

Lakenheath Fen news July 2017

Hello and welcome to news from Lakenheath Fen! I hope everyone is having an enjoyable summer!

Breeding Highlights

The past few months the team of staff and volunteers have been busy carrying a range of surveys to monitor the breeding bird's onsite. Since 2007 we have been the chosen breeding site for the same 2 pairs of **cranes** who have fledged 11 chicks throughout that time. Unfortunately this year, for unknown reasons, one of our pairs, that we know as "Little and Large" disappeared in early April. However we are very pleased to announce that our second pair successfully fledged one young on Friday 7th July. This means that this pair has fledged 5 young on the reserve in the last 3 years and our 12th overall, which is a fantastic achievement.

A group of six **cranes** appeared on the reserve on Saturday 24 June and we believe that these were the three juveniles that fledged on the reserve in 2015 and the three that fledged on the reserve in 2016 respectively. It is great to see these birds doing well, with 3 of the 6 being sighted foraging on the site over the following few weeks.



Image credits: Dave Rogers

Bitterns have had a good breeding season on the reserve. We had a record number of "boomers" in the spring with eight males holding territory and 4 confirmed nests.

Marsh harriers have had a slightly disappointing year on the reserve with only 11 confirmed nests.

Reserve Management

Our grassland compartments have recently undertaken a haircut as we have just finished topping the fields. In particular we were targeting juncus (rush) and nettles, as we aim to create more open conditions in certain compartments to benefit passage and breeding waders.

We have also been undertaking a lot of site maintenance work, with plenty of fencing repairs being carried out across site, in the hope that they can withstand the challenge of the constant onslaught provided by our ponies and cattle. Trail maintenance has also been an ongoing job, with our mower and strimmers keeping the paths and benches clear.

Wildlife Sightings

The majority of the bird interest over the last couple of months has focused on waders. Highlights have included a **grey plover** in full summer plumage on 20 June and a **wood sandpiper** was found on the washland on 24 June. It or another was present on and off for the next week or so. There were as many as 12 **little ringed plovers** along with up to five **ruffs**. There was also an impressive count of **1080** lapwings on the washland on 17 July.

There were some interesting invertebrate records during late June/ early July. Two scarce species of micro moth were seen in late June. Unfortunately, they only have scientific names so here they are: ***Eucosma metzneriana*** and ***Staphmopoda pedalla***. There were also

several interesting butterfly records with **brown argus** and **clouded yellow** both being seen in early July.

There was a pleasant surprise on 24 June when a couple of visitors found some **pyramidal orchids** in flower on the approach to Mere Hide (pictured below). This species has only been recorded on the reserve once before, when Warden Katherine found a single spike in Joist Fen North on 23 July 2008.



Image credits: David White

For more sightings or information about our events and the Reserve, including our blog, please check out our website www.rspb.org.uk/lakenheathfen

Events

All of our up and coming events for 2017 can now be found on our website, but please find a selection of these below:

Summer Family Fun Day

Sunday 20 August

10am-4pm

Price: Free event

Moths all a flutter

Friday 25 August

7.30pm-10pm

Price: Adults £10 Children £5 (Non-Members) Adults £8 Children £4 (Members)

Bats that go bump in the night

Saturday 2 September

7pm-9.15pm

Price: Adults £10 Children £5 (Non-Members) Adults £8 Children £4 (Members)

Race for Wildlife

Sunday 15 October

Registration closes at 10.30am. Race starts at 11am.

Price: £12 per adult, £6 for under 16's via: www.wegotickets.com/lakenheath; or send a cheque payable to RSPB. Booking essential

Hope to see you around the Reserve soon,

Thanks, Alan Kell (Warden) 27/03/2017