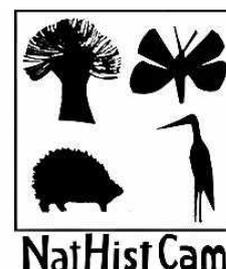


# NatHistCam Newsletter March 2019



## Butterfly records wanted

We are collecting Butterfly records. The first **Brimstones** appeared in mid-February and **Red Admirals** and **Small Tortoiseshells** should soon be emerging from over-winter torpor. About one third of UK butterflies are increasing in distribution, one third are stable and one third are in serious decline. **Marbled Whites** can now be seen on Coldham's Common and farmland near Girton; the **Grizzled Skipper** used to be seen in the orchards and wayside margins throughout north Cambridge in the 60's and 70's but is now confined to just three sites in Cambridgeshire.



*Marbled White*



*Brimstone*

**Please send in your records.**

A few cold-adapted species of **moths** fly throughout the winter, and recorders around the city have rarely been disappointed by empty traps this year during the unusually mild weather. **Oak Beauty**, one of the most spectacular early-spring moths has been recorded widely. Look out for **Common Quaker** and **Hebrew Character** on walls around outdoor lights and windows as they will be flying in huge numbers by the end of the month. Come and see the Cambridge Moth Group volunteers at the CNHS Conversazione on 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> April to find out about moth recording around the city and how to get involved!



*Oak Beauty (Annette Shelford)*



*Common Quaker (Annette Shelford)*

We have almost completed a survey of the College gardens with the help of Head Gardeners. Their enthusiasm and support has been outstanding and their commitments to sound ecology and creating a balanced, vibrant and sustainable wildlife space. **Red Foxes, Badgers, Otters and Muntjac Deer** (less welcome!) have all increased in recent years. There are still living **Elms** in the gardens which are some of the biggest trees in the City.

Where have all the **Nuthatches** gone? They used to be regular in the “Backs” but there has only been one recent record from Girton despite a dedicated search. Is it because there are no mature oaks, which Nuthatches like, in the “Backs”? Please send in any records of Nuthatches seen or heard. This time of year, it’s also worth looking for **Black Redstarts** around College buildings, shopping precincts and city centre churchyards. Four **Common Cranes** were seen over north Cambridge in mid-February



*Nuthatch (Duncan MacKay)*



*Common Cranes over north Cambridge (Jon Heath)*

Chris Preston is undertaking a survey of **Smuts** and **Rusts**. A smut fungus, *Antherospora hortensis* infects the anthers of **Grape Hyacinths**; look into the flowers to see masses of brown spores, rather than normal pale-yellow pollen grains. Although widespread in W. Wales and in Richmond (Surrey), he failed to find it in Cambridge last year and needs help! Please let him know ([cdpr@ceh.ac.uk](mailto:cdpr@ceh.ac.uk)).



*Antherospora scillae* (Chris Preston)



*Antherospora hortensis* (Arthur Chater)

A similar smut occurs on *Scilla* species; *Antherospora scillae* on *Scilla forbesii* was an exciting find in St Giles churchyard.

We have now surveyed 45 domestic gardens, on track for the planned 60 by the end of this season. If you would like us to survey your garden, please let us know by e-mailing [nathistcam@gmail.com](mailto:nathistcam@gmail.com). Some parts of the city are already well covered, but outlying areas including Grantchester, Teversham and Cherry Hinton are less so.

To send records visit our website: [nathistcam.org.uk/submit a record](http://nathistcam.org.uk/submit-a-record)  
**For further information, visit our website [www.nathistcam.org.uk](http://www.nathistcam.org.uk). If you can offer a suitable garden, or could lead one of our monthly projects or could start an altogether new recording scheme, please let us know.**