

DEESIDE NATURALISTS SOCIETY BIRD REPORT, 2013

COVERING THE CONNAH'S QUAY NATURE RESERVE
AND THE RSPB RESERVE AT OAKENHOLT MARSH.

WITH A BUTTERFLY REPORT BY Christine Hamer.

Glenn Morris, February, 2014.



Photo: Glenn Morris

Access to CQNR, its five bird hides and other facilities is available 24/7 (with minor exceptions) exclusively to members of the Deeside Naturalists Society. Membership details and application forms can be found at www.deesidenaturalists.org.uk

The bird species list for the Connah's Quay Reserve (inc. RSPB Oakenholt Marsh) has now reached 229 in its 36-year history of bird recording, although this total does include about 15 that are likely or definite escapes from captivity. Only one new species, **Eider**, was added to the list this year, but 140 were recorded (inc. escapes).

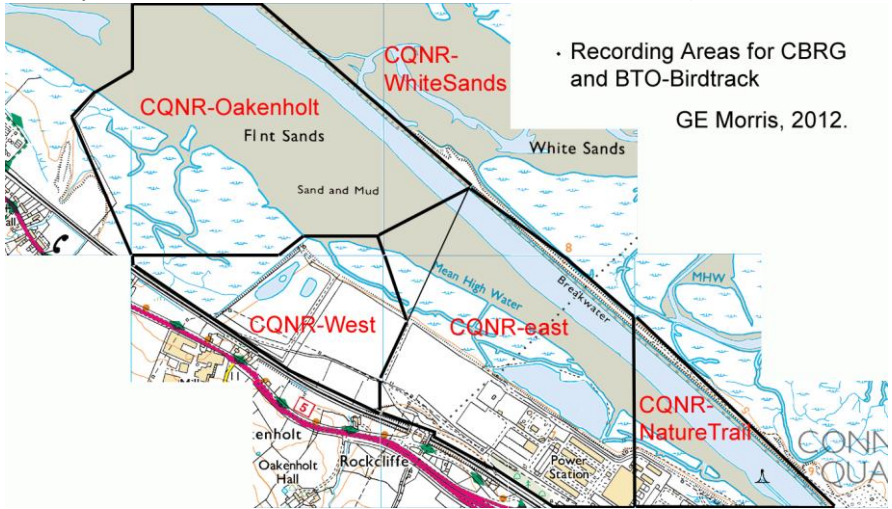
Species that were seen this year, but only on very few previous occasions, were **Garganey, Great White Egret and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** (all seen only twice previously), **Black Redstart** and **Spotted Flycatcher** (both last seen nearly 30 years ago) and **Gannet** (last seen in 1989). All of these, unfortunately, stayed too briefly to be seen by many members. Among the unusual and exciting birds that stayed for many days or weeks were **Curlew Sandpiper, Green Sandpiper, Little Ringed Plover and Avocet**. The massive spring passage of up to 35 **Wheatears** was also experienced by many members.

Successful breeding was confirmed for Mute Swan, Shelduck, Little Grebe, Oystercatcher, Moorhen, Coot, Chaffinch and Linnet. Breeding was attempted by Raven and Peregrine (though the latter failed this year). Remarkably, there were no records of Mallard chicks this year.

In these days of cheap (relatively) lightweight high-zoom cameras, there is little excuse for birders not making photographic records of unusual sightings for ID purposes. This report generally takes logbook records at face value, even with little or no supporting evidence for unusual species, provided there is a legible "signature" to indicate who is taking responsibility for the record.

Past CQNR bird reports are available on the DNS website (members only).

Starting in 2012, we have been entering all DNS records into BTO's BirdTrack. This system is based on 1x1km squares, but these don't translate easily into obvious landscape features on the Reserve. The divisions shown below are a compromise between the exact km square boundaries and what are generally perceived as different areas of the estuary. Counts in the text are the sum of all four Reserve areas. Divisions are arbitrary since birds move with the changing tides and the south part of Oakenholt Marsh (within CQNR-west below) has few birds.



CQNR-Oakenholt includes all the “birdy” areas of Oakenholt Marsh as far back as the rows of fence posts and most of the mudflats visible from the West Hide as far as the revetment. **CQNR-West** includes the fly ash lagoon area, the papermill stream and its banks, the grazing fields west of the helipad road and the area of marsh just below and to the rear of the West Hide. **CQNR-East** includes the bunded pool area, the river between the helipad and the Field Study centre, the grazing field east of helipad road, the Rockcliffe woods and the most of the Power Station. **CQNR-Nature Trail** includes all the area east of the Field Study Centre, including the river around the wooden piles used by Cormorants and any activity above and beyond the revetment. West Hide records for across the river on Parkgate marshes are recorded under **CQNR-White Sands**.

THE SPECIES LIST FOR 2013.

Birds seen in less than 5 previous years on the Reserve are shown in **bold** face. Birds that nested this year as shown as **(B)**.

Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*) **(B)**

A pair bred successfully on the fly ash lagoon this year, raising 7 well-grown cygnets.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	5	4	8	37	13	9	9	2	2	45	6	6



Photo: Glenn Morris

Black Swan (*Cygnus atratus*)

A single bird seen on April 21st (PDS) and 22nd (KJ-BH) was the 4th Reserve record. Another was seen on Nov 10th (J&TD).

Bewick's (Tundra) Swan (*Cygnus columbianus*)

A single bird was seen on Jan 27th (PDS). Once more common than Whooper in winter, this species is now rarely seen on the Reserve.

Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*)

A substantial flock winters across the river, often hidden behind the revetment. Recorded on the Reserve on only 3 occasions this year.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*)

Up to 5,000 were seen from the West hide across the river at White Sands and Parkgate and quite large numbers also visited the Reserve sporadically on Jan 20th (600 on Oakenholt marsh), Feb 28th (60: KJ-BH) and Nov 30th (4,000: P&SH)

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	600	60	5000	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	4000	0

Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*) (B)

A pair raised 3 young in the fly ash lagoon area this year. They can be seen on Oakenholt Marsh or the fly ash lagoon during most of the year, with numbers usually peaking in early autumn.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	19	140	150	35	40	130	300	200	300	970	120	500

Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*)

Very few this year, only 7 records of 1-2 birds, usually with the Canadas.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	0	2	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0

Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla*)

Although substantial flocks winter further down the estuary, this is an uncommon visitor to the Reserve. Two pale-bellied birds seen during the WEBS count on Feb 10th and 5-6 of the dark-bellied form recorded three times between Dec 22nd and 28th (P&SH, SS).

Bar-headed Goose (*Anser indicus*)

This escapee was seen on the fly ash lagoon on Aug. 10th/11th and again on Oct 7th (EN, PDS, KJ-BH) and was the 5th reserve record (since 1995).

Ruddy Shelduck (*Tadorna ferruginea*)

Two present in the Oakenholt Marsh-White Sands area on July 24th/25th (SS, KJ-BH) were described as “not hybrids”.

Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) (B)

One pair was often seen with 2 chicks in the river near the helipad.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	119	37	60	69	500	500	500	60	40	16	50	35

Teal (*Anas crecca*)

These frequent the mudflats, lagoon and banded pools for most of the year. As in 2012, numbers were rather lower than in earlier years.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	600	250	192	109	2	0	5	685	270	600	150	291

Garganey (*Anas querquedula*)

An eclipse male was flushed from the fly ash lagoon by a Marsh Harrier on Sep 8th (PDS). This was only the 5th Reserve record.

Gadwall (*Anas strepera*)

There were eight records, mainly from the fly ash lagoon, 2 in January (max 4), two in March (2), three in April (2) and 1 in November (2).

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) (B)

The highest numbers arrive for the summer moult, like the Shelduck.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	55	40	25	10	94	214	465	1000	124	54	74	54

Pintail (*Anas acuta*)

Small flocks were seen on the river between March 15th and April 14th, with a maximum count of 24 on March 31st. 2-4 birds were seen from July 21st onwards, often on the fly ash lagoon, until a flock of 280 appeared on the river on Oct 9th and 190 on Oct 16th. There were also 12 on Sep 22nd.

Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)

A winter visitor to grassland around the fly ash lagoon and banded pools

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	160	550	1150	130	1	0	2	3	2	100	355	612

Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)

A very good year for this species with numbers often in double figures on the fly ash lagoon

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	30	14	16	12	0	0	1	0	1	13	20	10

Pochard (*Aythya ferina*)

An uncommon visitor to the fly ash lagoon which held 2 on Jan 26th and 31st (PDS, EC).

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)

All records are from the fly ash lagoon and 22 on May 22nd (DN) was a record number for the Reserve, but no breeding records this year.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	5	9	15	16	22	14	10	3	1	2	6	-

Eider (*Somateria mollissima*)

A male and two females flying up-river near the Field Study Centre were seen by visitors from the mid-Cheshire Ornithological Society on Oct 22nd (AA, DT). This is the first reserve record for this species, which now nests in small numbers in North Wales.

Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*)

The first record was of a single on the river seen from the Nature Trail on Nov 11th (KJ-BH, PDS). This species was also seen on the river near the road bridge and beyond the reserve boundary. By mid-November, however, a female was regularly recorded on the bunded pool and was joined by a male on several occasions (14 records altogether).

Redbreasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*)

A male was seen on Jan 26th (P&SH) and 27th (AR) and further singles were recorded on Jan 11th, 13th (P&SH) and Feb 3rd (CW, KJ-BH).

Goosander (*Mergus merganser*)

A flock of 13 were seen on the fly ash lagoon on Sep 1st (PDS). The bunded pools also had 4 redheads on Nov 15th (JdA) and 2 on Nov 16th (GEM)

Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)

The only record this year was also a record count of 9 birds, 6 on the E-on field and 3 on Oakenholt Marsh on Nov 4th (KJ-BH), [local releases].

Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)

Like the Little Egret, this species is also found all year round and often side-by-side with Egrets. The high counts of 24 and 22 on Sep 18th and Oct 17th (GEM) included 19-20 birds across the river at White Sands. The highest count on the Reserve itself was 13 on July 7th.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	4	5	2	2	0	7	13	14	24	22	6	2

Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*)

This species nests at Burton across the estuary and can be found throughout the year on Oakenholt Marsh and the bunded pools, where sizeable numbers sometimes congregate in late summer and autumn. A bird with a Darvic ring (right-yellow H, left-white V) seen on Sep 12th (P&SH) had been ringed as a chick at Porth Penrhyn, Bangor on July 5th. Possibly the same bird (right-yellow H seen) was present earlier on Aug. 18th (FW). The count of 56 on July 21st (GEM) equalled the previous reserve record in 2007.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	2	1	6	2	4	29	56	29	36	5	6	2

Great White Egret (*Egretta alba*)

A bird on Oakenholt Marsh on May 25th (DN) was only the 3rd record for the Reserve although they are often recorded elsewhere in the estuary. One was seen at Parkgate from the West Hide on Nov 17th (P&SH).

Gannet (*Morus bassanus*)

A bird over Oakenholt RSPB Reserve on Feb 6th (GR) was only the 5th record for the Reserve and the first since 1989.

Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)

Non-breeders are present for most of the year. They usually frequent the river edge and the Nature Trail river Piles, but also fish regularly on the bunded pools.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	40	32	44	90	6	8	24	20	26	32	34	36

Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) (B)

Nested successfully on the fly ash lagoon, where it is resident, with 3 chicks first seen on June 21st and a likely 2nd brood of 2 chicks on Aug 2nd. Up to 3 adults were also present on the bunded pools throughout Jan and there were 6 there on Dec 28th.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	3	1	2	3	2	6	3	5	2	2	5	6

Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*)

This species used to come up the river on high tides in quite large numbers, but counts have declined over the past 6 or 7 years. Singles on April 13th and 22nd.

Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*)

The first record this year was on Mar 13th (GR), with a second from the far end of the Oakenholt stream on July 24th (RR), followed by other singles on Aug 19th (EN) and Sep 8th (PDS, BL) and two juveniles sitting together on the marsh at White Sands on Sep 18th (GEM)

Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*)

There were 3 records of males in January (1st, 5th and 26th: KJ/BH, DP, P&SH) and a sub-adult male on March 9th (PDS).

Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*)

Ten records, all singles, is a little above average for recent years., but much lower than in years when they nested in, or close to, the Reserve.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sightings	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	2	0

Red Kite (*Milvus milvus*)

Three singles on March 29th (GEM:photo), May 1st (DGW) and July 27th (K&ECG). First recorded in 2003, it appears to be becoming more regular, probably reflecting the gradual spread of nesting birds into North Wales. The 5th, 6th and 7th reserve records!



photo: Glenn Morris

Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*) (B?)

Fewer sightings in spring/summer this year with a maximum count of 3 on March 3rd, but 50 sightings overall is second only to 2012.

Two were found dead in February close to each other; North Wales Police investigated and thought they may have been shot or poisoned.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sightings	0	3	5	8	6	5	4	1	2	9	4	2

Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*)

Only two March records and none during the breeding season

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sightings	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	3	3	4	0	0

Merlin (*Falco columbarius*)

The only records were of singles on Sep 8th (BL), Nov 3rd (GEM) and Dec 24th (SS), the last being a female that took a twite near the West Hide.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sightings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1

Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*) (B)

Fewer records this year and the pair nesting on the Power Station failed, leaving a dead chick and 2 unhatched eggs (IMS). One bird was seen carrying a Black-tailed Godwit to this nest on May 24th (GEM). Two other prey items recorded were both pigeons. A juvenile calling noisily on the tower on July 3rd (GEM) was presumably raised elsewhere. A young bird with jesses was seen on Jul 31st (EC), possibly the same bird.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sightings	2	1	6	2	4	1	11	3	5	6	9	3

Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*)

One was seen chasing swifts over the Reserve fields on May 13th (EN) and another flew across Oakenholt Marsh on Oct 16th (PDS). This falcon is becoming an almost annual visitor to the Reserve on passage.

Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*) (B)

Nested successfully on the fly ash lagoon, where adults feeding young were first seen on July 3rd.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	2	5	6	7	5	10	5	4	12	7	9	8

Coot (*Fulica atra*) (B)

Always present on the fly ash lagoon, with larger numbers in winter, and more this year than last. Six chicks were first seen on May 20th and a likely separate brood with 2 chicks on July 3rd. The highest count was 60 on the fly ash lagoon on Dec 28th (P&SH), which equals the Reserve record in 2009.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	25	22	20	14	10	14	16	20	22	25	31	60

Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) (B)

A pair on the fly ash lagoon island raised two chicks this year, first seen on June 10th (GEM). Another pair on the bunded pool also raised two

chicks, first seen on July 7th (KG) and at least one still present on July 15th (KJ/BH). Only small numbers are seen feeding, but on high tides, very large flocks fly in to roost at Flint Point on Oakenholt Marsh.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	3000	3000	2000	215	1000	45	400	2000	4000	4000	4000	2000

Avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*)

An adult with a juvenile was seen regularly on the river banks and banded pool area from July 3rd until Aug 5th (many obs.). Another single was seen on Sep 9th/10th.



Photo: Glenn Morris

Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*)

Present sporadically in small numbers, mainly on passage. There were three spring records from March 10th (P&SH) to May 18th (PDS) with a

maximum of 15 on April 14th (GEM). Return passage was only 1 on July 21st (GR) and 3 on July 28th (PDS).

Little Ringed Plover (*Charadrius dubius*) **(B?)**

Nesting did not occur again at last year's site, but up to two birds were present on the fly ash lagoon throughout the summer with 30 records between April 21st (PDS) and August 20th. Two birds were seen together on 4 occasions (P&SH, PDS, DN) between April 28th and May 25th, so it is possible that breeding was attempted.

Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*)

One record of a single with a lapwing flock on Oct 24th (KJ-BH).

Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*)

No evidence of nesting, but large numbers on the mudflats and grazing fields in winter. Maximum count of 1200 on Dec 28th (P&SH).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	356	220	20	0	0	1	20	100	200	250	120	1200

Knot (*Calidris canutus*)

In previous years, Knot fed regularly with the Black-tailed Godwits and roosted at high tide, sometimes in large numbers, but records were remarkably few this year.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	0	0	1	6	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	0

Sanderling (*Calidris alba*)

This seashore bird is an unusual visitor to the Reserve mudflats, but a summer plumage bird was recorded on May 18th and 27th (PDS), with another record from across the river on June 1st (DN). Two were seen on Oct 2nd (P&SH).

Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*)

Rather irregular in winter, but when they do appear, numbers can be large.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	300	500	100	10	0	0	50	1	3	150	1000	1000

Green Sandpiper (*Tringa ochropus*)

A very good year with 2 birds seen regularly throughout August on the mitigation pool, the fly ash lagoon and the bunded pools. Once an annual autumn migrant, but now a more sporadic visitor.

Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*)

It has also been a very good year for this species in the UK and on the Dee. The Reserve had up to 6 birds on the bunded pools from Sep 9th (KJ-BH, SS) until Open Day on Oct 6th.



Photo: Glenn Morris

Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*)

Passage migrant in small numbers with a maximum of 5 from the West Hide on April 14th (PM), 24th (P&SH) and 27th (PDS). They also frequent the bunded pools and the river upstream from the Nature Trail.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	0	0	0	2	1	0	4	5	1	0	0	0

Redshank (*Tringa totanus*)

Redshank numbers increase from late July onwards with the largest numbers gathering on the bunded pools at high tide, though the highest count of 3000+ was from the mudflats of Oakenholt Marsh on Sep 8th (PDS).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	130	157	150	81	7	5	350	1280	3000	2000	570	306

Spotted Redshank (*Tringa erythropus*)

This is one of the specialities of the Reserve with significant numbers in autumn and a few overwintering. Winter numbers were good this year with 16 records, mostly on the bunded pools, but the maximum of 6 was on Oakenholt Marsh on Jan 26th (PDS). There was a spring migrant in full summer plumage on May 6th (KS, NH). The autumn passage was modest but winter numbers were good again with 5 present on Dec 12th (KJ-BH).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	6	2	2	1	1	0	1	10	7	11	6	7

Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*)

This is another Reserve speciality, which frequents the bunded pools, like the previous species. Autumn numbers were better this year than the recent average and up to 8 birds were present in winter. They tend to keep separate from other waders and form small groups. The counts of 18 (GEM) and 24 (EC) were unusually high, with 6-7 being a more typical count during the autumn.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	7	4	2	3	0	0	18	24	11	11	8	5

Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*)

Singles at White Sands on June 1st (DN) and 3 on the Reserve in August (D&MB, JR, PDS).

Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*)

Hardly ever absent except for a brief period of mid-May to late June, but numbers in winter were very low this year. Even the numbers on passage were lower than usual; the March count of 600 was of birds across the river at White Sands.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	2	450	600	700	120	0	4	200	200	160	131	700

One bird with leg rings, noted by KJ-BH on April 11th, has an interesting history of “recoveries” since it was ringed in the Wash in 2010.

- 13.08.10 Holbeach, the Wash estuary, Lincolnshire, E England
- 14.01.11 Marshside, Ribble estuary, Lancashire, NW England
- 10.11.11 Dee estuary, Cheshire, NW England
- 11.11.11 Dee estuary, Cheshire, NW England
- 12.11.11 Dee estuary, Cheshire, NW England
- 13.11.11 Dee estuary, Cheshire, NW England
- 17.11.11 Dee estuary, Cheshire, NW England
- 18.11.11 Dee estuary, Cheshire, NW England
- 03.02.12 Dee estuary, Cheshire, NW England
- 04.02.12 Dee estuary, Cheshire, NW England
- 11.02.12 Carr Farm Fields, Meols, Merseyside, NW England
- 29.08.12 Réserve Naturelle de Moëze-Oléron, Charente-Maritime, W France
- 19.09.12 Réserve Naturelle du Marais d'Yves, Charente-Maritime, W France
- 02.10.12 Réserve Naturelle du Marais d'Yves, Charente-Maritime, W France
- 22.02.13 Dee estuary, Cheshire, NW England
- 23.02.13 Dee estuary, Cheshire, NW England
- 24.02.13 Dee estuary, Cheshire, NW England
- 11.04.13 Connah's Quay, Flintshire, N Wales

Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*)

One spring record of a single on April 13th (PDS) and then 2 on Sep 9th (SS), singles on Oct 5th and Nov 7th, and 3 on Oct 17th (GEM) and Nov 6th (RB, GR). This is another species that is abundant on the outer estuary but uncommon on the Reserve.

Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*)

A good year with 10 spring records of 1-4 birds between April 28th and May 26th, the maximum count of 4 being on May 22nd (DN). A good return migration also, with a high count of 16 birds calling in flight before landing on Oakenholt Marsh on July 26th (GEM). The last record was a single on Aug 10th (PDS).

Curlew (*Numenius arquata*)

Present throughout the year and throughout the Reserve, including the grazing fields.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	95	147	80	45	50	8	46	100	105	118	119	30

Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*)

There were 11 records of 1-4 birds between Jan 6th and April 11th and 10 of these were from the bunded pools area and only one from the fly ash lagoon. The maximum count of 4 for the start of the year was on Jan 24th (KJ-BH). Birds re-appeared on the fly ash lagoon on July 21st with a maximum of 6 on Sep 4th (P&SH).



Photo: Glenn Morris

Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*)

A single was present on the bunded pools on Sep 9th and 10th (SS, GEM) and a late bird was recorded on Oakenholt Marsh on Oct 20th (P&SH).

Blackheaded Gull (*Larus ridibundus*) **(B attempted)**

Counts are not made systematically, but there is a distinct post-breeding peak in July/Aug with numbers dwindling slowly thereafter.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	50	100	242	115	30	219	800	1000	420	100	100	13

Little Gull (*Hydrocoloeus minutus*)

The only record was a single on the bunded pools on March 13th (GP).

Common Gull (*Larus canus*)

This species is surprisingly uncommon on the Reserve during the day, in spite of large winter numbers farther down the estuary and on inland farming areas. There were, however, 13 records in March/early April this year with a high count of 110 on the 29th, mostly of birds using the grazing fields. There were 20 present on Nov 17th.

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*)

The most common of the larger gulls on the Reserve for most of the year.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	1	20	21	2	50	98	80	8	40	50	100	36

Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus cachinnans*)

Several interesting records this year. The first on July 31st had a large red ring on its left leg (PDS), while another on Aug 23rd was described as "1st winter" (PDS). There were further singles on Sep 5th (P&SH) and 9th (SS), and a final record on Nov 1st (PDS).

Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*)

Less common than Lesser Black-backed among roosting flocks, though it may be equally common flying over. The counts below probably underestimate the over-flying birds.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	15	15	50	50	2	2	0	1	6	10	12	1

Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*)

Logbook records tend to underestimate this species, but RSPB records show the build-up in mid-winter (GR).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	62	25	10	8	15	2	5	7	12	10	37	65

Sandwich Tern (*Sterna sandvicensis*)

There were 3 records between April 21st and 28th, with a high count of 12 on the 21st (PDS). Usually seen in flight over the river, they are sometimes seen roosting with Common Terns on sand-bars from the West Hide. An adult with a juvenile on Aug 5th was the only autumn record (PDS).

Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*)

The highest count was 80 on both June 23rd (GR) and July 21st (GEM), but fair numbers were seen throughout the summer. The first record was on April 20th and the last on Aug 5th (both PDS).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	0	0	0	40	40	80	80	12	0	0	0	0

Arctic Tern

There were 2 spring records of 3 birds on April 21st (PDS) and a single on the 24th (P&SH).

Feral Pigeon

Two records are of 1-3 birds during the summer months (July-Aug).

Stock Dove (*Columba oenas*)

1 or 2 birds were feeding regularly on the ground below the feeders in summer. Maximum of 4 on the Nature Trail on Mar 31st (PDS).

Woodpigeon (*Columba palumbus*)

Present all year with a maximum count of 49 on Feb 24th. No proof of breeding, likely though it is.

Collared Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

The only record was of 2 birds close to the railway line at the back of the Reserve on May 2nd (KJ-BH).

Swift (*Apus apus*)

Recorded regularly between May 13th and July 21st, the maximum count was 25 on May 13th (KJ-BH).

Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)

There were 6 records of singles in the first winter period between Jan 5th and Feb 21st, mostly from the bunded pools. Singles were then seen from Aug 18th onwards, becoming regular after Sep 9th.

Green Woodpecker (*Picus viridis*)

A juvenile was seen along the road by the East Hides on Aug 2nd (A&SR). This bird was also photographed and posted on “northwalesbirding”. This species is declining in North Wales.

Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*)

Recorded in January and from June onwards, only 9 records altogether of 1-2 birds, both females and juveniles.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos minor*)

There was one logbook record of a female seen on the feeders on July 6th (DB). This was only the 4th reserve record of this very distinctive species, with previous singles in 1979, 1987 and 1993; the 1987 bird stayed for several days and was seen by many people.

Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*)

There were 4 records of 1-2 birds during April-August, mainly from the Rockcliffe area near the Reserve entrance.

Magpie (*Pica pica*) **(B)**

Present all year with a maximum count of 18 on March 29th. Adults were seen with recently-fledged young.

Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*)

Recorded in most months with high counts of 46 on April 6th, 60 on Nov 7th and 75 on Nov 16th. They are attracted to the grazing fields in summer, but they are also found with crows on the marsh.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	0	0	25	46	30	10	0	0	0	5	75	0

Rook (Corvus frugilegus)

The records are of singles on March 3rd, April 14th, Oct 17th, Nov 17th and 19th, and of 4 on Sep 22nd. Check out “crows” overhead, because rooks fly over the Reserve more often than they land.

Carrion Crow (B) (Corvus corone)

Numerous on marsh, mudflats and grazing fields with peak numbers in the summer.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	10	10	11	26	20	23	12	13	13	10	29	1

Raven (B) (Corvus corax)

An occupied nest was recorded on one of the pylons in early March (KJ-BH), but there were fewer records generally (12) and no family parties.

Goldcrest (Regulus regulus)

The only records were of singles on Jan 1st and Nov 7th and two on Jan 13th (KJ-BH).

Blue Tit (Parus caeruleus) (B)

The main occupant of Reserve nest-boxes, the highest count was of 13 on July 7th. Not satisfied with nestbox provision, one pair nested in a 5-litre plastic bottle attached to E-on equipment near the Reserve entrance.

Great Tit (Parus major) (B)

Another common nesting species with a maximum count of 6 on June 21st.

Coal Tit (Parus ater)

Two records this year: a single at Rockcliffe on Feb 15th and two along the Nature Trail on April 7th.

Skylark (B?) (Alauda arvensis)

Although recorded singing throughout the summer, there was no confirmation of successful breeding and the largest flock recorded was 100 on Jan 20th (P&SH).

Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*)

A better year with 11 records of this passage migrant on the fly ash lagoon between April 11th and July 3rd with a maximum of 30 on May 27th. The three records in June/July may be of birds nesting nearby, rather than passage birds, since the species is doing well in North Wales.

Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)

The first record was on April 10th and the highest counts were of 30 birds on both April 27th and May 9th. From 1975 to the present day, the average maximum for this species was 175; this compares with 41 for the house martin and 24 for the sand martin over the same period.

House Martin (*Delichon urbicum*)

The first spring passage bird was on April 13th and the highest count was of only 6 birds on July 21st.

Longtailed Tit (*Aegithalos caudatus*)

Only 6 records this year, in March, July, August, October and November with a high count of 10 birds on July 7th.

Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*) **(B)**

The first record was later than usual on April 7th and the last, of a bird still singing, on Sep 18th (GEM). An adult with recently-fledged young at Rockcliffe on July 7th confirmed breeding on the Reserve again this year (GEM). There was a record count of 10 birds on the Reserve that day.

Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*)

The first record was of a single on April 15th (KJ-BH) and there were 3 more records until May 24th. Only one record on the return migration; a single on July 11th.

Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*) **(B?)**

The first record this year was on April 13th and the last on July 7th. Although a pair was present at Rockcliffe in May, there was no proof of breeding this year.

Lesser Whitethroat (*Sylvia curruca*)

A singing male on July 3rd in the hedgerow around the Wetland Meadow Hide was the only record (GEM).

Whitethroat (*Sylvia communis*) **(B?)**

There were records of single birds from April 20th until June 30th, from at least three different locations on the Reserve, but no proof of breeding. The highest count was of 3 birds on July 17th.

Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*) **(B?)**

The first record was on April 25th. There were 6 records of 1-2 birds in the Wetland Meadow hedgerow between May 19th and June 10th, suggesting that breeding may have been, at least, attempted. The two records of 2 birds were in early June (DN).

Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*)

Only one record of a single on the fly ash lagoon on July 31st (PDS). The reeds close to the West Hide, where the species may have nested last year, were removed during conservation work on the lagoon.

Nuthatch (*Sitta europaea*)

Single birds in the hedgerows near the entrance on June 26th (GEM) and Oct 4th (P&SH).

Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) **(B?)**

A common resident. This bird is most easily detected when in full song between May and July. The maximum count was 4 on both April 7th and June 30th.

Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

They are often seen on grazing fields with peak numbers on summer evenings and early winter. The highest count of only 200 was recorded on Oct 20th (GEM).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	56	42	100	48	0	55	100	1	70	200	100	0

Blackbird (B?) (Turdus merula)

No evidence of breeding was submitted this year. The highest count was 25 on Jan 11th (EC) and this was the most ever recorded on the Reserve.

Fieldfare (Turdus pilaris)

A good early winter, with the late snow delaying departure. There were 10 records in Jan-Apr with the last record being of 2 on April 10th, though the highest count was of 13 on March 29th (GEM). The only other record was of 7 birds on Nov 30th (P&SH).

Redwing (Turdus iliacus)

As with the Fieldfare, 8 of the 12 records were during March and early April (up to 7 birds), though the highest count was of 12 birds on Jan 1st (KJ-BH). Subsequently, the first winter record was on Oct 17th (GEM) with a maximum count of 15 on Nov 30th (P&SH).

Song Thrush (Turdus philomelos)

No records of singing males this year and the highest counts were of 4 birds on Jan 20th (P&SH) and 6 on Oct 17th (GEM).

Mistle Thrush (Turdus viscivorus) (B)

A pair nested successfully near the bunded pool and was seen feeding young near the Middle Hide. There was a high count of 8 birds on Power Station structures on Sep 30th (GEM).

Spotted Flycatcher (Muscicapa striata)

On May 18th, there was a welcome return to the Rockcliffe woodland for this species, which nested there for several years in the late 1970s, though it didn't stay long this year (PDS). It last appeared in the DNS records in 1987.

Robin (B?) (Erithacus rubecula)

A common resident. Recorded throughout the year, there was a high count of 9 birds on Jan 13th (P&SH).

Black Redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros*)

A male on the Nature Trail on April 6th (PDS) was only the 6th Reserve record and the first since 1982.

Redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*)

There were 6 spring records between April 18th and 29th including a pair on the last date (KJ-BH). On return passage, 2 were feeding on the road to the helipad during July 7th-11th and there was a single female on July 28th (FS). The latest record was of 3 birds on Aug. 3rd (SS).

Whinchat (*Saxicola rubetra*)

A poor spring this year, singles on May 4th (EN) and 9th (BM, AL) only.

Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)

The first record was of 3 birds on April 8th (KJ-BH). The highest spring count was a massive 35 on April 20th (PDS), but there were 9 more counts of 10-30 birds during April 15th-27th. This spectacular passage broke the Reserve records again, the previous high being 27 in 2004. A later bird on May 27th was thought to be the Greenland sub-species (PDS). In contrast, autumn passage was light, with only 4 records of singles between Aug 18th and Sep 12th.

Dunnock (**B?**) (*Prunella modularis*)

A common resident. Most often recorded when in song from late Feb to July. The highest count was 8 birds on Feb 24th (GEM).

House Sparrow (**B?**) (*Passer domesticus*)

This species continues to do well with 4 counts of 20-30 birds in July.

Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava flavissima*)

A better spring passage with 2 birds present during April 21-27th (many obs.). There were also 3 records of a single between May 26th and June 11th (DN, P&SH). Only one autumn record on Aug 14th (GR).

Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*)

There were 3 records of 1-2 birds around the West Hide between Oct 2nd and 12th, and a single on Aug 14th.

White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba alba*)

A fair spring passage with 8 records of 1-7 birds during April 14th to May 22nd, the high count of 7 being on April 27th (PDS). There was a spectacular autumn passage of 40 birds on Sep 22nd (P&SH), another record high for the Reserve (previously 22 in 1983).

Pied Wagtail **(B)** (*Motacilla alba yarrellii*)

Breeding was proven again with several records of fledged young. There was a high count of 24 near the West Hide on April 23rd (JH) and a flock of 16 on July 7th included 10 young (JH).

Meadow Pipit (*Anthus pratensis*) **(B?)**

One bird was giving its display flight and song over the marsh near the helipad on July 7th (GEM). The highest count was 69 birds on March 31st (GEM), much higher than in recent years and probably birds kept off the hills by the snow. There were 7 more records of smaller flocks in late March-late April and 3 records of 1-4 between Sep 22nd and Nov 17th.

Rock Pipit (*Anthus petrosus*)

This species is usually recorded on the rocks around the West Hide in winter. This year there were records of 3 on Feb 13th (GR), 2 on Jan 13th (PDS, P&SH), Mar 13th (GR), Feb 10th and Oct 2nd (P&SH) and 1 on Jan 26th (PDS) and Nov 6th (RB, GR).

Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*) **(B)**

Breeding was proven with records both of adults carrying food on May 31st and of fledged young on June 21st (GEM). The largest early winter flocks were of 105 birds on Jan 13th (P&SH) and 80 on Feb 13th (GR), but 45 other records were of 1-12 birds only.

Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*)

There were two present on Jan 13th, one on Feb 13th (GR) and then a remarkably late record of a female on May 18th (PDS).

Greenfinch (B?) (*Carduelis chloris*)

The largest flock was of 60 birds on July 28th (P&SH). A young bird on the Nature Trail on June 30th suggests breeding on or near the Reserve.

Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*)

There was a large flock of 200 birds on Open Day (Oct 5th) and smaller flocks of 30-60 throughout July-September.

Siskin (*Carduelis spinis*).

Rarely recorded on the Reserve, there was one record of a male on March 9th (PDS).

Linnet (B) (*Carduelis cannabina*)

There was evidence of breeding again this year with young birds seen on June 21st (GEM) and July 2nd (PDS). The largest post-breeding flocks were of 60 birds on July 13th (PDS) and 100 on Oct 19th (RWE).

Twite (*Carduelis flavirostris*)

There were 15 records during Jan-April, with the last on April 24th (P&SH) and the highest count of 8 on March 16th (PDS). They reappeared from Oct 12th onwards, building up to a maximum of 86 on Dec 11th (RB). They are usually seen around the West Hide car park or along the approach road from the helipad. Richard Beckett has made a detailed study of the birds using the West Hide Car Park and found 6 birds with colour rings. The ringing was done either at a Snowdonia nesting site or at two wintering sites at Flint and Heysham. Concerns that twite might be driven away from the Reserve by remedial work on the car park surface in December were unfounded. Across the UK the evidence is consistent that the twite is a declining species. In view of the importance of the Dee Estuary, and CNQR with the adjoining Oakenholt Marsh, in particular, for the Welsh twite population as a wintering

habitat, data continue to be gathered to help the monitoring of the species in support of the RSPB Cymru twite project.



Photo: R. Beckett.

Lesser Redpoll (*Carduelis flammea cabaret*)

One record of 2 birds on April 20th (PDS). This species is now being recorded more often, but is still uncommon.

Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*) (B)

The maximum count of 6 on Aug. 16th included 3 juveniles (GEM). There were 19 records, mostly from the Rockcliffe area.

Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*) (B?)

No proof of breeding this year. The maximum count of 6 was on Jan 13th (P&SH).

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Count	6	0	0	2	2	1	1	1	0	2	2	0

Contributors

This report is based mainly on logbook records from the five hides on the Reserve, but other sources of information include RSPB counts for Oakenholt Marsh, WeBS high tide wildfowl and wader counts, BTO BirdTrack surveys and websites for “Dee Estuary Birding”.

All logbook records with a legible observer name are valuable and are submitted to BTO Birdtrack with the observer name. The names below are given to show who takes responsibility for some for the more unusual counts or sightings, so that queries can be directed to them. Most of the unusual observations are not supported by photos or detailed descriptions, but when they are, this is indicated in the text.

A Ankers (AA) Mid-Cheshire OS	D & M Belton (D&MB)
D Bowles (DB)	Richard Beckett (RB)
E Cocker (EC)	Joe d’Arcy (JdA)
J & T Dale (J&TD)	
RW Evans (RWE)	K & EC Galtres (K&ECG) (KG)
Peter & Sue Haslem (P&SH)	Joan Hotchkiss (JH)
N Hughes (NH)	Phil Hotchkiss (PH)
K Lloyd-Jones & B Hayes (KJ, BH) who also contributed to Curlew Survey	
A Leach (AL)	B Lewis (BL)
GE Morris (GEM)	B Marsh (BM)
D Nicklin (DN)	
E Nixon (EN)	D Peate (DP)
G Pepler (GP)	A & S Roberts (A&SR) (AR)
G Robinson (GR)	J Rogers (JR)
R Riley (RR)	F Smyth (FS)
K Smith (KS)	PD Shenton (PDS)
S Skelton (SS)	Ian Spence (IMS)
D Todd (DT) Mid-Cheshire OS	C Wilson (CW)
DG Wild (DGW)	F Wright (FW)

DNS thanks those in **boldface** for a particularly large number of unusual logbook records this year and the **many members**, not listed above, who provided valuable counts of commoner species (all are sent to BTO).

Survey of the Use of Grazing Fields by Curlew and Lapwing during winter 2012-2013.

METHOD: Spot counts were done at various times and dates from 23/9 to 29/11 (2 months) in 2012 and 1/1 to 15/4 in 2013 (3.5 months) **by GE Morris, K Lloyd-Jones and B Hayes.**

SUMMARY:

The results show that all four grazing fields are used by curlew for feeding over long periods, whereas lapwings preferred central fields (F9/F10) for roosting. Both are sensitive to disturbance, when they fly to other fields or to the estuary mudflats.

The E-on field (F10) attracted most curlews in the early winter, while the mitigation fields (adjacent to the fly ash lagoon) became more important in late winter and, especially, early spring.

Curlews

Curlews were using the fields on 57 counts out of 60 (95%).

The fields in order of popularity (% of counts with curlews present) were:

- 1) the mitigation area adjacent to the fly ash lagoon, present 32 counts out of 60 (53%).
- 2) E-on field (F10), curlew present on 28 counts out of 60 (47%),
- 3) the west field (Hughie: F9) on 18 (30%),
- 4) the back/railway field on 9 (15%)

Date	Time	West field F9 "Hughie"	E-on field F10	Fly ash field P13	Back field (railway)	TOTAL
Sep 23	8AM	12	25	0	0	37
Sep 27	9AM	0	40	0	0	40
Sep 30	8AM	8	32	0	0	40
Oct 4	11AM	0	11	0	0	11
Oct 5	9AM	40	12	0	0	52
Oct 5	11AM	0	16	29	0	45
Oct 6	3PM	0	8	3	0	11
Oct 8	11.30AM	11	38	0	0	49

Oct 14	9AM	1	1	4	70	76
Oct 17	9AM	0	0	nd	62	62
Oct 17	10AM	21	0	0	0	21
Oct 19	1PM	0	0	0	0	0
Oct 25	11AM	11	0	48	0	59
Oct 28	8AM	0	26	0	94	120
Oct 31	9AM	20	41	3	0	64
Nov 1	10.30AM	0	35	0	0	35
Nov 4	9AM	0	30	0	18	48
Nov 7	11AM	0	0	32	0	32
Nov 17	11.30AM	0	46	0	0	46
Nov 23	9.30AM	0	43	72	0	115
Nov 28	9.00AM	0	114	2	0	116
Nov 29	10.00AM	0	48	60	0	108

22 counts

Date	Time	West field F9 "Hughie"	E-on field F10	Fly ash field P13	Back field (railway)	TOTAL
Jan 1	10AM	0	18	0	0	18
Jan 3	1PM	0	0	79	0	79
Jan 7	10.45AM	0	27	0	0	27
Jan 7	1PM	0	0	71	0	71
Jan 12	10AM	17	0	11	22	40
Jan 14	10AM	0	56	0	0	56
Jan 14	11.30AM	4	62	29	0	95
Jan 17	10AM	0	0	0	0	0
Jan 24	10AM	0	0	0	7	7
Jan 28	9.40AM	0	55	0	0	55
Jan 28	10.55AM	27	0	0	0	27
Jan 31	9.40AM	0	0	0	16	16
Feb 15	8AM	0	0	87	45	132
Feb 18		0	0	0	36	36

Feb 21		48	0	0	0	48
Feb 24	8.30AM	60	0	3	0	63
Mar 3	9AM	4	0	48	0	52
Mar 4	9.50AM	0	0	65	0	65
Mar 7	11.30AM	20	0	32	0	52
Mar 10	9.00AM	11	53	0	0	64
Mar 11	11.15AM	0	0	18	0	18
Mar 12	10AM	0	0	0	0	0
Mar 14	11.30AM	0	2	36	0	38
Mar 15	11AM	0	0	35	0	35
Mar 18	12.15PM	0	0	28	0	28
Mar 21	1.15PM	12	0	0	0	12
Mar 28	9.30AM	0	28	0	0	28
Mar 29	11AM	0	21	10	0	31
Mar 31	11AM	0	0	50	0	50
Apr 2	10AM	0	0	35	0	35
Apr 4	10.35AM	0	0	5	0	5
Apr 7	10.30AM	0	0	30	0	30
Apr 8	10.35AM	0	0	30	0	30
Apr 10	10.30AM	0	0	24	0	24
Apr 11	11.15AM	0	0	24	0	24
Apr 14	09.00AM	4	26	15	0	45
Apr 15	09.30AM	0	13	0	0	13
Apr 15	1.15PM	0	0	19	0	19

Average Curlew counts:

	1 (Oct/Nov, 22dates)	2 (Jan-Feb, 22d)	3 (Mar-Apr, 16d)
Mitigation	12	17.5	24
E-on (F10)	26	13.6	6.5
Hughie (F9)	6	10	2.3
Railway	11	8	0
Total:	54 (max 120)	48.5 [max 122]	34 [max 65]

Lapwing:

The table below shows only the dates that lapwings were present (they were absent on all other dates for curlew counts above). Lapwings were roosting, often in compact flocks, and were extremely sensitive to disturbance. The counts below show how they sometimes settled on alternative fields after disturbance.

The central fields (F9/F10) were the sites preferred by lapwings, with Hughie's west field (F9) tending to hold more (average: 68) than the E-on field (F10) (average 43).

Date	Time	West field F9 "Hughie"	E-on field F10	Fly ash field P13	Back field (railway)	TOTAL
Sep 23	8AM	0	20	0	0	20
Oct 8	11.30AM	0	12	0	0	12
Oct 14	9AM	50	0	0	0	50
Jan 12	10.10AM	192	0	0	0	192
Jan 14	10AM	0	350	0	0	350
Jan 14	11.30AM	120	0	230	0	350
Jan 17	10AM	0	125	0	0	125
Jan 24	10AM	0	35	0	0	35
Jan 28	09.40AM	0	56	0	0	56
Jan 28	10.55AM	200	0	0	0	200
Feb 21		35	0	0	0	35
Feb 24	8.30AM	140	0	80	0	220
Feb 24	10AM	220	0	0	0	220
Mar 3	10.30AM	0	0	0	25	25

Butterflies on the Reserve 2013: by Christine Hamer.

Monitoring this year started early in April with just a few Small Tortoiseshell butterflies being recorded on the Nature Trail and Wetland Meadow during the first two weeks. By the end of the month several Peacock butterflies had been noted in both areas, plus also a couple of Comma butterflies on the Wetland Meadow. May had the numbers and species of butterfly increasing. For the first time Brimstone were recorded in both areas of the reserve during June. One **Dark Green Fritillary** was recorded during August on the Nature Trail which is a new species for the DNS reserve.

Overall the season was late with the numbers and species peaking in August. Species not recorded this year were Small Heath, Ringlet, Grayling, Dingy Skipper and Small Skipper. These have been seen in previous years. So, although five species were not recorded this year, two new species were. Hopefully all will return in 2014.

Nature Trail

	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	TOTAL
Large Skipper			1	1			2
Brimstone			1				1
Large White			2	2	30		34
Small White	1	2	8	1	45	8	65
Green Veined White		1	8		5	1	15
Orange Tip		1					1
Small Copper					1		1
Common Blue			4	6	46		56
Holly Blue					13		13
Red Admiral					1		1
Small tortoiseshell	6	15	5	31	32	6	95
Peacock		4		1	27		32
Comma					4	1	5
Dark Green Fritillary					1		1
Speckled Wood						1	1
Gatekeeper				2	34		36
Meadow Brown				19	52		71

Wetland Meadow

	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	TOTAL
Large Skipper				7			7
Brimstone			1				1
Large White			9	3	23		35
Small White		10	25	10	69	4	118
Green Veined White		1	9	2	16	1	29
Orange Tip		4	10				14
Small Copper					1		1
Common Blue			3		25		28
Painted Lady					1		1
Small tortoiseshell	11	37	4	38	13	4	107
Peacock	6	13	4		13	1	37
Comma	2				2	1	5
Speckled Wood		1	1	2	5	2	11
Gatekeeper				15	78	1	94
Meadow Brown				122	52		174

During this year a substantial area on the Nature Trail was cleared and fenced by National Grid limiting access to areas where monitoring is normally carried out. This work was completed by August, but further work will be carried out starting in Spring 2014

Thanks to all the recorders for their work. This year's recorders were: Val and John Ledsome, Barbara Rigg, Roy Hamer and Christine Hamer. Observation records are sent to Butterfly Conservation. Their website has lots of information: www.butterfly-conservation.org.

If you would like to be involved in the recording in 2014, which starts in April, please contact Christine Hamer on 01352 716273 or email c.hamer21@btinternet.com.



Twite on the West Hide Car Park: (photo: Richard Beckett)



Young Swallow outside West Hide in July: (photo: Glenn Morris)