

DUNE Project Newsletter

Hello and welcome to the June edition of the DUNE Project Newsletter with updates on recent project work, wildlife sightings and upcoming events.

May has seen a mixed bag in terms of weather coupled with some exciting sightings for our local area! Read on to find out more.

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

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

Coastal Ranger Updates

The first two weeks of May felt closer to the first two weeks of March this year! Rain, hail and a biting north-easterly wind off the Humber made for unpleasant conditions and seemed to slow down the arrival of migratory bird species.

A big thank you to those who braved the weather and attended our guided nature walks in the earlier in the month to celebrate [World Migratory Bird Day](#), with two walks taking place to explore the migratory species that spend the summer in the UK. We were treated to singing **Sedge** and **Reed Warblers** at Cleethorpes Country Park as well as **Common** and **Lesser Whitethroats** at Cleethorpes Local Nature Reserve.

The weather improved the following week with a welcome return of sunshine and warm, southerly winds. For migrating birds, a tail wind encourages and helps them!

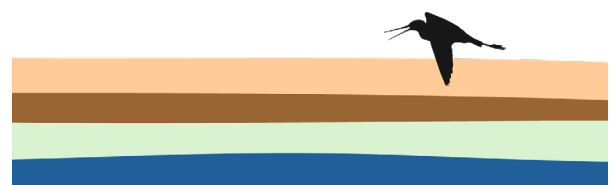
For [National Nature Reserve Week](#), we took a tour of two sections of Cleethorpes Local Nature Reserve which in 2023 became part of the [Lincolnshire Coronation Coast NNR](#). It was a pleasure to showcase our part of this wider reserve in such nice weather!

We were privileged to offer a work experience opportunity to a Year 10 student from a local school this month. They spent the week outdoors in challenging conditions, assisting the Coastal Ranger with guided walks, nature reserve mapping and survey work combined with office work with our Research and Engagement Officer looking at local heritage and learning all about how the council works.

We gave a talk about the DUNE Project at Franklin College for a personal and professional development session to the Franklin NEWT group (Nature, Environment and Wildlife Team). We asked them for their views on how we can encourage responsible access to our coastline as well as how to better engage young people with our local natural heritage.



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Cleethorpes Local Nature Reserve: May Sightings

May has seen some fantastic local records for migratory species at Cleethorpes Local Nature Reserve and in the wider area!

It is looking like we're having a **Painted Lady** year! There has been a large influx of this butterfly across the UK and I have seen these on a daily basis for the last 2 weeks. This migratory species undertakes an annual, long-distance journey from North Africa to Europe. The adults which have over-wintered in Africa disperse north, breed here and die. Their successors, hatched here in summer, then head all the way back to Africa in the autumn! Read more here: [Early signs of Painted Lady influx - BirdGuides](#)

In bird news, there have been some excellent local records of some proper rarities! A report came in from local birdwatcher Nick Coulbeck on Sunday 17th May of a **Purple Heron** on the edge of the Mike Sleight Island at Cleethorpes Country Park. A rare relative of our native Grey Heron, the elusive [Purple Heron](#) was found skulking through the reed beds.

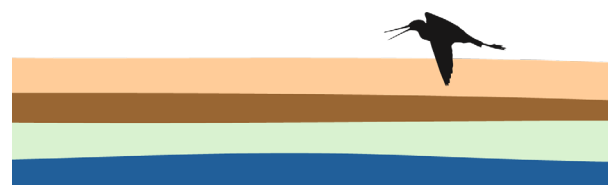
Overall, it is slightly smaller, darker and purplish. This species has colonised France and the Netherlands in recent decades with breeding first confirmed in the UK in 2010. There are around 30 records of this species in Lincolnshire up to 2021, so this bird was a very rare treat for local birdwatchers. Later in the day, it perched in a tree, preening itself before flying off high south around 7pm. It didn't return! Thank you to local birdwatcher and photographer Steve Hannam for the photos.



Purple Heron by Steve Hannam



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Another report of a rare bird in the local area was of a singing **Golden Oriole** at a private site in Humberston on Tuesday 26th. Sadly no longer a British breeding species, they can turn up in late spring before heading back south. With 3 Golden Oriole seen at LWT Gibraltar Point the previous day, there is a chance this was 1 of those birds. Please do have a listen to their magnificent song here: [Golden Oriole | BTO](#)

Other bird records of note in May were an **Osprey** flying along the coast at Humberston Fitties on Friday 22nd (very well timed, this was spotted by the Coastal Ranger on a guided walk!) and a pair of **Common Tern** exchanging food on the lake at Cleethorpes Country Park, a surefire sign that they are intending to breed.

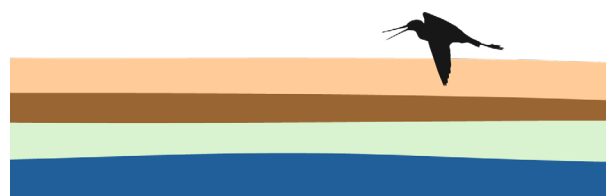
And finally, in exciting dragonfly news, local skilled naturalist Chris Atkin found what may be the first record of the migrant **Lesser Emperor** for our area. This [species](#) was once a rare vagrant from Continental Europe and has become more frequent in recent years; first recorded in the UK in 1996 with breeding confirmed in 1999. Thank you to Chris for his photo.



Lesser Emperor by Chris Atkin



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Photos



Guided Nature Walk for Migratory Bird Day



Talk at Franklin College NEWT session



Guided Nature Walk for NNR Week



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