

## Fobney Island Monitoring Summary Renton Righelato January 2015



### Fobney Island looking from the north, November 2014

Note high water levels in the large pool and dense willow around the scrapes in the western half of the island.

The monitoring arrangements are summarised in Table 1. Butterflies, dragonflies and damsel flies and birds have been reported for 2014. The RDNHS restarted their plant surveying in August 2014. Again we have no mammal surveys.

Extensive flooding in the months of the year growth of terrestrial plants and provided little opportunity for ground-nesting birds such as Little Ringed Plover and Lapwing. Some of the scrub plantings have been lost, but sufficient remain to provide the screening sought and are growing satisfactorily. Extensive invasion of Willow around the scrapes rendered the area less suitable for Little Ringed Plover, Lapwing and other waders and wildfowl. The Willow was flailed off in October but will need further treatment next year.

The **plant survey** in August by members of the Reading District Natural History Society recorded 141 species, including some considered scarce or rare in Berkshire (table 3). There seemed to have been a rich seed bed in the soil, which germinated after clearing and disturbance. Those species in the seed mix that were found were species that might be expected to have been there naturally; those species in the mix that were not found (chalk species) were inappropriate to the soil conditions.

**Butterfly** surveys are carried out on and around Fobney Island by John Lerpiniere. In 2014, butterflies on the Island were well down on the previous year but certainly better than 2012. The main factors were – 2013 was an exceptional year nationally, one of the best ever; the flowers providing nectar were less in evidence in 2014 (although a great improvement on 2012). The survey data will be added to this report when they are available.

Five species of **damselfly** and eight **dragonflies** were recorded (an increase of two over last year), including the Small Red-eyed Damselfly, a new species that is colonising southern England, but is still rare in Berkshire. Mike Turton's survey report is attached.

**85 bird species** were recorded (table 2), including five new species since the opening of the reserve (\*), with a 28 species confirmed as breeding or probably breeding. The scrapes were used by Oystercatcher\*, Green and Common Sandpipers, Snipe\* and Redshank on passage as well as summering Little Ringed Plover and Lapwing. Observers are encouraged to submit records via [www.berksbirds.co.uk](http://www.berksbirds.co.uk), where they can also be searched. A Lesser Spotted Woodpecker\* was in alders along the canal; a Nightingale\* was present in late June, probably dispersing post-breeding and Water Rail\* was recorded in the autumn.

**Table 1: Fobney monitoring summary: January-December 2014**

<b>Taxa</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Birds</b>	Renton Righelato et al. / BOC	Approx. Monthly casual recording.	Casual coverage of island + towpath + south bank of river. <b>Breeding:</b> Although atle Ringed Plover was briefly present during the breeding season there was no evidence of breeding. Gadwall and Shoveler were present in the breeding season and may have bred. Hobbies were seen feeding. A Lesser Spotted Woodpecker was seen on the towpath in April and a Nightingale was present in June – both new species for the site. <b>Wintering:</b> Small numbers of wildfowl were in evidence in January/March and October/November: Gadwall, Wigeon, Teal, Mallard, Tufted Duck. Canada and Greylag Geese have been present in small numbers and have not, so far, been an obvious problem.
<b>Mammals</b>  Bats	University of Reading (Becky Thomas)		Preliminary site survey done September 2012 by Becky Thomas. Small mammals: <b>no trapping in 2013 or 2014.</b> A Water Vole observed at Fobney Lock. Bat monitoring: <b>Not done. Giles Sutton to be approached.</b>
<b>Butterflies</b>	John Lerpiniere	Fortnightly in summer Started	With little vegetation on the island in 2012, few butterflies were noted; but 16 species were recorded south of the river. In 2013 a similar range of species was recorded, with many more butterflies, mostly Meadow Brown, on the island.  Data entered into Transect Walker for the national Butterfly Monitoring Scheme
<b>Dragonflies, damselflies</b>	Mike Turton	Started. Monthly from end April to late September,	Four species of damselfly and five dragonflies were recorded
<b>River fly monitoring</b>	R&DAA/Graham Scholey	Annual?	R&DAA report that the fly monitoring is going well, with an equally good score when compared with our other sites further upstream.
<b>Plants</b>	RDNHS	Approximately 6 weekly in Spring/Autumn	141 species recorded in August 2014

## Fobney Dragonfly Monitoring Report for 2014 (Mike Turton)

The monitoring transect is as follows:

- The first section runs from the eastern gate along the path on island to the 1<sup>st</sup> hide, then across the island on the bank dividing the two main areas of water and back to the eastern gate along the bank between the eastern lake and the river. Where possible, the transect stayed close to the water's edge so as to include all Odonata on the water.
- The second section runs from the eastern gate along the canal towpath to the weir, then back through the western gate to the western hide. The river is checked from the weir.
- The western lake is checked from the path where possible and from the hides at both ends, though these are not close enough to the water to pick up most species. For the latter 2 surveys, the western hide was inaccessible due to the vegetation.

Surveys were carried out by walking the above route at a slow pace and counting all Odonata within an imaginary box 5m in front, behind and above and 2.5m either side.

Four surveys were carried out in 2014: 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 4<sup>th</sup> August and 10<sup>th</sup> September. All surveys were carried out when the temperature was 17°C or above and wind was F1 or F2. Cloud cover varied – the June survey was carried out under 100% cloud, the rest of the surveys were clear or mainly sunny.

13 species were recorded during the year, in similar or greater numbers than in 2013 (reflecting the better weather in spring and early summer).

### Species recorded for the first time in 2014:

Small Red-eyed Damselfly	Four-spotted Chaser
Broad-bodied Chaser	Southern Hawker

### Species recorded in previous years but not recorded in 2014:

Large Red Damselfly	Ruddy Darter
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### Species showing evidence of possible or probable breeding:

Banded Demoiselle	Red-eyed Damselfly
Common Blue Damselfly	Brown Hawker
Emperor Dragonfly	Four-spotted Chaser
Black-tailed Skimmer	Common Darter

No exuvia were recorded this year. However teneral of three species were found indicating possible breeding on the site in previous years where larvae have not been washed away by the winter floods. The amount of emergent vegetation is increasing, which will further improve the breeding potential.

### The following species were recorded in 2014:

**Banded Demoiselle.** Max count 135. Occurs in grass alongside river on south side of the island and along the canal towpath. Breeding (coupled pairs) observed.

**Red-eyed Damselfly.** Max count 71, mainly on the lakes where they are attempting to breed (coupled pairs present). The occasional one is also found on the canal.

**Small Red-eyed Damselfly.** 5 recorded on the August survey on floating vegetation on the eastern lake. This species was first recorded in Berkshire in 2005 and has since been recorded on a number of sites scattered across the county.

**Common Blue Damselfly.** Max count 508, often with more flying over the lake. Mainly found on the lakes and in the grass on the island with some also occurring along the canal towpath. Coupled pairs were recorded on the eastern lake. Teneral were also recorded, but it is not possible to tell whether they emerged from the lakes on site or from a nearby site.

**Blue-tailed Damselfly.** Max count of 11, both on the lakes and along the canal towpath.

**Brown Hawker.** Max count of 6. Occurs on both the island and the adjoining canal, probably moving between the different habitats. One coupled pair recorded along the canal.

**Migrant Hawker.** Max count 5. Occurs on both the island and the adjoining canal, probably moving between the different habitats.

**Southern Hawker.** 2 recorded along the canal on the September survey

**Emperor Dragonfly.** Max count 7. Occurs on both the island and the adjoining canal, probably moving between the different habitats. One egg-laying female recorded.

**Four-spotted Chaser.** 2 recorded on the June survey, including an egg-laying female.

**Broad-bodied Chaser.** 3 recorded on the July survey.

**Black-tailed Skimmer.** Max count 25, mostly on or around the lakes but with a few on the canal towpath. Often seen at rest on the gravel path through the site. Teneral, coupled pairs and egg-laying females recorded.

**Common Darter.** Maximum count 16, mostly on or around the lakes but with a few on the canal towpath. Often seen at rest on the gravel paths. Teneral and coupled pairs present.

I led a dragonfly walk on 6<sup>th</sup> July, which was attended by 3 other people.

Mike Turton  
16<sup>th</sup> September 2014

## **Fobney Butterfly Monitoring**

To be added.

Table 2 **Fobney: Bird species recorded January- December 2014<sup>1</sup>**

<i>Total species recorded</i>		85	<i>Total confirmed breeding</i>		9
			<i>Total probable breeding</i>		19
<b>Species</b>		<b>Breeding code</b>	<b>Species</b>		<b>Breeding code</b>
Mute Swan	●	ON	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	●	
Greylag Goose	●		Skylark	●	
Canada Goose	●	FL	Sand Martin	●	
Egyptian Goose	●		Swallow	●	
Mandarin Duck	●		House Martin	●	
Gadwall	●		Meadow Pipit	●	
Teal	●	T	Grey Wagtail	●	FL
Mallard	●		Pied-White Wagtail	●	P
Shoveler	●	FL	Wren	●	T
Pochard	●	P	Duncock	●	T
Tufted Duck	●		Robin	●	T
Pheasant	●		Blackbird	●	T
Great-crested Grebe	●	T	Nightingale	●	
Little Grebe	●		Fieldfare	●	
Cormorant	●		Song Thrush	●	T
Little Egret	●		Redwing	●	
Grey Heron	●		Mistle Thrush	●	
Red Kite	●		Sedge Warbler	●	T
Buzzard	●		Blackcap	●	
Sparrowhawk	●		Garden Warbler	●	T
Kestrel	●		Whitethroat	●	FL
Hobby	●		Chiffchaff	●	T
Water Rail	●		Willow Warbler	●	
Moorhen	●	P	Goldcrest	●	T
Coot	●	ON	Long-tailed Tit	●	FL
Redshank	●		Blue Tit	●	FL
Little Ringed Plover	●		Great Tit	●	FL
Lapwing	●	T	Treecreeper	●	
Common Sandpiper	●		Jay	●	
Green Sandpiper	●		Magpie	●	
Black-headed Gull	●		Rook	●	
Lesser Black-backed Gull	●		Carrion Crow	●	
Herring Gull	●		Starling	●	
Common Tern	●		Chaffinch	●	T
Feral Pigeon	●		Greenfinch	●	T
Stock Dove	●	T	Goldfinch	●	T
Woodpigeon	●	T	Siskin	●	
Collared Dove	●		Linnet	●	
Swift	●		Bullfinch	●	
Kingfisher	●		Reed Bunting	●	FF
Green Woodpecker	●				
Great Spotted Woodpecker	●				

<sup>1</sup>Area includes the canal banks and the woodland and scrub strip on the S bank of the river between Fobney Lock and the labyrinth weir.

Table 3 **Fobney Island SU7071 Plant Survey 8 August 2014**

By David Morris, Renee Grayer and John Lerpiniere

<b>Scientific name</b>	<b>English name</b>
<i>Achillea millefolium</i> *	Yarrow
<i>Achillea ptarmica</i> *	Sneezewort
<i>Agrostis capillaris</i> *	Common Bent
<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	Creeping Bent
<i>Alisma plantago-aquatica</i>	Water-plantain
<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	Alder
<i>Alopecurus geniculatus</i>	Marsh Foxtail
<i>Anisantha sterilis</i>	Barren Brome
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow Parsley
<i>Apium nodiflorum</i>	Fool's Water-cress
<i>Arctium minus</i>	Lesser Burdock
<i>Artemisia vulgaris</i>	Mugwort
<i>Atriplex prostrata</i>	Spear-leaved Orache
<i>Barbarea vulgaris</i>	Winter-cress
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Daisy
<i>Bidens cernua</i>	Nodding Bur-marigold
<i>Bidens tripartita</i>	Trifid Bur-marigold
<i>Buddleja davidii</i>	Butterfly-bush
<i>Butomus umbellatus</i>	Flowering-rush
<i>Calystegia sepium</i>	Hedge Bindweed
<i>Carex acutiformis</i>	Lesser Pond-sedge
<i>Carex flacca</i>	Glaucus Sedge
<i>Carex hirta</i>	Hairy Sedge
<i>Carex riparia</i>	Greater Pond-sedge
<i>Centaurea nigra ssp. nigra</i> *	Common Knapweed
<i>Chenopodium album</i> agg.	Fat-hen
<i>Chenopodium ficifolium</i>	Fig-leaved Goosefoot
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping Thistle
<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Spear Thistle
<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>	Field Bindweed
<i>Conyza canadensis</i>	Canadian Fleabane
<i>Conyza sumatrensis</i>	Jersey Fleabane
<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	Dogwood
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn
<i>Crepis capillaris</i>	Smooth Hawk's-beard
<i>Daucus carota ssp. carota</i>	Wild Carrot
<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i> *	Tufted Hair-grass
<i>Dipsacus fullonum sensu lato</i>	Teasel
<i>Eleocharis palustris</i>	Common Spike-rush
<i>Elodea canadensis</i>	Canadian Waterweed
<i>Elytrichia repens</i>	Common Couch
<i>Epilobium ciliatum</i>	American Willowherb
<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>	Great Willowherb
<i>Epilobium montanum</i>	Broad-leaved Willowherb
<i>Equisetum arvense</i>	Field Horsetail
<i>Eupatorium cannabinum</i> *	Hemp-agrimony

<i>Festuca rubra</i> *	Red Fescue
<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i> *	Meadowsweet
<i>Galium album</i>	Upright Hedge-bedstraw
<i>Galium verum</i> *	Lady's Bedstraw
<i>Geranium molle</i>	Dove's-foot Crane's-bill
<i>Geranium pyrenaicum</i>	Hedgerow Crane's-bill
<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>	Ground-ivy
<i>Glyceria fluitans</i>	Floating Sweet-grass
<i>Glyceria maxima</i>	Reed Sweet-grass
<i>Gnaphalium uliginosum</i>	Marsh Cudweed
<i>Helminthotheca echioides</i>	Bristly Oxtongue
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed
<i>Hordeum murinum ssp. murinum</i>	Wall Barley
<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	Cat's-ear
<i>Humulus lupulus</i>	Hop
<i>Hypericum tetrapterum</i>	Square-stalked St John's-wort
<i>Impatiens capensis</i>	Orange Balsam
<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>	Indian Balsam
<i>Iris pseudacorus</i> *	Yellow Iris
<i>Juncus articulatus</i>	Jointed Rush
<i>Juncus effusus</i>	Soft-rush
<i>Juncus inflexus</i>	Hard-rush
<i>Lamium album</i>	White Dead-nettle
<i>Lapsana communis ssp. communis</i>	Nipplewort
<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>	Meadow Vetchling
<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	Oxeye Daisy
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial Rye-grass
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i> *	Common Bird's-foot-trefoil
<i>Lotus pedunculatus</i> *	Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil
<i>Lycopus europaeus</i> *	Gypsywort
<i>Lysimachia nummularia</i>	Creeping Jenny
<i>Lythrum salicaria</i> *	Purple-loosestrife
<i>Malus pumila</i>	Apple
<i>Malva sylvestris</i>	Common Mallow
<i>Medicago lupulina</i>	Black Medick
<i>Mentha aquatica</i>	Water Mint
<i>Myosotis scorpioides</i>	Water Forget-me-not
<i>Myosoton aquaticum</i>	Water Chickweed
<i>Odontites vernus</i>	Red Bartsia
<i>Oenanthe crocata</i>	Hemlock Water-dropwort
<i>Persicaria amphibia</i>	Amphibious Bistort
<i>Persicaria lapathifolia</i>	Pale Persicaria
<i>Persicaria maculosa</i>	Redshank
<i>Petasites hybridus</i>	Butterbur
<i>Phalaris arundinacea</i>	Reed Canary-grass
<i>Phleum bertolonii</i> *	Smaller Cat's-tail
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i> *	Ribwort Plantain
<i>Plantago major</i>	Greater Plantain
<i>Poa annua</i>	Annual Meadow-grass
<i>Polygonum aviculare</i>	Knotgrass



<i>Populus alba</i>	White Poplar
<i>Populus tremula</i>	Aspen
<i>Potentilla reptans</i>	Creeping Cinquefoil
<i>Prunella vulgaris*</i>	Selfheal
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn
<i>Pulicaria dysenterica</i>	Common Fleabane
<i>Ranunculus acris*</i>	Meadow Buttercup
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup
<i>Ranunculus sceleratus</i>	Celery-leaved Buttercup
<i>Rhinanthus minor*</i>	Yellow-rattle
<i>Rorippa palustris</i>	Marsh Yellow-cress
<i>Rorippa sylvestris</i>	Creeping Yellow-cress
<i>Rosa canina</i>	Dog-rose
<i>Rubus caesius</i>	Dewberry
<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	Bramble
<i>Rumex conglomeratus</i>	Clustered Dock
<i>Rumex crispus</i>	Curled Dock
<i>Rumex hydrolapathum</i>	Water Dock
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad-leaved Dock
<i>Rumex palustris</i>	Marsh Dock
<i>Salix caprea</i>	Goat Willow
<i>Salix fragilis agg.</i>	Crack Willow
<i>Scrophularia auriculata*</i>	Water Figwort
<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	Common Ragwort
<i>Senecio viscosus</i>	Sticky Groundsel
<i>Solanum dulcamara</i>	Bittersweet
<i>Sonchus arvensis</i>	Perennial Sow-thistle
<i>Sonchus asper</i>	Prickly Sow-thistle
<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>	Smooth Sow-thistle
<i>Sparganium emersum</i>	Unbranched Bur-reed
<i>Sparganium erectum</i>	Branched Bur-reed
<i>Stachys palustris</i>	Marsh Woundwort
<i>Symphytum officinale</i>	Common Comfrey
<i>Taraxacum agg.</i>	Common Dandelion
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red Clover
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White Clover
<i>Tripleurospermum inodorum</i>	Scentless Mayweed
<i>Tussilago farfara</i>	Colt's-foot
<i>Typha latifolia</i>	Bulrush
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Common Nettle
<i>Veronica anagallis-aquatica</i>	Blue water-speedwell
<i>Veronica beccabunga</i>	Brooklime
<i>Veronica catenata</i>	Pink Water-speedwell
<i>Veronica x lackschewitzii</i>	Hybrid Blue and Pink Water-speedwell
<i>Vicia cracca*</i>	Tufted Vetch

\* meadow species sown in 2012