



Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve
biodiversity report
2007

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biodiversityreport



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Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve Biodiversity Report 2007.

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Foreword

Welcome to the Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve Biodiversity Report for 2007.

It's been a busy year for biological surveys and monitoring with a deluxe suite of bird surveys continuing including the breeding bird, nest box and wintering bird monitoring as well as ringing studies and migrant bird counts. The remainder of the invertebrate survey was completed by Mike Edwards and bumblebee and sickle-bearing bush-cricket monitoring was started. The Hastings Botany Group continued habitat monitoring in Warren Glen and Ecclesbourne Meadow and monitoring of the vegetation changes within the farm fields and arable margins was undertaken.

Many thanks to everyone that has worked extremely hard, sometimes in awful weather and at very unsociable hours to monitor and survey the wildlife of Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve. Without this information it would be very difficult to manage the site to benefit wildlife and to provide a rich wildlife experience for the residents and visitors to Hastings. Also thanks to everyone that has added records to the **wild**hastings website. This is invaluable information we would not normally receive any other way.

Andy Phillips - Nature Reserve Officer

▽ **Sickle-bearing Bush-cricket** *Phaneroptera falcata*



Introduction

This report provides a brief account of the wildlife of the nature reserve and wildlife reports for 2007 based on the records gained from monitoring and survey projects and records received via wildhastings.org.uk.

The Reserve

Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve is a 345ha area of maritime cliff and slope, ancient gill woodland, acid grassland, heathland, semi-natural grassland and farmland a large proportion of which sits within the Hastings Cliffs To Pett Beach SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) and the Hastings Cliffs SAC (Special Area of Conservation). The site is entirely owned by Hastings Borough Council and was declared a Local Nature Reserve in 2006. The site sits within the High Weald AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and a large proportion of East Hill is a scheduled ancient monument.



△ Cliff and undercliff habitat.

Soft Rock Cliff

The cretaceous clays and sands that make up the soft rock coastal cliffs from Rock-a-nore to Cliff End support a rich invertebrate fauna and cliff nesting bird population. A diverse mosaic of soft rock cliff habitats can be found from extensive areas of bare ground & early successional vegetation to mature undercliff woodland.

In places where the cliff is steep and actively eroding only landslip debris, bare ground, or very early

successional vegetation dominated by **colt's-foot** *Tussilago farfara*, **thrift** *Armeria maritima* subsp. *maritima*, **sea carrot** *Daucus carota* subsp. *gummifer*, and **sea-beet** *Beta vulgaris* subsp. *maritima* occur. At Rock-a-nore **hoary stock** *Matthiola incana* can also be found and the rare weevil *Lixus scabricollis* is common on its food plant **sea-beet**. The local leaf beetle *Chrysolina banksi* is also present here. This species is very local in south-east England. At Covehurst the very rare lichen *Tornabea scutellifera* was once present but this species is now considered extinct although could

still occur as much of the cliff-face is inaccessible to lichenologists.

A few dozen pairs of **fulmar** *Fulmarus glacialis* and **herring gull** *Larus argentatus* nest on cliff ledges as well as smaller numbers of **lesser black-backed gull** *Larus fuscus*. **Peregrines** *Falco peregrinus* and **kestrels** *Falco tinnunculus* breed as well as up to five pairs of **black redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*. **Great cormorants** *Phalacrocorax carbo* once bred regularly but now only breed in small numbers occasionally.

The extensive areas of undercliff range from pioneer communities

▽ **Hoary Stock** *Matthiola incana*



such as pockets of reedbed to mature woodland. Seepages and trickles have produced large areas of wet mud and shallow pools that support nationally scarce water beetles such as *Laccobius atrophilus* and *Acupalpus falvicollis* and the ground beetle *Tachys micros*. Where the gill streams reach the cliff edge more permanent channels of flowing water form which support the only south-east England population of the rare water beetle *Hydraena pygmaea*.



△ *Lixus angustatus*

The nationally scarce moths **Webb's wainscot** *Archanara sparganii* and **reed dagger** *Simyra albovenosa* have been found on the small areas of reedbed and reedmace edged pools.

The dryer areas of undercliff are

very rich in invertebrates including **grey bush-crickets** *Platycleis albopunctata* and the comb-foot spider *Episinus truncatus* which can be found amongst tall vegetation, and even a small population of **small blue** *Cupido minimus* butterflies which just hang on due to patches of **kidney vetch** *Anthyllis vulneraria*

along the undercliff at covehurst. A number of nationally rare and scarce bees and wasps have been recorded breeding here but the site is especially

important for

the large populations of **long-horned bee** *Eucera longicornis* and *Andrena thoracica*, which are both declining species in Britain and *Eucera* is now a Priority Species for Conservation in Britain. The undercliff has also produced the last British records

of the endangered weevil *Lixus angustatus*. This species has not been recorded for many years and is now considered not to breed in Britain any more.

Mature woodland has developed on the largest and most stable area of undercliff at Covehurst Bay. **Bird's-nest orchids** *Neottia nidus-avis* can be found here but due to the dangerous unstable ground this woodland sits on it is very inadvisable to look for them. Some interesting bryophytes have been found here including *Lophocolea fragrans*, which is not found anywhere else in south-east England. In recent years this area has been actively moving again and is now inaccessible.

Maritime Heath and Grassland

The small pockets of cliff-top maritime grassland that remain still support populations of the nationally rare weevil *Cathormiocerus myrmecophilus*, the rare ant mimic ground spider *Micaria romana*, and the ant mimic



△ **Bell Heather**

jumping spider *Myrmyrachne formicaria*.

The larger areas of rabbit grazed cliff-top acid grassland support a large population of **glow-worms** *Lampyris noctiluca* and **minotaur beetles** *Typhaeus typhoeus*. The **bee-wolf wasp** *Philanthus triangulum* and many other species of wasp and bees nest in the bare sandy ground here. Amongst the heather the **lesser cockroach** *Ectobius panzeri* can be found as well the

heather bumblebee *Bombus jonellus*, a tiny bumblebee that collects heather pollen. **Greater broomrape** *Orobanche rapum-genistae* grows erratically on the many patches of gorse scrub and **Dartford warblers** *Sylvia undata* have been nesting here in recent years amongst the **stonechats** *Saxicola torquata*, **yellowhammers** *Emberiza citrinella* and **common linnets** *Carduelis cannabina*.

The most significant find amongst the cliff-top grassland, during August 2006, is the first breeding colony of **sickle-**

bearing bush-cricket

Phaneroptera falcata to be found in Britain. There is more detail about this insect later in the report.

Semi-natural Neutral Grassland and Meadow

Some large areas of semi-improved neutral meadow still exist on the clifftop and all the old cliff-top arable land has been reverted back to semi-natural grassland mainly to provide a pollen and nectar source for many of the bees that nest on the cliff and undercliff such as *Eucera longicornis*.

▽ **Sickle-bearing Bush-cricket** *Phaneroptera falcata*



Recently **Cepero's groundhoppers** *Tetrix ceperoi* and **Roesel's bush-cricket** *Metrioptera roeselii* have been found amongst areas of semi-natural grassland within the site.



△ **Roesel's Bush-cricket** *Metrioptera roeselii*

Ancient Gill Woodland

Where springs have cut through the softer clays and sands over millennia steep sided gill woodlands have developed. These are very rich in rare and scarce

bryophytes (mosses & liverworts) and diptera (two-winged flies).

These humid, frost-free wooded valleys have acted as refugia for species that require mild humid conditions all year round that are present in the northern and western parts of Britain but are very rare in south-east England. These include the rare liverwort *Dumortiera hirsuta* found in Fairlight Glen, and the nationally scarce money spider *Diplocephalus protuberans* that lives in streamside leaf litter in Ecclesbourne Glen.

Other scarce bryophytes found here include *Tortula freibergeri* and *Fissidens rivularis*. Few orchids have been recorded but **violet helleborines** *Epipactis purpurata* can be found growing in Fairlight Glen.

Many scarce diptera have been recorded recently including a number of county firsts. Other interesting invertebrates recorded here include the nationally scarce water beetles, *Hydraena nigrita* and *H. rufipes*, the moths' **cloaked carpet** *Euphyia biangulata* and

festoon *Apoda limacodes* and the snail *Acicula fusca*. **Hop** *Humulus lupulus* grows along the woodland edge and beside paths in Ecclesbourne Glen and is probably the source of the adult **buttoned snout** *Hypena rostralis* moths recorded at the site, although no larvae have been found.

A population of **dormice** *Muscardinus avellanarius* thrive within the woodland, woodland edge and scrub at the site.



wildlife reports



2007

Mammals, Reptiles & Amphibians



The first reptile record for the year was of five **common lizards** sun-basking in some warm mid winter sunshine at Warren Cottage Garden on 15th January.

Mammal reports are usually sparse for the site with only cetaceans (whales & dolphins) routinely recorded. This will hopefully change with the start of a small mammal trapping project to provide a distribution of the small mammals at the site and the setting up of an on-line collaborative mammal recording spreadsheet.

The first mammal record of the year was of two **harbour porpoise** loafing inshore at the mouth of Ecclesbourne Glen on 28th January. There were no more records until a single **harbour porpoise** was seen in the same area on the 6th September and a **bottle-nose dolphin** was seen on the 5th.

A **grey seal** was seen inshore below Warren Glen on 17th October.

Two **roe deer**, the most commonly recorded deer species at the site, were seen in the North's Seat area on 21st March and some **roe deer** tracks were seen along the muddy bridleway nearby opposite Fairlight Lodge at the beginning of the month.

▽ Common Lizard



Birds



January

Due in no small part to the rather mild conditions bird sightings throughout the month were fairly unremarkable. The farm recorded very low numbers of wintering birds, the failure of the barley crop not helping matters. The only **reed bunting** noted were three on 27th, during the winter bird survey, this survey also revealed two **chiffchaff** (a good multiple winter sighting), and a rare sighting of a **hawfinch** near Fairlight Glen. Also a good count of 26 **song thrush**, most using the uncut parts of A05 (the quarry field), was a good indication how tall weedy fields can benefit birds,

and there was also a single **red kite** seen flying over North's Seat. Up to three **Dartford warblers** wintered on the Firehills.

Ravens were seen throughout the month with up to two being present, this heralded the start of an unprecedented year for this species and by the middle of the year up to four birds may have been using the site.

The non-estuarine wintering water bird survey found some good totals for the area, with 126 **turnstone**, five **purple sandpiper**, a rare sighting of a **great-northern diver**, and a **Slavonian grebe**, but lower than expected totals of **red-throated diver** (10), **ringed plover** (2), **guillemot** (2), **great-crested grebe** (10), **redshank** (2) and **oystercatcher** (10). Also offshore during the month were seven **eider**. A rare winter record here now, this species used to winter here regularly but is now more often recorded during passage. Two **black redstarts** were found wintering around Ecclesbourne Glen.

February

February continued where January left off, with low numbers of farmland birds present. These low counts made a passage flock of 22 **skylark** on the 7th all the more pleasing.

The winter bird survey found only one larger than usual count, and that was 147 **carrion crow**! Other sightings throughout the month included a wintering male **blackcap**, and unusual records of single **little owl** and **lesser-spotted woodpecker**.

A **Dartford warbler** sang in Warren Glen for a couple of days towards the end of the month and the male **peregrine** returned to site from 7th.

March

The wintering bird survey still recorded lower than expected numbers this month, however good counts were made for **song thrush** (24) and **carrion crow** (116), the thrushes were still in the uncut fields and the crows were attracted to the grazed fields. A large flock of **carrion crows** and



△ **Wheatear** - Mali Halls

jackdaw also held 4 **rook** and a very rare record of a **hooded crow**. Also during the survey two **lesser redpoll** were recorded.

Records of early spring migrants were scarce during the month but on the 14th the first **wheatear** was recorded, along with three **chiffchaff** and a very early **willow warbler**. By the end of the month **chiffchaff** and **blackcap** had become widespread.

April

Migration got into full swing during April with many interesting counts and sightings. There was a better than usual run of **nightingale** records with birds noted on 5th, 11th-12th, 15th, 21st and 26th, almost certainly the best spring ever for this species here.

There were two **wheatear** on the 5th with one or two regularly reported throughout the month, a **ring ouzel** was also seen on the 5th, a few days before a good influx was noted along the Kent coast. The 5th also saw the first **whitethroat** of the year, along

with good counts of 68 **chiffchaff** and 25 **goldcrest**. The 11th was a quiet day, enlivened by a female **marsh harrier** seen flying east.

On the 12th the first **common redstart** and **garden warbler** arrived but it was the 15th before the first **lesser whitethroat** was seen. Also on 15th the peak spring count of 69 **chiffchaff** was achieved, a female **black redstart** was on the farm and there was a most unusual record of three **whimbrel** feeding on one of the cattle grazed fields.

The 25th marked the next main arrival with the first **swift** (2) and

▽ **Common Redstart** being ringed - Ian Standivan



a male **sedge warbler**, which started singing in the quarry. It remained until the 26th when it had moved to the tall vegetation in the quarry field. On the 26th the first **cuckoo**, **pied flycatcher** and **hobby** were noted. Good counts of commoner migrants at this time included 74 **whitethroat**, 14 **garden warbler** and 59 **willow warblers**.

Diurnal passage was recorded throughout the month with the more notable counts being 259 **wood pigeon** east on 5th, followed by 393 east on 15th, 137 **chaffinch** east on 5th as well as two male **sparrowhawks**, two **Canada geese** flew west along the Firehills on 5th, probably heading towards Ecclesbourne Reservoir. The 12th saw **yellow wagtails** feature with one on the fields and four flying east, two **tree pipit** flew east, and there was an unusual spring record of a **great-spotted woodpecker** flying east.

On the 26th there was a small movement offshore including 8 **common** and 1 **arctic tern** and 5 **whimbrel** also flew east.

A **grey heron** was seen on 25th and then one to three birds were noted throughout the rest of the year, this species certainly seems to be increasing here.

May

May was in general a little quieter than expected with no real influxes or large passage movements recorded. A gull flock was attracted to the farm fields as they were ploughed and on the 2nd this flock contained 3 **Mediterranean**, 1 **lesser black-backed**, 120 **herring** and 21 **black-headed gulls**.

A small passage occurred on the 5th with 42 **swallow** recorded flying east, a **buzzard**, the largest count of the month for **whitethroat** (60) and single **turtle dove**, **nightingale** and **spotted flycatcher**.

After this time there was very little of note recorded until the 17th when a pair of **shelduck** arrived and spent a couple of days wandering around the site, also on this date two **sand martin** and a single **cuckoo** were recorded.

June & July

Both June and July were rather quiet months for bird sightings with more concentration being paid to the breeding birds than hunting for late migrants.

June started with a great sighting of two **purple herons** flying east-south-east over the raptor watch-point (the view-point at the end of the Access For All Trail West) on 2nd. An unusual record of a **turtle dove** was made on 9th, one of very few seen in the nature reserve this year. Also on the

▽ **Peregrine** - Mali Halls



9th a **hobby** was recorded, and another was seen on 27th. Also on 27th eight **mallard** flew north-west and an adult **Mediterranean gull** flew south-west.

The real surprise in July was the number of waders recorded, with a **spotted redshank** flying west on 8th with eight **curlew**, later in the month two **whimbrel** flew west on 28th. The first signs of migration were a **sand martin** on 25th and 2 **reed warbler** on 28th.

August

August was an incredibly busy month with several good birds being recorded, the scarcest being a **honey buzzard**, which flew west on 25th. Of note were a small number of wader records with a westerly passage of single **little ringed plover** and **curlew** being detected on 27th.

The month was notable for large numbers of common migrants, peak counts included five **whinchat** on 2nd with seven recorded on 27th, between one to four were noted most days, two **reed warblers** were seen on the

1st and another on the 27th, two **sedge warblers** were also noted on 1st and another was seen on 4th. **Whitethroat** numbers built up throughout the month with 22 on 1st, 36 on 2nd and a huge count of 131 on 27th. The peak count of **wheatear** was five on 27th with one or two being seen most days throughout the month, good numbers of **tree pipits** were recorded with 10 west on the 27th being the highest count, there were more records than usual of this species actually on the ground and these included a good count of five on 2nd. Small numbers of **yellow wagtail** were recorded from the 1st with larger numbers towards the end of the month, these counts included 12 west on 27th and 54 east on 29th.

Between one to four **garden warbler** were recorded all month, with similar numbers of **lesser whitethroat** but there were isolated peak counts of 11 on 2nd and 8 on 27th for that species. One or two **common redstart** were recorded throughout the month, probably different birds being seen daily, making this one of the best

recent autumns for this species.

One or two **hobby** were seen during the month but three flew east on 29th and a **buzzard** flew west on 8th.

Large counts of **willow warblers** were made with peak counts being 83 on 2nd and a truly huge 219 on 27th. Also on 27th four **spotted** and a **piebald flycatcher** were seen.

Offshore there was an flock of **common scoter** with 27 being seen on 2nd.

Towards the end of the month hirundines started to move through with counts on the 25th of 200 **swallow**, 50 **house martin** and 10 **sand martin** flying west followed on the 29th by 120 **swallow** and 12 **sand martin** flying east.

September

There were two main days of bird sightings during the month, the first of these being the 6th when the rather impressive list of commoner species included an **osprey** flying west, a **little egret** on Ecclesbourne Reservoir,

five **whinchat**, the first migrant **stonechats** of the autumn (3), nine **common redstart**, 36 **whitethroat**, 33 **blackcap**, 201 **chiffchaff**, 61 **willow warbler**, 30 **goldcrest** (a rather early date for such a large count), the best count of the year for **spotted flycatcher** (10), a **rock pipit** on the Firehills, along with a **Dartford warbler**, also overhead passage was recorded with totals for **swallow** of 47 east and 533 west and **house martin**, 69 east and 119 west.

The other large day was the 13th when the last two **whinchat** were seen, five **stonechat**, 36 **whitethroat**, 81 **blackcap**, 230 **chiffchaff**, 47 **willow warbler**, 63 **goldcrest**, 4 **garden warbler**, 6 **spotted flycatcher**, 7 **wheatear** and 14 **lesser whitethroat**.

Diurnal passage recorded involved counts of 102 **meadow pipit** flying east, 2037 **swallow** east, 1037 **house martin** east, **sand martin** 56 east, **yellow wagtail** 17 east and **grey wagtail** 11 east.

Other sightings included a good count of 35 **long-tailed tit**

on 12th, the first three **redwing** of the autumn on 19th, 70 **meadow pipit** in the fields on 19th, and a **lapland bunting** flying over the quarry on 23rd. A **ring ouzel** flew in off on the 28th at Warren Glen, and a **merlin** was present hunting in the same area on that date.

Barn owls were noted frequently but the boxes were checked and they were found to be using them for roost sites only, with no indication of breeding there this year.

October

The traditional October birds showed in small numbers this year, with up to three **ring ouzel** present most of the month and one or two **firecrest** being reported regularly. There were also a few records of **brambling** flying over amongst large movements of **goldfinch**, **siskin**, **redpoll** and **chaffinch** later in the month.

On the 2nd a **marsh harrier** flew east and a count of 800 **swallows** was made. Grounded migrants on that date included 50 **robin**, 30 **chiffchaff**, 27

stonechat, a **black redstart** and a **grasshopper warbler**.

On the 3rd a **woodlark** was present in the North's Seat area as well as 100 **goldfinch** feeding on the weedy pasture, 7 **redpoll** and 14 **stonechat**.

On the 4th there were totals for

102 feeding around the nature reserve, **siskin** 64 east, 148 west and 72 feeding in the woods, **goldfinch** 26 east, 212 west and 209 feeding on the arable fields, a good total of 16 east and 107 west for **linnet** in a surprisingly bad year for the species here,

▽ **Grasshopper Warbler** being ringed.



swallow of 32 east and 171 west, **house martin** 155 east and 135 west, **meadow pipit** 168 east, 247 west and 151 feeding on the fields, **pied wagtail** two east and 49 west. Finch numbers included **chaffinch** 55 east, 146 west and

four **brambling** flying east and a good record of three **crossbill** flying west. Grounded migrants included a **yellow wagtail**, five **tree pipit**, a **common redstart**, a **whitethroat**, 31 **blackcap**, a good total of 241 **chiffchaff**, an equally impressive 144 **goldcrest**,

two **willow warbler**, a late **sedge warbler**, two **tree sparrow**, 13 **stonechat**, and a singing male **cetti's warbler** at Ecclesbourne Reservoir, which is probably the first site record. Also a superb adult male **hen harrier** flew west over ecclesbourne meadow and a **hobby** was present hawking dragonflies and butterflies at North's Seat.

There were two **ring ouzel** at North's Seat on the 12th and nine **tree sparrows** flew in off at Firehills.

On the 17th both **long-eared** and **little owls** were recorded at Warren Glen and this is when the flock of **lesser redpolls** began to arrive with 12 being counted, this flock would peak at 68 on the 18th.

The 18th would see totals of two **Dartford warbler**, three **woodcock**, five **tawny owl**, four **reed bunting**, 84 **redwing** (most roosting in GP01), 12 **blackcap**, 30 **chiffchaff**, 102 **goldcrest**, 14 **stonechat** and a **woodlark**. There were also 215 **goldfinch** on the fields with 19 flying west and 211 east also being recorded that

day.

The 19th would see the first **fieldfare** of the autumn with a flock of 38 being recorded.

On the 20th six **brambling** flew over and a **ring ouzel** was in scrub at Fairlight Glen and a **Dartford warbler** below the Coastguard Cottages. Also a **ring ouzel** and **Dartford warbler** in Warren Glen on the 27th and five **brambling** over.

Raptor passage was recorded from the 20th when single **peregrine** and **sparrowhawk** flew west, two female **sparrowhawks** were seen flying west on 30th, when a female **merlin** was also recorded.

Waders were in short supply this month, up to 12 **oystercatcher** were on the beach throughout, but other than that only a single **golden plover** flying east and two **snipe** were recorded.

On the 27th ten **mistle thrush** were seen and 450 **starling** flew west.

The 30th saw 360 **stock dove** flying south-west.

The latter part of the month

was dominated by **wood pigeon**, the flock feeding on the arable fields began the month totalling 16, and by the 20th this had risen to 200 and then peaked at 400 by 27th. The last two days of the month also saw some large diurnal, movements with 8550 flying south-west on 30th and a huge total of 22,500 flying south-west on 31st, what is even more remarkable about this last count is that it was made between 07.30 and 08.15, so the whole thing was over in $\frac{3}{4}$ hour.

Regular seawatching started again from the site this month and at Warren Glen on the 27th 85 **gannet** were counted flying west and another 65 around a fishing boat. This count was eclipsed on the 28th when 201 **gannet** flew west past Rock-a-nore Beach. Also seen on the 28th were an **arctic skua**, a **great skua** and a **great northern diver** all flying west.

November

A **ring ouzel** and **Dartford warbler** were reported on the 3rd as well as a count of

25 **brambling** over with small numbers of **siskin** and **redpoll**. Two **chiffchaff** were also present within Fairlight Glen. A **little egret** was on the beach at Covehurst.

A **blackcap** was found on the 7th and this remained throughout. Of the commoner species a count of 23 **long-tailed tit** was particularly noteworthy.

There were good totals of several farmland birds recorded on the 7th with 47 **meadow pipit** (declining to 22 by 24th), nine **stonechat**, a good total of 35 **goldfinch**, 48 **chaffinch** and 41 **yellowhammer** that had increased to 52 by 24th. Also on the 24th the peak **skylark** count of the month was made, this was a rather disappointing five, **snipe** had started to arrive by this time and three were seen, along with a good total of 32 **reed bunting**.

The flock of **wood pigeon** was noted on the 24th with 400 being present, this had increased by the 28th to at least 600. Also on the 28th a **brambling** was seen along with 7 **goldcrest** and 1 **woodcock**.

A seawatch from Rock-a-nore Beach on the 11th produced an **arctic skua** flying west as well as a **black-throated diver** and 2 **red-breasted mergansers**. A flock of 25 **common scoter** were on the sea offshore and a **purple sandpiper** was present with the **turnstones** on the Stade. On the 17th another **black-throated diver** flew past as well as five **red-breasted merganser** with another three on the sea.

December

Due in no small part to the poor weather conditions during December bird records appear thin on the ground.

A **purple sandpiper** was at Rock-a-nore Beach on the 2nd.

On the 6th three **fieldfare** were recorded, a rather scarce species at the nature reserve. On the 12th a female **merlin** was seen hunting around the quarry area.

On the 19th there were 9 **snipe**, 955 **woodpigeon**, 23 **meadow pipit** (this probably represents the current average mid-winter total), 4 **stonechat**,



△ **Black Redstart** - Mali Halls

164 **jackdaw**, 1 **rook** (probably the rarest crow species for the site, now even rarer than raven!!!), one of the aforementioned **raven**, 46 **chaffinch**, 23 **siskin**, a good count of 58 **yellowhammer**, 23 **reed bunting**, a **black redstart**, a **lapwing**, probably the same **blackcap** that was recorded in November, there was the annual sighting of a **short-eared owl** at GP04, but probably more importantly the pond where clearance work had been started (P02) had records of a **grey**

wagtail and the first **little grebe** record for the nature reserve.

On the Rock-a-nore undercliff on the 22nd a **black redstart** was present and a **purple sandpiper** was feeding amongst the intertidal rocks below East Hill and 14 **red-**

throated diver were present offshore.

Text by Ian Standivan with additions by Andy Phillips.

▽ **Dunlin** on Harbour Arm - Mali Halls



Insects & Spiders



The first major emergence of butterflies was reported on 15th April with many **speckled wood** reported throughout the site as well as smaller numbers of **large white, small white, small tortoiseshell** and **peacock**.

By the 27th April **small coppers** were out in numbers on the recently scraped area in Warren Glen due to the flush of the species' food plant, **sheep's sorrel**, that developed after the bracken litter was cleared away. Also on the wing at the end of April were **green hairstreaks, speckled yellow** moths and swarms of the long-horned micro moth ***Adela reaumurella***

especially around flowering umbels of **Alexanders**.

The 1st May produced sightings of **cream-spot tigers** and **green tiger beetles** in the bracken scraped area in Warren Glen, the first records of both these species for the year at the site. On the 29th May there was an unusual record of a **lime hawkmoth** caught in one of the bird ringers mist nets.

One of the most significant insect records of the year came on 11th June when a male and two female **red-veined darters** were seen around one of the undercliff pools at Covehurst undercliff. This is the first record for the site of this regular migrant to Britain and occurred the same time as a number of records of this species

▽ Cream-spot Tiger



along the south coast. Also on the same date **long-horned bees**, a rapidly declining species in Britain, were on the wing in numbers with females collecting **kidney vetch** and **bird's-foot trefoil** pollen and males defending territory or nectaring from bramble flowers.

It was a particularly good year for the scarce and declining bee ***Andrena thoracica***. This large colourful bee, with its foxy red thorax and black polished abdomen, was on the wing in numbers collecting pollen from **bramble** and **hogweed** flowers

▽ *Andrena thoracica*

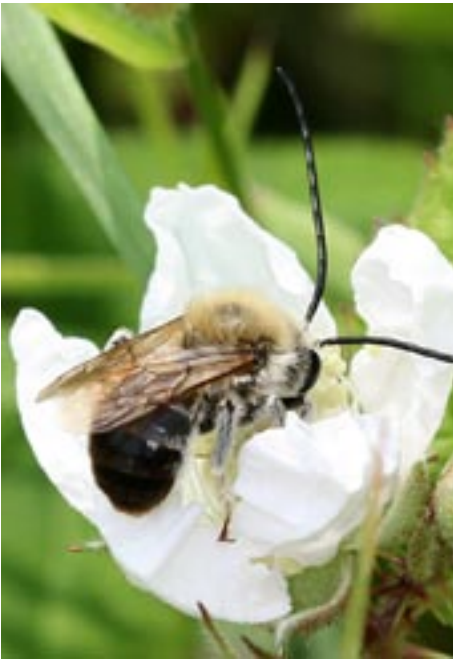


By the 4th July **Roesel's bush-crickets** were on the wing and in full song within the field between Brakey Bank and Warren Wood, Warren Glen. **Glow-worms** were first reported in Warren Glen on the 7th July during the Nocturnal Noises event.

throughout the reserve. The species nests in sandy landslip debris at the base of the cliffs.

A **clouded yellow** was reported from the Firehills on 30th July.

The most significant find during the annual bug hunt event within



△ **Long-horned Bee** *Eucera longicornis*

Warren Glen on 4th August was the first nature reserve record of the nationally scarce jumping spider ***Marpissa muscosa*** on the Warren Glen welcome sign. This is the largest jumping spider in Britain and seems to be increasing turning up at new sites in the area including the nearby Rye Harbour Nature Reserve.

The **sickle-bearing bush-crickets** continued to be the biggest wildlife attraction within the nature reserve at the moment

with many naturalists coming from far afield to photograph them. The first late instar nymphs were seen on 12th August and adults later in the month. Throughout September and the first few days of October up to 8 adults could be seen amongst stands of rosebay willowherb, bramble patches and other tall vegetation within and around the area they were first discovered in 2006.

A couple of confirmed reports were received this year of two significant records from last years invertebrate field surveys. A micro moth called ***Metzneria littorella***, a pRDB1 species (provisionally a Red Data Book species, RDB1 - Endangered) whose larvae feed on the seeds of **buck's-horn plantain**. It was previously only known from the Isle of Wight. Also confirmed was the record of a small weevil called ***Hypera ononidis***, a RDBK (Red Data Book species, RDBK - status unknown) species associated with **restharrow** growing on cliffs and undercliff and has only been found from a few sites along the south coasts of England and Wales.

further information & acknowledgements

For more information about the habitats and wildlife of Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve and the latest wildlife sightings from Hastings please visit **wild**hastings.org.uk

If you would like to join the Friends of Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve please pick up a membership form from the visitor centre or download one from **wild**hastings.org.uk

Thanks to everyone that has provided records or contributed to a monitoring or survey project within the nature reserve, with particular thanks to:

Ian Standivan,
Andrew Grace,
Alan Parker,
Martin Usher,
Mali Halls,
Mike Edwards,
Peter Hodge,
Graham Collins,
Brain Laney,
Norman Hall,
Jacqueline Rose,
Judy Clark,

and all the members of the Hastings Botany Group that helped with the botanical and habitat surveys of Warren Glen and Ecclesbourne Meadow.

To find out more about the wildlife of Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve please visit **wildhastings.org.uk**



For all the latest wildlife sightings from Hastings, Rye Bay and Dungeness please visit **RXwildlife.org.uk**

This booklet has been produced by Hastings Borough Council and the Friends of Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve.

