

# A brief update on the Herts Invertebrate Project

**Joe Gray, William Bishop and Ian Carle**

At the time of writing, we have completed two of the six scheduled invertebrate surveys for the 2018 field season. Our focus has been, and continues to be, recording data that can be used by site managers to enhance conservation measures in place for particular species. To this end, we have tried to ensure in 2018, more than ever, that meetings focus on sites that are due to have a management plan updated in the following year. For the most part we have targeted Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust sites.

The first event of 2018 saw the group head to Hunsdon Mead, on 19 May. Joining us for her first meeting was Gail Ashton, as part of her personal project to photograph 500 species of wild invertebrates in Britain during the year. We identified over 100 species on the day, with the list being dominated by beetles. Some stunning photographs by Gail of the beetles we saw are included with this brief report and highlight their incredible diversity of forms.

The second meeting took place at Therfield Heath and Fox Covert, on 2 June. It was a day the three of us will never forget, for Ian found the Down Shieldbug (*Canthophorus impressus*), under a Bastard Toadflax in the Pen Hills area of the SSSI. This is a nationally scarce species of burrowing shieldbug never before found in Hertfordshire and thought to have been completely lost from its previous sites in the East of England. Sadly, we found this very early on in the meeting, and Gail was slightly late and missed the find, and so we only have a basic photo of this magnificent insect to show.

By the time you are reading this, we will have hopefully completed the other four scheduled meetings for 2018 and been able to supply some much-needed invertebrate data to site managers.

More generally, the continuing success of the Herts Invertebrate Project is entirely contingent on people attending meetings and recording what we see. While it is always helpful to have people with particular expertise in one or more taxonomic areas within the invertebrates, we equally welcome

newcomers to natural history who want to learn and develop their field skills. Anyone interested in joining our mailing list is directed to our webpage: <http://www.hnhs.org/herts-invertebrate-project>.

### About the authors

Joe and William are co-founders of the Herts Invertebrate Project and regular attendees at field meetings. Ian has recently come on board to assist with the running of the initiative and he, too, regularly attends meeting. He also manages the Herts Environmental Record Centre.



*Down Shieldbug (photo Joe Gray).*



*Cantharis fusca (photo Gail Ashton).*



*Umbellifer Longhorn Beetle (photo Gail Ashton).*



*Cassida vibex (photo Gail Ashton).*



*Platystomos albinus (photo Gail Ashton).*