

ALDERNEY WILDLIFE



SUMMER 2018 | FRESHWATER
Protecting Alderney's wildlife for the future



Editorial

As we were discussing potential topics for this summer's magazine the idea of 'Freshwater' came up and it seemed like the perfect choice for our second edition.

Only 2.5% of the world's water is freshwater, meaning competition for this vital habitat and resource, needed by countless species, including humans, is high. We have relatively few freshwater habitats on Alderney and they are all the more important because of their scarcity. Our ponds are essential refugia for migrating species in addition to

being a food source and habitat for resident birds, amphibians and invertebrates. Streams themselves are a source of flowing water and also create wider wet areas, such as patches of bog or flush. Disused quarries too, provide a unique ecological niche for wildlife.

I hope you enjoy reading more about these habitats and how we are working to conserve them from their many threats, including invasive species, pollution and climate change. As always, your feedback and suggestions are very welcome.

Claire



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'Hasn't it been wet this year?'

The British love talking about the weather, and we are proud of our ability to discuss at length how wet, cold, hot or dry it is. Us Alderney folk are no different and with 2018's rain, snow, mist and drought we've had lots to say! Yet we're all becoming increasingly aware that the seasonal variations we face are getting more extreme. As we learn more about our island's ecology we can see how wildly populations can fluctuate because of the weather. Consider the Dartford warbler - drought in the 1990s devastated the population, but over the next 15 years it recovered to even larger numbers until snowfall and prolonged cold knocked back the population from over 27 pairs to little more than half a dozen.

As global temperature averages continue to climb, one of the most fundamental requirements for life, freshwater, is increasingly an issue. Stable moisture levels appear to be a thing of the past and rapid fluctuations increasingly the norm.

Alderney has an amazing number of micro-habitats, and many of these are dependent on the fresh water cycle to support them. Due to a wet spring our ponds are in a better state this summer to support their populations of dragonflies, flowering plants and birds than they have been for several years. However, with the prolonged dry conditions much of the island is parched, with very low moisture levels in vegetation and soil. Species such as gorse, normally resistant to drought, are now suffering more than I can remember in the last 20 years. Added to this is the very real risk of heath and scrub fires, which given the conditions could spread like 'wildfire'!

So the importance of fresh water, on which this issue of Alderney Wildlife will focus, is even more vital. Please consider this most vital of resources - how it affects you and the effect you have on it.

Roland Gauvain





News round-up

Guernsey Conservation Awards

Towards the end of June I went over to Guernsey for the day to take part in the annual Guernsey Conservation Awards, run by the Insurance Corporation Channel Islands (ICCI) and judged by conservation leaders from Guernsey.



Sadly this year AWT was not one of the winners, but it was great to see so many brilliant organisations working hard to protect all aspects of the Bailiwick's biodiversity. The overall winner was the Guernsey pollinator project, which aims to encourage planting for pollinators in gardens and by large-scale landowners, together with raising awareness of the benefits of pollinators and the damage caused by pesticides. Very worthy winners and the AWT will be following their work closely to see what we can learn from them.

It was also very encouraging to hear ICCI and Guernsey's Bailiff, Sir Richard Collas, reaffirm their commitment to protecting the Bailiwick's environment well into the future. The awards are always a highlight for us, not only getting

over to Guernsey to catch up with some of the other organisations working in the sector, but to recognise the pioneering work going on around our islands; long may they continue.



Inter-Island Environment Meeting 2018

September 20th and 21st 2018 will see Jersey National Trust and the States of Jersey Environment Department play host to the Inter-Island Environment Meeting, with the theme this year of 'Environmental Partnership'.

The meeting is a focus for groups and organisations that are working together for the good of our environment, now and for the future. The AWT will give a talk at the meeting, primarily concentrating on the internship structure the Trust relies on for much of our work, and how sustainable the internship system will be in future.

During the meeting there will be the opportunity to get out and see some of Jersey's wildlife sites, including areas identified for seabird conservation, the National Trust wetland centre and site restoration. We look



forward to providing a summary of the meeting in the next magazine.

National
Trust Jersey



The Druid and the Spurge Hawk-Moth

Two extremely rare moths came to light in Alderney on the nights of 3rd and 6th July 2018. The Druid (*Aedia funesta*) was in the Valley trap, and was the first Channel Islands record ever, and only the 4th for the British Isles.



The Spurge Hawk (*Hyles euphorbiae*), below, came to Poppy and Theo's trap. It used to breed in Jersey and Guernsey until the 1880s, with just one Guernsey record since, in 2006, and very few in the UK. Both species are totally new to Alderney.



Success for Alderney's plovers and terns

It is still relatively early days but it looks like the island's Ringed Plover and Common Terns have had a successful year.



Common Tern chick

This comes after a great deal of work through the Alderney Ramsar plan to try and reduce the threat of rat predation on the small tern colony on Houmet de Pies. From camera trap evidence collected last year we found rats were getting into the colony as eggs were laid and chicks hatching showing precisely when predation occurred and why no chicks fledged.

The plover, after a few failures early in the season, also managed to hatch at least three broods. We will update how they got on in the next edition.



Ringed Plover

Alderney's Freshwater Habitats

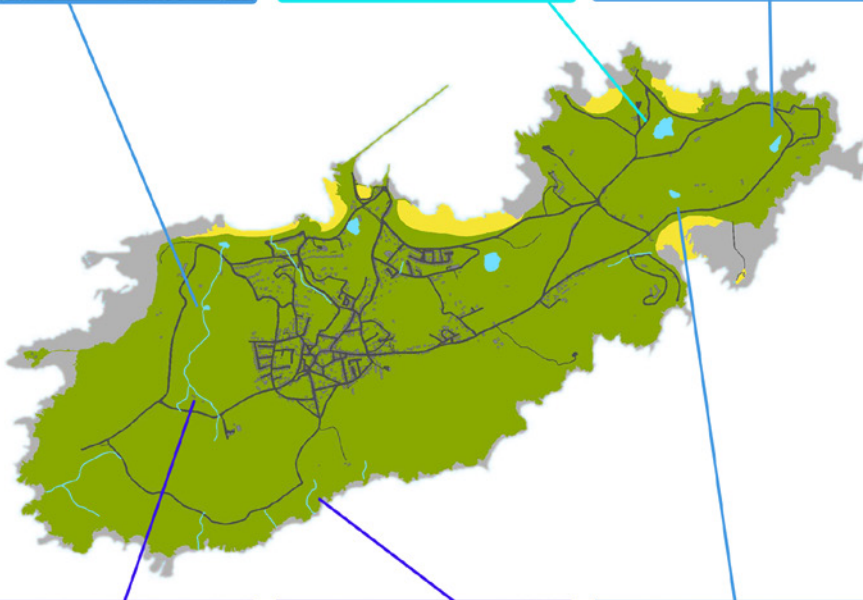
Bonne Terre pond



Corblets quarry



Mannez pond



Bonne Terre stream

Vau Du Saou stream

Longis pond

Ponds

These small water bodies often have high seasonal variation in their water levels (as we see with Longis and Mannez) and sadly the majority of the 50% that were not lost during the 20th century are in a poor state. Many ponds are man-made, in fact the only relatively natural pond here is Longis and even that has been dug out multiple times. Others arise mainly through damming (e.g. Bonne Terre) or quarrying (e.g. Mannez). Ponds are an important home for wildlife - they support two thirds of freshwater species including amphibians, waterfowl, fish, dragonflies and a whole host of aquatic invertebrates, not to mention the vital water source they provide for other species. Find out more about creating a pond on page 10.

Streams

Streams are small bodies of running water that tend to follow natural features of the landscape, often highly modified by human activity. Many are seasonal and may completely dry out in summer, but this feature contributes to their unique species assemblages. Streams support flora and fauna that depend on running water and are often important nursery grounds. The water also sometimes runs through the soil, creating wet and boggy patches.

Quarries

Once filled with water, quarries form a type of man-made lake or pond. They are often steep-sided and deep, filled naturally from springs and rain, allowing wildlife to gradually return, or flooded and restored. Depending on what was quarried some habitats may be unusual if they have high or low acidity or mineral content so support rarer species. Alderney's quarries were for stone and so can support similar species to the ponds, but their larger size and the presence of fish in some make them attractive to species such as kingfishers.

Other freshwater habitats

While ponds, streams and quarries make up the majority of freshwater habitats on Alderney there is one other freshwater habitat worth noting. A flush is an area where the water table reaches the surface briefly, leaving an area of waterlogged ground. The flush at Clonque is one of the very few sites on the island where the plant Ragged Robin still occurs and is somewhere the AWT will look to manage carefully in future.

Fond of our ponds

Rachel Conway, Conservation Officer

Two of Alderney's freshwater ponds can be found within the Longis Reserve: Longis Pond and Mannez Pond.

Longis Pond covers an area of approx. 1ha, including the reed bed. Old reference maps confirmed a pond has been present in the area for over 250 years so, after it had silted, the Alderney Society re-excavated the area in 1989 to restore the pond. Pollen analysis revealed an even longer history with the presence of open water vegetation dating back almost 3,800 years. A stream previously fed the pond from the north exiting into Longis Bay.

Mannez Pond lies in a sandstone quarry, now flooded, and forms a 0.4ha freshwater pond. Although Alderney has several quarries that are flooded, most are steep-sided reservoirs with limited wildlife and access. The shallowness of Mannez pond has allowed the formation of small areas of wetland. It holds a less mature wetland habitat than Longis pond possibly due to its artificial origin and presence of invasive plants.

Pond water levels naturally fluctuate and as a result threatens




such as drainage schemes, chemical pollution and neglect through disuse can have major impact on the fragile ecosystem. Aeration of a pond is vital to maintaining its long-term health. Murky or foul-smelling pond water can be caused by a build-up of anaerobic bacteria, often caused by an accumulation of excess nutrients from rotting vegetation. Ultimately this can lead to pond stagnation and a reduction in wildlife - both in terms of population size and diversity of species.

In the 1990s boreholes were installed in the vicinity of Longis pond to increase the island's water supply. Used only for emergency provision, pumping took place at very low levels until 2004 when successive years of low rainfall required greater pumping. As a result, Longis Pond regularly dried out. This is believed to have had a huge impact on wildlife reliant on the


pond. However, the boreholes began to dry up from overuse. A hosepipe ban was imposed and Alderney's water collection system underwent major changes. The need to pump regularly at Longis Common consequently reduced and ground water levels which feed the pond quickly increased.

Well-managed ponds are very important habitats for many creatures. Improving the health of a pond is about maintaining the right conditions for natural plant growth to thrive.

Our key objectives for the Longis Reserve ponds are to:

💧 Maintain an appropriate balance of tree and shrub cover in the area surrounding Longis Pond, whilst maintaining, and if possible, increasing the current size and species richness of open water and reed bed, allowing their natural expansion into adjacent grasslands. 

💧 Develop Mannez Pond's surrounding vegetation into a wet woodland whilst maintaining the current size and species richness of the open water.

Reed beds are dynamic ecosystems and each growth stage needs to be managed to maximise their conservation and biodiversity potential. Reed beds help clean the water as bacteria on the roots break down excess nutrients. Reed bed management at Longis and Mannez Ponds is required to prevent encroachment of Bramble, Willow and White Poplar. All White Poplar trees growing inside the reed bed at Longis were removed between 2003 and 2010 as they tend to dry out the land. However, 

saplings continue to return from the rootstock of the original trees and need annual control.

Regular removal of invasive, dominant species, such as *Crassula helmsii* and Parrot's-feather, is also required at Mannez. This will reduce the need for a bigger, more drastic restoration later.

Despite their small size, Longis and Mannez ponds hold an array of wildlife, providing food and rest for migrant species. Many newts, dragonflies, wetland birds, and bats rely on these freshwater habitats.

At present we only have outline information on the exact number and range of species within our ponds. To understand these sites better surveys are scheduled for the current five-year management cycle to determine the exact habitat types, plant communities, and species present. This will allow us to continue to conserve and support these unique watery worlds.





Wildlife gardening

This spring, as part of our Wildlife Week's events, resident Garden Designer and Horticulturist, Lee Sanders, hosted a talk on wildlife gardening, discussing how best to create wildlife habitats in our coastal gardens. Lee highlighted some key plants that provide shelter and valuable food sources for visiting species and how to attract creatures using plants as well as other means of habitat creation.

Some guidance from Lee to help decide on location and choice of plants to attract pollinators to your garden:

🦋 Provide pollinators with food, breeding grounds and places to hibernate by planting up a sunny, sheltered site.

🦋 Consider a successional planting border to provide nectar from spring to autumn. Include night-scented plants to attract moths such as honeysuckle or evening primrose.

🦋 Encourage butterflies to breed by growing very specific plants for caterpillars to feed on - a group of stinging nettles will provide food for the attractive peacock butterfly for example and can be seen in various places throughout the island.

🦋 To attract bees, try Viper's bugloss - *Echium vulgare* or Common Comfrey - *Symphytum officinale*, this plant makes useful liquid fertiliser!



Ponds

One of the key features of any wildlife garden must be the inclusion of water. Your water feature can be any shape and size if you choose a flexible liner or you can select an already shaped pond, in the form of a rigid plastic mould.

A pond can bring life to any garden space whatever the size, but the larger the pond the better your chances of attracting wildlife, especially invertebrates and amphibians, whilst allowing you to use a wider variety of pond plants. The pond does not have to be deep, but do try and vary the depth between 20-60 cm. Amphibians like newts and frogs will want a safe exit and entry to your pond and this can be achieved by having a very shallow shelf, and the liner can be disguised by covering with suitable washed pebbles or a fine shingle.



Shelter is also extremely important and if you do not have vegetation surrounding your pond you will need some plants to create this cover, so wildlife can safely enter and exit.



The pond margins will provide you with an opportunity to use special marginal plants which are happy to grow in the pond, having their roots underwater at various depths. They will also provide further cover and breeding areas for your wildlife.



Good native marginal plants include:

Branded horsetail (*Equisetum fluviale*), Arrowhead (*Sagittaria sagittifolia*), Cotton Grass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*) and Marsh marigold (*Caltha palustris*).



Lee can be contacted for garden & planting design drawings, all aspects of garden maintenance, planting and specialised pruning, garden consultancy.

Email: leesandershorticulture@gmail.com Phone: 07911 748633



Find some tips on pond dipping below - there's loads you might find, from frogs and newts to water boatmen and pond snails! Just remember to put them all back carefully afterwards.



How to go pond dipping



wildlife watch



Be prepared:

- wear old clothes and wellies 
- cover all cuts and scratches with waterproof plasters 
- go with a friend, and take a responsible adult too
- take a field guide if you have one 
- take a net, shallow tray or washing up bowl and a jam jar 

- 1 Put a small amount of pond water into your tray/bowl
- 2 Dip your net in the pond and pull it through the water - try a figure of 8
- 3 Empty your net into the tray/bowl and look carefully (some creatures are very small)
- 4 Use a camera, sketchbook and notes to record what you find 
- 5 When you've finished, gently empty the tray/bowl, wash your hands and disinfect the net



Illustration: Corinne Welch © Copyright Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts 2016



Alderney's dragonflies

DW



Red-veined Darter

It is remarkable that an island as small as Alderney can lay claim to 19 species of dragonfly. At least seven of these are resident, some are migrants and the rest are enigmatic species about which we know little, as yet.

Until recently Mannez quarry pond was the main dragonfly locality, but it is now a giant reed-bed with few patches of open water. Platte Saline pond still has damselflies in dozens, but fewer than in the past, because of the unpredictability of the water level. Corblets quarry is still a fine locality, especially for migrating hawkers and darters, but its development as an angling centre means that entomologists cannot expect to work there. Longis Pond is now the main dragonfly site, and it is often possible to see four or five species flying over the open water, right in front of the hide.

Despite most of the big ponds being inaccessible, however, Alderney is still full

of dragonflies. This is partly due to the number of garden ponds, which in a largely undisturbed island are often beautifully sited and surrounded by flowers, providing flying insects to feed the adult dragonflies, as well as water for the larvae. These garden ponds have masses of frogs, newts, and tadpoles in season, and most of them have mayfly larvae and plenty of water boatmen, as well as dragonfly nymphs. 'Greenacres' has a pool surrounded by lawn, with wonderful sea views towards Burhou, which is much frequented by hawker dragonflies. A different type of pool, surrounded by trees, is in Water Lane, where on one occasion eight Emperor Dragonflies were seen in the air at once.



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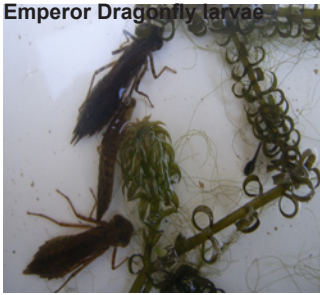
Resident dragonflies in Alderney include three damselflies:



Emperor Dragonfly

Common Blue, Azure and Blue-tailed, and also the Southern Hawker, Emperor, Black-tailed Skimmer and Common Darter. All these can be seen every year. Probable migrant species are Brown Hawker, 4-spotted Chaser, Broad-bodied Chaser, Ruddy Darter and Yellow-winged Darter, which can be seen occasionally. Migrant Hawker used to be rare but now appears in






dozens in late summer and autumn. A recent arrival is the huge Golden-ringed Dragonfly, which must be a migrant because its larva only lives in substantial and fast-flowing rivers! In similar circumstances we believed that the beautiful Banded Demoiselle, which occurs as a larva in rivers in England and appears as an adult in Alderney every summer, was also a migrant, but the damselflies may actually be emerging from nymphs which have lived in the streams which trickle down from the higher parts of the island, especially in the Valley. An enigma is the Red-veined Darter, which breeds occasionally in the UK, but in Alderney was for six or seven years a resident in Mannez Pond. Now the water has gone from that site,

occasional Red-veined Darters still occur, usually at Longis, and we hope this rare species is still resident here.



Another enigma is the Large Red Damselfly, a recent colonist which occurred in some numbers at Mannez, until the reeds swamped the lake, but is now seen occasionally in other parts of the island, often well away from water.


A very new arrival is the Willow Emerald Damselfly, which has been seen three times in recent years. The Southern Emerald Damselfly used to be common in Alderney but nowhere else in the British Isles, but it has not been seen here since the early 1900s. Now both species can be found occasionally in Jersey, so perhaps we shall have them again soon.



Migrant Hawker



Golden-ringed Dragonfly



Common Blue Damselfly

Dragonfly or damselfly?

Although there are always exceptions here are a few general rules to telling the two apart:

- Dragonflies have wings open at rest, damselflies are closed
- The eyes of a dragonfly touch at the top of the head, damselflies do not
- Dragonflies have strong flight whereas damselflies are more weak and fluttering.



Wetland birds

Tim Earl, Alderney Bird Observatory

We were searching deserts, mountains, forests and the wild Mongolian steppe for birds most birders can only dream of: Pallas's Sandgrouse, Mongolian Lark, Saxual Sparrow.

But it was our visits to marshes and lakes which made the greatest impact. Here we saw demure Demoiselle Cranes, Red-necked Stints on migration, Avocets and Black-winged Stilts, rare Relict Gulls next to Coots and Moorhens.

What is it about wetlands which makes them so appealing to wildlife enthusiasts, I wondered?

Most of the RSPB's reserves are wetlands, the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust specialises in them; there is even an international convention on their conservation and sustainable use: Ramsar.

Perhaps it is that wetlands are uncommon habitats in which birds are concentrated around the need for water.

They lend themselves to the provision of birdwatching hides where people can relax and wait for birds to appear rather than walking around looking for species.

This is an important point.

When walking through a wood, let's say, from the clatter of a woodpigeon's panicky flight to the clucking of disapproving blackbirds, we have been spotted – no longer pure observers, we are interacting with birds.

Not so in a wetland hide.

Here the birds cannot see us and thus behave as if we were not there.

As hidden observers we can enjoy watching birds "just like a David Attenborough film".

Part of the success of wetlands is that they have a variety of specialised habitats often in quite small areas.

Open water attracts ducks and grebes; rails and wading



Reed Warbler - Amy Lewis





Ducklings on Longis pond

birds pick around on water's-edge vegetation; bitterns, reed warblers and bearded tits frequent phragmites beds (if you are lucky) while willows provide perches for kingfishers, swallows and a host of 'small brown jobs'.

Many wetlands are tiny. We have two on Alderney, both hosting hides from which our resident birds and those migrating through the island can be watched.

Nesting little grebes prompt gasps of "ooh," and "ahhh"; cuckoos calling from sallows induce strangled imitations, while other observers wonder if it's a chiffchaff or willow warbler picking aphids from the underside of leaves just a few feet away.



Both hides can also act as bird ringing stations for enthusiastic volunteers visiting the Alderney Bird Observatory.

Longis Common and the former Mannez quarry both have bird hides. Do take time to visit and enjoy our wetland birds.



Grey Heron and Coots on Longis pond





Eels

The European Eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) is an elusive creature with a complex life cycle - still not fully understood to this day.

Eels are believed to start their life in the Sargasso Sea (near Bermuda)

then float across the Atlantic, stopping wherever the currents drop them in European Atlantic rivers. When they first arrive on our coastlines they are tiny and transparent, hence their life cycle name - Glass Eel. The young eels, now known as



European Eel - Jack Perks

Yellow Eels, mature in European freshwater habitats, feeding mainly on invertebrates and staying, on average, for 20 years. Once they are sexually mature they return as Silver Eels to the Sargasso via the Azores. They are a long-lived species, with the oldest recorded European Eel reaching 85 years old.

These eels are considered by the IUCN red list as a critically endangered species. While eel numbers themselves are not low, they are less than 10% of the former super abundance, with declines becoming increasingly dramatic in the last 30 years. These sharp declines are due to various factors including overfishing, dam construction, water pollution and the complex and long migratory life cycle described above.

More recently a new threat has become apparent - eel trafficking. We spoke to Andrew Kerr, chairman of the Sustainable Eel Group (SEG), about their research into this illegal trade. Their research has shown



Illegally trafficked glass eels found on a raid

that an estimated 350 million glass eels (or 25% of annual recruitment stock) are trafficked into Asia every year. The majority are caught in rivers in France and Spain, with fishermen receiving up to 400

euros per kilo. Once the eels are grown in farmed pools the illegal profit gained is in the tens of thousands of euros. The SEG hope that through their efforts with the European Parliament current legislation will be revised in 2019, bringing harsher punishment and greater policing for "Europe's own ivory trade".

Eels in Alderney

There are some anecdotal records (mostly from fishermen) of eel presence within Alderney's waters but there is no official quantitative information.

For this reason the Alderney Wildlife Trust conduct surveys to collect information about presence, abundance and distribution of European Eels. This consists of deploying a trap with bait inside in selected fresh water bodies (streams and ponds) in the evening. Some data such as GPS position, weather conditions, bait used and time of deployment is noted. The trap is pulled out the day after in the early morning to check what is inside (needless to say that the trap is designed to keep any captured animals alive).

If there are any eels inside we record the number of eels, length and then take pictures.

Unfortunately no eels have been found in Alderney's fresh water bodies since one of our first surveys in 2016. There are some possible reasons for that; including that last season was especially dry and hot causing



Eel trap in location near Longis Bay

the streams and ponds evaporate to very low levels. This makes conditions potentially too extreme for the eels to develop.

Along with trafficking two of the biggest threats to the species are habitat loss and barriers to eel migration. Within Europe the SEG estimates 1.3 million barriers and 25,000 hydropower stations - all preventing eels accessing the streams they need to mature.

We hope that our research will help shed some light on this charismatic species and contribute to their conservation.



National moth night

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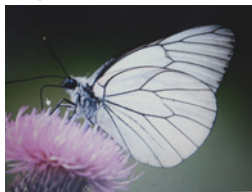
National Moth night is held on a different date each year, with hundreds of light traps throughout the British Isles. It used to be on a single night, which was often ruined by bad weather, but is now a weekend, which is much more satisfactory. This year's event took place on the nights of 14th to 16th June, with Alderney's light traps at five sites: in the Valley and Water Lane, Essex Farm, Millers Orchard and at the Lighthouse. In all 1,906 moths of 171 species were recorded, a good total although not a vintage Alderney year. 220 Orange Footmen was impressive, and there were plenty of rarities like Orache and Barrett's Marbled Coronet and the micro *Evergestis limbata*. The first Garden Tigers of the year appeared at Millers Orchard, & we show Poppy (age 8) and Theo (6) who run the trap, with the season's first Privet Hawk.



In early July the real rarities started to appear, with three species not only new to Alderney but also very uncommon on the UK mainland. On the night of 3rd July the first Druid moth ever seen in the Channel Islands came to our Valley site and on 6th a Spurge Hawk-moth appeared in Poppy and Theo's trap (see Page 5 for photos). This beautiful insect used to be found in Jersey and Guernsey up until the 1880s, but only one has occurred since! On 12th July a Black-veined White butterfly was seen at Fort Albert, another new species. Not to be outdone, on 17th July Henry Rowe, who used to be one of Alderney's most able young naturalists before he moved to Guernsey, found a specimen of the Alchemist in his new trap in the bigger island. The moth is the first for Guernsey and has never been seen in Alderney.



Evergestis limbata



Black-veined White



Alchemist





UK water voles in decline

Terry Whittaker



Water voles are a species synonymous with rivers and freshwater but despite recent efforts their populations are not recovering.

Water voles still declining, says new research

The water vole is still heading for extinction. That's the stark conclusion of research led by The Wildlife Trusts. Analysing data collected over ten years has revealed that the water vole's distribution has declined by 30% since 2006 in England and Wales.

“ It has now vanished from 94% of its former haunts ”

It has now vanished from 94% of places where it once was.

This would be even worse without The Wildlife Trusts and others carrying out river restoration and reintroductions across the UK. The causes are well known: habitat loss, water pollution, built development and predation by the North American mink. Ellie Brodie, Senior Policy Manager for The Wildlife Trusts, says: “We're working hard to bring them back, but much more is needed if we're going to stop this creature disappearing altogether. We need commitment to a Nature Recovery Network.”



Bonne Terre

Lindsay Pyne

Alderney's open nature makes its few deep valleys special places. Bonne Terre is the largest valley on the island, sloping down from the flat uplands of the Blaye in the south towards the sea in the north, with a freshwater stream running through which originally serviced the ancient Watermill, now being renovated by Alderney Society volunteers. Often wet and muddy, and easily overgrown despite the best efforts of our staff and volunteers, it is still one of my favourite walks. Naturally regenerating woodland extends up the valley and throughout March and April the valley turns white with Blackthorn, Hawthorn and Elder blossom and in later spring it provides the best displays of native Bluebells on the island.



Southern Marsh Orchid

Whilst small, the site contains a range of different habitats, but to me the most important is a small area of what was wet meadow and has the potential to be restored in the future, this is situated just above the dammed mill pond. In 2006 work was carried out in the valley by States of Alderney Water Board to create a settling pond behind the secondary dam in order to reduce the amount of sediment reaching the pumping station below. This resulted in the loss of arguably the best and largest wet meadowland habitat on the island and the only site for Southern Marsh Orchid.

We had hoped that "my" area was going to replace the one lost to the settling pond, but this did not occur and it has since become overgrown with bracken. It does contain some wet meadow species including Water Mint, Greater Bird's-foot Trefoil, Great Willowherb and the impressive Greater Tussock-sedge, as well as numerous butterflies, bees and other insects, but no orchids or Lesser Spearwort and only the occasional patch of Ragged Robin.

Regular clearance will help but active management of topography may be a longer term solution.

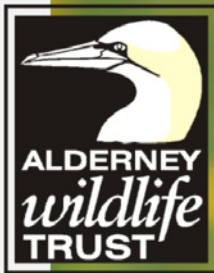


Ragged Robin



Water refill

Following the initial success of our plastic free campaign we looked at ways to get our school involved in more than just beach cleans. Having followed the success of the Refill campaign in the UK it seemed natural that Alderney should link in with the project. We challenged junior students to design window stickers for any business or organisation that would be willing to fill bottles from their taps for free. We had some brilliant entries and although the decision was tough we picked designs by Evelyn and Morgan in year 1 and 2. We hope that by promoting water refill locations we will reduce the need for single-use plastic water bottles and encourage people to drink Alderney's clean, healthy tap water. We are delighted that already fourteen businesses have signed up to Alderney's refill scheme - look out for a sticker near you.



SAVE THE DATE

ALDERNEY FAYRE
SUNDAY 26TH AUGUST
ESSEX FARM, FROM MIDDAY

PITCHES FREE AND OPEN TO ALL
PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU'D LIKE ONE

ADMIN@ALDERNEYWILDLIFE.ORG
01481822935

Watch news

Our recent Watch events have mainly centred on Wildlife Week, over the May half term - we had loads of activities from rockpooling to bug hunts to Gannet watching. We were especially proud of our 'Rubbish Puffin' created using litter collected from Alderney's beaches. It is great to see so many of our junior members improving their identification skills and getting hands-on with nature both at our events and in their own time.

We've also been out with the school, helping get classes learning



outdoors before the end of term, with trips to the beach, Bibette Head and the woodland among others. Look out for rockpooling, beach cleans, kayaking and more over summer before our summer fayre over the August bank holiday.



Photo - David Nash

Freshwater wildlife Quiz

How much do you know about Alderney's freshwater wildlife? Answers on the side of the page

1. How can you tell a Dabchick from a Little Grebe?
2. What gives rise to the expression 'bald as a coot'?
3. How can you tell a Sedge Warbler from a Reed Warbler?
4. In the marshy ground above the old mill pond are huge tussocks of what sedge?
5. What occasional visitor to Longis Pond makes a booming sound?
6. Which water bird can squeal like a wild pig?
7. If you see a damselfly at rest with its wings outstretched, what is wrong?
8. What kind of newt is regularly found in Alderney's ponds?
9. What kind of reed is regularly cut by AWT at Longis pond?
10. Where in Alderney is New Zealand pygmy-weed a nuisance?

Answers: 1. You can't! They're the same 2. The white on a coot's forehead looks like a bald patch on a man's 3. Sedge Warblers have a white eye stripe 4. Greater Tussock Sedge 5. Bittern 6. Water Rail 7. You are! Wings outstretched means it's a dragonfly 8. Palmate Newt 9. Common Reed 10. Marnier pond

Visiting a UK reserve



Filip Wieckowski, 2016 Ramsar Officer now studying in London

Three years after working as reserves officer on the **Great Fen Project** I returned to see how things have progressed. Change is everywhere, new footpaths, new ponds and reservoirs, but the real change is in



the great expanse of wildflowers and lush mixed grasses. This former arable landscape of rows of potatoes and sugar beet has been transformed into a fenland mosaic which supports the local community and provides habitats for a huge variety of species.

Woodwalton Fen is home to thousands of rare Tansy Beetles, and several species of dragon and damsel flies. From the back edge of the nature reserve you have a view across **Darlow's Farm**. One of the first places to undergo restoration, Darlow's is a diverse wet meadow dotted with rushes and wetland plants which leads the eye towards **Holme Fen**, perhaps the finest example of birch woodland in lowland Britain. Walking through Holme Fen the woods feel truly alive with Linnets, Goldfinches and butterflies. The woods lead to the Tower Hide which overlooks **Rymes Reed bed** offering views of wildfowl and Chinese water deer. The new network of pools at **Kester's Docking** hosts Great egret, Curlew and Crane, and Short-eared owls can be seen regularly.



Perhaps the best way to fully appreciate the work that has gone into the Project is to walk the newly opened **Last of the Meres trail**. It's not a quick stroll, taking around four hours, leading you through the rewilded meadows, bordering scrapes and pools and the birch woodland of Holme Fen.

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Get in touch

We would love to hear your
thoughts, questions and ideas
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