



## DUNE Project Newsletter

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

The 1<sup>st</sup> of March marks the beginning of meteorological spring and though the weather may not always feel like it, there are signs of spring all around us. Along our saltmarsh, the Skylarks and Meadow Pipits impress with their song flights as they start to establish territories. In our parks, the swans, ducks and geese are becoming ever more feisty. In our woodlands, Song Thrushes proclaim from treetops whilst Great Tits and Blue Tits fend off rivals as they seek mates.

Warmer days in recent weeks have even seen the first sightings of the year of butterflies and bumblebees in North East Lincolnshire! Read on to find out about recent sightings along our coastline and elsewhere.

### Project Updates

A big thank you to St Christopher's Methodist Church who invited the Coastal Ranger in to talk about the DUNE Project. We talked about the importance of our coastline for people and wildlife, as well as how they can help to reduce disturbance when visiting the coast. They were very good at the Bird ID Quiz and there was coffee and cake aplenty!

If you are part of a community group and would like a free talk or guided walk, please do get in touch! Our email address is [DUNEproject@nelincs.gov.uk](mailto:DUNEproject@nelincs.gov.uk)





## Cleethorpes Local Nature Reserve: February Sightings

February's [Wetland Bird Survey \(WeBS\)](#) took place in much nicer weather than January. Starting at the high tide roost, near Cleethorpes Leisure Centre, I was treated to a murmuration of several thousand wading birds.

Counting large numbers of mobile birds requires patience. Waders gather here at high tide: there is safety in numbers! As they began to settle, I was able to count 2,800 **Knot**, 1,200 **Dunlin**, 350 **Bar-tailed Godwit**, 100 **Grey Plover**, 80 **Ringed Plover**, 50 **Sanderling** and 41 **Redshank**.

This small but significant roost site held around 5,000 individual birds. Disappointingly, I witnessed a dog walker approaching too close, causing most of the birds to fly up. It was clear that the walker realised what had happened, they recalled their dog promptly and walked back in the opposite direction.

Although one incident of disturbance may seem insignificant, these birds face pressure all day long. As the tide draws out and our intertidal mudflats become exposed, the birds move in, making them vulnerable to disturbance from recreational activities. Each flight forces them to use energy they otherwise need ahead of their spring migration.

We remind people that our coastline is especially important in the winter for wading birds. You can help them to feed in peace by taking the following steps:

- 1) **Be aware of the birds:** Pay close attention to any birds feeding along the tide edge whilst you're on the beach
- 2) **Give them extra space to feed:** Take a slightly different route so that the birds can continue to feed
- 3) **Keep dogs under close control:** If you're enjoying our coastline with your dog, keep them under close control when birds are present
- 4) **Never let your dog chase birds:** Please ensure you practice good recall and consider using a lead to prevent your dog chasing the birds
- 5) **Report recreational disturbance:** Help us to understand what disturbance is taking place and where by reporting any incidents of wildlife disturbance to the Humber Nature Partnership: [Observations](#)

Elsewhere, the **Snow Buntings** are still around but it will not be long before they head back to Scandinavia. The **Glossy Ibis** is still feeding in our saltmarsh lagoons, the big question is when (or if) it will head back south!



## North East Lincolnshire: Nature in Focus

### Spring Returns!

We've made it to spring and wildlife in North East Lincolnshire certainly knows it! Read on to find out what you might be able to see over the next month.

#### **Challenge: Signs of Spring!**

Fancy a challenge? Here are some signs of spring that you can look out for as you step into the great outdoors in our local area!

#### **Easy:**

Many spring flowers are starting to appear. Snowdrops and winter aconites are starting to give way to wild primroses and lesser celandine!

Keep an eye out for spring flowers as these are a good place to spot early emerging honeybees, bumblebees and butterflies. Certain species of willow are particularly attractive as their pollen-rich catkins provide nourishment for these intrepid insects!

#### **Tricky:**

Have you spotted a butterfly yet? I was very pleased to spot a male Brimstone butterfly followed by a Peacock along the Humberston Fitties in the last days of February.

Any sunny spots will do, especially if there is a bit of shelter and any flowering plants nearby. Let us know what you find!

You can find out which species have been spotted so far this spring by visiting the Lincolnshire Branch of Butterfly Conservation's [latest sightings page!](#)

#### **Challenging:**

Fancy a challenge? Have a listen to the song of the [Chiffchaff](#). This is one of the first migratory species to arrive in the UK from Africa in early spring. Their characteristic "chiff chaff chiff chaff" song never fails to lift my heart after a long winter.

Try around Cleethorpes Country Park, the Town's Holt area on the River Freshney or one of our woodlands: Weelsby Woods and Bradley Woods are always reliable spots!

*We recommend trying the free [Merlin Bird ID](#) app on smartphone. Simply record bird songs and calls as you hear them and Merlin will identify them for you! It is a great stepping stone into learning how to identify species by sound.*



## Get Involved!

Would you like to join us for an upcoming guided nature walk? Or do you fancy contributing towards recording local wildlife? There are many ways in which you can get involved.

### Citizen Science:

There are plenty of projects to help record wildlife sightings and data, many of which are easy-to-access and can be done close to home. We've recently published a list of [Citizen Science Projects](#) on our DUNE Project webpage covering areas such as birds, insects, wildflowers and even marine life.

### Upcoming Events:

All guided nature walks are free but booking is essential. Binoculars are available upon request.

Keep an eye out for some special spring-themed walks and activities around the Easter holidays! Please visit our [EventBrite](#) page for more information and click "Follow" to found out about future events!

Date	Time	Start	What3Words
6 <sup>th</sup> March	10:00 – 12:00	Cleethorpes Boating Lake	///survey.tour.mini
13 <sup>th</sup> March	10:00 – 12:00	Cleethorpes Country Park	///luxury.game.parks
27 <sup>th</sup> March	10:00 – 12:00	Cleethorpes Boating Lake	///survey.tour.mini

### Send us your sightings!

If you have any sightings or photos, we'd love to hear from you! Send us an email and we will share our favourite photos in next month's newsletter: [DUNEproject@nelincs.gov.uk](mailto:DUNEproject@nelincs.gov.uk)

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