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Introduction

SHOTESHAM IS A great place to live in so many ways – lovely scenery, beautiful historic houses and churches, friendly and delightful people! On top of all this the parish has a remarkable variety of habitats for wildlife including, amongst others: the Common and Stubbs Green, the mixed deciduous woods, the River Tas and the Beck, many ponds, some fine old hedgerows, Shotesham Estate and a lot of wildlife- friendly gardens. Fortunately this is a big compensation for the industrial arable fields which mostly hold little attraction for wildlife, although on the peripheries field margins, new hedges, headlands and plantations of flowers to support bumble bees have made an important difference over recent years.

“March 2010. Early, frosty morning, cerulean blue sky..Several hundred feet up. A large flock of grey lag geese flying east.”



ABOVE: Camberwell Beauty by Ken Holbeck

10 years ago as we approached the millennium it seemed appropriate to put down a marker by carrying out a whole year survey of wildlife in our parish. More than 30 people lent a hand with the 2000 survey and a copy of the ensuing report was delivered to every household in the parish. It is still available in electronic form via the survey website (see later for details). That survey was strong on birds, wild flowers and butterflies but less so on mammals, amphibians and reptiles and other insects such as dragonflies and moths.

With all the changes affecting wildlife, not just locally but nationally and worldwide, including climate change, a lot can happen to wildlife populations in 10 years and it seemed like a good idea to repeat the survey in 2010. Fortunately there was plenty of enthusiasm again and as many of the old hands had learned a few new identification skills over the years and we were supplemented by new recorders with a range of interests and skills, we were able to tackle a wider selection of wildlife groups this time with greater confidence.

“June. One of the great pleasures is the unexpected. A large butterfly alights..it takes off revealing the primrose, creamy yellow edging as it rises rapidly upwards. A glimpse of a rare Camberwell Beauty.”



ABOVE: Barn Owls by Mike Fenn

Birds

OF ALL THE wildlife of Shotesham, birds are perhaps the most popular. Most are active during the day and can be watched by anyone with even a passing interest, especially those species that favour gardens and, of course, the wonderful Barn Owls that can be seen hunting around the village throughout the year. Even the more skulking species often draw attention to themselves by their calls and musical songs. The wide range of habitats around the parish means that Shotesham supports a broad selection of different species. Whilst some species, such as the Woodpigeon, can be seen anywhere, others are more localised and require a little more effort to locate. Of course, one of the main features of birds is their power of flight, and this means that some species migrate in and out of the village at different times of year. All this coming and going is one of the features that makes birdwatching so interesting – you are never quite certain what you might see from one day to the next.

The first Shotesham Wildlife Survey reported on the birds noted around the parish throughout the year 2000. This second survey allowed for another look ten years on, giving a fascinating opportunity to compare how Shotesham's birds have fared through this first decade of the 21st century, and there have been some clear winners and losers. A total of 19 species were recorded in 2010 but had not been seen in 2000. Of these, some were just chance events, such as Curlew, Common Sandpiper, Green Sandpiper and Crossbill that were clearly just passing through. A few other species may actually have been present but overlooked in 2000, such as Lesser Whitethroat and Reed Warbler, the latter only found along the edges of the river Tas in Shotesham Park. However, some species are known to have increased across Britain, and their appearance in Shotesham since 2010 is part of a wider pattern.

"The owl in Chapel Lane has a variety of calls: one almost like an old fashioned kettle, blowing and whistling away."

Perhaps the most obvious of these is the Little Egret, the small white heron that can now regularly be seen around the Common, although it can also be hard to miss the Egyptian Geese if you walk near them when engaged in their noisy calls. Perhaps most excitingly, two new birds of prey have appeared. The Hobby is a fast-flying migratory falcon that loves to hunt dragonflies, swallows and martins; although it may possibly have been overlooked in 2000, it certainly has increased in recent years and is now to be looked



ABOVE: Little Egret by Andy Musgrove

for anywhere around the parish in the summer months. Even more striking, Red Kites have now started to appear in our air-space. This beautiful and formerly widespread bird was driven to the brink of extinction by persecution, with just a handful of birds holding out in remote Welsh valleys. Since the 1980s, however, a series of successful re-introduction schemes have seen numbers bounce back and the species is increasingly being seen throughout Norfolk.

As well as the new species, several other species have clearly increased in numbers over the last decade. Greylag Goose, Buzzard and Goldfinch are amongst those species which are far more numerous in the parish now, for a variety of reasons. For example, Buzzards have spread back across Britain from strongholds in the west following a relaxation in persecution alongside more enlightened attitudes to gamebird rearing. The increase in Goldfinches, on the other hand, seems to be more linked to milder winters; most birds used to migrate south to France and Spain in the winter, but many remain now, helped by the provision of food in gardens.

Not everything is so rosy, however. Across Britain, it is well known that many species of farmland bird have suffered major declines since the 1970s. Although this decline has slowed in recent years, there is as yet little evidence of a return to former levels for most species. However, a great deal of sympathetic land-management is now underway in Shotesham and surrounding areas of Norfolk

OPPOSITE: Little Owl by Andy Musgrove

and we can only hope that this will soon begin to show some real results. Two farmland birds that seem to do well in Shotesham are Yellowhammer and Little Owl, although since 2000 it appears that numbers of Grey Partridge, Lapwing, Turtle Dove and Skylark have dropped noticeably. As well as farmland birds, there is now increasing concern about a number of woodland species, including two that, sadly, seem to have been lost from the parish in the intervening decade: Lesser Spotted Woodpecker and Willow Tit. The loss of these two species is part of a wider pattern in Norfolk, and at the moment, the reasons behind their decline remain somewhat unclear.

A few other species may also have declined in recent years. Snipe no longer breed on the common and wintering numbers also seem to be dropping. Kingfishers were scarce in 2010, although this may have been a short-term effect of the cold snap in the winter of 2009/10. Spotted Flycatchers have declined widely across Britain, as well as in Shotesham, for reasons which may be partly connected to conditions on their wintering grounds in Africa. Finally, numbers of Greenfinches have dropped across much of Britain due in large part to a parasitic disease called Trichomoniasis.

So, what will the Shotesham Wildlife 2020 report look like? Well, one thing that is certain is that things will not be the same. Unfortunately, it currently looks as though there will be continuing declines in some migrant species, such as Turtle Dove and Spotted Flycatcher, whilst the future for Lapwing and Grey Partridge may hang in the balance. Conversely, it seems extremely likely that Red Kite will be nesting in one of the woods in the parish by 2020, perhaps even joined by Raven, another species formerly widespread in Norfolk but exterminated by persecution. Little Egrets will quite possibly be joined by other exotic European species; both Great White Egret and Cattle Egret are increasingly found in Norfolk and both are very likely to occur in the village. Another species which may well make an appearance is Cetti's Warbler; this species currently occurs throughout the Broads and nests as close as Whitlingham – it is only a short distance up the river valley to Shotesham. But how about being even more optimistic? In April 2007, a Stone-curlew was heard calling at Hawes Green. Although that year it was only heard for a single night, numbers of this rare breeding bird are increasing in the Brecks and along the Suffolk coast, and perhaps its weird and wonderful calls could become a feature of the Shotesham evening before too long. It's definitely well worth keeping your eyes and ears open!

Below are listed the 100 species of birds noted in the parish of Shotesham in 2010.

Mute Swan – unusual in the village but small numbers along the river Tas in Shotesham Estate.
Greylag Goose – increasing numbers, especially Old Hall Farm area but can fly over anywhere.
Canada Goose – regularly seen but less common than Greylag, mostly around Old Hall Farm.
Barnacle Goose – a feral flock regularly flies over, sometimes roosting overnight at Shotesham House.
Egyptian Goose – one or two pairs now occur around the village and probably breed; a new arrival.
Shelduck – singles and pairs seen flying over in March and May; may still breed but no proof.
Wigeon – records from in Shotesham Park in November and December.
Teal – small numbers noted in Shotesham Park and on the Common at the start of the year.
Mallard – widespread breeding resident, several pairs nesting in gardens.
Red-legged Partridge – large numbers released for shooting, with some surviving to breed in the wild.
Grey Partridge – recorded twice around the Common, but now very difficult to find in Shotesham.
Pheasant – very common breeding resident, with many released for shooting.
Cormorant – several records in the winter months, mostly flying over the village.
Little Egret – up to three regularly at Shotesham Ford and the Common, but absent mid-summer.
Grey Heron – regularly seen around the parish all year, although does not breed in Shotesham.
Little Grebe – singles recorded twice; may have bred although no proof in 2010.
Red Kite – several summer records of this increasing (and stunning) species.
Sparrowhawk – regularly seen throughout the year; several pairs clearly nest but no proof in 2010.
Buzzard – an increasingly common sight, especially over woods, and clearly breeding now.
Kestrel – regularly seen; probably one or two pairs breeding in the parish.
Hobby – regular sightings from May to September of this increasing species; probably bred.
Water Rail – a skulking species, recorded in January near the village pond; probably overlooked.
Moorhen – a common breeding species around the

seen only in small numbers.

Woodpigeon – probably the most common bird in the parish; an abundant breeding resident.
Collared Dove – a common resident around houses and farm buildings.
Turtle Dove – a declining summer migrant, with only two birds recorded and not proved to breed.
Cuckoo – two or three singing males in the spring; probably breeds most years.
Barn Owl – perhaps four pairs in and around the parish, the most popular bird in Shotesham?!
Little Owl – a common resident with many breeding pairs around the parish.
Tawny Owl – a common breeding resident in the village and elsewhere around the parish.
Swift – a common bird between May and September, most breeding birds around The Grove.
Kingfisher – scarce this year, perhaps affected by harsh winters, but noted on the Tas and the Common.
Green Woodpecker – common resident, with several breeding pairs all around the parish.
Great Spotted Woodpecker – common all around the parish, and increasingly visiting garden feeders.
Jay – common although often somewhat secretive; often more noticeable in autumn.
Magpie – widespread but only in small numbers; assumed to breed.
Jackdaw – numerous resident, nesting in chimneys and on St Martin's ruin; larger flocks in winter.
Rook – recorded widely, but especially nearer the rookery on Skeets Hill where over 50 nests in 2010.
Carrion Crow – widespread around the parish in small numbers
Goldcrest – secretive but widespread especially around conifers; breeds and more in winter.
Blue Tit – common throughout the parish, especially to feeders and often using garden nest boxes.
Great Tit – also very common, and also making regular use of gardens for nesting and winter feeding.
Coal Tit – widespread resident in smaller numbers than Blue or Great Tits, especially around conifers.
Marsh Tit – several pairs resident around the parish, especially in woods but will come into gardens.
Skylark – still appears to be reasonably common in summer, although winter flocks have declined.



FROM TOP: Cuckoo and Lapwing nest by Andy Musgrove

village, especially along the Common.
Coot – a few pairs nested successfully on ponds in the village in the summer.
Oystercatcher – one record only, in May.
Lapwing – at least one pair hatched young at Hawes Green, but unusually scarce in winter. Lapwing Nest Photographer–Andy Musgrove
Snipe – small numbers in the winter, but no longer breeds in the parish.
Woodcock – common in the woods in winter, mostly detected by shooters. Not known to breed.
Curlew – recorded flying over the village in May and August.

Common Sandpiper – one heard after dark on the Common one night in August, a passage migrant.
Green Sandpiper – one recorded on the Common in November.
Black-headed Gull – largest numbers in the winter, in the fields and flying over to and from roost sites.
Common Gull – as Black-headed Gull, but generally in smaller numbers.
Lesser Black-backed Gull – recorded throughout the year, peaking in late summer and early autumn.
Herring Gull – a few records outside the breeding season, mostly flying high overhead.
Stock Dove – a widespread breeding resident, mostly

Sand Martin – small numbers over the Common throughout the summer; may breed but not proven.

Swallow – a common breeding bird around Shotesham, noted from April to September.

House Martin – common breeder in summer, although has declined at south-east end of the village.

Long tailed Tit – increasingly common breeding resident, increasingly being seen around bird tables.

Chiffchaff – common migrant with an easy-to-recognise song, present from late March into October.

Willow Warbler – several on migration in spring, but declining and uncertain whether still breeds.

Blackcap – common breeder, from early April and remaining until October; a few also in winter.

Garden Warbler – summer visitor in small numbers; only recorded in spring 2010 but probably breeds.

Lesser Whitethroat – small numbers from late April onwards, detectable by their rattling song.

Whitethroat – a common summer visitor, breeding in hedges and scrubby areas throughout the parish.

Sedge Warbler – one was singing on the Common on one date only in May.

Reed Warbler – only recorded in the reedbeds by the Tas in Shotesham Park where presumed to breed.

Waxwing – scarce winter visitor, but up to five in February and one over the Common in November.

Nuthatch – several reports from gardens, but more common in the larger woods in the parish.

Treecreeper – widespread but easily overlooked; present in many of the larger gardens and in all woods.

Wren – small and secretive, but its loud song shows it to be one of the commonest birds in Shotesham.

Starling – breeds in the village, especially at the south-east end, with more birds arriving in the winter.

Blackbird – a very common bird in gardens and elsewhere throughout the parish

Fieldfare – widespread in winter with flocks of up to 400 seen; also in gardens but in smaller numbers.

Song Thrush – remains reasonably common, especially noticeable when singing in spring.

Redwing – common winter visitor, mostly to farmland; can be heard overhead on still autumn nights.

Mistle Thrush – small numbers of breeding pairs present around the parish.

Spotted Flycatcher – a declining summer visitor, but one or two pairs were recorded.

Robin – a common and widespread breeding species across the parish.

Wheatear – occurs only on migration, with birds seen in April and May then again in August.

Dunnock – an unobtrusive but common breeding bird across the parish.

House Sparrow – declining nationally but increasing in Shotesham; highest numbers around The Grove.

Tree Sparrow – only occasional in the village, but one feeding in a garden at Hawes Green in February.

Grey Wagtail – small numbers present along the Tas and the Beck and breeds in the parish.

Pied Wagtail – small numbers recorded around the village throughout the year and presumed to breed.

Meadow Pipit – a few birds in arable fields and on muck heaps in the winter but absent in summer.

Chaffinch – a very common breeding bird with additional immigrants bolstering numbers in winter.

Brambling – scarce but perhaps overlooked; singles noted in January, October and December.

Greenfinch – common breeding species, but appears to be in decline; same as national pattern.

Goldfinch – increasingly common species, especially in winter when attracted to garden Nyjer feeders.

Siskin – small flocks recorded around the village, mostly in winter months; probably does not breed.

Linnet – increasingly common breeder in hedgerows and on the Common; seldom visits garden feeders.

Lesser Redpoll – just a handful of records in the early months of the year; probably does not breed.

Common Crossbill – one flew over a garden by the Common in January.

Bullfinch – a quiet and easily overlooked species, but breeding pairs occur widely around the parish.

Yellowhammer – breeds around the parish in hedgerows, gathering into larger flocks in the winter.

Reed Bunting – present on The Common in spring and summer and probably breeds.



FROM TOP: Swallow by Dick Jeeves, Wheatear by Andy Musgrove

Mammals

MOST MAMMALS ARE less visible than birds, butterflies or flowers and are therefore less consistently recorded. Those listed are mostly the result of chance encounters so it is generally rather difficult to give any indication of numbers.

Small rodents seen were: Bank Vole (not many), Short-tailed Field Vole (quite a lot, including a starring role in the Barn Owl pellets examined), Common Shrew, Yellow-necked mouse (seen in 2009 and 2011 but not 2010!) Wood Mouse, House Mouse, Brown Rat and Mole. One Mole was obliging enough to come to the surface during a session for children at the village pond and we were able to watch it dig itself back the ground. Harvest Mice have been recorded (nests found) in recent years, so hopefully they are still with us – but none were recorded this year.



ABOVE: Mole digging itself back into the earth by Frank Mitchell

“At the base of an old Hawthorn hedge in a small hollow was a large pile of bright red rose hips, some whole and some partly eaten....we caught a brief glimpse of a Wood Mouse looking at us.”

Water Voles showed signs of a revival with several being recorded on the Tas. This is probably a result of some success in the continuing campaign against American Mink which prey heavily on them.

Other predators were Fox, Stoat (a good population) and Weasel. Hedgehogs seem to be holding their own in spite of all the road deaths as are Rabbits in the face of Myxomatosis. Hares are a familiar sight in the fields and woods and Grey Squirrels are thriving.

We have 3 species of deer: Muntjac are common, usually seen in ones or twos; Roe are more often in groups of 6-8 and Red Deer are present, though surprisingly invisible considering their size.

We are just beginning to get to grip with bats but so far Gordon Edgar's bat detector has confirmed: Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, Noctule and Serotine. We are hopeful that other varieties will be recorded as the work continues. Certainly a Brown Long-eared bat was caught accidentally a couple of years ago.

2011 update-the rare Barbastelle bat was recorded near the Common, also by using an electronic bat detector.



FROM TOP: Hedgehog by Andy Musgrove, Hare by Mike Fenn

Reptiles

ANOTHER GROUP WHOSE fortunes are mixed. We have one snake and one (legless) lizard. Grass Snakes seem to be doing well recently and there were plenty of reports from across the parish of adults and young. Four pencil-thick young were found together in one spot and several people were lucky enough to see Grass Snakes swimming. This is normal behaviour and in some parts of the country they are known as Water Snakes.

"As I stepped in an innocent looking clump of grass, a glittering scaly serpent, plates glazing like the sun...it was a grass snake! You don't need to go far for an adventure."



ABOVE: Grass Snake by Frank Mitchell

Unlike Adders, which we don't get in Shotesham, Grass Snakes are harmless (to humans!) and are not poisonous. They like warmth and so are sometimes attracted to compost heaps in gardens where they may lay their eggs which take about 10 weeks to hatch. Grass snakes take a wide range of prey, much of which is caught in water, including frogs and small fish. Young Grass Snakes eat tadpoles, worms and slugs – so may be useful in keeping pests down in gardens if you are lucky enough to have one or two!

A few Slow Worms (the legless lizard) were recorded but they are far from common and predated by cats and also by Grass snakes!

If you are interested in attracting Grass Snakes or Slow Worms, a piece of roofing felt laid in a sunny spot provides a safe basking spot.

Amongst the amphibians, Frogs seem to be far less frequent than in recent years having been affected by a nationwide virus and a fungal disease. Toads have also apparently declined drastically in the last 2 or 3 years. Prior to this it was normal for there to be a major migration across the road by the Common each spring but by 2010 this had almost come to an end. Common Newts are around in several ponds and we have several populations of the legally protected Great Crested Newts.

The most unusual reptile was a small (and deceased) Terrapin found and photographed in July. Sad demise of someone's escaped pet presumably.



FROM TOP: Toad by Mike Fenn, Smooth Newt by Andy Musgrove

Butterflies

Overview

23 SPECIES WERE recorded within the parish during 2010, one more than in 2000. Recorded for the first time were; the Essex Skipper, Purple Hairstreak, Brown Argus and the Camberwell Beauty. Not recorded in 2010 but in 2000 were Wall Brown, Painted Lady and Clouded Yellow.

Species List	
Small Skipper	Peacock
Purple Hairstreak	Green-veined White
Essex Skipper	Comma
White Admiral	Orange Tip
Large Skipper	Speckled Wood
Red Admiral	Small Copper
Brimstone	Gatekeeper
Small Tortoiseshell	Brown Argus
Large White	Meadow Brown
Camberwell Beauty	Common Blue
Small White	Ringlet
	Holly Blue

'You just never know what's going to turn up..in the garden, not just a red admiral but also a white admiral'



ABOVE: White Admiral by Frank Mitchell

Newly Recorded in 2010

The Essex Skipper (similar to the Small Skipper) was probably overlooked in 2000. Similarly, the Purple Hairstreak, a beautiful insect that can be seen fluttering in ones and twos over the tops of oak trees. The Camberwell Beauty may have been a released captive bred butterfly. There was a genuine record of this scarce migrant on Chapel Lane in 1995.



ABOVE FROM LEFT: Purple Hairstreak and Wall Brown by Frank Mitchell

'Missing' in 2010

The Wall Brown seems to have disappeared from South Norfolk! We have included a photograph of one and would be grateful for any sightings in Shotesham, just let us know via the website. After the mass invasion of millions of Painted Lady from North Africa in 2009, none were recorded in 2010! Clouded Yellow migrate annually into the UK but usually in small numbers.

Habitat Changes and Butterflies

Butterfly numbers are constantly changing as they respond very quickly to their environment. As their habitat changes either by agriculture or by urban development then the range for these wonderful creatures is threatened. Apparently 12 square miles of gardens in London have been lost in recent years to car parking. A quarter of front gardens in the North east have been paved over!

Butterfly Plants

However, we can help by making our gardens as butterfly friendly as possible. Nectar rich plants are fairly easy to include in our gardens e.g. Buddleia, Verbena bonariensis, Lavender, Marjoram/oregano, Thyme, Sedum spectabile – ice plant

If you have the space you may like to consider some caterpillar plants e.g. Holly and Ivy (flowering) Honesty, wild Garlic, Buckthorn and even nettles if you can put up with them!

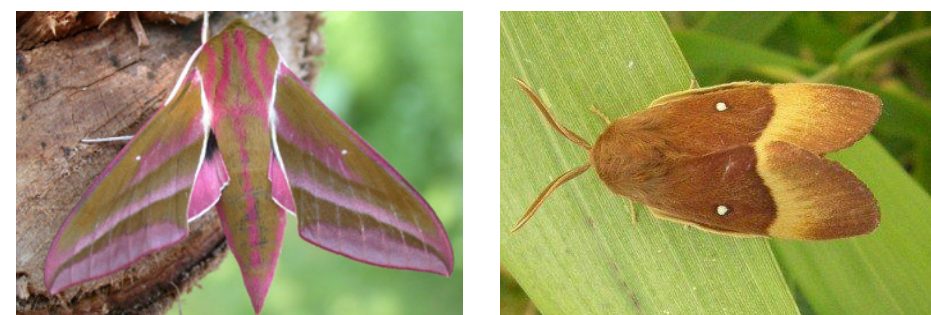
Whilst the environment is changing for butterflies, we can do our bit to help.



ABOVE: A Red Admiral is shown here on a Verbena bonariensis by Ken Holbeck

Moths

Moths are a fascinating but under-appreciated part of our wildlife heritage. Together with the better-known butterflies they form the Lepidoptera, over 2,500 species of which are known in Britain. Out of all of these, the 60-odd butterflies get all the attention, being colourful and day-flying, whilst most people think that moths are drab and dull and responsible for eating clothes! However, although many are shades of brown or grey, even these are intricately patterned, whilst many more species are striking and colourful. And very few of the clothes moths (or, more accurately, their caterpillars) are seen these days.



ABOVE FROM LEFT: Elephant Hawk-moth (detail) by Andy Musgrove, Oak Eggar moth by Rosemary Page-Davies

Another part of the appeal of moths is that many species have been given attractive and intriguing names. For example, species such as The Drinker, Blood-vein, Scorched Wing, Canary-shouldered Thorn, Elephant Hawk-moth (seen here) Lobster Moth, Ruby Tiger, Bright-line Brown-eye, Hebrew Character, The Sprawler and Beautiful Hook-tip are all common in Shotesham.

Although some moths can be found by day, the most effective way to see moths is by use of a light-trap. Most people will be aware that moths will come to a lit window on a summer's night; a light trap operates in a similar way, although the light tends to be a more attractive (to moths) ultraviolet, sited on top of a funnel leading into a box. The moths find it difficult to find their way back out and so settle down and wait until morning, when it is then easy to inspect the contents of the trap before releasing the moths unharmed.

A moth-trap was run in the garden of Tendaba on 47 occasions during the year 2010, with other species noted around the parish by day. We also ran several traps on the Common on the evening of 7th August – with special thanks to Mike & Bernie Fenn for electricity

and welcome late-night cuppas! The majority of records were by Andy Musgrove, although a few other sightings were sent in.

It was a reasonably good year for moths, following a run of several poor summers. On the other hand, there was little evidence of moth immigration from the continent this year; numbers of migrant moths do vary greatly between years. Most of the species trapped in 2010 were to be expected although a few were new records for the village. In total, 326 species of moths were noted during the year. These included 222 of the larger (or “macro”) moths, and 104 smaller (or “micro”) moths. Whilst these numbers of species may appear impressive to the newcomer to moths, in actual fact it is likely that many hundreds more species are present but were overlooked. In particular, trapping of a wider range of habitats (especially the Great and Little Woods, Stubbs Green, the lower Common and the banks of the Tas) would yield many different species that were not found in the garden. Additionally, many more species of micro-moths could be detected by looking for their feeding signs on their preferred food-plants; the blotches on the Horse Chestnuts in the village in recent years are a good example, being the work of the newly colonising Horse Chestnut Leaf-miner.

A full list of the species recorded is available in the full report and on the website, but the photographs here show a selection of some of the more striking species detected during the year.

“One of the more exciting things about looking in my moth-trap late in the summer is when I find it also crawling with hornets-it certainly wakes me up in the morning!”

Planting for moths

To help moths in your garden, there are really two main things you can do. Firstly, moths will come to feed on nectar from a wide range of flowering plants, but two particular favourites are Tobacco Plant and Night-scented Stock. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly moths require a wide range of native plants on which to lay their eggs and rear their caterpillars. Different moths require different wild plants for their caterpillars, but particularly good ones are the deciduous trees (especially Oak and Willow) and hedging shrubs (such as Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Hazel and Field Maple).

OPPOSITE: Herald moth – one of the most striking trapped by Andy Musgrove



Dragonflies and Damselflies

2010 SEEMS TO have been a good year for dragonflies and particularly for damselflies. The highlights have been the sighting of the Small Red-eyed Damselfly at Stubbs Green pond and also the Black-tailed Skimmer, again seen at Stubbs Green. This reflects the success of the pond clearance and improvements to the habitat at Stubbs Green. The one disappointment has been small numbers seen of Emperor Dragonflies, which are normally common throughout the village. It is encouraging that quite a few people have recorded the very attractive Migrant Hawker in gardens with ponds. This is now becoming a very common species within our village. The following species were recorded.

Damselflies

Common Blue Damselfly – Lots seen throughout the summer at the village pond and Stubbs Green pond. First spottings were April/early May on the Common.

Large Red Damselfly – Again lots seen around the village pond from early April onwards.

Azure Damselfly – Numerous throughout the Common and Stubbs Green

Blue-tailed Damselfly – Seen from Mid May. Not recorded previously at the pond.

Variable Damselfly – Another previously not recorded in the village. One at the rear of the village pond on 25 May

Banded Demoiselle – Only seen one at the ford in Hollow Lane mid June

Small Red-eyed Damselfly – A highlight for the survey, as these haven't been seen before. Recorded and photographed at Stubbs Green pond and seen as late as early September.

Dragonflies

Four-spotted Chaser – Only two were seen at the village pond, which was disappointing in comparison to previous years, but Stubbs Green was a delight from 10 June, many throughout the summer. Also several were seen mid summer on the new pond at Falgate Farm.

Broad-bodied Chaser – Two were seen on the village pond

Black-tailed Skimmer – One was seen at Stubbs Green on 10 June, I am sure there must have been more, great to see as this is a sign of good quality pond
Emperor Disappointing numbers this year. Only three recorded on the Common, one early June, two on 3 July at the village pond

Migrant Hawker – Lots were recorded throughout the village, a very common species and seen well into late September.

Brown Hawker – Stubbs Green and edges of Great Wood recorded from mid summer

Southern Hawker – This is a fairly common species, especially around Stubbs Green

BELOW: Large Red Damselfly, Mike Fenn



Other insects

Of all the different groups of wildlife, insects are by far the most varied and diverse. Although more attention is given to some of the larger and more colourful groups of insects, such as butterflies and dragonflies, there are many many more species that go mostly unnoticed beneath our feet (sometimes literally). For example, it is thought that within the UK, there are over 6,000 species of flies, 4,000 species of beetles and 7,000 species of bees and wasps. Of course, not all of these species occur in Shotesham, by any means! However, it is likely that if we were able to study our parish in extremely fine detail, we could find many thousands of species of insects.

Learning how to identify insects correctly takes time, patience, experience, lots of books and (for most species) a microscope. However, we did put names to a handful of other species as we were looking for the more familiar types of wildlife during our 2010 survey. It is hoped that increasing our knowledge of some of these other groups of insects might be something that people could work on in future years. The other insects noted around Shotesham during 2010 are listed below:

Order Orthoptera the crickets and grasshoppers

Omocestus viridulus –
Common Green Grasshopper
Chorthippus brunneus –
Field Grasshopper
Chorthippus albomarginatus –
Lesser Marsh Grasshopper
Chorthippus parallelus –
Meadow Grasshopper
Pholidoptera griseoaptera –
Dark Bush-cricket
Metrioptera roeselii –
Roesel's Bush-cricket
Leptophyes punctatissima –
Speckled Bush-cricket

Order Hemiptera the true bugs

Pentatoma rufipes –
Forest Bug
Eysacoris fabricii –
a species of shield-bug

Order Neuroptera the lacewings

Chrysoperla carnea –
a species of green lacewing

Order Hymenoptera the bees, wasps and ants

Bombus terrestris –
Buff-tailed Bumblebee
Bombus lapidarius –
Red-tailed Bumblebee
Bombus pascuorum –
Common Carder-bee
Bombus pratorum –
Early Bumblebee
Bombus sylvestris –
Forest Cuckoo-bee
Bombus vestalis –
Vestal Cuckoo-bee
Melecta albifrons –
a species of solitary bee
Vespa crabro – Hornet



ABOVE: Dark Bush-cricket by Andy Musgrove BELOW: Dark-edged bee-fly by Frank Mitchell

Order Diptera the flies

Bombylius major –
Dark-edged Bee-fly
Episyrphus balteatus –
a species of hoverfly
Leucozona lucorum –
a species of hoverfly
Volucella bombylans –
a species of hoverfly

Order Coleoptera the beetles

Melolontha melolontha –
Cockchafer
Nicrophorus humator –
Sexton Beetle
Coccinella 7-punctata –
Seven-spot Ladybird
Harmonia axyridis –
Harlequin Ladybird



Wild plants and flowers

Shotesham is blessed with having many and varied plant communities, largely influenced by the underlying soil type and the land use, past and present.

The heavier chalky boulder clays proved hard to plough, and up until the late 18th century the land was largely managed as “wood pasture”: small farms where grazing animals moved between wood and pasture, and where wildflower meadows, commons, hedges, ditches and woodlands were a common feature in the landscape.

With improved farming methods, drainage and machinery, these soils become “workable”, and “wood pasture” gave way to growing crops. Along with the Enclosures, hedges were removed, fields made larger, meadows cultivated and woodlands cleared.

Although today a good deal of the land in Shotesham is under the plough, there are still surviving many examples of these ancient landscape features, providing the habitats for the wild plants to grow and flourish.



ABOVE: Goat's Beard by Tim Drake

Shotesham Common

A 48 acre valley site in the catchment of the River Tas, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), traditionally managed by grazing for its wildlife. Typical of the plants recorded are: Marsh Marigold, Greater Bird's-foot Trefoil, Wild Angelica, Marsh Bedstraw and Gypsywort. The Common has many hidden gems, yet to be uncovered, and a more thorough survey is needed.

Stubbs Green Common

An unimproved flower-rich meadow; a remnant of those ancient landscapes. In the summer, the meadow is a blaze of colour, with Yellow Rattle, orchids, Oxeye Daisy and buttercups. Over 1000 Common Spotted Orchids were recorded this year. The meadow is managed in the traditional way; haymaking and grazing, which will ensure that this floristic “jewel” will continue to sparkle into the future.



ABOVE: Goat's Beard by Tim Drake

St Mary's

With over 800 churches, Norfolk has more churches than any other county in England. Older churchyards like St Mary's are again remnants of ancient countryside, fragments of unimproved pasture that were used for hay and to graze animals, long before the church itself was built.

It boasts a rich plant community; from spring ephemerals such as cowslip, primrose and violet, to the summer flowering Pyramidal Orchid, Oxeye Daisy, Bird's-foot Trefoil and Lady's Bedstraw.

The churchyard is actively managed, with a hay cut, by the village conservation group to protect and enhance its wildlife.

Roadside verges

An important habitat and landscape feature in the village. These strips of grassland are vestiges of the unimproved grassland that bounded the ancient byways, now mirrored by today's roads.

Plants, once common in the country meadows, are now only found on these verges, like Dyer's Greenweed, Sulphur Clover, Stone Parsley and Spiny Restharrow. Goat's Beard, Lady's Bedstraw, Agrimony and St John's Wort are also to be found. In Shotesham, four of these verges are Roadside Nature Reserves, managed by NCC for their wildlife interest.



ABOVE: Agrimony in Roger's Lane by Raz Woolacott



County wildlife sites

Within the parish there are 4 sites, all woodlands, designated for their plant community interest. These sites have not been adequately recorded for this survey; suffice to say they are worthy of further investigation...!!

In all, 248 plant species were recorded for 2010, look on the website for the full list; in 2000 it was 155. It's good to see that we have spotted more. However, number crunching isn't the whole story. For these beautiful, varied, often strange, yet always interesting plants to continue to flourish and garland our lovely Parish, we need to protect their habitats, so that future generations can derive that same joy that we so surely get.

The village garden & conservation group undertake "hands-on" management of various wildlife projects around the parish. Why not get involved yourselves, and be a part in protecting and enhancing Shotesham's wildlife. You don't need a lot of expertise, time or muscle power. Anyone, young and old, can lend a hand, not only to help conserve some of Shotesham's beautiful wildlife sites but also to have fun.

To find out when the conservation activities are taking place look in the monthly Contact or check out the Shotesham Wildlife Website at: www.shoteshamwildlife.weebly.com

Wildlife Recording

Anyone can get involved in wildlife recording – it's easy. All you need is a pair of eyes (or ears), a pencil and a notebook. Then simply keep a diary of the things that you see. Jot down whatever takes your interest. Some days you might keep a list of all the birds you see in your garden, others you might jot down an interesting butterfly or note the date that the oaks have burst into leaf. That's really what is meant by wildlife recording, it doesn't have to be complicated.

If you do enjoy recording wildlife, however, you can get even more enjoyment and fulfilment by sharing your observations. In the first instance, simply tell someone. You could use the Shotesham Wildlife forum to do this – simply go to <http://shoteshamwildlife.weebly.com/discussion-forum.html> to see the discussions.

Even better, it can be really helpful if you can send in any of your wildlife records (even of common species) to local or national organisations. If you're interested in doing so, a good place to look is the Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service – see http://www.nbis.org.uk/getting_involved.html for tips on how to start making your wildlife records really useful. In most cases, sending in a wildlife record simply requires you to provide just four key pieces of information:

1. **Date** – time might be useful also but isn't usually as important.
2. **Location** – a grid reference is best, but just "Shotesham" will be good enough for many purposes.
3. **Species** – if you're not 100% sure which species it is, then say so! It's always better to err on the side of caution, and if you're not sure then someone may be able to help you (especially if you can get a photo).
4. **Recorder** – that means you! It's really useful to be able to get back in touch with the recorder in case of any query.

"...how dull and barren our life would be if there were no birds... they come to our feeders ..and..entertain us on these cold dark days...to begin to identify species more accurately.. I have to start to..pay attention to detail and record accurately. It's the beginning of looking and seeing in a new way."

Getting children involved

Most children love spotting wildlife, the key is to make it fun and active! There is usually lots of wildlife events organised locally, and



nationally, aimed at families with children. Children can also become members of clubs, such as the RSBP Wildlife Explorers, which have projects and activities run in their nature reserves and ideas to carry out at home.

But the simplest way to get children interested in wildlife and nature is to find out what's on their door step, their garden. They could build, if possible, their own hide, make bird cakes, dig a mini-beast trap, sit back and see what comes. To get them started on identifying and recording what they see you can download easy-to-use wildlife spotting sheets from www.wildlifewatch.org.uk the junior branch of the Wildlife Trust, or from www.naturedetectives.org.uk part of the Woodland Trust site. Even if they don't see anything by using the 'nibbler' sheet they might find out what's been eating your plants!