



Issue 154

July 2021

Registered Charity No. 510146

Welcome back to our first Newsletter of the year. The Covid restrictions and lockdowns have ultimately dictated the lack of activity going on in the Society both in and outside the Reserve.

Things are starting to get back to some sort of normality in that the hides are now open to all (covid restrictions applicable) and the Field Meetings have re-commenced. As things stand at the moment, the Photography group and the Wednesday club will be discontinued due mainly to the lack of participation. The Friday evening talks will be reviewed later in the year and the Art group is to re-convene on Thursday 12th August from 1-30 pm until 3-30 pm unless Government guidelines dictate otherwise. Contact Kay Mattocks on 01244 821810

It was agreed at the last Committee meeting to invite any member who may have a gripe or an issue to raise to come down and join us to put your view/opinion across. The next Committee meeting being on 7th September at 1.00pm either inside or outside the Field Study Centre as the Covid rulings determine.

During the lockdown we have had contractors in to replace the wind damaged screening adjacent to the Dee hide, Middle hide and Field Study Centre.

Alan Smethurst.

Dear members,

Anyone visiting the Reserve will notice that the water level in the pools are low or very low. This is due to the collapse of the concrete work around the overflow pipe between the Middle Hide pool and the East Hide pool. DNS and Uniper are aware of this and are looking into fixing the problem. The saltmarsh is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and as such there are protocols to be followed, we can't just drive a digger onto the site, we need special permission. As we are fast approaching the return of the waders, no disturbance to them becomes a priority so it is extremely unlikely that any work would be started until May 2022 at the earliest.

Uniper have requested that anyone entering the 3 low level hides in front of the pools to sign in and out in a book that they will provide, this is for the purpose of their insurance company.

The tree cutting carried out on the reserve was carried out as an ongoing tree management program. All the cut wood was given to a bio fuel company to heat local homes.

Please continue to social distancing and adhere to the Welsh Government directives when on the Reserve.

Phil Hotchkiss (Chair).

Cryptic Natural History Quiz

1	After dark in a hurricane.		
2	Dishonest person is easily spotted.		
3	Is this feline on top of the world?		
4	Always flies in before Kay.		
5	Stanley stamps his author(ity) on this publication.		
6	This giant ramp needs sorting in Scotland.		
7	Felix sleeps no more.		
8	Lost Arabs are confused crossing the Atlantic.		
9	In making fisherman's pie you will need some sprats.		
10	Bet 25 quid on Scottish islands for equine transport.		
11	Erect firs haphazardly to find this little fella.		
12	The Doc reversed in Billingsgate.		
13	Pester and hound after some spread.		
14	Part of the other one in the pool.		
15	Rockers may feel undressed without it.		
16	Pegasus?		
17	A measure of harvest waste		
18	The Abergele phantom holds this disguised gargantuan		
19	Was it oak that Peter Piper picked uncertain.		
20	Wow! This feline is looking chic.		
21	Long after the Spanish for copper.		
22	Really, really, small? Could be.		
23	Multi coloured 'Yorkshire' battle defeat.		
24	I daresay this could take offat a push.		
25	41 st President's offspring.		
26	Allow hot Mommy to readjust in cooler times.		
27	Is this a Welsh version of this religious leader?		
28	Sharp pain just before the fiddle loses six.		
29	Section of a long narrow hill.		
30	'Babe' is after 252 pence.		
31	Mr Rhys Jones at home.		
32	It can fly amongst the furthest Orkney islands.		
33	Greetings, Mrs Sharples.		
34	Pristine letter of the alphabet.		
35	13 th letter embedded at the heart of the European Union.		

Reserve Bird Report Apr-Jun

Events!!

The pandemic has influenced the recording of bird species with the Reserve being closed from January to March.

The heavy rainfall caused the island on the Ash pool to become submerged. This led to loss of the vegetation and surface dressing down to the membrane. The resultant stripped surface attracted nesting black-headed gulls and a pair of nesting Avocets (a first for the reserve).

Breeding Avocets are schedule one: meaning it is illegal to disturb them on or near the nest. As a consequence all activity on or around the Ash pool is suspended until the birds leave. The island will then be relined and a deep dressing of shale will be added within a new timber surround.

The bund between middle and east hides has broken down and the pipe dislodged. We are entering peak wader migration with the bunded pools being an important wader roost from June onwards. Consequently any repair work would be a massive disruption. The pools are tidal fed when tides reach 9 metres or more and retention is controlled by the sluices at the east and west end. Water levels across the bunded pools should remain normal except as influenced by tide heights, prevailing winds and weather. To avoid disturbing the birds, which rely on the pools to roost, work could not realistically be carried out until May 2022. The decision has been made to monitor the numbers of waders using the pools and to consult with our ecologist before a decision is made on the extent of repairs.

Sightings.

April. Pair Grey Partridge, 8 Chiffchaff, 2 Whooper Swans, 8 Greenshank, 1000 Pink-footed Geese, 6 Grey Plover, Knot, Redshank, Dunlin, Bar-tailed Godwit, Wigeon, Teal, Skylark, Goldcrest, Bullfinch, House Martins, Sand Martins, Swallow, Black-tailed Godwits, Hen harrier, Pair Avocet, House Sparrows, Goosander, Red-legged Partridge, Spotted Redshank, Wheatear, Common Terns, 10 Twite, Linnet, Blackcap, Arctic Tern, 30 Sandwich Terns, Whimbrel, Pintail, Common Whitethroat, Willow warblers, Common Redstart, Lesser Whitethroat, Reed Warbler, Song Thrush, Mistle Thrush, Sedge Warbler, Great Egrets,.

May. Grey Partridges, Whinchat, Swifts, Great-spotted Woodpecker, Wheatear, Whimbrel, Paired Mute Swans, 18 pairs of Black-headed Gulls, Little Grebes, Rock Pipits, 2 Marsh Harriers.

June. Six Cygnets, 28 Black-headed Gull Chicks, 3 Avocet young, Moorhen chicks, Coot chicks and Little Grebe young, Ruddy Shelduck, Egyptian Goose, 2 Cattle Egret (with cattle near Rockcliffe roundabout), 3 Mediterranean Gulls, SP Spotted Redshank, Greenshank, Lapwings, Little Ringed Plovers, Common Sandpiper, Pair Grey Partridge, 8 Great Egrets, Kittiwake.

The 2020 Bird Report is now available under Publications on the DNS website.

Remember to log your sightings and be careful not to publicise breeding or rare birds on open social media (as reserve is permit only).

Peter and Sue Haslem.

‘Nightjar Walk’ 15th June

Coed Nercwys Is a coniferous plantation of around 3 square miles, situated a few miles to the south of Mold. It was originally heather moorland but during the mid 1960’s it was planted with conifers as part of the Governments post-war drive to become self sufficient in timber. There are cleared areas which are ideal habitats for ground nesting birds, flowers and butterflies.



At the high point of the site lies Llyn Ochyn, originally a small lake but is now blanket bog home to dragonflies, newts and an abundance of cotton grass. There are two public car parks one each at the northern and southern end of the woodland with a good accessible trail running between the two with numerous circular routes off to both sides plus a spectacular viewpoint looking north towards Beeston Chester and Widnes.

Our party of a round dozen met at the forest’s northern car park at 20.00 hrs and started a lazy stroll along the main path taking in the usual woodland birds en route with an exceptionally vocal Mistle Thrush hitting the decibels on the uppermost branches. Other species were: Chiff Chaff, Willow Warbler, Blackbird, Robin, Blackcap, Wood pigeon, Collared Dove, Siskin, Chaffinch, Wren, Thrush, Coal Tit, Crow and Bullfinch We waited near to a cleared area for any indication of Nightjars with no luck but as it was a little too early in the evening we pressed on uphill through the wooded area to the viewpoint and on to have a look at Llyn Ochyn. Shortly after we stopped by a suitable area that had been cleared and allowed to regenerate and waited - and waited - no Churring, just a wise old Tawny letting us know he was around.

It was 10pm by now and the breeze was picking up so it was decided to drop down to a lower cleared area on the main path. It was here that we had our one and only sighting of the evening, very close and beautifully silhouetted against the western sky. Waited for another, but no further sightings just a few churrings as the light was dying. Not as spectacular as our normal venue at Llandegla, but a successful evening nonetheless.



Thanks to Corinne for leading the walk.

Avocets – a new era?

We have been fortunate in the past to have the occasional Avocet visiting us on this side of the river with one actually overwintering last year but this year we have a first recording of them breeding at DNS..

They nested and produced a clutch of eggs at the back of the ash pool island but unfortunately abandoned the nest. Then at the back end of May they produced another clutch of three eggs this time at the front of the island which ultimately hatched mid/late June.

As you can see below they are protecting the chicks very aggressively, taking on all comers -Swans, Crows, Mallards, Magpies.

Please note that as a schedule 1 protected bird any disturbance is illegal. The grass bank in the West hide car park and the meadow pool field are strictly out of bounds whilst the birds are on the pool. At the time of going to print adults and chick appear to have settled on Oakenholt sands in the gutter to the north of the hide.

Images by *Peter Haslem & Alan Smethurst*



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DNS species recording day 3rd July

Four hardy souls went down to Connah's Quay Nature Reserve for a spot of wildlife recording on Saturday 3rd July; the aim was to record as many species as possible and add some much needed data about which species are actually present on the Reserve. The plan was to put out some moth traps the night before, empty them in the morning and then have a nice day recording butterflies, day flying moths, other insects as well as fungi, birds and plants too.



Well the weather had other ideas, the night before was wet so only one moth trap was put out, which still yielded some beautiful species to start the very wet morning off. Whilst there was nothing out of the ordinary in the trap, what was in there were some of most the stunning moth species that occur locally, including the Scarce Silver-lines (top left), Peppered Moth (right), Buff-tip (bottom left) and Swallow-tail. In total 32 species of moth were in a single battery powered trap in less than ideal weather conditions. If the weather had been good and more traps were out, perhaps 100 species of moth in a single night would be possible.

So whilst the start to our recording day was wet, it was certainly made brighter by these colourful moths. The chances of butterflies and many other insects was almost 0% with the wet and cool conditions, so our focus turned to plants and fungi. A walk from the Field Centre down to West Hide and then along the meadow trail actually yielded 135 species of plant, some were obvious highlights, Four spikes of Bee Orchid (below) were found in two locations and Pyramidal Orchids were seen next to the Field Centre and along the meadow trail; who doesn't love an orchid?



Along the meadow trail was a nice spread of species such as Field Madder, Common Field Speedwell and even some Hop Trefoil. A personal highlight was seeing the Musk Thistles, there are some cracking examples of this fine species around the fields and the slightly nodding purple heads once seen up close is a thing of beauty, if not a little spiky.

Not to be forgotten there were some nice birds around the reserve, the obvious stars were the Avocets and young on the Ash Pool, a fantastic breeding record for North Wales, the adult bird was quickly showing the local crows not to venture too close. Some Black-tailed Godwits still in summer plumage were nice to see and the local Linnet population seemed to have had a good season with a nice flock including many youngsters.

From a selfish point of view I always love to see Jelly Ear, this fungus is quite common on the Reserve but its gelatinous texture and weird look is always nice to see; a few powdery mildews on various plant species increased the sites fungi list.

In all 237 species were recorded in wet, chilly conditions, which goes to show how important the Reserve is for wildlife, but has still got me wondering how many species we could record in a single day on the site if the weather was with us....there is always next year.

David Winnard



Field Events 2021

Sun 22 AUGUST-HILBRE ISLAND. Hilbre over high tide, waders, terns and skuas. Meet at West Kirby Sailing Centre, Dee Lane at 8.30 am*. for a prompt crossing. Contact Bill Dickinson
07968438121

Sun 12 SEPTEMBER-LLANFAIRFECHAN AND MORFA MADRYN. For returning waders and sea birds. A short walk will take us to an area of salt marsh with a shingle spit and beyond this the pools of Morfa Madryn Nature Reserve. Meet in the beach car park by the Pavilion Cafe, off junction 15, A55 at 9.00am. Contact Bill Dickinson
07968438121.

Sun 21 NOVEMBER-CONWAY RSPB AND ESTUARY. Winter ducks and waders. Meet at the RSPB car park at 9.00am. Bring RSPB membership card. Contact Bill Dickinson
07968438121

Sat 4 DECEMBER -PARKGATE. High tide watch as the incoming tide forces the birds into viewing range. HT 9.7metres. Meet at Old Baths Car Park 8.30am
Contact Bill Dickinson
07968438121

*TIME CHANGED

Club Corner

DNS ART GROUP

We are a small group of members who enjoy painting together each month. We paint in various mediums and gain stimulation and encouragement from each other.

If you would like to join us, you would be most welcome. Our meetings are on the second Thursday

of the month in the Field Study Centre from 1-30 until 3-30 pm.

Contact Kay Mattocks on 01244 821810

Committee Members 2021

Phil Hotchkiss	Chair
Ian Spence	Secretary
Bob Lee	Treasurer
John Briggs	Membership Secretary
Peter Haslem	Recorder
Bill Dickinson	Field Meetings
Alan Smethurst	Newsletter
Keith Davies	
Dave Colton	

Quiz Answers

31. Griffin	26. Woolly Mammoth	21. Porcupine	16. Horsefly	11. Firecrest	6. Ptarmigan	1. Nighthingale
32. Stork	27. Lama	22. Mite	17. Chaffinch	12. Cod	7. Kittiwake	2. Cheetah
33. Hyena	28. Pangolin	23. Rainbow trout	18. Elephant	13. Honey badger	8. Albatross	3. Polecat
34. Newt	29. Partridge	24. Mayfly	19. Woodpecker	14. Heron	9. Kingfisher	4. Jay
35. Emu	30. Guinea pig	25. Bush baby	20. Dandyion	15. Leatherjacket	10. Shetland pony	5. Gibbon

Digital Media

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