

## What am I?

In the last issue, the 'What am I?' was the 22-spot ladybird (*Thea 22-punctata*). We had plenty of responses, but the first one was from Mrs E. Summers - many thanks to everyone who sent in an answer.

The 22-spot ladybird is a widespread and common species throughout Kent. It can be found in a variety of habitats including gardens, but typically found in meadows and on herbaceous plants, particularly hogweed. The species over-winters at ground level, usually in leaf litter or grass tussocks.

Many ladybird species are easy to identify, the 2-spot and Harlequin can be particularly problematic, due to the large number of colour variations.



© L. Manning  
22-spot ladybird (*Thea 22-punctata*)

If you believe you have seen a harlequin, take a photo or better still send us a live specimen in a crush proof container so it can be verified.

We can also help you to identify native ladybirds if you can supply us with a photo.

## What am I?

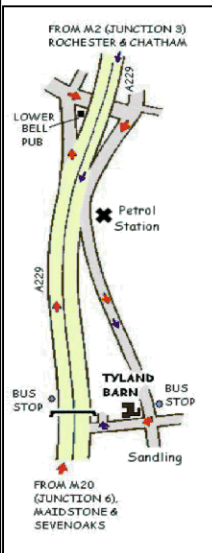


© S. Smith

We are looking forward to receiving your suggestions for the above photo (see 'contact us' below for details).

All suggestions are very much appreciated. *All species in 'What am I?' can be found in Kent.*

## Contact Us



If you have any news or success stories about species seen in your garden or elsewhere, we'd love to hear from you! If you would like more information about the Records Centre or other wildlife groups and organisations in Kent, feel free to contact us:

**KMBRC**

**Tyland Barn**

**Sandling**

**Maidstone**

**ME14 3BD**

Telephone: 01622 685646 or

01622 685780

(Editor R. Childs)

- If you are interested in becoming a volunteer or require more recording forms please call Ruth on 01622 685780 or email [ruth.childs@kmbrc.org.uk](mailto:ruth.childs@kmbrc.org.uk)

- If you would like to send in photographs for identification or have general queries, please email [info@kmbrc.org.uk](mailto:info@kmbrc.org.uk)

- If you know of any local publications which may be interested in including an article from us please contact Ruth at the above number or email [ruth.childs@kmbrc.org.uk](mailto:ruth.childs@kmbrc.org.uk)

- Additional information and detail can be found on our website: [www.kmbrc.org.uk](http://www.kmbrc.org.uk)

- We are also available to give talks or presentations to interested local groups about the Records Centre and/or Kent's wildlife.

- We offer training in recording and the use of

## Our Partners

We are very grateful to the following partners for providing funding and resources.



Kent & Medway

*A Focus for  
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# KMBRC NEWSLETTER

Biological  
Records Centre

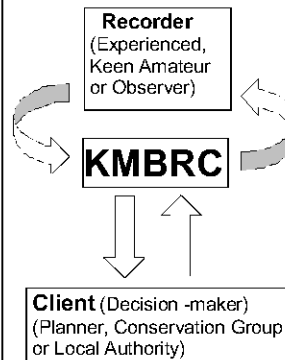
September 2006 Issue 9 **Biological Recording - Providing Useful Data**

*This is an enormous topic to try to tackle in a Newsletter but I wanted to provide a few points to consider when recording and some simple ways records can be made really useful.*

As a Biological Records Centre one of our remits focuses upon data flow. The passage of records between the data owner - (recorder) and the data user - (our clients), often planners, conservation organisations, consultants or local authorities. These are more often than not people who help to inform decision-making in Kent, be it for species conservation and management or for development. The KMBRC lies in between these two groups and is an apolitical organisation which facilitates the flow of information between them (see below).



*Lucanus cervus (female)* © L. Manning



The Records Centre has an important role to play, with a responsibility to supply our clients with high quality, up to date information with which they can then make informed decisions.

Aside from obtaining data from people who have been recording and carrying out surveys for many years, we acknowledge the importance of receiving records from people who are interested in wildlife but aren't seasoned regulars! Unfortunately recorders cannot be all over the county at the same time and rely on helpful 'tip-offs' from keen amateurs to find new sites for species, or monitor existing ones.

Photographs of species you believe are rare or unusual are a vital way for us to pass information on to county recorders, who understandably, aren't able to travel all over the county to verify records. Photographs (i.e. a voucher specimen) and accurate locations make records so much more useful to the data-users.



*Polyommatus icarus* © S. Smith

It is our responsibility to prove to clients (data-users) that records are accurate. One example is of a rare species observed away from its known area; with no way of proving an observation like this many would disregard the sighting. It may be a legitimate record but without proof it would probably not get used.

In summary, only record the species you are 100% positive about and anything you are unsure of, let us know as it may be an interesting record. We rely heavily on county recorders for help with species identification and so may not be able to respond immediately but many people give up their own time to help identify species from samples and photos, for which we are extremely appreciative.

*We are working very hard to offer support to amateur recorders through training days and we are always available to offer advice or support. We will return any photos if requested and specimens can be carefully sent to us in the post in crush-proof containers.*

## Fascinating finds from amateur recorders

*Chance sightings by members of the public can and do sometimes lead to the discovery of interesting or rarely seen species and behaviours:*

A telephone call revealed to us a greylag goose nesting atop a huge conifer. This is a ground-nesting species which initially baffled the birders we called for advice.

They visited the site and confirmed the observation believing it may have been a Scandinavian 'immigrant' used to nesting in trees to avoid predation by large mammals.

A call about earthworm behaviour led to a gentleman getting in touch with a national organisation to observe a previously unseen earthworm behaviour in his garden pond, where the earthworm foraged for detritus in the pond itself. Full details about this story were published in issue 3 of the newsletter.

An amateur mycologist recently found an extremely rare fungus, this was confirmed by the county recorder and became a very-much appreciated record.

These observations not only inform decisions but they also help our understanding of species ecology.

On a similar mycological note a record of a fungus on a Yew tree was discovered this year by someone who had an interest in ancient trees, particularly Yews (which Kent is famous for).

This fungus again was a fascinating sighting of a rarely seen bracket fungus - one of only 3 sightings of the county.

## Wildlife Recording: Hints and Tips



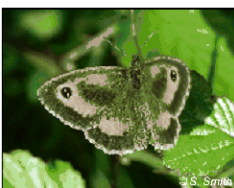
**Enjoy it!** - Recording is a great past time and is an enjoyable way to spend time whether you are in your own garden or out on an organised walk in the countryside. We certainly don't want recording to become a chore and if you find it hard work then stop!

**Accurate Identification** - We need a full species name to make it a useful record. This isn't always easy and with the help of some of Kent's Recorders, we are able to help identify species from specimens and photographs and, if requested will point out some of the defining features.

A dragonfly isn't a useful record, but if you have one you can't identify, collect some exuvia (the skins left by emerging dragonfly larvae) from around your pond and we will be able to identify all the breeding species in your garden, equally you can take a photo of the adult.

However, a bat is a useful record - all bats are protected by law and knowing where bats feed, roost or hibernate is extremely helpful.

We can recommend some excellent books to introduce species identification and we have a library here at the Records Centre office at Tyland Barn which anyone can come and use to look up species, or just browse through.



**Digital Recording** - The KMBRC relies on a team of dedicated volunteers to digitise paper records. We have a simple spreadsheet available to download (or we can email a copy) on our website.

If you have a computer and MS Excel this is the easiest way for us to receive records and they get added onto the database very quickly, reducing the time lag between records being taken and being used by clients. It is recommended to send in records once every 6 months in this format.

**Cameras** - Taking photographs is one of the easiest ways to record - you can go home and search through the books at your leisure! Photographs become invaluable to us when helping to identify species. Send photos to us for help with identification.

Not everything can be accurately identified from photos, fungi are notoriously difficult. Having a photo is a start and makes close up viewing very easy, which is ideal for some insects, and occasionally you'll find you've taken an amazing photograph!



**Accurate locations** - ideally we'd like a 6 figure (100m accuracy) Ordnance Survey Grid reference. <http://www.kmbrc.org.uk/gridrefs>

You can find more detail about it on our website, but we can always help too. If you aren't able to supply a grid reference then a detailed location is necessary, with nearest built up area, road junction, landmark etc. A post code is suitable if recording in your garden.

*It is impossible to know everything - we learn something new here at the Records Centre almost everyday. Don't record it unless you are 100% positive about your identification and location - if in doubt ask us, we'll be happy to help.*



**Training** - the KMBRC run study days in association with Kent Wildlife Trust and throughout the year there are walks and day-long classes to attend for a variety of species groups. The Kent Field Club also run an excellent calendar of fascinating walks throughout the county. Going out with people who know species very well is often the best way to start to learn. So if you're interested in fungi why not take part in one of the fungi trails, or go on a bat walk with the Kent Bat Group.

([www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk), [www.kentfieldclub.org.uk](http://www.kentfieldclub.org.uk), [www.kentbatgroup.org.uk](http://www.kentbatgroup.org.uk))

## Kent Goes Wild! 2006

Kent Goes Wild 2006 went ahead this year in August at Shorne Wood Country Park, near Gravesend. The event ran across 2 days over the weekend and we had incredible support from local people, recorders and recording groups.

Between the recording groups present more than 250 separate species records were collected during the weekend. This data is being collated and will be passed on to the wardens at Shorne to help inform their management plans.

The event was attended by about 2500 people and we had some excellent press coverage during the event from BBC Radio Kent and Meridian as well as a number of articles in the local press. Many thanks to all who attended, both visitors and recorders.



Participants of the Dragonfly guided walk © G. Marchais

## Up and Coming Events

This coming Autumn there are a variety of events going on throughout Kent in which you could take part. From Study Days to guided walks and open days. Every year recording groups, national societies, wildlife trusts and records centres organise a huge range of activities for serious recorders, amateurs and families. It is an ideal way to meet new people and learn more about Kent's species. There are links to many of these organisations on our website: <http://www.kmbrc.org.uk/links.htm>



**Kent Field Club  
Annual Conference**

The Kent Field Club's annual conference is being held on Saturday October 14th.

The theme this year is Kent's Woodlands and a number of excellent speakers will be talking on a variety of topics with a woodland focus.

It's a perfect opportunity to learn about Kent's nationally important woods and mingle with a whole host of people. Details can be found on our website: <http://www.kmbrc.org.uk/events.htm>



**South East Annual Amphibian and Reptile  
Groups Annual Conference**

This year it's the turn of Kent's Reptile and Amphibian Group to host the South East Conference. The theme this year is positive contributions to conservation made by herpetological groups. The event will be held at Greenwich University's Medway Campus, in Chatham on Saturday November 11th.

For more information please visit the KRAG website: <http://www.kentarg.org/events.htm>