



DUNE Project Newsletter

Hello and welcome to the February edition of the DUNE Project Newsletter with updates on recent sightings, upcoming events and this month's nature in focus.

January's weather has been, at best, a very mixed bag. We have had fine, bright winter days followed by heavy rain and high winds; not forgetting the snow and ice! These conditions can be hard for us but how do our shorebirds cope? Read on to find out more!

Well done to those who attended our guided walks this month! More dates have now been added for February and March, details are at the end of the newsletter – see you there!

For further information about the DUNE Project, visit our webpage: [Cleethorpes DUNE project | NELC](#)

Get in touch!

If you have any questions about the DUNE Project or would like to enquire about bespoke guided nature walks, talks or events please do get in touch with us! Our email address is DUNEproject@nelincs.gov.uk

Cleethorpes Local Nature Reserve: January Sightings

This month's Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS), scheduled for Sunday 25th, had to be postponed. Arriving at Cleethorpes early that day, I was greeted by a sharp easterly wind and squally rain showers. Deciding I would get better results in drier weather, I returned the next day.

(Read last month's newsletter to find out more about WeBS: [DUNE Newsletter January 2026](#))

We managed to count 1,300 birds in total with around 420 **Oystercatcher**, 92 **Turnstone**, 81 **Ringed Plover**, 78 **Redshank** and 56 **Curlew** – all of which were found in the intertidal area off the main beach at Cleethorpes. Elsewhere, a flock of **Snow Bunting** has been seen around the lagoon near Anthony's Bank carpark. These Arctic finches are well worth having a look for, their plumage is striking even in winter.



The **Glossy Ibis** continues to overwinter on our saltmarsh despite freezing conditions and is often found around the lagoons. It has occasionally ventured to Cleethorpes Country Park and was recently spotted in the dog paddling area there! The photos below show how this juvenile bird is starting to gain its adult plumage.

Keep your eye out for this beautiful bird but please allow it the space it needs to feed without disturbance.



Glossy Ibis on the saltmarsh in early November 2025 showing juvenile plumage. **Photo credit:** Liam Smith



The Glossy Ibis at Cleethorpes Country Park in January 2026 showing more adult feathers. **Photo credit:** Chris Atkin



Finally, we received a report of a **Ringed Plover** with leg rings – a ringed Ringed Plover if you will. After some sleuthing and an email to the German [NABU](#) (an organisation like our Wildlife Trusts and RSPB), it was confirmed that this bird was ringed at Beltringharder Koog on the north German coast in summer 2025. They were very pleased to receive this report of their bird!

Thank you to Steve Hannam for the report and the photo.



North East Lincolnshire: Nature in Focus

Wading birds in winter

January has seen freezing temperatures, icy cold winds and lots of rain. Unlike us, our shorebirds have no shelter. So, how do they cope with winter?

The Humber Estuary is a vitally important European Marine Site and hosts hundreds of thousands of shorebirds over winter. The intertidal mudflats are richly stocked with marine invertebrates, a vital food source for them. Our estuary and coast also form part of the East Atlantic Flyway.

This is an important migratory route for many species and stretches from the Arctic to the African west coast. Many Arctic breeding birds migrate along this highway, stopping off at coastal sites like ours to spend the winter. The time they spend feeding here is crucial to the next stage of their journey; the return journey in spring to their northern breeding grounds.

(To find out more about the East Atlantic flyway, check out our story map here: [Life on the Saltmarsh](#))

When our shorebirds arrive to spend the winter here, they face a range of challenges. To stay warm, our shorebirds must eat to build up and conserve body fat. The less they eat, the quicker they will metabolise fat making it harder for them to stay warm. If this continues, they will start to metabolise muscle making them weaker and more vulnerable.

In stormy or freezing conditions, foraging for food on our intertidal mudflats becomes harder. The shorter daylight hours mean that some waders switch to night-time feeding



but not all species can adapt like this, meaning they must feed as much as possible during the day. The sad truth is that winter can lead to an increase in mortality.

Given the pressures our shorebirds face, how can we help them? Simply put, we can give them the space they need to feed and rest without disturbance.

When enjoying our coastline this winter, please consider the following:

- 1) Be aware of the birds
- 2) Give them extra space to feed and rest
- 3) Keep your dog under close control, especially near the tideline or near roosting birds. Never let your dog chase the birds.

Every flight a bird has to take due to disturbance reduces its energy reserves, putting more pressure on them as individuals and impacting their ability to successfully breed.

If you notice disturbance along our coastline, please report this via the Humber Nature Partnership's website: [Humber Nature Partnership - Report wildlife disturbance](#)

Upcoming Events

New dates have been added for our Guided Nature Walks! All walks are free but booking is required. Binoculars are available upon request.

Please visit our EventBrite page for more information and click "Follow" to found out about future events! [NELC Ecology Events | Eventbrite](#)

Date	Time	Start	What3Words
13 th February	10:00 – 12:00	Cleethorpes Leisure Centre	///snake.spell.tune
19 th February	10:00 – 12:00	Cleethorpes Leisure Centre	///snake.spell.tune
20 th February	10:00 – 12:00	Cleethorpes Leisure Centre	///snake.spell.tune
27 th February	10:00 – 12:00	Cleethorpes Country Park	///luxury.game.parks
6 th March	10:00 – 12:00	Cleethorpes Boating Lake	///survey.tour.mini
13 th March	10:00 – 12:00	Cleethorpes Country Park	///luxury.game.parks
27 th March	10:00 – 12:00	Cleethorpes Boating Lake	///survey.tour.mini

The "Pop Up Observatory" is coming soon. Keep an eye out for the Coastal Ranger, his spotting scope and sightings board along our coast. It's your opportunity to connect with our shorebirds!