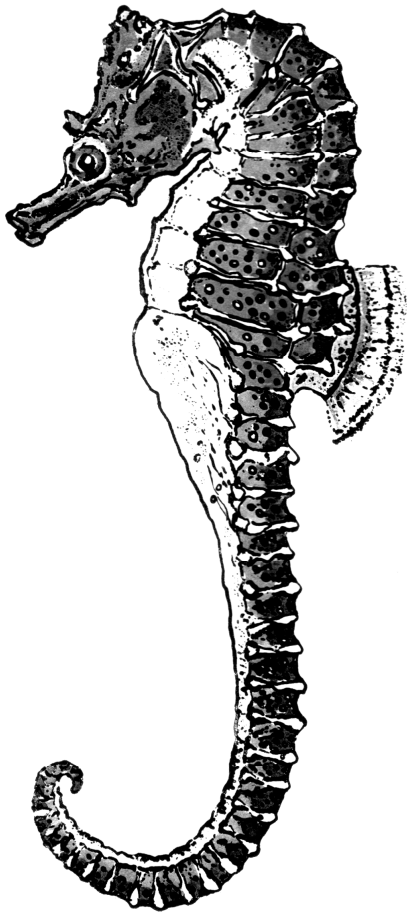
ADASTRA 2006



An annual review of wildlife recording in Sussex

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EDITORIAL: SUSSEX SPECIES AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Patrick Roper: editor

I write at the end of an unprecedentaly mild winter, though it is only the middle of January 2007, and along with many other enthusiasts for our Sussex countryside and its wildlife, I often wonder about the short and long term consequences of this trend.

Several of the articles in this edition of the *Adastra Review* mention new species that seem to be happier in a milder climate. John Paul, for example, talks about the remarkable discovery of a colony of the **sickle-bearing bush cricket** in Hastings Country Park. Peter Hodge has now found the new-to-Britain picture-winged fly, *Tephritis divisa*, on its host plant **bristly ox-tongue** (itself an ancient introduction) at sites near the coast in East and West Sussex in both 2005 and 2006, while Colin Pratt has come up with a remarkable list of new migrant moths.

Many of these species appear to have arrived naturally, or have at least been spreading northwards to the Channel coast in France, and may well have made it under their own steam. Assisted passage is, of course, always a possibility in these days when pan-European trade has increased so much and Sarah Patton has contributed a fascinating article on looking for alien fauna in shops and supermarkets.

As well as colonisers from the near continent, many newcomers are introduced from far flung places and find Britain and Sussex much to their liking. Insects like the **harlequin ladybird** (originally from the Far East) and the **horse-chestnut leaf miner moth** (first recognised in Macedonia in 1985) have spread across the country with astonishing rapidity. Sometimes in my dreams I see hordes of small beetles or moths winging their way across the dark landscape to fresh fields and pastures new and inevitably I wonder why some of our own rarer species with perfectly good wings do not do the same thing. Maybe they try, but something stops them before they get anywhere; maybe they have just become tired or lazy (or perhaps always were).

The ladybird and the leaf miner have not been welcomed with open arms, but many new arrivals have had a good press. Entomologists, for example, always seem keen on a close encounter with the **ivy bee** *Colletes hederae*, and it is an attractive and apparently harmless insect that enjoys our long warm autumns. Most recorders seem comfortable with the spread of the large, dramatically coloured **wasp spider** though its predilection for grasshoppers must have some effect on our Orthoptera and the other species that they eat. **Hornets** too have largely been welcomed back to those parts of Sussex from which they have long been absent, though in this case they appear to have spread internally from the north and west, rather than from mainland Europe.

On the flora front everyone will welcome David Lang's mention of what appears to be the re-establishment of the **lizard orchid** in the Beachy Head area and I was pleased to discover a fine specimen of the unmistakable 'Mediterranean' **red cage fungus**, *Clathrus ruber* near my home this autumn. Peter Russell, our recorder for fungi, tells me there are now 123 British records for this hard-to-overlook species, though only a handful for Sussex.

Looking back over historic records makes one realise how quickly the overall species list for any county changes, though losses (often due to habitat destruction and fragmentation) tend to get a higher profile than gains. The art will be in assessing whether the rate of change is genuinely increasing, as I am sure most of us believe, or whether this is, at least in part, a reflection of recorder activity, better storage and dissemination of data or simply the natural dynamic.

THE SUSSEX BIODIVERSITY RECORD CENTRE IN 2006

by Henri Brocklebank, Manager, Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre

In the last year we saw the publication of the draft South East Plan documenting the expectations of the region in terms of future developments. To me, no other document makes it clearer why it is important that we maintain our services regarding the provision of biodiversity data to make sure that our precious Sussex wildlife is taken into account in the important and tough decisions that lie ahead.

In light of this we have been refreshing our relationships with our local planning authorities, trying to ensure that we deliver biodiversity information to them in the most useable and reliable formats and helping them with reporting against their activities (in relation to species, habitats and designations). We now have direct relationships with all but one of the Sussex local authorities, which is a great advance on previous years.

In terms of species data we have certainly been putting the information to increasingly diverse uses. Biological records form an important aspect of the new agri-environment schemes and through the year we have contributed your data to many such applications. We have also been responding to what seems like a continuous flow of enquiries coming into the Centre from environmental consultancies, planners, members of the public etc..

Being out and about in the Sussex landscape, be it urban or rural, recording your favourite group sometimes seems a far cry from the technical aspects of our work. For example this year, for the first time, digital habitat data from all round the region has been brought together by the Record Centres. This is an important step in a process of understanding our habitat distributions, in order to incorporate them more intimately into regional spatial strategies. In Sussex it has highlighted the increasing need to improve the quality of the information that we hold on our habitats and step by step we have been progressing this throughout the year. With an ambitious program of habitat data projects over the coming months, we will be in a better position to embark on habitat modelling exercises in 2007. It is at this point where your species records will become even more important as we will be able to use your information to help guide decision makers on the most appropriate site for habitat recreation and habitat corridors.

One of the most predominant themes in the Record Centre this year has been the unravelling of technical issues. Holding a million and a half species records for Sussex is not without its complexities. But I think it is fair to say that we have made some good headway in teasing out some of the principle problems. Thankfully issues with the data import wizard are being solved as I write. Our thanks must be extended to all those who have patiently waited whilst we have got on top of the IT. Charles Roper, Penny Green and Andrew Lawson have been joined by our excellent volunteers who have worked hard all year to maintain the efficiency of the Record Centre and stay on top of the mass of data coming in and the increasing demand for data going back out.

The role of the Sussex recording community in maintaining SxBRC is crucial and the continued support that we have received over 2006 in terms of records, advice, and expertise is very gratefully received.

YOUR RECORD CENTRE'S FREE BACK-UP SERVICE

The permanency of recorded data has been a problem ever since writing was invented. One of the most robust systems (perhaps 'the original and still the best') was recording information on tablets of stone, or on fired clay like the ancient Sumerian cuneiform scripts.

An aspect of the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre that is, perhaps, not appreciated as much as it should be is our ability to operate as a back up facility for the records of any individual or organisation.

As we get deeper into the computer age, more and more of our data is committed to digital form. Notebooks and record cards do, of course, remain important but computerised material can be searched, rearranged and distributed so much more easily. People working on their own surely spend much time worrying about hard discs failing, computers catching fire (yes, I know, we all do regular back ups) or all the other ways in which years of recording work might simply be irretrievably lost.

Sending copies of your data to us at the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre is a way of ensuring that if you do have the ultimate digital disaster, all your material is securely held by an agency whose business it is to ensure that no data is lost. Once you have had a strong cup of tea, done battle with your insurance company and set yourself up with replacement equipment, we can send all your records back to you so that you can pick up almost where you left off. Also, if you shuffle off this mortal coil rather more quickly than you had intended, you will have the comfort of knowing beforehand that all your records will be safe for posterity and continuing to do sterling service in the cause of conservation and a greater understanding of the natural world. As well as being a comfort to yourself, this will relieve your relatives of wondering what they ought to do with that vast mass of material they suspect you had tucked away in a computer somewhere, or on various CDs.

Most of our records at Woods Mill are digitally stored (we also have a library of old notebooks, survey reports and other material). If anything happens to the Centre, there is ample back up provided through the technical expertise of the Sussex Wildlife Trust. We also think in the much longer term about permanent 'deep storage' so that material is preserved through human or natural disasters and can be passed on from system to system and generation to generation as the world of digital information changes and grows.

RECORD CENTRE SURVEY UNIT

Theresa Greenaway, Survey and Research Officer

2006 has been a year of mixed fortune for the Survey Unit. One of the highlights was the production of the Knepp Castle Estate Baseline Ecological report, which was published by English Nature (now Natural England) as Research Report No. 693. The Survey Unit has also produced a monitoring strategy for the Knepp Wildland project. Further breeding bird and vegetation surveys are due to take place in 2007.

The monitoring strategy for the Sussex Wildlife Trust has been completed in conjunction with the Reserves Department, and is currently being used to monitor the management of four of SWT reserves, with plans to extend this to cover other reserves in the future.

Other projects have included an arable plant data survey, carried out on behalf of English Nature (now Natural England) for London and the Southeast and East of England Regions. The objective was for the information gathered to be used in arable plant conservation, but it really highlighted just how important it is to have a fully-functioning record centre, as only those with digitised records were able to submit data.

ORTHOPTERA

by John Paul

In August, Andy Phillips, Hastings Nature Reserves Officer, emailed news that the **sickle-bearing bush-cricket**, *Phaneroptera falcata*, had been discovered during the course of invertebrate survey work at Hastings Country Park. Graham Collins and Peter Hodge came across a colony of both nymphs and adults in a patch of rosebay willowherb on a south facing slope. The presence of nymphs shows that breeding had taken place. I was able to visit the site and see for myself this first known colony of this species on British soil. Adult *P. falcata* cannot really be confused with other species that appear in guides to British Orthoptera: they are pale green with long wings but much bigger than the **oak bush-cricket**, *Meconema thalassinum*, and smaller and much more slender than the **great green bush-cricket**, *Tettigonia viridissima*. *P. falcata* occurs on the Normandy coast and there are old records of sightings of single examples from Cornwall and Dorset. Unlike many species of bush-cricket whose eggs must pass through two winters before hatching, *P. falcata* eggs mature after one winter and are dependent on moderately high temperatures.

It will be interesting to see if this insect manages to be become established in Sussex. A single specimen of *P. falcata* was also reported from the Hampshire coast in 2006. It was important to confirm the identity of *P. falcata* at Hastings as there is a related European species with a more southerly distribution, *Phaneroptera nana*. Amazingly, within a few weeks of hearing about *P. falcata* at Hastings, I was told of the discovery of a colony of *P. nana* in London. The *P. nana* colony was associated with imported shrubs. Readers who come across bush-crickets found in association with plantings of exotic vegetation should keep a look out for this species also.

With *P. nana* in mind I conducted a search of a local nursery in West Sussex.
Within a few minutes of arriving I beat a small pale earwig from a plant of red-tipped photinia, *Photinia fraseri*, that I immediately recognised as the Mediterranean species, *Forficula pubescens*. With little effort I was able to find others on pine and also from rough vegetation such as hogweed around the edge of the site showing that a naturalised population was present. These are the first records for the UK. Old records of *F. pubescens* from England were later shown to refer to the closely related *Forficula lesnei* which is local but widespread in Sussex. The male cerci or forceps of *F. pubescens* are distinctly more elongated than those of *F. lesnei*.

In October I was informed by Peter Sutton and Bryan Pinchen of the discovery of a **mole cricket** by a bait digger on Winchelsea Beach. This would seem an odd place to find a mole cricket, so its origin must be in doubt. The latest information I have is that a check is being made of the insect's chromosome count to see if it is *Gryllotalpa gryllotalpa*, the species of mole cricket that is native to Britain: in southern Europe there are other species with different chromosome numbers.

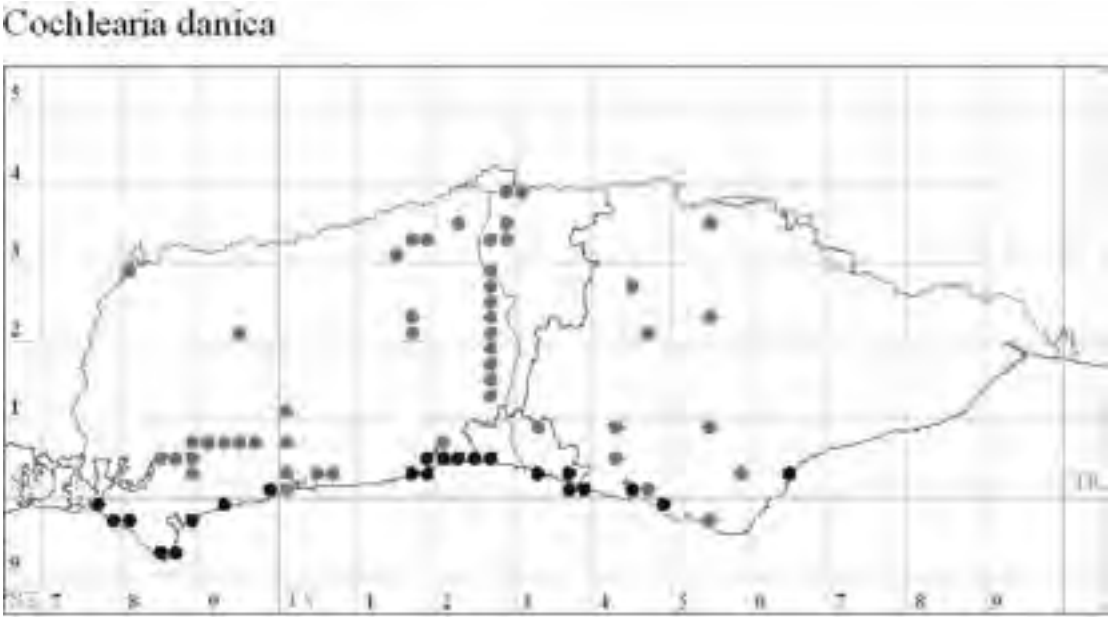
VASCULAR PLANTS

Paul Harmes and Alan Knapp, vascular plant recorders for East and West Sussex respectively.

This year most of our Sussex Botanical Recording Society effort has been concentrated on tetrad recording for the new ***Flora of Sussex*** with members producing over 57,000 new vascular plant records giving a total (with still a few more to come) of just below 160,000. This is just over half way to our expected total of around 300,000 records but this is the easy half so we expect the rate of increase to slow down in future. Of the just over 1,000 tetrads wholly or partially within Sussex 733 now have more than 100 records and 80 have over 300.

Since 2000 we have recorded 1,069 native species and 867 alien species (bramble microspecies are not included).

The level of recording has now reached the point where we are starting to see some interesting patterns and evidence of change emerging. One of the most striking is illustrated in the map below which shows the distribution plotted so far of **Danish scurvygrass**, *Cochlearia danica*. In the Sussex Plant Atlas, whose records covered the period 1966 to 1978, this plant was present in only a single inland tetrad whereas we already have records from 45 inland tetrads since 2000. Even the most cursory glance at the map suggests the reason - spread along major roads associated with the use of salt for de-icing. The line of the A23/M23 is clear and the route of parts of the A27 and A264 are emerging. By the time the flora is published, this map may well look just like a map of A roads in Sussex.



SBRS records so far gathered for Cochlearia danica.
Dark grey dots are native, maritime sites,
Pale grey dots are introduced sites on roadsides etc.

There have, once again, been a number of very interesting new finds of which the most significant is the re-discovery of the very scarce and threatened **Deptford pink** *Dianthus armeria* near Eastbourne. A single very small plant was found at the base of a chalky bank by a well used path about 2km from the area where it was last seen in Sussex in the 1950's. Another important discovery was a new site for **mossy stonecrop**, *Crassula tillaea*, on Chapel Common. This was known from a field near Coates in the 1990's but has now gone so Chapel Common is the only Sussex site. **Common wintergreen**, *Pyrola minor* has been known for many years on Midhurst Common and is doing well there but this was thought to be the only extant Sussex site until this year when a large colony was found on Graffham Common, not far from a site described in early floras of Sussex. However, the news is not all good. An SBRS field meeting was arranged in Possingworth Park to record the area and check on a colony of **Cornish moneywort,** *Sibthorpia europaea*. This is an important species as it is one of a group found mainly in the west of Britain but with an outlier in Sussex. Unfortunately the area where it formerly occurred is now much drier and no plants could be found. We were rewarded however by the discovery of a flourishing colony of **six-stamened waterwort**, *Elatine hexandra*, on the edges of the lake there.

ORCHIDS

by David Lang

To quote The Bard, "The times are out of joint!" – a comment which I am sure will be met with agreement by many of our recorders. The persistent bitter nights of early spring 2006 switched off some early species, which failed to appear or flowered in reduced numbers, while the summer drought took a severe toll of the late species, especially the helleborines.

The **white helleborine**, *Cephelanthera damasonium*, had yet another poor season, although a new small colony was found on the south edge of Friston Forest on the August 30th field outing. **Marsh helleborine**, *Epipactis palustris*, did well at Rye Harbour, with hundreds of flowering spikes, and **broad-leaved helleborine**, *Epipactis helleborine*, did quite well, with evidence of spread in Friston Forest. Yet again **green-flowered helleborine**, *Epipactis phyllanthes*, had a poor year, many plants shriveling in the drought, while most of those at Graffham were eaten off – probably by deer.

By late August it seemed that **autumn lady's-tresses**, *Spiranthes spiralis*, would be another casualty of the drought, but the heavy rains resulted in a spectacular flowering in most localities, with some new colonies reported.

Birds-nest orchid, *Neottia nidus-avis*, is fast disappearing from many locations especially in East Sussex, although a new site was found in North Chailey. **Fly orchid**, *Ophrys insectifera*, also appears to be vanishing from many Sussex locations for reasons that are not clear.

Lesser butterfly-orchid, *Platanthera bifolia*, reappeared at Park Corner Heath, as did the **lizard orchid**, *Himantoglossum hircinum*, at Beachy Head. Despite much human attention, it set a good quantity of seed. Both at Beachy Head and at Castle Hill the colonies of **early spider-orchid**, *Ophrys sphegodes*, flowered very well indeed.

The normal form of **burnt orchid**, *Orchis ustulata*, had a fair season, although the cold spring reduced flowering in exposed areas, while the late-flowering var. **serotina** suffered from the drought and failed to flower in 50% of known sites. The special Sussex **bee orchid**, *Ophrys apifera* var. *fusca*, flowered again in West Sussex.

Following my request last year for information, a gratifying number of new records came in for **green-veined orchid**, *Orchis morio*, and for the **marsh-orchids**, *Dactylorhiza incarnata* and *D. praetermissa* – and their hybrids.
Finally I was shown a fascinating peloric[1] **early-purple orchid**, *Orchis mascula*, on Hollingbury Camp near Brighton, where it was found by Philip Thompson. Initially reported as 'yellow **early-purple orchids**', close examination of the four flowering spikes revealed that each flower had three superimposed ranks of bright yellow pollinia, while the perianth segments were reduced to minute pointed lobes 1mm long. At first glance the whole flowering spike appeared yellow.

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[1] **Peloric** means "a flower with a radially symmetrical arrangement of *perianth* members, where the species normally has an asymmetrical arrangement." (From David Lang's *Technical terms Britain's orchids*) http://www.britainsorchids.fieldguide.co.uk/?P=tech_terms&SHC=1&PSD=1

SEAWEED RECORDING IN SUSSEX, 2006

Ian Tittley, Botany Department, Natural History Museum, London SW7 5BD (Seaweed recorder for Sussex).

Seaweed recording began in earnest in 2006 with shore visits to Eastbourne (Hollywell, The Pound, sites 1,2, grid references below), Hastings (near Ecclesbourne Glen, 3,4,5), Rottingdean (6) and Pagham Harbour near Church Norton (7).

At Hollywell, Eastbourne, coastal armouring (granite boulders) at upper shore levels (1) supported algal communities typical of this environment with green algae including *Blidingia* spp at high tide level and successively zones of **laverbread**, *Porphyra umbilicalis*, **spiral wrack**, *Fucus spiralis*, and **bladder wrack**, *Fucus vesiculosus*. The reefs of Upper Greensand at lower shore levels carried a diverse algal flora. On wave-exposed rocks was a turf-like community of **carragheen moss**, *Chondrus crispus*, *Cladostephus spongiosus*, *Lomentaria articulata*, **pepper dulse**, *Osmundea pinnatifida* and *Polysiphonia fucoides*. The pool flora contained many species but notably the non-native **japweed**, *Sargassum muticum*, **coral-weed**, *Corallina officinalis*, **sea-lettuce**, *Ulva lactuca*, as well as *Furcellaria lumbricalis*, *Halidrys siliquosa* and *Phyllophora crispa*. A well-developed kelp forest of *Laminaria digitata* was evident as low tide level; associated species in the community included *Calliblepharis jubata*, *Cryptopleura ramosa*, *Phyllophora pseudoceranoides* and *Plocamium cartilagineum*.

The intertidal wave-cut platform by Ecclesbourne Glen, Hastings was at lower shore levels covered by mussels, barnacles and a thick deposit of silt. Over this grew a dense mat of *Ulva (Enteromorpha) compressa* and *Ceramium virgatum*. Other species present included *Chondrus crispus*, *Gelidium pusillum*, *Osmundea pinnatifida* and *Rhodothamniella floridula*. Rock pools were richer in species and contained amongst others *Corallina officinalis*, *Dictyota dichotoma*, *Osmundea hybrida*, *Polysiphonia fucoides* and *Sargassum muticum.* A large inshore rock at upper shore levels supported *Blidingia minima*, *Fucus spiralis*, *Rhodochorton purpureum*, *Sphacelaria nana*, *Ulva (Enteromorpha) prolifera* and other species.

The wave-cut platform of chalk at Rottingdean was covered by a canopy of **saw-wrack**, *Fucus serratus*. Species such as *Ceramium virgatum*, *Chondrus crispus*, *Cladostephus spongiosus*, and the crustose coralline alga *Phymaolithon lenormandii* grew beneath the canopy. As at Eastbourne, low shore pools were especially rich in species including *Calliblepharis ciliata*, *Corallina officinalis*, *Dilsea carnosa*, *Saccharina latissima*, *Scinaia forcellata* and *Taonia atomaria.* The other **carragheen moss**, *Mastocarpus stellatus*, was found but only on flint.

Pagham Harbour presented a different type of environment for algal growth being a sheltered inlet of the sea. Algae grew either among halophyte vegetation, or on consolidated shingle and cobble, or on man-made structures. The filamentous red alga *Bostrychia scorpioides*, largely restricted to saltmarshes in Britain, was found among halophytes. The **Channel wrack**, *Pelvetia canaliculata*, relatively rare in Sussex, formed a zone on shingle near high tide level. **Knotted wrack**, *Ascophyllum nodosum*, also sporadic in Sussex, grew on large cobbles at mid shore levels. The 'boot-lace' alga *Chorda filum* colonised stones in channels and deeper standing water together with *Sargassum muticum*. Another non-native alga, the red foliose *Grateloupia turuturu* was found on stones in deeper standing water. The filamentous *Griffithsia corallinoides* was locally common on a wood breakwater.
Altogether 70 species were confirmed from the four sites visited in Sussex, approximately 25% of the flora known for the county. All of the species recorded are known to occur in Kent and on the Isle of Wight. A full list of records is given below.

Aglaothamnion hookeri 5; *Ahnfeltia plicata* 2; *Ascophyllum nodosum* 3d,7; *Blidingia minima* 5; *Blidingia* spp.1; *Bostrychia scorpioides* 7; *Bryopsis plumosa* 3,4; *Calliblepharis ciliata* 6; *C. jubata* 2; *Ceramium deslongchampsii* 3; *C. gaditanum* 2,5; *C. virgatum* 4,6; *Chondrus crispus* 2,3,4,6; *Chorda filum* 7; *Cladophora rupestris* 2; *C. sericea* 4; *Cladosterphus spongiosus*

2,3,6,7; *Corallina officinalis* 4,6; *Cryptopleura ramosa* 2,6; *Cystoclonium purpureum* 2; *Dictyota dichotoma* 2,4,6; *Dilsea carnosa* 2,6; *Elachista fucicola* 3,7; *Fucus serratus* 4,6; *F. spiralis* 1,5,7; *F. vesiculosus* 1,3,7; *Furcellaria lumbricalis* 2; *Gelidium pusillum* 4,5,6; G*racilaria/Gracilariopsis* sp. 6,7; *Grateloupia filicina* 6; *Grateloupia turuturu* 7; *Griffithsia corallinoides* 7; *Gymnogongrus crenulatus* 2; *Halidrys siliquosa* 2,7d; *Halarachnion ligulatum* 6; *Halurus flosculosus* 2,4,6; *Hildenbrandia* sp. 2,4; *Hincksia granulosa* 4; *Hypoglossum hypoglossoides*,4; *Laminaria digitata* 2; *Lomentaria articulata* 2; *Mastocarpus stellatus* 6; *Membranoptera alata* 2; *Myrionema strangulans* 4; *Osmundea hybrida* 4; *O. pinnatifida* 2,4; *Palmaria palmata* 1,6; *Pelvetia canaliculata* 7; *Phyllophora crispa*, 2; *Phyllophora pseudoceranoides* 2; *Phymatolithon lenormandii* 2,4,6; *Plocamium cartilagineum* 2,4,6; *Polysiphonia fucoides* 2,4,6,7; *Porphyra purpurea* 7; *Porphyra umbilicalis* 1,5; *Porphyrostromium ciliare* 3; *Pylaiella littoralis* 5; *Rhizoclonium tortuosum* 4,5; *Rhodochorton purpureum* 5; *Rhodothamniella floridula* 2,4; *Saccharina latissima* 6; *Sargassum muticum* 2,4,5,7; *Scinaia ?forcellata* 6; *Sphacelaria bipinnata* 2; *Sphacelaria nana* 5; *Stragularia clavata* 7; *Taonia atomaria* 6; *Ulothrix flacca* 5; *Ulva (Enteromorpha) compressa* 4; *Ulva (Enteromorpha) prolifera* 5; *Ulva (Enteromorpha)* spp. 1,3,7; *Ulva lactuca* 2,3,4,7; *Urospora wormskioldii* 5.

d= drift record only

1, TV604973; 2, TV604967; 3, TQ829005; 4, TQ 833095; 5, TQ 833096; 6, TV370020; 7, SZ877957

SEAHORSES IN SUSSEX

Gerald Legg, Booth Museum of Natural History, Brighton

Hippocampus guttulatus holding on to its close cousin, a Worm Pipefish, *Nerophis lumbriciformis,* next to the hull of a motor boat, Brighton Marina, October 2006; photo ©Michelle Legg

Throughout the year a number of records of Seahorses along the Sussex have been made, largely from dead specimens washed up on the strandline, including near Splash Point Worthing, and beaches at Brighton.

Both species occur in shallow inshore water amongst seaweed and eelgrass (*Zostera*). The Long-snouted can also be found in rocky areas. Being well-camouflaged seahorses are very difficult to spot in the water. Consequently, it is very likely that their presence is only the tip of the iceberg – others await discovery. In Britain two common species occur:

The Long-snouted, or Spiny Seahorse, *Hippocampus guttulatus*, is recorded from the southern coast of England from the Thames Estuary around to the Bristol Channel, along the Welsh coast and isolated records from northern Scotland. *Hippocampus guttalutus* can also be found in rocky areas. (see: http://www.marlin.ac.uk/species/Hippocampusguttulatus.htm)

The Short-snouted Seahorse, *Hippocampus hippocampus*, is found along the south coast and around the Channel Islands.
(see: http://www.marlin.ac.uk/species/Hippocampushippocampus.htm)

Further information can be found at the British Seahorse Survey (BSS) website: http://www.britishseahorsesurvey.org/index.htm who welcome records

The most notable record occurred early in the summer of 2006 when a boy, using a hand net off the pontoon where his father's boat was moored, caught an adult seahorse in Brighton Marina. The wonders of email meant that we were able to confirm this record. This report spurred an investigation to see if further seahorses were present in the Marina. In October, after lengthy negotiations and arrangements a team of divers took the plunge and searched the area. A young specimen was soon found close to a pontoon, but not on the weed. It was evident that trying to find any on the weed and animal encrusted sides of the pontoons would be virtually impossible. Both 'wet' and 'dry' observers soon spotted further specimens. In all about a dozen ranging in size from 10 to 25 mm, were seen, photographed and filmed. Further surveys of the Marina will endeavour to see if this is a breeding population which, from the size of the specimens seen in October, suggests it is.

It was long thought that Seahorses were occasional visitors to UK waters, but the work of the BSS has shown that they are probably indigenous but overlooked. However, with warmer winters and the Channel water keeping warmer for longer, it is possible that their presence is increasing. Seahorses are protected under CITES[2], which attempts to control the trade in endangered species. In the UK seahorses do not feature in the UK BAP species programme [see Foundation for Endangered Species: http://www.ffes.org.uk/projects/uk-projects/seahorse.html]. DEFRA have proposed protection of both species under Section 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 and in January 2005 the Government recommended adding Seahorses to the Act.

STOP PRESS FEB 2007: A fisherman at Eastbourne has been catching Seahorses in his shrimp net, so the group is clearly becoming more common in Sussex as are their close relative the worm pipe fish (responsible for many bird deaths last year as chicks choke on them).

PSEUDOSCORPIONS

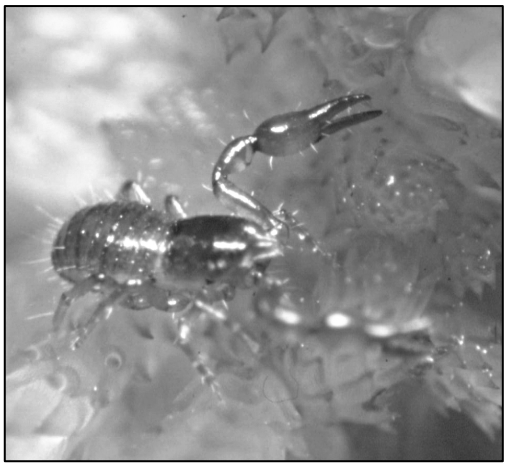
Gerald Legg, Booth Museum of Natural History, Brighton

Glamorous, eye-catching groups like birds, butterflies and dragonflies receive far greater attention than tiny, secretive organisms. However, being small does not mean you are not as charismatic as the well-known creatures. Once seen Pseudoscorpions can be found to be delightful and fascinating.

Pseudoscorpions are 'advanced' arachnids, in terms of their anatomical and morphological characteristics. Like their allies the spiders, mites, harvestmen and scorpions, they have eight legs and a body divided into two parts. What makes them obviously distinct are their large pincer-like 'pedipalps' which make them appear as miniature scorpions without a 'tail'. Like the scorpions they use these formidable appendages to catch their prey. In many species these can inject poison. Once caught their hapless victim is quickly passed to their 'jaws', the chelicerae, elaborate structures designed to chew-up their food, divert digestive juices onto the meal, suck-up the result and also spin silk. Their legs allow them to move quite rapidly, with many species quite capable of running as fast backwards as forwards. Vision is limited or completely absent but they know exactly what is around them through the use of sensitive hairs and other special organs.

[2] Seahorses have been collected on an industrial scale for Chinese medicine.

In Britain we have 28 species, several of which are quite common, but easily overlooked. Dipterists and coleopterists come across them as they are found in similar habitats and in some instances use flies and beetles as modes of long-distance transport.

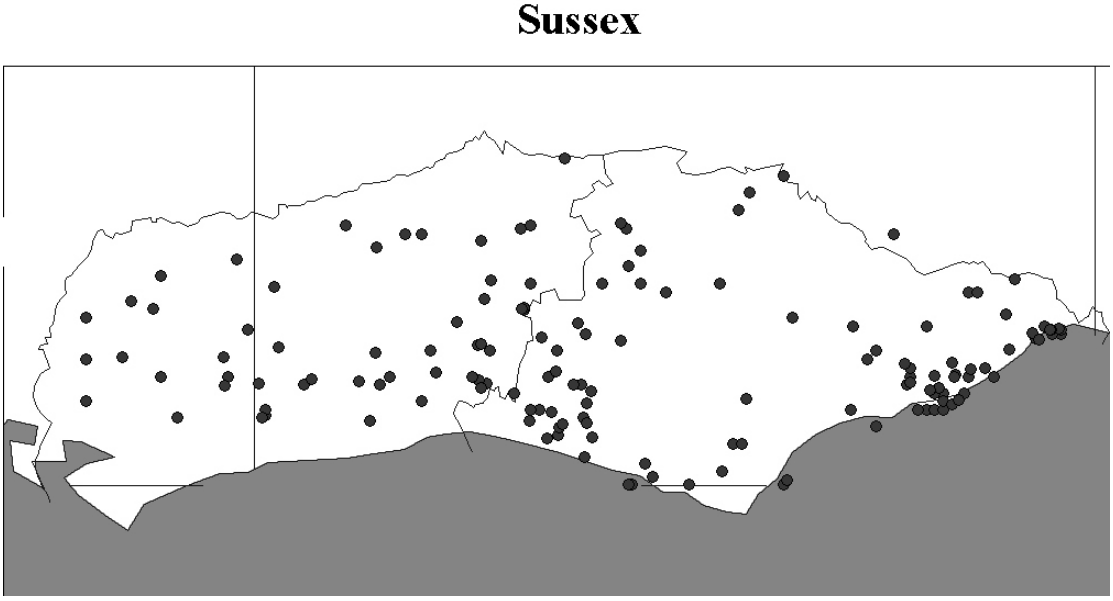


Microbisium brevifemoratum on *Sphagnum*.

Dactylochelifer latreillei from sand dune

This is 'phoresy', a form of hitchhiking where a relative immobile creature can travel long distances through clinging to a more efficient traveller.

Pseudoscorpions live in stable habitats like leaf litter and soil, but they also occur in animal nests, rotting trees, barn debris and manure heaps – temporary habitats which they need to leave in order to survive. Hitching a lift is a good answer; many parasites do the same thing.



Pseudoscorpion records from Sussex (those in the sea are along the coast!)

Like many small groups of relatively obscure species, the distribution of records reflects the where enthusiasts live and go on holiday rather than the animals themselves. Despite this somewhat cynical view records do show that some are common, e.g. *Neobisium carcinoides* and *Chthonius ischnocheles*, and others rare, so rare that they are, for example, ancient woodland and bog indicators (*Dendrochernes cyrneus, Larca lata*). In the past few years' two species have been added to the British list, one, *Larca lata* occurs in rotting wood found (only

one record in the UK, Windsor Great Park, but more in mainland Europe where it is also very rare). The other, *Microbisium brevifemoratum* is found in *Sphagnum* bogs, not uncommon on parts of mainland Europe, but only two records here. Neither has been found in Sussex, but we could have the right habitats – it is a case of looking and knowing how to look. Sampling techniques can completely alter the status of species. Hand sorting, netting etc will find say one specimen of rare beetle in a morning. Use a vacuum sampler and dozens turn up. The same applies to pseudoscorpions.

For further information on the groups go to http://www.chelifer.com/pseudos/ where distribution maps, images and back copies of the Newsletter, *Galea* (which includes details of collecting that are useful for more than pseudoscorpion fanatics).

ALIEN ALERT!

by Sarah Patton

Coming to a supermarket near you! Just when you thought it was safe to venture out for the weekly shop with boredom guaranteed, let me offer you the opportunity to turn every dull drudge around the aisles into an alien exploration.

Have I finally taken leave of my senses? No! Some of my most exciting wildlife discoveries have been in the habitats of the fruit and veg section and the garden centre. Let me tempt you with my records of a **praying mantis** (dead) in grapes, an **Egyptian grasshopper** (alive) amongst the bonsai, **scarce bordered straw** caterpillars in the mange tout and also in a bunch of flowers and **long-tailed blue** butterfly larvae also in mange tout.

As well as making shopping marginally more tolerable and providing entertainment if you decide to rear larvae through, these records do have a serious side with the potential for alien species to colonise this country, especially with the current change in climate.

Supermarket long-tailed blue bred by the author

I am interested in collating records of aliens in Sussex, but limited to the 6 (or 8-)-legged varieties. The worlds of alien plants and birds are well covered by existing recording schemes. There are problems with definitions – migrant, vagrant, import, assisted-by-man..... For the purposes of this 'mini-scheme' I am restricting the scope to species which have accidentally arrived here through human activity, rather than under their own migratory power.

Some aliens are already having a well-documented impact, especially in the south. The **horse-chestnut leaf-miner moth** is on the rampage and the infamous **harlequin ladybird** has also been newsworthy. Such important invasions have their own specific recording protocol (http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-68JJRC and http://www.harlequin-survey.org/) and are outside the scope of my humble scheme.

So, what constitutes a record? What? Where? When? And by Whom? I'm happy to try and identify any aliens – dead or (preferably) alive. Send any well-packaged specimens to the address below BUT please contact me first to be sure that I am able to receive the parcel. Otherwise, if the record is of a species known to you, or if you are able to take a good photo, then that should suffice.

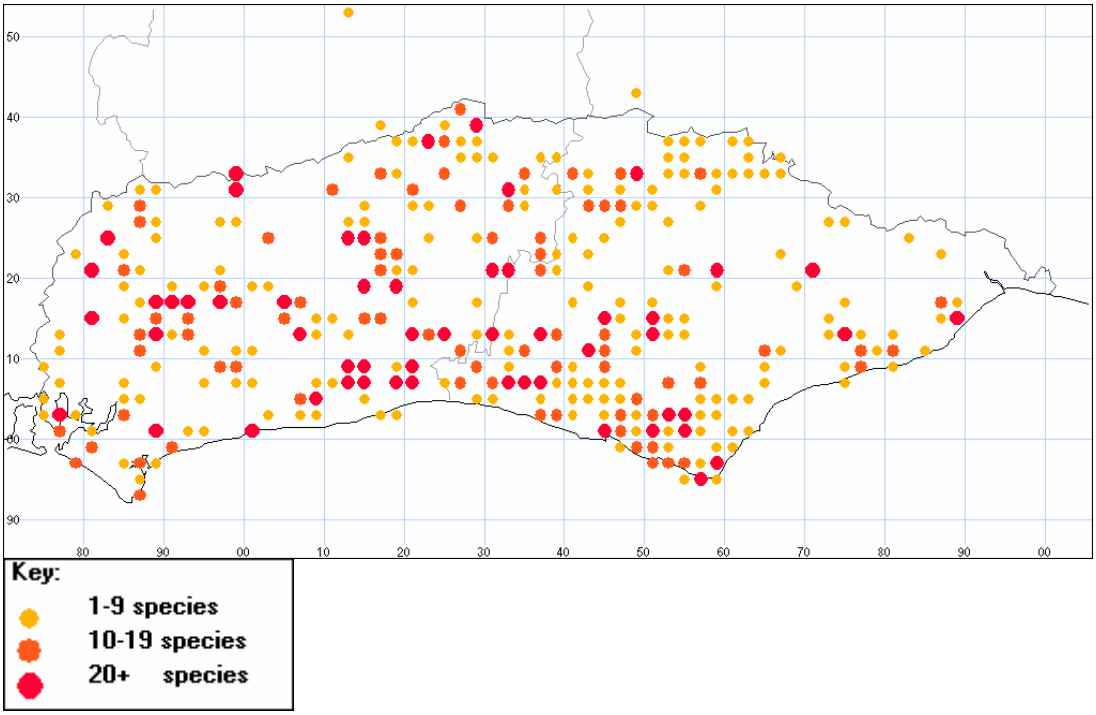
See you in Tescos!

Sarah Patton, 26 Old Glebe, Fernhurst, Haslemere, Surrey, GU27 3HS. 01428 653172 house.mouse@btopenworld.com

Butterfly Conservation – Sussex Branch

The cold dry weather in January, February and March suited the overwintering eggs and larvae and the succeeding long warm 2006 season was an excellent one.

Members and other recorders turned in a total of 322 records from sights across the country as indicated in the accompanying map.



Two species of conservation concern, the Silver-studded Blue and the Duke of Burgundy both did relatively well in West Sussex. There has been no advance in the spread of the Wood White into the Sussex woods south of Chiddingfold. On the other hand, the Pearl-bordered Fritillary introduction into Abbotts Wood (East Sussex) seems to have been a success. Painted Ladies flew almost to the end of the year (and have continued to do so in the New Year). Clouded Yellows were also conspicuously late flyers.

Amidst considerable excitement, a number of second brood White Admirals were recorded - an event that gave Sussex parity with several other southern counties and possibly associated with climate change.

We also benefited from a migration of Camberwell Beauties from Poland with a number of sightings across the county, the specimen outside the RSPB offices in Pulborough becoming quite famous.

In 2007 we hope to obtain a better data set for the distribution of the White-letter Hairstreak, a species whose fate is intimately bound up with that of our few surviving elm trees.

Our Regional Officer provided considerable conservation advice site management visits to Vert Wood, Old Lodge Warren, Verdley Wood, Ashpark Wood, Abbots Wood, Plashett Wood, Rewell Wood, Powdermill Wood, Hooksway, West Dean Woods as well as organising butterfly survey training days for 75 South Downs Joint Committee volunteers.

We ran an extensive program of walks, open to the public as well as members, including a packed *Save Our Butterflies Week* in July. We did TV, radio and newspaper work to improve public awareness of butterfly and moth conservation work, including pieces for BBC Countryfile, BBC South East Today, and an item on moths for BBC's Inside Out.

Bill Taylor

RARE MOTHS IN SUSSEX DURING 2006

*by **Colin R. Pratt***, F.R.E.S.*, County Recorder of butterflies and moths for East and West Sussex*

The migrant species

Modern-day hunters of rare moths are living during uniquely extraordinary times. Migrant species which 30 years ago were deemed scarce in Sussex – for example, the **white-point**, *Mythimna albipuncta*, **l-album wainscot**, *M. l-album*, **scarce bordered straw**, *Heliothis armigera*, **flame wainscot**, *Senta flammea*, and **red-necked footman**, *Atolmis rubricollis* - are now commonplace in some parts of the county. Moreover, the trend is accelerating.

In Sussex, 2004 was the most action-packed season for the arrival of rare migrating moths from mainland Europe ever - but events during 2006 exceeded even that. The quality and quantity of this year's migrants can be judged by the number of new vice-county and all-Sussex records. After more than 150 years of intensive entomological recording, there were six species completely new to Sussex, five of which were primary immigrants. These were, a **passenger**, *Dysgonia algira* at St Leonards-on-Sea, the **splendid brocade**, *Lacanobia splendens*, at Icklesham, a **beautiful marbled**, *Eublemma purpurina* at Findon, **Porter's rustics**, *Athetis hospes* at Bexhill and Icklesham, and an **eastern bordered straw** *Heliothis nubigera* at Crowborough. In addition, the first eastern vice-county records of the pyralids *Antigastra catalaunalis* were made at Peacehaven, Hurst Green, Beckley, and Icklesham, of *Catoptria verellus* at Bexhill and of the macro **oak processionary**, *Thaumetopoea processionea* at Icklesham again. Meanwhile, there were more new moths in West Sussex, such as the pyralids *Hymenia recurvalis* at Warnham and *Agrotera nemoralis* at Walberton, and the **scarce silver y**, *Syngrapha interrogationis*, at Edburton and Walberton.

Other once-in-a-lifetime encounters were also made with the **Sussex emerald**, *Thalera fimbrialis*, at Hastings, the **gypsy**, *Lymantria dispar* at Heathfield and Paynes Green, an **orache**, *Trachea atriplicis*, at Icklesham, a **flame brocade,** *Trigonophora flammea* at Ferring, a **dusky hook-tip**, *Drepana curvatula* at Hastings, a **lunar double-stripe**, *Minucia lunaris*, and an **alchymist**, *Catephia alchymista* at Bexhill, a **pretty marbled**, *Lithacodia deceptoria* at Arundel, **silver-striped hawk**, *Hippotion celerio*, and **small marbled**, *Eublemma parva*, at Walberton, the pyralid *Euchromius ocellea* at Peacehaven**, red swordgrass**, *Xylena vetusta*, at Warnham, **Dewick's plusia**, *Macdunnoughia confusa*, at Chichester and Icklesham, **crimson speckled**, *Utetheisa pulchella* at Findon, Wadhurst, Eastbourne, and Hastings, **angle-striped sallow**, *Enargia paleacea*, at Hurst Green and Ditchling, and **Bloxworth snout**, *Hypena obsitalis* at Peacehaven and Worthing. Even the fabled **death's head hawk**, *Acherontia atropos* came to light at Brede.

More **scarce bordered straw**, *Heliothis armigera*, and **delicate**, *Mythimna vitellina*, were seen in Sussex during 2006 than had been totalled during the previous 150 years. The **striped hawk**, *Hyles livornica* had its best season here since 1949, while four **Clifden nonpareils**, *Catocala fraxini* were also counted this year – at Brede, Ticehurst, Fontwell, and Icklesham - this equalling the all-time record made in 1868. Most observers sighted the day-flying **humming-bird hawk**, *Macroglossum stellatarum*, at some time during the season, although numbers did not reach those enjoyed in 2003.

The sixth fresh species to Sussex during 2006 is an apparently new colonist to the whole of southern England and so is therefore potentially one of our most important records of all. Dozens of the pale grey tortrix *Acleris logiana* appeared at Warnham this year after being disturbed from birch woodland. This insect was previously almost exclusively known from northern Scotland but in recent years a few odd specimens have begun turning up elsewhere. The rogue specimens are presumed to have been primary immigrants from northern Europe, where the species' closest colonies to Sussex are established. Our Warnham record suggests local residency.

The native species

It has just been shown by the Rothamsted Insect Survey that over the past few decades the volume of moths in their national network of light traps has fallen by almost a third. This serious decrease was first brought to public notice after an analysis of 31 years of nightly research into a total of more than 800,000 moths had been carried out at Peacehaven, the results being published in 1999 in *A Revised History of the Butterflies and Moths of Sussex* by the author of this article. The results from 2006 show that this trend of decline is also continuing, with this season being the worst for numbers here since 1985.

For scarce native species in Sussex as a whole, the year of 2006 again proved a run-of-the-mill affair. The most notable incident concerned the fresh detection of the tree-boring **goat moth**, *Cossus cossus*, at Icklesham - a species in serious danger of extinction in the county. Other important events included the discovery of the fruit-tree-boring **red-belted clearwing**, *Synanthedon myopaeformis*, at Lodsworth and Donnington - along with a previous sighting at Warnham, these are our only known 21st century colonies. A football-sized nest of **small eggar**, *Eriogaster lanestris*, caterpillars was seen at Firle, while the **drab looper**, *Minoa murinata*, was seen at West Dean and Arundel, these being the first county records since 1997. In addition to the previously mentioned sighting of the **red swordgrass**, *Xylena vetusta*, at Warnham, the moth was also seen again at Walberton – but here it seems to have been resident since at least 2002. The last time Sussex could boast of a such colony was during the 1940's. All of these insects are 'Nationally Notable B'.

Of 'Nationally Notable Group A' species, a dozen larvae of the **striped lychnis**, *Shargacucullia lychnitis* were counted at Singleton, and the **pale-lemon sallow**, *Xanthia ocellaris*, turned up in the Arundel and Hastings areas. **The triangle**, *Heterogenea asella*, a Red Data Book 3 insect, continued to colonise the extreme east and west of the county. The most important capture of all, an **orange upperwing**, *Jodia croceago* (RDB2), is a species which is almost extinct nationally.

The most significant small-sized micro-moths recorded this year included the recent colonist of horse chestnut tree leaves, *Cameraria ohridella*, which was freshly found at Brighton and Worthing, while the second ever West Sussex sightings of *Ethmia bipunctella* and *Teleiodes flavimaculella*, and the first all-Sussex record of *Gypsonoma minutana*, were made in the Arundel district. Specimens of the nationally rare moths *Acleris umbrana* were also confirmed at Brede, and *Cydia amplana* at East Grinstead and Icklesham. Some of these particular moths probably originated from abroad, although which ones is open to debate.

Much of the above information was supplied by members of the Sussex Moth Group. For information on the Group, and its aims, activities, and meetings, contact the chairman, Tony Davis, at Butterfly Conservation, Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Wareham, Dorset BN20 5QP. Telephone 07837 412820, or e-mail: tdavis@butterfly-conservation.org

For queries and information on the Sussex lepidoptera contact the County Recorder of Butterflies & Moths for East and West Sussex, Colin R. Pratt, F.R.E.S, at 5, View Road, Peacehaven, East Sussex, BN10 8DE, telephone 01273 586780, or e-mail: colin.pratt@talk21.com

ICHNEUMONS AFTER DARK – MOTH TRAPPERS PLEASE NOTE

In October 2005 the national Biological Records Centre announced a new recording scheme for nocturnal Parasitic Wasps (Hymenoptera: Ichneumonoidea). The scheme will be run by Dr Gavin Broad, who has moved from the BRC to the Natural History Museum.

Nocturnal ichneumonoids occur in two families of parasitic wasps, Ichneumonidae and Braconidae, that regularly come to light. Most are characterised by their pale orange/fulvous colouration, large eyes and long antennae; these adaptations to a nocturnal lifestyle have been termed the 'ophionoid facies', after the genus *Ophion*, species of which are generally the most conspicuous and frequent in light traps. Most are parasitoids of larval Lepidoptera.

Gavin Broad would like to receive light-trapped specimens from anywhere in Britain or Ireland, or specimens collected in other ways, including rearing. He cannot accept specimens of non-ophionoid parasitoids as the workload would be too great. Also, he cannot accept photographic or other non-specimen records. Most of the species involved are extremely similar, the existing literature is often inadequate for reliable identification and there are various taxonomic issues still to be resolved. However, one of his main aims is to produce more user-friendly keys.

The first goal will be to generate preliminary distribution maps of the species of the ichneumonid subfamily Ophioninae. Several lepidopterists have been sending specimens from light-traps and these have proved invaluable. Ideally specimens should be sent in alcohol[3] to avoid damage to antennae and for preservation of DNA, but dry specimens are fine as long as they are suitably cushioned with tissue paper.

Details of the new scheme are posted on the national Biological Records Centre website at: www.brc.brc.ac.uk

PR

BIRDS IN SUSSEX, 2005 & 2006

A report from the Sussex Ornithological Society

The Sussex county bird list currently stands at 389 species. In 2005, 87,586 records (up by 22,000 on the previous year) were received of 263 different species (up one on the previous year) from 796 observers (up from 590 in the previous year). The number of submitted records was again the highest total ever received and reflects the increasing observer coverage within the county as well as the continued increase in effort to capture and collate

[3] For amateur entomologists, the most suitable alcohol is isopropyl alcohol, sometimes known as 'rubbing alcohol', and available via many chemists of from suppliers of entomological equipment. Unlike ethyl alcohol, it does not require a license for duty-free purchase (and cannot be drunk).

records. As last year a huge number of records were received via the BTO's *Birdtrack and Migration Watch* as well as the usual high level of recording from individual sites around the county.

The majority of records still come from the major birdwatching sites but many additional and less-frequently visited sites are also included in the records and it is heartening to see that observers are making the effort to take note in less watched areas, and in turn broadening the overall knowledge of the county's avifauna. Collated records were again received from most of the more-popular sites, such as Pagham Harbour, Rye Harbour, Pulborough Brooks RSPB, Weirwood Reservoir, Warnham Nature Reserve and Chichester Harbour.

The number of scarce and rare descriptions accepted for 2005 numbered 219 of 63 different species or sub-species of which 194 were accepted by the Sussex Ornithological Society's (SOS) Records Committee and 26 by the British Birds Rarities Committee and appeared in the relevant reports. The records for 2006 are now being entered and will be added to the numerous records already received electronically and from the SOS website. Already the number of records received electronically has surpassed that of 2005.

The drake **Lesser Scaup** seen at Scotney Gravel Pits in 2004, the first record of this North American species for the county, remained into 2005 before migrating north, being spotted in north Kent en route. No new species for the county were recorded in 2005 but a number of extreme vagrants were observed including two **Laughing Gulls** in the Brighton area (third and fourth county records) and a **Great-spotted Cuckoo** in Shoreham-by-Sea and then Brooklands, Lancing (third county record) as well as a wide variety of lesser rarities including **Black-winged Stilt** (2), **Cattle Egret** (2), **Pectoral Sandpiper** (4), **Kumlien's Gull**, a wide-ranging **Gull-billed Tern**, **Greenish** and **Bonnelli's Warblers** at Beachy Head (third and fourth county records respectively), both **Radde's** and **Dusky Warblers** (the latter only the fourth county record) and a **Common Rosefinch**.

Remarkably the **Great-spotted Cuckoo** was initially sighted at the Arun Recreation Ground in Shoreham-by-Sea – only about a mile away from the site where the same species was observed in 1990. Unfortunately it only remained here briefly but was luckily refound at Brooklands Park, Lancing where it performed well for several days, much to the delight of many birders.

Birders in the county were also treated to the largest invasion of **Waxwings** into the county for ten years with at least 750 birds being seen, although the true numbers over a prolonged period may have involved double that figure.

As stated last year some of our once-commoner resident species still appear to be struggling, with birds such as **Willow Tit** and **Grey Partridge** still declining in the numbers observed and in the frequency of sightings and so unfortunately they appear in this report again. Others such as **Turtle Dove** and **Grasshopper Warbler** also remain scarce and certainly show a downward trend from previous years.

The pair of **Red Kites** that nested successfully in West Sussex in 2004 did the same again in 2005, although colonisation elsewhere in the county has yet to materialise. Up to twenty-two **Little Egret** nests were discovered during 2005 (fifteen in 2004), many of which again successfully produced young and numbers observed during migration and over-wintering continued to be high. The successful colonisation of the county is slow but obvious.

For the first time since 1981 a pair of **Stone Curlew** summered on the South Downs, although there was no evidence of breeding. It would be nice to imagine that the species has been successful elsewhere and that perhaps this could be the next species to recolonise the county.

On the administrative front Tim Parmenter, Assistant Recorder, retired in 2006 under the five-year rule and Tony Cook took on the position. Finally, the sharing of records with the SxBRC continued, and although a few hitches have been encountered along the way, the majority of records have been entered into the database, although those of certain vulnerable or scarce species were excluded to protect nesting and winter roost sites.

Christian Melgar, Sussex Ornithological Recorder.

DRAGONFLIES AND DAMSELFLIES – SUSSEX 2006

by John Luck, British Dragonfly Society, Sussex Branch

We are entering exciting times in wildlife observation in the UK. Species are poised on the borders of the continent to invade our shores. Are we ready for them?

This doubtless applies across the board, but concentrating solely upon dragonflies, we have had a relatively easy job over here, up until now. France has about 90 species, more than double the number in the U.K. and some of the species, especially darters (S*ympetrum* species) are confusingly similar. Observers will need to "burn the midnight oil" swotting up on the key diagnostic differences, take ever more detailed field notes and hone their photographic skills to be ready for the new identification demands.

This year, we were treated to a hot summer. Consequently, Sussex was host to only the second sighting of **southern migrant hawker** *Aeshna affinis* in the U.K. – the previous one being in 1952. Obviously, the recorder was an experienced observer. Not a bit of it! We are indebted to a professional photographer, Ray Hamblett, who found the insect near the river Adur, perched on a dead twig of wild clematis and took several shots of it before it flew away. He then posted it on a photographers' website and waited to see if anyone knew what it was. Initial thoughts were maybe an **emperor dragonfly** until another photographer came up with the correct identification. Further definite sightings of this species were made in July and August with two in Hampshire and one in Norfolk. The likely number reaching the U.K. could be well into double figures.

It is strongly suspected that this species has visited the U.K. on other occasions. However, this insect is very similar to the resident **migrant hawker**, *Aeshna mixta*, and trying to identify between the two in flight is another matter altogether. Thus, hardly surprising that we have had so few records.

Another rare migrant, **red-veined darter**, *Sympetrum fonscolombii*, was seen on three occasions, between August 8th and November 4th: the latter two being by David Chelmick. The last sighting was the latest ever by more than seven weeks – confirmation of the long spell of warm weather we have enjoyed, this year.

Interestingly, another rare migrant, the **yellow-winged darter**, *Sympetrum flaveolum*, had a good year nationally, but to date I have not received any sightings for Sussex. Why might this be? Well, it is resident in France, Germany and countries further east, and thus requires east or south-east winds to help it reach our shores. It was reported from Essex and Norfolk so may well have bypassed Sussex altogether. The previous large migration was 1995 when the winds must have been beneficial to Sussex as we had thirteen separate sightings in the county.

We have reports of further migrants from the sharp-eyed wardens at Rye Harbour Nature Reserve of **scarce emerald damselfly**, *Lestes dryas*, which has not been seen for more than fifty years apart from a possible sighting in 1990 and **lesser emperor** *Anax parthenope*.

Expectations that our most recent resident, the **small red-eyed damselfly,** *Erythromma viridulum*, would thrive over the coming years have proved to be accurate with many new sightings. The highest number reported was a remarkable 1,000 seen by Barry Collins in the far west of the county.

In regard to the Sussex Rare Species Inventory, we reviewed the current dragonfly list a few months ago and removed three species – **white-legged damselfly**, *Platycnemis pennipes*, **hairy dragonfly**, *Brachytron pratense*, and **ruddy darter**, *Sympetrum sanguineum* – for the encouraging reason that they had become more common.

The **scarce chaser**, *Libellula fulva,* which is still on the Rare Species Inventory, is thriving on its main stomping ground on the Arun. I carried out a survey there last summer and was fortunate enough to do this by canoe. The previous year's was done on foot with the ever-present possibility of falling headfirst into a deep bed of nettles, or suddenly realising one is in a field, surrounded by large bulls and the nearest gate is quite some distance away. Travelling by boat removes these problems. Apart from having to keep very still to avoid tipping over and the occasional need to briefly return to land to avoid obstructions, we came through relatively unscathed.

This exercise was of immediate benefit as after returning to East Sussex I located good numbers of this species on the Cuckmere – all males but with tell-tale breeding marks on their abdomens. Without this experience, it is quite likely that these would have been assumed to be Black-tailed Skimmers *Orthetrum cancellatum*. However, the differences in colours of eyes and thorax and in behaviour are very obvious when one takes a closer look. A further population has been found on the Ouse. So next year it will be interesting to trace the extent of the two populations and who knows where else it may turn up.

On the future events front, I have some exciting news for all our dragonfly recorders and anyone else who may be interested. I am very pleased to announce that David Chelmick will be giving a presentation at the Booth Museum on Wednesday March 14th 2007 at 7.30pm (admission free). His talk will cover the life history of dragonflies and in particular the Sussex species and their habitats; the changing fauna of our county and the new challenges facing the field observer with the warming of our climate. The lecture will have hints and tips on identification so that we can all be better equipped to spot potential new species in our still under-recorded county.

Sussex Dragonflies: their life history and habitats

Talk by David Chelmick, international dragonfly expert and former national Odonata recorder. 14 March 2007 at 7.30pm in the Booth Museum of Natural History, 194 Dyke Road, Brighton. Admission free

Dave carried out a survey of dragonflies in Sussex in the 1970's and was national recorder until the early 1980s. He was a founding member of the British Dragonfly Society and since those early days has spent time studying dragonflies in Africa and North and South America; but his heart and enthusiasm are still in Sussex and its changing fauna.

So please come along on the 14th March: expel the winter blues and pick up some of Dave's enthusiasm in readiness for the 2007 field season. I have attended several of his presentations and I can assure you that he is a most entertaining speaker. This is an event not to be missed.

MOLLUSCA

By Martin Willing, Mollusc Recorder for Sussex

The **little whirlpool ramshorn snail**, *Anisus vorticulus*, is a UK BAP Priority species and is also on the EU Habitats and Species Directive annexes II (requiring that species have Special Areas of Conservation or 'SACs' designated for them) and IV (requiring 'strictest protection'). The species lives in drainage ditches on coastal and floodplain grasslands (see also earlier details in ADASTRA 2004: 16 – 19). West and East Sussex supports a significant proportion of UK populations of this species and in 2006 all known Sussex populations of the snail were monitored (funded by the Environment Agency and coordinated by the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre). Surveys were undertaken on the Pevensey Levels and in three areas of the Arun Valley (Amberley Wildbrooks, Pulborough Brooks and Houghton).

Populations of *A. vorticulus* are holding up well on the Pevensey Levels and a number of new ditches were also found supporting the species. In the Arun valley it was more of a mixed picture with stability of the Pulborough and Houghton populations. Worryingly the decline of the snail on Amberley Wildbrooks (as reported in the lecture to the Biological Recorders Seminar, 4th March 2006) continues.

The SWT Pevensey Levels reserve is a 140 ha part of the Pevensey National Nature Reserve. A full molluscan survey of the freshwater drainage ditches was undertaken in April/May 2006. This revealed large populations of the UK BAP priority species the **shining ramshorn snail**, *Segmentina nitida*, together with the **large-mouthed valve snail**, *Valvata macrostoma* (now a proposed UK BAP priority species) and the rare (RDB3) **false orb pea mussel**, *Pisidium pseudosphaerium*. A new population of *Anisus vorticulus* was also discovered.

In 2006 Southern Water funded a number of important projects throughout the county in connection with its management of freshwater resources. In East Sussex this work entailed some surveys of drainage ditches and sections of river channel in the upper Cuckmere valley. One find of note was the discovery of live *Segmentina nitida* in the river Cuckmere. This is of particular interest for two reasons: it may be the first record for this endangered species in the Cuckmere catchment and, secondly, it is most unusual to find this snail living in a river; normally it is almost entirely restricted to drainage ditches on grazing levels.

In the Arun valley, Southern Water have also been funding surveys that have contributed significantly to knowledge of the distribution and ecology of two further species of note, both with nationally important populations in the Arun corridor. These are the UK BAP priority species, the **compressed** (or **depressed**) **river mussel**, *Pseudanodonta complanata,* a local species in the UK restricted to the lower sections of a number of rivers. The second species, the **swollen spire snail**, *Pseudamnicola similis* (previously *P. confusa)* an RDB (category 1 = endangered) species lives on the muddy margins of the lower river. *P. similis* is the only mollusc for which the Sussex Biodiversity Partnership have published a county Species Action Plan. The work undertaken for Southern Water has allowed most of the Species Action Plan targets to be completed. It is not yet possible to release precise details as work is currently ongoing, but it is hoped that more information will be released in 2007.

REFERENCE

Willing, M. J. (2001) *Species Action Plan for Sussex: Swollen Spire Snail* Mercuria confusa. Sussex Biodiversity Partnership, (Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre, Henfield)

Dr. Martin Willing (Conservation Officer),
Conchological Society
Contact: martinwilling@godalming.ac.uk

HEMIPTERA (including 'true' bugs and leafhoppers)

by Alan Stewart

In a previous issue of Adastra, I described the re-discovery in Sussex of the leafhopper *Macrosteles cyane.* This is an unusual species in that it lives entirely on **floating pond weed**, *Potamogeton natans*. It seems to favour small ponds but there are too few records across the country to be certain about this. It was discovered by Peter Hodge in a farm pond near Heathfield in 2003. Since then, the pond has been partly dredged causing disturbance to the sediments. This had the effect of promoting rampant growth of **bulbous rush**, *Juncus bulbosus*, which greatly diminished the coverage of the pond weed and hence the habitat for the leafhopper. Fortunately, since then, Peter has found the same species in one of the dew ponds on the Downs just outside Lewes. As this particular pond was recently restored from a derelict state, we suspect that the leafhopper may have been introduced with the aquatic plants used for restocking the pond. This raises the interesting possibility that it may be quite widely distributed across the county in similar small ponds where plant material has been brought in from outside. The leafhopper itself is quite hard to spot even when sitting on the top of floating leaves, so it may have gone unnoticed for some time.

A large-scale survey of insects in calcareous grasslands across southern England was published earlier this year by Norbert Maczey of CABI Bioscience. Extraction of the records for Sussex has highlighted some interesting new sites for some of our rarest species. Perhaps most interesting was the tiny delphacid planthopper *Eurysa douglasi* from a downland site near Steyning. I previously reported this species from Castle Hill near Woodingdean, but there are otherwise only rather old records from a couple of sites in Kent. Another unusual, and nationally notable, planthopper that is very small and easily overlooked is *Ribautodelphax angulosus*, which I recorded on Seaford Head; this species is normally associated with relatively acid sites, so its discovery on the top of the chalk was unexpected. Saltmarsh habitats are not generally especially rich in leafhopper species, although they sometimes turn up surprises. Thus, we found extraordinarily high densities both of the leafhopper *Aphrodes aestuarinus* and the cixiid planthopper *Oliarus leporinus* feeding on **sea purslane**, *Halimione portulacoides*, on the upper salt marsh fringing the right bank of the river Adur by Shoreham Airport. This discovery became all the more remarkable when we watched the tide come in and flood the upper marsh; these species presumably somehow manage to survive twice-daily inundation of their food plants.

For the Heteroptera, Peter Hodge found *Enoplops scapha* in two places on Hastings undercliff. This species is recorded in the 1905 *Victoria County History* for Sussex from Fairlight, so this year's record confirms its continued existence in the county. He also recorded a single male of the corixid (lesser waterboatman) *Arctocorisa germari* in a pond in Hastings Country Park, representing a new species for the vice county of East Sussex. Finally, two of my students made interesting discoveries whilst carrying out site surveys for their Masters course at Sussex University. Helen Burgess found a single individual of the uncommon groundbug, *Aphanus rolandri*, crawling over bare tarmac in the disused Preston Barracks in Brighton. This species is classified as Nationally Notable but occasionally turns up in such 'brownfield' sites. Jackie Thompson found the local capsid bug *Adelphocoris ticinensis,* which feeds on **greater birds-foot Trefoil**, *Lotus uliginosus*, growing in acidic damp grassland, and several individuals of the distinctive squashbug *Syromastes rhombeus* in one of the wooded valleys within Ashdown Forest.

COLEOPTERA IN 2006

by Peter Hodge

2006 was a productive year for insects and several very interesting species of beetles were added to the county list.

Most readers will have read about the **harlequin ladybird** *Harmonia axyrydis* which has recently became very common in the London district. Well now it's our turn because it has suddenly appeared in large numbers in many parts of Sussex. Because it could potentially damage populations of our native ladybirds, it is our duty to record every sighting. Photographs of the various adult colour forms and also the distinctive larva may be found on the Harlequin Ladybird Survey web site at www.harlequin-survey.org where records should be reported.

Two other notable ladybirds were recorded from Sussex in September 2006. *Rhyzobius chrysomeloides* was beaten off alien shrubs growing in the Marks & Spencer car park at the Holmbush Centre at Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex. This is the first sighting in West Sussex for this fairly new species to Britain. In Lewes Priory grounds the tiny Australian ladybird *Rhyzobius lophanthae* was present in considerable numbers on the foliage of an unidentified species of Cupressaceae (possibly x *Chamaecyparis leylandii*, Leyland cypress). This predator of scale insects has been sold as a biological control agent and is established in the wild in London.

Two weevils were added to the county list in 2006. *Pachyrhinus lethierryi*, a 4mm long weevil covered with green scales, resembling a *Polydrusus*, was beaten off an unidentified species of Cupressaceae growing in a garden in Hill Road, Lewes on 11th July. This weevil was first discovered in Britain on x *Chamaecyparis leylandii* (Leyland cypress) in a garden at Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire in April 2003 and has since spread rapidly in south-east England. In September 2006 two specimens of *Otiorhynchus crataegi* were beaten off alien shrubs growing in the Marks & Spencer car park at the Holmbush Centre at Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex. This flightless species is related to the vine weevil *Otiorhynchus sulcatus* and must have been introduced with the shrubs when they were planted.

On the Hastings undercliff near Rock-a-Nore on 13th October a single example of *Hypopycna rufula*, a tiny rove beetle, was extracted from a suction sample. This is the second Sussex record for this species which is said to be associated with the runs of small mammals.

Dr Colin Welch, a visitor from Hemington near Peterborough submitted an impressive list of mostly tiny beetles from Rake Hanger, West Sussex that included several new county records: *Acrotrichis rugulosa* (Ptiliidae), a minute beetle less than 1 mm long apparently associated with dung; *Atheta taxiceroides* (Staphylinidae), a tiny rove beetle associated with fungi in ancient woodland; *Malthodes flavoguttatus* (Cantharidae), a small soldier beetle found in woodland; *Enicmus rugosus* (Latridiidae), a tiny fungus beetle associated with slime-moulds on trees growing in ancient woodland; *Colydium elongatum* (Colydiidae), a small but distinctively shaped beetle thought to be predatory on wood boring beetles (Scolytinae and Platypodidae) and *Dryocoetes autographus* (Curculionidae), a bark beetle associated with conifers chiefly in northern Britain, but now evidently spreading.

Finally, Dr Brian Levey, as visitor from the National Museum of Wales, extracted a specimen of *Epiphanis cornutus* (Eucnemidae) from dead wood at Stedham Common in June. This species, related to click beetles (Elateridae), is sometimes found in decayed spruce logs and has a scattered distribution in southern England.

CETACEANS IN 2006

by Stephen Savage, Sussex Regional Coordinator Sea Watch Foundation and County Recorder for Sea Mammals.

2006 has been another good year for cetacean sightings off Sussex, with reports from sites include Littlehampton, Shoreham, Brighton, Eastbourne and Hastings. A total of 22 **bottlenose dolphin**, *Tursiops truncatus*, sightings and two **harbour porpoise** ,*Phoceana phoceana*, were recorded. The earliest recorded bottlenose dolphin sighting this year was 18th March near the Brighton Marina and the latest confirmed sighting was 15th August. A semi-resident bottlenose dolphin was present off Seaford coastline East Sussex in April. It was first reported on 21st April when it was seen feeding and two further sightings were attributed to this animal on 24th and 27th April. It was last seen off Seaford on 3rd May and was identified off Folkestone (Kent) on several occasions in the latter part of May and June. The dolphin was identified as the same animal due to a distinctive yellowish white circular patch on the left side of its dorsal fin and a similar mark lower down on the right side of the dorsal fin.

On a possibly sadder note, one of the Selsey dolphins previously reported, (Adastra 2005) present in the area between Feb and Sept 2005 (nicknamed Adidas because of a fin marking) may have been involved in a serious accident in February 2006. A solitary bottlenose dolphin was present in Portsmouth Harbour from the end of 2005 and early 2006. It appeared not long after the Selsey dolphins moved on. This dolphin also regularly interacted with vessels and was named Spinnaker by Portsmouth locals. Sadly, this dolphin was involved in a bad collision with a vessel (9th February 2006) which removed a large part of its tail fluke. I have attempted to get photographs of the Portsmouth dolphin to compare with Adidas which has several distinctive markings useful for ID purposes. The injured dolphin was never found again.

Sick and injured

Several seals and cetaceans have been stranded in Sussex waters this year. A number of these were dead when stranded but others were successfully rescued and returned to the sea. A dead harbour porpoise washed ashore at Shoreham-by-Sea (West Sussex) on 27th January. It was a metre long with damage to its snout and tips of the fins. Another dead porpoise stranding occurred at Normans Bay, Eastbourne on 24th July.

On the 3rd August a harbour porpoise became stranded on mud flats by Chichester Harbour. The porpoise was rescued by BDMLR and moved to a temporary pool constructed on the shore. The porpoise was considered okay to be released later in the day and almost immediately swam out into deeper water.

A very old **grey seal**, *Halichoerus gripus*, was washed up onto the rocky shore at Cuckmere Haven on 24th February. On 14th August **a common seal** pup, *Phoca vitulina*, was washed ashore near Eastbourne. It was thin and in need of care and was moved to the RSPCA Mallydams Wood centre near Hastings and eventually released. An adult grey seal had been seen the previous week near Newhaven, but this animal seemed fit and healthy. A common seal pup was seen at Worthing on the 19th September with two adults nearby. The pup eventually came ashore and it was found to have an injured flipper. The pup was also taken to the RSPCA Mallydams Wood centre for treatment and eventual release. There is a small resident group of common seals in Chichester and it may have been from this group. The adults seemed unconcerned that the pup was captured and removed from the beach. This is not surprising as seals provide little parental care, compared with dolphins. Seal pups are suckled for a few weeks and left to fend for themselves. We have received other reports of healthy seals those that we have reliable details for include a common seal reported off

Selsey on the 18th and 19th March. A common seal was also observed for ½ hour at Hove beach on 12th June before heading out to sea.

National Whale and Dolphin Watch (NWDW)

The annual Sea Watch Foundation event National Whale and Dolphin Watch 2006 (August 12-21) saw hundreds of people, young and old, turning out to help trained observers at more than 70 manned sites around the UK. This, added to the usual network of observers resulted in 601 separate sightings around the UK. These sightings were of eight species of whales, dolphins and porpoises (**harbour porpoises**, *Phoceana phoceana*, **minke whales**, *Balaenoptera acutrorostrata*, **killer whales**, *Orcinus orca*, and five species of dolphin – **Risso's**, *Grampus griseus*, **common**, *Delphinus delphis*, **bottlenose**,*Tursiops truncatus*, **white-beaked**, *Lagenorhynchus albirostris* and **Atlantic white-sided**, *Lagenorhynchus acutus*).

During NWDW we manned a public site at the Brighton Marina and a further watch at the Shoreham Beach LNR. Staff from the Sussex Wildlife Trust also lent a hand and undertook watches from the Brighton Marina. Three sightings of bottlenose dolphin were reported in Sussex during the event, at Brighton, Worthing and Selsey. Extra training for this event was provided by a National Biodiversity Grant which also contributed to planning the event locally.

Funding provided for the Sussex group by Crawley based Veritas DCG Inc was an added boost to our outreach programme. (Veritas provide geophysical services which include seismic survey planning and design, data interpretation and have worked with Sea Watch Foundation to limit possible impact on Cetaceans during this work). This funding allowed us to participate in a larger number of local events with interactive displays, visit local schools – supporting our aims to raise awareness of sea mammals and their conservation- and displaying our local data.

Website: www.seawatchfoundation.org.uk
Hotline number to report sightings: 07773610036

MAMMALS OTHER THAN CETACEANS

by Fran Southgate (SORP) and Penny Green (SxBRC)

In November 2006, the Sussex Mammal Group (SMG) was re-launched by a team of enthusiastic recorders. The aim of this group is to further the knowledge and understanding of mammals in their area, and to promote projects in order to get a better idea of mammal distribution in Sussex. For example we have very few records of **brown hares** in the county and would like to set up monitoring schemes to record the hopeful return (and spread!) of **otters** and **polecats** to the county. We will update you on all the group's planned activities in next year's Adastra. We will also be collecting names of anyone willing to get involved with our forthcoming volunteer activities. In the meantime though, here is a summary of how our native aquatic mammals are faring in Sussex.

There is still concern for the status of the **water vole** in Sussex. Although there appear to be isolated populations of water voles on most river catchments, the majority of these populations are still very fragmented and very much in danger of being destroyed. The Chichester Coastal Plain Sustainable Farmland Partnership was pioneering in its approach to water vole conservation through improved management of the wider landscape. This project effectively trebled the water vole population in the area in three years along with a number of much wider biodiversity benefits. The Sussex Otters and Rivers Partnership (SORP) is now working towards creating more of these sustainable land and water partnerships for water voles throughout Sussex.

The last confirmed sighting of an otter in Sussex was on the River Medway in October 2005. Since then there have been numerous unconfirmed sightings, particularly on the Ouse, Eastern Rother and Arun. The SMG would like to start regular otter surveys with a group of long-term volunteers, so if you are interested in helping please get in contact with us. Otter records are few and far between in Sussex, but we live for the day when they will be seen in our rivers once more. By conducting regular surveys, we hope that we will pick up signs of their arrival as quickly as possible.

A study supported by Brighton University and SORP has been investigating the distribution of the **water shrew** in Sussex. Until recently there was sparse information about water shrew distribution, feeding and habitat requirements, with a resulting lack of information available for conservation practitioners about management for the species. Prior to 2003, only 71 historic records of the species had been officially recorded at the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre, dating back as far as the 1950's. Over the course of two years (2003 and 2004) and two seasons (summer and winter), twenty seven sites across the three catchments (Pevensey, Ouse and Cuckmere) were surveyed for a huge range of factors including water shrew presence, water quality, plant species and aquatic invertebrates.

The results of the survey provided some fascinating new information on how water shrews live and eat. For the first time in the country, water shrews were officially recorded at coastal vegetated shingle and heathland sites. This has huge implications in terms of where we have been looking for this animal up until now and means that water shrews may be able to tolerate living near some salt water as well as freshwater sites. We also found out that surveying for water shrews in winter appeared to be better than surveying for them in summer – which perhaps can be attributed to the long, dry summers we have been experiencing lately.

The survey appeared to indicate that water shrews are widespread at a range of different wetland sites, and throughout river catchments in Sussex. They were found in ponds, rivers, ditches, streams and even reservoirs. Surprisingly, water shrews appeared to prefer less floristically diverse sites with reedbeds, sedges and grassy tussocks and they showed a definite preference for sites with populations of diverse aquatic invertebrates (insects), and for food prey such as caddis fly larvae and water snails.

If you would like more information about the SMG, please get in contact with Penny Green Pennygreen@sussexwt.org.uk or 01273 497521.

DIPTERA 2006

Patrick Roper, Sussex Diptera Recorder

We have been lucky over the last few years to have had several of Britain's leading dipterists visiting Sussex on field trips, as well as other entomologists who have produced many valuable diptera records.

Steven Falk, who is Senior Keeper of Natural History at the Warwickshire Museum, is undertaking a four to five year study of diptera and other insects on the South Downs, and has spent much of successive annual summer holidays with us. His lists are spectacular – in 2005, for example, he recorded over 600 species, many in the RDB range.

Among the more elusive species were the BAP hoverfly *Doros profuges* (formerly *D. conopseus*), the coastal **long-horned general**, *Stratiomys longicornis*, and the flesh fly *Macronychia agrestis* , new to the British Isles.

Steve seems proudest of the rediscovery of a fly *Musca osiris*, for which the only previous British record was 'Seaford, 1875'. A female was found at Birling Gap in 2006 and a male at Deep Dean. "Are these" he asks "representatives of the same 19th century population or a case of recolonisation? The fly is closely related to the house fly, *M. domestica*, and face fly, *M. autumnalis*, and will probably have larvae associated with decaying substrate of some sort or dung.

Tanyptera nigricornis in Brede High Wood

A group a members of the Dipterists Forum spent several days in Sussex exploring a wide range of habitats from their base at the Plumpton Agricultural College. One of the highlights was the large number of the **four-lined horsefly**, *Atylotus rusticus*, found on the Pevensey Levels, a site where they had been seen earlier in the year by Andrew Grace. This rare species is now has its only British sites on grazing marshes near the coast in East Sussex.

Peter Hodge has found more sites for the new-to-Sussex picture-winged fly *Tephritis divisa* and leaf mines of another Tephritid *Acidia cognata* were recorded for the first time in East Sussex in leaves of winter heliotrope.

Among the Nematocera (craneflies and their allies), the ichneumon-like daddy-long-legs *Tanyptera nigricornis* turned up in Brede High Woods, only the second Sussex record. We have also had a superb list of flies from the east of East Sussex from Peter Chandler and others who visited the area in 2004. The fungus gnat (*Mycetophiloidea*) list has now risen to 122 for the trip with 5 Nationally Scarce species.

LICHENS 2006

by Simon Davey, Sussex Recorder for Lichens

2006 has been a quality year for lichens in Sussex. A visit in a heatwave (94° F) to Lydd Army Ranges in August produced a record for *Cladonia mitis*. No, my brain wasn't quite addled by the heat! Although recorded previously from a site on the RSPB Reserve at Dungeness (Kent), it was destroyed there forty years ago by flooding to create bird habitat. This species is otherwise known from the north coast of Nairnshire and from Ross and Cromarty.

On the same day *Usnea wasmuthii* (new for Sussex) and *Usnea flammea* (new for VC14) were recorded. The habitat is dwarf, lichen smothered blackthorn that is all but moribund due to its being prevented from photosynthesising by the lichen cover. The Ranges are difficult to survey as access permission is not readily forthcoming. However there is great potential for further rarities here.

I have just heard (BLS Summer Bulletin 2006) that in 1991, Tony Fletcher, a leading lichenologist collected *Aspicilia tuberculosa* on Butser Hill (just in Hampshire). This species was found in around 1830 by the great botanist Borrer, from, and I quote, "The Downs, Sussex." This was the sole collection in the World of this species, so we should look out for it with renewed hope. Flint pebbles on chalk downland are where it is likely to occur and it is not that hard to distinguish. I have photographs of the specimen in the Natural History Museum if anyone would like to receive the image by e-mail.

Following a suggestion by Peter Hodge at a meeting to produce an up to date species list for beetles, I have produced an Annotated List of Sussex Lichens, which hopefully will be

published shortly. A huge number of new species have been added since the 1991 Sussex Lower Plant Atlas and these will appear in the list. The Sussex Lichen Recording Group has had a successful year adding a good few number of records to our lists.

SUSSEX AMPHIBIAN AND REPTILE GROUP 2006

by Jenny Bacon, Chair, Sussex Amphibian & Reptile Group

The first event in 2006 was the annual toad migration which got off to a late start as the weather was such that the frogs and toad refused to leave the comfort of their winter beds, however, the wait was well worth it and it finally took place in the second half of March 2006 and the numbers seen were phenomenal, the best I have seen since first helping out on the crossing in 1994. Mallard Drive crossing, in Uckfield recorded toad numbers of over 800 with the number of frogs dropping off significantly and the newt numbers remaining about the same. We also had excellent results at both Newhaven and Littlington crossings.

The Pond at Mallard Drive seems to have gone full circle, this was a traditional farm pond with only toads and fish living there in 1994, over the next few years the fish were removed and the toad numbers started to drop but we found that the frog and newt numbers began to increase in such a rate that we had far more frogs than toads. This was all happening as the number of houses being built on the estate increased. However, in the past few years all the building works have been completed though we did have reports of goldfish being seen in the pond. In 2004 and 2005 we found that frog ,toad and newt numbers were decreasing at such a rate that we thought a manned crossing would not be necessary any more, until spring 2006 when we had a toad population explosion.

Not knowing this the national press contacted us before migration started wanting to do a piece on why people do toad patrols. Anyway the reporter arrived from the Sunday Telegraph one cool Friday night and everywhere we looked we found toads looking back at us and none of them were camera shy that night. So after years of numbers decreasing we have three good sites on the up, which is all an amphibian and reptile group could ask for.

Our AGM was again held at Arlington Reservoir where we continue to offer advice and information to our members, however, it rained persistently all day and the event was therefore poorly attended. Our thanks are due to South Eastern Water for letting us host this event and our committee meetings at the Reservoir.

We try to continue to attend events each year such as Bishopstone Fair and David Harris represented us in June at the 'Brighton Goes Wild' event in Stanmer Park, Brighton.

Ongoing projects

We are still consulted with regard to the South Downs National Park and our thanks go to Janet Claydon who has spent many an hour completing questionnaires they have sent to us. Work continues at the Powdermill Trust and survey work at Chailey common would not continue with the dedication and support of both Janet Claydon and David Harris. As a group we were involved with the Ouse Estuary Project as concerns were made with the management of the site, and we are looking forward to receiving proposals from East Sussex county ecologist Alex Tait.

Barry Kemp arranged for the group to spent a lovely day scrub clearing at South Eastern Water's sewage works near Tunbridge Wells which sounds like a contradiction in terms, but we spent the day clearing brambles which will enable the reptiles to enjoy basking in the summer sun without having to fight through a thicket. The site is no longer in use and has proved to be a perfect haven for wildlife including many amphibians and reptiles.

As ever the SARG committee and members continue to keep busy, although this year we hit crisis point with the group under threat and all hope of finding new recruits to the committee dwindling. We held an extraordinary general meeting one damp night and much to our delight members came forward and the group is now able to continue. We would like to say a big thank you to both David Harris and Su Pitcher who have retired from the committee for all of their help in the past. We appreciate that everyone including committee members lead such busy lives. but without the help of enthusiasts for our reptiles and amphibians, the group would not exist. Many thanks to all and everyone who has helped and supported SARG in the past 12 months.

SUSSEX SPIDER GROUP FIELD VISITS IN 2007

by Andrew Phillips

A new group has been set-up to study the spiders of East & West Sussex. Two field visits will be organised during 2007 and anyone interested in studying or recording spiders is welcome to attend. Complete beginners are also encouraged to attend as there will be more experienced spider enthusiasts present who will be only too willing to pass on identification and ecological knowledge of spiders during the field visits.

The two sites chosen to visit this year are Lullington Heath/Friston Project Area and Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve.

Lullington Heath has very few spider records despite containing lowland heath, a habitat which is the richest for spider diversity in the UK. This field visit should contribute greatly to the biological information held for the site.

Hastings Country Park is a newly declared nature reserve and the area that will be surveyed contains a mosaic of habitats very close to each other, cliff-top heathland, acid grassland, coastal scrub and gill woodland. As well as a wide variety of spider species you will also have a chance of seeing the recently discovered sickle-bearing bush-cricket.

The dates and times listed below are provisional so please contact me, Andy Phillips, to book a place on the field visits and I will confirm the date, time and meeting place.

Saturday, 2nd June 2007
Lullington Heath/Friston Project Area
Target sp.: *Philodromus histrio*, *Hypsosinga sanguinea* and other lowland heath specialists.

Saturday, 8th September 2007
Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve
Target species: *Atypus affinis* and *Micaria romana*.

Dr Francis Rose

This year we sadly lost the man often cited as the best field botanist of his, or any other generation. However, Francis Rose was not just a botanist, but also ecologist, teacher, author, good friend and inspiration to many Adastra readers.

In Sussex he has left a huge legacy. This includes his extensive records from both site cards and field notebooks, our understanding of our unique Sussex biogeography, that will be referred to for many years to come, and insights into the ecology and distribution of many of our plant species (See Sussex Botany Issue 2).

To me his most impressive legacy is through the many naturalists who he inspired and taught who have gone on to inspire and teach others in Sussex and beyond.

HB

SUSSEX COUNTY RECORDERS 2006/7

If you are not already sending your records onto a particular local recording scheme or society records of any plant or animal species can be sent to the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre who will pass them on to the relevant groups listed below.

Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC)
Woods Mill, Henfield,
West Sussex BN5 9SD
Tel: 01273 497553
info@sxbrc.org.uk

Sussex Wildlife Trust
Woods Mill, Henfield,
West Sussex BN5 9SD
Tel: 01273 497630
enquiries@sussexwt.org.uk

Higher Plants

ALAN KNAPP
(Sussex Botanical Recording Society
West Sussex)
7, Trinity Close, Pound Hill, Crawley RH10 3TM
Tel: 01293 883695
aknapp2000@btinternet.com

PAUL HARMES
(Sussex Botanical Recording Society
East Sussex)
10 Hillcroft, Mile Oak Road,
Portslade BN4 2QD
p.harmes01@ntlworld.com
Tel. 01273 880258

Sussex Botanical Recording Society
web site: www.sussexflora.org.uk

Orchids

DAVID LANG
1 Oaktree, Barcombe, Lewes,
East Sussex BN8 5DP.
Tel: (01273) 400446
dclangbarcombe@yahoo.co.uk

Bryophytes

HOWARD MATCHAM
21 Temple Bar, Strettington,
near Chichester,
West Sussex PO18 0LB
Tel: 01243 781238
hwlgmatch@yahoo.co.uk

Lichens

SIMON DAVEY
10 Cottage Homes, Common Lane,
Ditchling, Hassocks
West Sussex BN6 8UR
Tel: 01273 843375
srdavey@globalnet.co.uk

Charophytes (Stoneworts)

FRANCES ABRAHAM
Old School House, Ebernoe, nr Petworth,
West Sussex GU28 9LD
frances.a@solutions-inc.co.uk

Fungi

PETER RUSSELL
15 Graham Avenue, Patcham,
Brighton BN1 8HD
pjrthe1st@yahoo.com

Amphibians & Reptiles

Records should be sent to
Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC)
Woods Mill, Henfield,
West Sussex BN5 9SD
Tel: 01273 497553/554
info@sxbrc.org.uk

River Fish

DAMON BLOCK
Environment Agency, Sussex Area Office.
Saxon House, Little High Street, Worthing,
West Sussex BN11 1DH
Tel: 01903 703812
damon.block@environment-agency.gov.uk

Birds

CHRISTIAN MELGAR
Recorder: Sussex Ornithological Society
36 Victoria Road, Worthing,
West Sussex BN11 1XB
Tel: 01903 200064
recorder@sos.org.uk

Bird conservation enquiries:
conservation@sos.org.uk

All other enquiries:
RICHARD COWSER
Tel:01903 770259
secretary@sos.org.uk or 01903 770259

Mammals (see below for bats, badgers & cetaceans)

Records should be sent to the
Sussex Mammal Group
C/O Penny Green, Woods Mill, Henfield,
West Sussex BN5 9SD
Tel: 01273 497553/554
sxbrc@sussexwt.org.uk

Bats

MARTIN R.T. LOVE
4 The Cherries, Rookwood Rd,
West Wittering,
West Sussex PO20 8LT
Tel. 01243 513650
halcon@globalnet.co.uk

Badgers

Badger Trust (Sussex)
Tel: 07910 198720
Badger Trust website: www.badger.org.uk

Cetaceans and Seals

STEPHEN SAVAGE (Seawatch)
45 North Road, Portslade,
East Sussex BN41 2HD
Tel. 01273 424339
stevep.savage@ntlworld.com
www.seawatchfoundation.org.uk

Moths and Butterflies

TONY DAVIES
Sussex Moth Group Secretary
tdavies@butterfly-conservation.org

COLIN PRATT
Sussex Moth Group Recorder
Oleander, 5 View Road,
Peacehaven, East Sussex.
colin.pratt@talk21.com
Tel. 01273 586780

BILL TAYLOR
British Butterfly Conservation Society –
Sussex Branch, Recorder
Tel: 01903 774551
Email: william.pendrich@tesco.net
Web: http://www.sussex-butterflies.org.uk/

Glow-worms

Please send records to SxBRC

Spiders

ANDY PHILLIPS
Flat 5, 21 West Hill Road
St. Leonards on Sea
East Sussex
TN38 0NA
Tel: 01424 716919
threecubes@gmail.com

Orthoptera & related orders

JOHN PAUL
Downsflint, High Street, Upper Beeding,
West Sussex BN44 3WN
tetrix@pavilion.co.uk

Dragonflies

JOHN LUCK
British Dragonfly Society – Sussex branch
4 Mill View, Ringmer, East Sussex BN8 5EP
Email: johnluck@gotadsl.co.uk
Web: www.dragonflysoc.org.uk

Coleoptera (beetles) &
Heteroptera (plant bugs)

PETER HODGE
8 Harvard Road, Ringmer,
East Sussex BN8 5HJ
Tel. 01273 812047
Peter.J.Hodge@tesco.net

Hymenoptera: Ants, Bees & Wasps

MIKE EDWARDS
Lea-side, Carron Lane, Midhurst,
West Sussex GU29 9LB
Tel. 01730 810482
ammophila@macace.net

Diptera (two-winged flies)

PATRICK ROPER
South View, Churchland Lane,
Sedlescombe, East Sussex TN33 0PF
Tel. 01424 870208
patrick@prassociates.co.uk

Hoverflies

ROGER MORRIS & STUART BALL
National Hoverfly Recording Scheme
7 Vine Street, Stamford
Lincolnshire PE9 1QE
roger.morris@dsl.pipex.com
Web: www.hoverfly.org.uk

Hemiptera/Homoptera (Auchenorrhyncha: Leafhoppers & planthoppers)

ALAN STEWART
31 Houndean Rise, Lewes,
East Sussex BN7 1EQ
a.j.a.stewart@sussex.ac.uk
Tel: 01273 476243

Molluscs

MARTIN WILLING
14 Goodwood Close, Midhurst,
West Sussex GU29 9JG
Molluscs@willing.fsbusiness.co.uk
Tel:. 01730 814790

Isopoda (woodlice) and related groups

STEVE PROSSER
43 Marchant's Drive
Camber, East Sussex TN31 2RF
mail@camber43.freeserve.co.uk
Tel: 01797 229334

Pseudo-scorpions

GERALD LEGG (National Recorder).
Booth Museum of Natural History, 194 Dyke Road, Brighton,
East Sussex BN15AA
gerald.legg@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Tel: 01273 292777

Geology

JOHN COOPER
Booth Museum of Natural History, 194 Dyke Road, Brighton,
East Sussex BN15AA
john.cooper@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Tel: 01273 552586

Marine Records - (see also Cetaceans)

GERALD LEGG
Booth Museum of Natural History, 194 Dyke Road, Brighton,
East Sussex BN15AA
gerald.legg@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Tel: 01273 292777

Geology

GERALD LEGG
Booth Museum of Natural History,as above
John.cooper@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Tel: 01273 292777

SOME VACANT GROUPS : VOLUNTEER COUNTY RECORDERS NEEDED

Ephemoptera (Mayflies), Neuroptera, Mecoptera and Megaloptera, (Lacewings, Scorpion-flies, Alderflies and Snake-flies), Coelenterata, Nemertea (Nematode worms), Oligochaeta (Oligochaete worms), Bryozoa, Annelida (Flatworms), Myriapoda (Millipedes), Crustacea.

OTHER USEFUL ADDRESSES

Ashdown Forest

The Conservators of Ashdown Forest
The Ashdown Forest Centre
Wych Cross, Forest Row
East Sussex RH18 5JP
Tel. 01342 823583;
conservators@ashdownforest.fsnet.co.uk

Badgers – see above.

East Sussex County Council

Alex Tait, County Ecologist,
Transport & Environment,
County Hall, St. Anne's Crescent,
Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1UE
Tel: 01273 481621
E-mail: alex.tait@eastsussexcc.gov.uk

Natural England (formerly English Nature)

Sussex and Surrey Team,
Phoenix House, 33 North Street,
Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2PH
Tel: 01273 476595
Email: sussex.surrey@english-nature.org.uk

Environment Agency

Sussex Area Office
Saxon House, Little High Street,
Worthing, West Sussex BN11 1DH
Tel: 01903 703831
cherry.weeks@environment-agency.gov.uk

Forestry Commission

South East England Forest District,
Bucks Horn Oak, Farnham,
Surrey GU10 4LS
Tel: 01420 23666
enquiries.seefd@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

High Weald AONB Unit

Woodland Enterprise Centre,
Hastings Road, Flimwell,
East Sussex TN5 7PR
Tel: 01580 879500
info@highweald.org

National Trust

South East Region, Polesden Lacey,
Dorking, Surrey RH5 6BD Tel: 01372 453401

Otters and Rivers Partnership

Fran Southgate
c/o the Sussex Wildlife Trust, Woods Mill
Henfield, West Sussex BN5 9SD
Tel: 01273 497555
fransouthgate@sussexwt.org.uk

RSPB

South East England Regional Office
2nd Floor, 42 Frederick Place,
Brighton BN1 4EA
Tel: 01273 775333

South Downs Joint Committee

Victorian Barn
Victorian Business Centre
Ford Lane, Ford Nr Arundel
West Sussex BN18 0EF
Tel: 01243 558700 Fax: 01243 558701

South Eastern Water

3 Church Road, Haywards Heath
West Sussex RH16 3NY
Tel: 0845 301 0845
Email: contactcentre@southeastwater.co.uk

Southern Water

Environment & Product Quality
Southern House, Lewes Road
Falmer, Brighton BN1 9PY
Tel: 01273 663150
customerservices@southernwater.co.uk

Sussex Amphibian & Reptile Group

Jenny Bacon, Chair
Hammonds Green Cottage
Framfield, East Sussex TN22 5QH
Tel: 01825 890236
jenny@baconjjgw.fsnet.co.uk

Sussex Bat Group

Recorder: Martin Love
4 The Cherries, Rookwood Rd,
West Wittering, West Sussex PO20 8LT
Tel. 01243 513650
halcon@globalnet.co.uk

***Sussex Botany* magazine**

Enquiries to the SxBRC

Sussex Botanical Recording Society

http://www.sussexflora.org.uk/

Sussex Lichen Recording Group

Details from SxBRC

Sussex Wildlife Trust

Woods Mill, Henfield, West Sussex BN5 9SD
Tel: 01273 492630
enquiries@sussexwt.org.uk

Weald Meadows Initiative

At High Weald AONB Unit (see above).
meadows@highweald.org

West Sussex County Council

Environmental and Economic Policy Services
The Grange, Tower Street, Chichester,
West Sussex PO19 1RH
Tel: 01243 777273
E-mail: env.dev@westsussex.gov.uk

Woodland Trust

The Woodland Trust, Autumn Park
Dysart Road, Grantham, Lincs. NG31 6LL
Tel: 01476 581111
conservation@woodland-trust.org.uk