

EYEBROOK RESERVOIR  
RUTLAND'S FIRST WATER



WILDLIFE GROUP  
JUNE 2015 NEWSLETTER

Inspired by Jamie's lead article, I decided to check out the butterflies in the plantation. A pristine new brood Small Tortoiseshell on some blackberry flowers caught my attention. On approaching closer I saw, feeding about two feet away, a Painted Lady. Being easy to photograph, this has allowed me to make use of my editor's privilege and have my first newsletter cover shot.

Following on from last month's Odonata I thought it opportune to deal with some of the Lepidoptera likely to be found around the reservoir. I will not even attempt to tackle the moths but think I can handle the butterflies. If there is anyone out there who would like to take on the moths and produce an article for the newsletter I would be most grateful.

I would like to take some credit for the Otter sighting as I suggested in last month's newsletter that the best chance of seeing one would be early morning or in the evening. However as the finder is well known as being an early bird my input would have had little to do with it.

Phil Rogers

To contact me, either email at [ebr-rfw@outlook.com](mailto:ebr-rfw@outlook.com) or text on 07939285371.

Facebook [www.facebook.com/EBRwildlife](http://www.facebook.com/EBRwildlife)

### **Correction**

Last month's photograph of the Grey Plover was incorrectly credited to S. Davis when it was actually one of P. Dams. Apologies to both parties.

### **Eyebrook Reservoir Summer Fayre/Open Day 2015**

As advised last month this is taking place on the 22<sup>nd</sup> August. However with the lack of interest to date; only one person volunteering for the day itself and the same person interested in the bird race; any Wildlife Group involvement is looking unlikely.

Cover Photograph © P. Rogers

## Invading Foreign Painted Ladies

I'd just like to draw people's attention to a migrant species that is now beginning to arrive in the local area. It's not a bird but a butterfly - the marvellously named Painted Lady. This is a large and colourful species related to Red Admiral and Peacock and is happily easy to identify.



© P. Rogers



© C. Clarke

Small numbers arrive from southern Europe and North Africa each year but occasionally we receive far larger numbers and once in a while we have a true invasion. I can recall being in Kent on some sort of twitchy business and seeing literally hundreds passing by on their way north. This year is not shaping up to be one of those years but having seen a couple within a few miles of the res I feel there's a reasonable chance of seeing one.

Painted Ladies often have a fast and quite powerful flight often low across the ground and fairly direct. They appear to be a pale, creamy orange colour quite unlike many of their darker relatives. Purple flowers seem to be a favourite for feeding with thistles in particular being preferred although Buddleias too can be irresistible. It's when they're at rest that you can see just how attractive this species is and luckily they can be quite approachable so binoculars are not required.

Unfortunately this species cannot survive the rigours of a British winter and our population is entirely dependent on immigration from the Med. Mr Farage need not get too excited however as there is evidence to suggest that Painted Ladies make a return migration, a seemingly remarkable feat for such a fragile creature.

So keep an eye out over the coming months, if we ever get a nice sunny day its well worth having an encounter with a Painted Lady.

Jamie.

## Editor's Note

Jamie, I try not to take cheap and easy shots at our political figures but sometimes the temptation is too much. Mr Farage may have something to worry about. It seems with global warming and milder winters, there have been rare instances of Painted Ladies surviving the winter and producing offspring. Also last year saw another butterfly immigrant appear and breed, the Long-tailed Blue. ( A David Cameron type in a morning suit?) Given that this is happening in his heartland of Kent, I'm surprised Nigel is not suggesting a cull. It is enough to make you have another pint!

## Eyebrook Lepidoptera (excluding moths)

As far as butterflies are concerned it is fairly safe to say that EBR is not a top location. Only the more common species are regularly seen. Of the fifty nine regularly occurring UK species only some twenty one that I know of have been recorded at Eyebrook Reservoir in the last few years. These are:-

Small Skipper	Essex Skipper
Large Skipper	Clouded Yellow
Brimstone	Large White
Small White	Green-veined White
Orangetip	Small Copper
Common Blue	Holly Blue
Red Admiral	Painted Lady
Small Tortoiseshell	Peacock
Comma	Speckled Wood
Gatekeeper	Meadow Brown
Ringlet	

Of these, two, Clouded Yellow and Painted Lady, are scarce migrants, while another, Holly Blue, although being fairly common in the county is hard to find at EBR. There are older records of species that may or may not still occur. White Admiral has been reported. White-letter Hairstreaks were once regular when there were still some elm trees and could still survive where there is some elm regrowth. Purple Hairstreaks could be in the many oak trees in the plantation. Both these species spend most of their time in the tops of trees and are easily overlooked.

A Holly Blue was found this month alongside the road near the bridge, the first I know of for some time. A Painted Lady has been found in the plantation. July is prime time for the woodland butterflies so now is the time to add to the list.

## Rarity Updates

Last year's report of a Nightjar at EBR has not been accepted by the LROS Rarity Committee. The written description was found to be inadequate; it was felt that the bird could possibly have been a juvenile Cuckoo. This does not mean that it was not a Nightjar, but is an example of how written descriptions have to be precise and unambiguous.

A written report has been received by the County Recorder of a sighting of the Alpine Swift just to the west of EBR over the road to Market Harborough about two hours after it left Rutland Water on the 14<sup>th</sup> April. If there is anyone who can back up this report, please contact the LROS.

## To Tick or Not To Tick

With the ongoing presence of the two Pink-footed Geese and now the pair of Egyptian Geese at EBR there has been some discussion as to the acceptability of these two species.

I am personally very sceptical about many of the wildfowl that are reported and think that much more scrutiny needs to go into records before they are accepted as being truly wild. I have several species with webbed feet on my Eyebrook and British list that I am dubious about but that have been accepted by the relevant committees.

However this is just my point of view and what matters is how you feel. A personal list is just that, it is what you want; you can count anything you like. Pink-backed Pelican, Flamingo, Australian Shelduck, Scarlet Macaw and many more have been seen at EBR and have found their way onto people's lists. It is where you draw the line. The purists will say that you have to accept the findings of the BOURC, (the official British List), but there are many top birders who disagree hence the UK 400 club. So basically it is down to you.

Egyptian Geese are undoubtedly an introduced species that has gone feral. They have been breeding in the wild for many years and are accepted as wild birds; there is a resident colony at Rutland Water which is where the EBR pair has more likely come from. Other introduced or escaped species, Little Owls, Red-legged Partridges, Mandarin Ducks etc. are all deemed acceptable; so is there any difference?

The two Pink-footed Geese need a bit more consideration. There are feral Pink-feet around the country which are not accepted as wild birds; where the nearest to EBR are I'm not sure. Looking at it from another angle, these two first appeared as juveniles at migration time last year. They could be wild birds that attached themselves to the Greylag flock and stayed over winter. As the Greylags do not migrate back to the north in spring, these two young birds could have followed suit and stayed put.

So make up your own minds. I think that the Egyptians will be accepted by the powers to be but the Pink-feet will not; but there again no-one needs to listen to me.

## House Martin Details

Hi all

We know surprisingly little about House Martins despite the fact that they breed alongside us, using our houses on which to build a nest.

We do not know why this species is in rapid decline in the UK. Currently, it is 'Amber listed' in the Birds of Conservation Concern listings. We need to discover more about House Martins to help us identify why they are declining.

If you have House Martins nesting near you we would like to hear from you with details e.g. the location and number of nests plus any other information you can supply.

The data we collect, as well as being valuable for the county records, could also be useful for the next part of the BTO House Martin survey in 2016.

Regards

Ken

Ken Goodrich LROS

[KJGood1532@aol.com](mailto:KJGood1532@aol.com)

## Ignorance, Complacency or just Stupidity?



In April



In June

The above occurrence took place on the 14<sup>th</sup> June in front of birders watching the Bar-tailed Godwits. Oblivious to everything around them, they approached the water's edge in an attempt to cross the inflow. Not only did they cause massive disturbance to the wildlife but they also put themselves at risk. Given that the wildlife disturbance within the SSSI is not something that concerns either the site owners or Natural England, maybe this should be a Health and Safety issue that concerns someone.

## **A More Positive View of Eyebrook Reservoir**

*I have been visiting Eyebrook Reservoir for a number of years' now. It's a delightful and serene place for birdwatchers to visit. I would describe this idyllic setting as a tranquil respite for the weary.*

*On one of my most recent visits I watched the amazing Barn Owl hunting low over the ground seeking a meal. There is something indefinable about the Barn Owl which intoxicates me, its ghostly image stamping its authority on my thought processes.*

*Watching waders going about their work is therapy for me. I adore Dunlin as they probe and forage, constantly on the move seeking invertebrates. My favourite wader though is the sublime Little Stint, which I have seen often at Eyebrook. This delightful, diminutive bird looks so vulnerable, and yet so enchanting as well, the juveniles are a joy to behold with their well marked plumage.*

*Over the course of the last few years I have developed an obsession with gulls. I have come to appreciate the fact that Eyebrook Reservoir is an excellent place to study them up close. I have spent many hours sorting through Black-Headed Gulls looking for a possible Mediterranean Gull. On one of my last visits to Eyebrook I saw four Little Gulls. These divine birds are wonderfully agile, they are true masters of the sky.*

*I will close by stating Eyebrook Reservoir is an understated joy. I have a job which stresses me a lot, visiting Eyebrook gives me much needed therapy from the rigours of modern day life.*

*Richard Carl Nielsen*

*Loughborough*

## **June Review**

The two geese flocks, both Canada and Greylag, started to build up throughout the month with the return of unsuccessful breeders. It was not a surprise that the two Pink-feet were seen with them on the 4<sup>th</sup>. The pair of Egyptian Geese were present on and off until the 16<sup>th</sup>. Where they go when they are not at EBR is not clear but they could easily be commuting to and fro from Rutland Water.

A brood of eight Shelduck ducklings appeared on the 12<sup>th</sup>. Several broods of Mallard were present along with two broods of Gadwall, one of seven and the other of ten. A pair of Shoveller were at the island on the 5<sup>th</sup>. Good numbers of Great Crested Grebes were present but no signs of breeding have been seen.

A maximum of seven Little Egrets were reported; five were together at the inflow on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>.

The usual five species of raptor were fairly regular with a Hobby on the 26th.

One or on occasion two Oystercatchers showed on and off throughout the month. Two Avocets were present only on the 4<sup>th</sup>.



© J. Turner



© S. Davis

A maximum of twenty five Ringed Plovers were reported on the 3<sup>rd</sup>; numbers then declined to only one towards the end of the month. Small numbers of Little Ringed Plovers were present. The Lapwing flock continued to increase but no sign of any young from the few breeding pairs were seen. There were three Sanderling on the 1<sup>st</sup> and a Turnstone on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. Three Dunlin were seen on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, this dropped to one until the 14<sup>th</sup>. A Green Sandpiper appeared on the 16<sup>th</sup> and stayed until the month's end with four on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 2 on the 29<sup>th</sup>. A Common Sandpiper was seen on the 27<sup>th</sup>. The only Redshank reported was on the 29<sup>th</sup>. A Black-tailed Godwit was present from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup>. Much more unusual were six Bar-tailed Godwits on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>. Two Curlews were at the island on the 25<sup>th</sup>.

Juvenile Black-headed gulls appeared towards the end of the month. An immature (3<sup>rd</sup> year?) Greater Black-backed and a sub-adult Yellow-legged Gull were reported in the latter part of the month. Several large Juvenile Common Terns were noted on both rafts during the month; the first away from the rafts was on the island on the 29<sup>th</sup>. Two Little terns were at the inflow on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

Owls seemed thin on the ground. The usual Little Owls were reported only on a few occasions while calling Tawny Owls were heard on and off.

Only three calling Cuckoos have been reported this year; this reflects the drastic decrease in numbers throughout the country.





© J. Turner

The only Kingfisher reported was from the bridge on the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Juvenile Pied Wagtails appeared around the reservoir. Several Yellow Wagtails were seen throughout the month.

A very unseasonal Stonechat was reported on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Could anyone who saw this bird please pass on the details?

A newly fledged brood of Marsh Tits were seen in the plantation from the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### **Mammals and Reptiles**

An Otter was seen from the bridge early in the morning on the 27<sup>th</sup>. A Muntjac Deer was spotted in the plantation on the 16<sup>th</sup>.

Grass Snakes were active at the bridge on the 5<sup>th</sup>, seen swimming across the stream and hunting on the bank.

### **Butterflies, Dragonflies and Damselflies**



© P. Rogers



© J. Turner

Large Skippers were plentiful around the reservoir. Both Brimstone and Orangetips still showed but most were starting to look a bit tatty. All three of the "Whites" could be seen. One Holly Blue was seen. Some pristine second brood Red Admirals, Small Tortoiseshells and Commas appeared late in the month. At the same time the first Painted Lady was found. Speckled Woods were common in the plantation and the numbers of Meadow Browns built up all around the reservoir.



© P. Dams



© P. Dams



© P. Dams



© P. Rogers

Living up to its name the most numerous damselflies were Common Blues. The first three photographs are of Common Blues, the first being newly emerged with no colour, the second turning blue and the third fully blue. Another species Azure Blue; fourth photo; were also present. Less numerous and quite similar to Commons, close views are needed to safely separate them. Both species vary in the shade of blue.



Common Blue



Azure Blue

As a generalisation a swarm of blue damselflies on vegetation away from water will be Commons, Azures stay more on waterside vegetation. However Commons are seen at the water's edge when mating so to be certain the following features need to be noted.

On the side of the thorax a thin short line is present only on the Azure. A club shaped marking is on the top of the first abdominal segment on the Common. The marking on the Azure is U shaped.



© P. Dams

Several Large Red Damselflies could be seen from the bridge from early in the month.

Later in the month numbers of Banded Demoiselle Damselflies increased becoming easy to watch. The male is blue and the female a bright metallic Green.



© P. Dams



© P. Dams



© C. Clarke

Dragonflies were slow to appear this year. The first on the 4<sup>th</sup>, a female Broad Bodied Chaser, looked to be a freshly emerged one.

The only other species were Black-tailed Skimmers which started to appear at the end of the month.



## High quality garden birdseed at farm gate prices

*Produced on our conservation award winning farm surrounding the Eyebrook Reservoir*

Rectory Farm, Great Easton, LE15 8SN Tel: 01536 770771  
rectoryfarm@eyebrookwildbirdfeeds.co.uk  
[www.eyebrookwildbirdfeeds.co.uk](http://www.eyebrookwildbirdfeeds.co.uk)

# Bird Ringing at Eyebrook – Eyebrook Ringing Group

## Eyebrook Reservoir

### Report for the month of June

On the 27<sup>th</sup> I watched the otter for about 20minutes, swimming from the reservoir up the channel and under the bridge towards Stockerston. This is the time of year when the geese moult their flight feathers and gather together. On the 26<sup>th</sup> I counted in excess of 180 Canada Geese and 120 Greylag Geese. The Shelduck which had eight young on the 13<sup>th</sup> still had 7 young on the 28<sup>th</sup>. Disappointingly there are no Swallows in the truck shed this year and only one pair in the tractor shed.

#### Daily sightings:

- 1<sup>st</sup> 3 Sanderlings
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Turnstone, 18 Ringed Plovers, 3 Dunlin and Kingfisher
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Turnstone, 25 Ringed Plovers and 2 Dunlin
- 4<sup>th</sup> 2 Avocets, Black-tailed Godwit, 14 Ringed Plover, 2 Dunlin, 2 Pink-footed Geese and Spotted Flycatcher
- 5<sup>th</sup> Black-tailed Godwit, Dunlin, 9 Ringed Plovers, 2 Oystercatchers, Dunlin and a pair of Shoveller
- 6<sup>th</sup> Black-tailed Godwit, 11 Ringed Plover and 2 Little-ringed Plover
- 8<sup>th</sup> Black-tailed Godwit
- 9<sup>th</sup> 10 Ringed Plover, Dunlin and 2 Egyptian Geese
- 11<sup>th</sup> Pied, Grey and Yellow Wagtails by Stoke Dry car park
- 12<sup>th</sup> 2 Egyptian Geese and Little-ringed Plover
- 13<sup>th</sup> 6 Bar-tailed Godwits, 2 Ringed Plover and 3 Little-ringed Plover
- 14<sup>th</sup> 6 Bar-tailed Godwits, Ringed Plover, Little-ringed Plover Dunlin and Spotted Flycatcher
- 15<sup>th</sup> 2 Little Terns
- 16<sup>th</sup> Hobby, Green Sandpiper, 2 Little-ringed Plover and Little Egret
- 19<sup>th</sup> 2 Egyptian Geese
- 20<sup>th</sup> 2 Egyptian Geese, Green Sandpiper and Little-ringed Plover
- 21<sup>st</sup> Green Sandpiper
- 22<sup>nd</sup> 2 Little Egret
- 23<sup>rd</sup> 5 Little Egret and 2 Little-ringed Plover
- 25<sup>th</sup> Green Sandpiper, 5 Little-ringed Plover, Oystercatcher and 2 Curlews
- 26<sup>th</sup> Green Sandpiper, Hobby, Oystercatcher, 5 Little-ringed Plover and 5 Little Egret
- 27<sup>th</sup> 4 Green Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper, 2 Redshank, Kingfisher, Garden Warbler and Little-ringed Plover
- 29<sup>th</sup> 4 Little Egret, 2 Little-ringed Plover, 2 Green Sandpiper, Redshank and a juvenile Common Tern at the Island

## Mystery nest



Last month's mystery nest



Typical Tree Sparrow eggs. These are the eggs I would expect to see, sometimes they can be slightly paler.

When I checked the mystery nest again on the 7<sup>th</sup> June I discovered that the five eggs had indeed hatched and the chicks ready to ring. My initial suspicion was that it was a House Sparrow, which would have been the first brood of House Sparrows to be ringed on Eyebrook. Even though the eggs had hatched, I was still unsure so Andy Wilkin and I kept a vigilant watch on the box. After some time we saw the bird several times entering the box doing feeder runs. To my amazement the bird turned out to be a Tree Sparrow. There have been over 1,200 Tree Sparrow chicks ringed in the boxes since 2001, many of which I have done personally. You do not always see the eggs because the nest is usually full to the top of the box (like House Sparrows). I have seen many Tree Sparrow eggs before but never that colour. The first three small eggs were Blue Tit.