



# Milford Conservation Volunteers

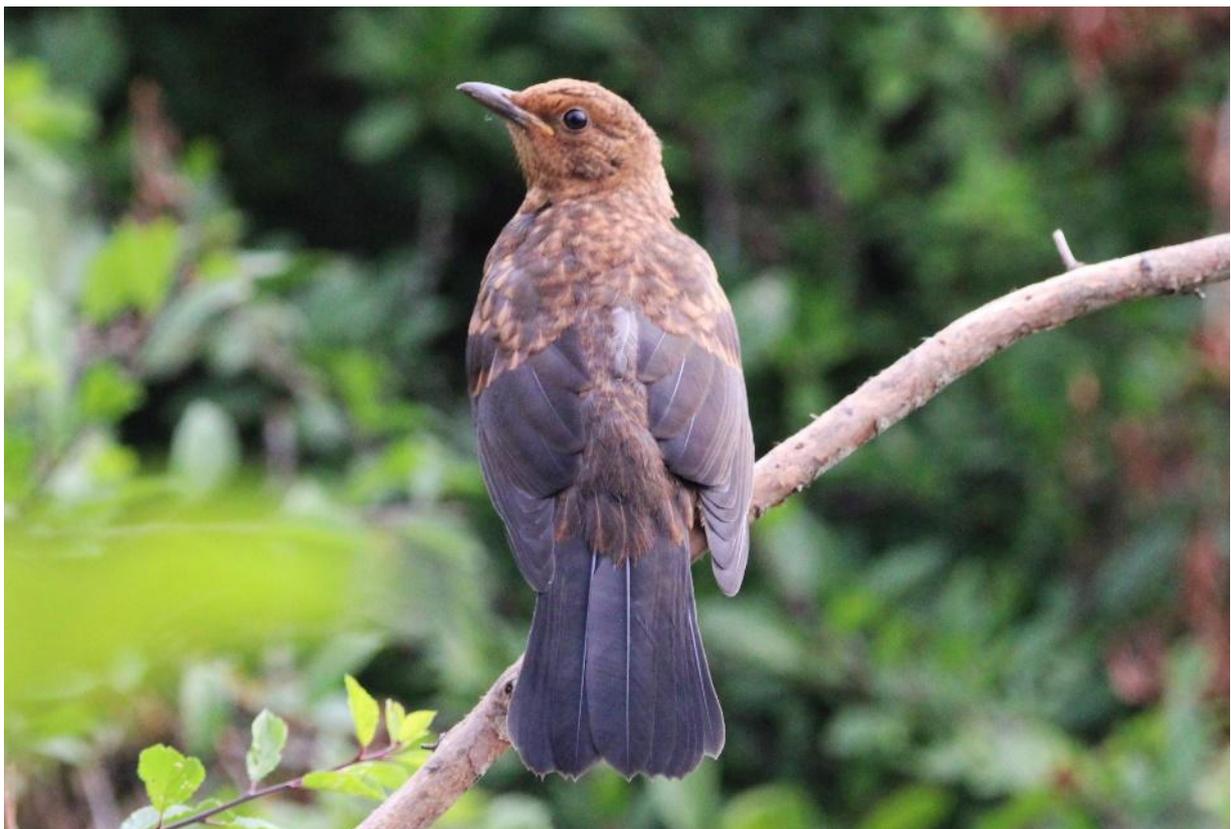
[www.milfordconservationvolunteers.org](http://www.milfordconservationvolunteers.org)

## June 2025 Observatory Report.

**Avocet:** Recorded nearly every day with 22 seen on the 27<sup>th</sup>.



**Blackbird:** Seen around the site every day of the month. 7 were seen on the 29<sup>th</sup>.



**Blue Tit:** Seen every day. The ones in the photo below are young birds.



**Carrion Crow:** Recorded every day of the month.



A Carrion Crow on the tree branch over the Kingfisher Pool.

**Cetti's Warbler:** Recorded nearly every day. Two were seen on three days during the month.

**Common Tern:** Seen on 17 days during the month.



The photo above shows a Common Tern over Avon Water.

**Cuckoo:** Heard on 5 days during June but only distant calls, two were heard on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Curlew:** Recorded on 5 days during the month.



The photos above show a Curlew on the mud of Avon Water. I'm not sure if the bird is ill or just going through a very heavy moult but it flew off with no problem.

**Dunnock:** Three were seen on several occasions below the feeders.



**Great White Egret:** Only present for three days during the month. Unfortunately it was at the far end of the Pans.



**Grey Wagtail:** A single bird was seen on June 20<sup>th</sup>. Photo below.



**Kingfisher:** At least two Kingfishers were seen flying around the site during the month.



Juvenile Female Kingfisher.



Juvenile Male Kingfisher.

**Little Egret:** Recorded most days of the month, with 7 recorded on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Little Grebe:** Seen on 9 days during the month. 6 were present on the 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Mallard:** Present on Avon Water and the Pans every day of the month. On some days over 190 birds were recorded. At least two families have been seen.



The photo above shows 5 of the 6 ducklings from one of the families.

**Marsh Harrier:** Recorded every day of the month.

**Mistle Thrush:** 2 were present on the 19<sup>th</sup>.



Luckily the two birds flew out of a tree and foraged around the Pans fairly close to the Observatory.

**Mute Swan:** Two were present either on the Pans or Avon Water. There was no attempt to breed this year.

**Oystercatcher:** Present everyday with 12 being the highest number recorded on 3 separate days.



An Oystercatcher flying over the Observatory.

**Pied Wagtail:** Upto three have been seen around the site most days. photo below.



**Reed warbler:** Heard every day.

**Robin:** Seen near the Observatory on 14 days during the month.



One of the juvenile Robins seen near the Observatory.

**Shelduck:** Seen around the site every day. 13 was the highest number recorded.

**Starling:** Seen every day. Over 500 birds were recorded on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Stock Dove:** Recorded every day.

**Swallow:** Recorded nearly every day.

**Swift:** Seen on only 4 days during the month. The highest number recorded was 21 on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Water Rail:** Heard on 10 days during the month but only seen once.

**Wren:** Recorded every day. Sometimes two are seen flitting around by the trees.

## **Birds Recorded but not mentioned in this Report.**

Blackcap, Black Headed Gull, Black Tailed Godwit, Buzzard, Canada Goose, Chaffinch, Chiffchaff, Coal Tit, Collared Dove, Coot, Cormorant, Egyptian Goose, Feral Pigeon, Gadwall, Goldcrest, Goldfinch, Great Black Backed Gull, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Greenfinch, Green Woodpecker, Greylag Goose, House Martin, Jackdaw, Kestrel, Linnet, Long Tailed Tit, Magpie, Mediterranean Gull, Moorhen, Pheasant, Raven, Reed Bunting, Red Kite, Redshank, Rook, Sedge Warbler, Skylark, Song Thrush, Spoonbill, Stonechat, Whimbrel, Whitethroat and Wood Pigeon.

**Thanks to:** David Horne and Keith Metcalf for their additions to the bird records.

Due to the receding water levels and the distance to the main body of water I have removed the trail cameras and will be using photos taken from the Observatory for the monthly reports from now on. If and when the water levels get back to a reasonable level I will replace the trail cameras and reposition them outside.

## **Trail Cameras.**

**Birds Recorded:** (before the trail cameras were removed).

Blackbird, Black Headed Gull. House Sparrow, Mallard and Pheasant.

**Animals Recorded/seen. Badger.** Seen only once on the 4<sup>th</sup> June. Photo below.



**Bat:** Have been seen flying around the Observatory on two occasions, one on the 10<sup>th</sup> and two on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Eel:** An Eel was seen with a chunk taken out of its side on the 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Fox:** Seen on 20 days during the month. On the 24<sup>th</sup> three foxes were seen, on the 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>. Two were seen on the 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>.



One of the 3  
Fox cubs seen at  
the Pans.

This photo was  
taken on the  
25<sup>th</sup> June.

**Muntjac:** A male was seen on the 8<sup>th</sup> walking along the far side of the Pans from the barns at the far end to the Observatory end.



**Otter:** Seen on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> June



The photo above shows an Otter at the Pans on the 1<sup>st</sup> June early that afternoon.

**Roe Deer:** Recorded on 5 occasions, one on the 10<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, two on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> and one female with two fawns on the 25<sup>th</sup>.



Two Roe deer kids at the far end of the Pans.

**Shore Crab:** 2 seen on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Squirrel** One was seen on the 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Weasel:** David Horne saw one on the 10<sup>th</sup> when he was working at the Observatory.

# **Keyhaven Observatory Updates**

## **Pans water levels**

Regular visitors will have noted how dry the site has become over recent months. Last winter the tidal flaps in the sea wall, were replaced by the Environment Agency. The old ones were in a poor state of repair and increasingly allowed saline water to enter the site on every high tide. The new ones only allow excess water to drain from the site. As a result, the contained water body has become gradually fresher only being supplemented by rainwater and occasional over topping from the Avon Water River further upstream. Initially this resulted in a large area of shallow water which proved ideal for many waders such as black-tailed godwits and avocets.

However exceptionally dry weather this spring and early summer has resulted in the body of water shrinking and retreating upstream. This has resulted in allowing only restricted distant views of the waders & waterfowl from the Observatory platform.

Ideally there should be a water level management plan drawn up and active control of water levels in place in order to create optimum conditions for the visiting birds. Hopefully by working closely with the new site owners, the Environment Agency, this is something both organisations can aspire to in the future.

## **Replacement of the entrance gate**

The old entrance gate was gradually deteriorating and increasingly dragging on the ground. On 7<sup>th</sup> June Dorset Fencing replaced the gate and the two supporting posts. The electric magnetic gate lock was reconnected and the site entrance is now looking considerably smarter as a result.

## **Volunteer task day**

On 26<sup>th</sup> June three volunteers carried out maintenance work at the observatory. The railings were painted with a lightly stained wood preservative and growth on the adjacent hedges was topped in order to enhance the sight lines for Observatory visitors, across the Pans and adjacent river. A further session will be required to complete the task.

The photos below were supplied by David Horne.



Chris Barrass. 2/7/2025