



ABINGTON NATUREWATCH

The Record
2019

Records the activities of Abington Naturewatch for 2019. Includes records of sightings of the fauna and flora in Great and Little Abington, Cambridgeshire, as noted by members and covering several sectors: Wildlife at Granta Park and in the River Granta, Birds, Reptiles & Amphibians, Mammals, Insects, Flora, Fungi.



Front Cover:

1: Wasp Spider, Granta Park – Aug (DB)

2: Fen Drayton Lakes – 23 Feb (DF)

NOTABLE EVENTS OF 2019*March - Replacement trees planted on Recreation Ground*3: *Liquidambar Styraciflua* – 27 Oct (PJB)4: *Metasequoia Glyptostroboides*, Comma – 23 Apr (DP)

5: AUGUST – Lynsey joins us for River Sampling



6: APRIL – Esme with Chris Packham (EL)

Many thanks to all those, especially new members, who submitted observation records and photographs for use in the Blog and this Record. Please keep it up, with as many photographs as possible.

To keep in touch during the year, please visit the Blog <http://abington-naturewatch.blogspot.com/>

Notes:

- i. In this document, GA stands for Great Abington, GP for Granta Park and LA for Little Abington; LSA means former Land Settlement Association area (North, South, Chalky and Cutting Roads).
- ii. All photographs were taken in 2019, unless noted. Photographers are:
Andy Merryweather (AM), Anne Dunbar Nobes (ADN), Barry Brooks (BMB), Carol McCrae (CMcC), Darren Bast (DB), David Farrant (DF), David Pimblett (DP), Derek Turnidge (DLT), Esme Langford (EL), Jennifer Hirsh (JAH), John Turner (JT), Len Mead (LAM), Peter Brunning (PJB), Bill Rusted (WR)
- iii. Visits out of the Abingtons are recorded separately in Section 10.
- iv. For contact details for all sectors, please refer to the back page.

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1. FOREWORD

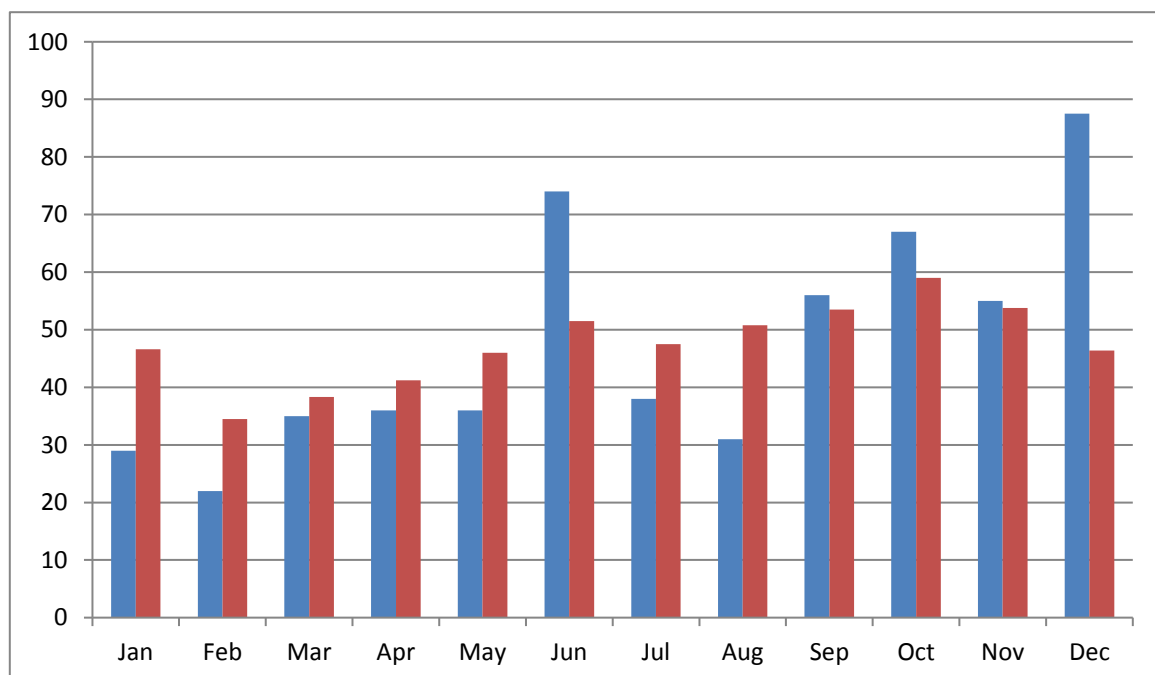
I. Weather

2019 started with a dry, mild period over January / February bringing an early spring but below average rainfall. The summer started with the early part of June very wet but then a prolonged dry spell with high temperatures over late June, July, August and early September. The rain then returned in late September and into October, November and December. Are we seeing the effects of climate change in our area?

This weather pattern in 2019 had the biggest impact on our River Granta with very low levels of water over the spring and summer and these did not start to recover until mid-December making our water sampling difficult as the river had silted up. Without the water input from the sewage works upstream the river could well have dried up. The state of River Granta was reported in the local press and meetings arranged between those organisations involved to see what can be done to safeguard it in future.

The mild spring did help breeding birds, with a plentiful food supply available early on leading to good brood sizes in many early breeding birds, such as Blue Tits, Robins and Blackbirds. The summer period saw low numbers of Bumble Bees, which were affected by the dry weather reducing flowering in plants and, as you will read in the insect report, some butterfly species such as the “Whites” did very well and others did not. The dry summer weather also led to some early leaf drop on the trees but the late rain in September saved the situation and we had a prolonged period of autumn colour into November.

Abington Rainfall for 2019 (blue) compared to Average (red) in mm.



Abington Rainfall 2019

Source of average (1981 to 2010) - Cambridge

II. The 2019 Programme

Our 2019 programme started with our winter visit to Fen Drayton lakes in February followed by our spring members' meeting in March when we had a presentation on the tagging work with Spotted Flycatchers around Cambridge by Michael Holdsworth, who has tagged some birds in Abington previously. In April, June and September, despite low river levels, we carried out our water sampling, once again demonstrating that our Granta river water is of good quality. In June, on a hot day, we had a birdwatching visit to the new venue of Lackford Lakes, which has the benefit of several types of habitat in a relatively compact area. We also recorded the local results from the RSPB Garden Birdwatch, carried out our own Abington Birdwatch in May and made a visit to the Old Railway Line in August.

The results from the year's visits were discussed at our winter Members' meeting in November and are presented in this Record.

III. Granta Park

Granta Park is a very important area within the Abingtons and although village access to Granta Park remains difficult, Naturewatch Project Members have been given restricted access and are able to provide limited reports of the wildlife. We are also fortunate to have one of our own members working there and this together with reports from other Park employees enables us to record an accurate picture of the wildlife and plant life in the Record. We are very grateful for their inputs.

I must also thank Granta Park for their support of Naturewatch through the award of a small grant. This goes towards the printing of the Record, the hire of the Institute for meetings and the cost of speakers.

IV. Naturewatch Members

This year, in an effort to make our information more readily available and up to date, we have started to produce a monthly summary report on the Naturewatch Blog, which is linked to the village website. These reports summarise the weather and what has been seen and reported during the month. It has been well received by members. If you have not seen the blog, the access details are presented at the end of the Record.

The Record has been produced since 2005 and has recorded the wildlife of the area every year since. It could not be produced without the reports from members and the work of our project team in assembling the data and photographs, writing the reports and putting the Record and Blog together. As with many organisations currently, it is difficult to find volunteers willing to support our work not only in reporting what they see but also in recording it and organising our various trips. My thanks to all of them and I hope we can keep the reports, photographs and visits going in 2020.

I would like to especially thank Sally Turnidge who has reported on our Protected Road Verge and local plant life for several years and has decided to take a break. This means we have a vacancy for a plant recorder and hope a new volunteer can be found. The position can be tailored to as much time as you can give.

David Farrant

Note:

Abington Naturewatch covers the area of Great and Little Abington: from the Roman Road south to the Essex border and from the A11 east to Hildersham parish. A map showing local names of the main areas is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/scdmlth>.

2. RIVERCARE

I. Overview

Abington RiverCare is a member of the national *RiverCare* organisation and has two main interests: looking after the stretch of the River Granta next to the playing fields in the village and surveying its flora and fauna.

On the last Monday in the month except for bank holidays, when it is the next working day, we walk through the playing fields along the river and check its condition, picking up litter along the bank and, if possible, from the river. [Volunteers are always welcome at the road bridge at 9:30 a.m.] We look out for, and attempt to eradicate, invasive plants such as **Himalayan Balsam** and **Giant Hogweed** – we occasionally remove a small amount of Himalayan Balsam from the bank near the cricket ground but there is now less than before. We notify landowners or the *Environment Agency* of any issues that need further attention, such as the clearance of larger items of debris. The national *RiverCare* organisation provides equipment, insurance, safety guidelines and other advice.

The River Granta has had very low flows for much of the year but heavy rains in November and December have helped to clear out the channel and any debris.

II. News

i. Recreation Ground Trees

The Abington Recreation Ground Committee commissioned a survey of the trees on the ground, which was conducted at the end of 2017. During 2018, a few trees were felled, and others reduced for safety reasons, and then a storm in July felled two more and caused some other damage. During 2019, we replaced the three good trees that were felled with new specimen trees: *Liquidambar Styraciflua* (by the container), *Metasequoia Glyptostroboides* by the river and *Cercis Siliquastrum* (Judas Tree) on the west side.

ii. Contacts

Our contacts in various places include:

- RiverCare: <http://www.rivercare.org.uk/>. Lynsey Stafford, who lives in Cambridge, has visited for litter-picking and for River Sampling. Andrew Walters is project manager.
- Wildlife Trust: Ruth Hawksley has arranged training for our river sampling activities.
- South Cambs District Council: We have had little contact on river matters since Ecology Officer Rob Mungovan moved to the Wild Trout Trust.
- Environment Agency: we do not have regular contact but have met John Findlay in connection with River Sampling. He keeps an eye on our records.

III. River Sampling 2019

Our reports from the River Granta are submitted in the name of Abington Naturewatch.

We sample at the Ford (Grid ref: TL534489), just upstream of the road bridge.

We have been logging our findings directly on the database so they can be observed by the EA (and anyone else). <http://www.riverflies.org/riverflies-gis-home>.

We use a sampling method based on 3 minutes (1 minute, for each of 3 locations) use of a net, disturbing the river-bed by kicking/shuffling just upstream so that material is carried into the net. We supplement this by examining stones and local vegetation for additional specimens. We look mainly for the larvae of some specific species of river flies. N.B. We do not find Stoneflies in Abington.

The Riverfly Partnership *abundance* figures are as follows:

1 – 9	category A = (based on a quick count)
10–99	category B = (+ estimated number to nearest 10)
100–999	category C = (+ estimated number to nearest 100)
over 1000	category D = (+ estimated number to nearest 1000)

IV. *Freshwater Watch*

We have started testing the water quality using the Freshwater Watch methodology, which focuses on measuring water turbidity (cloudiness) and two chemicals: nitrates and phosphates. These are commonly used in agriculture and elsewhere. Most of our tests have shown high nitrate and low phosphate levels, but there have been a few cases of high phosphate levels.

V. *River Sampling Sessions*

i. 15th March 2019

Water quality: Nitrate: 5-10 Phosphate: 0.2-0.5 Turbidity: <14 Colourless

ii. 29th April 2019 at 10:30

Flow	Low	Concentration (mg/l)			
Water Quality	Clear (NTU<14), colourless	Nitrate	>10	Phosphate	<0.02
Weather	Bright overcast, sunny intervals 12C				
Recorded	Anne Dunbar Nobes, Peter Brunning	Robin, Sally, Ross, David			
Samples	3 kick samples x 1 minute:	1: silt, weed	2: gravel	3: weed, gravel	Overall
Caddisflies	Cased				0
	Caseless				1 - A
Up-wing flies	Mayfly (Ephemeraidae)				12 - B
	Blue-winged Olive (Ephemerellidae)				0
	Flat-bodied (Heptageniidae)				0
	Olives (Baetidae)				120 - C
Freshwater Shrimp	Gammarus				50 -B
Other	Leeches				0
	Hairworms				3 - A
	Pea shell bivalve				2 - A
	Signal Crayfish				0
	Tiny fish (observed in river)				1
Photos:	https://www.flickr.com/gp/peterjeb/23j1JG				

iii. 5th June 2019 at 17:00

Flow	Very low, slow flow	Concentration (mg/l)			
Water Quality	Clear (NTU<14), slightly yellow	Nitrate	>10	Phosphate	<0.02
Weather	Bright overcast, sunny intervals 12C				
Recorded	Anne Dunbar Nobes, Peter Brunning	Robin, Derek, Sally, Ross, David, Richard, Jennifer			
Samples	3 kick samples x 1 minute:	1: mud, weed	2: gravel, stony	3: stony	Overall
Caddisflies	Cased				0
	Caseless				0
Up-wing flies	Mayfly (Ephemeraidae)				1 - A
	Blue-winged Olive (Ephemerellidae)				0
	Flat-bodied (Heptageniidae)				0
	Olives (Baetidae)				150 - C
Freshwater Shrimp	Gammarus				200 -C
Other	Leeches				0
	Hairworms				1 - A
	Pond snail				1 - A

	Signal Crayfish (1 tiny, others 2-3 cm)				3 -A
	Fish				0
	Duck + Drake + 9 ducklings				11 - B
	Moorhen				1 -A
Photos:	https://www.flickr.com/gp/peterjeb/3855WX				

iv. 13th August 2019 at 18:00 (water quality on 17th August)

Flow	Very low, sluggish flow	Concentration (mg/l)			
Water Quality	Clear (NTU<14), Colourless	Nitrate	>10	Phosphate	<0.02
Weather	Bright, sunny, warm				
Recorded	Anne Dunbar Nobes, Peter Brunning	Robin, Ross, David, Richard, Lynsey			
Samples	3 kick samples x 1 minute:	1: silt, leaf debris	2: sandy, gravel	3: gravel, stones	Overall
Caddisflies	Cased				0
	Caseless				50 - B
Up-wing flies	Mayfly (Ephemeraidae)				0
	Blue-winged Olive (Ephemerellidae)				20 - B
	Flat-bodied (Heptageniidae)				0
	Olives (Baetidae)				20 - B
Freshwater Shrimp	Gammarus				40 - A
Other	Leeches				0
	Signal Crayfish (small)				1 - A
	Bullhead Fish (1 adult + 1 young)				2 - A
	Minnow				1 - A
Photos:	https://www.flickr.com/gp/peterjeb/214h8N (not many – low battery)				

Note: Lynsey tweeted a report on her visit.

v. 30th September 2019 at 10:30

Flow	Low, slight sewage smell	Concentration (mg/l)			
Water Quality	Clear (NTU<14), slightly yellow	Nitrate	>10	Phosphate	<0.02
Weather	Bright, sunny, high cloud				
Recorded	Anne Dunbar Nobes, Peter Brunning	Robin, Ross, David			
Samples	3 kick samples x 1 minute:	1	2	3	Overall
Caddisflies	Cased				0
	Caseless				2 - A
Up-wing flies	Mayfly (Ephemeraidae)				0
	Blue-winged Olive (Ephemerellidae)				1 - A
-	Flat-bodied (Heptageniidae)				0
	Olives (Baetidae)				120 - C
Freshwater Shrimp	Gammarus (very small)				10 - B
Other	Leeches				0
	Signal Crayfish (1 @ 10cm, 2 @ 3cm)				3 - A
Photos:	https://www.flickr.com/gp/peterjeb/128217				

v. 3rd November 2019

Nitrate: >10 **Phosphate:** >1

Turbidity: <14

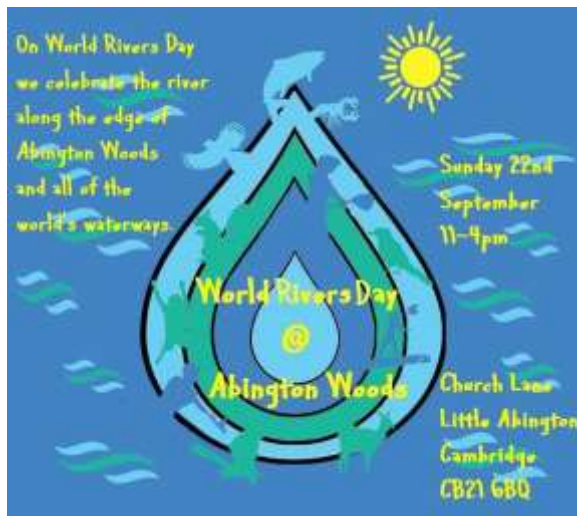
Brown

VI. *RiverCare & BeachCare Conferences*

- i. **Cam & Ely Ouse (CameEO) Catchment Partnership (UK) – 26th February**
Robin Harman attended a meeting.
- ii. **RiverCare / BeachCare Volunteer Conference, Rutland Water – 6th April**
Robin Harman attended this.

VII. *Other RiverCare Events*

- i. **RiverCare visits to Abington**
Richard met Lynsey in Linton for a meeting with a nascent RiverCare group in Linton. Lynsey visited our sampling session on 13th August
- ii. **World Rivers Day – 22nd September**
Abington RiverCare did not participate this year, but Abington Woods held a celebration.



iii. **Riverfly refresher course – 3rd November**

Peter went to a refresher course at Babraham Institute on Saturday morning. The main session was practical, supervised by John Findlay of the Environment Agency. He explained that their methods differ slightly from the Riverfly one, notably with more samples of shorter times. In view of the very low water levels in the Granta, he told us a bit about drought conditions. He also gave us useful information about the use of ‘trigger levels’ for our data – they may suggest problems to his team, who regularly sample at Hildersham Ford and Bourn Bridge.

iv. **Invasive Species – Balsam & Hogweed**

On 2nd October, Richard and Peter removed some **Himalayan Balsam** spotted in Sluice Wood by Andy.

This is a non-native invasive species which is best removed as it can displace plants that stabilise river banks. It is usually pink but some of these plants were white.

On 13th October, Richard removed **Giant Hogweed** just downstream of the village road bridge.



8: Himalayan Balsam, Granta Park - 26 Sep (AM)

Peter Brunning

3. BIRDS

I. Members' Reports

i. JANUARY 2019

RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch on 26th - 28th: produced 15 reports and a total of 32 species noted in the Abingtons (see 3.II)

Barnacle Goose - small flock of 9 on cricket ground on GP (2nd).

Sparrowhawk - circling high above Sluice Woods (7th), and again in a low-level, high speed attack on a flock of feeding Redwing on 29th.

Little Egret - pair seen in Sluice Woods on 22nd, and a female Reed Bunting regularly visiting a garden feeder on Bourn Bridge Rd. Group of 12 Canada Goose and a Greylag on GP lake.

Low numbers of Greenfinch reported on garden feeders this year (only 1-2 and not often seen), compared to larger groups of Goldfinch and Chaffinch being regularly reported.

Stock Dove - one or two pairs of seen regularly in ivy-covered trees near the sluice.

An unusual sighting of a large pale-ish brown owl (31st), most likely a Short-eared Owl, hunting in the late afternoon over scrubby ground on Bourn Bridge Rd.

ii. FEBRUARY 2019

Many species continue to be reported in small flocks, prior to dispersing to breed. In particular, 10 Meadow Pipit and up to 60 Pied Wagtail were reported on the cricket ground, a flock of 20 Yellowhammer were regularly seen on the arable fields on the Land Settlements, and 10-30 Linnet along the Old Railway Cutting and on GP.

Up to 44 Reed Bunting were seen roosting in the reeds around GP lake.

Winter visitors such as Fieldfare (up to 50) and Redwing (up to 100) were reported throughout the month, particularly on the fields between the churches, and near Hildersham Wood.

Golden Plover – a flock of ~30 were reported flying over fields near Abington Park Farm.

Siskin were reported for the first time this winter (14th) on feeders at two locations – far fewer than last year. There were no reports of Redpoll this winter.

Nuthatch (1-2) and Great Spotted Woodpecker were also seen on several garden feeders, visiting almost daily at some locations.

Goldfinch and Chaffinch in flocks of 10-12 were regulars in several gardens, occasionally joined by only 1 or 2 Greenfinch, numbers of which seem to be sharply down this year.

Bullfinch (2-6) were twice reported feeding on tree flower buds, along the Old Railway Cutting (10th) and in a garden on the Settlements (24th).

Goldcrest – a pair was spotted in conifers along Cambridge Rd (10th), and occasionally a single bird was seen amongst mixed tit flocks on GP.

Jay - reported at two locations, as a regular visitor to one, and was seen recovering stashed acorns from a garden lawn.

Little Egret - spotted several times along the river (18th and 26th), as was a Grey Wagtail, seen feeding on the floating mats of fallen leaves near the sluice (20th). Grey Heron were also regularly seen along the river.

Red Kite were reported on three occasions, flying over GP, Four Went Ways and North Road.

Up to six Buzzard were also seen soaring high on the thermals over Hildersham Wood, above North Rd, and around the meadows alongside the river. A Kestrel and a Sparrowhawk were also occasionally seen over GP.

Skylark was reported singing on 10th, along the Old Railway Cutting - first time this year.

Corn Bunting was heard singing from a small clump of dried grasses near Abington Park Farm, also the first report this year, on 19th.

Several other species were also heard singing this month, including Blackbird, Great Tit,

House Sparrow, Wren and Robin. A large number of Song Thrush have been heard around the village, as well as a Mistle Thrush high up in trees by old A11, and a Coal Tit singing in oak trees in GA (24th), and on GP in following days.

Red-legged Partridge – a small covey was seen in the fields alongside Cambridge Rd (25th).

iii. MARCH 2019

Fieldfare – 10-20 reported on GP (5th, 19th), a flock of ~30 on fields near Hildersham Wood (20th), and 12 were seen flying over GA on 23rd.

Redwing – 20+ in trees behind Cambridge Road (1st), and 2-4 on GP (14th). Last reported along Chalky Rd on 17th.

Warblers – Chiffchaff first heard singing from bushes alongside GP lake (1st), with many reports since from across the village, including at least 4 singing males along Old Railway Cutting (30th). Blackcap – first heard singing along Old Railway Cutting on 19th. Heard several times since in Sluice Wood, and a report of 3 singing males along the Old Railway Cutting (30th).

Green Woodpecker – reported in a Bourn Bridge Rd garden and heard ‘yaffling’ in Sluice Wood throughout the month. Great Spotted Woodpecker continue to visit several garden feeders.

Little Owl – seen on several occasions first thing and at dusk on GP. A Tawny Owl was heard on GP (1st), and regularly heard (male and female) at night on LSA.

Red Kite – several sightings near Hildersham Wood, over GP, and the Old Railway Cutting.

Sparrowhawk – one seen with prey, possibly a Collared Dove in a garden (20th), another seen hunting on Bancroft Farm Meadow (27th), and a third flying across the High Street.

Golden Plover – around 30 flying over Mortlock Gardens and the adjacent field (20th).

Yellowhammer – small flocks seen in fields south of LSA. Linnet – a flock of 30-40 seen very regularly on rough ground, or on the cricket ground, in GP.

Skylark – 3-4 reported in full song on the LSA (9th), and over fields alongside Pampisford Rd.

Bullfinch – reported feeding on tree buds along the Old Railway Cutting on two occasions.

Small flocks of Goldfinch continue to visit feeders, with 2-3 Greenfinch, and up to 15 Chaffinch.

Long-tailed Tit – reported ‘pecking their reflections’ in window glass. Regular reports of Coal Tit singing on GP, the LSA, and a GA garden.

Goldcrest – two seen and heard in conifers on LSA (17th), and one in GP (25th).

Robin – one report of a pair displaying and feeding each other in a GA garden.

Grey Wagtail – a female seen on 2 occasions, feeding on floating debris in the river near the sluice.

Little Egret – at least six separate reports of a single bird along the river, throughout the month.

Goosander – a female was seen flying over GP (21st) – first record in The Abingtons.

Mandarin Duck – 5 flying noisily in large circles over the meadows alongside river by A1307.

Cormorant – reported on 4-5 occasions feeding in the lake. Moorhen seen displaying on GP lake (15th), and Mallard are now mostly in pairs along the river, with very few left on GP lake. A pair of Reed Bunting also seen in the reedbeds (28th).

Rook and Jackdaw – colonies actively nest building in tall trees on GP. Jay – four reported squabbling in the trees along Cambridge Rd, and two in Cooke’s Meadow



9: Part-albino Blackbird - 10 Feb (CMcC)



10: Chiffchaff, Old Railway – 30 Mar (AM)



11: Green Woodpecker, Bourn Bridge Rd – 4 Mar (DF)



12: Gt Spotted Woodpecker, Lewis Cr - 13 Mar (AM)



13: Raven, Old Railway - 6 Apr (AM)



14: Little Owl, Granta Park - 6 Apr (AM)



15: Blackcap ♂, Old Railway - 30 Mar (AM)



16: Blackcap ♀, Old Railway - 15 Apr (AM)

iv. APRIL 2019

Fieldfare – two reported on 3rd – last sighting of the year

Hirudines – Sand Martin – five flying low over GP lake (2nd). First Swallow seen passing overhead on 6th (same date as 2018), and regularly across the village since, with pairs reported returning to nests on LSA (21st). House Martin – first seen in village centre on 19th (22nd April in 2018), and returning to nest sites on the school, shop and in Mortlock Gardens.

Warblers – many Blackcap and Chiffchaff singing around the village throughout the month. Willow Warbler heard in copse on east edge of GP (23rd -26th).

Many species regularly reported singing throughout the month including: Dunnock, Wren, Robin, Great Tit, Skylark, Chaffinch, Blackbird, Song Thrush and Mistle Thrush.

Blue Tit – several pairs seen entering nestboxes in gardens and on GP, with laid eggs reported in a nestbox on LSA (6th).

Several reports of young fledging birds this month: young Blackbird on LSA (6th) and GA (27th); Robin family with 3 fledglings in GA (15th); young Song Thrush on LSA (15th); several groups of Mallard ducklings, 10 in Sluice Wood, 5 near Millennium Bridge, 14 near road bridge (all after 22nd); Dunnock fledgling being fed by parent in GP (24th).

Kestrel, Sparrowhawk and Buzzard (up to 5) all reported. Hobby – two flying over (18th), and a Red Kite reported several times.

Barn Owl – one heard at night in GA (21st), and Little Owl have again been seen on GP (1st - 10th), near the site where they bred last year.

Greylag and Canada Goose (up to 5) on GP lake, as was an occasional Cormorant.

Grey Heron – regularly along the river, with up to 5 seen on Bancroft Farm Meadow. One also reported being mobbed by corvids in a tree on Church Lane

Grey Wagtail – a single female seen three times early in the month, feeding along the river in Sluice Wood. A few reports of Pied Wagtail, especially on the cricket ground, and in LSA paddocks.

Finches – Chaffinch regularly around feeders, along with good numbers of Goldfinch. Small numbers of Greenfinch (mostly 2-3) also reported on several feeders. Two pairs of Bullfinch along the Old Railway Cutting (6th and 13th), and a flock of 50-90 Linnet feeding on rough ground on GP throughout the month

Buntings – Reed Bunting reported twice in the reeds on GP, and along the Old Railway Cutting. Several Yellowhammer heard singing near the Old Railway Cutting (6th).

Stock Dove – 2-4 regularly around Hall Farm Meadow, and several reports in gardens.

Goldcrest – two reports, on GP and Cambridge Road.

Treecreeper – one seen on LSA (16th), and heard on Dawn Chorus walk on GP (25th)

Raven – single bird over Old Railway, ‘korrping’ loudly (6th) – first report in The Abingtons.

v. MAY 2019

Ten reports for the Abington NatureWatch Bird Survey recorded a total of 52 species within the parishes over the Bank Holiday weekend (24th -27th). See section 3.III.

Swallow – up to four seen around village. Nesting pair in LA garage. House Martin – nesting in Mortlock Gardens. Up to 30 feeding and collecting mud on GP. Swift – first seen over St Mary’s Church on 4th, up to eight seen regularly since.

Spotted Flycatcher – first report of one returning to LA garden on 25th.

Wheatear – three along track above Chalky Road, possibly early-returning migrants, on 7th.

Warblers - Blackcap – regularly throughout month in GA. Old Railway Cutting, LSA and GP.

Chiffchaff – regularly seen and heard, mostly at the start of the month. Willow Warbler – two singing on Old Railway Cutting, and one heard several times on GP. Common

Whitethroat – one singing near Abington Park Farm on 12th, and heard several times since along Old Railway Cutting. Lesser Whitethroat – one singing from a thick hedge along Hildersham parish boundary on 19th. Reed Warbler – one heard on 24th, and several times

over a week in GP reedbed.

Corn Bunting – calling from wheat and hedgerow. Pair on Old Railway Cutting – possibly nesting. Reed Bunting – several regularly heard singing around GP lake.

Red Kite – three reports of a single bird, over LSA, and from GP. Buzzard – several reports of up to three. Kestrel – pair seen feeding prey to young on the nest in Sluice Wood. A female Sparrowhawk seen swooping over GA High Street.

Barn Owl – heard at dusk in GA garden on 24th.

Great Crested Grebe – single male back on GP lake from 8th – seen 3-4 times since. Little Grebe – one seen diving in GP Lake on 24th.

Mallard – several females with two-five ducklings on river. Males moulting around GP lake.

Greylag Goose – up to five, and Canada Goose – three pairs, one with 2-3 goslings on GP.

Blue Tit – several reports of adults actively feeding at nest boxes. Fledged family seen on 13th.

Great Spotted Woodpecker – a pair frequently visiting suet feeder in LSA garden.

Goldcrest – close encounter with one bird indoors on LSA.

Stock Dove – pair in GA garden, and occasional reports from Sluice Wood.

Goldfinch – fledged young seen bathing in garden pond. Bullfinch – pair along Old Railway.

Nuthatch – one reported in garden on Church Close, a Treecreeper in Sluice Wood on 23rd.

Mistle Thrush – one seen twice on Recreation Ground, and also on GP.

vi. JUNE 2019

Lackford Lakes Trip (see 10.I.ii) – a group of thirteen enjoyed an interesting visit, seeing a total of 46 bird species, including Cetti's Warbler (seen!), Hobby, Kingfisher, Marsh Tit and Spotted Flycatcher.

Fledglings – numerous reports of fledglings and young birds this month, including Blue Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Kestrel, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Green Woodpecker, Mallard, Canada Goose, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Robin, Wren and Nuthatch.

Warblers - Common Whitethroat - two sightings on Roman Road, and one pair regularly seen collecting food, presumably for young in the nest, along the Old Railway Cutting (17th).

Lesser Whitethroat – one report from the Roman Road (3rd). Blackcap, Chiffchaff – both heard regularly, especially towards end of month. Willow Warbler – single report of a singing bird along Old Railway Cutting (5th). Reed Warbler – heard singing in GP reedbed (20th).

Corn Bunting – several reports from Roman Road and Old Railway Cutting. Yellowhammer – seen and heard along the Roman Road, and on the Land Settlements.

Skylark – a few reports along Roman Road, and a pair seen carrying food along Old Railway Cutting.

Swallow – only two reports, with very few (2-4) birds being seen around the village. Swift – regularly reported above the village and GP, with eight around LA Church. House Martin nests with young visible on High Street, and up to 12 seen collecting mud from the edges of the lake on GP.

Nuthatch, Great Spotted Woodpecker – both regularly visiting garden feeders along High St.

Coal Tit – visiting feeders, and calling, in GA.

Little Owl – 1-2 seen on GP. Tawny Owl, Barn Owl – a few reports of calls after dark.

Kestrel – 1-2 young in nest in Sluice Woods early in month, and fledged birds seen nearby later on Sparrowhawk – at least five sightings in gardens, often after catching small song-bird prey. Red Kite – 2-3 reports from along Roman Road and above Sluice Wood.

Great Crested Grebe – single bird seen for a few days on GP lake early in the month.

Tufted Duck – pair seen around reeds on GP (17th).

Cormorant – one on GP lake (7th).

Greylag, Barnacle Goose and Canada Goose with 2-3 fledglings, regularly on GP lake.

Little Egret – one disturbed along the river (24th).



17: Grey Wagtail, Sluice Wood - 6 Apr (DLT)



18: Wren, Old Railway - 15 Apr (AM)



19: Swallow, Old Railway - 15 Apr (AM)



20: Starling feeding young, Lewis Cr - 18 May (AM)



21: Willow Warbler, Old Railway - 19 May (AM)



22: Sparrowhawk, Cambridge Rd – 2 July (DLT)



23: Bullfinch ♀, Old Railway - 12 Nov (AM)



24: Pheasant ♂, Old Railway - 12 Nov (AM)

vii. JULY 2019

A relatively quiet month generally, but with a few unusual highlights!

Kingfisher – two reports of what is likely to be the same bird, along the river near the footbridge (18th and 22nd). First reports of this species in the village this year.

Redpoll – one female in Bourn Bridge Road garden (28th). Highly unusual to see this species here in the summer months.

Common Tern – one flying over GA in bad weather (27th). Not previously reported in the Abingtons.

Fledglings and young birds continue to be widely reported, including young Blue Tit, Great Tit and Coal Tit visiting feeders, as well as young Robin, Song Thrush, Blackbird, House Sparrow, Dunnock, Mallard, Moorhen and Swallow.

Common Whitethroat – one along Old Railway Cutting (1st). Blackcap and Chiffchaff – regularly in GP.

Swift – several reports of 8-13 around LA Church, and over GP, and ~30 over Great Abington High Street (16th). Swallow – 20-30 perched on wires along Bourn Bridge Road, and swooping low over adjacent fields (9th), as well as 10 on South Road, and 3 young birds seen over Church Lane (23rd). House Martin – mostly fledged from nests around the village by mid-month. Several reports of flocks of 10-12 over the village, and 35 over the GP lake (15th).

Grey Wagtail – two along the river (10th). Pied Wagtail – 6-12 on cricket ground and Perse fields.

Corn Bunting – 2-3 regularly south of LSA. Skylark – 3-4 singing on several occasions around LSA.

Sparrowhawk – one young male (?) catching a young Blackbird in a garden on Cambridge Road. Buzzard – two calling and soaring high above LA, and 1-2 above LSA. Red Kite – one over GP (1st), and one soaring for some time above LSA (16th).

Little Owl – 1-2 still seen regularly around presumed nest-site on GP. Barn Owl – heard calling at night on several occasions in GA.

Green Woodpecker – several reports of adults and juveniles in Sluice Wood, and in several gardens. Great Spotted Woodpecker – one young bird on garden feeders, High Street, LA.

Nuthatch also regularly seen at same location.

Song Thrush – reported in Cambridge Road garden, and one singing on GP.

Barnacle Goose, Canada Goose and Greylag – remain on GP lake throughout.

Reed Bunting heard calling from reedbed.

Cormorant – one flying over GP (29th).

Mixed Tit flock in Lagden's Grove (29th) containing 20-30 young Great Tit, Blue Tit and Long-tailed Tit, as well as 2 young Goldcrest. Small party of Long-tailed Tit also seen along river.

viii. AUGUST 2019

Generally, a quiet month for birds, many of which have finished breeding and remain largely inconspicuous whilst completing their moult. Towards the end of the month though, family groups of several species were being seen and, after several weeks of silence, birdsong could again be heard, in particular of Robin, Wren and Song Thrush.

Kingfisher – one along river in Sluice Wood (8th), and again perching on the Millennium Bridge (12th).

Common Tern – several small flocks, totalling around 50, flying over, heading north (21st).

Yellow Wagtail – two reports of single birds flying over GP, presumably on migration.

Barn Owl – one heard screeching loudly during night in GA.

Swift – 3-4 around LA Church, one over the Old Railway Cutting 9th. Last report (23rd) was of a single bird briefly seen drinking from GP lake, before moving on. Swallow – one flying low over cricket ground, four reports of 2-6 over GP, and c20 over Perse sports

fields (15th and 23rd). House Martin – several gatherings around the village, especially later in the month. Includes 100+ over Perse sports fields (23rd), and c40 over the lake on GP (30th).

Grey Wagtail – several reports along river near Millennium Bridge, and one in Sluice Wood.

Pied Wagtail also gathering in larger groups (10-12) to feed on open ground.

Blackcap – several reports of single birds in gardens, and within mixed flocks on GP.

Chiffchaff, Goldcrest – single birds also seen as part of a mixed flock in Lagden's Grove.

Long-tailed Tit – on garden feeders in LA, and flocks of c10 on GP. Great Tit, Blue Tit – small family groups often mixed appearing in gardens and in Sluice Wood, occasionally also containing the odd Coal Tit.

Goldfinch – several small groups in gardens and GP, of adults and the more subdued-coloured juveniles. No reports of Greenfinch or Chaffinch.

Linnet – small flocks, including juveniles, feeding on seed heads on rough ground on GP.

Red Kite – several reports over the fields south of LSA. Buzzard – one over LSA, and several times over Home Farm Meadow. Kestrel – one along Old Railway Cutting. Sparrowhawk – one seen catching a pigeon in garden, and one flying along North Road, LSA.

Green Woodpecker – regularly on garden lawn on Cambridge Road, and on GP.

Nuthatch – single bird in top branches of ancient oak tree near Hildersham Wood.

Canada Goose – large numbers (21-46) on GP lake throughout the month, accompanied by 1-

3 Greylag and seven Barnacle Goose. Up to 35 Mallard, still mostly in eclipse plumage.

Jackdaw – large flock of 100+, with a few Rook, wheeling around Pampisford Road (28th).

Starling – flock of c50 over GP (14th).

ix. SEPTEMBER 2019

Hobby – brief sighting, flying fast and low over hedge along 'hairdresser path' on GP (26th)

Swallow – several reports up until 19th. Three successful broods reported from a site on LSA.

House Martin – single birds / small flocks reported until 29th. Flock of 100+ over GP on 24th. Swift – single bird flying over GP on 16th – unusually late in the year.

Blackcap – young or female on garden feeder on Cambridge Road. Chiffchaff – single birds on 2-3 occasions in mixed tit-flock on GP.

Robin – heard singing more regularly again from sites around the village.

Coal Tit – single bird seen in group of Great Tit and Blue Tit on garden feeder in GA.

Goldfinch – flocks of c12-15, with a few Chaffinch and Greenfinch, returning to feeders.

Goldcrest – single birds in gardens on Cambridge Road and South Road, and in Sluice Wood.

Linnet – starting to congregate into small flocks (10-20) on Abington Park Farm and GP.

Grey Wagtail – several reports single bird along river near Millennium Bridge and in Sluice Wood. Pied Wagtail – gathering in flocks of around 12-15 on GP cricket ground.

Meadow Pipit – four feeding on scrubby garden on GP.

Nuthatch – one reported in several gardens. Treecreeper – one in Cambridge Road garden.

Jay – seen collecting acorns in GP, and in a GA garden.

Red Kite – several reports of 1-2 soaring over the village centre, and at Abington Park Farm.

Sparrowhawk – several reports in gardens, usually seen chasing small birds. Buzzard – several reports of single birds flying over the village

Tawny Owl – male calling 'twoo-hoo' from trees behind Lewis Crescent (16th). Barn Owl also heard 'screeching' from same trees later in month.

Mallard – eclipse mostly over now for c80 on GP lake. Barnacle Goose (3-7) and Canada Goose (3) on lake, and nine Greylag Goose flying over.

Great Black-backed Gull – in fields adjacent to Cambridge Road, and in Perse sports fields.

x. OCTOBER 2019

Swallow – three flying over GP lake on 3rd – last report of the year.

Winter thrush – small flock of Redwing (10-15) first seen on GP on 9th and regularly since, and two Fieldfare seen in GA (on 31st). A Song Thrush also reported in Cambridge Road garden (24th).

Small flocks of birds return to garden feeders, particularly Goldfinch, Chaffinch, Great Tit, Blue Tit, Long-tailed Tit and occasionally Coal Tit at several locations. Greenfinch notable by its relative absence – only one report of a single bird.

Linnet – occasional small flock on waste ground in GP.

Skylark – 2-3 singing high above stubble fields near Abington Park Farm, and one over GP.

Goldcrest and Treecreeper – both part of mixed flock in Lagden's Grove, several occasions.

Reed Bunting – two in reedbeds around GP lake.

Cormorant – single bird fishing in GP Lake throughout the month, alongside up to c80

Mallard, several Moorhen and a single female Mandarin Duck (9th).

Sparrowhawk – one (likely juvenile) chasing a Woodpigeon in GA garden. Buzzard – three

reports of a single bird over Cambridge Road, and Sluice Wood. Kestrel – three heard

calling to each other, over GP (9th). Red Kite – one over GA and regularly over South

Road, and two over Sluice Wood (13th). Hobby – further report of two raptors, believed to be Hobbies, being mobbed by crows near Sluice Wood (4th).

Tawny Owl – several reports of 'hooting' heard around the village. A Barn Owl also heard 'screeching' in GA (17th).

Green Woodpecker and Great Spotted Woodpecker – in several gardens, and on GP.

Jay – often seen collecting acorns and flying between woodland areas on GP.

Nuthatch – a single bird in a garden on High Street LA.

Grey Wagtail – one on the river in Sluice Wood, and another in a garden with a pond in LA.

Pied Wagtail - up to 25 feeding on GP cricket ground, and on Perse sports fields.

Grey Heron – two sightings of one juvenile bird near the river. Little Egret – four reports of (presumably the same) single bird on the river near recreation ground.

Barnacle Goose – flock of seven regularly on GP cricket ground, and Perse sports fields.

Mute Swan – single juvenile on a new lake in a garden on South Road.

xi. NOVEMBER 2019

Kingfisher – single bird seen around 1-2 ponds along Chalky Road in early November.

Bullfinch – pair feeding on fruits along Old Railway Cutting. Goldfinch - (10-12) regularly on feeders, with a few Chaffinch and occasionally 1-2 Greenfinch.

Good numbers of Blue Tit (15-20 in one report) and Great Tit, with a few Coal Tit and Long-tailed Tit also regularly seen. Mixed Tit flocks also in Lagden's Grove and Sluice Wood, including an occasional Goldcrest.

Sparrowhawk – many sightings from around the village, mostly attracted to flocks of small birds on garden feeders. Red Kite – two reports of a bird over Sluice Wood, and a Buzzard regularly around Cooke's Meadow.

Tawny Owl – several reports of calling around Abington Woods, notably early in the month.

Redwing – c12 feeding on haws in Cooke's Meadow, up to c40 in Yew trees around Abington Hall, and a single bird in Cambridge Road garden. Fieldfare – flock of c30 over GP (9th), 8 flying over LSA, and 2 over great Abington.

Mistle Thrush – loud rattling alarm call heard from two on Chalky Road. Song Thrush – 1-2 on GP in amongst Redwing flock, so presumably also migrants.

Blackcap – over-wintering bird along Old Railway Cutting (9th).

Meadow Pipit – three on rough scrubby grassland on GP (8th).

Grey Wagtail – single bird on leaf rafts downstream of sluice (6th). Pied Wagtail – pair on the school roof, and a flock c15 feeding on GP cricket green.

Great Spotted Woodpecker – regularly on GP and reported at several garden feeders. Green

Woodpecker – 1-2 on several garden lawns, and on GP.
Nuthatch – one in fine breeding plumage on a garden feeder on the High Street.
Jay – 1-2 being seen again collecting food in several gardens, and in oak trees on GP.
Barnacle Goose – flock of seven regularly on GP until 20th.
Grey Heron – 1-3 in river around the sluice and in adjacent fields, and around GP lake.
Lesser Black-backed Gull – large flock feeding in fields near A11. Great Black-backed Gull and Black-headed Gull in smaller numbers flying over GP, especially in early morning.
Large flock of c500 mostly Herring Gull wheeling high over Perse playing fields (25th).
Red-legged Partridge – around 20 in field near Old Railway Cutting. Pheasant – a few starting to come into gardens.

xii. DECEMBER 2019

Fieldfare – flocks of up to 40 around GP, along with smaller numbers of Redwing.
Starling – flocks of between 800-1800 murmuring over GP most evenings towards the end of the month, before roosting in the reedbeds there.
Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull – flock of ~50 in fields beside Old Railway Cutting on 29th. A few Black-headed Gull also seen flying over GP.
Goldfinch – around 50 feeding on Fat Hen seeds in fields along Bourn Bridge Road. Regular flock of 10-12 on feeders in Lewis Crescent. Greenfinch – 1-2 regularly with Goldfinch flock on feeders, with small numbers of Chaffinch too. Bullfinch – 1-2 females along old Railway Cutting on two occasions.
Flocks of Blue Tit, Great Tit, up to 10-12 Long-tailed Tit, and occasional Coal Tit all visiting garden feeders, and in a mixed flock in Lagden's Grove.
Meadow Pipit – around 20 feeding on rough ground on GP (18th).
Song Thrush – several reports of birds singing towards end of the month. Mistle Thrush – occasionally reported singing around GP.
Jay – several reports of 1-2 birds feeding in gardens and around oak trees.
Buzzard – reports of 1-3 birds, around Cooke's Meadow, Cambridge Road and the LSA.
Sparrowhawk – seen in several gardens around both villages. Occasional reports of Kestrel. Red Kite – two sightings, one above Perse playing fields and another on the LSA.
Tawny Owl – heard calling on several occasions across the villages.
Great Spotted Woodpecker and Nuthatch on garden feeder on High St, LA. Green Woodpecker – pair in Cambridge Road garden.
Treecreeper – single bird reported in garden along Bourn Bridge Road, and in GP.
Grey Wagtail – reports of single bird feeding along river edge by sluice & Recreation Ground.
Little Egret – one along river in Sluice Wood (10th, 13th) and near Millennium Bridge (27th, 31st). Grey Heron – one regularly along river near Sluice Wood, and in a Cambridge Road garden. One also spotted being mobbed by corvids.
Cormorant – single bird flying over GP (23rd). Mallard – regularly 40-80 in GP lake early in the month. Latterly, small groups along the river, as water levels too high in the lake.
Lapwing – flock of c30 flying over fields near Pampisford Road (2nd)
Red-legged Partridge – small covey in field near Ley Rectory Farm on 17th.
Collared Dove – up to 10 around feeders on Lewis Crescent.



25: Mallard on lake, Granta Park - Nov (AM)



26: Barnacle Geese, Granta Park - Nov (AM)



27: Chaffinch ♂, Old Railway - 12 Nov (AM)



28: Robin, Old Railway - 29 Dec (AM)



29: Buzzard, Old Railway - 12 Nov (AM)



30: Sparrowhawk, High St - Dec (JT)



31: Blackbird ♀, Old Railway - Nov (AM)



32: Grey Heron, Granta Park - Nov (AM)

II. RSPB Garden Birdwatch – seen in Abington – 26th-28th January

15 reports were received, including one from Class 1 at Great Abington Primary School. In total, 32 species were seen, with varying numbers of reports for each species.

<i>Species</i>	<i>Number of Reports</i>
Blackbird	12
Black Headed Gull	2
Blue Tit	13
Carrion Crow	4
Chaffinch	8
Coal Tit	8
Collared Dove	11
Dunnock	9
Fieldfare	2
Goldfinch	8
Great Spotted Woodpecker	2
Great Tit	10
Greenfinch	4
House Sparrow	7
Jackdaw	9
Jay	2

<i>Species</i>	<i>Number of Reports</i>
Kestrel	1
Long-tailed Tit	8
Magpie	6
Moorhen	1
Nuthatch	1
Pied Wagtail	2
Redwing	1
Robin	13
Rook	4
Siskin	1
Song Thrush	2
Sparrowhawk	1
Starling	4
Stock Dove	2
Woodpigeon	13
Wren	2

III. Abington Bird Survey – Bank Holiday Weekend – 24th-27th May

10 reports were received this year.

52 species were reported: this is a list which shows how many of the 10 reports included each species and the maximum number of that species where it exceeded 5.

<i>Species</i>	<i>Reports</i>	<i>Max.</i>
Barn Owl	1	
Blackbird	10	6
Blackcap	4	
Blue Tit	8	
Bullfinch	1	
Buzzard	3	
Canada Goose	2	
Carrion Crow	4	
Chaffinch	4	
Chiffchaff	6	
Coal Tit	5	
Collared Dove	8	
Corn Bunting	2	
Dunnock	6	
Goldfinch	6	
Great Spotted Woodpecker	5	
Great Tit	7	
Greenfinch	3	
Green Woodpecker	1	
Grey Heron	2	
House Martin	3	10
House Sparrow	7	6
Jackdaw	10	10
Jay	3	
Kestrel	2	
Lesser Whitethroat	1	

<i>Species</i>	<i>Reports</i>	<i>Max.</i>
Linnet	1	
Little Grebe	1	
Long-tailed Tit	6	
Magpie	8	
Mallard	3	11
Moorhen	3	
Nuthatch	1	
Pheasant	2	
Pied Wagtail	3	
Red Kite	1	
Red-legged Partridge	2	
Reed Bunting	1	
Reed Warbler	1	
Robin	8	
Rook	6	12
Skylark	3	
Song Thrush	6	
Spotted Flycatcher	1	
Starling	6	9
Stock Dove	2	
Swallow	4	
Swift	2	8
Whitethroat	2	
Willow Warbler	1	
Woodpigeon	10	12
Wren	6	

Derek Turnidge

4. REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS

I. Summary

A quiet year, most probably the result of only 3 ponds supplying observations through the year. As expected, **Common Frogs** and **Common Toads** were active in gardens with ponds from early Spring till early Autumn, and good populations of **Smooth Newts** were reported at two ponds. Reported sightings of **Grass Snakes** remained low (only 3 for the whole year), despite some periods of very warm weather, but this may again be a reporting issue rather than a reflection of declining numbers. No other reptiles (e.g. **Slow Worms** or **Common Lizards**) were reported in 2019.

II. Amphibians

i. Common Frog

February: First reports of Frog activity in a garden pond in South Road on 22nd, with first spawn of the year appearing in a pond on Chalky Road on 26th. This is the earliest record of Frog spawn in the Abingtons since reporting began in 2011, no doubt encouraged by the five days of unusually warm weather at the end of the month.

March: Large mass of Frogspawn reported in a garden pond on Bourn Bridge Road (3rd). Frogs seen throughout the month in two garden ponds on South Road.

June and July: Small Froglets seen in and out of the pond, often in long grass, in garden in South Road.

August: First signs of adult Frogs moving out of water and finding over-wintering spots in the garden. Two were found under flowerpots in a garden in Lewis Crescent, and another found in damp vegetable patch on South Road.

ii. Common Toad

April: Large adult discovered in a bag of compost where it had presumably over-wintered, Church Lane (11th). An adult was seen in a pond on South Road later in the month.

June and July: Young Toads seen in pond on South Road. The adults are now moving out into damp, shady spots in the garden. One was found in compost and another under a wooden plank beside a greenhouse (29th July).

iii. Smooth Newt

February and March – A few Newts becoming active in pond on South Road. One was found under a pile of leaves beside pond, with a very orange belly (1st Mar).

April – From mid-month onwards, regular sightings of Newts in ponds on South Road and Cambridge Road. Also, a first-time sighting of 4 Newts in a new pond on Bourn Bridge Road.

June, July and August – Good numbers of very young Newts caught regularly by net in garden pond on South Rd. Some of these Newt ‘larvae’ have legs, others are still very tiny and fish-like. Very few sightings of adults in August as they are generally now on land in cool, damp places.

III. Reptiles

i. Grass Snakes

April – First Grass Snake of the year (20th) reported in pond on Cambridge Rd (thin, 60 cm in length).

June and July – Two sightings of a Grass Snake around pond on Cambridge Rd, both almost 1 metre long.

Anne Dunbar-Nobes

5. MAMMALS

This year there have again been frequent sightings of Muntjac, Hares and Bats.

A few Badgers, Pygmy Shrews, a Woodmouse, a Stoat, a Polecat and Short Tailed Voles have also been reported as has a small herd of Fallow Deer which is seen at times near Abington Park Farm and Hildersham Wood.

Hedgehog numbers again appear to be declining.

Moles seemed to disappear during the summer, and it was reassuring to see signs of them again in October.

Bats have been reported very late into the year with one sighting as late as 31 December. Another sign of global warming?

I. Summary report of mammal sightings:

Species	Location	Date	Number
Polecat	Between GP lake & Riverside car park	03.01.19	1
Badger	Cricket ground GA	22.01.19	1
Hare	South of cutting	10.02.19	2
Muntjac	Field edge – old railway cutting	10.02.19	2
Muntjac	Front garden LA	16.02.19	1
Muntjac	Sluice Wood	18.02.19	2
Hare	Field near Abington Park Farm	24.02.19	3
Hare	Rough Ground, Pampisford Rd	25.02.19	2
Hare	Rough Ground, Pampisford Rd	28.02.19	1
Badger	Abington Woods	28.02.19	1
Hare	Rough Ground,	01.03.19	2
Badger	Abington Woods	04.03.19	1
Hare	Rough Ground, Bourn Bridge Rd	14.03.19	2
Hare	Lagden's grove	15.03.19	1
Muntjac	Lagden's grove	15.03.19	1
Muntjac	Old railway cutting	19.03.19	2
Fox	Old railway cutting	19.03.19	2
Muntjac	Lagden's grove	25.03.19	2
Fox	Cooke's meadow	25.03.19	1
Pygmy Shrew	Garden Cambridge Rd	27.03.19	1
Hare	Hairdressers' footpath	29.03.19	4
Hare	Old railway cutting	30.03.19	2
Fox	Old railway cutting	30.03.19	1
Muntjac	Lagden's grove	01.04.19	1
Hare	Lagden's grove	01.04.19	1
Hare	Field by hairdressers' path	01.04.19	2
Hare	Field by hairdressers' path	09.04.19	4
Hedgehog	South Road	12.04.19	1
Fox	Old railway cutting	13.04.19	1
Muntjac	Old railway cutting	13.04.19	1
Hare	Old railway cutting	13.04.19	1
Hare	Field by hairdressers' path	15.04.19	5
Badger	South Road	21.04.19	1
Hare	Field by Abington Park Farm	29.04.19	2
Muntjac	By Sluice	29.04.19	1

Hare	Field by hairdressers' path	29.04.19	3
Muntjac	Field between Camb. Rd and Church La	02.05.19	1
Fallow Deer	Fields near Hildersham woods	04.05.19	8
Muntjac	Old railway cutting	24.05.19	1
Muntjac	Lagden's grove	24.05.19	1
Hare	GP field by hairdressers' path	24.05.19	2
Bat	Garden GA	24.05.19	2
Hare	GP by Illumina	5 & 7 June	3
Bat	Bridge over Granta	13.06.19	1
Muntjac	Garden Church Lane	14.06.19	1
Muntjac	Garden Cambridge Rd	18.06.19	1
Bat	Garden Cambridge Rd	19.06.19	3
Bat	Garden GA	26.06.19	
Hedgehog	Great Abington garden	May/June	(droppings)
Muntjac	Garden Cambridge Rd	June	
Bat	Garden Cambridge Rd	June	
Hedgehog	Garden Bourn Bridge Rd	June	(droppings)
Badger	Cambridge Rd	06.07.19	1
Fox	GP by Sluice Wood	02.07.19	3
Muntjac	GP by Sluice Wood	02.07.19	1
Hare	GP by Illumina	15-26.07.19	several
Pygmy Shrew	Garden Cambridge Rd	14.07.19	1
Bat	Garden Lewis Crescent	24.07.19	several
Bat, Vole, Grey Squirrel	Garden Cambridge Rd	August	
Fox	South Rd	29.08.19	1
Stoat	GP field by hairdresser path	21.08.19	1
Muntjac	Lagden's Grove	28.08.19	1
Muntjac	South Rd	30.08.19	1
Bat	Meadow Walk	01.09.19	5
Muntjac	High St. GA	01.09.19	2
Hare	GP field by hairdressers' path	06.09.19	1
Fox	GP field by hairdressers' path	06.09.19	2
Muntjac	Garden Cambridge Rd	09.09.19	2
Short-tailed Field Vole	Garden Cambridge Rd	13.09.19	1
Bats	Garden Cambridge Rd	13.09.19	several
Fallow Deer	Abington Park Farm	15.09.19	7
Badger	Chalky Road	15.09.19	1
Wood Mouse	Garden Cambridge Rd	19.09.19	1
Bat	Garden Cambridge Rd	22.09.19	several
Hare	Roman Road	01.10.19	1
Muntjac	High St. GA	01.10.19	1
Muntjac	Sluice wood	04.10.19	1
Muntjac	Garden Bourn Bridge Rd	04.10.19	2
Bat	Garden Bourn Bridge Rd	04.10.19	several
Muntjac	Sluice wood	13.10.19	1
Bat	Garden Cambridge Rd	22.10.19	several
Mole	Rec., Perse playing fields	October	
Bat	Garden Cambridge Rd	01.11.19	several
Roe Deer	Pampisford Rd	14.11.19	several
Badger	Abington Park Farm	21.11.19	3 - 4
Fallow Deer	Top end of Chalky Road	27.11.19	7

Bat	LA Church	25.12.19	1
Muntjac	High St. GA	30.12.19	1
Bat	Edge of Sluice Wood	31.12.19	1



33: Polecat, Granta Park - 3 Jan (AM)



34: Fox, Sluice Wood - July (AM)



35: Badger Visit, South Rd - 21 April (early) (ADN)



36: Fox, Old Railway - 13 Apr (AM)



37: Rabbit, Old Railway – 12 Nov (AM)



38: Muntjac, High St - 28 Dec (JAH)

6. INSECTS

I. Insect reports and reporters

This report covers mainly butterflies, bees, dragonflies and damselflies. These are the groups that members recognize and can usually identify. Other invertebrates, hardly ever reported or identified, are also mentioned at the end.

The total number of reports received this year was 1552, the most ever. The number of butterfly reports was almost 1300, up considerably on the last few years.

There are four regular reporters (includes couples) and six occasional reporters.

II. Butterflies

This was a mixed year for butterflies due to the very variable weather, particularly the large amount of rain in June and the autumn months.

This year again we saw 24 of the 34 county resident species. A few of these were more unusual for Abington with less than 10 reports.

Small White butterflies topped the ranking in the reports, with **Brimstones** in second place; these were seen in more months, from February until November. **Meadow Browns** were in third place, followed by **Red Admirals** and **Commas**; **Large Whites** were next.

There were increasing numbers of **Speckled Woods** and **Orange Tips** which is encouraging. **Ringlets** and **Gatekeepers** were down in number again. **Small Tortoiseshells** were down in numbers from previous years probably due to the very dry weather in May and beginning of June and therefore the lack of their food plants in flower.

Painted Ladies: we did not have an 'invasion' of these as we did in the notable year, 2009, when we saw hundreds (millions were seen in Britain). These butterflies migrate from Morocco via Spain and France: a very long migration, some of it over high mountains. They like dry open spaces and feed mainly on thistles – in Abington the Roman Road is a more likely place to see them than our own gardens. From the chart on the next page you will see that they were recorded in June, July and August.

First butterfly: **Peacock** on 8 Jan 2019

Last butterfly: **Red Admiral** on 18 Nov 2019

2019	Butterflies ranked by number of reports (top 12)	Last year's ranking 2018
1	Small white	1
2	Brimstone	2
3	Meadow brown	4
4	Red admiral	9
5	Comma	8
6	Large white	3
7	Speckled wood	5
8	Painted lady	Not in top 12
9	Holly blue	12
10	Orange tip	6
11	Peacock	Not in top 12
12	Small tortoiseshell	7

The table overleaf shows the butterflies seen in Abington in 2019 by month (24 species)

2019 rank	Butterflies ranked by number of reports	Reports in 2019	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
			Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
														None
1	Small White	181			8	13	20	13	57	35	34	1		
2	Brimstone	161		27	29	27	30	14	18	12		3	1	
3	Meadow Brown	114						45	57	12				
4	Red Admiral	104		1			2	15	31	25	26	2	2	
5	Comma	103		4	9	6	2	1	36	20	21	3	1	
6	Large White	91			2	3	2	7	43	24	9	1		
7	Speckled Wood	71				6	16	14	8	13	13	1		
8	Painted Lady	69						18	20	22	9			
9	Holly Blue	68				13	39	15	1					
10	Orange Tip	61			1	31	26	2	1					
11	Peacock	57	1	1	10	11	2	3	17	9	3			
12	Small Tortoiseshell	49		5	3	2	1	9	17	11	1			
13	Ringlet	38						3	30	5				
14	Gatekeeper	30							20	10				
15	Green Veined White	27				4	5	1	11	6				
16	Large Skipper	17						5	11	1				
17	Small Heath	16						5	6	2	3			
18	Common Blue	9				1			5	2	1			
19	Small Copper	9							2	2	5			
20	Essex Skipper	7						3	4					
21	Marbled White	7					1		6					
22	Small Skipper	6						1	5					
23	Brown Argus	3							1	2				
24	White Letter Hairstreak	1							1					
	Total no of reports	1299	1	38	62	117	146	174	408	213	125	11	4	

July was the best month with all 24 species being seen. November and December were both exceptionally wet and therefore very few Butterflies.

Note that the numbers in the table are not the numbers of Butterflies seen but reports of that species being seen, however many.

III. Other reports 2019

i. Bees

Bee numbers were well down on previous years. Bumble Bees were reported from April onwards but in much smaller numbers than in previous years; this reflects the national situation. Bumble Bees can be very active on the warm spring days, but the erratic weather patterns meant that they did not always have the right food plants in flower. Fewer reports of Honey Bees this year.

Bee species seen: Buff Tailed, White Tailed, Red Tailed and Tree Bumblebees, Carder Bees, Honey Bees and Mining Bees.

ii. **Bee-flies**

Several reports of Bee-flies in April and May.

iii. **Damselflies**

Fewer reports of damselflies this year.

Species seen were Azure, Common Blue and Large Red damselflies and Banded demoiselles.

iv. **Dragonflies**

Reports of dragonflies included Black Tailed Skimmer, Common Darters, Emperors and larger numbers of Southern Hawkers.

v. **Ladybirds**

Very few reports of any ladybirds and mainly of our native 7 spot ladybirds. Very few reports of harlequins.

vi. **Moths**

No moth events held this year.

Hummingbird Hawkmoths were reported in increasing numbers and a few Cinnabar Moths.

vii. **A notable spider**

A Wasp Spider was seen in August in a village garden and another on Granta Park.

The *Wasp Spider* is a very large, colourful *spider* that is a recent arrival in the UK from the continent and has slowly spread over the south of England. It builds large orb webs in grassland and heathland and attaches its silk egg-sacs to the grasses. They are not commonly seen and are not poisonous.

Jennifer Hirsh



39: Comma – 24 Feb (AM)



40: Buff tailed bumblebee – 16 Feb (AM)



41: Hairy-footed flower bee, Lewis Cr. – 13 Apr (AM)



42: Bee-fly - 24 Mar (JAH)



43: Angle Shades Moth - 15 Apr (AM)



44: Hairy-footed Flower Bee (female) - 13 Apr (AM)



45: Peacock - 8 Apr (DF)



46: Holly Blue - 25 May (AM)



47: Azure Damselfly - 22 May (DLT)



48: Large Red Damselfly - 15 May (LAM)



49: Green-veined White, Granta Park - May (AM)



50: 7-spot Ladybird. Granta Park - May (AM)



51: Honey Bee, pollen, Granta Park - May (AM)



52: Harlequin Ladybirds, Granta Park - May (AM)



53: Garden Carpet Moth, Granta Park - May (AM)



54: Hoverfly (*Episyrphus balteatus*), Lewis Cr. - Jun (AM)



55: Harlequin Ladybird larva, - Jun (AM)



56: Speckled Wood, Roman Road - 23 Jun (DF)



57: Small Heath, Granta Park - Jun (AM)



58: Painted Lady, Camb. Rd - Jun (DLT)



59: Large Skipper, Granta Park - Jul (AM)



60: Ringlet, Granta Park - Jul (AM)



61: Gatekeepers, Granta Park - Jul (AM)



62: Small Skipper, Granta Park (AM)



63: White Letter Hairstreak, Granta Park - Jul (DB)



64: Common Blue, Granta Park - Jul (AM)



65: Marbled White, Granta Park - Jul (AM)



66: Cinnabar Moth, Granta Park - Jul (AM)



67: Southern Hawker, Church La - Jul (LAM)



68: Broad-bodied Chaser, Cambridge Rd – 16 Jul (DLT)



69: Black-tailed Skimmer, Granta Park - Jul (AM)



70: Red Admiral, High St - Sep (WR)



71: Wasp Spider, High St - Aug (WR)



72: Common Darter ♀, Granta Park – Sep (AM)

7. FLORA

During January, **Snowdrop** and **Aconite** flowered in abundance in Granta Park woods and were really at their best by mid-February. **Coltsfoot** were reported in flower near Hildersham Wood on 23rd February, much earlier than last year, and **Sweet Violet** and **Celandine** were in flower on rough ground along the High Street, towards the end of the month.

Early in March, there were fantastic displays of **Sweet Violet** in many places around the village, including dark blue, pale blue and white forms, and more than seen in previous years. The first signs of spring were evident towards the end of the month: on Bourn Bridge Road, **White Dead Nettle** and **Pink Dead Nettle** were just in flower, as was a single **Buttercup**. A few **Dandelion** were in flower, as were **Celandine**, and many small **Daisies** and **Thistles**. **Mallow** and **Dock** were in leaf, as were possibly **Comfrey** and **Cow Parsley**. On Granta Park, there were many **Cowslips** in the field next to cricket ground, along with small blue flowers, possibly **Forget-me-Not**, **Dandelion**, **Dock**, **Celandine** and **Speedwell**. **Lords and Ladies** were in leaf but not in flower. A profusion of fresh green foliage of **Wild Arum** and **Dog's Mercury** carpeted the Granta Park woods, along with **Sweet Violet**, **Coltsfoot** and **Speedwell** in flower. On Cambridge Road, one **Bluebell** was seen, and along the old railway cutting **Blackthorn** buds were about to burst, and the lovely yellow **Sallow** flowers were out. **Hornbeam** was starting to come into flower towards the end of the month.

April started with the last of the **Celandines** which had been very pretty. **Bluebells** started in the middle of the month, as well as **Dandelions** and **Daisies** which have been very prolific. This year, **Buttercups** have also been good, in contrast to last year when they were generally poor. **Yellow Archangel** flowered in Sluice Wood earlier in the month on Granta Park, and **Common Storksbill** and **Early Forget-me-Not** flowered throughout the month. By the end of the month the **Umbellifers** began to flower on many roadside verges and **Cowslips** were lovely on the old railway cutting, and also on the 'entrance meadow' on Granta Park. **Wayfaring Tree** (*Viburnum lantana*) was also in full bloom at the end of the month, joined by **Hawthorn** and **Elm**. On 29th the first **Ragwort** flower was seen.

Early May brought fine displays of **Hawthorn** in full flower, as well as **White Dead-nettle**, **Hedge Bedstraw** and **Wood Forget-me-not**. Profusions of **Buttercups** and **Oxeye Daisies** on the meadows in Granta Park, with **Common Vetch**, **Milk Vetch**, **Hedgerow Cranesbill** and **Common Storksbill** on the rough open ground. Good areas of **Garlic Mustard** and **Germander Speedwell**, as well as **Herb Robert** and **Ground Ivy** were evident in Sluice Wood. **White Campion** and, more unusually, **Red Campion** was in flower along the Linton Road verges at the end of the month.

Bourn Bridge Road verges were showing significant signs of recovery by June. **Poppy** were showing well, and there were good flowers on both **Hawksbeard** and **Hawkweed**. **Lady's Bedstraw** and **Hedge Bedstraw** were not quite in flower but had plenty of buds. **Field Scabious** was coming on really well at the end of the month and **Goatsbeard** was setting seed well. **Wild Mignonette** was just showing colour and one small patch of **Scarlet Pimpernel** was seen. **Wild** and **Bladder Campion**, **Hogweed**, **Cow Parsley** and **Hemlock** were in flower. There was a small amount of **Yarrow**. All along the verges there was also plenty of **Common Mallow**. Unfortunately, there were masses of **Stinging Nettle** too, as well as **Hedge Bindweed** and **Curled Dock**. Several **Bee Orchid** and one very rare **Wasp Orchid** were reported in Granta Park, as well as **Common Spotted Orchid**, and **Pyramidal Orchid** on the old railway cutting and on Granta Park. **Viper's Bugloss** was around every corner, with an especially splendid show on the rough ground near the Granta Park main entrance. **Knapweed Broomrape** was seen along the Roman Road, and during the Lackford Lakes visit on 29th, good examples of **Southern Marsh Orchid** and one **Bee Orchid** were also seen.

In July, **Chicory** was growing especially well this year, on both sides of Bourn Bridge Road (previously only on one side) - maybe the right weather conditions - and at four other sites, one just inside the gate at the top of Chalky Road and the others round Abington Park Farm.

Great Wild Carrot plants were seen for the first time in Bourn Bridge Road verges, and there was a profusion of flowers along the Roman Road near Worsted Lodge, with 38 species being identified including: **Bladder Champion, Wild Mignonette, Creeping Cinquefoil, Perforate St John's Wort**, several bindweed species, **Hedge Bedstraw, Great Mullein, Ribwort Plantain, Mugwort, Yarrow, Lesser Burdock** and **Goatsbeard**.

On 7th August, Sally Turnidge led an evening walk, principally to look at the flora along the old railway cutting. The following species were recorded: **Burdock, Common Cudweed, Cotton Thistle, Great Bindweed, Hemp Nettle, Knapweed, Marjoram, Mignonette, Old Man's Beard, Perforated St John's Wort, Ragwort, Red Bartsia, Scabious, Teasel, Toadflax, Weld, White Campion, Wild Parsnip** and **Yellow Wort**.

In October, several flowering **Himalayan Balsam** plants were identified growing near the sluice and were subsequently removed.

Sally Turnidge



73: Snowdrops, Granta Park - Jan (AM)



74: Aconites, Granta Park - Jan (AM)



75: Sweet Violet, Granta Park - Mar (AM)



76: Red deadnettle, Granta Park - Mar (AM)



77: Early Forget-me-not, Granta Park - Apr (AM)



78: Speedwell, Granta Park - Mar (AM)



79: Celandine, Granta Park - Apr (AM)



80: Daisies, Granta Park - Apr (AM)



81: Archangel, Sluice Wood - Apr (DF)



82: Cowslips, Granta Park - Apr (AM)



83: Storksbill, Granta Park - Apr (AM)



84: Red Campion, Linton Rd - May (DF)



85: Vetch, Granta Park - May (AM)



86: Herb Robert, Granta Park - May (AM)

8. GRANTA PARK – WILDLIFE SUMMARY

I. Introduction

Granta Park has made a concerted effort throughout 2019 to attract even more wildlife and insects to the Park. The most notable addition this year is the development of ‘Bumblebee Meadow’. This is located on the land formerly used for the onsite nursery, which has moved to the southern side of the Park. We have been able to repurpose the area and sow a variety of wildflower seed during the summer, with the specific aim of attracting bees.

In July we were also able to reopen our Southern Woodland walk, this has been closed for a number of years due to the development of the Apiary and the new nursery. The landscapers have done a fantastic job of making the walk passable and staff are pleased to have another walk to explore.

We continue to encourage staff based on Granta Park to report what they see on their lunchtime walks. Anything of a significant nature is reported back to Abington Naturewatch.

II. Wildlife related events held on Granta Park during 2019

i. 25 April

At the end of April, Iain Webb from The Wildlife Trust, met a group of Granta Park staff and a few members of Abington Naturewatch for our annual Dawn Chorus Walk. As always Iain was able to help attendees identify a number of different calls. The event was enjoyed by all and well attended.

ii. 18 July & 13 September

In 2018 Granta Park became the home to four bee hives and we are thrilled to say that, thanks to the hard work of our apiarist Anna Sellen, the bees have thrived here throughout 2019.

In June we invested in an observation hive to allow us to showcase the bees to the staff across the Park. We held two extremely successful pop-up events on the cricket ground in July and September where we encouraged staff to get away from their desks and look at the bees. We had some fantastic feedback; people enjoyed having the opportunity to ask Anna questions.

At the September pop-up, some of the older children from the nursery were also able to join in and had their own mini session before the main event.



87: Beehive, Granta Park



88: Beehive, Granta Park

iii. 5 September

In conjunction with the Wildlife Trust and ecologist Sarah Lambert we held a new wildlife photography workshop for beginners. We hope that hosting events such as this help to promote mindfulness of wildlife. The amazing photograph below was taken during the workshop by Paul Brough who works at Vernalis.



iv. 16 October

The Wildlife Trust returned to Granta Park to lead our annual fungi foray. Due to some very wet weather beforehand we saw a much larger variety than usual. Species seen were:

Agaricus campestris var. *campestris* (Field Mushroom)
Agaricus moelleri (Inky Mushroom)
Agaricus xanthodermus (Yellow Stainer)
Auricularia auricula-judae (Jelly Ear)
Auricularia mesenterica (Tripe Fungus)
Bjerkandera adusta (Smoky Bracket)
Calocera cornea (Small Stagshorn)
Chlorophyllum brunneum (Brown Parasol)
Clitocybe phaeophthalma (Chicken Run Funnel)
Clitocybe rivulosa (Fool's Funnel)
Clitopilus hobsonii (Miller's Oysterling)
Coprinellus domesticus (Firerug Inkcap)
Coprinellus micaceus (Glistening Inkcap)
Crepidotus caspari (Pale Oysterling)
Crepidotus luteolus (Yellowing Oysterling)
Dacrymyces stillatus (Common Jelly Spot)
Exidia thuretiana (White Brain)
Galerina marginata (Funeral Bell)
Hebeloma crustuliniforme (Poisonpie)
Hebeloma vaccinum (Willow Poisonpie)
Hemimycena mairei (Fanvault Bonnet)
Hyphodontia sambuci (Elder Whitewash)
Inocybe rimosa (Split Fibrecap)
Lepiota cristata (Stinking Dapperling)
Leucoagaricus leucothites (White Dapperling)
Lycoperdon pyriforme (Stump Puffball)
Mycena galericulata (Common Bonnet)
Mycena inclinata (Clustered Bonnet)
Mycena olida (Rancid Bonnet)
Mycena pura (Lilac Bonnet)
Mycena rosea (Rosy Bonnet)
Parasola plicatilis (Pleated Inkcap)
Paxillus involutus (Brown Rollrim)
Peziza micropus
Pleurotus ostreatus (Oyster Mushroom)
Pluteus phlebophorus (Wrinkled Shield)
Pluteus romellii (Goldleaf Shield)
Rhodocollybia butyracea (Butter Cap)
Rhodotus palmatus (Wrinkled Peach)
Rhytisma acerinum (Sycamore Tarspot)
Rickenella fibula (Orange Moss-cap)
Stropharia coronilla (Garland Roundhead)
Trametes versicolor (Turkeytail)
Tricholoma argyraceum
Tubaria dispersa (Hawthorn Twiglet)



 Total number of unique taxa: 45

v. 28 November

In November we were delighted to add a new autumn guided walk to our social calendar and invited Iain Webb from the Wildlife Trust back to site to lead a hardy group of enthusiasts on a walk through Lagden's Grove and Sluice Wood. Despite some rain we were still able to see some excellent plant life and Iain was even able to point out some unusual moss near to the entrance of Lagden's Grove. We hope to run this walk again in 2020.

III. Dragonflies and Butterflies (by Darren Bast, Astra Zeneca)**i. Dragonflies**

2019	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	Total
Large Red Damsel				1	1	1							
Azure Damsel				1	1	1	1	1					
Common Blue Damsel					1	1	1	1					
Four-spotted Chaser						1	1						
Broad-bodied Chaser						1	1						
Black-tailed Skimmer						1	1						
Emperor						1	1						
Southern Hawker						1	1						
Migrant Hawker									1	1			
Banded Demoiselle						1	1						
Brown Hawker						1	1	1					
Norfolk Hawker													
Hairy					1	1							
Common Darter						1	1	1	1	1			
Ruddy Darter						1	1						
Numbers				2	4	13	11	4	2	2			14 species

ii. Butterflies

2019	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	Total
Brimstone			1	1	1	1							
Comma			1	1	1	1	1	1	1				
Peacock			1	1	1	1		1	1	1			
Small Tortoiseshell			1	1	1	1							
Small White			1	1	1	1		1	1	1			
Orange Tip				1	1	1							
Large White				1	1	1		1	1	1			
Wood White													
Clouded Yellow													
Common Blue					1	1			1				
Gatekeeper						1	1	1					
Green Hairstreak													
Purple Hairstreak						1	1	1					
White Letter Hairstreak						1	1						
Black Letter Hairstreak													
Brown Hairstreak													
Green Veined White				1	1	1							

Holly Blue				1	1	1			1	1			
Large Skipper						1	1						
Marbled White						1	1						
Meadow Brown						1	1	1					
Painted Lady						1	1	1	1				
Red Admiral				1	1	1	1						
Ringlet						1	1						
Essex Skipper						1	1						
Chequered Skipper													
Silver Spotted													
Grizzled Skipper													
Dingy Skipper													
Small Copper				1	1	1	1		1				
Small Skipper						1	1	1					
Speckled Wood				1	1	1			1	1			
Brown Argus					1	1	1						
Chalkhill Blue													
Adonis Blue													
Large Blue													
Wall													
Swallowtail													
Small Heath						1	1		1				
Large Heath													
White Admiral													
Purple Emperor													
High Brown Fritillary													
Dark Green Fritillary						1	1						
Silver Washed Fritillary							1						
Pearl Bordered Fritillary													
Marsh Fritillary													
Glanville Fritillary													
Heath Fritillary													
Grayling													
Numbers			5	12	14	26	17	9	10	5	0	0	27 species

IV. *Birds (contributed by Andy Merryweather, Astra Zeneca)*

Many thanks to all those who contributed bird sightings on Granta Park throughout 2019. A total of 73 species were reported, in a total of over 2,500 individual records – the highest number for several years. This year, Granta Park bird sightings have been combined and summarised alongside bird sightings from elsewhere in the villages (Section 3), with just a short summary and table for Granta Park being included here.

A number of species were reported for the first time on Granta Park (and indeed in the Abingtons) this year: a female **Goosander** was seen flying over the lake early on 23rd March; a group of five **Sand Martin**, also flying low over the lake on 4th April; and a **Hobby** was spotted during the autumn migration, hunting for prey along the hedges to the east of the site.

Several other species were seen more frequently on Granta Park than previous years, although these species were also seen elsewhere in Abington: **Skylark** were heard singing whilst hovering over the rough ground to the east of the site, perhaps a sign that they were considering nesting; a **Whitethroat** was heard singing in the woods along Pampisford Road in May, and a large flock of **Lapwing** was seen in December; **Red Kite** were more commonly seen, most often soaring around the edges of the site in search of carrion; and **House Sparrows** were reported on a few occasions, quite unusually for Granta Park.

Other highlights included the return of the pair of **Little Owl**, which again nested on site and are believed to have successfully fledged young. A pair of **Great Crested Grebe** also returned to the lake in May, and were seen courting, but shortly afterwards one bird departed and they failed to nest. A **Kingfisher** was spotted on several occasions in July and August, this likely being the same bird staying in the area, but the low river level later in the year would have made it very difficult for the bird to remain. Both **Grey Wagtail** and **Yellow Wagtail** were reported more frequently, the latter being a more unusual summer visitor, and was seen several times in August.



89: Little Owl, Granta Park - Apr (AM)

In the spring and early summer, several warbler species arrived and could be heard singing: **Blackcap**, **Chiffchaff** were first to be heard in March, followed by **Whitethroat** and **Willow Warbler** in April and May, and the last being a single **Reed Warbler**, which sang in the reeds during May and June in the vain hope of finding a mate. **Swallow**, **Swift** and **House Martin** were seen again this year, arriving in April/May and departing in August/September, but in noticeably lower numbers than previous years, perhaps not helped by the 'netting' of several buildings to discourage nesting. Sadly, the **Spotted Flycatcher**, several of which nested on site in 2017, again failed to return this year, in line with much of the rest of the UK.

The lake and river held the usual variety of water birds, some of which like **Mallard** and **Moorhen** successfully nested and reared young. Others included **Barnacle Goose**, **Greylag Goose** and **Canada Goose**, the latter with young; **Grey Heron** and **Little Egret**, particularly in the spring and autumn; and the odd more interesting species, such as **Tufted Duck**, **Mandarin Duck** and a **Cormorant**.

Of the winter visitors, **Fieldfare** and **Redwing** were seen from January until their departure in March or early April, returning again in October. Large numbers of **Starling** again gathered late in the year in large flocks of 800 to 1500, their 'murmurations' making spectacular patterns in the sky before finally settling to roost in the reedbeds around the lake.

*The table below indicates the number of times each bird species was reported, by month. The darkness of the blue shading representing the relative number of reports. The pale shading in the first column indicates those species seen in 2019, but not reported in recent previous years. **Contributors:** Darren Bast, Peter Brunning, Mike and Lois Bull, Francis Daunt, David and Gaynor Farrant, MedImmune, Andy Merryweather, Rachel Oldridge, Gareth Rees, Sally Simmonds, Richard Smith, Derek Turnidge, Sally Turnidge.*

2019 Total: 73 species	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Barnacle Goose	2	1				1	10	5	7	6	6		38
Blackbird	16	7	13	13	6	9	8	3	2	6	6	6	95
Blackcap			3	10	5	9	10	1					38
Black-headed Gull	16	9	3				1			2	4	4	39
Blue Tit	17	9	12	11	4	7	4	6	4	7	9	2	92
Bullfinch			1										1
Buzzard	5	5	5	9	4	3	2	2	4	5	5	2	51
Canada Goose	8	7	9	3	3	10	10	6	3				59
Carrion Crow	15	9	11	14	3	8	10	5	4	8	8	5	100
Chaffinch	5	3	3	4	1	2	3				4	2	27
Chiffchaff	1		8	16	4	7	9	1	3				49
Coal Tit	1	5	6	6	1		3						22
Collared Dove		1	1		1			1	1	1	3		9
Cormorant			4	4		1	1			5		1	16
Duncock	7	5	6	9		4	3			3	1	1	39
Fieldfare	6	6		2						1	1		16
Goldcrest	5	1	1	1			1	2	2	2		1	16
Goldfinch	7	8	7	10	4	8	8	3	6	4	9	4	78
Goosander			1										1
Great Black-backed Gull	1						1		1		2		5
Great Crested Grebe					3	2							5
Great Spotted Woodpecker	9	4	6	4	2	4	4	2	1	1	6	4	47
Great Tit	18	10	13	13	3	5	4	4	5	6	6	4	91
Green Woodpecker	4	5	13	10		6	10	6	3	5	4	1	67
Greenfinch	2	1	2	2	1	1				1	4	1	15
Grey Heron	13	9	7	7	3	1				2	3	4	49
Grey Wagtail		2	2	2				1		2	1		10
Greylag Goose	1		1	5	2	10	8	4	1				32
Herring Gull	2			1		1	1	1			2	3	11
Hobby									1				1
House Martin				1	6	13	13	7	4				44
House Sparrow			1		1								2
Jackdaw	15	9	12	12	5	10	3	3	5	7	9	5	95
Jay	3		2	2		4	2		1	7	6	3	30
Kestrel	2	2	5	3	2	7	3			4	2		30
Kingfisher							2	1					3
Lapwing												1	1
Lesser Black-backed Gull									1				1
Linnet		3	13	10		1	4	2	3	2	1		39
Little Egret	3	3	5			1				1		1	14
Little Owl			4	5		11	7						27
Long-tailed Tit	9	5	8	7	3	1	5	3	3	6	5	3	58
Magpie	10	6	11	4	2	7	6	5	3	6	7	4	71
Mallard	21	12	14	14	3	10	10	6	6	7	7	4	114
Mandarin Duck										1			1
Meadow Pipit	2	3		1					1		1	1	9
Mistle Thrush	5	6	5	3	1	1					3	4	28
Moorhen	18	11	11	6	3	9	8	4	4	5	8	2	89
Pheasant		1	3	3		1	2	1	1	2	1		15
Pied Wagtail	7	8	5	9	4	8	6	4	4	4	3	3	65
Red Kite	1	2	1			2					1		10
Red-legged Partridge			2	3		3		1					9
Redwing	16	8	2							6	6	2	40
Reed Bunting	3	3	1	2	2	5	2			2			20
Reed Warbler					2	1							3
Robin	19	11	14	12	6	7	6	5	5	7	8	2	102
Rook	9	6	11	12	4	4		1		6	5	1	59
Sand Martin				1									1
Skylark					1	1				2			4
Song Thrush	8	11	8	12	3	5	3				3	2	55
Sparrowhawk	2	1	1				1				1	2	8
Starling	9	9	6	7	3	3	3	4	2	5		2	53
Stock Dove	8	7	7	2	2	5	6	4	1	1	3	1	47
Swallow				2	2	3	5	4		1			17
Swift				1	5	10	11	1					28
Tawny Owl			1							1	2		4
Treecreeper	1			1	1					1		1	5
Tufted Duck						1							1
Whitethroat					1								1
Willow Warbler				3		1							4
Woodpigeon	15	8	12	10	7	11	12	8	6	7	7	5	108
Wren	11	6	13	10	5	9	9	2	3	5	6	4	83
Yellow Wagtail								3					3
Total Reports	358	248	316	314	124	254	240	122	101	166	179	98	2520

9. FUNGI (selected photos)



90: *Agaricus bisporus*, Lewis Cresc – 10 Mar (AM)



91: Bracket fungus, Old Railway – 20 Mar (AM)



92: Dryad Saddle *Polyporus squamosus*, GP – 26 Jun (AM)



93: Oyster Mushrooms *Pleurotus ostreatus*, GP – Jul (AM)



94: *Boletus* fungus, Granta Park – 23 Aug (AM)



95: Fairy Ring, Granta Park – Oct (AM)



96: Shaggy Inkcap, nr Hildersham Wood – Oct (ADN)



97: Parasol Mushroom, Ab. Woods – Oct (JAH)

10. VISITS OUT OF THE ABINGTONS

I. Bird Outings

i. Visit to Fen Drayton Lakes – 23 February

In glorious spring sunshine, six members enjoyed a walk around the RSPB Fen Drayton Lakes reserve on Saturday 23rd Feb. As well as seeing a good variety of bird species and large numbers of ducks, we were lucky enough to get great views of a Marsh Harrier hunting effortlessly above the reedbeds, and a Water Rail briefly, as it scuttered across the water between reedbeds just in front of us. It was also heard making its strange 'grunting, squealing' call, known as 'sharming', from the reeds shortly afterwards.



98: Tufted Duck ♂ (AM)



99: Great-crested Grebe (pair) (AM_

Bird species seen were:

Blackbird	Goldeneye	Moorhen
Black-headed Gull	Great Black-backed Gull	Mute Swan
Blue Tit	Great Crested Grebe	Pochard
Bullfinch	Great Tit	Reed Bunting
Carrion Crow	Green Woodpecker	Robin
Cetti's Warbler	Grey Heron	Shoveler
Chaffinch	Greylag Goose	Song Thrush
Common Gull	Jay	Teal
Coot	Lapwing	Tufted Duck
Cormorant	Long-tailed Tit	Water Rail
Dunnock	Magpie	Wigeon
Egyptian Goose	Mallard	Woodpigeon
Gadwall	Marsh Harrier	Wren

The group also saw a few Brimstone butterflies, out in the gloriously warm sunshine, and broke out the sunhats in celebration!



100: Break time! (AM)



101: What bird? Where? (DF)

ii. Visit to Lackford lakes – 29th June

13 members went on this visit on the morning of a very hot day.

The following birds were heard or seen – 46 species:

Blackbird	Lapwing
Blackcap	Little Egret
Black-headed Gull	Little Grebe
Blue Tit	Long-tailed Tit
Buzzard	Magpie
Canada Goose	Mallard
Carrion Crow	Marsh Harrier
Cetti's Warbler	Marsh Tit
Chiffchaff	Moorhen
Common Tern	Mute Swan
Coot	Oystercatcher
Cormorant	Red Kite (just before arriving)
Dunnock	Reed Bunting
Egyptian Goose	Reed Warbler
Goldfinch	Robin
Great Crested Grebe	Song Thrush
Great Tit	Spotted Flycatcher
Grey Heron	Swift
Greylag Goose	Teal
Hobby	Tufted Duck
House Martin	Tufted x Pochard hybrid
Jay	Woodpigeon
Kingfisher	Wren

Damselflies and Dragonflies included:

Common Blue Damselfly, Beautiful Damselfly, Four-spotted Chaser, Southern Hawker and Banded Demoiselle.

Butterflies:

Comma, Meadow Brown, Painted Lady, Red Admiral, Ringlet, Small White.

Among flora noted were:

Marsh and Bee Orchids and Viper's Bugloss.



102: Egyptian Goose (BMB)



103: Grey Heron (BMB)

Derek Turnidge

11. REFERENCES

I. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre (CPERC)

CPERC (<http://www.cperc.org.uk/>) collates, manages and stores data that describe biodiversity in the local area. It is the main source of natural history and protected species information for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough. In the past we have provided some of our records to them, notably about native species in decline and undesirable non-native species.

CPERC now has an online recording website *CPERC Record* where you can submit wildlife sightings for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. To get started, log in or register at www.cperc-record.org.uk.

II. Local Wildlife organisations

Wildlife Trust (for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire):
<http://www.wildlifebcn.org/>

III. RiverCare

A small group of NatureWatch members make up the Abington RiverCare team, which is affiliated to the regional *RiverCare* organisation <http://www.rivercare.org.uk/>. This, together with *BeachCare*, is run in East Anglia by [Keep Britain Tidy](#), a national environmental charity, in partnership with [Anglian Water](#).

IV. GB non-native species secretariat (GBNNSS)

The GB Invasive Non-native Species Strategy was developed to meet the challenge posed by invasive non-native species in Great Britain. See <http://www.nonnativespecies.org/>.

V. Cam Valley Forum

RiverCare members also occasionally attend Cam Valley Forum events. This is a voluntary group, established in 2001, which works to protect and improve the environment of the River Cam and its tributaries – see <http://www.colc.co.uk/cambridge/cam.valley.forum/>.

VI. Naturewatch documents:

Flora Abingtonia 2008, compiled by Pat Daunt:

<http://www.theabingtons.org.uk/site/assets/files/1179/flora-abingtonia-full.pdf>

River Sampling 2006-2011

<http://www.theabingtons.org.uk/site/assets/files/1179/riversampling.pdf>

Bird species noted in the Abingtons – a summary compiled by Derek:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1yb4L187I48652mB4iO61lw7NwFFzQ5HL>

"What's that bird?" – by Andy M:

- Warblers <https://goo.gl/eFXYZo> and Buntings <https://goo.gl/8BhaLx>
- Raptors: Falcons <https://goo.gl/wunx4b> and Accipiters <https://goo.gl/QUhpeK>

12.CONTACT INFORMATION

I. The Abington Naturewatch Website

The Abington Naturewatch Website is maintained as a *blog* (i.e. web log) at <http://abington-naturewatch.blogspot.com/>. Using a blog means that it is simpler to publish material in diary form. It is easily reached from the village website <http://www.theabingtons.org.uk/>: there is also a Naturewatch page under **Clubs**, which gives access to past issues of *The Record*.

The blog lists the aims of the group and has details of members' meetings. Those interested are encouraged to join – there is no membership fee! Members receive personal invitations to meetings, by email if available.

There is a link to a simple Google map of the area, with the names we use to refer to some parts of the area covered. There are also reports and photographs submitted by members and some useful links to other sources of information. See next page for contacts.

Naturewatch Home Page:

Abington Naturewatch

This is a place to post sightings and news for the Naturewatch group of Great and Little Abington in Cambridgeshire, UK. See below for more details and information on how to join.

Sunday, 29 December 2019

Splashes of colour

On his walk along the Old Railway Cutting this morning, Andy M found some splashes of colour in amongst an otherwise rather drab scene.



Rosehips - still bright and plentiful



Resources

- [Events Calendar](#)
- [2019 Naturewatch Programme](#)
- [NatureWatch contacts](#)

Blog Archive

- 2007 (18)
- 2008 (19)
- 2009 (21)
- 2010 (18)
- 2011 (35)
- 2012 (30)
- 2013 (32)
- 2014 (49)
- 2015 (54)
- 2016 (62)
- 2017 (58)
- 2018 (53)
- ▼ 2019 (145)
 - January (3)
 - February (4)
 - March (10)
 - April (23)
 - May (19)
 - June (18)
 - July (21)
 - August (11)
 - September (11)
 - October (12)
 - November (5)
 - ▼ December (8)
 - Nov 2019. Interesting sightings around the Abingto...
 - [ANW November Members Meeting - Photo-Identificatio...](#)
 - [Such wet weather](#)
 - [Sunrise message](#)

II. The Abington Naturewatch Project Team and Sectors

The team is always interested to hear of any sightings in the Great and Little Abington parishes, especially accompanied by photos that can be published on our website.

Programme Coordinator (and Membership Secretary)

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RiverCare, Record

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Amphibians & Reptiles

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Insects

Jennifer Hirsh, 34 High Street, Little Abington

☎ 01223 893 352

Email: jennifer@hirsh.com

Mammals

Gill Smith, 1 Bourn Bridge Road, Little Abington

☎ 01223 892 759

Email: richardandgill.smith@live.co.uk

Flora

Vacancy – volunteer welcome!

RiverCare

Robin Harman, 22 West Field, Little Abington

☎ 01223 891 730

Email: robandkayharman@gmail.com

Website / Blog – submission of photos etc.

Andy Merryweather, 6, Lewis Crescent, Great Abington

Email: amerryweather61@gmail.com

Granta Park

Eleanor Miller, Granta Park Estate Office, Great Abington

☎ 01223 893 710

Email: eleanor.miller@grantapark.co.uk

