

Issue 144

August 2017

Registered Charity No. 510146

Uniper have reported that there had been occasional outbreaks of New Zealand pygmy weed on the shoreline of the lagoon in Compartment 1. Unfortunately this has now significantly spread to the muddy margins on the northern end of the lagoon and is now a low carpet of NZPW. Previous incidents of the weed in 2015 have been successfully remedied by the application of salt and Uniper are now taking immediate steps to eradicate the latest outbreak.

There are a couple of issues that require addressing:

Somebody has taken it upon themselves to cut back the nettles in front of the Visitor Centre screening. We have been contacted by Uniper and been asked to inform all members that, quote:

"Any maintenance operations carried out on the Reserve must be implemented in accordance with the approved management plan. Also, as the landowner they are ultimately responsible for safe working on site and need to be aware of any proposed operations and how and by whom they will be implemented".

Secondly, we have unfortunately experienced a couple of thefts in recent months - an RSPB feeder has been taken from the station outside the Feeder Hide and a sack of sunflower hearts taken from inside the same hide. As access to both the pole for servicing the feeders and the seed bins would only be facilitated by a keyholder, sadly it would appear the culprit is one of our own. Members vigilance would be greatly appreciated.

I have been handed a leaflet from Media Panel Wales that may be of interest to members to raise a little cash for the Society. It is simply a weekly online declaration of your TV viewing habits for which up to a maximum of £500 per year may be raised for a community charity of your choice. The contact details are as follows:

www.mediapanel.wales or ring Sian on 07494 506 962

A pair of spectacles has been in the signing in kiosk at the barrier for some weeks now if anyone is missing a pair - they are in a Specsaver case.

An Evening With The Nightjars

Five helpers and twelve members met at One Planet Adventure Visitor Centre at 8 pm on a beautiful summer evening. Fortunately there was enough of a breeze to keep the midges at bay.

We walked slowly up the forest track, watching a variety of smaller birds as we went. Most of the views were fairly brief as birds disappear into the lush undergrowth at this time of year. We did however have good views of a Goldcrest which spent some time feeding at the top of a gorse bush and a Blackcap which flitted around the base of a tree. We walked to the RSPB hide to take a look at a different habitat, where we had distant views of two flying male Black Grouse and a couple of Meadow Pipits, also at a distance.

We then walked on to the clear fell area where we waited for dusk to fall and hoped to see Nightjars. We stood in a line watching the clear fell area and waited.....and waited..... A Buzzard which had been perching on one of the dead trees flew away and as the light faded a faint 'churring" was heard. A Nightjar had landed on a distant branch and we were able to get good views of the distinctive silhouette in the scope, as well as listening to the unmistakable sound. We were then treated to a Nightjar flying display with one and sometimes two birds flying low over the clear fell. Norma and Corrine, who had taken up position a little further down the forest track were also hearing Nightjars and being treated to a fly past. We estimated that at least 6 Nightjars were using the area.

As we were leaving the area Ros, Norma, Corrine and others heard the unmistakable sound of Black Grouse lekking on the moor behind us - it was 10.30pm!

Our return journey involved avoiding several frogs who were crossing our path. Norma, our evening species recorder, reported that 27 bird species had been seen or heard during the visit.

Many thanks to Tilhill for allowing us access, to Jim and Ian at the One Planet Adventure Visitor Centre in Llandegla Forest for their help and to our guides, all DNS members, Julie, Norma, Corinne and Ros.

Bob Lane

VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED TO HELP OUT

MAINTENANCE DAY (Saturday 14th October)

Meet at 9.00am at the Field Centre for a general tidy up of the site and hides prior to the open day.

OPEN DAY (Saturday 21st October)

10.00am - 3.00pm. Helpers will be needed for car park organisation, tea making and giving our visitors a warm welcome.

If you are able to help out in any way, please contact: Julie Rodgers 07858 776387

Thank You

Field Trip

Leasowe Foreshore 23rd April

The area that we visited was inland of the embankment, particularly the area between Dove Point and Leasowe Lighthouse, with sand dunes followed by a series of small horse paddocks many surrounded by overgrown hedges, this habitat seems particularly attractive to spring migrants. We also went down Lingham Lane, inland of the lighthouse, with its tall hedges and the nearby River Birkett.

Our attention was first drawn to the row of sycamores and silver poplars that runs northwest to southeast down the side of Stone Cottage just prior to the lighthouse where a pair of birders had reported a Ring Ouzel having flown over minutes before. However despite intense scrutinisation of the surrounding area by the ten members of Dee Nats and the two birders we were unable to locate the elusive bird. We did see in this area Song Thrush, along with a few migrant Chiffchaffs and Whitethroats; Knot, Herring gull, Swallow and Pied Wagtail.



We then headed past the lighthouse, down Lingham Lane and around the horse paddocks, where we saw further migrants including Sedge, Reed and Willow Warblers together with all the usual suspects: Blue, Long Tailed and Great tits, Robin, Dunnock, Crow, Kestrel, Sparrowhawk, Mallard, Moorhen and others.

Walking through the dunes and returning along the embankment back to the lighthouse we saw Stonechat, Skylark, Linnet, Oystercatcher, Cormorant, Ringed Plover, Greenshank, Curlew, Dunlin, Little Egret and Redshank.

We finished the morning with forty three species, with some good migrants, and good company, which was a fair reflection of the day, despite missing the Ring Ouzel. Still there's always next year.



Bill Dickinson

Field Trip

Wixhall Moss 28th May

Such a pity that only eight members turned up for what was an excellent and informative day at Wixhall Moss, superbly guided by Barry Probin, National Nature Reserve volunteer and DNS member.

Wixhall and Fenn Mosses straddle the Welsh/English border to the S.W. of Whitchurch and are Sites of Special Scientific Interest; European Special Area of Conservation and Ramsar Wetlands of International importance.

After the last Ice Age a large moraine was deposited by the head of the glacier coming down from the north, this formed a dam that prevented the melt water from running away and subsequently the Moss was born and became the country's third biggest lowland raised bog. Extensive work has been carried out over recent years to restore the Moss to something like its former self following the removal of trees, predominantly Alder, and the blocking of drainage ditches to raise the water table.



There were plenty of Dragonflies and Butterflies spotted early on in our walk including: both blue and red damsel flies and several white legged damselflies. Lots of Four Spot Chasers venturing out once the sun came out along with one of the reserve's star residents - White Faced Darters. Butterflies included Holly Blues, Small Blues, Brimstone, Speckled Wood, Green hairstreak and Green Veined White.

Before not too long we encountered yet another of the Reserve's 'A' list species, a really good sighting of an Argent & Sable Moth. Other moth species that we encountered were Brown Silver Line and Common Heath.

A stop at another pool and we were rewarded by a sighting of a truly spectacular Raft Spider complete with a distinctive white stripe running along either side of its body. If that was not enough, in the next pool we had Dragonfly nymphs freshly emerging from the water to climb up blades of grass in order to wait for their bodies to harden off.



Throughout the day we had a Cuckoo calling and were fortunate to get a very brief sighting as it flew off on our walk back to the cars. The skies also provided us with good sightings of several Hobbies, other birds spotted through the day were Stonechat, Buzzard, Swallow, Curlew, Reed Bunting, Meadow Pipit.

All in all it was a very rewarding and informative day with good company and an excellent guide in Barry who was a mine of information be it Geology, Local History or Wildlife.

Alan Smethurst

Reserve Report Apr - Jul

A Hooded Crow photographed on April 28th was yet another new species for the Reserve. A Hobby was seen on both May 1st and 2nd. There were many records of Great White Egret on the bunded pools in June and July, often with two birds present, one of them with the darker bill of a breeding plumage bird, and even 3-4 birds present on July 30th/31st. A Cuckoo was seen over the Nature Trail on May 31st, flying across the river and there was one report of a very early Kingfisher on June 25th. The summer procession of Common Terns along the river was joined by an Arctic Tern on April 28th, 5 Black Terns on April 30th, 4 records of 1-4 Sandwich Terns in May and a single Little Tern on June 7th. There were also some unusual gulls; Little Gulls were seen four times between April 23rd and May 17th (on the first date, a juvenile bird was chased away by a Peregrine), Mediterranean Gulls were seen on April 20th and July 30th with Yellow-legged Gulls present on May 17th and July 30th. There were 8 Whinchat records of 1-2 birds between April 24th and 30th, with a Redstart on April 23rd and a Yellow Wagtail on April 30th. Departure of the wintering flock of Pink-footed Geese was quite late with many birds still visible on Burton Marsh on April 25th.

Two pairs of Tufted Duck raised young on the fly ash lagoon, as did Mallard, Coot and Little Grebe. Four juvenile Mute Swans were seen “escaping” from the lagoon onto Oakenholt Marsh through a hole in the fence on June 25th, leaving a single cygnet behind for much of July. The more gradual disappearance of young Swans, occurring annually, has been something of a mystery in the past. Little Ringed Plovers nested successfully and a pair with 3 young was seen on the fly-ash lagoon in mid-June. Moorhens also raised young in the little reed-bed by the Field Study Centre this year.

Return migration will be in full swing by the time this newsletter goes out and visitors to the Reserve will find Spotted Redshank and Greenshank as “certainties” on the bunded pools, with spectacular flocks of Black-tailed Godwit, Redshank, Oystercatcher and (sometimes) Dunlin and Knot, with a sprinkling of more exotic waders. We can also expect more raptor sightings in the autumn; indeed, 3 Red Kites were seen from the Reserve on July 25th. The highest tides for August are during the week of Aug 20th-25th.

Glenn Morris

The West Hide Stoat

Our little manic entertainer of the last few weeks



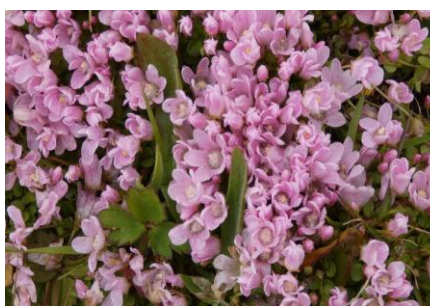
Field Trip

South Stack & RSPB Cemlyn Bay 24th June

Kath Morris arrived at our house bright and early and we set off for Llanfairfechan to meet with Richard Howells and Pat from Sandbach who were staying there. This is an excellent area in winter but much less to see at this time of the year. Rod and Jeannie from Chester soon joined us and we set off down the A55 Anglesey bound.

The day was overcast, but it didn't rain and became increasingly pleasant. Kath, who grew up in Holyhead suggested that we go to Breakwater CP on the way, a new site for us and one that pleased us all. Chiff Chaff and Willow Warblers were calling and Richard quickly spotted a Rock Pipet - on a rock by a low cliff along the shore.

Richard was happy to do the bird list which finally added up to 51 species and some of the birds seen here were: Gannet, Manx Shearwater, Buzzard, Kestrel, Peregrine and Cormorant.



As we left we admired a carpet of very pretty pink flowers. After consultation with a Harrop field guide, it turned out to be Bog Pimpernel.

We then headed for South Stack where we enjoyed seeing all the usual cliff nesting birds, Good views of a pair of Chough particularly pleased me. The RSPB is working towards improving the breeding success following the last two years of nestling failure.

We were due to meet Stella here but unfortunately by the time we met we needed to leave in order to get to Cemlyn. Roseate Terns once nested here and efforts are to be made to encourage them to return.



From the NWWT web site:

Cemlyn is one of NWWT's star reserves and regarded by the Anglesey County Council as the "jewel in the crown" of its Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

It is valued for both its scenic qualities and its unique range of wildlife and is as popular with general visitors as it is with birdwatchers and naturalists. It includes a large lagoon, separated from the sea by a spectacular, naturally-created shingle beach. During the summer months it is home to one of the most important Tern colonies in the UK, and Wales' only colony of Sandwich Terns.

Well, we were in for rather a big disappointment. The colony had been badly disturbed with Otters, Herons and Humans all under suspicion. The birds we saw were a shadow of the lively, noisy crowds we usually see here at this time of the year. At least, now in June, the Little Terns at Gronant are doing well in spite of the high tides.

Richard and Pat had left before I remembered to take a group picture!



Betty Lee

Indoor Meetings 2017

All indoor meetings (**except the October meeting**) will be held at Connah's Quay Community Centre, Tuscan Way, off Chapel Street, CH5 4DZ and will start at 7.30pm.

Friday 15th September. *Steve Palin,*
'Butterflies, Dragonflies and Moths'

Friday 20th October, *Mike Taylor, Wepre Park Ranger.*
A talk on the work and wildlife of Wepre Park including specimens and exhibits.
(NB: This talk will be held at the new Field Centre, Wepre Park)

Friday 17th November, *Ian Spence*
Bird ringing at Connah's Quay Nature Reserve.

Friday 24th November.
AGM

Corrine Williams

Field Meetings 2017

Saturday 9th September.

Hilbre Island. Hilbre over high tide - Waders Terns and Skuas. Meet at West Kirby Sailing Centre, Dee Lane (SJ213869) at 9.30am for immediate crossing. For further details contact:
Bill Dickinson: 07968438121

Sunday 22nd October.

Moore Nature Reserve. Popular reserve with lakes, woods and pastures, also the possibility of lesser Spotted Woodpecker. Meet at Moore NR, Lapwing Lane, Warrington (SJ573854) at 9.30am. For further details contact: Hugh Stewart: 07527828571

Saturday 16th December.

Marshside RSPB and Mere Sands Wood LWT. Bewick and Whooper Swans with a host of other wildfowl and waders. Meet at Marshside visitor centre (SD353205) at 9.30am. For further details contact: Bill Dickinson: 07968438121.

Bill Dickinson

Group Activities

Art Group:

Every second Thursday of the month at 2.00pm
Contact: Doreen Boswell on 01352 757309

Photographic Group:

Every 2nd Wednesday of the month at 2.00pm
Contact: Carl Boswell on 01352 757309

Wednesday Group:

Every 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month at 1.00pm

All activities are held at the Field Studies Centre

Digital Media

The password for the website members area will now remain unchanged until the December issue when a new password will be assigned to last for the following 12 months.

User Name	dnsuser
Password	hkds9312

Web site: www.deenats.org.uk

Email address: webeditor@deenats.org.uk

Facebook page: MEMBERS OF DEESIDE NATURALIST SOCIETY