



Restharrow Scrape Development Project

Outreach and Education Report Greg Lee

After entering the position at the start of the month, I'm pleased to have been involved in lots of outreach opportunities already in the past few weeks. My first event was when the Education Team visited Sandwich Junior school to help run a workshop in support of the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch. Through a short presentation and three workshops we discussed the importance of monitoring birds and helped them with the skills of using binoculars and ways to identify the 10 most commonly found birds in UK gardens. Overall, we engaged over 100 children and 10 staff.

The session received extremely positive feedback from both the children and staff alike, with one child telling us "It was the best day of my life!", and another proclaiming watching birds was the most fun he had ever had!



Ned, from the Crab Museum Margate, demonstrating how crabs shed their shells

I also joined in on the first RSPB Youth session of the year, where we received a very interesting and intriguing talk on crabs, with a set of Roman armour even used to demonstrate the crab exoskeleton. This was followed by a patrol along the beachfront where although no live crab specimens were obtained, a shell and other interesting pieces of natural shore detritus were collected and examined through a high-powered microscope, much to the enjoyment of everyone. The end of the session culminated in a RSPB garden birdwatch from the Observatory where a good number of species were observed.

Upcoming events include our guided walks in the February half-term, in association with Birdwise East Kent, to help raise awareness of protecting our shorebirds. Birdwise initially contacted Steffan,

our warden, to ask if we could help their cause resulting in the set-up of this event. This will be a family-event with a dedicated team to show people our coastal avifauna here at Sandwich Bay across seven days.

Furthermore, we are looking to capitalise on our relationship with Sandwich Junior School and start an after-school bird-watching club for children aged 7-11 on Tuesday afternoons. This will be run for 6 weeks and cover a variety of themes to provide learning on bird identification and awareness of the natural world.

A Home-Schooling group are booked for a morning's session in February and we also have a provisional booking for Laleham Gap School, a special school from Broadstairs, a new school to us, to visit for 6 morning sessions, every Thursday. These will be on-site at the Observatory allowing for potential of outdoor learning. We will take into consideration the work of the Conservation Team on these days although we are only looking at a group of 10 children each time and they will have a lot of adult supervision. The Observatory will also be playing host to a University of Kent field course in late March, we are planning to provide lots of different activities to the students including bird-ringing, guided walks, moth-trapping and surveying of our duneland habitats.

Also, in March we are in the process of organising a session on "Protecting animals in our locality" for a class from Cartwright and Kelsey School in Ash. We are also planning to have an Easter Holiday Club/Spring trail set-up during the school holidays.