

L E N S B U L L E T I N

No. 19

Issued for Members and Friends of the

LONG EATON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

SPRING 1989

- |               |   |               |
|---------------|---|---------------|
| CHAIRMAN      | : | ALAN HEATH    |
| SECRETARY     | : | MARTIN HARVEY |
| MEETINGS ORG. | : | KAREN BIDGOOD |
| TREASURER     | : | NORAH KNIGHT  |



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## CHAIRMAN'S FORWARD

This bulletin sees the conclusion of another winter session which again offered a wide variety of speakers. Meetings were well attended, some particularly so and it is pleasing to see that new members have joined us as result of notices displayed in public places. All good signs of a healthy and thriving society.

We can now look forward to the summer session with a variety of outings which we hope you will all do your best to attend. The summer is the time when most of us are able to get out and about, so please remember to note what you see and let Stan have a report. Don't forget your camera too as it would be nice to see what you have all been looking at when we have next members' evening.

Finally, you will be pleased to know that our Bulletin is proving to be of real value. Recently I had a letter from Clare Stone of the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust. She is a projects officer and has a special interest in the Toton Water Meadows. Our Bulletin was able to provide a check list of animals and plants found there in order that she can evaluate the site. Martin too found the Bulletin of value when Derbyshire Wildlife Trust asked him for information about the Ash Tip at Lock Lane, Sawley. We cannot overstress the importance of our records to which you are all invited to contribute.

Alan Heath

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The last outing in 1988 was to Kings Mills, Castle Donington, on 2nd October for a fungal foray, a report by Alan Heath.

The fungal foray to Kings Mills was led by Mr John Varty on Sunday morning. The morning was bright and sunny and numerous fungi were found in the woodland walk by the river.

The species listed below were all identified by John Varty who also took a number away for verification.

The nine members who attended were disappointed that more birds were not seen but as there was a clay pigeon shoot going on at the time, this was not surprising! Alan Heath took a number of photographs both in black and white and colour which will be shown at a members evening in the future.

John Varty said he would supply a complete list of the fungi found and that he would also report them to the Leicestershire Recorder. The leader was thanked by Alan

FUNGAL FORAY TO KINGS MILLS, CASTLE DONINGTON - 3rd October 1988

There were few fungi but these included some spectacular and unusual species. Names agree with R. Phillips.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Armillaria mellea - Honey Fungus        | A serious tree parasite - always present in local woods   |
| Auricularia auricula - Jew's Ear        | For the story of the name see J. Ramsbottom - 'Mushrooms and Toadstools' in the New Naturalist Series.  |
| Calocera carnea                         | Tiny yellow-orange clubs or fingers. Growing among moss on fallen tree.   |
| Coprinus lagopus                        |   |
| Daldinia concentrica - Cramp Ball       | This ascomycete is active when its colour is reddish-brown. It persists for years. Concentric structure does not arise from periodic growth but is for water storage. |
| Fistulina hepatica - Beef-Steak Fungus  | An old specimen but readily identified. A nasty parasite of oak.  |
| Ganoderma applanatum                    | This is a perennial polypore. This specimen, on a fallen tree, showed only one year's growth. Look again next year!   |
| Hebeloma (mesophaeum?)                  | An interesting one. The spores are not as expected. Still working on this one.  |
| Inocybe asterospora                     | Spores not examined so is a tentative identification.   |
| Lycophyllum ulmarium                    | There are several like species. Large white stripes united at base. Spectacular. On fallen tree. Not really common locally.   |
| Peziza repanda                          | Fairly common cup fungus  |
| Pleurotus ostreatus - Oyster Mushroom   | A white specimen. It is very variable. Should be grey or brownish.  |
| Pleurotus cornucopiae                   | A very nice find of a beautiful species. Only other record I have is for Ticknall Lime Yards  |
| Polyporus squamosus - Dryad's Saddle    | A common parasite. Can be spectacular. Ours were not. At its best earlier in the season.  |
| Stereum hirsutum - Dead Man's Fingers   | Common yellow species on old wood   |
| Xylaria polymorpha - Dead Man's Fingers | On fallen ash.  |

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As usual Alan Heath has furnished us with a comprehensive report on the water sites he has visited in the area throughout the year. Visits were made to 13 sites, 7 of which were freshwater habitats. A special study was made of FORBE'S HOLE, and ONE-ACRE POND, Long Eaton in order that comparison could be made of their respective populations. FORBE'S HOLE has an uncertain future due to developments in the area. Bill Adcock and Alan appeared on Central TV to give the naturalists viewpoint in September. The results of the comparative study are given in special report, anyone who would like a copy of this along with details of findings at the other sites including, DOCKHOLME POND, TRENTON DRIVE POND, FLETCHER'S POND, Long Eaton, TICKNALL LIME YARDS, and WOLLATON PARK LAKE, please contact me Fay Blackburn L.E.732710.

THE RAILWAY PONDS OF THE LONG EATON AREA - Alan W. Heath

The Railway Ponds of the region are ecologically unique in Britain and perhaps also in Europe. All are long established (over 100 years) and their age is known.

PAST A paper written in the Journal of Ecology X1 (1923) by the late Prof. H. Godwin described the dispersal of the pond floras in the neighbourhood of Trent Railway Junction. Prof. Godwin was a local man and he was assisted by Miss J. Turner and her senior pupils of the Long Eaton County School in collecting data. Recent interest in the area by Dr. Max Wade of Loughborough University was the subject of a talk to Long Eaton Natural History Society in March 1981. Dr. Wade later conducted members on two visits to the ponds.

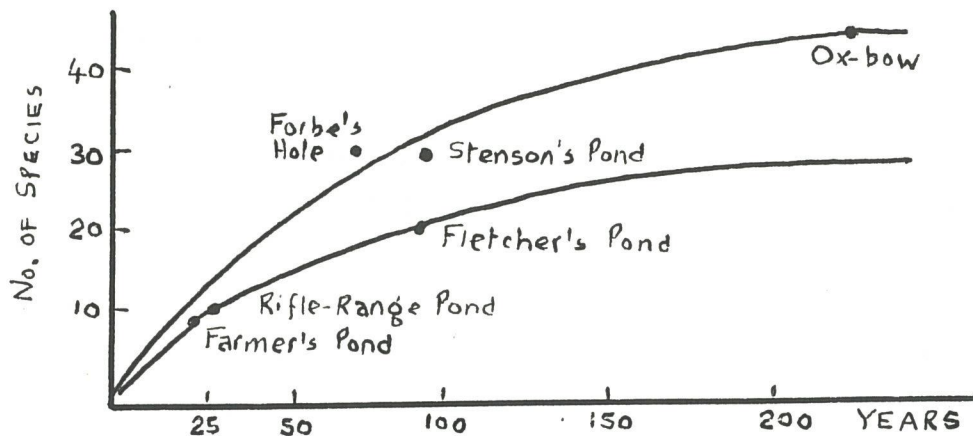
Godwin states that one of the essential postulates of Dr. J.C. Willis's theory of 'Ages and Areas' that plant distribution is an extremely slow process and one greatly retarded even by small barriers. In the district where the Derwent, Soar and Erewash join the River Trent in the neighbourhood of Trent junction, there are ponds cut in different places to supply ballast for railway embankments which cross the flood plain. There are others of different origin, one of which is the Ox-bow formed by the River Trent just west of Sawley and another has been dug to form rifle-butts. The ponds are within a mile or two of each other and are all dug in the Trent gravels and would therefore seem to have the same physico-chemical characters.

The results of Godwin's investigation show that, in general, the older the pond the more species are to be found. The ponds will accumulate species over time and can then take no more. The equilibrium point having been reached, the ponds are now mature. Godwin suggests that they should level out at about 200 years.

The Midland Railway Company provided the dates when the ponds were formed and this data together with Godwin's number of species is given below :

| Pond             | No. of Species | Date   |
|------------------|----------------|--------|
| Sawley Ox-bow    | 44             | 1700 c |
| Forbe's Hole     | 29             | 1852   |
| Stenson's Pond   | 29             | 1836   |
| Fletcher's Pond  | 20             | 1836   |
| Rifle-Range Pond | 9              | 1898   |
| Farmer's Pond    | 8              | 1902   |

With one exception, the dates confirm the prediction



Graph showing the relation between age and number of contained species in the ponds. The 3 which received some species by water dispersal lie on the steeper curve and the three whose populations were not so aided lie on the flatter curve.

Godwin concludes that plant distribution may be essentially a matter of chance but land barriers are very effective in slowing down the rate of dispersal of water-plants.

PRESENT The whole area was affected by flooding in 1932 and again in 1947. Farmer's Pond has now been filled in and the Trent Railway Station no longer exists but the railway lines do still carry considerable traffic.

Dr. Max Wade has studied the plant communities of the region and Bill Adcock and Alan Heath have studied the macroscopic and microscopic life in the ponds since the mid-50s especially Forbe's Hole. The ponds studied are shown on the accompanying map and are listed as follows :

|                   |        |         |           |
|-------------------|--------|---------|-----------|
| Forbe's Hole -    | N.G.R. | 496/325 | 136       |
| Stenson's Pond -  | N.G.R. | 504/332 | 152       |
| Fletcher's Pond - | N.G.R. | 492/316 | 152       |
| One-Acre Pond -   | N.G.R. | 492/317 | not known |
| Rifle-Range Pond  | N.G.R. | 498/314 | 90        |

A further pond in close proximity to Fletcher's Pond has been added to the list which is known as One-Acre Pond but the date of origin is not known.

Descriptions of the pond are as follows -

- Fletcher's Pond - Well maintained and fished
- Stenson's Pond - Reduced to a swamp, and in periods of dry weather it is possible to walk through the site with only small isolated areas of water.
- Forbe's Hole - Emergent vegetation now extensive but there are still good areas of open water. Swans and other water fowl found there. Under threat of development.
- Rifle-Range Pond - A small pond which is shallow
- One-Acre Pond - Good pond with no fishing allowed. Number of species is comparable to that of Forbe's Hole.

**FUTURE**            The value of the ponds cannot be overstated and a further survey of the flora would clearly add weight to the earlier work of Godwin and more recently that of Dr. Wade. If Godwin's estimate of equilibrium is correct, then still more species could be added. The ponds need to be preserved in order that this valuable ecological work can be completed.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**            A copy of the paper by Prof. Godwin was obtained from Nottingham University Library by Mrs Margaret Berresford and without which much of the earlier information could not have been obtained.

The normal breeding range of this species extends from Northern Scandinavia through Finland and across N. Russia to Siberia.

Every year in winter, the population moves westwards into Poland and East Germany, but on a roughly 10 year cycle, there occurs a much larger movement of birds across the whole of N. Europe and into the British Isles. The reasons for this irruption, as it is known, is not clear to scientists as it does not appear to be linked to any failure of food crops or sudden increase in the population.

Whilst mystery may surround the reasons, the fact remains that this winter has been a 'Waxwing' year for Britain and you may have seen reports in the press to this effect and of the numerous sightings around the country.

The birds are about the same size as Starlings and in some ways they behave in a similar manner, moving around in small flocks of 30/50 perching on berries, mainly hawthorne and cotoneaster, and often on apples. They are quite conspicuous and gregarious in habit.

The plumage is mainly reddish-brown with some black patches above and below the bill and a large crest on the head is very noticeable. The tips of the wings have bright sealing-wax red spots (hence the common name) with some bright yellow markings which are also repeated in the tail feathers.

Until this year, I had never seen this species, but in December, Pam and I went on a short dancing holiday at Grange-over-Sands and on one of the 'free' days we decided to visit the nearby Leighton Moss RSPB reserve. Unfortunately, it turned out to be one of the few cold frosty mornings of this winter and all the open water was iced over with virtually nothing to see except a few of the commonest species like Mallard and Tufted Duck and a couple of Bewick's Swans, but we did see a flock of Long-Tailed Tits in the trees. We arrived at one hide to be told that we had just missed an otter which had been running about on the ice for 10 minutes in full view of the hide. Then it started to drizzle so we decided that it wasn't our day and we made our way back to the car park to eat our lunch.

On the way, we met a group of ladies who told us that they had seen a flock of about 50 Waxwings at a place called Warton on their way up from Morecombe that morning. Not being familiar with the area, the name meant nothing to us, and we envied them their luck, as we returned to eat our sandwiches.

We then drove off in the direction of Silverdale with the object of finding a cup of tea but after a short distance we approached a road junction with a signpost pointing down a side lane marked 'Warton - 3 miles'. A hurried conference decided that nothing ventured, nothing gained and we might find a cup of tea in that direction just as easily, so we turned off towards Warton.

The road was narrow and winding for most of the way but as the village came into view the road straightened out for a few hundred yards with an old overgrown hawthorne hedge on the right hand side and on a final bend into the village, an old farm house and orchard. At a gap in the hedge with a view into the orchard we spotted a couple of people with binoculars and realised that we had indeed found our Waxwings.

After hurriedly parking on the grass verge, we dashed over the road to find about 30 birds flitting about in the trees only a few yards away feeding on the apples and coming down on to the ground to drink and bathe in pool of water on the rough track leading to the house. During the next half hour we had some superb views of these beautiful birds before resuming our quest for a cup of tea, with the satisfaction of chalking up yet another species on our list.

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As usual Alan Heath has provided us with a summary of the weather he recorded during 1988 at his home at 136 Trowell Grove, Long Eaton.

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| WARMEST DAY                 | 7th August   |
| COLDEST DAY                 | 22nd November  |
| AVERAGE MAXIMUM TEMPERATURE | - 64°F which is 4°F down on the previous year  |
| AVERAGE MINIMUM TEMPERATURE | - 33.8°F which is 3°F up on the previous year  |
| DRIEST MONTH                | December   |
| WETTEST MONTH               | July   |
| WETTEST DAY                 | 10th July with almost an inch of rain  |
| RAINFALL                    | 23.31 inches for the year which is 2 inches down on 1987   |
|                             | Average per week 0.45inches  |
| THUNDERSTORMS               | Total of 6   |
| SNOW                        | Measureable snow fell on only one day which was 22 January with 2 inches. A trace covering fell in November. |
| BAROMETER                   | Highest was 30.9 on December 31 and the lowest was 28.95 on January 29                                       |
| FOG                         | It was particularly noticeable that there were 6 recorded days of fog in November following Bonfire Night    |
| PREVAILING WIND             | West   |
| LEAST WIND                  | East. In previous years this has been South East but it was East in 1988                                     |
| COMMENTS                    | Normally the coldest day of the year is in January or February. In 1988 it was in November                   |
|                             | The average maximum temperature was down on 1987 but the average minimum temperature was up.                 |

It had been widely reported that it was the mildest Christmas for many years in Britain. Whilst the period was certainly mild, it was actually warmer on Christmas Day in 1974 in Long Eaton. It was the warmest Boxing Day since the records began in 1960. By contrast, the coldest Christmas Day and Boxing Day was in 1962 when the temperature only reached freezing point.

It was noticeable that following the 5th November, there was a marked increase of fog. The efficiency of the Clean Air Act was demonstrated as the fog followed Bonfire Night. There was very little rain or wind following this period thus allowing fog to form in the smoke polluted air



MONTHLY WEATHER SUMMARY FOR 1988 - Recorded at 136 Trowell Grove.

- JANUARY A wet month with snow on 22nd. Windy in first week especially the 6th. On the 8th the temperature increased during the day by 21°F. River Trent was in flood in final week, especially on the 25th.
- FEBRUARY Mixed month with some mild days especially in the second week. A little snow which did not settle. Very windy at times with gales on the 1st and 9th. Quite windy in second and final week too.
- MARCH A wet month with River Trent in flood again on 16th and 17th. Strong westerly winds on 15th and 24th. Hail accompanied rain at times. Snow on the 13th did not settle.
- APRIL A drier month than of late. Some warm days in the third week but cool again later. Dominance of North-East winds.
- MAY A mixed month but quite warm in second week. The driest period was the third week and there was a thunderstorm on the 31st.
- JUNE Middle two weeks fine and warm. Thunderstorms at the end of the month. Dominance of North and North-East winds.
- JULY The wettest July since my records began and the wettest month of the year. Nearly an inch of rain fell on the 10th. Very windy at times, especially in the last week.
- AUGUST Very warm in the first week with the warmest day of the year on the 7th. Quite a good month but windy in the last week.
- SEPTEMBER A fairly dry month especially the first three weeks. Some good sunny days and warm at the end of the first week.
- OCTOBER Mixed month. Very windy on the 6th. Mild until the last week.
- NOVEMBER Mainly dry month until last week. Fair amount of fog following the 5th. Some hard frost and cold nights in second part of month. Coldest day of the year on the 22nd.
- DECEMBER Driest month of the year. Generally mild. One of the mildest Christmas periods since 1974.

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First meeting for Summer 1989 is on Saturday 22nd April at Egleton Reserve, Rutland Water. Meet 10.30am in car park at Egleton Reserve, 1 mile out of Oakham on the road to Uppingham. Map ref. 875075. Packed lunch required. Agenda for all meetings available.

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Looking forward to the programme for Winter 1989 Brrrrr.....

The first meeting will be on Monday 18th September at 7.15pm.

UNUSUAL BIRD SIGHTINGS OCTOBER 88 - FEBRUARY 89

|                      |       |            |                     |
|----------------------|-------|------------|---------------------|
| CORMORANT            | 118   | Nov        | Attenborough        |
| BITTERN              | 1     | 14.12.88   | Wollaton Park       |
| BEWICK'S SWAN        | 2     | 11.11.88   | Attenborough        |
| EIDER                | 1     | 15.10.88   | "                   |
| RUDDY DUCK           | 1     | 25.11.88   | Wollaton Park       |
| LONG TAILED DUCK     | 1     | 18.12.88   | " "                 |
| MERLIN               | 1     | 11.11.88   | Toton               |
| WATER RAIL           | 1-3   | Nov/Dec 88 | Attenborough        |
| BLACK-WINGED STILT   | 2     | 15.10.88   | "                   |
| LAPWING              | 1500  | 27.12.88   | Stapleford          |
| GREEN SANDPIPER      | 3     | Oct 88     | Attenborough        |
| GREAT SP. WOODPECKER | 1     | 4.1.89     | Wollaton Park       |
| LESSER " "           | 1     | 24.12.88   | Attenborough        |
| GREY WAGTAIL         | 12    | 7.10.88    | "                   |
| " "                  | 1     | Dec 88     | "                   |
| " "                  | 1     | Nov 88     | Beeston             |
| GREAT GREY SHRIKE    | 1     | 26.10.88   | Attenborough        |
| BLACKCAP             | 1     | Oct 88     | "                   |
| "                    | 1     | Oct/Dec 88 | Bramcote            |
| CHIFFCHAFF           | 1     | 11.11.88   | Attenborough        |
| "                    | 1     | 30.11.88   | Wollaton            |
| GOLDCREST            | 30/40 | Oct 88     | Attenborough        |
| RING OUZEL           | 1     | 30.10.88   | Wollaton            |
| LONG TAILED TIT      | 30    | 31.12.88   | Attenborough        |
| DIPPER               | 1     | 1/3.11.88  | R.Erewash-Sandiacre |
| BRAMBLING            | 1     | 25.11.88   | Wollaton Park       |
| SISKIN               | 40/50 | 24.12.88   | Attenborough        |
| "                    | 30/40 | Dec 88     | Wollaton Park       |



# BRITISH NATURALISTS' ASSOCIATION

PHENOLOGICAL REPORT

YEAR .....

LOCALITY ..... COUNTY .....

Observer's Name.....  
Address.....  
.....Post Code.....

Notes: B.N.A. members have been sending in records from its formation in 1905. From 1989 after a break the survey has been recommenced, the results will be published from time-to-time in the journal 'Country-Side'

As a basis for any study of the subject we need first a clear and accurate as possible a picture of the situation for many events, many localities and many years. Please keep noting events throughout the year, for as well as helping long term phenological perspective, locations of individual sightings will be forwarded to the Biological Records Centre.

Please enter the dates of your observations in the column provided. If a single observer restrict your entries to observations made within a 10 mile radius of the location at the top of the form. If you regularly watch a site outside this area, please use a separate form. It is not expected that you will have observations for all the species listed. Attach any other observations of interest (local increases or decreases, exceptional numbers, unusual species, abnormal weather, etc.) on a separate sheet of paper, together with the year, locality and your name.

Please complete and forward this form, together with a stamped, self addressed envelope to: Austen Dobbs,  
Cloverleigh, Old Main Road,  
Bulcote, NOTTINGHAM NG14 5GU.

to arrive not later than the 15th December.

(A) FLOWERING PLANTS

|                         | First flowering | Main flowering |    | Last flowering |
|-------------------------|-----------------|----------------|----|----------------|
|                         |                 | from           | to |                |
| 1. Coltsfoot            |                 |                |    |                |
| 2. Lesser Crelandine    |                 |                |    |                |
| 3. Wild Primrose.       |                 |                |    |                |
| 4. Dandelion            |                 |                |    |                |
| 5. Lady's Smock         |                 |                |    |                |
| 6. Garlic Mustard       |                 |                |    |                |
| 7. Bird's -foot Trefoil |                 |                |    |                |
| 8. Meadowsweet          |                 |                |    |                |

(B) BIRDS

Breeding Blackbird  
Breeding Song Thrush

|                                 | First Records |           |              |             | Last Records |              |
|---------------------------------|---------------|-----------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
|                                 | Nest bldg.    | Clutches  | Food for yg. | Fledged yg. | Eggs         | Food for yg. |
|                                 | First Records |           | Young/larvae |             | Last Records |              |
|                                 | First         | In number | 1st.brood    | 2nd.brood   | In number    | Last         |
| 1. Goldeneye                    |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 2. Cuckoo                       |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 3. Swift                        |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 4. Swallow                      |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 5. House Martin                 |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 6. Blackcap                     |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 7. Chiffchaff                   |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 8. Spotted Flycatcher           |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 9. Fieldfare                    |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 10. Redwing                     |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| <b>(C) <u>ANIMALS</u></b>       |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 1. Hedgehog                     |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 2. Pipistrelle                  |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| <b>(D) <u>REPTILES etc.</u></b> |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 1. C.Lizard                     |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 2. Grass Snake                  |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 3. C.Frog                       |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 4. C.Toad                       |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| <b>(E) <u>INSECTS</u></b>       |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 1. Bumble Bee<br>(Bombus sp.)   |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 2. Wasp                         |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| <b>(F) <u>BUTTERFLIES</u></b>   |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 1. Brimstone                    |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 2. Orange Tip                   |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 3. Red Admiral                  |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 4. Painted Lady                 |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 5. Small Tortoiseshell          |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 6. Peacock                      |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 7. Wall                         |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 8. Meadow Brown                 |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| <b>(G) <u>MOTHS</u></b>         |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 1. Poplar Hawk Moth.            |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 2. Lge. Yellow Underwing        |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 3. Vapourer                     |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 4. Oak Eggar                    |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 5. White Ermine                 |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 6. Cinnabar                     |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 7. March                        |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 8. Common Carpet                |               |           |              |             |              |              |
| 9. Magpie                       |               |           |              |             |              |              |

