Coleopterists Society of Britain and Ireland
Secretariat:
6 Cedarways
Appleton Park
Warrington
WA4 5EW
United Kingdom

ColSoc field meeting report

Wicken Fen, Cambridgeshire – 7th June 2026

After a week of rain in early June (in such a hot dry summer), the ColSoc meeting at the National Trust's Wicken Fen in Cambridgeshire enjoyed a lovely warm, sunny day. 15 people attended, most of whom met mid-morning by the Café and then, in normal ColSoc behaviour, dispersed across the landscape. That is all too easy at Wicken Fen, as the core SSSI fen is 250 hectares and there are 650 ha of habitat in various stages of restoration.



A birds-eye view over the Visitor Centre, Café, Boathouse and the Sedge Fen.



Sedge Fen Drove.

Wicken Fen has been a nature reserve for well over 100 years. The National Trust had acquired the majority of the classic fen by 1926, with further small land additions in later decades and then a major expansion in the land area of the nature reserve since 1999, with the arable farmland being restored to wetland habitats.

The undrained, calcareous, rich fen habitat on wet peat is very diverse in plant species and supports a rich invertebrate community. It is maintained by rotational cutting, which produces large heaps of cut material known to be very productive for invertebrates (locally named Duffey Piles after Eric Duffey, the spider expert). There are also a variety of aquatic, grassland and fen carr habitats. The wider nature reserve has year-round grazing by konik ponies and highland cattle and thus a huge dung resource (no avermectins are used, nor pesticides or fertilisers).

There were no target species for the meeting. It was an opportunity for people to explore and enjoy this famous nature reserve and to find beetles, new to them and possibly new for the site. With an exceptional beetle list of 1770 species, you might think it would be hard to add more species, but that is not the case when the ColSoc is visiting.

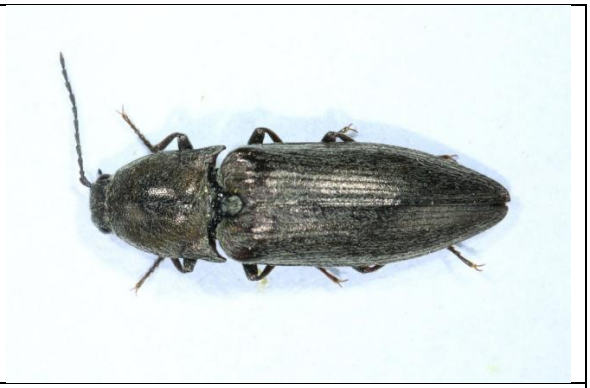
The collated records so far total 560 records of 348 species, of which 17 are new to the Wicken Fen list. This included some species known to be spreading across Britain, such

as the buprestid *Agrilus convexicollis* (found by beating dead twigs), *Lithostygnus serripennis* (sedge heap) (Latridiidae) and the rove beetle *Coproporus immigrans* (sedge heap). Less common species added to the list included *Paraphotistus nigricornis* (Elateridae), *Aeletes atomarius* (Histeridae), *Phalacrus championi* (Phalacridae), *Scydmaenus rufus* (Scydmaenidae), *Lissodema cursor* (Salpingidae) and the staph *Heterothops binotatus.* There were also widespread species that had not been spotted at Wicken before, such as *Dorytomus rufatus* (Curculionidae) and *Tasgius winkleri* (Staphylinidae).

In addition, beetles more usually found indoors or in stored products were taken in the field, from the sedge heaps, notably *Palorus subdepressus* (Tenebrionidae), *Cryptolestes capensis* and *Cryptolestes pusillus* (Laemophloeidae).

A nice surprise was the addition of 3 new species of longhorns, out of the 7 species recorded on the day; *Glaphyra umbellatarum*, *Pseudovadonia livida* and *Tetrops peterkai*. In addition, the three new saproxylic species added to a steadily growing saproxylic list, that has lifted the SQI for Wicken Fen to 502.5 (about 36th in the UK list of sites, see https://khepri.uk/rankings/).

Of the Wicken specialities, several people found *Silvanus recticollis*, in various Duffey piles, a species found new to Britain at Wicken Fen by Steve Lane (2019). Also found was *Alphitophagus bifasciatus* (Tenebrionidae), the first WF record for over 100 years, the Vulnerable reed beetle *Donacia bicolora* (Chrysomelidae) and the Nationally Scarce Withy Weevil *Cryptorhynchus lapathi*.

	
Silvanus recticollis from Wicken Fen (Photo by Simon Van Toller, on iRecord)	*Paraphotistus nigricornis* from Wicken Fen (Photo by Simon Van Toller, on iRecord)

Wicken Fen is a lovely place to visit at any time of the year. The land in restoration is less recorded compared to the classic fen, but all areas are likely to turn up scarce species and occasionally beetles new to the site lists.

Lane, S.A. (2019) *Silvanus recticollis* Rietter (Coleoptera: Silvanidae) new to Britain*. The Coleopterist* **28:** 128-129. [discovered at Wicken Fen from a sedge 'Duffey' heap in March 2019].

Stuart Warrington (meeting organiser and a volunteer surveyor with the National Trust).

Please email Stuart if you would like a copy of the Wicken Fen Coleoptera Records.
Stuart.warrington7@gmail.com