THE NATIONAL TRUST

Wicken Fen

Recording and Research Newsletter

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This Newsletter is produced by the Wicken Research and Recording Group
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Deadline for contributions to the next issue is 30th September 2008
Please send all contributions to the address above or by e-mail to: stuart.warrington@nationaltrust.org.uk

Introduction

Hello everyone and welcome to the second issue of the Wicken Fen Recording and Research Newsletter.

The aim of this Newsletter is keep you informed of what is going on at Wicken. We hope you find the contents interesting and that you might be encouraged to get involved.

Wicken Fen National Nature Reserve is owned by the National Trust and is managed by a professional team guided by a Local Committee. The 'Research and Recording Group' at Wicken helps to organise and co-ordinate various scientific activities on the property. Everyone who is interested in research and recording at Wicken is welcome to attend the Group's three meetings each year. Contact anyone listed below.

The Chair of the Research and Recording Group is Owen Mountford, who is also the Botanical Secretary. The Zoological Secretary is Helen Roy. The editor of this Newsletter is Stuart Warrington, who is the Nature Conservation Advisor for the National Trust in the East of England Region.

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We hope that this Newsletter will find its way to everyone who has an interest in Wicken Fen. Please do tell the editor Stuart Warrington, if you know of people who you think would like to receive it (postal or email address). Also if you don't want to receive this Newsletter again, just tell Stuart.

New look to Wicken Website

http://www.wicken.org.uk/

The Wicken Fen website has been re-launched, with a new look, more photos and updated information. Please do visit and explore the pages. We welcome any feedback to help us improve the site.

The Wicken Fen Vision

The National Trust's Wicken Fen Vision is to encourage the development, by the year 2100, of a landscape-scale Nature Reserve for the benefit of people and wildlife across 5600 hectares of land between Wicken Fen and Cambridge. This exciting landscape-scale restoration project has been underway since 1999 and in that time the Trust has more than doubled its land owned for conservation to almost 660 hectares (1600 acres). Eight years on from the launch of the Vision, it is an appropriate time to update the Vision documentation. The Wicken Vision Manager, Jon Megginson, in consultation with lots of partners, has produced a new Vision Strategy. You can download the document from: http://www.wicken.org.uk/vision_firstdraft.htm

In autumn 2007, additional land will be acquired by The National Trust adjacent to Burwell Fen. The Trust is buying Hurdle Hall Farm, which is 40 ha, from Cambridgeshire County Council. We are extremely grateful for financial support from the Viridor Credits.

Grazing animals are very important in managing the Vision land. On Adventurers' Fen, the Trust has breeding herds of Highland cattle and Konik ponies. Their grazing adds a vital element of dynamism to that created by the variations in water levels. These herds are thriving, with the cattle numbers increasing to 25 from a starting point of 9 in 2005, and the Koniks now number 30, with foals being born every year since 2004, and seven were born in 2007.

Birds

The Wicken Fen Ringing Group is very active, and the overall ringing total for 2007 by the end of September was 3482 birds of 56 species. The September total alone was 843 birds, of which 197 were re-traps. In July a re-trapped Bullfinch was found to be 8 years 0 months, just one month short of the Wicken Fen longevity record for this species. Other long-lived birds were a Long-tailed Tit at 6 years 9 months, a Robin at 6y 5m, and a Bullfinch at 6y 10m. A Sedge Warbler, trapped at the Wicken Reedbed on 23 July 2006, had previously been ringed in Oveida, Spain, 1069km to the SSW on 31 July 2005.

April was a great month for unusual sightings, with spoonbills present on 28th and 29th, a black kite on the 26th, a water pipit on the 29th, a Montagu's Harrier on the 2nd and a bittern was booming in the reedbed until the 16th.

For more details of the Wicken Fen Ringing Group and their activities, please contact Dr Chris Thorne, St Catharine's College, Cambridge University CB2 1RL. Tel: 01954 210566. Email: cjrt@cam.ac.uk They welcome new members.

Mosses and Liverworts

The collated Bryophyte records for Wicken Fen now total over 1200 records of 132 species.

Some new species for the Wicken List include:
A small quantity of the liverwort, *Riccia cavernosa* (Cavernous Crystalwort) was found in the draw-down zone of the Mere and in Baker's Fen (Compartment 106) on 15 October 2005 by C.M. Cheffings and Chris Preston. This uncommon species was abundant over hundreds of square metres in the most heavily flooded winter grassland in Baker's Fen. Two further species new for Wicken found on the same day by the Cambridge Bryological Excursion were the mosses *Aphanorhegma patens* (by the Mere and in Cmpt 106) and *Dicranella varia* (by the Mere) (see Nature in Cambridgeshire volume 48, page 97).
The liverwort *Frullania tamarisci* was new for Cambridgeshire, as well as Wicken, when a small patch was found on a Sallow trunk, near the Godwin plots on the Sedge Fen (Cmpt 12) on 5 April 2003 by R.A. Finch and T.L. Blackstock.
The Bryophyte Recorder for Wicken is Chris Preston (cdpr@ceh.ac.uk). They are planning an excursion to Wicken in April 2008, contact Chris for more details.

Water Quality

The quality of the water flowing down Monks Lode and into Wicken Lode is a very important factor in the conservation of the Fen. The Environment Agency takes monthly water samples at a point on Monks Lode about 2.2km upstream (at TL 58200 69900) from the Wicken Lode-Monks Lode junction. Below is a summary of water quality data for January 2002 to October 2006 (54 samples).

Water Quality	Mean (st.dev)	Winter Mean (Dec to March)	Peak value	Env Agency River Water Quality Highest Standard
pH	8.04 (0.18)	8.10 (0.14)	8.41 (on 07/09/2005)	-
Nitrate (as N mg/l)	9.04 (1.47)	10.21 (1.76)	13.90 (on 26/01/2004)	< 5
Phosphate (orthophosphate P mg/l)	0.021 (0.003)	0.021 (0.004)	0.033 (on 11/01/2005)	< 0.02
Conductivity (at 20 C uS/cm)	715 (57)	766 (62)	911 (on 26/01/2004)	-
Biological Oxygen Demand (as O2, mg/l)	1.61 (0.64)	1.42 (0.41)	2.83 (on 07/09/2005)	< 2.5

These results are very encouraging with these chemical parameters having low values. The Phosphate and Biological Oxygen Demand values are equal to or better than the standards set by the Environment Agency for highest river water quality. The nitrate values are also very good. Also encouraging is that the peak values are not greatly different from the mean values. It is possible that the monthly samples taken by the Environment Agency might miss short-lived pollution events that may cause high values, but it is felt that such events are very rare. Overall, the chemical water quality of Monks Lode, and thus Wicken Lode, is very good.

The Local Management Committee is grappling with the difficult issue of trying to keep the old fen at Wicken (Sedge, Verrall's and St. Edmunds) in good condition, and research work by Mike Harding has identified that the fen needs to be 'topped up' with calcareous water in the winter. Rainfall alone is not enough to keep Wicken Fen wet into the future and rainfall is acid and lacks the calcium the fen needs. Plans are being drawn up to put to the Environment Agency to take some water from Monks Lode, in winter, and feed it into the old fen.

Wicken in past times

The great interest in Wicken Fen shown by the Victorian entomologists is an important reason why Wicken Fen survived the drainage that befell so much of the great fenlands. The accounts in the literature of the visits to Wicken by these gentlemen (and it usually was gentlemen, although a few ladies did visit the Fen too) provide a fascinating insight into the Fen at that time and how the local economy was bolstered by their activities.

The easiness of getting to Wicken by road and onto the Fen these days contrasts greatly with the great efforts necessary at the turn of the last century. To get to Wicken then required a train journey to Cambridge, a change onto the branch line to Fordham and Soham, followed by a horse and cart ride of several miles. An alternative route was to cycle along the west bank of the River Cam from Cambridge to Upware, where you rang the bell to summon the ferry to get across to the village and from there you walked half a mile into the Fen. The length of the journey required you to stay overnight at an Inn, either at the 'Maid's Head' at Wicken or the 'Five Miles from Anywhere, No Hurry' at Upware. Getting onto the Fen was also a risky business, as there was no boardwalk, bridges or mown droves, which is why most visiting entomologists employed a local guide.

In 1894, James W. Tutt wrote 'attempting to cross a level-looking piece of ground covered with sedge, found myself precipitated at the first step up to my waist in water, and discovered that the smooth-looking ground was a dyke, on which the sedge rested so alluringly'.

How many species at Wicken Fen? An update

An often quoted figure is that there have been 7000 species recorded at Wicken Fen over the years. However, the ongoing collation of species data for the Fen, broken down into the various taxonomic groups, has revealed that this is an **under-estimate.** The running total is now **7956 species** ! The dominant group is the Insects with 5688 species, of which the Diptera (flies) are top of the list with 1891 species, followed by the Coleoptera (beetles) with 1514 species (up from 1475, just from the 2007 data – see below). However, the Fungi are probably under-represented in the collated data and there could be a few hundred more species to add, thus the species total will soon be lifted to over 8000 species.

We are continuing to collate the species records for Wicken Fen. For several groups the work is nearing completion, although such tasks are never really complete, for there are always more records to be found in people's notebooks, in reports and scientific papers, and there are probably hundreds (if not thousands) of specimens in Museums bearing a 'Wicken Fen' label. Our computerised records now total over 44000 !

Invertebrates

Moths

The mammoth task of getting the Wicken Fen moth records onto computer is almost complete. We are hugely in debt to David Wilson, who used to live in Wicken village and has now moved to Suffolk, for the enormous amount of work he put into compiling the Wicken Lepidoptera data. David's research has provided the majority of the data, to which we have been able to fill in a few gaps from notes and lists in the Wicken files. We can never be sure that all records have been submitted to us and there are historical records in both the literature and in museums that may be tracked down in due course. However, we feel that we have an impressive amount of Lepidoptera data for the nature reserve.

The data have been organised into three Excel spreadsheets, one for Micro-Moths (about 3,800 records), one for Macro-Moths pre-1979 (c. 3,200 records) and one for Macro-Moths post-1980 (c. 10,500 records). If you would like to receive these, please email Stuart Warrington (see p1).

There are some interesting recent records for Wicken (also see below)
Pine Carpet (*Thera firmata*) 1st Wicken record on 2 July 2005 by Allan Jenkins
Twin-spot Carpet (*Perizoma didymata*) 1st Wicken record on 2 July 2005 by Mark Skevington and Adrian Russell
Dotted Footman (*Pelosia muscerda*) 1st Wicken record on 6 July 2004 by Allan Jenkins
Orange Footman (*Eilema sororcula*) 1st Wicken record on 17 June 2005 by Sean Clancy and then 2 more in 2006.
Wormwood (*Cucullia absinthii*) 1st Wicken record on 16 July 2006 by Allan Jenkins
Black Rustic (*Aporophyla nigra*) 1st record for 28 years on 1 Sept 2005 by Carol Laidlaw
Pale Pinion (*Lithophane hepatica*) 1st Wicken record on 28 May 2006 by A.G.J. Butcher
Small Mottled Willow (*Spodoptera exigua*) 1st Wicken record on 17 June 2006 for this migrant by Jeff Higgott and taken the next month too by Allan Jenkins.
Scarce Bordered Straw (*Helicoverpa armigera*) 1st Wicken record on 21 July 2006 for this migrant by Allan Jenkins.
Shaded Fan-foot (*Herminia tarsicrinalis*) 1st Wicken record on 5 July 2006 by Jeff Higgott

Also, as stated in the last Newsletter, most visits for moth recording are concentrated in mid-summer and involve light-trapping. Indeed, there have been NO moth recording visits to the Fen from October through to the end of April for over 8 years! So please do consider coming to the Fen at different times of the year and using different techniques. You might turn up some rarely recorded species. For example, there is only one post-1980 record for each of these species: Six-spot Burnet, Yellow-legged Clearwing, Red-belted Clearwing, Lunar Hornet Moth, September Thorn, December Moth, November Moth, Winter Moth, Oak Beauty, Barred Red, Brown-tail, Stout Dart, Grey Arches, Antler, Brick, Yellow-line Quaker, Old Lady, Ear Moth, and the dear old Mother Shipton.

Chironomidae (Non-biting Midges)

Huge thanks to Peter Langton for going through all his personal records for this group of flies from his work at Wicken from 1972 to 1997, to provide details on locations, dates and comments. The Wicken list for Chironomidae now totals an impressive 103 species. These 5 species were first recorded in Britain by Peter Langton, at Wicken Fen.

Corynoneura gratias
1st record in Britain when taken on 11 July 1977 from Wicken: Little Breed Fen: Brickpit Pond 76a (TL56047077). Pharate adult male reared from larva taken on pond surface.

Limnophyes asquamatus
1st record in Britain when taken on 30 April 1977 from Wicken: Little Breed Fen: Brickpit Ditch 78e (TL56047073), Wicken: Sedge Fen: Experimental Pond by Drainer's Dyke (TL552707) and Wicken: Sedge Fen: Windpump Ditch (TL562705). Larvae skimmed and adults taken.

Micropsectra contracta
1st record in Britain when taken on 1 May 1978 from Wicken: Sedge Fen: Windpump Ditch (TL562705) and Wicken Lode: Dead End by boathouse (TL563705). Adult male and female reared from larvae at surface.

Orthocladius holsatus
1st record in Britain when taken on 1 June 1977 from Wicken: Little Breed Fen: Brickpit Ditch 78e (TL56047073). Larvae skimmed.

Tanytarsus medius
1st record in Britain when taken on 23 September 1972 from Wicken: Sedge Fen: Drainer's Dyke (TL553703) and Wicken: Sedge Fen: Gardiner's Dyke (TL554701).

Crustacea

Many thanks to the unknown person who delivered a box-full of Wicken materials to the Visitor Centre this spring. In the box was a MSc project report on the Water Fleas of Wicken from 1976-1977 by R. Doughty of Cambridge University. This detailed and thorough report added the Cladocerans *Alonella nana, Disparalona rostrata,* and *Macrothrix laticornis* to the Wicken list and the Copepod *Cyclops abyssorum.* It also provided several records for species last noted at Wicken in the 1920-30s. There are now 128 species of Crustacea on the Wicken list.

Coleoptera (Beetles)

2007 has been a bumper year for beetle recording at Wicken Fen. In terms of recording effort, it rivals the 'golden years' of the 1920s when many eminent coleopterists came to Wicken. In 2007, we had visits from Tony Allen, Robert Aquilina, Pete Brown, Martin Collier, Tony Drane, Andy Foster, Garth Foster, Peter Hammond, Derek Lott, Geoff Nobes, Matt Smith and Jon Webb. Not all of the data has been received yet, but it is clear that there have been lots of interesting records which show how valuable it is for people to keep surveying and recording, both on the classic Fen and on the new restored land. Rarities have been discovered, new species added to the Wicken list, and species with only old records have been re-found. So far we have 1140 records of 437 different species for 2007, including 17 Red Data Book species.

Tony Drane, the Coleoptera recorder for Wicken, has been continuing his survey of Adventurers' Fen and the newer lands. On Guinea Hall (restored 1999), the reedy ditches were found to support large numbers of the fen carabids *Demetrius imperialis* and *D. monostigma* although the grassy areas held a more ubiquitous fauna. On Rothschild's lapwing (Cmpts 41-42) the dykes were very good, with all four specialist reed carabids found in some numbers, *Odacantha melanura*, *Demetrias imperialis*, *D. monostigma* and *Dromius longiceps.* Also four species of reed beetle (Chrysomelidae) were recorded – *Donacia. clavipes*, *D. marginata*, *D. simplex*, and *Plateumaris sericea*. Associated with the dead reed-mace and reeds was the silvanid *Psammoecus bipunctatus* and four *Tematophilus* species – *T. brevicollis*, *T. caricis*, *T. schoenherri* and *T. typhae*, two of which are Red Data Book species.

The ancient willows, poplars and the fallen dead wood were found to support a significant saproxylic fauna, such as the longhorns (Cerambycidae) *Stenocorus meridianus*, *Grammoptera ruficornis*, *Clytus arietis* and *Tetrops praeusta*. In 2007, Tony Drane also recorded *Pseudotriphyllus suturalis , Dacne bipustulata, Dacne rufifrons* (all first records since the 1920s). The following five saproxylic species were new records for the Fen; *Tillus elongates, Vincenzellus ruficollis, Mordellochroa abdominalis, Eledona agricola* (Nb) and *Cryptophagus labilis* (Nb). Peter Hammond also recorded further saproxylic species such as *Euplectus kirbyi* (Nb), *Orthoperus aequalis* (RDBk), *Ischnomera cyanea* (Nb) and *Kissophagus hederae* (Nb).

The Saproxylic Quality Index for Wicken Fen is now **447** from 94 scoring species (the SQI is calculated from a list of 598 saproxylic beetle species, which are associated with dead and decaying wood, with more points awarded for rarer species). This places Wicken about 40th in the UK rankings. Wicken has an excellent range that are associated with willows, poplar, hawthorn and alder.

A selection of further notable beetle records

- *Dytiscus dimidiatus* (Dytiscidae): This spectacular, large (3cm) diving beetle was taken four times by Andy Foster and Garth Foster on 30/4/2007 and 1/5/2007 from Sedge and Verrall's Fens. The last Wicken records of this rare (RDB2) species were 1998 and 1946 and it is great to know that it is still present at Wicken.
- *Eubrychius velutus* and *Notaris scirpi* (Curculionidae): Taken at several locations in April and May 2007 from various locations on the old Fen. These are scarce (Nb) weevil species last recorded in the 1920s, but clearly still widespread at Wicken.
- *Ptenidium intermedium, Ptenidium nitidum, Ptilium affine* (RDB), *Microptilium palustre* (RDB)(Ptiliidae): These tiny beetles (<2mm) are all scarce and rarely recorded, at Wicken or elsewhere. All found by Peter Hammond in cut sedge and litter on the Sedge Fen on 3/5/2007.
- *Alaobia trinotata, Bibloplectus tenebrosus, Euplectus signatus, Tachinus humeralis, Liogluta microptera, Mocyta negligens* (Staphylinidae): All new species to the Wicken list, found by Peter Hammond in cut sedge and litter on the Sedge Fen on 3/5/2007. Peter also added modern records for several rove beetles last recorded pre-1929.
- *Tachinus flavolimbatus* and *Dalotia coriaria* (Staphylinidae): Both new rove beetle species for Wicken Fen, found by Tony Allen searching sedge litter in Cmpt 19 on 5/5/2007.
- *Clambus pallidulus* (RDB) and *Clambus simsoni* (Clambidae): Both new species for Wicken, recorded by Peter Hammond in cut sedge on the Sedge Fen 3/5/2007. *C. pallidulus* is very rarely recorded.
- *Trox scaber* (Trogidae): Present in cut sedge on the Sedge Fen, 3/5/2007, found by Peter Hammond. A new species for Wicken Fen. A scavenging 'scarab' beetle feeding on dead animal remains. Very local.
- *Atomaria zetterstedti* (Cryptophagidae): Present, beating & sweeping on the Sedge Fen, 3/5/2007 by Peter Hammond. New species for the Fen. A very local (RDB) wetland species, found in fens and marshes.

- *Galerucella sagittariae* and *Phratora vulgatissima* (Chrysomelidae): Two leaf beetle species beaten from sallows and reeds on Adventurers' Fen in May 2007 by Tony Drane. Both new species for the Fen.
- *Haliplus mucronatus* (Haliplidae): This very scarce (Na) water beetle was netted in one of the new ditches by the Borrow Pit on Adventurers' Fen on 23/5/2007 by Stuart Warrington. 1st record at Wicken for 66 years.
- *Enochrus melanocephalus* (Hydrophilidae): A scarce water beetle (Nb) last recorded in 1929, but taken twice by Garth Foster around the Brickpits on Little Breed Fen on 30/4/2007.
- *Agabus unguicularis* (Dytiscidae): This scarce (Nb) diving beetle with only one previous record c.1918 (which may not have been on the Fen) was taken by Garth Foster on both Sedge and Verrall's Fen on 30/4/2007.

Wicken Fen Beetles in Museums.
There are potentially many Wicken records in Museums. For example, E.C. Bedwell and T.H. Beare collected several times at Wicken, and we have only a handful of their records on file. Their collections are in the Norwich Castle Museum and Royal Scottish Museum respectively. There is a fascinating potential project for a volunteer to track down the information held about Wicken and its fauna in the Museums of Great Britain.

Peter Hammond's expert and detailed examination of C.E. Tottenham's collection of beetles taken at Wicken in the Natural History Museum, has added several extra Staphylinidae (rove beetles) to the Wicken Checklist, such as: *Lordithon thoracicus* (Sep 1928), *Gabrius piliger* (16 May 1952), *Oxypoda procerula* (11 April 1925), *Quedius schatzmayri* (11 March 1924), *Stenus formicetorum* (June 1923), *Tasgius melanarius* (6 April 1925), *Tinotus morion* (14 July 1929). Also *Proteinus atomarius* (Oct 1918) is added from the A.M. Massee collection.

A Moth Species new to Britain discovered at Wicken Fen

On 24 June 2005 Jeff Higgott, a moth expert from Ipswich, made a very exciting find. He trapped a small plume moth *Emmelina argoteles* on the Sedge Fen that proved to be not just new to Wicken and Cambridgeshire, but new to the British Isles. Jeff took a male specimen at a 125W mercury vapour light. Apart from having a slightly smaller average size, *E. argoteles* is currently considered to be indistinguishable through external characteristics from the closely related *Emmelina monodactyla*, but the two species can easily be separated through examination of male genitalia.

It has since been trapped at Wicken Sedge Fen several times, and larvae collected from its food plant, Bindweed *Calystegia sepium*, have successfully been reared, proving that the species is breeding at Wicken.

Dr Zoe Ringwood, from Writtle College, is undertaking further research into the biology and ecology of this species in 2006, along with Jeff Higgott and colleague Alan Roscoe, funded by a grant from the SITA Trust. One task is to find out how widespread, or not, the species is at Wicken. Zoe has previously worked on the ecology and conservation of Fisher's Estuarine Moth, a very rare moth species that is only found in Essex.

Higgott, J. (2006) *Emmelina argoteles* (Meyrick, 1922) (Lep: Pterophoridae) – a newly recognised British plume moth. *Entomologist's Record & Journal of Variation* **118:** 195 – 197. {Photo below of the moth by Jeff Higgott]

Research at Wicken

Pete Stroh is the newly appointed Project Officer in monitoring and evaluating landscape scale wetland restoration projects. This project has been funded by the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation and will focus on the two landscape scale, wetland restoration projects that are being developed in the Fenlands of Cambridgeshire, the **Wicken Vision**, north of Cambridge, and the **Great Fen Project**, near Peterborough. This three-year applied research project will deliver best-practice guidelines for monitoring and evaluating landscape-scale, wetland restoration projects by addressing the following three aims:

1. Carry out ecosystem monitoring and refine monitoring protocols for these important projects.
2. Design monitoring projects that will be undertaken by volunteers in local communities, complementing work done by professional ecologists.
3. Design methods and protocols for assessing the achievement of large-scale landscape restoration projects in lowland areas of the UK.

Work to include

- Vegetation survey data collection and analysis, including both terrestrial and aquatic species
- Supervised experimental work on seed bank composition
- Vegetation mapping using aerial photographs in conjunction with digital topographical data.

Pete Stroh is based at Anglia Ruskin University and is supervised by Dr Francine Hughes. There will be more about this research in the next Newsletter as the project progresses. For example, Peter has identified and quantified the abundance of plants in over 700 quadrats in the summer of 2007 and he has assessed the vegetation in 16 paired grazed and ungrazed plots. Hydrological monitoring, such as measuring the water table, will continue through the winter.

The Influence of Colour, Scent and Nectar Concentration on Hoverfly Foraging Behaviour

Alastair Hotchkiss, School of Environmental Sciences, University of East Anglia. (BSc Project).

Hoverfly communities were investigated at 8 Cambridgeshire sites, including 3 on Burwell Fen (Wicken). It was found that three distinctly separate hoverfly communities were present over the eight sites. There was an *Episyrphus balteatus* dominated community, associated with composites such as autumn hawkbit *Leontodon autumnalis*, oxeye daisy *Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*, dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* as well as buttercups and clover. Secondly there was a *Sphaerophoria scripta* dominated community found where common ragwort *Senecio jacobaea* was in great abundance, along with hawk's-beards and bristly oxtongue *Picris echioides*. The 3rd community type had a more balanced abundance of five hoverfly species, *Episyrphus balteatus, Syrphus vitripennis, Sphaerophoria scripta, Metasyrphus corollae* and *Meliscaeva auricollis.* The study also looked at the attraction of 'model' flowers, with and without scent, and the effect of nectar strength, on the behaviour of the main hoverfly species.

Research protocol.

If you wish to carry out research at Wicken Fen, you will need to have the support of the Wicken Research and Recording Group and you must get a permit. In the first instance please contact the Chair of the Group, Owen Mountford (address details on p1) with your research title and some information on your proposed methods. We like to have the site used for research, but need to co-ordinate and manage the research work. We also have ideas for useful projects and can guide you to good sites on the property, provide maps etc.

PUBLICATIONS

Terry Rowell compiled an extensive and impressive bibliography for Wicken, which was updated by Laurie Friday and Adrian Colston. It can be viewed or downloaded from the Wicken website at:
http://www.wicken.org.uk/research_bibilography.htm
Further recent publications that include references to Wicken include:

Drane, A.B. & Marsh, R.J. (2006) *Cryptophagus schmidti* Sturm (Cryptophagidae) at two Yorkshire sites and a summary of the British records. *The Coleopterist* **15:** 65-67
[includes reference to Champion's 1870 Wicken Fen record of this rare beetle]

Grubb, P. (2006) Max Walters. *Nature in Cambridgeshire* **48:** 3-11

Higgott, J. (2006) *Emmelina argoteles* (Meyrick, 1922) (Lep: Pterophoridae) – a newly recognised British plume moth. *Entomologist's Record & Journal of Variation* **118:** 195 – 197.

Palmer, M.A. (Ed)(2006) Fen Ragwort *Senecio paludosus* L: a review of conservation work carried out under English Nature's Species Recovery Programme, 1991-2005. English Nature Research Report Number 674.

[includes discussion of the re-introduction of plants at Wicken]

Palmer, M.A. (Ed)(2006) Fen Violet *Viola persicifolia* Schreber: a review of conservation work carried out under English Nature's Species Recovery Programme, 1993 to 2005. *English Nature Research Reports*, No. 676.
[includes discussion of the population of plants at Wicken]

Yom-Tov, Y., Yom-Tov, S., Wright, J., Thorne, C.J.R. & Du Feu, R. (2006) Recent changes in body weight and wing length among some British passerine birds. *Oikos* **112**: 91-101
[study largely based on records collected by the Wicken Fen Ringing Group]

WILDLIFE SNIPPETS

A pair of water voles have taken up residence in the ditch right by the Visitor Centre and Cafe. Many visitors have been lucky to have seen these delightful mammals from the bridge to the Centre. They are also present in the ponds by the Brickpit Hide. Wicken provides a good habitat for 'watery' mammals such as water vole, water shrew, otter, and it would be great if a volunteer or student carried out a survey across the property for these species.

Roe deer are now frequently seen on Burwell Fen, and occasionally in quite large numbers, such as groups of ten or more. Muntjac deer are also frequently seen, in ones and twos, in the quieter wooded areas of the old Fen.

Tubney Fen, the 100 hectares of farmland the Trust recently bought close to the village of Reach, came with a large, deep butyl-lined irrigation reservoir. This was totally devoid of plants and supported little wildlife. In the winter of 2007, the steep clay banks of this reservoir were re-profiled, and moved out to form a larger water area of 2 hectares (5 acres) and a greater length of shallow margins. Thus the new **Tubney Mere** was created. A pair of Mute Swans immediately took up residence (in fact they arrived before the diggers left) and reared five cygnets. A large population of the Small Red-eyed Damselfly became established – this is a recent arrival in England, having naturally colonised from the continent. The aquatic plants are dominated at present by Canadian pondweed, but there is more diversity along the margins.

25 species of water beetle have been recorded from Tubney Mere, including the diving beetle *Hygrotus nigrolineatus* (nationally scarce and new for Wicken and Cambridgeshire) which favours open water bodies with little vegetation. Other scarce water beetle species found there are *Berosus luridus* (RDB), *Berosus affinis* (Nb), *Ilybius fenestratus* (Nb), *Hydroglyphus geminus* (Nb), *Haliplus laminatus* (Nb), *Rhantus suturalis* (Nb) and *Rhantus frontalis* (Nb). This is an impressive range of scarcities for such a new habitat.
13 species of water bug (aquatic Heteroptera) have been found in Tubney Mere, none of them rare, but this again shows how quickly a new water body can provide valuable habitat. We will continue to monitor the colonisation of this Mere.

UK Biodiversity Action Plan: Report on the Species and Habitats Review. June 2007.
The aim of this review was to ensure that the UK BAP remained focussed on the correct priorities for action and takes account of changes in the status of biodiversity and new knowledge. The new UK list of Priority Habitats and Species now contains 1149 species and 65 habitats.

All the original UK BAP habitats have been reselected and additional habitats added, so now the BAP has 40 terrestrial habitats (up from 32) and 25 marine habitats (up from 17). Some of the new UK BAP habitats are Ponds; Oligotrophic and Dystrophic Lakes; Inland Rock Outcrops and Scree.

Added to the species list are Soprano Pipistrelle bat, Noctule bat, Brown Long-eared bat, Tree Pipit, Twite, Hawfinch, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker; White Admiral, Small Heath, Wood White and many other butterflies, and so many moths that the Wicken list of BAP moths will leap from 3 to about 20.

Each of the 1149 species has up to three priority actions listed. There are 124 species that require research or monitoring only. Most of the rest have actions based on habitat management, restoration or creation.

123 species that were on the original BAP lists have been removed as they are no longer judged to meet the criteria. These include Pink Meadow Cap fungi, Common Pipistrelle Bat, Square-spotted Clay moth, Button Snout moth and the Maple Boring Beetle (*Gastrallus immarginatus*).

For the full report and appendices, see: www.ukbap.org.uk

RECORDING AT WICKEN FEN and SENDING IN YOUR RECORDS

Recording

Please do come to Wicken Fen to observe and record its flora and fauna. Don't assume that because the site has such a long history of recording that nothing new or unusual can be found. This Newsletter has highlighted a number of species found new to the property or the first record for many decades. Also, the Reserve is getting larger and it is very interesting to find out what species occur on the restoration land, so do look at the new land as well as the classic fen. We can send you a Map of the site too, to help you get around and get to new areas.

Please get a Permit

You will need a permit to use a trap, net or collect specimens, but these are readily obtained, with the understanding that you will send us your records. To get a permit, write with your address (& email if you have one) to the National Trust Property Manager, explaining what you are coming to study (eg 'Moth trapping', 'Coleoptera and Hemiptera using a sweep net'). The permits lasts one year. The address is on the first page.

Sending in your Records

The key information we need is:
Species Name, Location, OS Grid Ref., Date, Recorder.

It is also useful to add **Comments** (exactly where found, the habitat, notes on the behaviour etc.), **Determiner** (if different to the recorder), and Numerical **Abundance** (how many).

The ideal Format for us is an **Excel Spreadsheet**, with each individual record on a separate **line**, with separate **columns** for Species Name, Location, Grid Ref., Date, etc. This can then be emailed to wickenfen@nationaltrust.org.uk
Or to stuart.warrington@nationaltrust.org.uk

If you don't have access to email and computers, than a typed or hand-written list is also quite acceptable.

With Moth records, it is very useful if the Bradley Checklist Code number can be included.

Examples of Spreadsheet formats. (species names can be scientific or common names, or have columns for both)

Small Copper	Compartment 22	TL562706	15/07/2005	John Smith	Basking on path	4
Gatekeeper	Sedge Fen Drove	TL556706	15/07/2005	John Smith	15 over 100 metres	15
Speckled Wood	St Edmunds Fen	TL564702	15/07/2005	J.B. Jones	A few noted	
Peacock	Burwell Fen: Cmpt 208	TL563689	15/07/2005	J.B. Jones	5 around thistles	5

1634	Lackey	Sedge Fen Drove	TL556706	10/06/2006	C.C. Brown	5
1640	Drinker	Sedge Fen Drove	TL556706	10/06/2006	C.C. Brown	1
1682	Blood-Vein	Sedge Fen Drove	TL556706	10/06/2006	C.C. Brown	1
1713	Riband Wave	Sedge Fen Drove	TL556706	10/06/2006	C.C. Brown	1
926	Phalonidia manniana	Sedge Fen Drove	TL556706	10/06/2006	C.C. Brown	1

Cassida vibex – a tortoise beetle often seen at Wicken.
(Photo by RS Key)