



# Milford Conservation Volunteers



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## Committee update for the Observatory

10<sup>th</sup> April to 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

**Avocet:** These have been seen 21 times over this time period, 5 being the highest number on 16<sup>th</sup> May.

**Black Tailed Godwit:** Common until 3<sup>rd</sup> May, the highest number recorded was 125 on 13<sup>th</sup> April.

**Canada Goose:** Seen nearly every day, either on Avon Water, the Pans or the farm field at the far end of the site.

**Cattle Egret:** A new species for the site. One seen on 23<sup>rd</sup> April.



The Cattle Egret is the bird on the left.

**Common Tern:** First recorded on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, now seen most days.

**Cormorant:** Present most days.

**Cuckoo:** Heard ten times, either to the North of the site or to the East.

**Gadwall:** Recorded 6 times, mainly on Avon Water.

**Greenshank:** Common, highest number recorded was 7 on two occasions.

**Kingfisher:** Only seen twice. (flying only).

**Lapwing:** Seen most days, usually flying over.

**Little Gull:** One seen flying over on 24<sup>th</sup> April.

**Little Tern:** Two seen flying over on 21st April and one on 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Marsh Harrier:** A male is regularly seen.

**Med Gull:** Their call usually lets us know when they are around. 8 seen flying over on 27<sup>th</sup> April.

**Mute Swan:** Two pairs have been nesting, one pair on Avon Water and the second pair on the Pans. They both made a first appearance with their cygnets on the 16<sup>th</sup> May at virtually the same time. 4 Cygnets for the Avon Water Swans and 5 Cygnets for the Pans Swans.



Avon Water Cygnets. (06.12 16/5/2021)    The Pans Cygnets. (06.27 16/5/2021)

**Oystercatcher:** Two were present on 13 occasions.

**Redshank:** Present most days, mainly on the Pans.

**Reed Warbler:** Regularly heard but only recently being seen.

**Snipe:** Seen on the Pans on 8 occasions, 4 being the highest number recorded.

**Sparrowhawk:** Recorded 9 times, usually flying east carrying prey.

**Spoonbill:** Seen on the Pans on 10 occasions, usually one bird but on occasion two were present. Frustratingly one bird seen, was ringed but it was always too far away to get a good photo of its leg ring.

**Tufted Duck:** Recorded 14 times, 8 being the highest number so far.

**Water Rail:** 2 were seen near the Kingfisher Pool on 20<sup>th</sup> April.

**Whitethroat:** One was seen on the central hedge on 11<sup>th</sup> May

**Wimbrel:** Seen flying over twice, highest number estimated to be about 40.

### **Nest Box news.**

A pair of Blue Tits have been using the nest box closest to the Observatory and a pair of Great Tits have been using the Owl nest box. They are all busy providing food for their chicks.



Blue Tit



Great Tit

A Female Mallard with 11 ducklings on the Pans. (9<sup>th</sup> May)



## **Tern Raft News.**

The Tern raft is finally in place at the far end of the Pans thanks to David Horne and his band of helpers. It was put there on 11<sup>th</sup> May and it is already drawing some interest from a Pair of Common Terns. (photo below)



Two Common Terns checking out the newly fitted raft.

## **Rat stopped play.**

While I was sitting in the Observatory on the 4<sup>th</sup> May, the door closed and the righthand side window open I was quite shocked to hear what I thought was the door handle rattling violently, but it wasn't moving, I sat and waited and the noise was repeated. I then noticed a Rat amongst the stack of wood in the corner by the door. It was trying to climb up to the top of the wall, which it succeeded in doing, once on the wall it disappeared. I rearranged everything at the back so that the rat would not be able to climb back down to the floor.

Then I left the building (very quickly).

As there had been a build up of Rat numbers around the Observatory it was decided not to put seed out after the 1<sup>st</sup> May.

## Trail cams.

When I checked the trail cams photos/videos I discovered that a Grey Heron had been dispatching and eating the rats, there was also three photos that showed that a Tawny Owl had joined in. This was the first time an Owl had been photographed by the trail cameras.



Tawny Owl (thanks Keith).

A Badger, Fox, Roebuck and Otter were also photographed. The last Otter photo was taken on 17<sup>th</sup> April.

Other birds recorded in the diary but not mentioned in this report include: Blackbird, Blackcap, Black Headed Gull, Brent Goose, Buzzard, Carrion Crow, Cetti's , Chaffinch, Chiff Chaff, Collared Dove, Coot, Dunnock, Egyptian Goose, Goldcrest, Goldfinch, Great Black Backed Gull, Greenfinch, Grey Heron, Herring Gull, House Martin, House Sparrow, Jackdaw ,Jay, Kestrel, Little Grebe, Little Egret, Long Tailed Tit, Magpie, Moorhen, Pheasant, Pied wagtail, Raven, Robin, Sedge Warbler, Shoveler, Starling, Stock Dove, Swallow, Swift, Teal, Wood Pigeon, Wren.

Electrical problems at the Observatory meant that no access was possible on the 4<sup>th</sup>,5<sup>th</sup>and 6<sup>th</sup> May. Keith contacted Andy Chase, an electrician to fix the problem which he did.

Chris Barrass. 17/5/2021.