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Welcome to the latest news from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre

Firstly, thank you to all those who volunteered their time to support us, submitted records to the centre or helped us with verification.

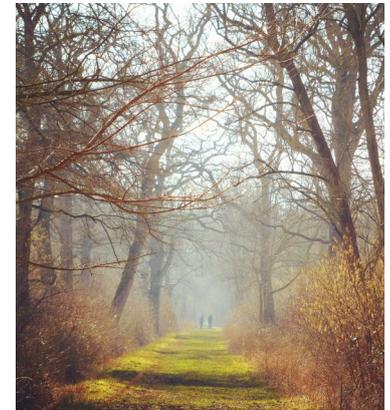
We write this at the start of Spring and just after an unusually warm and dry February which led to sightings of brimstone butterflies, and this hummingbird hawkmoth was also spotted in a garden in Chatteris on the 22nd February.



Hummingbird hawkmoth (*Macroglossum stellatarum*) / Karen Hall

More recording highlights from the last year are on the next page. You will also find an update about progress with our data holdings and the various projects and events we have been involved with.

From the CPERC team (Phil, Hazel and David)



Hayley Wood nature reserve, managed by the Wildlife Trust BCN, in the strangely warm February sunshine / Rob Enderby

Team News

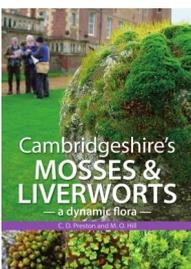
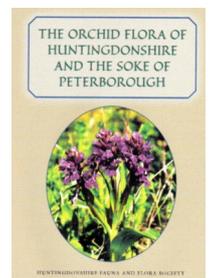
Since our previous newsletter Hazel Harbird and David Gregory have joined the team. Hazel joined CPERC as a Data Officer in September 2017 and now works part-time here and part-time at Bedfordshire and Luton Biodiversity Recording and Monitoring Centre. David Gregory started as a Data Officer in February 2018 and is now full-time.

2018 was a busy year, with David and Hazel receiving training in GIS and other software and all of us helping to organise three Bioblitzes, process records, work on projects and attend various conferences and meetings.

Wider News

The Huntingdonshire Fauna and Flora Society's new book, 'The Orchid Flora of Huntingdonshire and the Soke of Peterborough', is now available to buy.

Email Peter Walker at walkpeg@hotmail.co.uk to place an order. Copies cost £15 each for HFFS members or £20 for non-members, with additional charges for post and packaging.



Another book on the flora of our area is due out soon: 'Cambridgeshire's Mosses and Liverworts - a dynamic flora', by C. D. Preston and M. O. Hill. Copies can be pre-ordered from the Nature Bureau online bookshop, with a £20 pre-publication offer price if ordered before 31st March.

We were sad to hear that Rob Wilson and Gill Gent, both previously vice-county plant recorders for Northamptonshire, passed away during 2018. The vice-county of Northamptonshire covers the Soke of Peterborough and as such they both contributed significantly to our data holdings. More about them can be found in the Northamptonshire Biodiversity Records Centre's Autumn/Winter 2018 [newsletter](#).

Recording highlights (2018 and 2019 so far)



Wasp spider (*Argiope bruennichi*) / Jacqui Cunado

The long, hot and dry summer of 2018 may have favoured some species more than others, and CPERC received a number of interesting records both in summer and through the rest of the past year.

There were more reports of wasp spiders (*Argiope bruennichi*) in the summer and early autumn than in previous years, the majority of which came from south Cambridgeshire. The CPERC team were lucky enough to find two on separate BioBlitzes (see our [2018 BioBlitz Event Summary](#)) in Landbeach and Eltisley.

Records for bee orchids (*Ophrys apifera*) were submitted from across the county, particularly in June where we received six separate records via email and our recording website.

Willow emerald damselflies (*Chalcolestes viridis*), a relatively recent arrival to Cambridgeshire, were recorded more than ever before in 2018. For more information on the spread of this species please visit the [British Dragonfly Society website](#).



Bee Orchid (*Ophrys apifera*) / Ben Atkinson



Willow emerald damselfly (*Chalcolestes viridis*) / David Spencer

Other highlights include a turtle dove (*Streptopelia turtur*), seen in Upwood and the Raveleys in May, and wrinkled peach fungus (*Rhodotus palmatus*), found in Boxworth in November. Winter saw two records of Chinese Water Deer (*Hydropotes inermis*) from East Cambridgeshire - they are rarely recorded outside of the Great Fen area.

Our summer 2016 newsletter heralded our first Cambridgeshire record of an albino grey squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*). Grey squirrels continue to cause excitement in the CPERC team, with two reports of black squirrels (a melanistic variant of the grey squirrel) from South Cambridgeshire, one of which was seen by the CPERC team from our offices in Cambourne in January this year.

In July and September there were two separate reports from the Orton area of Peterborough of a grey squirrel so red it was mistaken for a red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*). We're still not sure if it was the same individual in both reports! Sadly, the last confirmed record of a red squirrel we hold for Cambridgeshire is from 1973. The [Northern Red Squirrels group](#) provide an excellent short guide to identifying red and grey squirrels.

There have been no recent reports of albino grey squirrels, but an albino hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) was reported in Bottisham in April, and a black fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) was reported in Little Gransden in January this year.

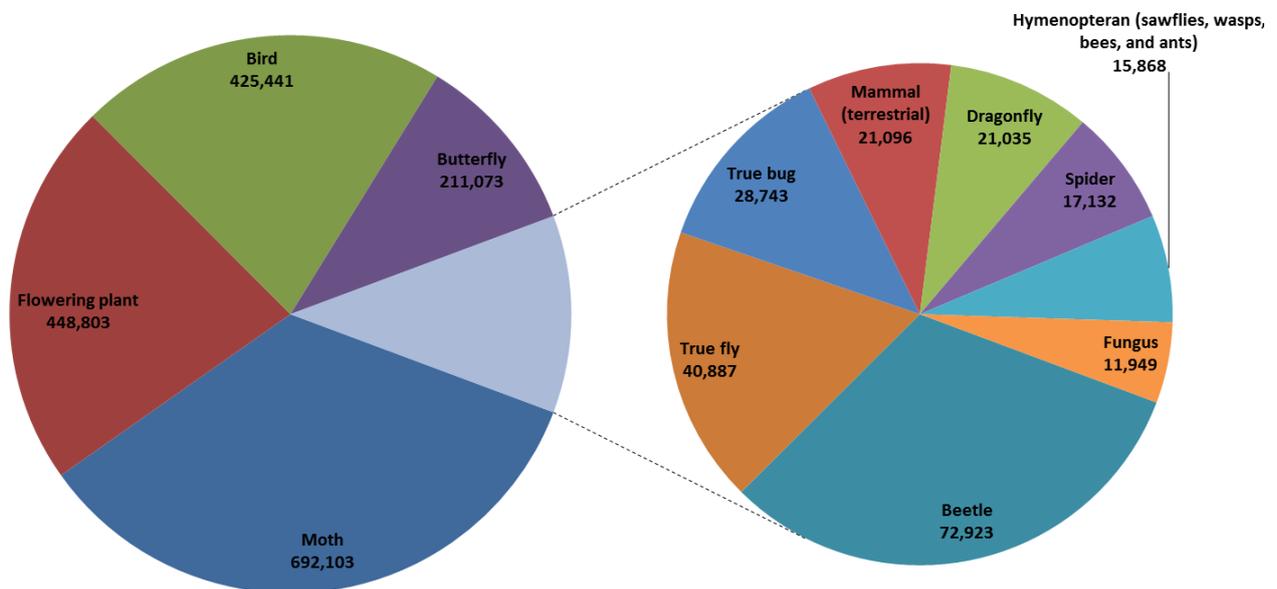
As well as the more ad-hoc reports from members of the public listed above, we also continue to receive many interesting and valuable records from environmental consultants, established recorders and our partner organisations such as the Wildlife Trust. For more information about how and where to record please visit our [website](#) and our [recording website](#).



Grey squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*), deceptively red / Joanne Pye

Data holdings update

Our database now contains over two million records for nearly eighteen thousand species. The twelve taxon groups for which we have hold over ten thousand records are shown in the pie charts below.

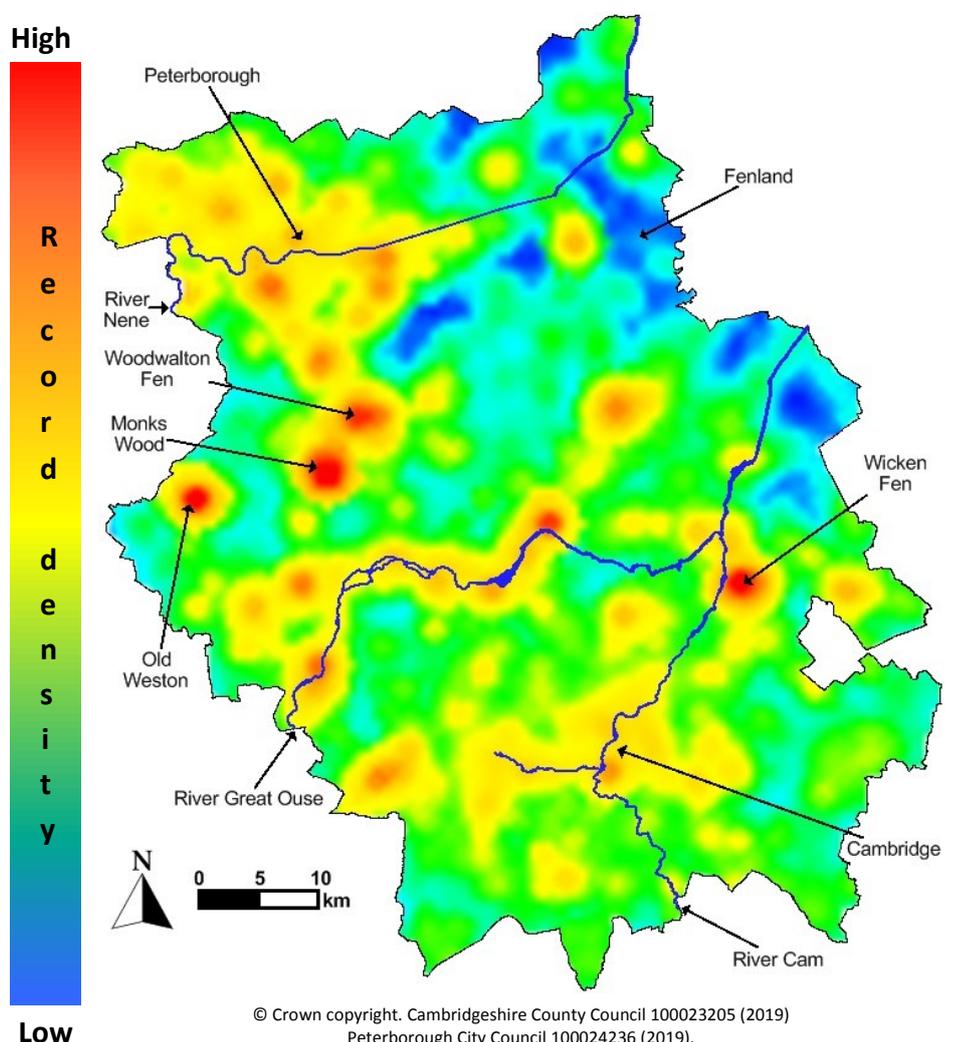


Our records are not distributed evenly across Cambridgeshire, as the county map below illustrates. The colour on the map indicates the density of records in a particular area.

Red and yellow areas of high record density include:

- The cities of Cambridge and Peterborough, where there is a high concentration of people to record species
- Significant nature reserves, such as Wicken Fen, Woodwalton Fen and Monks Wood, and areas along stretches of the major rivers and their washes, where a variety of wildlife can be more easily seen and recorded
- Areas regularly recorded by established recorders, such as Old Weston

In contrast, the dark blue areas of low record density tend to be in the arable Fenland areas, where fewer recorders visit and wildlife is often restricted to the margins, particularly the drains.



2018 BioBlitz Event Summary



Isleham: 15th/16th June

With the help of the Friends of Isleham Nature Reserve and Cambridgeshire County Council, our first Bioblitz of the year saw experienced Recorders and the public exploring the Local Nature Reserve along the disused railway and also the adjacent meadow.



The path of the old railway line through Isleham LNR / David Gregory

On Friday night we listened for bats and recorded moths. On Saturday experts provided guided walks about birds, plants and reptiles and amphibians and members of the public could have a go at butterfly netting. The Bioblitz more than doubled the number of records we hold for the site, with 265 new sightings (of 229 separate species) being added to the existing 240 records. Highlights included a beautiful privet hawk-moth and a Willughby's Leafcutter Bee.

Worts Meadow LNR: 13th/14th July

This busy Bioblitz, in the middle of the summer heatwave, saw a bat walk and moth trapping on Friday evening, before intensive recording by the experts and guided walks and activities got underway on Saturday morning, with only a brave few making it through to the heat of the afternoon! Thanks to the Friends of Worts Meadow for providing a bacon sandwich breakfast and children's activities. Before the Bioblitz, there were 185 records for the LNR, with 350 records from the two days (for 323 different species) which, once fully verified, should bring the total number of records for the site to over 500.



150 plant species were recorded on site, including these buttercups / David Gregory

Children on their bug hunt were thrilled to see a common red soldier beetle, a froghopper and a buff-tailed bumble bee, magnified with mites on its back! A wasp spider was spotted later in the day.

Eltisley: 22nd July

This exciting event for recorders was held at Papley Grove Farm, where we were invited by Martin Lines, chairman of the Nature Friendly Farming Network. This was part of Chris Packham's 'UK Bioblitz - nature reserves are not enough!' campaign, so some of the Recorders managed to spot the man himself, and some were even identified later that day on ITV Anglia News!



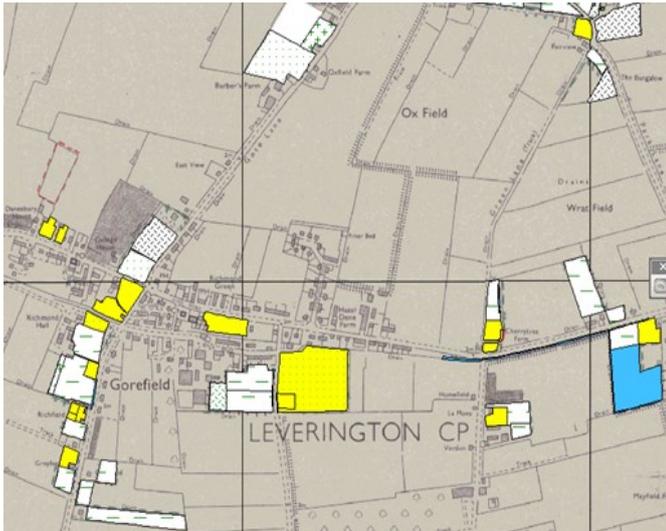
Two buzzards (*Buteo buteo*) were recorded and this feather was found on the farm / David Gregory

As the event took place on farmland that is not accessible to the public, there were no existing records for most of the site. Overall, an impressive 541 records were added, for 329 separate species.



Wasp spider (*Argiope bruennichi*) with a captured cricket / Hazel Harbird

Recent Project Work & Events



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Phase 1 Habitat Mapping

Digitising the Cambridgeshire Phase 1 Habitat Survey from the 1990s has been a long-term project. The survey was originally undertaken on black and white paper maps, which were filled in with coloured pencils with specific colours and patterns coding for different habitat types. The CPERC team have been working with a scanned version of this original map to create a new GIS layer for the county, matching to OS MasterMap where possible, which can then be queried and analysed more easily. The digitisation was well under way when the last CPERC newsletter was sent out and it is now complete. An extract of the digitised habitat polygons overlaid on the original map is shown

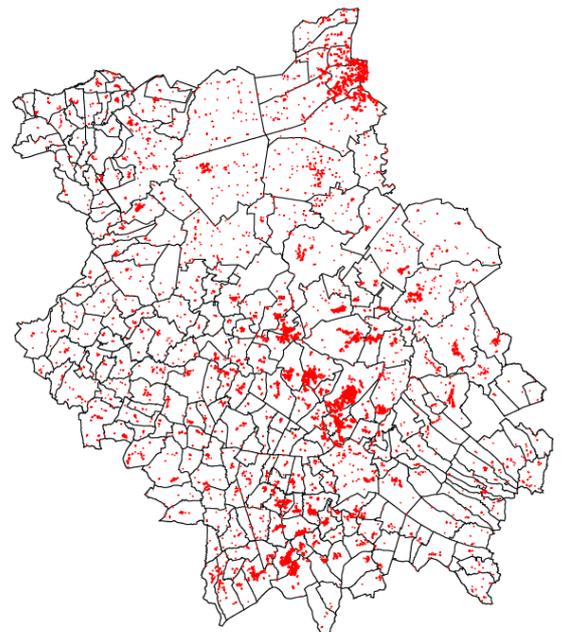
above. The GIS layer we have produced has recently been used as part of a Biodiversity Partnership project to map habitats and identify areas of potential for habitat creation across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, undertaken by the consultancy Natural Capital Solutions. More news will follow on this project as it becomes available.

Orchards East

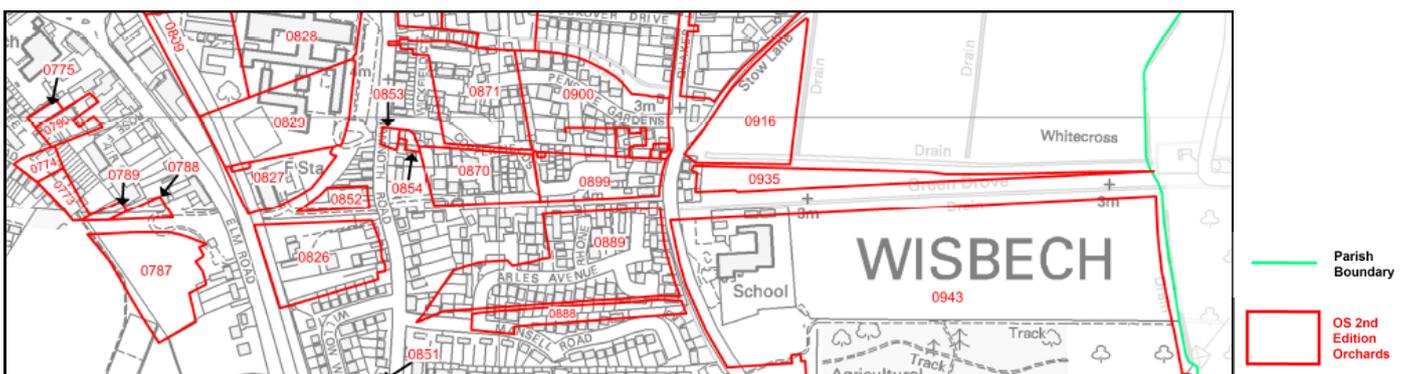
This HLF funded project aims to conserve historic orchards and establish new community orchards in the East of England, covering the counties of Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk.

CPERC, and the other local records centres in the project area, were initially involved with capturing in GIS the locations of orchards as they were in the late 19th and early 20th centuries using OS Second edition maps. This showed both the huge loss in the numbers of orchards since that time and the areas with the highest concentrations. In total, CPERC digitised 6,679 historic orchards. From this and more recent orchard information, maps could then be made for volunteer surveyors to take into the field to record whether previously recorded orchards were still present.

There are still parishes in Cambridgeshire that need to be surveyed - if you are interested in volunteering, please visit the project [website](http://www.orchardseast.org.uk) or email the team at info@orchardseast.org.uk.



Distribution of Historic Orchards in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
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Peterborough City Council 100024236 (2019).

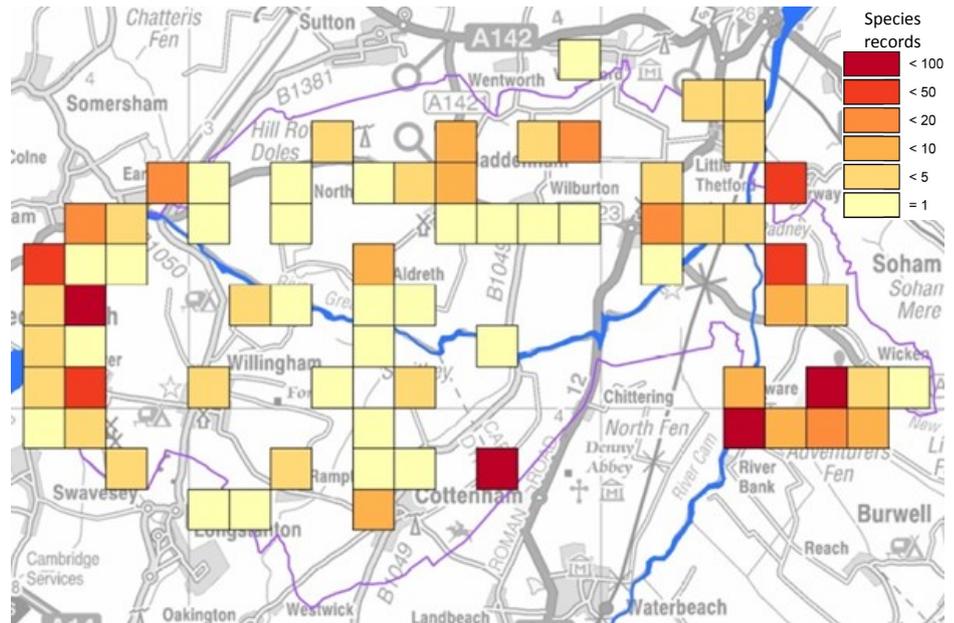


Historic orchards in-situ on a modern map in Wisbech parish © Crown copyright. Cambridgeshire County Council 100023205 (2019).

Recent Project Work & Events

New Life on the Old West

CPERC is one of many community and conservation organisations contributing to a project called 'New Life on the Old West', which aims to enhance connectivity of fenland species and habitats through improvements to community greenspaces and arable landscapes. The project encompasses an area spanning over nine parishes around the 'Old West River', a section of the River Great Ouse stretching between Over in the west downstream to Little Thetford in the east.



Turtle dove (*Streptopelia turtur*) – Distribution Map of post-1990 CPERC records in the New Life on the Old West project area © Crown copyright. Cambridgeshire County Council 100023205 (2019)

CPERC's contribution to the project so far has been to supply baseline data and distribution maps for the project's target species, such as the turtle dove (*Streptopelia turtur*) which is shown above.

Colin Welch Coleoptera Records



Stenocorus meridianus / Mark Ricketts

Colin Welch is the Huntingdonshire vice-county beetle recorder. Colin lent us his extensive collection of Coleoptera records before relocating in 2017. The paper records, mainly from survey visits, fill ten A4 ring binders, and the majority are new records which we do not already have in our database. With no digital copies of these records, digitising them has been an ongoing project for 14 months. The majority of the records are detailed, with specific locations and recording methods noted. We have been assisted in this project by a new volunteer, Garrett Maguire, who records invertebrates on our recording website. So far, 13,205 records comprising 1,632 species have been added to the Recorder database, with more to come!

Monitoring & Research Conference

CPERC attended the Wildlife Trust BCN's Monitoring and Research Conference in February this year (WTBCN are CPERC's host organisation). The team engaged with conference attendees about wildlife recording in the county and were also able to enjoy learning about the wider work of monitoring wildlife across the three counties. External speakers discussed monitoring waterbirds in the Nene Valley, Diptera in Northamptonshire and the impact of local temperature changes on butterflies and Wildlife Trust staff delivered presentations on the wide range of projects they are running to better understand and conserve local wildlife.



CPERC's stand at the Wildlife Trust BCN's Monitoring and Research Conference

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