

## Wetland update



**Marsh Harrier** sightings since the creation of the wetland have been irregular. There now are 2 females quartering the reed bed almost daily, this an indication of how the site is establishing as a reed bed drawing in this classic species. I wonder how long it will take before they could be looking to breed? These birds are thought to be from Leighton Moss which is a regular site for breeding as well as wintering individuals. The photo clearly shows the cream coloured head cap of the female and the uniform brown plumage. Along with these ID features an early



signal as to their presence is disturbance to the waterfowl. Most of the dabbling duck will take flight as one of these passes over but with Buzzard they tend not to be so bothered. Photo expertly captured by young Orin Thomas.

Other species of note. A **Great White Egret** has been in the Lyth Valley for a while now and it was only a matter of time before one turned up on the wetland. This bird has been spotted on the southern section recently. Those looking for it will first notice its stand out size (compared to Little Egret) that being the size of a Heron and having a large yellow beak. Hopefully this bird will become more evident to all.

Here is a photo taken at Leighton Moss clearly showing the comparison size and structure.



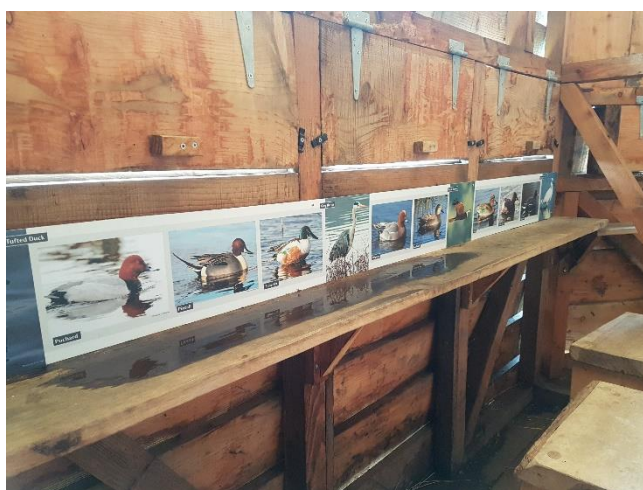
Wigeon and Teal numbers have both peaked around the 600 this winter. Mixed in with these have been (with record counts) Gadwall (33), Tufted duck (26) and half a dozen Shoveler. Apart from that it's a case of the usual suspects really. Little Grebe are setting up territory and its beginning to feel like spring is around the corner with early Sand Martins appearing not too far away.

### Other news

During this last year we have been doing some more reed planting in the southern section. Reed clumps have been dug and then re planted in the open areas. Doing this will speed up the spread of reed across large areas.

We have 2 more days planned for this in the northern section. If you would like to help, then email [robert.pocklington@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:robert.pocklington@nationaltrust.org.uk) . Our first date is Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March.

New bird and underwater creature identification boards have been put up in the hide. The bird board highlighting the regular species seen.



### Dragonflies

During the creation of the wetland Dragonflies have been recorded on site. Below are some notes extracted from the survey kindly done by Ian Brodie (NT volunteer).

#### **Banded Demoiselle (*Calypteryx splendens*)**

A note of seeing the species (John Hooson) in 2014/2015 has been received. This was at northern end of site. A population (along with some Beautiful Demoiselle) is known from within 2 km of this site.

#### **Emerald Damsel (*Lestes sponsa*).**

Has been known to breed nearby but, disappointingly as yet, no records from the site.

**Azure Damsel (*Coenagrion puella*).** Almost certainly a breeding species on this site.

A population found in June (26th) 2015 of several hundred with a few pairs in cop, thereby suggesting breeding on the site. Small numbers noted 11 May 2017 including pairs in tandem. Between 400-500 males noted June 2017.

**Large Red Damsel (*Pyrrhosoma nymphula*)**

Small numbers recorded for first time in 2017 (11 May). Only one noted 19 June 2017.

**Common Blue Damselfly (*Enallagma cyathigerum*)** Should be a breeding species.

Two males found towards the northern end of the site 26 June 2016. Others seen by other observers (RP, SH). A photograph of a larvae is probably this species (SH). A few seen in 11 May 2017 including teneral. 19 June recorded less than ten but at least 3 pairs in cop.

**Blue-tailed Damselfly (*Ischnura elegans*)** A breeding species.

A good population (many hundreds) found on site including many pairs in cop. Breeding is suggested. 11 May 2017 this was (c50) the commonest species recorded on this transect with pairs in tandem and teneral present. Some 30-40 noted on 19 June and most of these were pairs in cop.



**Southern Hawker (*Aeshna cyanea*)**

A male photographed on site (SH).

**Brown Hawker (*Aeshna grandis*)**

No records yet from the site.

**Common Hawker (*Aeshna juncea*)**

No records yet from the site. An unconfirmed report only from an adjacent area.

**Migrant Hawker (*Aeshna mixta*)**

Several were seen on the transect of 15 September. They were mostly males. The species was previously believed to breed possibly in nearby drainage ditches (often some 2m wide).

**Emperor Dragonfly (*Anax imperator*)** Almost certainly a breeding species.

A male was photographed on site (SH). On 19 June 2017 at least three were seen with two males holding territories and (as temp was c25C) one suspected female had turned blue.

**Broad-bodied Chaser (*Libellula depressa*)**

Almost certainly a breeding species.

Some records yet from the site both m. and f. (SH) and freshly emerged insects were noted in the adjacent Brigsteer Park Wood in 2015. Other observers have also noted this species in the area in 2014/2015. A fresh female seen near the hide on transect of 11 May 2017. A small number noted on 19 June with one pair in cop.



**Four-spot Chaser (*Libellula quadrimaculata*)** Almost certainly a breeding species.

Adults seen holding territory on site and a very fresh insect was found on 26 June, 2016. Two also seen on transect of 11 May 2017. Around 5 seen on 19 June with a pair in cop suspected.

**Black-tailed Skimmer (*Orthetrum cancellatum*)** Almost certainly a breeding species.

Two males were believed to be on site on 26 June 2016 when they were briefly glimpsed. On 19 June 2017 over 12 were noted. Females were common on path to hide with males holding territory near sluices on both sides south of the embankment.

**Black Darter (*Sympetrum danae*)**

A large breeding site exists within a few kilometres and the 15 September visit found some 10+ individuals of both sexes.

**Common Darter (*Sympetrum striatum*)**

A confirmed breeding species.

A major emergence was noted on 26 June 2016 when around 100 teneral were seen and, despite no exuviae being found. However, larvae have been sampled and photographed (SH). The east-west lagoon appears particularly favoured. The September transect again found over 100 of this species, both males and females and almost all away from the open water areas.

Hopefully when I next write there will be another stand out species or two to write about, how about a Hobby feeding on the wealth of dragonflies?