

# Fobney Island Monitoring Summary 2015

Renton Righelato January 2016

The monitoring arrangements are summarised in Table 1. Butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies and birds have been reported for 2014. The RDNHS restarted their plant surveying in August 2014 and continued in 2015. A bat survey was carried out by Giles Sutton but we have no other mammal surveys.

2015 was a relatively dry year, with water levels falling steadily in the main pool and the scrapes drying almost completely by autumn. A low Willow layer developed around the scrapes from the flailed off stools from 2014. The dense cover again made the west end unattractive to ground-nesting waders and low water levels may have contributed to low numbers of dragonflies and damselflies. However, the meadow and marshy scrapes produced an excellent range of plant species, a total of 198 taxa being recorded (including hybrids and subspecies). Three interesting rare species were golden dock *Rumex maritimus*, nodding bur-marigold *Bidens cernua* and orange foxtail *Alopecurus aequalis*. The last has not been seen in Berkshire for decades, while there are very few records for golden dock. These species are associated with the muddy, seasonally inundated edges of waterbodies, and the scrapes created at Fobney provide the perfect habitat.

**Table 1: Fobney monitoring summary: January-December 2015**

Taxa	By whom	Frequency	Comments
<b>Birds</b>	Renton Righelato et al. / BOC	Approx. Monthly casual recording.	Casual coverage of island + towpath + south bank of river. 88 species in 2015. <b>Breeding:</b> Although Little Ringed Plover was briefly present during the breeding season there was no evidence of breeding. Gadwall and Shoveler were present early in the breeding season, though there was no evidence of breeding,. Hobbies were seen feeding. A Cetti's Warbler was singing on the canal for much of the year, a new species for the site. A male Barn Owl was using one of the owl boxes on the south bank. <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>Passage:</b> Garganey (April), Dartford Warbler and Short-eared Owl (November) were new species for the island.
<b>Bats</b>	Giles Sutton (RBC)		A single monitoring survey in August found five species of bat, though rather low numbers.
<b>Butterflies</b>	John Lerpiniere	Fortnightly in summer Started	Data entered into Transect Walker for the national Butterfly Monitoring Scheme. Although more individuals were recorded than in 2014, a cool Spring and Summer kept numbers low in 2015
<b>Dragonflies, damselflies</b>	Mike Turton	Started. Monthly from end April to late September,	Six species of damselfly and six dragonflies were recorded, though numbers were low due perhaps in part to low temperatures and lack of emergent vegetation..
<b>River fly monitoring</b>	R&DAA/Graham Scholey	Annual?	No data for 2015
<b>Plants</b>	RDNHS	Approximately 6 weekly in Spring/Autumn	198 taxa recorded from August 2014 to October 2015.

## Fobney Island Botanical Study 2014-2015

David Morris, November 2015

The flora of Fobney Island was surveyed on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2014 and again over several visits from May to July 2015. It had been my intention to map habitats and assign them to NVC communities, but other commitments prevented my completing this design.

In total 198 plant taxa (species, hybrids etc.) were found, a list of which is appended. Included are nine locally rare or scarce species and listed on the Berkshire and South Oxfordshire Rare Plants Register (Crawley, 2005). These are discussed below. For such a small area, 198 is a large number of species, reflecting the diversity of habitats seen on the island. More surely remain to be found, though they are likely only to be common or ruderal species.

Parts of the island were sown to create new wet meadow and riparian habitat. A list of species included in the mixes used was provided to me. Almost all of the species used in the mix can be found somewhere on the island. Many of these could have arisen naturally from the seed bank or have been carried in on flood water from the river, as indeed must have the species not specified in any of the seed mixes.

### **Rare Plants**

Great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis* is a rare plant in Berkshire (Crawley, 2005), but as it appears on the wet meadow seed mix species list it must be regarded as an introduction to Fobney Island. The remaining eight locally rare species, however, are not included in any of the seed mixes.

The three most interesting of the rare species are golden dock *Rumex maritimus*, nodding bur-marigold *Bidens cernua* and orange foxtail *Alopecurus aequalis*. The latter has not been seen in Berkshire for decades, while there are very few records for golden dock. These species are associated with the muddy, seasonally inundated edges of waterbodies, and the scrapes created at Fobney provide the perfect habitat.

Flowering rush *Butomus umbellatus*, perfoliate pondweed *Potamogeton perfoliatus* and lesser pondweed *P. pusillus* are aquatic plants. Small pondweed is a characteristic species of newly created water bodies, and is found in abundance with the alien Nuttall's waterweed *Elodea nuttallii* in the main scrape/pool. The other pondweed is found in silt banked up against the wall of the canal lock. Flowering rush is frequent with water plantain *Alisma plantago-aquatica* around the western-most scrape on the island.

The remaining two species are of least interest. Rye brome *Bromus secalinus* was once a frequent agricultural weed and is now rather scarce in the county. It is not a natural part of any of the vegetation types found on the island and is unlikely to persist. Sweet-briar *Rosa rubiginosa* is a characteristic plant of scrub and hedges on chalky soils, and in Berks is therefore confined mostly to the north-western parts of the county. However, it is increasingly planted in new hedges and is easily spread by birds. The individual at Fobney was presumably introduced in such a manner as it did not appear to be planted.

The hybrid *Veronica x lackschewtizii* between the blue and pink water-speedwells (*V. anagalis-aquatica* and *V. catenata*, respectively) was also found in some numbers on Fobney. It is considered a rare plant in Berkshire by Crawley, but it may simply be mistaken for either of its parents. In any case, the size of hybrid population is an interesting feature of Fobney.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Distribution	Comment
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	yarrow		
<i>Achillea ptarmica</i>	sneezewort		
<i>Agrimonia eupatoria</i>	agrimony		
<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 aequalis</i>	orange foxtail	Many plants at SU7008971133	RPR, thought extinct in Berks
<i>Alopecurus geniculatus</i>	marsh foxtail		
<i>Angelica sylvestris</i>	angelica		
<i>Anisantha sterilis</i>	barren brome		
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	cow parsley		
<i>Apium nodiflorum</i>	fool's watercress		
<i>Arctium lappa</i>	greater burdock		
<i>Arctium minus</i>	lesser burdock		
<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	false oat-grass		
<i>Artemisia vulgaris</i>	mugwort		
<i>Atriplex prostrata</i>	spear-leaved orache		
<i>Avena fatua</i>	wild oat		
<i>Barbarea vulgaris</i>	common winter-cress		
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	daisy		
<i>Bidens cernua</i>	nodding bur-marigold	Frequent around the western-most scrape	RPR
<i>Bidens tripartita</i>	trifid bur-marigold		
<i>Bromus hordeaceus</i>	soft brome		
<i>Bromus secalinus</i>	rye brome	Two plants with other arable grasses at SU7026071134	RPR; casual
<i>Buddleja davidii</i>	buddleja		
<i>Butomus umbellatus</i>	flowering rush	Frequent around the western-most scrape	RPR
<i>Calystegia sepium</i>	bindweed		
<i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>	shepard's purse		
<i>Carduus crispus</i>	welted thistle		
<i>Carduus nutans</i>	musk thistle		
<i>Carex acutiformis</i>	lesser pond-sedge		
<i>Carex flacca</i>	glaucous sedge		
<i>Carex hirta</i>	hairy sedge		
<i>Carex otrubae</i>	false fox-sedge		
<i>Carex riparia</i>	greater pond-sedge		
<i>Centaurea nigra subsp. nigra</i>	black knapweed		
<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	common mouseear		
<i>Chenopodium album</i>	fat hen		
<i>Chenopodium rubrum</i>	red goosefoot		

Scientific Name	Common Name	Distribution	Comment
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	creeping thistle		
<i>Cirsium palustre</i>	marsh thistle		
<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	spear thistle		
<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>	field bindweed		
<i>Conyza canadensis</i>	Canadian fleabane		
<i>Conyza sumatrensis</i>	Guernsey fleabane		
<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	dogwood		
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	hawthorn		
<i>Crepis capillaris</i>	smooth hawksbeard		
<i>Crepis vesicaria</i>	beaked hawksbeard		
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	cocksfoot		
<i>Daucus carota subsp. carota</i>	wild carrot		
<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>	tufted hair-grass		
<i>Dipsacus fullonum</i>	teasle		
<i>Eleocharis palustris</i>	common spike-rush		
<i>Elodea nuttallii</i>	Nuttall's water-weed		
<i>Elytrigia repens</i>	couch grass		
<i>Epilobium ciliatum</i>	American willowherb		
<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>	great willowherb		
<i>Epilobium montanum</i>	broad-leaved willow-herb		
<i>Equisetum arvense</i>	field horsetail		
<i>Equisetum fluviatile</i>	water horsetail		
<i>Equisetum palustre</i>	marsh horsetail		
<i>Eupatorium cannabinum</i>	hemp agrimony		
<i>Festuca rubra</i>	red fescue		
<i>Filago vulgaris</i>	common cudweed		
<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>	meadowsweet		
<i>Galium album</i>	hedge bedstraw		
<i>Galium aparine</i>	cleavers		
<i>Galium verum</i>	lady's bedstraw		
<i>Geranium dissectum</i>	cut-leaved cranesbill		
<i>Geranium molle</i>	doves cranesbill		
<i>Geranium pratense</i>	meadow cranesbill		
<i>Geranium pyrenaicum</i>	hedge cranesbill		
<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>Hedera helix</i>	ivy		
<i>Helminthotheca echioides</i>	prickly ox-tongue		
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	hogweed		
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire fog		
<i>Hordeum murinum subsp. murinum</i>	wall barley		
<i>Hordeum secalinum</i>	meadow barley		
<i>Humulus lupulus</i>	hops		
<i>Hypericum tetrapterum</i>	square-stemmed St John's wort		
<i>Hypochoeris radicata</i>	cats ear		
<i>Impatiens capensis</i>	orange balsam		
<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>	Himalayan balsam		

Scientific Name	Common Name	Distribution	Comment
<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>Knautia arvensis</i>	field scabious		
<i>Lactuca serriola</i>	prickly lettuce		
<i>Lamium album</i>	white deadnettle		
<i>Lapsana communis</i>	nipplewort		
<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>	meadow vetchling		
<i>Lepidium draba</i>	hoary cress		
<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	oxeye daisy		
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	perennial rye-grass		
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	birds-foot-trefoil		
<i>Lotus pedunculatus</i>	greater birds-foot-trefoil		
<i>Lycopus europaeus</i>	gypsywort		
<i>Lysimachia nummularia</i>	creeping jenny		
<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>	purple loosestrife		
<i>Malus pumila</i>	cultivated apple		
<i>Malva moschata</i>	musk mallow		
<i>Matricaria discoidea</i>	pineapple weed		
<i>Medicago lupulina</i>	black medick		
<i>Melilotus albus</i>	white melilot		
<i>Melilotus officinalis</i>	common melilot		
<i>Mentha aquatica</i>	water mint		
<i>Mentha arvensis</i>	corn 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>	lesser cats-tail grass		
<i>Phleum pratense</i>	Timothy grass		
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	ribwort plantain		
<i>Plantago major</i>	greater plantain		
<i>Poa annua</i>	annual meadow grass		
<i>Poa trivialis</i>	rough meadow grass		
<i>Polygonum aviculare</i>	knotgrass		
<i>Polypogon monspeliensis</i>	annual beard grass		
<i>Populus alba</i>	white poplar		
<i>Populus tremula</i>	aspen		
<i>Potamogeton pectinatus</i>	fennel-leaved pondweed		
<i>Potamogeton perfoliatus</i>	perfoliate pondweed	By the canal lock	RPR
<i>Potamogeton pusillus</i>	lesser pondweed	In the main scrape with <i>Elodea</i>	RPR
<i>Potentilla reptans</i>	cinquefoil		

Scientific Name	Common Name	Distribution	Comment
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	self-heal		
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	blackthorn		
<i>Pulicaria dysenterica</i>	fleabane		
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	meadow buttercup		
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	creeping buttercup		
<i>Ranunculus sceleratus</i>	celery-leaved buttercup		
<i>Reseda luteola</i>	weld		
<i>Rhinanthus minor</i>	yellow rattle		
<i>Rorippa amphibia</i>	great yellow-cress		
<i>Rorippa palustris</i>	marsh yellow-cress		
<i>Rosa canina</i>	common dog rose	In hedge & along fence	RPR as data deficient; some planted
<i>Rosa rubiginosa</i>	sweet briar		RPR; if not planted, then likely a bird-sown garden plant
<i>Rubus caesius</i>	dewberry		
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	bramble		
<i>Rumex conglomeratus</i>	clustered dock		
<i>Rumex crispus</i>	curled dock		
<i>Rumex hydrolapathum</i>	water dock		
<i>Rumex maritimus</i>	golden dock	Frequent around scrapes in the western, e.g. at SU70067113	RPR
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	broad-leaved dock		
<i>Sagittaria sagittifolia</i>	arrow root		
<i>Salix caprea</i>	goat willow		
<i>Salix cinerea</i> subsp. <i>oleifolia</i>	rusty willow		
<i>Salix fragilis</i>	crack willow		
<i>Salix viminalis</i>	osier		
<i>Salix x reichardtii</i>	hybrid willow		
<i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>	great burnet	Scattered across western half, e.g. three plants at SU7021671093	RPR, but likely sown
<i>Schedonorus arundinaceus</i>	tall fescue		
<i>Scrophularia auriculata</i>	water figwort		
<i>Senecio erucifolius</i>	hoary ragwort		
<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	ragwort		
<i>Senecio vulgaris</i>	groundsel		
<i>Silene dioica</i>	red campion		
<i>Silene flos-cuculi</i>	ragged robin		
<i>Sisymbrium officinale</i>	hedge mustard		
<i>Solanum dulcamara</i>	bittersweet		
<i>Sonchus arvensis</i>	field sowthistle		
<i>Sonchus asper</i>	prickly sowthistle		
<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>	smooth sowthistle		
<i>Sparganium emersum</i>	unbranched bur-reed		
<i>Sparganium erectum</i>	branched bur-reed		

Scientific Name	Common Name	Distribution	Comment
<i>Stachys palustris</i>	marsh woundwort		
<i>Symphytum officinale</i>	comfrey		
<i>Symphytum x uplandicum</i>	Russian comfrey		
<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> agg.	dandelion		
<i>Trifolium dubium</i>	lesser trefoil		
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	red clover		
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	white clover		
<i>Tripleurospermum inodorum</i>	scentless mayweed		
<i>Triticum aestivum</i>	bread wheat		
<i>Tussilago farfara</i>	coltsfoot		
<i>Typha latifolia</i>	reedmace		
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	stinging nettle		
<i>Valeriana officinalis</i>	valerian		
<i>Valerianella locusta</i>	common cornsalad		
<i>Veronica anagallis-aquatica</i>	blue water-speedwell		
<i>Veronica arvensis</i>	wall speedwell		
<i>Veronica beccabunga</i>	brooklime		
<i>Veronica catenata</i>	pink water-speedwell		
<i>Veronica x lackschewitzii</i>	hybrid water-speedwell		RPR
<i>Vicia cracca</i>	tufted vetch		
<i>Vicia sativa</i> ssp <i>segetalis</i>	common vetch		

RPR: Berkshire and South Oxfordshire Rare Plant Register (Crawley, M., BSBI, 2005)

# Odonata, Orthoptera, Reptiles: Fobney Monitoring 2015

Mike turton

## Dragonflies

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
- In addition, 2 surveys (May and June) were carried out along the path on the south bank of the R. Kennet.

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.

Five surveys were carried out in 2015: 13<sup>th</sup> May, 11<sup>th</sup> June, 9<sup>th</sup> July, 11<sup>th</sup> August and 10<sup>th</sup> September. Apart from the May survey, when the temperature was 16°C, all surveys were carried out when the temperature was 17°C or above and wind was F3 or less. Cloud cover varied – the August survey was carried out under 100% cloud, the rest of the surveys were clear or mainly sunny.

12 species were recorded during the year. Numbers for most species were down this year; the exceptions were Migrant Hawker, Broad-bodied Chaser and Blue-tailed Damselfly which were stable and Common Blue Damselfly with an increased count.

There was no floating vegetation present this year until the water levels dropped so far that submerged vegetation was above the surface. The drop in water levels also meant that all plants which could be used by emerging dragonflies were some distance from the edge of the water.

### Species recorded on survey for the first time in 2015:

Beautiful Demoiselle (although this species has been recorded previously by John Lepiniere)

### Species recorded in previous years but not recorded in 2015:

Small Red-eyed Damselfly, Ruddy Darter, Southern Hawker

### Species showing evidence of breeding:

Common Blue Damselfly (probable breeding)

Broad-bodied Chaser (possible breeding)

Black-tailed Skimmer (confirmed breeding)

Common Darter (probable breeding)

### The following species were recorded in 2015:

**Beautiful Demoiselle** (*Calopteryx virgo*). Recorded at the western end of the island by the gate on the towpath and on the southern bank of the river. This species seems to prefer the shady spots near fast running water such as the weir and the riffles in the river. Maximum counts were in May with 12 on the south bank and 8 on the island.

**Banded Demoiselle** (*Calopteryx splendens*). Lower numbers than the previous two years with a maximum count of 60 in July. Normally plentiful along the southern edge of the island, but the maximum number seen there this year was just 18. Also occurs along the canal towpath – maximum count there this year was



42. No breeding observed. It may be that the dip in numbers this year is fairly general and not specific to Fobney.

**Large Red Damselfly** (*Pyrrhosoma nymphula*). A single record of one adult in May. Based on the data from the last two years, I presume that this species is not yet resident on the island and that this is a visitor from elsewhere.

**Red-eyed Damselfly** (*Erythromma najas*). Very low maximum count of 13 in May, all on the canal. This species likes to perch on floating vegetation and there was none this year on any of the lakes on the island. The only records from the island were one in June perched on a floating plastic bag and three in August perched on vegetation exposed by the very low water levels.

**Common Blue Damselfly** (*Enallagma cyathigerum*). Maximum count 660 (up on 2014), 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. Teneral and breeding pairs were recorded, so it is probable that it is breeding on the island.

**Blue-tailed Damselfly** (*Ischnura elegans*). 10 recorded in July on the lakes and along the canal towpath. This was the only survey when they were found.

**Brown Hawker** (*Aeshna grandis*). Two adults recorded in July hawking over the island and the canal. This was the only record.

**Migrant Hawker** (*Aeshna mixta*). Maximum count 4. Occurs on both the island and the adjoining canal, probably moving between the different habitats.

**Emperor Dragonfly** (*Anax imperator*). Maximum count 3, all on the island. No breeding observed.

**Broad-bodied Chaser** (*Libellula depressa*). Recorded in May, June and July. Maximum count was two – a breeding pair was seen in both May and June.

**Black-tailed Skimmer** (*Orthetrum cancellatum*). Surprisingly few with a maximum count of 9 – well down on 2014. Mostly occurs on or around the lakes but with a few on the canal towpath, they are often seen at rest on the gravel paths. This species is confirmed breeding in the eastern lake - one was found emerging (in the rain) during the dragonfly walk in June, four other exuvia were found on the same day and teneral were observed on two other occasions.

**Common Darter** (*Sympetrum striolatum*). Lower numbers than in the last two years with a maximum count of just 8. These were mostly on or around the lakes, but with a few on the canal towpath. They are often seen at rest on the gravel paths. Breeding observed with one female egg-laying, but no teneral present.

I led a dragonfly walk on 28<sup>th</sup> June, which was attended by 16 other people. The walk was advertised on BDS website, Freegle events page and Friends of Fobney Facebook page, all of which attracted people. Unfortunately the weather was pretty poor: warm but cloudy with rain setting in shortly after the start. The highlight was finding an emergent Black-tailed Skimmer on low vegetation about 6ft from the water. The only other dragonfly was about six Common Blue Damselflies. Other species found during the morning included a Puss Moth caterpillar on some of the willow by the eastern lake and a Scarlet Tiger Moth by the bridge at the eastern end. Everyone had good views of both, which partly made up for the disappointing dragonfly count.

## Reptiles

Fourteen squares of roofing felt (0.5m x 0.5m) were put out on the island, mainly along the reserve side of the scrub between the reserve and the canal towpath, but with one on the edge of the eastern lake and 3 at the western end of the island (see maps below), 2 of which were by the straw bales. Felts 1-10 were put out on 10<sup>th</sup> April and felts 11-14 on 22<sup>nd</sup> April. Monitoring visits commenced on 22<sup>nd</sup> April. Apart from July, when there was only one visit, the felts were checked twice a month. Visits were normally late afternoon, although there were also two mid-morning visits. As the summer progressed, some felts were not checked every time as they could not be found in the long vegetation; in particular felts 7 & 8. The felts were removed on 7<sup>th</sup> October.

Grass Snake (*Natrix natrix*) was recorded on three occasions; twice there was a single adult under or near felt 6 and once when two (a female and a male or sub-adult) were found under felt 11. Slow Worm (*Anguis fragilis*) was recorded on 12 occasions. All records came from the felts along the boundary. Felts 4 and 5 were the most popular, with up to five slow worms under each. The maximum total number recorded on a single visit was eight. There is a breeding population present on the island with males, females and juveniles (including some born this year) all present. There were no records of reptiles from the western end of the reserve or from the single felt (7) on the edge of the eastern lake.



The picture shows locations for Slow Worms (red circles) and Grass Snake (green circles). Thanks are due to Malcolm & Elaine Butler for helping with the survey and to John Lerpiniere for his records.

## Orthoptera

No formal survey was carried out. However a bat detector was used on 10<sup>th</sup> September to check for the presence of grasshoppers and crickets. I hope to carry out a proper survey in 2016. The following species were recorded:

- Dark Bush Cricket (*Pholidoptera griseoaptera*). Single record
- Roesel's Bush-cricket (*Metrioptera roeselii*). Common
- Long-winged Cone-head (*Conocephalus fuscus*). Common

## Mammals

Small mammal nests/runs were found under reptile felt 7 by the eastern lake and a vole (species not recorded) was found under felt 14 at the western end. A small mammal (probably a vole sp) was seen on 7<sup>th</sup> October.

Five Barn Owl pellets found beneath a Barn Owl box on the south shore at SU702710 were examined by John Lerpiniere to determine what the owl had been feeding on. The usual diet is said to be mostly Field Voles but a variety of skulls were found including four Field Voles, two Bank Voles, two Common Shrews and one Pygmy Shrew. No bird skulls were found nor evidence of any other creatures.

A single August survey recorded Common and Soprano Pipistrelle, Noctual, Daubentons and Serotine bats.

## The Butterflies of Fobney

John Lerpiniere

### UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (UKBMS)

A survey of butterflies on Fobney Island and the land to the south is carried out each year weekly for 26 weeks starting on 1<sup>st</sup> April and finishing towards the end of September. Results contribute to the UKBMS and are used alongside the BTO's Breeding Bird Survey to inform the state of the natural environment. A transect route is mapped and marked in sections which ideally indicate the different habitats encountered. Thus the condition of the habitat can be monitored for suitability for butterflies and this was the aim of the original scheme 'Transect Walker'. Results are useful indicators of climate change over the long term but numbers of butterflies fluctuate greatly between both species and years in the short term.

The route is walked and all butterflies counted in a five metre tunnel, that is, five metres ahead and two and a half metres each side of the route. The walk has to take place in acceptable weather conditions outlined in the scheme though results of walks in poorer conditions can be entered but are of limited value. The route followed at Fobney is divided into five sections of which only section 2 is on the island itself because of the need to avoid sensitive bird habitat through the breeding season. Moths, day-flying or disturbed, were also counted but inconsistently.

### Results

2012 – Results were modest most butterflies being found on the land to the south along the sunny wood edge bordering the grassland. On the island the flowers were yet to become established so few butterflies were attracted.

2013 - An excellent year nationally, one of the best ever, so butterfly numbers were good. In addition there was a welcome profusion of flowering plants on the island attracting a number of species. A total of 91 Common Blues in section 2 compares with 23 in 2014 and 16 in 2015 although 2013 was an exceptional year for this species for other reasons. Meadow Browns 180 compared with 9 and 97, and Small Tortoiseshell 26 compared with 13 and 16. Sixteen species were recorded on the island.

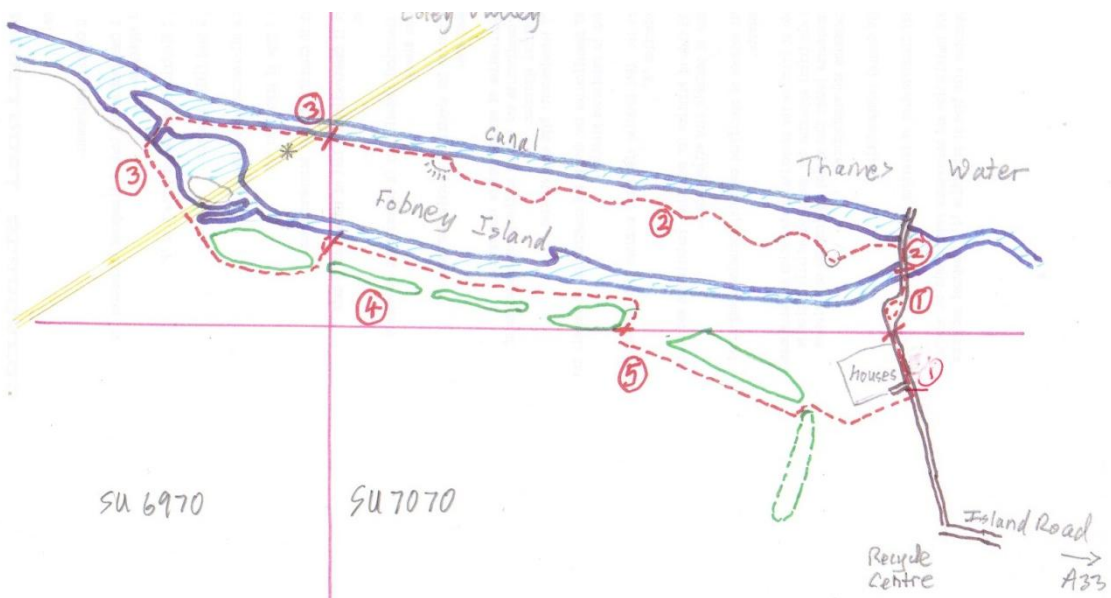
2014 – Unfortunately flowering plants were disappointing compared with the previous year with coarse grasses dominating much of section 2. This, in addition to poor weather, led to lower numbers of butterflies on the island. Nationally it was a poorer than average year, although better than 2012, and numbers across the whole transect reflected this. Brimstone and Orange Tip appeared on the island indicating a better spring than the previous year. Fourteen species.

2015 – A somewhat more productive year than 2014, but a cool Spring and Summer delayed flowering of many plants. Brown Argus and Painted Lady were new species for the island. Fifteen species.

## Fobney Transect Results Section 2 - Fobney Island

		2013	2014	2015
Small Skipper	<i>Thymelicus sylvestris</i>	18	16	12
Essex Skipper	<i>Thymelicus lineola</i>	14	6	7
Large Skipper	<i>Ochlodes sylvanus</i>	2	1	4
Clouded Yellow	<i>Colias croceus</i>	4		
Brimstone	<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>		9	6
Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>	10		3
Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>	30	3	11
Green-veined White	<i>Pieris napi</i>	17	10	8
Orange-tip	<i>Anthocharis cardamines</i>		1	
Small Copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>	3		
Brown Argus	<i>Aricia agestis</i>			1
Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>	91	23	16
Holly Blue	<i>Celastrina argiolus</i>			
Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atlanta</i>	1	4	
Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>			1
Small Tortoiseshell	<i>Aglais urticae</i>	26	13	16
Peacock	<i>Agais io</i>	6	9	12
Comma	<i>Polygonia c-album</i>	1		
Speckled Wood	<i>Parage aegeria</i>			
Gatekeeper	<i>Pyronia tithonus</i>	30	3	29
Meadow Brown	<i>Maniola jurtina</i>	180	9	97
Ringlet	<i>Aphantopus hyperantus</i>	9	2	8
Small Heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>			
<b>Total individuals</b>		<b>440</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>Species</b>		<b>16</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>

Species list includes all butterflies found on whole transect



Bird species recorded 2012-2015 <sup>1</sup>	2015	Breeding	Bird species recorded 2012-2015 <sup>1</sup>	2015	Breeding
Mute Swan	●	FL	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker		
Greylag Goose	●	FL	Skylark	●	
Canada Goose	●	FL	Sand Martin	●	
Egyptian Goose	●		Swallow	●	
Shelduck	●		House Martin	●	
Mandarin Duck	●	P	Meadow Pipit	●	
Wigeon	●		Grey Wagtail	●	T
Gadwall	●		Pied-White Wagtail	●	
Teal	●		Wren	●	T
Mallard	●	FL	Dunnock	●	T
Shoveler	●		Robin	●	T
Garganey	●		Stonechat	●	
Pochard			Nightingale		
Tufted Duck	●		Blackbird	●	T
Pheasant	●		Fieldfare	●	
Little Grebe			Song Thrush	●	T
Great Crested Grebe	●		Redwing	●	
Cormorant	●		Mistle Thrush	●	
Little Egret	●		Cetti's Warbler	●	T
Grey Heron	●		Sedge Warbler	●	T
Red Kite	●		Blackcap	●	T
Sparrowhawk	●		Garden Warbler	●	T
Buzzard	●		Lesser Whitethroat	●	
Kestrel	●		Whitethroat	●	FL
Hobby	●		Dartford Warbler	●	
Water Rail			Chiffchaff	●	T
Moorhen	●	P	Willow Warbler	●	
Coot	●	FL	Goldcrest	●	T
Oystercatcher	●		Long-tailed Tit	●	FL
Little Ringed Plover	●		Blue Tit	●	T
Lapwing	●		Great Tit	●	FL
Snipe			Nuthatch	●	T
Common Sandpiper	●		Treecreeper	●	S
Green Sandpiper	●		Jay	●	
Redshank			Magpie	●	
Black-headed Gull	●		Jackdaw	●	
Lesser Black-backed Gull	●		Rook	●	
Herring Gull	●		Carrion Crow	●	
Common Tern	●		Starling	●	T
Feral Pigeon	●		Chaffinch	●	T
Stock Dove	●	S	Greenfinch	●	T
Woodpigeon	●	UN	Goldfinch	●	FL
Collared Dove	●		Siskin	●	
Cuckoo	●		Linnet	●	
Barn Owl	●	T	Lesser Redpoll		
Swift	●		Bullfinch	●	
Kingfisher	●	T	Yellowhammer		
Green Woodpecker	●		Reed Bunting	●	T
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.