



No.2: February 2018





Spring is on its way

Winter may still be with us but Spring is on its way.

Snowdrops and Winter Aconites are in prime condition now. Check your local churchyards, NT estates and woodlands. They won't be around for long.

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Welcome to the second issue of the Nature Group eNews. eNews is emailed to all Nature Group members whose email address is registered with RPS Membership Department. It is also available as a download from the 'Nature Group Members' area' of the RPS website.

The aim of 'eNews' is to improve communication within the group, allowing members to share items of interest with their fellow members. But it only be successful if members give it their support and share information - such as short reviews of books or kit you have acquired, photo kit you have for sale, field meetings arranged at short notice, indeed anything that would be of interest to nature photographers. eNews will appear in your 'in-box' during the months of September, February and May - roughly between publications of *The Iris*.

In this issue are two articles which concern the welfare of wildlife and how close contact with human beings has affected their habitat, behaviour, general wellbeing and in the one instance, the ultimate sacrifice, life itself.

Items of interest are required for the May issue. You may contact me by clicking on the following email address: naturegroup_enews_editor@btinternet.com

I look forward to hearing from you soon.



Announcements

RPS Nature Group Spring Meeting 42nd Annual General Meeting Opening of the Annual Exhibition

Saturday 21st April 2018

Smethwick Photographic Society
The Old Schoolhouse, Churchbridge, Oldbury,
West Midlands, B69 2AS

(for directions see below)

Programme:

10:00hrs Doors open, tea and coffee available

10:30hrs Welcome and introduction

10:40hrs 'Life Behind the Lens' - Robert Thompson FRPS, FIPF, professional wildlife photographer and

author, will give a wide ranging talk covering a variety of natural history subjects.

12:45hrs Break for lunch

Please bring your own packed lunch as lunches will not be available. There is a dining area.

Tea, coffee and drinks will be available at the bar.

13:30hrs 42nd Annual General Meeting of the RPS Nature Group

Agenda:

- 1. Apologies for Absence
- 2. Minutes of the 41st AGM 2017 printed in issue 128 of The Iris
- 3. Matters arising
- 4. Chairman's Report
- 5. Treasurer's Report
- 6. Secretary's Report
- 7. Any Other Business
- 8. Date and Venue of the 43rd AGM 2019

14:15hrs Opening of the 2018 Exhibition

Presentation of the Awards

Projection of the accepted images.

The accepted prints will be on display.

16:30hrs Close

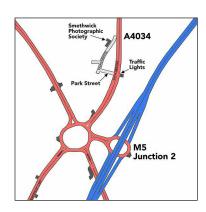
Directions:

From Junction 2 of the M5 follow the signs for the A4034 north towards West Bromwich. Once on the A4034 stay in the left hand lane and after about 1/3 mile turn left at the first set of traffic lights into Park Street. At the end of Park Street turn right into Churchbridge (cul-de-sac). The Old Schoolhouse is the last but one building on the left.

If you use SatNav use postcode: B69 2AS

Google Maps Coordinates: 52.497771, -2.019776

Please note that currently there are major road works between Junctions 1 and 2 of the M5 plus delays at M5 Junction 4a northbound. Please allow extra time for your journey to Smethwick if you are using the M5.



Field Meeting Announcement

Ainsdale Dunes, Ainsdale-on-Sea, nr. Southport, Lancashire

Date: Saturday, June 9th, 2018

Time: 10:00 am.

Location: The Ainsdale Discovery Centre,

The Promenade, Shore Road,

Ainsdale-on-Sea, Nr Southport, PR8 2QB

Main subjects of interest: Orchids and other dune flora, amphibians, reptiles and rare insects etc.

Leader: Trevor Davenport ARPS

Tel: 01704 870284 Mobile: 07831 643844

Email: trevor43davenport@gmail.com

Dr. Phil Smith, MBE, has kindly agreed to join us again on this field meeting; Phil is a noted expert on the Sefton Coast and author of 'The Sands of Time' and 'The Sands of Time Revisited'

Additional Information:

The sand-dunes of the Sefton Coast provide the largest sand-dune complex in England, covering an area of approximately 2100 ha. It is a fascinating and ever-changing habitat offering many photographic opportunities throughout the seasons; however, early summer is usually a period when the dunes are richly rewarding for both botanic and entomological subjects. This year we have timed the meeting for early summer orchids and insects. These are always dependent upon seasonal weather; (last year was exceptionally dry but so far we have had a wet winter with plentiful rain). Unless we have a very dry period from now on we should find Bee Orchids and varieties of Marsh Orchids with hybrids. There are many other botanic specialties to be found in the dunes and on the 'Green Beach' at this time of the year. If the day is warm we should find the Northern Dune Tigerbeetle - a superbly photogenic insect; and there should be a plentiful supply of early butterflies and dragonflies. The frontal dunes and the 'Green Beach' are also well known for sightings of migratory birds and there may be some latecomers passing through. The area is also noted for having two increasingly rare species: the Sand Lizard and the Natterjack Toad. These are not easy to locate, especially the Sand Lizard, but we will do some prior research into suitable locations. In addition to the flora and fauna the Sefton Coast is itself very photogenic with sand, sea and dune landscape opportunities. The dunes are always changing, physically and with both subtle and dramatic lighting, and there are locations where 'sand blow' has scoured large 'Devil Holes' further down the coast.

There is plentiful accommodation in the nearby seaside resort of Southport.

This is a popular field trip with a maximum number of fifteen so early booking is important.

Items to bring: There are very few natural hazards but the area is exposed so light warm clothing and

waterproofs are ideal in case of rain.
Stout shoes or wellingtons are required.

There are no charges but a packed lunch and something to drink is advisable.

Wildlife News

Grizzly #148

by David Osborn FRPS

In certain areas of the world co-habitating with the larger animals and in particular the large predators can be challenging and in some circumstances nothing short of dangerous and difficult!

Unfortunately man's impact in traditional wilderness areas is usually to blame and increasingly the spread of global tourism is giving additional cause for concern.

Regrettably there never really seems to be a winning compromise and certainly not for the creatures involved, who, in our attempt to maintain the safety of encroaching human populations, are more often than not euthanised, (todays popular term for being humanely shot, if that in itself is actually possible).

I'm sure that over the years we've all read various stories of interaction conflicts and the management solutions employed to solve these problems, but occasionally we read a story which is really rather sad and pulls at the heart strings a little.

One such tale that I read in Banff's 'Rocky Mountain Outlook' during a recent visit to Canada is about Grizzly No.148 - a bear I photographed on a previous visit.

Affectionately titled, '148' was a six and a half year old female Grizzly, who for 90% of her life lived within the protected environs of Banff National Park.

Unfortunately for her, over the relatively short period of her life, she had become accustomed to people and was therefore classified as a habituated bear that showed little fear of man.

During the summer of 2017 she had moved into the Canmore area to feast on the abundance of buffalo berries and on an increasing number of occasions there had been various encounters with joggers, bikers and people walking their dogs in a popular and heavily used area of the Bow valley. Clearly something needed to be done to reduce the risk to human safety before anything more serious occurred.

The local authorities had approved, what appeared to be a very sensible strategy and planned to temporarily close the area and wait. Clearly 148 would have moved on once the berry feast was over.

However, regrettably this decision was reversed by a higher authority and a counter decision was made to capture and relocate 148 - a very controversial decision as these days it is widely accepted that this strategy generally doesn't work. Also the local authorities were not keen to lose what they considered to be a vital asset and member of a diminishing local population. Nevertheless, on July 28th, Grizzly 148 was captured



Wildlife News

Grizzly #148 by David Osborn FRPS ... continued from previous page.

and relocated to the remote Kakwa Wildland Provincial Park, an area some 500kms northwest of Canmore. Local naturalists said that they regretted the action as it is well known that relocated bears rarely survive. However, regardless of their concerns, 148 was captured and relocated in what must have been a fairly traumatic experience for the bear and a costly one for the authorities.

After her release her GPS collar shows that she roamed fairly widely, presumably as a result of her being unfamiliar with her new surroundings. The report says she actually travelled hundreds of kilometres as she wandered the area searching for visual clues to her whereabouts.

This sad little story however doesn't go on for too much longer because within eight weeks it was reported that 148 had been shot by a hunter - being unfamiliar with her new environment she was presumably a pretty easy target.

State wildlife officials reportedly said that they weren't too worried that 148 would be hunted in BC, because as a general rule, hunters in BC don't typically kill collared Grizzlies. Well never say never!!

A tragic and disappointing end to a story that could have had so many different endings, not all of which would have been negative.

Now, whilst It's not for me to appear critical of policy decisions in another country, it just seems so sad and a great, great pity that such a wonderful animal, so synonymous of the great wilderness areas that are North America, should lose it's life to preserve a safe area for dog walkers and cyclists.

In 2016, in the same area, wolves of the Bow valley pack were 'euthanised' as a result of careless campers feeding them, and now, in 2017, 148's sad tale. Global populist tourism is making many of the traditional wildlife areas in the world easily accessible to many. But remember, we weren't really invited, we just came. And, as we came in larger and larger numbers, what we came to see and experience has been somewhat degraded while the pressures on the local wildlife have increased. More people visit, so more support staff for the industry are required. The local population then increases, the villages grow and become towns. It's a complex problem - everywhere wants and needs the revenue from sustainable tourism. However, we must not forget that wherever we go and whatever we see, it should not be adversely affected by our visit.

It's time we thought about preservation and management strategies in the real world not from the safety of a computer model in a city office. We allow development of these areas, encourage people to visit, to come and see the wildlife and then we destroy it because of potential conflict. Doesn't seem like we've learnt a great deal!

Editors Note:

Being quite saddened by this bears fate I Googled 'Grizzly 148' and found additional information about this bear.

The CBC site gives more history: she was one of three siblings born to Grizzly 64 who had lived in the Bow Valley region for 24 years. 148 and her two littermates stayed with their mother for two or three years which Bill Hunt, Resource Conservation Manager for Parks Canada, says is a long time. He believes that is because around Banff there is lots of rock and ice and the bears need more time to learn what he describes as "the complexities of the landscapes and where to find food at different times of year". Bear 64 seems to have died, either in the fall or in the den during the winter. The family split up, the sister moved into the 'backcountry' and the brother roamed out of the park and was destroyed when he 'got into trouble' at a Llama ranch! 148 took over her mother's range and stayed in the Bow Valley. Apparently she had learned how to avoid town, use the wildlife corridors and bridges over the Trans-Canada highway and, generally speaking, how to stay away from people. Bill Hunt said that she was not a bear that was interested in garbage or hanging around human habitation hoping for an easy meal. He went on to say that when she was a young cub, if people got too close, "her mother would huff or give a signal and then people would move off. This is a similar behaviour we see with 148. She'll give a little huff and take two short steps toward somebody. Then she goes back to feeding."

However, this summer something changed because she was seen on the rugby field of Banff High School, and chased dogs out for a walk with their owners.

The story becomes sadder due to the fact that she was reportedly mated twice during the summer and may have been pregnant. Hunt had said that he would like to see her get every chance to bring her cubs into the same range where her mother birthed her. Sadly that is never going to happen now.

It is reported that the hunter who killed Grizzly 148 was not a resident of British Columbia but was with a guide. They were aware that the bear was wearing a research tracking collar. B.C. Conservation refered to the killing as a 'harvest' and said that it was a legal hunt and an investigation was not required.

Grizzly 148 was killed in late September 2018 just a few weeks after B.C. announced it would end the Grizzly Bear Trophy Hunt on November 30th 2018 because it was "inconsistent with the values of most British Columbians". However, it seems that the hunting of Grizzlies for meat will still be allowed in some areas outside of the Great Bear Rainforest. In Alberta It has been illegal to hunt Grizzlies since

2006.

Wildlife News

Hey, Hey, We're the Monkeys

by Julia Wainwright ARPS DPAGB

Our guide looked around anxiously. More accustomed to showing tourists around temples and cities, he seemed uncertain as to how to best manage the situation unfolding before him: one religious monument, two totally absorbed photographers, over 100 free roaming Crab-eating Macaques and a large stick that he had been given to ward off the monkeys when they got too close.

It was early in November 2017 and we had arrived in the old quarter of Lopburi, also known as 'Monkey City', around 3 hours drive north of Bangkok. Dating back to the 6th Century, it is one of Thailand's oldest cities and decayed palaces and temples from both the Khmer and Ayuthaya empires are dotted around.

Perched on monuments, with no regard for their historic value, numerous macaques watch the world go by. They sit along the roadsides, waiting patiently for a break in the traffic so they can cross to the other side. Balconies and shop fronts have been barricaded up by their owners. Any stationary vehicle is a target for a surprise raid. For the local people the presence of macaques in the town is just a part of everyday life.

Monkeys have been tolerated, even welcomed, in Asian temples for hundreds of years. Around the temples of Lopburi macaques were resident long before human settlement but, in locations such as this, where cities have grown up around the temples, the monkeys can no longer retreat to the rainforest even if they want to. As their numbers have increased their urban range has spread and they now live like street urchins in Asian cities from India to Indonesia.

One such temple in Lopburi is Prang Sam Yot, an iconic 3pranged temple, built when the region was under the control of the Khmer empire. Initially a Buddhist sanctuary, at some point in history it was converted into a Hindu shrine. Hindus believe monkeys to be



reincarnations of the celebrated god Hanuman, so they are lavished with food and offerings thus giving them no real incentive to leave.

Most of the monkeys found in the Lopburi area are Crab-eating Macaques, often referred to as Longtailed Macaques because their tails are typically longer than their bodies. They are primarily arboreal, native to Southeast Asia and found in a wide variety of habitats such as rainforests, riverside forests and mangroves. They also easily adjust to human settlements

Some of the Macaques found in Lopburi are thought to be Rhesus hybrids, as it has been common for people in this area to acquire young Rhesus monkeys as pets and then release them to the streets when they grow too big.

Despite their name, Crab-eating Macaques typically do not consume crabs as their main food source but instead eat a variety of animals and plants. In rural areas and towns they have become synanthrope, living off human resources and cultivated produce such as rice and other crops, often causing significant losses to local farmers. In villages, towns, and cities where there is an absence of food resources, they frequently raid grocery stores and scavenge from waste bins and rubbish tips.





For visitors, such as ourselves, coming to see the macaques in the temples, the messages are confusing. Signs displayed on the perimeter fencing instruct people not to feed the monkeys and yet, just inside the entrance, there is a booth selling peanuts and renting out sticks to visitors so they can ward off any unwanted primate attention.

Each year, in November, the people of Lopburi throw a Monkey Party in the temple, where tables covered with bowls full of snacks are set out for the macaques to feast upon. Our visit was too early in the month to witness this but, by all accounts, it is quite a sight to see!

A downside of this tolerance is that the Macaques have become fearless of humans, which can lead to them taking food from people, both passively and aggressively – hence the recommendation for visitors to carry a stick. For the most part though, they ignore visitors unless they believe them to be carrying food or some shiny items that they could acquire, such as sunglasses and cameras.

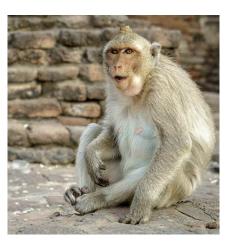
which they were using as a makeshift swimming pool whilst an overhead rope ladder (provided by the locals) made a great diving platform.

Not far from the temples, we passed shops where macaques hung around doorways, trampolined on shopfront awnings, climbed onto balconies and clambered over cars. In some places metal shopfront awnings have been electrified to deter the macaques but with limited success. Whilst the carrying of catapults and swatting poles to keep away overly curious primates is commonplace with everyone from shopkeepers to Buddhist monks, there also seems to be a perverse kind of reverence and appreciation for these rascally primates.

During our visit we followed a couple of macaques down an alleyway which lead us into a small shanty town. Here macaques swung from suspended power cables, draped themselves over ramshackle wooden fences and socialised with the local dogs and cats. With our guide acting as translator, we talked to one of the shanty town residents









The general health of these Macaques is suffering ...

One thing that was evident though is that the general health of these macaques is suffering as a result of a diet comprising sugary foods, plastics and other trash. Many were overweight or obese whilst others appear to have severe skin problems or tumour-like growths. In the past, wildlife rescue groups have set up programmes to address the health and well being of these primates but I have been unable to find information on any current initiatives.

Macaques are known to be one of the best primate swimmers and, in the rainforest, will drop from trees into the water below to avoid predators such as Clouded Leopards and Pythons. In the grounds of Lopburi's modern San Phra Kan Shrine a macaque version of tag was being played out around a water feature who seemed quite at home with his somewhat unusual neighbours. He invited us to an outdoor seating area where we talked, photographed and watched the macaques scamper around. Asked if he enjoyed living alongside the macaques the man smiled resignedly, shrugged his shoulders and said 'I have no choice'.

It's true that his choices may be limited but there was no animosity in his response, just acceptance, and you were left with the feeling that he really considered them as part of his extended family. He has even gone so far as to give some of them names. In a city with an estimated population of more than 1000 macaques that's probably the most pragmatic approach. It's unlikely that these furry residents will be going away any time soon.

News

For Sale

Nature Group Chairman's Day

Date: Saturday, 14th September, 2018

Time: 10.00hrs - 16.00 hrs

Venue: **Smethwick Photographic Society**

The Old Schoolhouse

Churchbridge Oldbury B69 2AS

Make a note of the date in your diary now. Full programme and details of how to obtain tickets will be announced soon.

Nature Group Residential Field Meeting - June 2018

Juniper Hall Field Centre, Old London Road, Dorking, RH5 6DA

Situated on the North Downs near Box Hill, Juniper Hall Field Centre has much to offer the nature photographer. The surrounding chalk downland has a high species diversity of flowers and insects, while further afield the BNR Thursley Common, the Wey and Arun Canal, provide more specialised habitats for the larger aquatic dragonflies and damselflies.

We shall be able to take advantage of the Centre's other facilities, including the use of moth traps, a library with a wide range of field guides, and the use of the Centre's own minibus.

Cost - £240 (with a small additional charge for transport).

Includes 3 nights' accommodation, full board, packed lunches, afternoon tea and the use of the Centre's facilities.

If you would like to join the group, (or be added to the waiting list if full), please contact Julia, details below.

Julia Andrew LRPS: andrew.julia@gmail.com

1. Manfrotto 441 Carbon One Tripod -£75 + p&p

Carbon Fibre, good condition Cost £230 new.

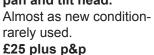


2. Arca monoball head £75 + p&p Some 'wear and tear' but still serviceable. Serviced by Arca a few years ago and not used since.



Enquiries to Dawn Osborn: Email: naturegroup_enews_editor @btinternet.com

1. Manfrotto 804RC2 pan and tilt head. Almost as new condition-





Enquiries to David Osborn FRPS: Email: poppyland3@btinternet.com

Obituary

Michael Charles Faraday Proctor FRPS 21-01.1929 - 24.10.2017

Michael was a Nature Group Member and several years. He was one of the UK's leading botanists and ecologists, specialising in the flora and natural vegetation of Britain.

A Graduate of Queen's College, Cambridge, Michael studied botany, zoology and chemistry. He became a lecturer in Botany at the University that was later known as Exeter University. He remained there, later as Senior Lecturer then reader, until his retirement in 1994 when he became an honorary research fellow.

He wrote several books including two with his friend Peter Yeo on the subject of plant pollination; he was also the editor of 'Watsonia', the journal of the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland for 10 years, as well as a trustee of Paignton Zoo.

His contributions to nature conservation will be missed.

Dates for your diary

Entries Invited

The following National and International Exhibitions with Nature sections are now open for entries:

South Birmingham 'Image 18' Digital Exhibition

Digital Projected Images www.southbirminghamphotographicsociety.co.uk Entries close 25th February 2018

Vale of Evesham National Photographic Exhibition

Digital Projected Images www.eveshamphoto.net Entries close 28th February 2018

Basingstoke C.C. National Open Photography Exhibition 2018

Digital Projected Images www.basingstokecameraclub.co.uk Entries close 5th March

f2 Sociedad Fotografica Salon Internacional 2018

Digital Projected Images www.f2sociedadfotografica.com Entries close 11th March 2018

6th Cheltenham International Salon 2018

Projected Digital Images www.CheltenhamCameraClub.co.uk Entries close 2nd April 2018

Rushden Open Photography Exhibition

Digital Projection 4 www.rushdenopen.co.uk Entries close 8th April 2018

Sydney Harbour International

Digital Projected Images www.sydney-harbour-international.org.au Entries close 15th April 2018

Neath & District PS UK Salon

Digital Projection 4 http://www.neathphotographicsociety.org Entries close 21st April 2018

Robin Hood Open Digital Exhibition

Digital Projected Images www.robinhoodexhibition.co.uk Entries close 28th April 2018

Calling Young Photographers

At the Nature Group AGM last year interest was expressed by some members about encouraging young photographers. Those of you who have children, grand-children, young friends or know of young members of your local camera club/photographic society, might be interested in encouraging them to enter the FIAP Youth Biennial.

Howard Tate MA, ARPS, AFIAP, APAGB, Vice President of the Photographic Alliance of Great Britain (PAGB) has sent the following details:

FIAP Youth Biennial

There are two sections:

- up to/incl 16 years of age (born before 31/03/2002)
- up to/incl 21 years of age (born before 31/02/1997).

20 images are required for each category and there is a limit of 2 images per author. There will be medal awards to winning countries and also FIAP medals to be awarded to the authors of outstanding individual images.

Please email several thumbnails copies of images that you consider to be your best for our small committee to select from.

Closing date for receipt of images is 20.02.18.

Higher resolution copies of the selected images will be requested for the entry into the Biennial.

This is a prestigious event which the PAGB has not entered for some considerable time. Based on our history we can win this, all we need is the images from you.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Howard G Tate MA ARPS AFIAP APAGB Vice President - PAGB email: hgtate@tesco.net

Information



Publication information

Nature Group eNews is published by the RPS Nature Group three times a year. Copy and publication dates are as follows:

Late Winter Copy deadline 30th December

Published mid January.

Copy deadline 30th April Late Spring

Published mid May.

Copy deadline 31st August Late Summer

Published mid September.

All contributions should be submitted to the Editor at: naturegroup_enews_editor@btinternet.com. Any item of interest to nature photographers is welcomed, including reviews on equipment and relevant books. Copy should be submitted as .txt or .doc files by email. Please do not send hand written copy.

Digitally captured photographic images should be supplied as flattened 8bit sRGB tif or jpg files, 6" x 4" at 300 pixels per inch. Please do not email larger images.

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Distribution:

Nature Group eNews is forwarded to members using email addresses supplied by them to the RPS Membership Department in Bath. Please remember to inform them if you change your email address. eNews will also be available as a download from the members only pages of the Nature Group section on the RPS website.

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President of the Society; Vice-President of the Society; Director General of the Society; Hon. Treasurer of the Society;

Chairman of the Nature A & F Distinctions Panel

Nature Group Exhibitions:

CDs/DVDs of Nature Group Exhibitions are available for purchase by camera clubs/photographic societies for use in their programme. Please contact the Exhibition Secretary, details opposite.

The Iris: Publication Dates

The 'The Iris' is published by the RPS Nature Group three times a year. Copy and publication dates are as follows:

Copy deadline 8th December

Published mid March.

Summer Copy deadline 30th April

Published early July.

Winter Copy deadline 31st August

Published early November.

All contributions should be submitted to the Editor. Items covering any aspect of nature photography and/or natural history are welcomed, including reviews on equipment and relevant books. The Editor can be contacted at: iris_editor@btinternet.com



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