

NEWSLETTER 62

January 2020

Unearthing the "lost" spiders of Leicestershire



Psilochorus simoni

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In 2019, I recorded a total of 353 individual spiders representing 103 species, 29% of the VC55 list. Figure 2 (p. 3) shows where and when I recorded, roaming further afield in summer and sticking closer to home in winter. I managed to add one new species to the County list, *Enoplognatha latimana* (Cann, 2019), but I also unearthed a number of other "lost" species which between them had not been recorded for over 50 years.

Uloborus plumipes (p. 3, fig. 1), known as the Feather-legged Spider (from the Latin *pluma* "feather" and *pes* "foot"), or Garden Centre Spider, is a European species now widely distributed in greenhouses and garden centres worldwide. Believed to have been imported from The Netherlands on plants and first recorded in

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LEICESTERSHIRE ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Affiliated to:
Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust

**Chairman &
LES Occasional Publications Editor:**
Ray Morris
16 Hinckley Road, Dadlington
Leics. CV13 6HU
Telephone: 01455 213569
Email: ray@cactusbob.net

Secretary:
Anona Finch
14 Thorndale, Ibstock, Leics. LE67 6JT
Email: finchgraham1@gmail.com

Treasurer:
Dave Budworth
121 Wood Lane, Newhall, Swadlincote
Derbys. DE11 0LX
Telephone: 01283 215188
Email: dbud01@aol.com

Committee Members:
Maggie Frankum
3 Chapel Lane, Knighton, Leicester LE2 3WF
Telephone: 0116 270 5833
Email: maggiefrankum@uwclub.net

Peter Patrick
The Hollies, Holly Street, Stapenhill, Burton on Trent,
Derby DE15 9ET
Telephone: 01283 548704
Email: petebass03@aol.com

Newsletter Editor:
Steve Woodward
19 Highfield Road, Groby, Leicester LE6 0GU
Telephone: 0116 287 1679
Email: grobysteve@talktalk.net

Publications downloadable from:
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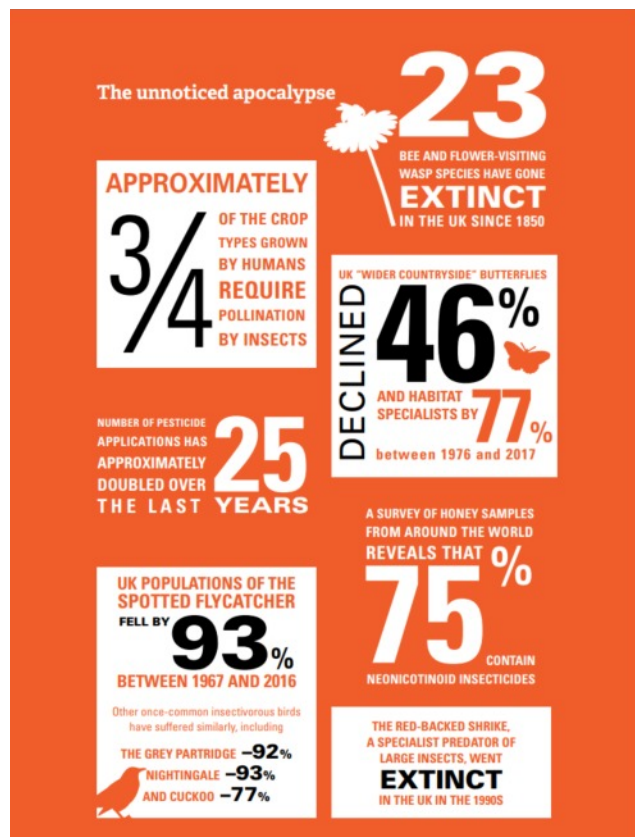
The editor will be happy to receive articles, short notes and photos (in focus please!) about insects or other invertebrates in Leicestershire and Rutland, also news of members' activities further afield. Photos to be sent separately please at high resolution. Unless otherwise credited, photos are by the author of the article.

Next Copy Deadline: 5 Sep 2020

Editorial

It is much harder to demonstrate the local extinction of a species than to add a new one to the county list. Every edition of this newsletter reports on a few further additions, pushing the grand total of invertebrate species ever higher. This does not show that our invertebrate life is thriving, of course - that is an illusion arising from that way we record wildlife. If we consider the *abundance* (numbers of individuals or biomass), then a very different picture emerges. I am old enough to remember the 1970s when car windscreens became splattered after a long journey in summer, and when my moth trap regularly attracted hundreds of insects. In recent years, scientific evidence has been collated that shows an alarming rate of decline, for example see Dave Goulson's report https://www.lrwt.org.uk/media/uploads/final_report_web_version.pdf A "poster" page from the report appears below.

I was delighted to learn from John Clarkson, the new Head of Conservation, that LRWT is supporting, along with other Wildlife Trusts, a new campaign called *Action for Insects*. The campaign highlights the problem, the causes and suggested solutions, some of which are applicable to our domestic and gardening activities.





"We are witnessing the largest extinction event on Earth since the dinosaurs"

Insects are dying out up to 8 times faster than larger animals and 41% of insect species face extinction.

This is a grave cause for concern - it impacts us all as well as wildlife. Insects pollinate three quarters of our food crops, as well as being the main food source for many birds, small mammals and fish.

Loss of their habitat and overuse of pesticides are two of the major causes of this looming catastrophe. **However, the good news is that it's not too late to act.**

Insect populations can recover, and we know what needs to be done to save them.

Why should we care?

Without insects many birds, bats, reptiles amphibians, small mammals and fish would die out as they would have nothing to eat.

87% of all plant species require animal pollination, most of it delivered by insects - that is pretty much all of them except grasses and conifers.

In addition, 3 out of 4 of all the crops that we grow require pollination by insects.

Only by working together can we address the causes of insect loss, halt and reverse them, and secure a sustainable future for insect life and for ourselves.

Together, we can stop this looming catastrophe and create an environment that is rich in nature for the benefit of wildlife and people.

These are a couple of extracts from the Trust's web site: <https://www.lrwt.org.uk/get-involved/actions-for-insects/>

Steve Woodward

cont'd from p.1

the UK in the 1990s, this species survives in greenhouses and buildings where the winter temperature is maintained above freezing (Jonsson, 1998). In this habitat it appears to play an effective role in controlling whitefly, but they are not commonly found in domestic houses. Although it is now widely distributed across the UK, they are cryptic and difficult to spot as they hang upside down motionless in their webs. Their horizontal webs and star-shaped egg sacs are much easier to find than the spiders themselves. Females grow up to 6 mm and appear to vastly outnumber males, but this may be because the 4 mm males are even more cryptic than the females. This species lacks venom glands and traps prey by entanglement in fuzzy, non-sticky cribellate silk.

Uloborus plumipes was first recorded in VC55 (Leicestershire and Rutland) in 2001, ironically in a garden centre only half a mile from my home. It was subsequently recorded at Brooksby Agricultural College near Melton Mowbray, in a now-defunct Leicester garden centre and finally in the plant section of a Homebase Superstore in 2006. The species has not been



Fig 1. *Uloborus plumipes*.

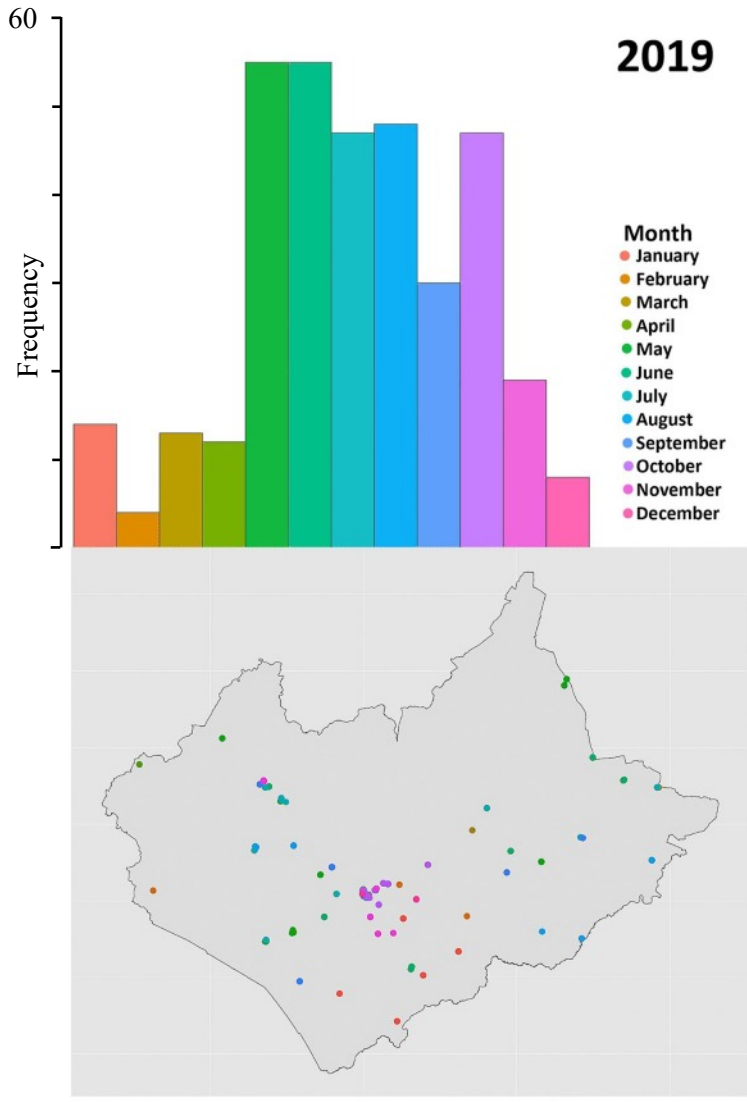


Fig 2. My spider records in 2019.

Arachnids (Opiliones, Harvestmen): - Ray Morris, see page 2.

Arachnids (Spiders):- Paul Palmer
palmerpjp@gmail.com.

Arachnids (Pseudoscorpions):- Ed Darby 01509 569670 lboro.ecols@ntlworld.com

Biological Recording:- Sue Timms, Leics & Rutland Environmental Records Centre; Room 400, County Hall, Glenfield LE3 8RA. 0116 3054108
Sue.timms@leics.gov.uk

Chilopoda:- Helen Ikin, 237 Forest Road, Woodhouse, Woodhouse Eaves, Leics LE12 8TZ. 01509 890102. helen.canids@btinternet.com

Coleoptera:- Graham Finch, 14 Thorndale, Ibstock, Leics. LE67 6JT: finchgraham1@gmail.com

Collembola: Alan Cann, 17 Overdale Road, Leicester LE2 3YJ. alan.cann@gmail.com Online identification guides:
<https://collembolla.blogspot.com/p/identification-guides.html>

Diplopoda:- Helen Ikin (see Chilopoda).

Diptera (Some families):- Ray Morris (see page 2).

Diptera (Nematocera - Mosquitoes, Blackflies & Craneflies):- John Kramer, 31 Ash Tree Road, Oadby, Leicester LE2 5TE. 0116 271 6499.
john.kramer@btinternet.com

Hymenoptera (Symphyta - Sawflies):- Dave Nicholls, 69-71 Church Lane, Ratby, LE6 0JF.
nicholls.99@btinternet.com

Hymenoptera (Bumblebees):- Maggie Frankum, see page 2.

Hymenoptera (Other aculeates - Bees, Wasps & Ants):- Helen Ikin (see Chilopoda).

Hemiptera:- Dave Budworth, see page 2.

Isopoda (Woodlice):- Helen Ikin (see Chilopoda).

Lepidoptera:- Adrian Russell, 15 St Swithin's Road, Leicester LE5 2GE. 0116 241 5101.
Adrian@wainscot.demon.co.uk

Mecoptera, Neuroptera, Plecoptera :- Steve Woodward, see page 2.

Mollusca: - Dave Nicholls (see Hymenoptera (Symphyta)).

Odonata:- Ian Merrill i.merrill@btopenworld.com

Orthoptera:- Helen Ikin, see Chilopoda.

Plant Galls:- Maggie Frankum, see page 2.

Psocoptera:- Helen Ikin, see Chilopoda.

Thysanoptera: - Ivan Pedley, see Arachnids - Mites.

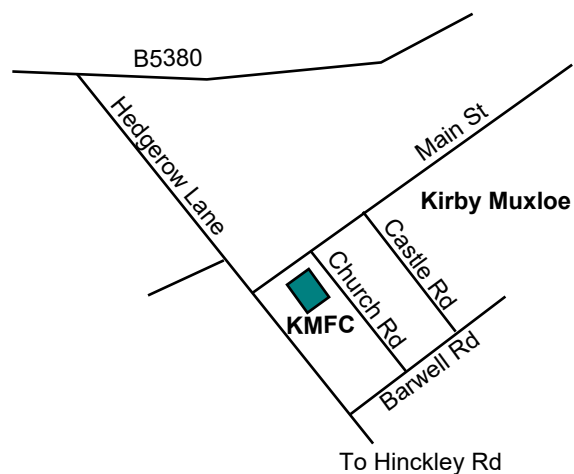
Trichoptera (adults):- Ray Morris, see page 2.

Indoor Meetings Programme

Our venue is Kirby Muxloe Free Church, Main Street, Kirby Muxloe LE9 2AN SK517042. The session starts at 7:30, but most members arrive half an hour earlier for a natter, with tea, coffee and biscuits. Visitors are welcome.

Thursday 20 February 2020 - Update on Spider Recording in VC55. Alan Cann will show us the latest available data and distribution on this relatively under-recorded subject.

Thursday 19 March 2020 - How to find rare beetles. Graham Finch taking it a step further, moving away from casual observations in order to find the more unusual species.



Anona Finch
