

BayNews January 2022

The Newsletter of Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory Trust



White Stork by S.Reynaert

Table of Contents

Chairman's Letter	2
Wildlife Observations by Steffan Walton.....	4
Birds	4
Moths	8
Ringling Report by John Buckingham.....	9
Bird of the month.....	10
Introducing Greg Lee our new Assistant Warden	12
Bay Chats By Becky Downey	13
Restharrow Scrape Development Project.....	18
SBBOT Access Improvements	19
Young Birder's Blog.....	22
What to look out for in the next few months	24
Wednesday Evening Zoom Lectures	25
Member's News	27
In focus.....	27
200 Club results for December	27
For sale or wanted	27
Regular Donations.....	28
Amazon Smile.....	28
Adverts	29
LEICA APO-TELEVID 77 TELESCOPE	29
RSPB Thanet Local Group Events	30

Chairman's Letter

A Happy and Healthy New Year to all members and friends of the Observatory!

Appointment of a new Assistant Warden: I am pleased to inform members that we appointed a new Assistant Warden in early December. His name is Greg Lee and he will have taken up his post by the time that this Bay News is published. Greg is a keen birder and moth enthusiast who was a volunteer assistant warden at the Observatory for several months in the Spring of 2019. Last Autumn he did a spell of volunteering at Spurn Bird Observatory and is just completing his Master's degree at the University of Salford. Although his main work will be in supporting Steffan in recording and writing up the wildlife of the area, Greg will also be continuing with the outreach and education work that Becky Downey was involved in. Greg will be resident at the Observatory.

Other staff changes: Dawn Stockley, who did an excellent job as the Field Centre Manager at the Observatory over the past two years, mainly looking after the accommodation areas, has now left us, prior to a move out of the area. Cleo Newhouse, who many members will already know for her work in up-grading the Shop, has agreed to take over Dawn's role on a temporary basis.

Renewal of the tenancy on Dragonfly and Jubilee Fields: members will be pleased to know that we have recently been able to renew our tenancy for a further ten years on these two fields alongside the Guilford Road. It is intended that the footpath access to the fields will be changed within the next few months.

Renewal of agreement with the RSPB: members will also be pleased to know that we have renewed our agreement with the RSPB for a further three years. Under this agreement, the RSPB pays the Observatory a rental which allows Charlotte Pestell, the Warden for the RSPB's Lydden Valley Reserve, to share office space at the Observatory, as well as providing storage space at the Observatory for her equipment.

With very best wishes,

Ken Chapman

(Chair of the Trustees, SBBOT)

January 3rd 2022

Wildlife Observations by Steffan Walton

Birds

The month started with singles of Pintail, Goldeneye, and Hen Harrier on Worth marshes, along with the **White Stork**, meanwhile good visibility for sea-watching rewarded those taking part with **Great Northern Diver**, **Shag**, and Great Skua offshore. A Merlin was near Restharrow Scrape. On the 2nd the **White Stork** was still present on Worth Marshes whilst a drake Goosander was a good sighting offshore. The 3rd saw Teal numbers rise up on Restharrow scrape to 715 and a Red-breasted Merganser was the best offer for sea-watching. The **White Stork** continued on Worth Marshes, this time flushing a Woodcock! Large numbers of Golden Plover, Lapwing and Starlings were present on the 4th on the Estate, with two Merlins, a Barn Owl, and a Hen Harrier present.



Hen Harrier by P. Coltman

Three Green Sandpipers, Pintail, and Goldeneye supported the **White Stork** on Worth Marshes on the 5th with a **Great Northern Diver** being sighted offshore and a Merlin once again at Dickson's Corner. The 6th saw the ringers catch an

interesting bird in a very late **Lesser Whitethroat** showing features of one of the Eastern races. Elsewhere, a few Siskins and Lesser Redpoll were on the Estate along with high numbers of Blackbirds and Song Thrushes. A large build-up of Cormorants on the 8th in the aftermath of Storm Barra was an interesting talking point with 900+ recorded offshore. A **Great White Egret** was on Worth Marshes. On the 9th, Tree Sparrows made a welcome re-appearance around the sandpit area with at least 16 present in the scrubby undergrowth and nearby Hawthorns. At least 1,434 Cormorants were offshore and at high tide in Pegwell Bay there were flocks of 49 Shelducks, 310 Wigeons, 882 Oystercatchers, 265 Lapwings, 128 Curlews, 101 Redshanks, 420 BH Gulls, 590 Common Gulls, and 435 Herring Gulls. Two Avocets and 31 Black-tailed Godwits were unusual for mid-winter. Three Water Rails, a Green Sandpiper, and a Coal Tit were also on the Green Wall.



Chiffchaff by P. Blanche

The 10th recorded a nice male Merlin on Worth marshes, as well as the **White Stork** and Goldeneye, and a **Shag** joined the melee of Cormorants offshore. The Tree Sparrows remained on Dickson's Corner on the 11th, though now reduced to six. Three Water Rails, Green Sandpiper, and Brambling were highlights along the Green Wall. The ringtail Hen Harrier was seen a few

occasions throughout the morning of the 12th. Singles of Blackcap and Brambling were caught by the ringing team and six Snow Buntings were on Royal Cinque Ports Golf Course. The 13th brought ten Snow Buntings and a Tree Sparrow in their usual spots around the RCPGC/Dickson's Corner area. Worth was productive with Goldeneye, Water Pipit, Brambling, Hen Harrier, Mediterranean Gull, and an increase in Wigeon and Teal. The **White Stork** was still nearby at the Round House. There was an arrival of Meadow Pipits and Water Pipits on Worth marshes on the 14th, with at least five of the latter. A Woodcock was on the Estate, 11 Snow Buntings were seen on RCPGC, and at least one Dartford Warbler was re-appeared at Dickson's Corner after going missing for a few weeks. On the 15th, New Downs produced a Green Sandpiper on the flooded fields and over 1,000 Lapwings. Four Pochards were on Prince's Reservoir and at least two separate Bearded Tits were calling from reedbeds around the South Pool and the North Pool. Over on Worth, a Hen Harrier and Water Pipit were present with the White Stork and on the Green Wall seven Water Rails were calling and three Water Pipits came into roost.



Snow Buntings by S.Raynaert

Calm conditions on the 16th produced a mild morning for birding. The flock of 11 Snow Buntings were still by the raised tee on Royal Cinque Ports Golf Course (south of Sandilands) and a flock of Siskins were in the Haven. Out to sea, plenty was about with 317 Red-throated Divers and 172 Great Crested Grebes, but also a handful of Razorbills. Over on Worth marshes the highlights were two Water Pipits and the **White Stork**. The 18th proved to be an excellent day of birding with the discovery of a mixed flock of Geese consisting of at least 27 White-fronted Geese, one **Tundra Bean Goose**, and nine **Barnacle Geese**, among the Greylag Goose flock around Willow Farm. Whilst viewing the geese from Dickson's Corner both a Dartford Warbler and a Tree Sparrow were viewed. There were further totals of one Goldeneye, one Woodcock, three Green Sandpipers, 49 Snipes, six Jack Snipes, and five Water Pipits, with the **White Stork** still present. There were now 12 Snow Buntings south of Sandilands on RCPGC and sea-watching was just as productive with another eight **Barnacle Geese** north, a **Shag**, and a **Little Gull**. On the 19th, the ringed **Eastern Lesser Whitethroat**, from two weeks ago, re-appeared in The Elms in a mixed Tit and Chiffchaff flock. At least 26 White-fronted Geese were still on Worth marshes, as well as the Goldeneye and the **White Stork**, whilst the Dartford Warbler and five Tree Sparrows were in the sandpit area. Another Dartford Warbler was seen in the Sea Buckthorn along Prince's Beach and over in Pegwell Bay there was an excellent count of **42 Barnacle Geese** and two **Tundra Bean Geese**. A **Velvet Scoter** flew along the shore.

Two **Velvet Scoters** flew north offshore on the 20th whilst coverage of Worth Marshes recorded 40 **Barnacle Geese**, 18 White-fronted Geese and a Merlin. The 21st recorded further interesting geese totals with a mixed flock of nine Brent Geese, 55 White-fronted Geese, one Pink-footed, five **Tundra Bean**, and 68 **Barnacle Geese** on Worth marshes, with the Hen Harrier and **White Stork** also seen.

A **Black-throated Diver** offshore was the sea watching highlight on the 23rd. Worth Marshes once again held good numbers of geese with Willow Farm having 42 **Barnacle Geese** and 50 White-fronted Geese. On the other side of the railway, four Brent Geese and the **White Stork** were also noteworthy. 220 Golden Plover on the Estate was a good flock-size and the ringtail Hen Harrier once again made an appearance. The 24th saw 70 **Barnacle Geese** still on Willow Farm, and 11 Pink-footed Geese in with them. The **White Stork** remained on Worth and a drake Pintail was on the pools. Five Short-

eared Owls, a Marsh Harrier, and a Hen Harrier were quartering between Restharrow Scrape and the Chequers in the evening. Two Dartford Warblers were present at Dickson's Corner on the 26th with five Woodcocks along the Green Wall. Two **Little Gulls** offshore was the best offer in grim conditions on the 27th with a few Chiffchaffs and a handful of Redwings on the estate. The 28th witnessed a mass arrival of Lapwings to the area with around 7400 recorded, five Water Pipits were on Worth with 50 **Barnacle Geese** still remaining at Willow Farm. The large Lapwing numbers remained on the 29th with 5200 on Worth alone, four Ruff were in the flooded fields by Restharrow Scrape.

A good mix of offshore sightings were notable on the 30th including a female/imm. male **Velvet Scoter** and a **Shag**. At Willow Farm c.100 White-fronted Geese were present. Although quiet on the Estate for the final day of 2021 with a few Chiffchaffs in the Elms, Worth recorded a good selection of species including Goldeneye, Pintail, Water Pipit, two Ruffs, Hen Harrier, Merlin, Peregrine, and the **White Stork**.



Navigation

Find a map of our reserves [HERE](#)

Find a map of the Recording Area [HERE](#)

Read about the SBBOT Recording Area [HERE](#)

Moths

The 14th saw promise of two-figure temperatures and the trap was set in earnest, catching a December Moth and *Epiphyas postvittana* in the carpark trap. An Actinic in the Elms also caught Winter Moth and *Scrobipalpa costella*. Although the minimum temperature did not drop below 10°C on the 15th only three moths of three species made it in including *Acleris hastiana*, Angle Shades and Dark Chestnut.

Trapping was more-or-less retired for the remainder of the month, though further records were collected with two Mottled Umbers attracted to the lights on the windows on the 19th and a further five Winter Moths on the 20th. Five Dark Chestnuts were caught on the final night of the year.

2021 was another excellent year for diversity and with lots of interesting bird, moth, dragonfly, and butterfly species recorded. And much more! A big thank you to all visitors who have contributed to the records. Let's hope 2022 is just as good.

Ringling Report by John Buckingham

Just about our quietest month with only six ringing sessions. Progress was slowed by almost continuous strong winds, with some rain as well. Ringers' availability during the Christmas holiday affects results as well, so that just 64 birds were ringed.

As expected, Chaffinches are the most commonly caught species at the moment and 34 were ringed during the month representing more than half of the total. Otherwise, 10 Blackbirds now adds up to two-thirds of the total plus assorted Robins, Dunnocks, Blue and Great Tits. Winter thrushes put in an appearance with 4 Redwings and a Fieldfare, and other winter visitors included 2 Bramblings, a Goldcrest and Lesser Redpoll. Of great interest was a Lesser Whitethroat of an eastern form, possibly *blythii*, a Blackcap, probably a winter visitor from central Europe and a third warbler – a Chiffchaff, one of an increasing number that 'over-winter?' these days.

There have been a few ring recoveries reported to us during the month of which three of the more interesting ones are below – all having been ringed at Sandwich Bay:

A Blackcap travelling to Yonne in France during September.

A Lesser Redpoll to Warrington

And best of all, a Blue Tit travelling across to Belgium. This is only the ninth British ringed Blue Tit to have ever been recovered abroad.

Congratulations to John Tomlinson on meeting the BTO criteria for an 'Open Nest Endorsement' to be included on his ringing license. Skills that will benefit the efforts of the Ringing Team.

Bird of the month

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*



Text & Photos by John Buckingham

Fieldfares are passage migrants, numerous winter visitors and extremely rare breeders in the UK, with up to 720,000 recorded in some winters. Apart from the very obvious markings and colouration of Fieldfares, including the

silver/grey rump, grey head and nape, white underwings, rufous-brown back and rusty orange, heavily spotted chest, they are longer-tailed than the other thrushes, with a much less undulating flight. Their winter 'chack-chack' calls are unmistakable.

When they first appear here, usually in October, they will feed in the fields on earthworms and invertebrates, moving on to ripening hedgerow berries as temperatures drop. They then sometimes gather to feed in large flocks with Redwings and others. In Kent, huge numbers will be sustained by fallen and abandoned orchard apples for much of their stay. Early arrivals in eastern Britain may be passage migrants on their way further west to Ireland or south into France and Iberia. Ring-recoveries show that most of those that stay are from Fennoscandia, particularly Norway. Their breeding distribution is Eurasian, stretching from eastern France, north into Scandinavia and Russia and far to the east throughout Siberia and N.E. Asia. Ring-recoveries also show that some birds from far to the east will complete a stupendous round trip of 12,000 kms. to and from Britain.

They breed in woodland and scrub throughout their range, and certainly in north-west Europe, nest commonly in parks and gardens, and build their Blackbird-like nests quite high in lines of trees. Fieldfares also sometimes nest colonially, when they gather together to aggressively mob potential predators, mostly corvids, which would also benefit other nearby breeding species. Part of this behaviour includes bombarding their foe with excrement, and in force, this would seem to be extremely effective as I can testify, they will do this to humans as well.

Recently fledged young Fieldfare in North Norway in Silver Birch, a tree that flourishes on poor soils and in colder climates.



Introducing Greg Lee our new Assistant Warden

Hello everyone!



My name is Greg and I'm a 24-year-old nature enthusiast of Gloucestershire origin. I might be a familiar name already to some of you, having been fortunate enough to have a 3-month internship at the Observatory in March-June 2019 as part of my university placement year (spending 6 months previously at Durlston Country Park). I enjoyed the experience of the day-to-day life at a Bird Observatory, experiencing migration first-hand, and interacting with people with the same passion. Having been an admirer of nature from childhood, it was incredible seeing the movements of

birds so rapidly change, particularly catching up with coastal birds that a landlubber doesn't frequently see. In addition, seeing the cartons in the moth-trap covered in all sorts of species including local specialties and migrants, observing dragonflies of various species frenetically darting *en masse* around the Recording Area, and huge numbers of orchids growing was a really captivating experience. As photography is a side hobby of mine, I enjoyed capturing all the aspects of my placement, some of these pictures still providing use now!

Since my time at Sandwich, I've graduated in wildlife conservation and undertaken an MSc by research degree using data kindly provided by the Observatory, looking at the effects of weather patterns on moth migration and

vagrancy in birds. After leaving academia, I also enjoyed an internship at Spurn Bird Observatory in the autumn of 2021, where I helped lead guided walks, carried out daily transects and took part in activities such as moth-trapping demonstrations to the general public whilst also observing some excellent rarities (finding one or two myself!). As well as this I've led some tours for Naturetrek helping to showcase the best wildlife of certain regions to guests and helped with local events for the Gloucestershire Moth Group. After my internship at Sandwich, I broadened my interest in nature to include a variety of different groups including orchids, butterflies, dragonflies and chiefly moths, recording several interesting species of the latter for Gloucestershire as well as attempting to see as many species of all the others as possible. I'm extremely pleased to be back working at Sandwich Bay and observing the huge diversity of wildlife, helping to contribute good sightings of my own, as well as project my passion in nature into educating and inspiring people of all ages through various formats. I very much look forward to helping with moth-trapping, surveying, ringing and so much more in my tenure, maybe I can finally catch up with a Honey Buzzard or Pallas's Warbler. It's going to be a pleasure meeting you all!

Bay Chats By Becky Downey

Welcome back to another, and sadly my final, Bay Chats! I want to thank everyone who has been an interviewee of this feature in the past two years – thank you for letting us all get to know you a little more! To anyone I didn't get a chance to talk to, I'm sorry! You've all wonderful, interesting stories and it's been a pleasure. I had considered doing myself for this final interview, however felt it may be a tad self-centred, (someone else can interview me in future!). Therefore, I decided instead to ask some of the young people who have been very active with SBBOT since the beginning of this year. Since a large part of my role was to encourage younger people to get involved, it felt fitting to have my final piece focusing on them, and a great way to start the New Year. I'm sure lots of you have heard of Emily and Matthew, as they have been getting involved with ringing and our new Young Birders Blog, however if not here's your chance!

Thank you both so much for allowing me to involve you in yet another thing and interview you! So where are you guys from originally?

Emily and Matthew: We're from Sandwich, and have lived here our whole lives, but our parents are from the Northeast of England, so all the rest of our family live up there.

Well, it seems like a wonderful place to live! How was it you first came to the Observatory and what have you become involved in?

Emily and Matthew: We first visited on an Open Day when we were very young, so we can't remember that.

Emily: I started visiting more often when I was volunteering at SBBOT for my Bronze Duke of Edinburgh award a couple of years ago. I came along to the Sunday walks and kept a record of all the birds we saw. Matthew sometimes came along as well. Since Covid happened last year, I started to properly get into bird watching and started visiting a lot more often to appreciate the amazing wildlife that the area has to offer! Now I am working on my DofE Gold, and Matthew on his DofE Silver, so we have begun volunteering regularly, and it is really rewarding to give something back to the wildlife that we love so much.

I first met you, Emily, when you entered our Art and Photography competition with your amazing drawing of a Hen Harrier! You had been joining in on the Zoom classes and I remember you asked about ringing, which both you and Matthew have become involved with now which is great. So, from your time spent here, do you have a most memorable moment?

Emily: I think the moment I remember the most is when I helped out with the SBBOT Holiday Club. It was so much fun to help out with engaging other young people with the natural world. At one point Matthew and I found a very obliging Redstart hanging out in the trees in Middle Field and it was fantastic to get to share our enthusiasm with the other children, as we set up our scope and shared our binoculars, so we could all appreciate a fairly uncommon visitor to the area!

Matthew: I have many best moments, but most of them come from bird ringing. We are both learning to ring and recently got our trainee licences. I've especially enjoyed seeing the incredible birds we have caught including Great Spotted Woodpecker, Green Woodpecker, and Jay.

That's so cool! The Redstart really did get a few children super interested! Also, I'm jealous of the Jay. What is your favourite bird, just in general?

Emily: My favourite bird has got to be the Kestrel. They were one of the first birds I learnt to identify, since their characteristic hovering makes them easy to pick out at a distance. Birds of prey are just fantastic in general and, as Kestrels are one of the more common birds of prey in this country, I see them quite frequently and they always make my day by adding that little bit of wildness to my everyday life.



Kestrel by S.North

Matthew: My favourite bird is a Treecreeper. I'm not quite sure originally why, but it's mostly because they're small, "cute" and rather unique. I also enjoy watching them spiral up trees collecting their food.

Both excellent birds, I love to see them too! What is your favourite bird to see around here in Sandwich Bay? (Think of our recent young birders blog!!)

Emily: I really, really love Snipe, because it is so delightful to watch them walk about probing the ground. They have such odd-looking faces, which I think just adds to their charm, and their beautiful markings help them to blend in with the vegetation extremely well, so it's really exciting when you are able to spot one.

Matthew: I'd say my favourite bird to see around Sandwich Bay is the Skylark. I simply love their personality. Flying up into the sky and screaming as loud as they can you'd think would be evolutionarily detrimental, yet they all do it and they're always a joy to see.

Yes, they do like to attract attention! They're so well camouflaged on the golf course grass, so that possibly helps them. Now, if you could *be* any bird, which one would you be and why?

Emily: Ooh I really love this question! I think I would love to be a Golden Eagle or a Bearded Vulture, I really love mountains and being able to soar through that kind of habitat sounds like it would be so much fun!

Matthew: I'd like to be a Peregrine Falcon for the simple reason that I love the idea of the stoop. It just sounds fun and whooshing through the air to grab pigeons and other prey just sounds incredible.

Oh, two serious birds of prey on our hands there! Is there anything you would like to see more from the Trust itself?

Emily and Matthew: We both think the work being done to engage more young people with wildlife and nature is really valuable and hope to see it continue.

That's great, we definitely agree! Okay, final question: Do you have a random animal fun fact that you could share with us? (I know you will!)

Emily: Woodcocks have almost 360-degree vision horizontally, as a result of their oddly positioned eyes!

Matthew: I was stuck between two facts to mention so I'll say them both for bonus points. The first is how Swifts will spend as long as they can in flight. They achieve this by drinking on the wing, eating on the wing and even sleeping on the wing. They only land if they're unwell or nesting. The other is how Wrynecks use the mimicry tactic of twisting their neck in a serpentine manner to trick potential predators into thinking they're a snake.

Definitely bonus points for those facts! Thank you both so much again! I'm excited to see what you both end up getting up to here at Sandwich Bay, and I'm sure it'll be great!



Snipe by N.Smith

Restharrow Scrape Development Project

As we begin to reflect on how successful this whole project has been we would love to hear your thoughts. As many of you will know we recently sent out a questionnaire by email. We have already had several responses and have been delighted by how positive the responses have been. It is very gratifying to see that many of the positive comments coincidentally also relate to some of the outcomes we set ourselves.

In the next month or so we will be compiling our final report for the National Lottery Heritage Fund in order to receive the final tranche of money from them. This is dependent on us having met our outcomes or explaining good reasons for not achieving them. This will, of course, include a reflection on how the Covid-19 pandemic impacted the project. The comments we have already received on the questionnaire will be extremely useful to support the report.

So please do complete one of our questionnaires. We really need to know what you think. At the end of the questionnaire there is a space for any other comment so please do take this opportunity to let us know your thoughts. There are paper copies of the questionnaire in the hides, at the Observatory and if you are unable to access these please ask us to send you one electronically or, if this is not possible, by post. Responses can be sent to 1sallyhunter2310@gmail.com or dropped off at the Observatory where there is a box to put them in.

There is also still the possibility of supporting the project financially including through the Adopt-a-Plot initiative. More information on all the progress so far will be the subject of a display shortly to be put in place in the area between the shop and accommodation.

Thank you for all the support so many of you have given to the project so far in so many different ways. We could not have done it without you.

Sally Hunter

SBBOT Access Improvements

I've been a champion of mobility access for more than two decades... all quite selfish, of course, as I have had a problem walking with a form of chronic arthritis since my teenage years... now lost in the mists of time. I stood as a trustee last year with the principal objective of helping to address access issues I had experienced as a regular visitor to SBBO and its reserves.

The way I see it, people with mobility issues should have the same chances as able-bodied people to enjoy the countryside and, of course, the birds. Special places like ours attract people, drawn by rarities or the regular 'good' birds, whether it's the chance of a vagrant Radde's Warbler or resident Grey Partridges. Those people come in all shapes and sizes, abilities and needs. Despite how most things are designed, we are not all fit, tall, thirty-year-old blokes. We may be little and young, or old and infirm, short and short-sighted, or large and hard of hearing. In my case, I'm 'hard of walking'. That is to say I can walk, but not too far... my muscles tire quickly and my joints lock up if I venture further than these old bones tolerate. Others may use wheels not feet and that has challenges too.

I got involved because anyone who is fit and 'average' won't notice the things that challenge some of us. Like most things in life, our personal experiences largely govern how we think the world works. If it works for us, it sometimes comes as a surprise that it doesn't work for others. Most people, when they are made aware can be incredibly helpful; my fellow trustees are no exception, I've found support from the moment I started pointing out issues or suggesting solutions. The inner girl guide or boy scout is quick to help when they see the need.

When the extension to Restharrow Scrape was being discussed, I and others were asked for input on the designs of paths and hides. Our wonderful new hide is among the most accessible I know and it's a joy to be able to sit and rest on one of the benches along the paths to that hide.

However, lots of the paths in the surrounding area are challenging. My mission is to uncover the problems and try to address them. It helps greatly that others are pointing out problems to me and can go to places I find difficult to access and so help define the issues I hope to solve.

There are already some exciting developments.

Firstly, the trust has agreed to acquire a mobility scooter that will be available for members and visitors to use to extend their range if they cannot make it on foot. It will be arriving early in 2022, so watch this space for details of how to book its use.

With the immediate and extremely pleasing response of Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club the path from Dickson's Corner to the Sailing Club is now more accessible to wheelers and walkers. The access at either end has been made easier with some work being done to improve the path surface in-between.



Improved entrance and exit of path towards Sandilands and the beach

We are also working closely with RSPB and other landowners to improve access across Worth Marshes. It's not a matter of new access, but of making the existing infrastructure more useable by all of us. There are plenty of challenges ahead, but the first improvement has been made by removing the stiles at either end of the footbridge that crosses the Delf. That's not the end of the story, KCC have agreed to replace the bridge with a fully accessible one with necessary ramps and, hopefully, a bit of a viewing platform on the side overlooking the muddy pools.



Picture of the bridge sans stiles

I hope these are just the first changes, over time and with your help (feel free to email me fatbirder@gmail.com), we hope to see every footpath and right of way across the Lydden Valley, Worth Marshes and the SBBO recording area open to all birders great and small.

Bo Beolens

Trustee

Young Birder's Blog

A Wild Stork Chase by Matthew Hill



White Stork by J.Dodds

It was an oddly warm winter morning, and I'd got up early to join a Young Birders walk organised by Becky, the Assistant Warden at Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory. The White Stork, that had recently been spotted locally, was at the back of my mind, yet I didn't expect to see it due its current location being in Worth. Upon arriving at the agreed meeting place, in the Observatory car park, and greeting the rest of the group, the options for the route of our walk were discussed. The suggested choices, that were thrown around, were Dickson's Corner to look for Tree Sparrows or Worth Marshes to hunt down the White Stork. Unanimously, and much to my excitement, we agreed we wanted to find the White Stork, even though it would mean a longer walk for everyone.

However, before we even left, we were lucky enough to be shown a new species of spider for Kent and also had an excellent view of some Ring-necked Parakeets that noisily landed in a sunlit tree in the car park.

Once we were ready to leave, we set off towards Worth. It was a lovely walk and we caught a fleeting view of a Kingfisher, as well as some Shovelers, Teal, Wigeon, a couple of Buzzards and a few Grey Herons, one of which I mistakenly thought might have been a White Stork at first glimpse. We spent quite a bit of time at Worth Marshes trying to find the Stork, but then found out online that it had recently been seen by the Round House in Worth. The problem was, that none of us knew exactly where that was, but we continued in the vague vicinity. I didn't know if we were heading in the right direction, but I really hoped we were.

After a while we walked along a track and past a building, which someone suspected was the Round House (despite it being a cuboid), and then we spent a while scouring the field ahead of us. Suddenly, I heard a calm voice saying, "There it is!" As soon as I processed the information, I began looking, and soon spotted it. The White Stork was walking along and exploring the ground at the far side of the field. Occasionally it would disappear behind some vegetation, but mostly it was clearly visible, even without binoculars. It's an unusual occurrence for me to see a one-off bird like this, and it was such a great experience. We took turns looking through Becky's scope and some of the group took photos. After a while, we had to return, but believe me I would have watched that bird for much longer if I'd had nothing else planned for the day.

The walk home flew by. There were fewer birds, with the highlight being a couple of Stonechats and some Curlews and another Buzzard next to the Observatory, but there was plenty for us all to talk about. Once we arrived back at the car park we discussed even more, from Myers Briggs personality tests, to Harry Potter houses (apparently everyone was Hufflepuff except me, a proud Slytherin) and afterwards I'd almost forgotten that we'd seen a White Stork! Truly this was a fantastic experience, and I hope to be able to do it again soon.

What to look out for in the next few months

January/February

Cold spells from now on are likely to provoke movements of scarcer wildfowl, including geese, Smew and Goldeneye, though these species tend to remain on the continent unless we get a significant spell of hard weather. Short-eared Owls are present in variable numbers and big flocks of Golden Plovers and Lapwings can be present in Pegwell.

March

Spring is just around the corner and birds that have spent the winter with us know it's time to think about moving on. Starling flocks accumulate on the marshes, with large parties heading off to the NE, Redwings and Fieldfares appear on the fields and Chaffinches, Siskins and Linnets begin to move along the coast. Great Tits become more conspicuous, particularly if there was a significant influx last autumn, and Brent Geese can be seen in large groups offshore and in Pegwell.

April

Summer migrants begin to arrive, mostly to occupy breeding territories locally, though occasional Redstart, Pied Flycatcher, Wood Warbler and Firecrest are worth keeping an eye out for. Offshore wildfowl movement continues, and visible migration of finches and wagtails intensifies. Red Kites, Sparrowhawks and Buzzards can be a major feature and wader passage is likely to feature Whimbrel and Bar-tailed Godwits, with rare species such as Kentish Plover and Wood Sandpiper always possible.

Wednesday Evening Zoom Lectures



WINTER BIRDS

ON ZOOM at SBBOT with John Buckingham

A five-week course on Wednesday evenings @ 7.30pm

January 19th & 26th, February 2nd, 16th & 23rd 2022

£20 per person for the course, recordings available for missed sessions

A look at the sometimes-large bird populations that are present in Britain during the winter, with special emphasis on those we can see here in Kent and at Sandwich Bay particularly. We will discuss why they come, where to find them, their habitats, food requirements, adaptations and where they are from, whether residents or migrants. Illustrated as usual with top quality images.



BIRDS IN SPRING

ON ZOOM at SBBOT with John Buckingham

A four-week course on Wednesday evenings @ 7.30pm

2nd, 9th, 16th & 30th March 2022

£16 per person for the course, recordings available for missed sessions

Migrants arrive from parts of Africa and southern Europe as early as March to boost our resident bird populations. We will look at why they are here, where they from and how their behaviour is affected so dramatically as weather and food supplies change. Special emphasis will be placed on species breeding here in Kent and at Sandwich Bay particularly. Illustrated as usual with top quality images.

Member's News

In focus

In focus are scheduled to be at the Observatory on the following Sundays: -
January 16th and March 6th 2022.

200 Club results for December

Prize	Number	Winner
£100	20	Liz Spanton
£75	184	Andrew Lipczynski
£50	54	Ian & Sally Hunter
£25	280	Sue Bennett
£25	162	Colin & Sue North

Thank you to all our participants. If anyone wishes to join, the application form can be downloaded from our website, sbbot.org.uk. The 200 Club page sits under the **Support Us** tab.

For sale or wanted

To help members sell unwanted items, or ask members if they have particular items for sale. If you wish to use this service, please send your advertisement (with photo, asking price and contact details) or request to info@sbbot.org.uk. We are offering this service as a way of raising funds for the Observatory, important at this particular time. To that end we would ask that you make a donation of 15% of the sale price. To do so, your donation can be made to our bank account as follows: -

Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory Trust

Sort Code: - 30-93-34

Account No.: - 02785982

Regular Donations

Some of our members make monthly donations to our funds. This is a relatively painless way to donate to us, as you may hardly notice the sum leaving your bank account each month. Such donations are, of course, greatly appreciated.

The reference - Surname Initial e.g., Bloggs M

The bank account for the receipt is: -

Account Name - Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory Trust

Sort Code - 30-93-34 Account Number – 02785982

Amazon Smile

When using Amazon consider using Amazon Smile. When doing so Amazon will donate 0.5% of the value of your purchases to your chosen charity. Just nominate SBBOT as your charity. Click on the link below to get started

<https://smile.amazon.co.uk/gp/charity/homepage.html>

Adverts

FOR SALE

LEICA APO-TELEVID 77 TELESCOPE

Complete with

Leica x20 – x60 angled eyepiece

Weatherproof telescope cover

Manfrotto (055CLB) Tripod

Delta HC-1 Hide clamp

Instruction booklets etc

All in excellent condition

£650 o.v.n.o

Tel 07971 569387

(Location: Deal for viewing)





Thanet
local group



RSPB Thanet Local Group Events

We are returning cautiously to the St Peter's Main Church Hall for the second Monday of the month (except Nov). These meeting will also be available on Zoom for those not ready to return or who live too far away, but still wish to join us and they are most welcome. Speakers may be either in the hall or delivering the talk from their home. Both Hall and Zoom meetings start at 7.30pm (doors open or log on is from 7pm) @ £4 per person or £7 per household (Zoom only) payable in advance, please and are open to all. If you are already on our mailing list you will receive a Zoom invite/reminder shortly before each talk by email.

10th January *Hybrid*

24th January *Zoom*

Ashley Grove

John Draper

Shetland to Scillies

Invertebrate Life in My

Broadstairs Garden

7 Years of Observation

China - off the beaten track

Wetlands - for extra wildlife,

Just add Water

Birding the Heart of Europe

Gambia or Crane Spotting

tbc

Birds of the World's Most

Remote Islands

Speaker TBA

14th February *Hybrid*

28th February *Zoom*

Nick Smith

Andre Farrar

14th March *Hybrid*

28th March *Zoom*

Simon Ginnaw

Ashley Grove

11th April *Hybrid*

Keith Betton

9th May *Hall*

AGM

Electronic payment is the preferred means of payment. Our bank details are:

Account name: RSPB Thanet Local Group; **Sort code:** 30-90-79; **Account number:** 34022068.

Payment reference: please put as a minimum ZOOM or Hall and date of session i.e., DDMM to help our reconciliation's. Ensuring your name is properly displayed on Zoom is terribly important to us. User1 or Charlie's iPad makes later reconciliation and ensuring all pay, as we all expect, very challenging, so please have a look at: -

[Changing Your Name in a Zoom Meeting | teaching@NMC.](#)

Payment by cheque will be accepted by post to Richard Aslet, 19 Percy Road, Broadstairs CT10 2BJ

Please visit our website for contacts and group activities
www.rspb.org.uk/groups/thanet

plus, our

Facebook page www.facebook.com/RSPBThanetlocalgroup/

Twitter <https://twitter.com/LocalRspb>

WhatsApp [Thanet Birding](#) for regular updates.

*The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is a registered charity: -
England and Wales no. 207076, Scotland no. SC037654*



Sandwich Tern by Paul Coltman

Join our Facebook group [HERE](#).

Our Facebook community is the perfect place to introduce yourself, ask questions about the Observatory and share your photos of wildlife and nature.



It's also a great way to meet like-minded people and to ask for help with identification of birds, insects, plants and animals. We'll do our best to try and solve mystery species.

[Get reminders about our events](#)

[Like us on Facebook HERE @SandwichBirdObs](#)



[Look at photos & videos taken at #SBBOT](#)

[Follow us on Instagram HERE @SandwichBirdObs](#)



[Regular sightings from our Warden](#)

[Follow us on Twitter HERE @SandwichBirdObs](#)



[Wildlife & educational videos](#)

[Subscribe to our YouTube channel HERE](#)



SBBOT can provide skills to boost your CV

[Connect with us on LinkedIn HERE](#)



Encourage people to visit SBBOT

[Leave a review on TripAdvisor HERE](#)



www.sbbot.org.uk



info@sbbot.org.uk

Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory Trust
Guilford Road, Sandwich Bay
Sandwich, Kent, CT13 9PF
Tel. 01304 617341

Registered charity no. 289343

BAYNEWS is the official newsletter of Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory Trust. Any views or comments expressed are those of the various author(s) or editor and may not necessarily reflect the views of the Trust. All information and images contained within this newsletter are the property of Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory Trust and may not be used without prior permission from the editorial team. BayNews copyright @ S.B.B.O.T 2022

President: Bill Oddie	Chairman: Ken Chapman	Vice Chairman: Pam Worrall
Secretary: Vacant	Treasurer: Bob Dean	Membership: Eugene Hood
Warden: Steffan Walton	Assistant Warden: Greg Lee	Field Centre Manager: Cleo Newhouse
