



Wild About Beds

Spring 2012

One million records!

The millionth record was added to the Biodiversity Recording and Monitoring Centre (BRMC) database on January 25th. It was one of 15 *Hoplodrina alsines*, 'Uncertain' moths, recorded on June 21st 2011 in Biggleswade by Lionel Burgess.



The Uncertain, *Hoplodrina alsines* was the BRMC's millionth record. Photo by Donald Hobern

It was less than two years ago when another BRMC moth record (Buff Cosmet *Mompha ochraceella*) gave the National Biodiversity Network its 50 millionth record (*Muntjac* issue 155)

Many thanks to Mr Burgess and to all the naturalists and County Recorders who provided the other 999,999 records that enabled us to reach this new major milestone!

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Wild About Beds is the newsletter of:



The Bedfordshire Natural History Society
www.bnhs.org.uk
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BedsLife
www.bedsbionet.org.uk

The BNHS

The BNHS was formed in 1946, its main function to record the fauna and flora of the county. It has over twenty active Recorders who cover many branches of natural history study and whose annual reports are published in the *Bedfordshire Naturalist* journal.

Members receive a quarterly newsletter, Wild About Beds, and programmes of meetings. These meetings include field meetings to Bedfordshire sites and occasionally farther afield. During the winter months, there are illustrated lectures normally held in Elstow, Haynes, Toddington and Maulden.

The Society depends on annual subscriptions which are devoted to its working, as all offices are honorary. Membership is open to anyone, whether resident in the county or not. If you would like to join the Society, please contact **Mary Sheridan**, Honorary Membership Secretary, 28 Chestnut Hill, Linslade, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 2TR. Tel: 01525 378245, www.bnhs.org.uk.

BedsLife

BedsLife - Bedfordshire & Luton Biodiversity Partnership is a consortium of government and non-governmental agencies dedicated to promoting the maintenance and enhancement of Bedfordshire's biodiversity. The Partnership oversees the implementation and monitoring of the Bedfordshire and Luton Biodiversity Action Plan, which can be found online at www.bedsbionet.org.uk.

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Your comments/notes on anything that you have observed in the field, on the road or in a past Wild About Beds issue are welcome/essential for continuity. Please do send articles to me either as an attachment via email or through the post. Pictures are always welcome; material required by **15 June 2012** please.

Thank you in anticipation.

The next Wild About Beds will be published in **June 2012**. Please note that any views are independent of the Bedfordshire Natural History Society

CPRE Living Countryside Awards - nominations invited

Nominations are invited for the 2012 Living Countryside Awards. The scheme is in its 5th year and the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) Bedfordshire is seeking nominations for projects which improve the country's appearance, preserve its character and promote sustainability. The deadline for entries is May 21.

The awards recognise groups or individuals that have made special efforts to improve the natural environment. The scheme is not competitive and anyone can nominate a project which they believe is deserving of recognition. The three categories for entries are 'Landscape Improvement', 'Historic and New Buildings' and 'Sustainable Living'.

Previous award winners have included country parks and ponds, conservation schemes on farms, farm shops, church restoration, and individual craft businesses such as thatching.

A prestigious awards ceremony will take place in the autumn.



Bedfordshire
Campaign to Protect Rural England

Your nomination could make a great difference to groups and individuals working on imaginative local projects which care for and enhance our landscape and environment.

For further details contact Ann Collett-White on 01234 353331 or by email at ann.cw@cprebeds.org.uk. The nomination form is available on the CPRE Bedfordshire website: www.cprebeds.org.uk.

From the Editor's desk

So the Asian Long-horned Beetle has arrived in the UK. This is not good.

In 2005 I stood in a crowd of press and conservation professionals to watch City of Toronto Foresters cut down the first of many trees in a drastic attempt to stop the spread of this awful pest. Asian Long-horned Beetle (ALB) *Anoplophora glabripennis* had since 1998 been moving north from the United States, and it was now in Canada's largest city. Emerald Ash Borer *Agrilus planipennis* had crossed the Detroit River a couple of years before, and plans were being made for a wide firebreak across south western Ontario to stop its spread as well. These two insects were being predicted to wipe out Canada's hardwoods. For a nation with a maple leaf as its national symbol, this would be not only economically but culturally devastating.

Wood movement restrictions and other precautions seem to have contained the ALB infestation and slowed the Emerald Ash Borer's spread. But the news this week of ALB landing on our shores has reminded me of the potential impact of invasive non-native species. The Spiny Water Flea *Blythotrephes longimanus* has effectively wiped out the Great Lakes whitefish fishery. The Great Lakes basin is – or was – home to about a third of the world's freshwater mussel species. The Zebra Mussel – found right here in Bedfordshire – is busy eradicating them.

It was strange to come here and find that my own grey squirrel and mink were much-maligned invasive species. I certainly appreciate the impact they have on Britain's ecology. At the same time I still find it a bit weird that something I've always known as benign can, when transplanted into a seemingly similar environment, cause so much damage. I love living here in England but I confess I like seeing a familiar 'face' from home.

I suppose this is what the British settlers thought when they went to North America with their songbirds and wildflowers. Huge numbers of Starlings now inhabit the cities: I even had one nesting under my 18th floor balcony in downtown Toronto. What they and the House Sparrows displaced I can only guess. Certainly one sees very few Palm Warblers, Indigo Buntings or Scarlet Tanagers nowadays. The woodland floor is covered with Garlic Mustard, and Purple Loosestrife is draining the wetlands. Vast stands of *Phragmites* have replaced the native Cattail marshes.

In these enlightened times we no longer move species willy-nilly across oceans. Biosecurity measures see to that. The danger now is the stowaways zipping around the globe, in wooden pallets, ballast water and even supermarket produce. When I'm back home I love seeing the bright red Cardinals, and in the spring hearing the male Red-winged Blackbird's 'okaree' call. But in my little English garden? It just wouldn't be the same.

A grand day out at the zoo!

ZSL Whipsnade Zoo was the host for the second Bedfordshire & Luton Environmental Education Show on February 23rd. BBC One Show horticulture expert Christine Walkden was the keynote speaker, and raved about the amazing range of activities and displays. Workshops were held on everything from willow weaving to wildlife-friendly school gardening, and the zoo held a series of 'taster' talks and tours.

BNHS volunteers were on hand of course, promoting the 'Nature Table in a Box'. This amazing collection of bones, fungi, leaves, seeds and other sundries was once again a hit with teachers and pupils alike. Other display highlights included Anglan Water's toilet filled with 'non-flushables', Luton Culture's stuffed owl and Harrold-Odell Country Park's fossils. It must be said though, that the most popular attractions were the live hissing cockroaches, python and Bearded Dragon at the ZSL Whipsnade Zoo stall!

In all over 50 people attended from schools and other organisations around the county. Teachers, students and exhibitors all said it had been a great day. Many thanks to Mazars LLP, RHS, Groundwork and ZSL Whipsnade Zoo without which the event would not have been possible. Thanks as well to all the exhibitors for putting together an inspiring and creative event.

Peter Geoffrey Taylor (1926-2011)

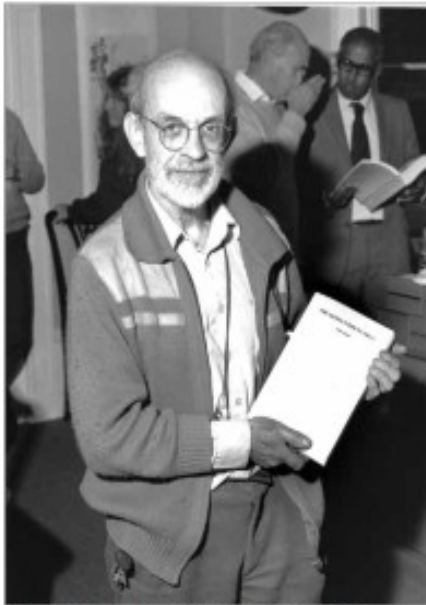


Photo courtesy Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Peter Taylor, who died on 20th October 2011, was one of the founding members of the BNHS. He was born in Luton and after he left school he joined Commer Cars as an apprentice machinist and turner. He developed an interest in butterflies when he was 13, collecting in Bedfordshire and adjacent counties within cycling range, about 40 miles, from Luton. At that time he was able to find marsh fritillary and adonis blue on the chalk downs around Totterhoe and Markham Hills, and recognised that both species might have been introduced to the area. They became extinct in Bedfordshire many years ago. Just over the county boundary at Ashridge he found high brown fritillary in such abundance that "a person so inclined could take a hundred in an afternoon". This species now survives in only a few small areas in the west and north-west of England and Wales. His interest in butterflies continued until 1944 when he met John Dony who encouraged him to concentrate on developing his skills in botany. This Peter did so successfully that in 1948 John recommended him to apply for a post as Temporary Assistant in the Herbarium at Kew which started him on a new career. Peter renewed his interest in Lepidoptera in the early 1960s but when he visited some of his former haunts in Bedfordshire he "found them rather distressingly deteriorated" so concentrated instead on sites nearer to his home, especially around where he moved to in Sussex.

In the BNHS, Peter served as Recorder for Vascular Cryptogams and Bryophytes from 1947 to 1952. He ceased to be a member in 1953 so he will not have been known to many current members. He contributed a section on liverworts in Dony's 1953 *Flora of Bedfordshire*. In his chapter on 'The Study of Bedfordshire Botany' Dony wrote of Peter 'An exceedingly observant botanist he has made ferns and horsetails his special study. He has also done some useful work on bryophytes and collected for the Flora all available material on the *Hepatics*. In a short period of field work he added *Carex binervis*, *Ceterach officinarum*, *Dryopteris borreii* and *Thelypteris oreopteris* to the flora.'

Peter worked at Kew from 1948 until his retirement in 1986. He was very skilled at preparing herbarium specimens and was known for his meticulous attention to detail. He had a deep knowledge of the British flora as well as that of other countries to which he travelled, particularly tropical Africa. From 1972 to 1984 he was in charge of the orchid section at Kew. He published many papers and several books, culminating in his great monograph on the bladderworts, *The Genus Utricularia: A Taxonomic Monograph* (1986) which runs to 736 pages.

After Peter retired he bought two small neglected woods near his home in Sussex. He and his wife set about restoring them for wildlife with, as he said, "some success" including having purple emperor breeding there. The woods also provided materials for his other great interest in life, cabinet making. His garden was lined with sheds containing timber at various stages of seasoning. He made concert standard harpsicords and clavichords to period designs, doing the metal work and detailed decoration as well as the woodwork, producing unique and beautiful instruments. Peter was certainly a many talented person.

More comprehensive obituaries of Peter by Phillip Cribb are in the Botanical Society of the British Isles Yearbook 2012 and in the Bulletin of the Amateur Entomologist's Society December 2011.

Invertebrate Day at Flitwick Moor

*A report on the BNHS and Flitvale Group of the Wildlife Trust, joint event held on Saturday 30th July 2011.
by Colin Carpenter*

The Invertebrate day held at Flitwick Moor on Saturday 30th July was the first event of this type held jointly by the Wildlife Trust Flitvale local Group and the Bedfordshire Natural History Society. The idea was to try and invite along as many recorders as possible, members, volunteers and the public, who could record invertebrate species throughout the reserve, but also to help out with species identification and education of the public.

The day started with individuals and families arriving in the Folly Farm car park, and being introduced to members of the Wildlife Trust and BNHS. Initially, everyone was asked to sign in so we could record attendance, and also a plan of Flitwick Moor was given out, which had been divided up into various sections. Each family or group of people could choose which areas they wanted to survey, or to concentrate on one particular area.

Pond dipping nets were given out along with white plastic containers and specimen tubes for those wishing to do aquatic invertebrates, including a laminated identification sheet and clip board to record what they found. Others who wanted to record flying invertebrates were given sweep nets, specimen tubes and a clip board also.

As it turned out, many families did their own exploring as well as collecting invertebrate specimens and recording other wildlife.

Two members of the public reported seeing a breeding pair of Spotted Flycatchers and others heard the Water Rail squeaking during the afternoon.

The specimens soon came flooding in, and we had increasing numbers of specimens in pots. Luckily we had a good stock of identification guides which proved very useful, but some specimens nevertheless remained difficult to identify at species level.

In total over 400 records were received of butterflies, dragonflies, damselflies, macro and micro moths, beetles, spiders, bugs, crustaceans, molluscs, grasshoppers and crickets, hoverflies, bees, and aquatic species.

By 5.30 pm everyone was ready to pack up, and the event finished at about 6 pm. A total of 24 adults and 7 children attended for only part of the whole day, and everyone seemed to have enjoyed themselves.



Spotted Longhorn Beetle *Rufpela maculata*. Photo by Gwen Cooper

Analysing the data and specimens took at least another day, and most of the species have now been recorded onto spreadsheets and sent onto the respective BNHS recorders.

This year the Invertebrate Day will be held on Saturday 30th June 2012 at Flitwick Moor starting at 10 am. It is hoped that more recorders, staff and volunteers from the BNHS and Wildlife Trust will attend to continue the work of recording invertebrates and other wildlife, and to help out with education, guidance and advice for the general public. All are welcome.

Bedfordshire Naturalist 2010 now available

The 2010 edition of the Bedfordshire Natural History Society's journal *Bedfordshire Naturalist*, published in two parts, has recently been distributed to members. Part 1 covers species groups other than birds. Part 2 covers only birds. Non-members may purchase copies from Mary Sheridan at membership@bnhs.org.uk, or at a BNHS or Bird Club meeting.

The Vintners Swan

by David Kramer

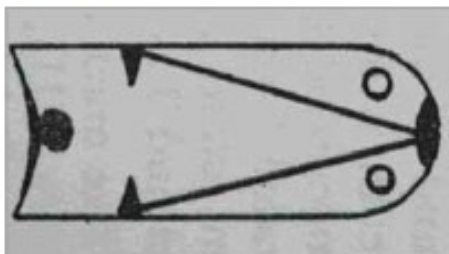
In February last year a dead Mute Swan was found at Priory Country Park with a BTO ring on one leg (W26542) and a second ring on the other leg. This second ring was of interest because it bore the name VINTNERS and the number 00438. This is the first record of one of these 'guild' swans to be recorded in Bedfordshire although they have turned up in Hertfordshire. The Worshipful Company of Vintners and The Worshipful Company of Dyers were two of 108 guilds granted the status of a Livery Company (the latest of which is The 'Worshipful Company of Security Professionals'!) but many of them date back to mediaeval times and include such honoured professions as bowyers (longbow makers), cordwainers (fine leather workers), goldsmiths, scribes, brewers and many others. The Worshipful Company of Vintners and that of the Dyers date back to the twelfth century. Apart from the Vintners and Dyers the only other people allowed to own swans are the Ilchester family at the Abbotsbury swannery.

Swan owners marked the bills or sometimes the feet with a mark. After 1482 these marks were recorded on rolls of vellum, with their owners names, the longest being the Redgrave Roll which is 5.5 inches wide and 30 feet long!



The Vintners' Company ring. Photo by Dave Kramer

One of the marks was owned by David Selby, a citizen and vintner of London. He was Master of the Vintners Company in 1439-1440 and his mark may have been given or sold to the Vintners Company. The Worshipful Company of Vintners received their swan rights from the Crown between 1472 and 1483 although the first documentary evidence for them owning swans comes from 1509.



The mark of David Selby, later of the Vintners Company. Image from NF Ticehurst, 1957. *The Mute Swan in England*. London: Cleaver-Hume Press.

The V mark was omitted in 1863 leaving only two nicks on the bill, hence the name of the pub in Sharnbrook is called The Swan with Two Nicks. In some cases the significance of the name has been misunderstood so occasionally you may come across a pub called 'The Swan with Two Necks'.

The Queen shares with the Worshipful Company of Vintners and the Worshipful Company of Dyers the ownership of the swans on certain stretches of the Thames; the swans are still caught in what is called the Swan Upping Ceremony. This takes place in the third week of July starting at Shepperton Lock and ending five days later at Abingdon Bridge. The Queen's Swan

Marker, the Royal Swan Uppers and the Swan Uppers of the Vintners and Dyers use six traditional Thames rowing skiffs in their journey along the river. Today the swans are ringed with an individual ring by the Queen's Swan Warden, a Professor of Zoology at Oxford University, Dr Chris Perrins. Notching the beaks of the swans was given up in about 1999 and from then onwards they were ringed. Swans used to appear on the menus of Livery banquets up to about 1984 but although 'swans' are still served they are in fact geese or other fowl – and they taste much better!

Old Swan Laws

We are used to seeing Mute Swans roaming free, but a few hundred years ago many were captive and kept in domestic or semi-domestic state by people such as lords of the manor or religious institutions. As such they had to be covered by some sort of rules, the first of which were fairly simple and usually made up by the local owners. According to Henry de Bracton's *De legibus et consuetudinibus Anglie* (around 1235 -1259) 'if wild animals have been tamed and by habit return, fly away and fly back' (such as swans) or 'as long as they have the disposition to return' they are the property of landowners. Although there was an Act of Parliament during the reign of Edward II (1307-1327) raising the status of the Sturgeon to that of a Royal Fish, it is not known when the status of the swan was raised to that of a Royal Bird as no charter

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exists. However if so, it must have been prior to 1186. It was always understood that although anyone could keep swans as captives on their own private waters all others on open and common waters belonged to the Crown, but nothing was written down. If a swan escaped the owner could pursue and recapture it so long as the pursuit was continuous!

Although officially, no one could keep swans except by being granted permission from the Crown this seems to have been totally disregarded and anyone wealthy enough to have sufficient land and a pond seemed to keep them. In fact the whole situation was chaotic and stealing of swans and their eggs was rife. In fact on October 24th, 1314 John, the Bishop of Bath and Wells complained to a judge that four people had chopped down trees and taken two 'brood' swans and five others worth £10 at Langeford (sic), Bedford. Between 1210-1225 William de Beauchamp granted the Canons of Newnham Priory, Bedford, the right to have as many swans and cygnets as they willed in all his waters in the River Ouse from Eton to Odell.

From at least the mid 13th century Mute Swans were eaten at great banquets and feasts usually for the monarch of the time. In 1247 Henry III requisitioned amongst other things, forty swans for his Christmas feast at Winchester. In 1249 he ordered 104 swans from Bedford, Northampton, Cambridge, and Buckinghamshire amongst other places. In 1250 Peter Chaceporc, acting for the Bishopric of Winchester, was asked to get as many swans as he could find for the King's use and the Sheriff of Bedford was amongst those asked to provide them.

Things were tightened up a lot in 1482 by 'The Act for Swans'. This restricted swan ownership to those who have 'Lands and Tenements of the estate of Freehold to the yearly value of Five Marks above all yearly charges.' The act however still did not make it clear that all unmarked swans were the property of the Crown and this was clarified at the Court of the King's Bench, Trinity Term in 1592 which states: 'A swan is a royal fowl and all swans the owner of which is not known belong to the Crown'. This was an important point of law when it came to prosecuting someone for 'criminal damage' as a charge of criminal damage can only be brought if that which is damaged has an owner. The Orkneys do appear to be an exception to these laws. Under Udal Law, the ancient Norse system of inheritance and law which the Viking settlers brought to Orkney, the swan is the property of the people rather than the Crown. The case was proven in 1910 by a Kirkwall lawyer who, accompanied by his friend, the Procurator-Fiscal, went out and shot a swan. The case went to the High Court and the Crown lost. Of course, today's Orcadians do not go out and shoot swans but the principles of the old Norse Udal Law apparently still stand. The Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981 now covers this sort of thing, and is quite strong, being able to give fines of up to £5,000 or jail terms of up to six months. One point which is less clear is whether one is committing an offence if one finds a dead swan and then eats it. I suspect that the Wildlife and Countryside Act refers to birds 'both alive or dead or any part of, or anything derived from', etc. Any offers?

Mayhem at the Moor!

by Gwen Hitchcock, Greensand Reserves Ecology Officer, Wildlife Trust

A day of panic followed the sinking of a digger in the peat of Flitwick Moor last autumn. It happened while it was digging a small area of undisturbed peat to provide some open standing water. The project, funded by Veolia and Heritage Lottery Fund, aims to create habitat for early-stage successional communities which are slowly being pushed out of other areas.

Much of the moor was commercially dug for peat up til the 1960s; in the later years the peat was used to filter coal gas. The digging left a lot of bare peat & standing water habitat which have since vegetated up.

The area we've dug is adjacent to the last commercially dug area which hosts an interesting community of Bottle



The digger sunk in up to its cab! Photo by Gwen Hitchcock



New sanding water at Filwick Moor. Photo by Gwen Hitchcock

Sedge, Cotton Grass and Marsh Pennywort. This area is becoming drier (or at least firmer under foot), and tree saplings are beginning to take over. Whilst we are removing the saplings and endeavouring to keep this open the new peat diggings should provide a blank canvas for those early-stage successional communities that prefer open and wetter habitats. In the long term we may decide to dig another patch when this one begins to fill in and gets overgrown.

The digger was finally rescued after 30 hours and the peat digging completed safely. We are all very excited to see what will colonise first!

Asian Longhorn Beetle confirmed in England

from the Food and Environment Research Agency (Fera)

An outbreak of the Asian longhorn beetle (ALB), an exotic beetle pest which could have severe consequences for British trees, has been found in Kent the Food and Environment Research Agency confirmed today. This is the first time an outbreak of this pest has been found in the UK and it is being treated extremely seriously. Fera and the Forestry Commission are taking urgent steps to try to eradicate the outbreak before it has the chance to spread further afield.

Several larvae of the beetle have been found inside a poplar tree during a routine survey by the Forestry Commission at a site in the Paddock Wood area. Scientists from Forest Research had been monitoring an area around the site where an adult beetle had been found in 2009 and this is the first evidence of infestation. It is thought the beetles originated from wood packaging used to import stone from China at an adjacent industrial site.

The beetle is not native to the UK, and poses a serious threat to a very wide range of broadleaved trees and shrubs such as maple (including sycamore), elm, horse chestnut, willow, poplar, birch and some fruit trees.

Speaking about action to eradicate the outbreak Martin Ward, Head of Plant Health Policy at Fera said, "Our Plant Health Inspectors and the Forestry Commission are conducting a survey to determine the extent of this outbreak. They will be contacting all those within the survey area over the next few days and weeks with a view to inspecting all potential host trees for signs of the beetle. In the meantime we would urge members of the public, local businesses and landowners to be on the alert for the beetle and let us know if they find anything.

Adult beetles are large (around 20 - 40 mm long), shiny black with variable white markings. Their antennae are particularly distinctive being much longer than their bodies (up to twice the body length) and are black with white/light blue bands. The larvae of the beetle feed undetected on the inside of the plant and can kill it or leave it weakened and susceptible to further pest and disease damage.

The most obvious symptoms of ALB damage are the circular adult exit holes which are around 10 mm in diameter and are generally found in the main trunk and branches. The adult beetles usually emerge from these holes between May and October.



Adult Asian Longhorn Beetle *Anoplophora glabripennis*. Photo: Wikimedia Commons

John Morgan, Head of Plant Health at the Forestry Commission, stated, "Until we have completed the initial survey work to determine the extent of the outbreak it's difficult to say exactly what measures will need to be taken. However, we will need to remove any trees found to be infested and it is possible that we will need to remove potential host trees around the original site as a precautionary measure. Eradication measures to treat outbreaks in the US and Italy have resulted in the loss of tens of thousands of mature trees."

If anyone suspects they have seen an Asian longhorn beetle, or evidence of its presence please contact the Fera Plant Health Helpline 0844 2480071 or email planthealth.info@fera.gsi.gov.uk If possible, the beetle should be caught and placed in a secure container so that an Inspector can collect it. The beetles are not harmful to humans, though they should be handled with caution as they can nip the skin.

Great Crested Newts in the Marston Vale

by Heather Webb

The Marston Vale – in particular the central area around Stewartby and Marston Moretaine – is commonly regarded as a hotspot for Great Crested Newt (GCN) *Triturus cristatus*. At the same time, the area has seen or is facing a number of large development projects, for example the Bedford Western Bypass, A421 improvements and urban extensions of Wootton, Marston Moretaine and Stewartby.

While many individual surveys had been done on ponds in the Marston Vale, little was known about the habitat network as a whole. A study was undertaken which pulled together a range of record sources, to gain a better understanding of the Vale's Great Crested Newt ecology. The broad aim of the study was to collect information about GCN population size, distribution and habitat network in water bodies of the central and western Marston Vale. The study area covered the Vale from the A600 westward, an area of about 137 km².

The study included only records from ponds: records from terrestrial and other habitats were not considered. Those from water bodies known to have been destroyed were also not included. Records were drawn from a wide range of sources, including the Biodiversity Recording and Monitoring Centre, planning applications submitted to local authorities and online searches. In total over 1300 Great Crested Newt survey records were collected. These included both positive and negative survey results, making it possible to identify ponds which – as far as we could tell – did not have GCN.

A map was created of all ponds in the study area. These were distinguished as either positive for GCN, negative for GCN or not surveyed. Concentric 250m and 500m buffer zones were plotted around ponds with positive survey results. These zones together illustrate the potential network within which breeding GCN could disperse.

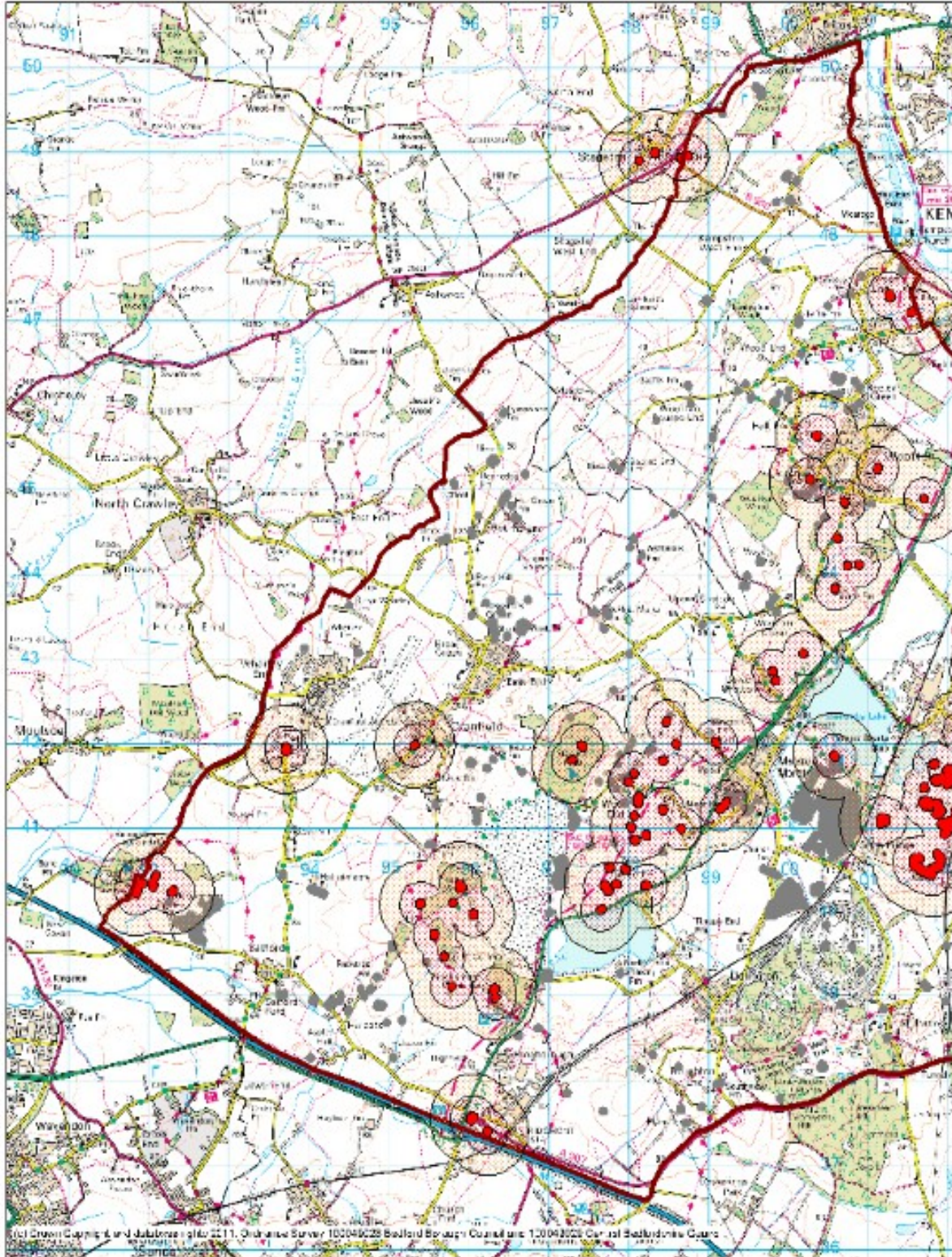
A total of 502 ponds and other small water bodies were identified in the study area. The survey results broke down as follows:

- Positive for GCN 103
- Negative for GCN 85
- Not surveyed 295
- Destroyed/filled in 19

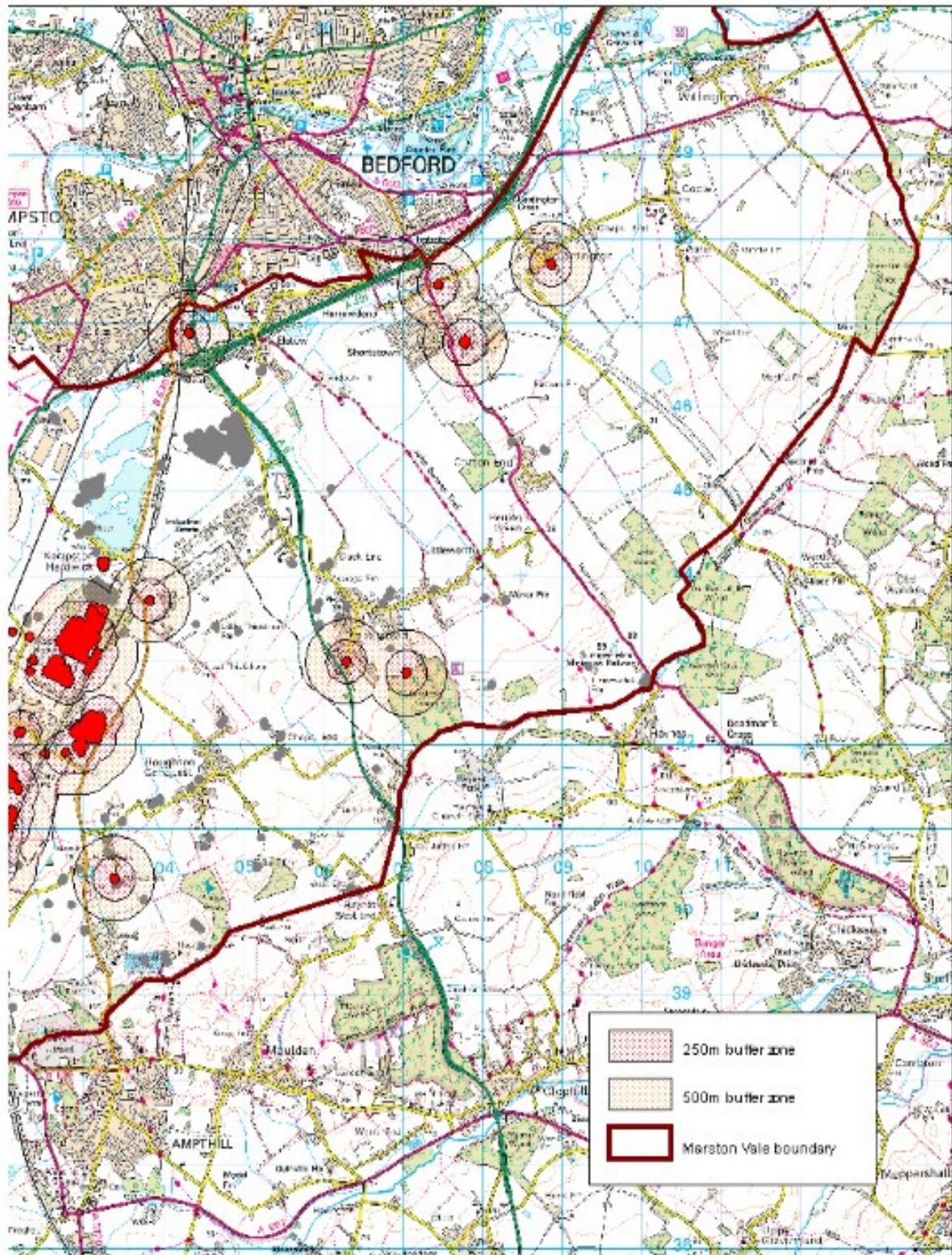
Of the 188 ponds which had been surveyed, over half (54.8%) had at least once been found to have Great Crested Newts. Eleven of the 19 ponds destroyed or filled in had previously had positive GCN surveys.

The study identified two large and one smaller GCN habitat networks. The first of these stretches between Marston Moretaine and Stewartby, and includes the post-industrial land at Rookery and Coronation Pits. The second large network follows the north side of the A421 from Wootton to north of Brogborough landfill. The smaller but still significant GCN network is located south of Brogborough landfill. Many of the surrounding ponds have not been surveyed so this third area might in fact extend into Salford or Cranfield, or indeed stretch right around the landfill, making it contiguous with that along the A421.

Map of Great Crested Newt habitat networks in the central and western Marston Vale, illustrating 250m and 500m buffers around ponds where GCN have been found



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BNHS Vacancies

The Society will be seeking a new Treasurer at their 2013 AGM. Jenny Sprod will not be standing for re-election as Honorary Treasurer, and is happy to talk to anyone who might be interested in the role and show them how things work. She will also continue to offer support until the new Treasurer is confident in the role. If you think you might be interested in becoming the BNHS Treasurer, please contact Jenny at treasurer@bnhs.org.uk.

Upcoming events

Apr 15 Morning walk over Pegsdon Hills for spring migrants. Park and meet at 8.00 am in the car park at the Live and Let Live Inn, Pegsdon, TL121303. Leader: Jon Palmer.

Apr 21 Bird walk in Ampthill Park and Cooper's Hill. A gentle walk through two varied habitats which lie close to one another in Ampthill, looking and listening for the spring bird life. Leader: Steve Halton. Space is limited: to reserve a place please email flitvale.info@gmail.com or ring Kathy on 07890 347327 after 6pm or at weekends. To support this local group there is a suggested £1 donation per adult.

Apr 28 Small mammal trapping at Duck End Nature Reserve. Meet at 10.00 am at the reserve on Moor Lane, Maulden, TL051377. Leader: Richard Lawrence.

May 2 The Museum of Science and Industry, Manchester will be the venue for **150 Years of Japanese Knotweed**, a one day seminar. The event will address Japanese Knotweed management and eradication over the last 150 years and will feature speakers from the private and public sector. To book your place, please visit www.jksl.com/events_detail-10.htm.

May 6 Annual Dawn Chorus in Maulden Wood. Meet at 4.15 am in the lay-by at the top of Deadman's Hill on the A6, TL073394. Hot fried breakfast to follow, price £3.00. Please order 7 days in advance with John Adams on 01234 381532. Leader: Pete Marshall.

May 12 A search for the Duke of Burgundy. A walk through Totternhoe Quarry's chalk lands looking for butterflies and most especially the Duke of Burgundy. Leader: Keith Balmer. Space is limited: to reserve a place please email flitvale.info@gmail.com or ring Kathy on 07890 347327 after 6pm or at weekends. To support this local group there is a suggested £1 donation per adult.

Jun 23-24 Bioblitz event at Millennium Country Park, Marston Moretaine. The event will run from mid-day on the 23rd to mid-day on the 24th. There will be guided wildlife walks and a chance for people to get involved in recording at the site. There will also be a moth trapping event the evening of the 23rd.

Jun 30 Invertebrate Day at Flitwick Moor. Meet at 10.00 am in Folly Farm car park, TL046355. To reserve a place please email flitvale.info@gmail.com or ring Kathy on 07890 347327 after 6pm or at weekends.

Sept 3-5 The meeting **Hedgerow Futures 2012** has been called to bring together hedgerow researchers and managers to consider a range of themes, including biodiversity, connectivity, ecosystem services, sustainability, management and relationship with people. The event will be held at the Staffordshire University Science Centre in Stoke-on-Trent. Booking and programme details are available at www.hedgelinek.org.uk/hedgerow-futures-conference-2012.htm.