, the liverwort *Pella endiviifolia* was discovered. This is not a particularly common species in Southampton.

VASCULAR FLORA

Wild and Native Species

A survey of sites for **Autumn Lady's Tresses Orchid** *Spiranthes spiralis* in the Southampton area in September 2002 revealed that this orchid was present in four main areas: Rownhams village, Southampton Common, Harefield/Thornhill and the Royal Victoria CP at Netley. In 2003 a new site was found at the last location and there were rumours of its presence in St Mary's Extra Cemetery at Sholing. There was another discovery at a new site when one was reported in a garden lawn at Ash Close, Romsey on 30/8 (PB and D. White). Both the **Pyramidal Orchid** *Anacamptis pyramidalis* and the **Bee Orchid** *Ophrys apifera* were found at the Grange Fields, Netley for the first time in June (WW).

A thorough botanical survey was carried out by the Southampton Wildlife Link in all twenty-three allotment gardens in Southampton between 23/6 and 15/7. Some of the more interesting records appear in the list below, but of particular note was the discovery of **Tall Ramping Fumitory** *Fumaria bastardii* at five of the sites: Aldermoor Leisure Gardens, Dale Valley Allotment, Mansbridge Allotment, Oakley Rd Allotment and Weston Allotment. The only previously known site in Southampton for this species is in the Shirley Valley east of Warren Avenue/Shirley Pond.

A list of other native species recorded in 2003 include the following, listed in alphabetical order of scientific names:

***Bromus commutatus* (Meadow Brome)** Shirley Ponds Allotment 15/7 (PB)

***Bromus lepidus* (Slender Soft-brome)** Dale Valley Allotment 10/7 (PB)

***Campanula rotundifolia* (Harebell)** found for the first time in a Bitterne Way garden 8/9 (MS)

***Centaurea cyanus* (Cornflower)** 13 plants in cornfield north of Stubbington 18/7 (PB)

***Chrysanthemum segetum* (Corn Marigold)** Athelstan Rd Allotment 29/6 (PB)

***Crataegus laevigata* (Midland Hawthorn)** Shirley Park 7/6 (PB)

***Daphne laureola* (Spurge Laurel)** Roughay 5/2 (KEW)

***Eleocharis multicaulis* (Many-stemmed Spike-rush)** north of Green Lane, Old Netley 25/5 (PB)

***Euphorbia platyphyllos* (Broad-leaved Spurge)** Athelstan Rd Allotment 29/6 (PB)

***Geranium columbinum* (Long-stalked Crane's-bill)** Weston Allotment 5/7 (PB)

***Glyceria declinata* (Glaucous Sweet-grass)** Southampton Sports Centre 30/6 (PB)

- Lamium amplexicaule* (**Henbit Dead-nettle**) on Old Town Walls near Mayflower Memorial 27/4 (PB)
- Luzula forsteri* (**Southern Wood-rush**) Frog's Copse 27/4 (fm)
- Medicago polymorpha* (**Toothed Medick**) Broad St, Southampton 27/4 (PB) and Oakley Rd Allotment 23/6 (PB)
- Moenchia erecta* (**Upright Chickweed**) Burke Drive, Thornhill 12/4 (PB)
- Oenanthe pimpinelloides* (**Corky-fruited Water-dropwort**) Muddy Bottom Allotment 15/7 (PB)
- Orobanche hederæ* var. *monochroma* (**'Yellow' Ivy Broomrape**) 1 plant by roadside at Close Wood, north of Wickham 28/7 (PB)
- Orobanche rapum-genistæ* (**Great Broomrape**) 2 spikes on Ulex (Gorse) at Hut Wood 26/5 (PB) (colour page 2)
- Oxalis incarnata* (**Pale Oxalis**) Dale Valley Allotment 10/7 (PB)
- Polygonum oxyspermum* (**Ray's Knotgrass**) Park Shore near Tanner's Lane 16/6 (KEW)
- Polypogon monspeliensis* (**Annual Beard-grass**) abundant on former Pirelli site at Western Esplanade 27/4 (PB)
- Potamogeton berchtoldii* (**Small Pondweed**) Woodmill Salmon Pools 'dipping pond' 8/7 (fm)
- Quercus cerris* x *Q. robur* (**Turkey Oak x English Oak**) Tatchbury Lane, Netley Marsh 16/9 (PB)
- Rubus caesius* (**Dewberry**) Frog's Copse 27/4 (fm) (not very common in Southampton)
- Valerianella carinata* (**Keeled-fruited Cornsalad**) Broad St, Southampton 6/5 (fm)

Escapes and Naturalisations

- Allium roseum* (**Rosy Garlic**) established in woods behind Pemper's Close, Fair Oak 28/5 (PB)
- Allium subhirsutum* (**Hairy Garlic**) woods behind Boswell Close, Thornhill 7/4 (PB)
- Amaranthus albus* (**White Pigweed**) kerbside, Laburnum Rd, Bassett Green 5/9 (PB)
- Ambrosia artemisiifolia* (**Ragweed**) 1 plant, Park Lane, Otterbourne 15/10 (PB)
- Anisantha madritensis* (**Compact Brome**) abundant at Grosvenor Square, Southampton 27/4 (PB)
- Arbutus unedo* (**Strawberry Tree**) bird-sown tree, Lord's Wood Greenway 30/6 (PB)
- Campanula persicifolia* (**Peach-leaved Bellflower**) 1 plant in Southampton Old Cemetery 13/7 (PB)
- Cenopodium murale* (**Nettle-leaved Goosefoot**) in flowerbed Warburton Rd, Thornhill 22/8 (PB—confirmed by E.J.Clement)
- Chrysanthemum coronarium* (**Crown Daisy**) 1 plant, Caerleon Ave, Bitterne 30/8 (PB)
- Cotoneaster bullatus* (**Bullate Cotoneaster**) 1 bush, Hannay Rise, Hightown 22/8 (PB)

Cotoneaster lacteus (**Late Cotoneaster**) 2 bushes, Hannay Rise, Hightown 22/8 (PB)

Crocoshmia paniculata (**Aunt Eliza**) over 20 plants along Lee Lane, Nursling 13/8 (PB) (colour page 3)

Crocus x stellaris (**YellowCrocus**) 1 under Hawthorn in NE part of Southampton Common (PB)

Cyclamen coum (**Eastern Sowbread**) 2 plants in grass verge by A334 near Somerset Ave 19/6 (PB—confirmed by E.J.Clement, first Hampshire record)

Cyclamen hederifolium (**Wild Cyclamen**) well established at Chessel Bay 12/9 (PB)

Dipsacus laciniatus (**Cut-leaved Teasel**) 12 plants by A335 Broom Hill, Otterbourne 17/7 (MO)

Euonymus japonicus (**Japanese Spindle**) 1 bird-sown bush at Mayfield Park 20/9 (PB)

Gaillardia x grandiflora (**Blanket Flower**) 1 plant by Lee Lane, Nursling 13/8 (PB)

Galanthus plicatus ssp. plicatus (**Pleated Snowdrop**) by lane side at Upper Swanmore 9/3 (fm)

Gaultheria mucronata (**Prickly Heath**) bird-sown on banks, Southampton Sports Centre 13/8 (PB)

Helianthus petiolaris (**Annual Sunflower**) Princes St, Northam 24/9 (PB)

Hyacinthoides italica (**Italian Bluebell**) by Mill Lane, Nursling 12/4 (fm). Several at archaeological site at Lower High St, Southampton 27/4 (PB) (colour page 2)

Inula helenium (**Elecampane**) 1 naturalised plant at Great Down Park, Bursledon 13/7 (PRB)

Laurus nobilis (**Bay Laurel**) bird-sown at Shirley Park 7/6 and Rollesbrook Greenway 9/6 (PB)

Marrubium vulgare (**White Horehound**) Princes St, Northam 24/9 (PB). [Probably the first record for Southampton] (colour page 3)

Mimulus moschatus (**Musk**) plentiful in ditch by A36 at Netley Marsh 6/9 (JP) (colour page 3)

Panicum capillare (**Witch Grass**) in a cornfield at Longdown 6/8 (PB—confirmed by E.J.Clement)

Pilosella aurantiaca (**Fox-and-Cubs**) established in garden lawn, Caerleon Ave, Bitterne 30/8 (PB); well established by A3024, Hightown 15/9 (PB)

Polygonatum x hybridum (**Garden Solomon's-seal**) plentiful in west of Hut Wood 26/5 (PB)

Potentilla cuneifolia as weed in garden at Thorold Rd, Chandler's Ford 20/5. (PB—confirmed by E.J.Clement, second British record)

Potentilla recta (**Sulphur Cinquefoil**) Athelstan Rd Allotment 29/6 (PB). Muddy Bottom Allotment 1 5/7(PB)

Senecio inaequidens (**Narrow-leaved Ragwort**) by Northam Bridge 12/9 (PB) [An increasing alien] (colour page 3)

Setaria pumila (**Yellow Bristle-grass**) on kerbside by Laburnum Rd, Bassett Green
5/9 (PB)

Thalictrum minus (**Lesser Meadow Rue**) under a wire fence at Borrowdale Rd
Allotment 23/6 (PB)

Verbena bonariensis (**Argentinian Vervain**) Princes St, Northam 21/9 (PB)

Veronica peregrina (**American Speedwell**) in the paving by Tudor Merchants
Hall 27/4 (PB)

Viola tenuifolia (**Fine-leaved Vetch**) by road outside Whiteley Community Centre
6/6 (PB)

FAUNA

The remarkable summer of 2003 was sure to pay dividends for naturalists, and indeed this is reflected in the many exciting records listed here. Aside from the general abundance of many common butterfly species, one of the most noticeable species in gardens was the migrant Hummingbird Hawk-moth, which arrived in numbers in early summer and continued to arrive and exploit garden nectar sources into the autumn. Numbers were exceptional as, in typical years, there are only a handful of records in our area. Furthermore, other large and impressive migrant Hawk-moths (Death's Head and Convolvulus) also bred in our area. Some butterflies, such as Small Tortoiseshell, were present in exceptional numbers and notable wanderers included Dark Green Fritillary. Amongst the birds, Avocet bred again at the same site as in 2002 and there were a number of unusual garden records including Woodcock, Red Kite and Lesser Whitethroat.

Recording priorities for the Society in 2004 are Orthoptera and also Ladybirds, for which we are about to initiate a new survey. Many thanks to those observers who contributed to the following account, and the large number of records it contains, which provides a permanent record of an exceptional year.

MOLLUSCS

Vitrina pellucida recorded at The Moors, Bishops Waltham by PB on 28/11.

Hollowed Glass Snail (*Zonitoides excavatus*) recorded by PB at Kite's Croft, Titchfield on 15/4.

ARACHNIDS

Araneae: Spiders

Argiope bruennichi (**Wasp Spider**) 1 at Westwood on 4/8 (ARC) and 1 at Lepe on 15/8 (KEW).

INSECTS

ODONATA (Dragonflies and Damselflies)

Beautiful Demoiselle recorded by JB at Bishop's Waltham on 11/6.

Banded Demoiselle recorded by JB at Calcot on 24/6, where large numbers were on the wing. KEW recorded this species at West End (garden) on 25/6.

Emerald Damselfly 3 at Manor Farm CP on 6/7 (ARC).

Large Red Damselfly early records were on 15/4 at Lordsdale Greenway (ARC), Bassett Wood on 18/4 (PB) and Chandler's Ford on 22/4 (KJP). The last was at Chandler's Ford on 19/8 (KJP).

Azure Damselfly KJP recorded the first at Chandler's Ford, 26/5 and the last, 19/8

Common Blue Damselfly 10 at Swanwick on 2/6 (ARC).

Blue-tailed Damselfly KJP recorded the first at Chandler's Ford, 5/6 and the last, 16/9.

Red-eyed Damselfly 30 at Swanwick on 2/6 (ARC) and 1+ at Mansbridge Reservoir the same day (PB). 1 at Little Testwood Lake on 15/6 and 4 at Lakeside on 2/8 (ARC). CO recorded 3 at Cromarty Pond on 2/8 and 3 there on 25/8.

Downy Emerald 2 were at Botley Wood (SE), 19/5 (PB). KJP recorded 1 on 30/5 at Chandler's Ford. An excellent garden record of this rather local species.

Brown Hawker 1 male at Mansbridge Reservoir on 2/8, a new locality. There are few records of this species in the Southampton area (PB).

Migrant Hawker recorded at Silverdale Rd on 16/8 (JW).

Southern Hawker recorded by JB on 30/6 in Bishop's Waltham and between 19/7 and 19/11 by KJP at Chandler's Ford, the latter being a late date.

Common Hawker recorded by DG at Fawley Power Station on 19/9.

Golden-ringed Dragonfly recorded at Cromarty Pond on 7/6 and 2/8 (CO) and one at Swanwick on 3/8 (ARC).

Emperor Dragonfly recorded from 7/6 at Fernyhurst Pond (CO) and between 24/6 and 31/7 by KJP at Chandler's Ford.

Four-spotted Chaser 1 seen at Hut Wood by PB on 26/5. 1 recorded by KJP at Chandler's Ford on 25/6 was the first garden record. This species is extremely scarce in our area.

Broad-bodied Chaser KEW recorded 1 at Shirley on 5/5 and this species was recorded between 20/5 and 2/6 by KJP at Chandler's Ford.

Black-tailed Skimmer 1 at Fernyhurst Pond on 21/6, 19/7 and 2/8 (CO) and 1 at the Sports Centre boating lake on 12/8 (PB).

Black Darter a late record at Matley Pond, New Forest, on 12/11 (KEW).

Ruddy Darter one at Manor Farm CP on 6/7 (ARC).

Common Darter 1 female at Little Testwood Lake on 15/6 (ARC). Recorded between 12/7 and 1/11 by KJP at Chandler's Ford.

ORTHOPTERA (Grasshoppers and Crickets)

Speckled Bush-cricket 1 in the garden at West End on 11/8 (KEW) and Sholing on 27/9 (ARC). A very late record of 1 sheltering in the porch at Caerleon Ave, Bitterne on 20/11 (PB).

Roesel's Bush-cricket 5 at Lepe on 23/8 (ARC). (colour page 3)

Short-winged Conehead 1 at Lakeside CP on 2/8 (ARC).

Long-winged Conehead 1 attracted to MV moth trap at Sholing on 8/8 (ARC).

Wood Cricket heard at Doctor's Hill near Lockerley on 11/9 and heard near Mayfield Park gardens on 17/9 (PB).

Large Marsh Grasshopper 12 at Matley Bog, New Forest on 9/8 (ARC). (colour page 3)

Lesser Marsh Grasshopper several at Southampton Common, west of boating lake, on 13/7. This is an unusual inland locality for this species (JP). (colour page 3)

Field Grasshopper present in the inner city at Radctiff Rd Allotment (25/7) and by Northam Bridge (16/9) (PB).

HEMIPTERA (Bugs)

Deraeocoris ruber recorded by GHW at Bitterne Manor on nettles on 30/6.

Coriomerus denticulatus common at Grange Fields (Westwood), Netley, 28/5 (PB).

Water Measurer (*Hydrometra stagnorum*) recorded in a garden pond at Thorold Rd, Chandler's Ford on 20/5 (PB).

Myrmecoris gracilis recorded by GHW, Bitterne Manor, found on Petty Spurge, 2/8.

Pantilius tunicatus recorded on the early date of 16/8 at UV light at Osborne Close, Royal Victoria CP (PB).

HOMOPTERA

Ledra aurita (Eared Leaf-Hopper) 1 at Sholing on 7/8 (ARC).

LEPIDOPTERA

Butterflies

PB and PRB initiated a new butterfly transect on Peartreen Green in which 1,357 butterflies of 25 species were recorded between April and September (25 visits). The transect looks like it may yield very valuable data over forthcoming years. The more unusual species included **White-letter Hairstreak** (singles on 16/7 and 17/7), **Green Hairstreak** on 29/4 and **Brown Argus** on 18/7 (the first record there since 1999). A total of 12 **Clouded Yellow** were recorded (singles on 19/8–20/8

and 10 on 24/9–26/9). Other totals were 13 **Small Copper**, 3 **Orange Tip**, 83 **Common Blue**, 11 **Holly Blue**, 5 **Painted Lady** and 145 **Marbled White**.

Clouded Yellow 1 in the Cromarty Pond area, 2/8 (CO), 2 at Swanwick on 3/8 and 1 at Miller's Pond on same day. Present in quite large numbers later into the autumn with 7 recorded at Westwood on 18/10 (ARC). The last was at Jurd's Lake, Woolston, on 10/11 (CPZ).

Orange Tip recorded from 15/4 at Lordsdale Greenway (ARC) and 23/4 at Portswood (KE).

Painted Lady recorded from 4/5 west of Shirley Pond (PB), 1 at Grange Fields, Netley on 31/5 (PB) and 1 on 5/6 at Southampton General Hospital and 3 at Southampton Common the same day. Good numbers in the garden at Sholing, with a maximum of 8 on 11/8. There were 10 at Westwood on 4/8 (ARC) and 7 in the Cromarty Pond area 7/8 (CO). KE recorded this species at Portswood on 16/9.

Small Tortoiseshell this species had an excellent year. The first was on 21/2 at Moorgreen Rd, West End (PB). Recorded by ARC from 6/3 at Lordsdale Greenway (2). KE recorded 2 at Sirdar Rd on 16/3. A maximum of 12 in the garden at Sholing on 11/8 (ARC). The last was on 15/11 at Magdalen Hill Down (PB).

Red Admiral the first was at Royal Victoria CP on 14/1 (NH). Recorded between 6/3 and 20/9 by CO at Rownhams. Recorded until 8/11 at Townhill Park (PRB) and 12/11 at Lordsdale Greenway (ARC).

Peacock a very early record was at Peewit Hill on 27/1 (PB). The last was a single on 6/11 at Lordsdale Greenway (ARC).

Comma recorded between 6/3 and 12/11 at Lordsdale Greenway (ARC). The last was at Royal Victoria CP on 20/11 (NH).

Brimstone 2 very early examples recorded on 27/1 by PB from Peewit Hill. Recorded between 14/3 (3) and 6/11 (1) at Lordsdale Greenway (ARC). The last recorded by PB was also on 6/11 at Abbotstone.

Purple Hairstreak recorded at Bassett Wood on 30/6 (PB). The first garden record at Chandler's Ford on 18/7 (KJP).

Green Hairstreak 7+ at the Grange Fields, Westwood on 28/5 (PB) with 2 there on 17/6 (ARC). Normally very scarce in our area.

Small Copper 1 at Hollybrook Cemetery on 11/7 (ARC). A garden record on 1/9 at Rownhams (CO).

Holly Blue recorded from 13/4 at Sholing (ARC) and recorded on 6/5 at Portswood (KE). Recorded at Tanglewood Pond on 2/8 (CO). A late record on 22/9 at Knowle Hill, Fair Oak (DG).

Common Blue 1 in the garden at Sholing on 10/8 (ARC).

Brown Argus 1 recorded in the garden at Chandler's Ford by KJP on 16/9 was an excellent record. 2 at Knowle Hill, Fair Oak on 22/9 (DO).

Large Skipper recorded in the Cromarty Pond area from 21/6 (CO). A late example at Chandler's Ford on 9/8 (KJP).

Essex Skipper 1 in the Cromarty Pond area 2/8 (CO).

Dark Green Fritillary the most exciting butterfly records of the year were of 2 singles reported from Coates Rd, Sholing on 12/7 (GW) and at Southampton Common on Knapweed on 13/7 (PB, JP). Possibly the first records in the area since 1 seen in Chandler's Ford in 1994 (Barker and Budd, "Butterflies of Southampton" booklet, 1997).

Speckled Wood recorded from 26/3 (ARC) at Lordsdale Greenway, 3/4 at Sirdar Rd, Portswood (KE), and 4/4 at Barry Rd. Bittene (PB). A very late record was 7/11 at Lordsdale Greenway (ARC).

Marbled White 5 at Little Testwood Lake on 15/6, 30 at Jurds Lake on 17/6 and 25 at Westwood the same day (ARC). 2 at Hut Wood on 21/6 (JP). 1 in the Cromarty area 5/7 (CO). The latest ever Hampshire record was from Royal Victoria CP on 25/9 (PB).

Moths

A survey of Southampton area brownfield sites by DG yielded many moth records, particularly leaf miners, for the Society records. The area covered included Fawley B Power Station, Hound Corner Ecology Park, Knowle Hill, Fair Oak, Mercury Basin, Pirelli Factory, Radcliffe Rd, St Mary's Gas Works and Mayflower Park.

Etainia louisella mine at Peel Common Recreation Ground on 23/8 (PB).

Eriocrania sangii adult at Peewit Hill 15/4 (PB).

Bucculatrix ulmella mine recorded by PB at Oakcroft Lane Meadow on 23/8.

Six-spot Burnet (*Zygaena filipendulae*) 40+ in the Cromarty area on 21/6 (CO), 1 at Shirley Ponds Allotment on 10/7 (PB).

Lunar Hornet Moth (*Sesia bembeciformis*) larval feeding signs (exit holes and cases) recorded by DG at Knowle Hill, Fair Oak on 22/9.

Currrant Clearwing (*Synanthedon tipuliformis*) 2 at Witts Hill allotments, Southampton on 29/6 (PB, ARC, JP). (colour page 3)

Red-belted Clearwing (*Synanthedon myopaeformis*) at Sholing 2 on 17/6, 3 on 29/6 (ARC). Also 7 at Athelston Rd allotments, Bitterne, and 1 at Witts Hill allotments, Summit Rd, Southampton on 29/6 (PB, ARC, JP).

Red-tipped Clearwing (*Synanthedon formicaeformis*) at Sholing 4 between 2.30 and 4.45 pm on 17/6 (ARC).

Six-belted Clearwing (*Bembecia ichneumoniformis*) at Swanwick 17 on 29/6, 34 on 12/7, about 70 on 3/8 (ARC). 1 was at Westwood, Southampton on 6/7, with 6 there on 4/8 (ARC). The first record (1) for Magdalen Hill Down extension

was on 10/7 (ARC). Other new locations were Lepe where there were 3 on 13/7 and 7 on 4/8, Milford on Sea (the base of Hurst Point) where there were 3 on 5/8 and South Hayling beach where there were 5 on 6/8 (ARC).

Ypsolopha sequella recorded by KJP at Chandler's Ford on 6/10.

Acleris aspersana recorded by PB at Bitterne on 4/8.

Cydia funebrana recorded by PB on 16/8 at Osborne Close, Netley.

Calamotropha paludella 1 at Sholing on 10/7 (ARC).

Agriphila selasella 1 at Sholing on 13/8 (ARC).

Evergestis pallidata 1 at Sholing on 31/7 (ARC).

Pyrausta nigrata 1 at Old Winchester Hill on 18/4, seemed unusually early (ARC).

Nascia ciliaris 1 in Sholing on 7/8. There are known colonies only at Browndown and Titchfield Haven. This day produced many migrants suggesting a possible continental origin. The record was confirmed by Barry Goater.

Meal Moth (*Pyralis farinalis*) 1 at Burseldon, 21/6 (PRB), 1 at Sholing, 10/7 (ARC).

Trachycera advenella recorded by KJP at Chandler's Ford on 21/7.

Elegia similella 1 at Sholing on 27/6 (ARC).

Ortholepis betulae 1 at Sholing on 14/8 (ARC). A new record for the site, confirmed by Barry Goater.

Dioryctria abietella singles at Sholing on 30/6 and 11/7 (ARC).

Dioryctria simplicella recorded by KJP at Chandler's Ford on 28/7.

Nephopteryx angustella 1 at Sholing on 19/9 (ARC). Possibly a migrant, there were a number of coastal records at other localities at the time.

Frosted Green (*Polyploca ridens*) recorded by KJP at Chandler's Ford on 25/3 and 5/4 (first garden records).

The Mocha (*Cyclophora annularia*) 1 on 10/8 at Sholing (ARC). The first record for the site.

Wood Carpet (*Epirrhoe rivata*) recorded by KJP at Chandler's Ford on 11/8. An excellent record of this uncommon species. Probably the first recent Southampton area record.

Cypress Carpet (*Thera cupressata*) total of 30 at Sholing (ARC). There were 15 between 9/6 and 27/6 and 15 from 3/10 until 20/11. There were 6 in 2002 and 3 in both 2001 and 2000, following the first in 1999. Clearly increasing rapidly in the area.

Pretty Chalk Carpet (*Melanthia procellata*) recorded by PB at Osborne Close, Netley on 16/8. An excellent record of a species more typically seen on chalk downland.

White-spotted Pug (*Eupithecia tripunctaria*) the first garden record at Chandler's Ford on 21/7 (KJP).

Ochreous Pug (*Eupithecia indigata*) the first garden record at Chandler's Ford on 10/6 (KJP).

Black-streaked Pug (*Eupithecia phoeniceata*) 15 records at Sholing from 4/8 (ARC). PB recorded singles at Osborne Close, Netley on 16/8 and Silverdale Rd on 21/8.

Lilac Beauty (*Apeira syringaria*) 1 recorded by ALB at Chandler's Ford on 15/6.

August Thorn (*Ennomos quercinaria*) recorded by KJP at Chandler's Ford on 30/8.

Dusky Thorn (*Ennomos fuscantaria*) recorded by PB at Netley Marsh on 5/9 and KJP at Chandler's Ford on 16/9.

September Thorn (*Ennomos erosaria*) recorded by KJP, 4/8, Chandler's Ford.

Orange Moth (*Angerona prunaria*) an exceptional record was of 1 male recorded by GHW at Bitterne Manor on 25/6.

Small Brindled Beauty (*Apocheima hispidaria*) recorded at Chandler's Ford on 27/2 by KJP (first garden record).

Brindled Beauty (*Lycia hirtaria*) 1 at Sholing on 17/4 (ARC).

Red-necked Footman (*Atolmis rubricollis*) an excellent record was of 1 trapped by AB at Chandler's Ford on 15/6. This moth came to an Actinic light. A very local species with no other recent Southampton records although it has been seen at Hilliers in Romsey in recent years.

Garden Tiger (*Arctia caja*) 1 at Sholing on 8/7 (ARC).

Scarlet Tiger (*Callimorpha dominula*) 1 at Woodmill Salmon Pools on 8/7 (PB).

Yellow Belle (*Semiaspilates ochrearia*) 1 at Netley Grange Fields on 28/5 (PB).

Pine Hawk-moth (*Hyloicus pinastri*) singles on 9/6 and 18/7 at Sholing (ARC).

Elephant Hawk-moth (*Deilephila elpenor*) ARC recorded a total of 120 at Sholing. The remarkable increase in numbers continues.

Privet Hawk-moth (*Sphinx ligustri*) recorded at Archery Grove on 9/7 (CPZ).

Shuttle-shaped Dart (*Agrotis puta*) a very late record from KJP at Chandler's Ford on 18/11.

Purple Clay (*Diarsia brunnea*) recorded by KJP at Chandler's Ford on 10/6.

Red Chestnut (*Cerastis rubricosa*) recorded from Peewit Hill by PB on 15/4.

White-L Wainscot (*Mythimna l-album*) 7 records in Sholing including 1 on 25/6 and 6 from 15/9 (ARC). The highest count to date.

The Mullein (*Shargacucullia verbasci*) recorded by KJP, Chandler's Ford 28/4.

Merveille du Jour (*Dichonia aprilina*) 1 at Sholing on 16/10 (ARC). The first record for the site. KJP recorded 3 at Chandler's Ford between 29/9 and 24/11. (colour page 4)

Feathered Ranunculus (*Eumichtis lichenea*) 8 at Sholing from 27/9, with the last on 21/10 (ARC).

Centre-barred Sallow (*Atethmia centrago*) recorded, Netley Marsh, 5/9 (PB).

Orange Sallow (*Xanthia citrago*) 1 at Sholing on 25/9 (ARC).

Barred Sallow (*Xanthia aurago*) 1 very early record was 14/8 at Sholing (ARC).
The Coronet (*Craniophora ligustri*) singles at Sholing, 26/6 and 10/7 (ARC).
Straw Underwing (*Thalophila matura*) 1 at Sholing on 11/8 (ARC).
Frosted Orange (*Gortyna flavago*) 1 at Sholing on 23/9 (ARC).
Small Dotted Buff (*Photedes minima*) 1 at Caerleon Ave, Bitterne, 4/8 (PB).
The Crescent (*Celaena leucostigma*) 2 on 11/7, 1 on 12/7 at Sholing (ARC).
Twin-spotted Wainscot (*Archanara geminipuncta*) 1 at Sholing, 5/8 (ARC).
Small Rufous (*Coenobia rufa*) 1 on 10/8 at Sholing (ARC).
Bordered Sallow (*Pyrrhia umbra*) 3 at Sholing from 26/6 (ARC).
Golden Plusia (*Polychrysis moneta*) 1 at Sholing on 12/6 (ARC).
Gold Spot (*Plusia festucae*) singles on 4/8 and 11/8 at Sholing (ARC).
Pinion-streaked Snout (*Schrankia costaestrigalis*) 1 at Sholing on 19/6 (ARC)
 and 1 at Osborne Close, Netley on 16/8 (PB).

Migrant Moths

Diamond-backed Moth (*Plutella xylostella*) total of 184 at Sholing (ARC) with the first on 18/5 and a peak of 13 on 11/8. There were 126 in 2002 and 33 in 2001. The last record from Chandler's Ford was on 20/12, a very late date (KJP).
Rusty Dot Pearl (*Udea ferrugalis*) a total of 75 at Sholing from 12/6, the last on 21/11 (ARC). There were 19 in 2002 and 5 in 2001.
Rush Veneer (*Nomophila noctuella*) a total of 573 at Sholing from 8/6 (ARC). The peak was 42 on 18/9. There were only 15 in 2002 and none in 2001.
Palpita unionalis ARC recorded this uncommon migrant at Sholing as follows: 1 on 4/8, 2 on 18/8, 1 on 20/8, 1 on 26/8, 1 on 4/9, 1 on 14/9, 1 on 18/9 and 1 on 21/9. ARC has recorded only 3 previously in Southampton, since 1990. (colour page 4)
Ancylois oblitella a single recorded in Sholing on 6/9 (ARC). The identification was confirmed by Barry Goater. A scarce migrant in Hampshire.
The Vestal (*Rhodometra sacraria*) 1 on saltmarsh at Keyhaven, 20/9 and 1 at Sholing, 21/9 (ARC). KJP recorded 1 at Chandler's Ford, 6/10 (first garden record). (colour page 4)
The Gem (*Orthonama obstipata*) 3 singles at Sholing, 27/6, 14/9 and 22/9 (ARC).
Convolvulus Hawk-moth (*Agrius convovuli*) the largest influx of this southern Hawk on record took place during 2003. Adults were reported at central Hamble on 12/8 and in Mayfield Park in August (PB). Remarkably, several larvae were reported, which is a very infrequent event in the county. 1 fully grown larva was given to IW by his neighbour at Cunningham Crescent off Kathleen Rd, Sholing on 29/9. When placed on soft soil this larva immediately burrowed underground and pupated a week later. On the same day 1 larva was also found at Underwood Rd, Bishopstoke and given to PB. (colour page 4)

Death's-head Hawk-moth (*Acherontia atropos*) the first recent records for our area included 2 pupae found in a potato field at Whiteley Farm and given to PB on 2/9. The pupae were just under 3 inches long. A pristine adult was trapped at Porchester by Jon Stokes on the night of 17/9. (colour page 4)

Hummingbird Hawk-moth (*Macroglossum stellatarum*) 2003 was a remarkable year for this species with very large numbers recorded in the country. The first substantial numbers arrived at the end of June. 3 were at Old Winchester Hill on 12/7 and on 14/9 (ARC). ARC recorded singles at Sholing on 16 dates with the first on 31/8 and second on 5/9 with a further 12 singles until 21/9, when 2 were seen together, the last was on 6/11. Presumably a single returning individual accounted for some of these records. Typically sightings were of insects feeding on *Buddleia* but other tubular flowers were visited. A maximum of 1 record per year is more typical for Sholing. RV recorded 1 at Andover on Valerian in early July. At Shirley KEW recorded 1 on 26/8. CO recorded singles in the garden at Rownhams on 5 dates 2/9–10/9. PB recorded 1 on 21/9 at Melbourne Rd, Southampton. BC recorded 1 over 2–3 days at the end of September in Locks Heath, attracted to *Verbena*. At Chandler's Ford KJP noted the first garden record on 5/10. This species can hibernate successfully in the UK, so it will be worth looking out for this species in the spring and summer of 2004. At the time of writing (January 2004) a Hummingbird Hawk has already been reported on the 10th of January at Bassett Lawn Tennis Club, nectaring on *Veronica* in mild weather (per Tim Norriss on hantsmoths internet mailing list).

Dark Sword-grass (*Agrotis ipsilon*) 11 records in Sholing from 27/6 (ARC). There were only 2 in 2002. PB recorded 1 at Silverdale Rd on 21/8.

Pearly Underwing (*Peridroma saucia*) 2 on 9/8 and 1 on 4/9, Sholing (ARC).

White-point (*Mythimna albipuncta*) PB recorded 1 on 28/5 at Netley, Grange Fields. It is not known whether this represents an early migrant or from a resident population. PB also noted 2 at Osborne Close, Netley, 16/8. There were 16 between 10/8 and 13/9 at Sholing (ARC). Presumably a proportion of these were not primary migrants. This is by far the largest number yet recorded by ARC. The previous maxima were 3 in both 2002 and 2001. (colour page 4)

Small Mottled Willow (*Spodoptera exigua*) singles in Sholing on 7/8 and 22/9 (ARC).

Scarce Bordered Straw (*Helicoverpa armigera*) singles recorded on 2 1/9, 3/10 and 7/10 (ARC). This is a new species for this site. (colour page 4)

Bordered Straw (*Heliothis peltigera*) 8 in Sholing between 7/8 and 27/8 (ARC). There were 2 in 2002.

Silver Y (*Autographa gamma*) a total of 688 in Sholing from 8/5, with the last on 2 1/11 (ARC). The peak count was 83 on 7/8. There were 133 in 2002 and 113 in 2001. PB recorded 40 at Silverdale Rd on 21/8.

DTPTERA (Flies)

Bombylius major (a bee-fly) recorded from 26/3, Lordsdale Greenway (ARC).

Laphria marginata (a robber-fly) recorded by PB at Botley Wood (SE), 19/5.

Asilus crabroniformis (a robber-fly), the largest British species, 3 at Bushfield Camp, Winchester on 14/8 (PB).

Sericomyia silentis (a hover-fly) recorded by PB, Denny Wood on Hawthorn, 12/5.

Sericomyia lappona (a hover-fly) recorded on Hawthorn by PB, Denny Wood, 12/5.

Volucella zonaria (a hover-fly) a particularly good year for this very large hover-fly. Recorded by PB at Hollybrook Cemetery on 10/7 and Coates Rd, Sholing on 12/7.

Volucella inanis (a hover-fly) recorded by GHW at Bitterne Manor on 28/7 by PB at Trott's Copse Marchwood on 13/8, where nectaring on Water Mint. 1 at Swanwick on 30/8 (ARC).

Chrysotoxum festivum (a hover-fly) nectaring on Ragwort on 18/7 at Peel Common, Stubbington (PB).

Xylotomima lenta (a hover-fly) nectaring on Hogweed on 19/7 at Church Lane, Exton (PB).

Scaeva pyrastris (a hover-fly) a late record at Caerleon Ave, Bitterne, 6/11 (PB).

HYMENOPTERA (Wasps and Allies)

Anthophora plumipes (a flower bee) recorded below old town walls at Westgate St on 27/4 by PB.

Bombus humilis (**Brown-banded Carder Bee**) recorded by DG at Fawley Power Station on 19/9.

Bombus jonellus (a bumblebee) recorded by PB, 15/5 and 20/5, Caerleon Ave, Bitterne.

Bombus (Psithyrus) vestalis (a cuckoo bumblebee) recorded from Thorold Rd, Chandler's Ford on 20/5 (PB).

Chrysis ignita (a ruby-tailed wasp) recorded by GHW, Bitterne Manor on 29/6.

Saropoda bimaculata a bee with a very shrill buzz was recorded south of Bury Marsh, Marchwood on 7/8 (PB).

Hornet (*Vespa crabro*) recorded by KJP at Chandler's Ford on 6/8. This is the first garden record at this site. Late records were of 1 at Royal Victoria CP on 12/10 (ARC), on 16/10 at Mayfield Park (PB) and at Middle Rd, Sholing on 18/10 (EWW).

Jet Ant (*Lasius fuliginosus*) reported by JP at Hawthorns Urban Wildlife Centre on Southampton Common on 17/4.

COLEOPTERA (Beetles)

Orange Ladybird (*Halysia sexdecimguttata*) 1 at MV light in Sholing on 13/9 (ARC).

Judolia cerambyciformis (a longhorn beetle) about 5 on Wild Carrot heads on 13/7 at Great Down Park, Burseldon (PB).

Lilioceris lili (Lily Beetle) PB had his first garden record in Bitterne on 9/7.

Stag Beetle (*Lucanus cervus*) a very early male recorded on 1/4 by KJP at Chandler's Ford. Recorded at West End on 29/5 (KEW).

Pterostichus oblongopunctatus seen in a pitfall trap at Gull Coppice, Whiteley by PB, an Nb notable species.

Scaphidium quadrimaculatum (a shining fungus beetle) seen at The Moors, Bishop's Waltham by PB on 29/4.

FISH

Eel JS found about 10 very large examples either dumped or washed up between Horseshoe and Northam Bridges on 18/8.

Sea Trout 1 dead at Riverside Park on 2/1 (PB).

Flounder singles on 2/8 and 2/10 at Mansbridge (PB).

Bullhead 1 in the river at Mansbridge on 2/8 (PB).

Gudgeon 2 in the river at Mansbridge on 2/8 (PB).

AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES

Adder recorded in March at Hook Park Warsash (per PB), 1 at Pennington Marshes on 19/9 (PRB).

Grass Snake recorded at Hook Park, Warsash on 19/3 (PB).

Slow-worm recorded, 23/6, Paignton Rd allotment and Studland Rd allotment by PB.

Palmate Newt 4 at Westwood on 18/4 (ARC).

Smooth Newt JS recorded 1 egg laying in the garden pond in Bevois Valley, 26/4.

There were 3+ in small ponds at Southwell Farm allotment on 23/6 (PB).

Common Frog there were 20 pairs in PB's garden pond at Bitterne on 25/1, and a total of 55 individuals (including 11 pairs) on 21/2. The first spawn hatched on 21/3.

Common Toad PB saw only 1 example at Bitterne on 25/1 and also 1 adult at the Grange Fields, Netley on 28/6.

BIRDS

Garden bird records

A **Buzzard** flew over the garden at Sholing on 26/10 (ARC). ARC also reported a **Whimbrel** to the north over Sholing in spring and a migrant **Brambling** flew over on 16/10. CO at Rownhams recorded 28 species over the course of the year. These included a male **Blackcap** in January and December, a **Brambling** in March, a **Bullfinch** in June, a **Green Woodpecker** in August, a maximum of 6 **Long-tailed Tit** in September and **Siskin** in both winter periods with a peak of 20 in January. Apparently 2 families of **Great Spotted Woodpecker** were present here, 1 of the males was ringed and is presumably a bird that has been returning since January 2000. 2 males were fighting here on 2/5. A remarkable record was of a **Woodcock** (colour page 4) found dead after hitting a window at PB's garden in Bitterne. PB recorded a total of 50 species in or from his garden. The commonest species (as a percentage of days recorded in the garden) were (in descending order from 100% to 54%): **Woodpigeon, Blackbird, Robin, House Sparrow, Carrion Crow, Collared Dove, Blue Tit, Black-headed Gull** and **Greenfinch**. Notable records in or from the garden were a **Cuckoo** heard to the east at dawn on 6/5, **Tawny Owl** heard on 31/3 and 16/8, the first **Swift** on 7/5 and the last on 6/8, the first and last **Swallow** on 12/4 and 14/10, the only record of **House Martin** was 8 east on 28/9, 5 records of **Blackcap** (Jan–March), the first ever garden record of **Lesser Whitethroat** on 3/8 (2 birds), **Willow Warbler** singing on 22/4, **Fieldfare** on 13/10 and 20/10, 1 **Siskin** on 5/2 and 1 **Bullfinch** on 3/10 (the first record since 1986!). RC at Regents Park, Southampton noted **Sparrowhawk** in 11 months with the peak numbers in November (8 bird-days). However, overall a decline in numbers has been seen in this area of the city since 2000. RC also noted **Buzzard** dispersing over Regents Park on 3 dates. Other birds of prey included a **Hobby** moving south-east on 21/9. **Peregrine** made a good showing with sightings of 9 birds on 8 dates, including 1 with prey moving south-south-west towards Marchwood on 24/6. RC also heard **Oystercatcher** over Regents Park on 10/3, a **Snipe** high to south-east on 8/11 and a heavy movement of **Meadow Pipit** (74 north-west on 30/3). **Woodpigeon** movements over this area peaked at 349 west on 9/11 (08.00–08.45). A very interesting record was of a **Green Woodpecker** in Regents Park, this first record in 30 years, on 1/10. Winter thrush movements over Regents Park included 385 **Fieldfare** north-north-west between 07.55 and 08.15 on 13/11, along with 78 **Redwing**. Particularly large numbers of the former species moved through the Southampton area in November 2003. Autumn **Chaffinch** movement peaked at 42 west between 08.00 and 09.15 on 25/10. Finally, Regents Park attracted **Reed Warblers** on 28/5 and 28/8 and another garden **Lesser Whitethroat** on 28/8.

Several observers recorded wintering **Blackcap**, including JS who noted a male feeding on fat and on *Mahonia* flowers in Bevois Valley on 31/12.

Other records from Southampton and area

Red-throated Diver singles at Weston Shore 2/2 and 27/2 (ARC).

Red-necked Grebe 1 at Weston Shore 3/1 (RC) and 4/1 to 26/1, seen on 5 dates (ARC). This bird was present from December 2002.

Slavonian Grebe 1 at Weston Shore 11/1, 12/1 18/1 (ARC). Dibden Bay 22/1 (RC).

Fulmar a remarkable record was of 1 over Peartree Green 21/6 (PRB).

Little Egret maximum 6 at Weston Shore 22/3 and 5 on 15/11. Seen throughout the year (ARC). PB noted 2 in a muddy inland field at Upper Swanmore 9/3. Recorded by GHW at Northam Bridge 13/7 (1).

Gadwall PB noted 40+ at Ovington on the Itchen 6/11.

Eider 100 off Solent Breezes 1/3 (ARC).

Goosander 1 pair recorded at Bramshill Plantation 5/3 (PB).

Buzzard seen frequently at Westwood throughout the year. 4 together at Southampton General Hospital 25/3 (ARC).

Peregrine 1 took a pigeon over Town Quay 6/11 (ARC).

Red Kite 1 high to south over Regents Park, Southampton 30/3 (RC). Singles over Matley Bog (New Forest) on 9/8 and Old Winchester Hill 14/9 (ARC). One near Beacon Hill over arable land 15/11 (RC).

Goshawk a female at Roydon Woods 10/9 and 27/9 (RC).

Stone Curlew 1 heard 26/8 by PB Bransbury Common area.

Avocet 2 pairs bred at Warsash. 4 adults present 10/5, with 1 on a nest. 2 birds were sitting by 17/5. On 10/6 4 adults were present and 1 pair had 4 young estimated to be 10 days old, the second pair had a single young which was only a few days old, and its parent was still incubating. By 15/6 the pair and the older young had gone and the remaining adults had 2 young (ARC). IW reported, from information received, that the second pair hatched 3 in total, but only 1 of the 7 young Avocets (from the older brood) survived, the others having perhaps been taken by Foxes or perhaps lost while trying to walk to Titchfield, as last year. IW saw an adult and young at Warsash 15/7 and by this time the young bird looked almost ready to fly.

Lesser Sandplover a remarkable record was a single of the race *Mongolus* at Pennington, 23/7. Only the third or fourth British record and first of this race (MO).

Grey Plover 100 at Weston Shore 23/1 (ARC).

Bar-tailed Godwit 1 at Weston Shore 22/2 and 23/3 (ARC).

Black-tailed Godwit 2 at Chessel Bay on 20/9 (JP).

Knot singles at Weston Shore on 11/1 and 12/1 (ARC).

Temminck's Stint 1 at Farlington Marshes on 22/8 (PRB).

Green Sandpiper 1 over Magdalen Hill Down on 9/1 (PB).
Common Sandpiper JS recorded maximum of 3 between Horseshoe and Northam Bridges with regular sightings from October to December.
Grey Phalarope 1 at Pennington Marshes on 19/9 (PRB).
Herring Gull 15+ at Freemantle, Southampton in summer 2003, including 2 young circling over the B.A.T factory (RC).
Yellow-legged Gull 1 underneath Northam Bridge on 28/9 (JS).
Little Gull 2 adults at Weston Shore on 27/2 (ARC).
Mediterranean Gull adults at Weston Shore on 11/1, 16/2 and 16/3. 2 adult summer seen there on 22/3 had green rings with white lettering (3AEO and 3AL8), which were ringed in Belgium (ARC). PB recorded 1 on 15/9 at the regular Woolston site by the Itchen Bridge.
Barn Owl a pair bred in the nest box at Westwood and an adult could be seen regularly sitting in or on the box there throughout the year (ARC).
Little Owl 1 at School Lane, Burseldon on 27/8 (PB).
Woodlark a singing male at Crabwood Farm on 3/3 (PB).
Nightingale singing male between 29/4 and 6/5, at least, at Peartree Green (PB).
Stonechat 1+ at Peartree Green between 15/5 and 4/6 (PB).
Wheatear 1 at Southampton Sports Centre on 13/8 (PB).
Grasshopper Warbler 1 at Roydon Woods, New Forest, on 30/8 (RC).
Spotted Flycatcher 1 at Peartree Green on 27/8 (PB).
Willow Tit 1 at Lower Test Marshes on 9/7 (ARC).
Great Grey Shrike singles noted catching flying bees at Latchmoor Bottom on 21/2 and 1 catching and killing a passerine (probable Dartford Warbler) at Yew Tree Heath, New Forest, on 22/12 (RC).
Fieldfare 200 to west at Weston Shore on 15/11 (ARC).
Brambling 1 at Southampton Common on 2/11 (PB).

MAMMALS

Hedgehog an immature still active from 21/11 to 27/12 (JW).
Harvest Mouse 3 nests found at Yew Hill, Winchester, on 19/2 (PB).
Roe Deer 3 at Westwood on 15/11 (ARC).
Serotine Bat (*Eptesicus serotinus*) 2 at Southampton Common on 23/6 (JP).
Fox starting to recover from mange outbreak. Recorded (PB) Netley Grange Fields 31/5.
Otter very interesting record was of a half skeleton found by JS on 2/12 on the shore near Horseshoe Bridge, comprising the spine and pelvic girdle to almost the tip of the tail. Probably washed down from further upstream.
Badger 1 found dead by Bitterne Rd East/Somerset Ave on 18/3 (PB). An unusual record in this area.
Weasel 1 recorded on 18/6 in West End (AB).

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