



Lincolnshire Bird Club eNewsletter



Lincs Bird Club eNewsletter 03 Spring 2018

Come and hear BB Editor Roger Riddington talk about his birding adventures at the Lincolnshire Bird Club AGM

From Skegness to Shetland

Diary date:
Lincs Bird Club AGM,
Admiral Rodney,
Horncastle. 7.30pm, March 20th, 2018

Please don't forget the AGM, this is going to be one not to miss

Melanistic Blue Tit at the Whisby NR feeders in January 2018

During January, a smart looking Blue Tit with a black head appeared at Whisby Nature Park in Lincoln. It was a popular bird with local photographers. The BTO has conducted an Abnormal Plumage Survey as part of the Garden Birdwatch scheme which looked at leucism (partially white plumage), albinism (completely white plumage) and melanism (abnormally dark-coloured or black plumage). Full details of that survey are posted on the BTO's website [here](#). In brief, 3000 records were submitted with 82% classed as being 'leucistic'; compared with just 3% as 'albinistic'; 4% as 'melanistic'; and 11% as 'other'. Of the 112 records of 'melanistic' birds about 40% have been of Great Tits (30) and Blue Tits (16), with 18 other species also logged. In the case of Great and Blue Tits, it is often the case that the white cheeks or yellow bellies appear as a much darker colour. Of the 112 records of 'melanistic' birds about 40% have been of Great Tits (30) and Blue Tits (16), with 18 other species also logged. In the case of Great and Blue Tits, it is often the case that the white cheeks or yellow bellies appear as a much darker colour.



Images by Neil Roberts





Images by Brian Cocksedge

2018 Rook Survey

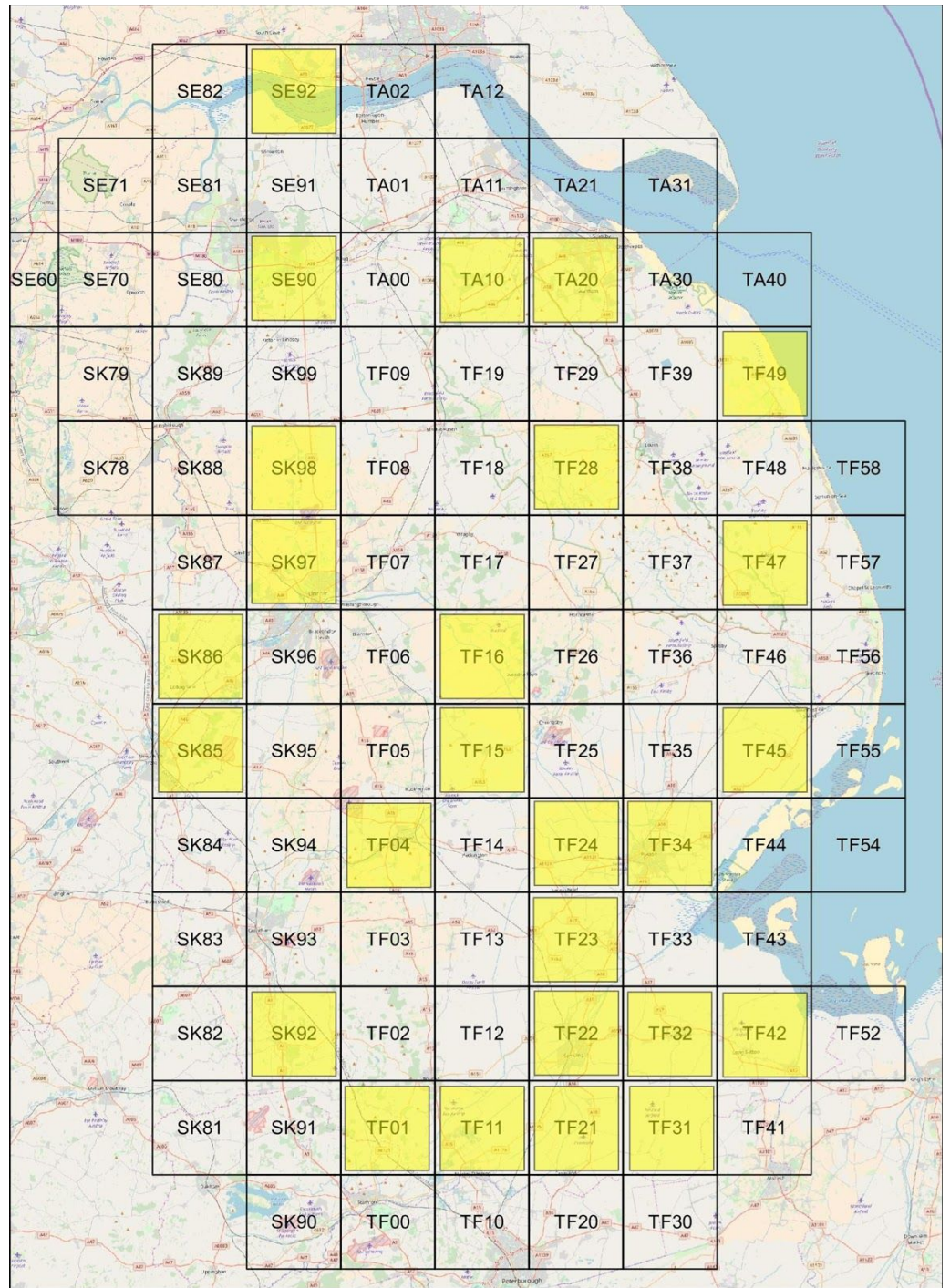
In 2017 the Lincolnshire Bird Club asked members to count rookeries in Lincolnshire.

In 2018 we would like members to help again.....

During the spring months of 2017 Lincolnshire Bird Club members were asked to participate in a survey of rookeries in Lincolnshire. The object of the survey was to obtain a random sample of rookeries throughout Lincolnshire in order to monitor the Lincolnshire breeding population. The survey results were compared to those published in the Lincolnshire Bird Report 1980. The 1980 survey was undertaken in conjunction with the BTO where random 10km squares were surveyed across the UK to provide basic data on rook population and to provide a baseline data so that future surveys could assess the effect of Dutch Elm Disease on Rook populations.

Counts were undertaken between late March and early May. Recorders were asked to record the location (place name), OS Grid Reference and the number of nests in relation to the tree species.

During the survey Lincolnshire Bird Club members counted a total of **251 rookeries** which contained **5959 nests**. The rookeries were recorded from 34 10km squares (but... a total of 49 10 km squares didn't get visited).



During the 2017 survey members were asked to note the number of nests located within tree species. Not all observers noted the tree species and it was not always possible to gain access to all the rookeries to get an accurate tree assessment. Of the 5959 nests recorded in 2017 a total of 5322 were assigned to a tree species.

It is clear there has been a significant increase in the number of tree species utilized, with 18 new species recorded (although, it is possible some of these species may have been 'lumped' under a common species name e.g. beech and copper beech etc.)

Help needed in 2018 (late-March - May)

The map shows the 10 km squares (shaded yellow) that were counted during the 1980 survey. We would like to repeat the counts in **ALL OF THESE** 10 km squares so we can compare the results.

We are looking for volunteers to be allocate a 10 km square. Please email info@lincsbirdclub.co.uk to request your square! **Act now to avoid disappointment!**

If you are unable to take on a whole 10km square, we still want your rook records. At the beginning of March 2018 full details of the survey will appear on the Lincolnshire Birdclub Website.

All images thanks to Alan Bowness.



Common Redpoll *Acanthis flammea* in Ruskington - 06/02/2018

By Jack Dawson

On the 6th February a **Common (Mealy) Redpoll** was trapped and ringed in my Ruskington garden.
Here it is seen in the field on the 2nd February:



The Common Redpoll (*Acanthis flammea*) feeding on nyjer

So as you can see, it wasn't extremely obvious in the field that this was a **Common Redpoll**. One thing you can see is the generally paler, greyer appearance of the bird when compared to **Lesser Redpoll**.

So we caught it today and here's a photo demonstrating just how grey those ear-coverts are:



Lesser Redpoll (left) and Common Redpoll (right)

On the two photos above, note how much greyer the ear-coverts are on the **Common Redpoll**. Also, note how the **Common Redpoll** has a larger eye. We sexed the **Common Redpoll** as a male due to the pink on the breast feathers (as you can see above). In this photo, you can also see the **Common Redpoll** has a completely different bill structure. When measured, the distance from the back of its head to the tip of its bill was 29mm. On the **Lesser Redpoll** this was 25mm.



Rump and tail feathers of the Common Redpoll

The photo above shows the greyish, less heavily streaked rump of the **Common Redpoll**. Also, note the broad tail feathers, allowing us to age this bird as an adult.

Here's a photo of the rump of a **Lesser Redpoll** caught in February 2018:



Rump of a Lesser Redpoll trapped and ringed on the same day

As you can see, the **Lesser Redpoll's** rump is darker and more heavily streaked.



Under tail coverts of the Common Redpoll

Again, the under tail coverts of the **Common Redpoll** were slightly less streaked than that of a **Lesser Redpoll**.

The **Common Redpoll** also had a wing length of 79mm, way outside the maximum for a male **Lesser Redpoll** which is 73.5mm (Svensson, 1992).

Bibliography

Svensson, L. (1992). Redpoll. In L. Svensson, Identification Guide to European Passerines (p. 299). Lars Svensson.

Electronic record of “The Lincs List”

Progress to date, photographs, and museum specimens.

by Phil Hyde

The first phase of this project is complete as far as it can be at present. All species have a minimum entry of a photograph (where available) and a strapline summary of status in the county. There is a sprinkling of full accounts for some species. The latest ones include Greenish Warbler, Pine Bunting, Buff-bellied Pipit and Rufous-tailed Bush Robin – the rarer ones are easier as there is less information to put together!

I have included the same table as last month with photos received crossed out, and.... (optimistically) photos of some species which someone might have in their archive highlighted in blue. As I said last month, there are unlikely to be any photos of the extreme rarities.

If you have any of these in your archive that you are willing to share *and which was taken in Lincolnshire*, please let me know. These are as follows:

Lesser White-fronted Goose	Whistling Swan	Puffin	Black Grouse
Cream-coloured Courser	Storm Petrel	Leach's Petrel	Fulmar
Laughing Gull	Franklin's Gull	Great Spotted Cuckoo	Great Snipe
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Cory's Shearwater	Sooty Shearwater	Great Shearwater
Balearic Shearwater	Solitary Sandpiper	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	Stilt Sandpiper
Pallas's Sandgrouse	Feral Pigeon	Goshawk	Golden Eagle
Bustards	Scops Owl	Tengmalm's Owl	Pallid Swift
Little Swift	Corn Crake	Greater Sand Plover	Little Crake
Blue-cheeked Bee-eater	Hudsonian Godwit	Nutcracker	Baillon's Crake

Museum specimens

Some old mounted specimens that were rescued from the infamous clear out at Lincoln Museum were photographed. In due course, some of these may be used in the Lincs List archive, either within the full species account or in a separate appendix to the list. Not all of these specimens were obtained within Lincolnshire so careful checking will ensue before using any. Photographs awaited.

Finally.....if you spot any errors **PLEASE** let me know. What's there is essentially a “first draft” so it may not be entirely error free. Thanks already to **Russell Hayes** for some errors he has spotted so far.

Neck collared greater white-fronted goose at Gib Point (Jan 2018) - Information from Nige Lound

An adult greater white-fronted goose *Anser albifrons* with neck collar Black KJ3 was recorded on Croft Marsh, Gib Point 15th Jan 2018. One of a small flock of 14 birds, 13 adults and 1 juvenile. Ringed in December 2013 with numerous sightings in Netherlands and Germany. This is the first UK sighting.

Code: Neckband Black : KJ3, Legring (Metal only) : NLA-7147839 White-Fronted Goose

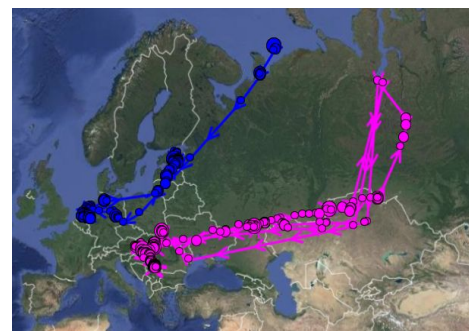
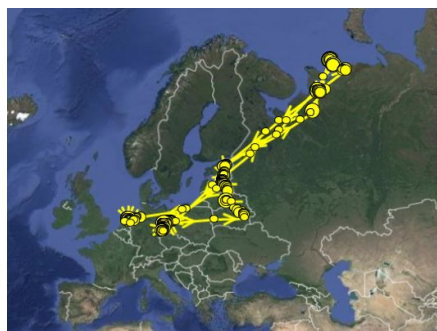
Ringling date: 28.12.2013 Sex: M Age: J

Ring location: Skarsterland, Rottum Coordinate (North): 52 55 53 Coordinate (East) (- = West): 5 53 24



28.12.2013 Skarsterland, Rottum Friesland NL Ale en Harm van der Wal
13.01.2014 Baarlo, zomerdijk Overijssel NL Anneke Zeinstra
11.11.2014 Schmergow PM Brandenburg D Günter Lohmann
22.11.2014 Bornim/ Potsdam Brandenburg D Günter Lohmann
16.12.2014 Grube/Potsdam Brandenburg D Günter Lohmann
31.01.2015 Neu Garge, Lüneburg Niedersachsen D Werner Habicht
17.02.2015 Darchau, Lüneburg Niedersachsen D Axel Degen
17.02.2015 Gülstorf, Lüneburg Niedersachsen D Werner Habicht
25.10.2015 Preten, Lüneburg Niedersachsen D Werner Habicht
28.11.2015 Aldeboarn fjurlanswei Friesland NL Peter Volten
06.12.2015 Tijnje Riperwalden Friesland NL Appie Venema
10.12.2015 Oldeboorn, Fjurlanswei Friesland NL Jan Kramer
13.01.2017 oud ade vrouw vennepolder Zuid-Holland NL Sjon van Santen
14.01.2017 nieuwe wetering veenderpolder Zuid-Holland NL Sjon van Santen
16.01.2017 Mijdrecht, Hoofdweg Utrecht NL Kees Janmaat
21.02.2017 Nieuwkoop, Meijegraslanden Zuid-Holland NL Jacques de Raad, Laura Kooistra
25.02.2017 waverveen, hoofdweg Utrecht NL Sjon van Santen
29.11.2017 Lauwersseewei, Rinsumageest, Nederland Friesland NL Age Hulder
15.01.2018 Gibraltar Point NNR Lincolnshire GB Nige Lound 13 adults and 1 juvenile White-front

For more information see <http://www.blessgans.de/> (make sure you switch the site to English (top right hand corner) and see the SatTag birds at <http://www.blessgans.de/index.php?id=602&L=1>



The LBC and sightings Records

As a club the LBC keeps multi-million sightings records on a computer system using a software package called Wildlife Recorder.

A great deal of thanks go to our invaluable members, Colin and Sheila Jennings and their team for all the input of these records over the last 14 years.

When used correctly this program allows the LBC to do all sorts of things, some as simple as knowing the first and last date of a species in a year and some much more complicated like exporting a max count per month and mapping species for use in the bird report.

Members records are essential for us to produce the Lincolnshire Bird Report and over the past few weeks I have been doing a complete revamp of the LBC and GPBO records and updating how we take in records. I must say that Jack Levene of Wildlife Recorder has done hours of work to help me including a great number of new features for the LBC and the LBC owes a great deal of gratitude for all his efforts, without his help the project could not be undertaken.

It's not so many years ago that birder's would jot down their records in meticulous detail and then send in a copy so the bird club could enter them. Most active birders still keep meticulous records but transfer them to a computerised recording package which can export the records.

These records are then imported to the LBC Database and used as the basis for the LBC annual Lincs Bird Report. You can find out how we would like your records sending in on the website.

Citizen Science

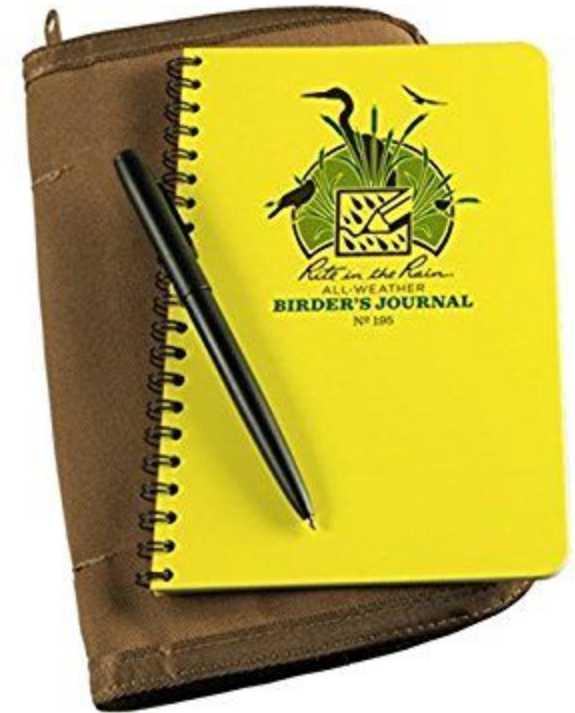
One buzz word that has come to the fore in recent years is "Citizen Science". Public participation in science is increasing, and citizen science has a central part in this. It is a contribution by the public to research, actively undertaken and requiring thoughtful action.

Citizen science projects involve non-professionals taking part in things like data collection. The idea is to break down big tasks into understandable components that anyone can perform.

Without doubt citizen science is a great way of involving the public in research but everyone must understand that it has its drawbacks when it comes to bird sighting recordings.

Firstly in most cases no training is given, so dubious records can be entered.

Then there is have what I call the "Buggeration factor", this is when someone purposely enters bad data such as Micky Mouse seeing 50 Golden Eagle's at Frampton Marsh with a Map Reference thats on the Isle of Man.



Misidentification is also a big problem, an example is telling Marsh Tit from Willow Tit, it's not easy at the best of times but beginners often send in records that have clearly been misidentified.

For many beginners all identification can be difficult at the best of time so when data is entered it could well be wrong.

We all have stories of bad identification.

I remember getting a call from a lady saying she had 7 Nutcrackers in her garden. I asked for a picture and you guessed it they were starlings.

I was at Spurn once when an excited Birder came running up saying he had found a rare american Cuckoo. After a mad dash there it was in all its glory, problem was it was just an escaped Rossella.

I recall the RSPB once had a call from someone asking "What's a bird with red on its head?" they answered at first "Well sir, it's most likely at Goldfinch" only to be get the answer "But this one is 5 foot tall!". It turned out to be an escape Sandhill Crane.

I remember watching a Buff-breasted Sandpiper at Cley which had been out of view a while when a mate said "Buff-breast is showing!" someone then said , "Thanks but what is the Black and White one with the Beak that's upside down next to it?"

I am sure you are getting where i am going with this.

The BTO BirdTrack system is a citizen science project and you would think this would be simple but in the 17000 records entered for Lincolnshire for July 2017 there was 56 variations for the LBC site,

"Frampton Marsh" including spelling mistakes, shortened names and even some where the map reference entered was over 30 miles away from the actual site. The big problem is that BirdTrack do not see this as an issue in the scheme of things nationally.

Many of BirdTrack users are excellent Birders, far better than I will ever be but my oh my there are some bad ones.

A person from Carlisle recorded on BirdTrack just 5 species at Holbeach Marsh on New Years day. These included 1 x Whimbrel and 15 x Twite, yet he did not see Curlew, any gulls or any other waders or ducks. Another recorded many breeding finches and other birds for January. One eBird user entered a large count with the time seen while it was pitch black.

Now these records could be correct, but they are also highly suspect and as entries are mostly unchecked by the BTO and simply accepted, the LBC must try to verify them.



Wildlife Recorder

This is a package that was first written in 1973 by Jack Levene. Jack is a well known and respected Birder and Photographer who happens to be a programmer. Jack has improved and updated WR many times including modifications to help the LBC and bird clubs keep their records.

The LBC uses Wildlife Recorder to keep its records as does the Norfolk Bird Club and many others. WR is a Windows based system where the records are kept on a standalone PC and the records are kept secure as the package itself needs no connection to the internet, other than to download updates to the program or the species lists.

WR will record World Birds, Butterflies, Mammals Etc and Jack updates the species list including updating when splits are made. It is without doubt the most comprehensive package available however it takes a bit of getting used to.

Jack has also written an Android App called Nature Lister that allows Birders to record in the field and then transfer your sighting directly into WR.

<http://www.wildlife.co.uk>

Good: Inexpensive, Very powerful, export directly into LBC Database. Regular updates to the species lists. Records other types of wildlife.

Bad: Nothing really but you have to spend time with it to get the best out of it.



BirdTrack is an online service provided free of charge by the BTO. By far the most records submitted to the LBC come from BirdTrack, anywhere from 5000 to 20000 per month and the number is growing all the time.



Most users of BirdTrack, swear by it as it's quite simple to use and has a very useful app that allows you to see your life list, year list and what other birders have seen. However it has a few quirks that can cause bird clubs problems.

Users select a species and add their count, however the site name and sometimes the map ref used are typed in by the user. The BTO make no check on their BirdTrack users, simply hoping they are proficient in identification, can read a map and use proper site names, however some records are suspect and some users use site names such as "My Garden", and "Gravel Pit" which do not help the LBC. The BTO also allow the use of 10km square map references to store records which can cause problems considering that a 10km square is 14.4km corner to corner which can make it difficult to identify precisely where a record is from. BirdTrack can be and is used by all sorts of people at all levels and we have to face facts that some are better than others.

The records are not vetted by the BTO so records of species like Marsh Tit and Willow Tit and other confusion species may be suspect and require verification by LBC if they are to be used in the bird report. If you are using Birdtrack properly thank you. If you have unidentifiable site names, please consider changing them to geographical locations. Also try and use the LBC site list that we have provided to BTO which makes using the records much easier for us. If you are a beginner have a look at the excellent id videos the BTO has on their website.

<https://app.bto.org/birdtrack/main/data-home.jsp>

Good: Free, Data used and sold by BTO

Bad: Data not vetted at all

This is a windows package that on the surface looks good, it's simple to use even though adding a site is a pain. It's internet based, keeping the records on the BJ5 server as well as your PC and then it sync's the records from time to time. The species list were never updated in all the time I tested it so splits were not included and the export routine is rather useless as it does not include everything you would expect.



As the export routine misses several important fields, these must have pieces of information make importing from BJ5 into the LBC Master Database very difficult.

<https://www.birdjournal.com/> offers a free limited version and the full version at £29.99 per year

iGoTerra says it offers a cloud-based service and mobile applications to individuals, organizations and businesses enjoying and working with wildlife watching.



I found that it was rather slow to use even on my fibre broadband making putting in records a long task. I think the problem is that the server they use is simply not fast enough for the system they have designed.

They have a mobile app that you can use to record in the field which is great for trip but rather cumbersome for day to day birding.

eBird is an online system launched in 2002 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, eBird provides rich data sources for basic information on bird abundance and distribution at a variety of spatial and temporal scales.

eBird



eBird's goal is to maximize the utility and accessibility of the vast numbers of bird observations made each year by recreational and professional bird watchers. In May 2015, participants reported more than 9.5 million bird observations across the world

The observations of each participant join those of others in an international network of eBird users. eBird then shares these observations with a global community of educators, land managers, ornithologists, and conservation biologists. In time these data will become the foundation for a better understanding of bird distribution across the western hemisphere and beyond."

Several LBC members use it and we can import their records directly into the LBC Master Database.

Others you can check out are Birder's Diary, Birders Notebook, Observation.org, Scythebill and Swift. However I will be staying with my trusted Wildlife Recorder. Colin Casey



Lincolnshire Bird Club
Follow us on twitter @lincsbirdclub
<http://www.lincsbirdclub.co.uk>

The Lincolnshire Bird Club, supporting the recording & conservation of wildlife in Lincolnshire

