

Recent highlights at Sculthorpe

Attractions showing well recently

Date: Saturday 16th October 2010

The autumn migration is really underway now. The north Norfolk coast has had several large falls of birds over the last ten days and consequently may have moved inland to Sculthorpe. Robins and blackbirds have arrived in large numbers along with redwing and fieldfare. Individual sightings of redpoll, linnet and brambling have all been recorded over the last ten days and the water rail is coming to the Whitely hide feeder on a daily basis. On the 14th a great grey shrike appeared on the moor and was still on the reserve yesterday evening (15th). Much to warden Nigel Middletons delight, sightings of bearded tit have been reported since the 8th with 6 birds seen yesterday afternoon.

Date: Wednesday 8th September 2010

Two cranes were observed flying over the reserve by one of our volunteer wardens this morning. Several reports of good views of kingfisher and a bittern was seen and photographed by one of visitors taking off from the reed bed this afternoon.



Richard Bedford

Hopefully this won't be the last we see of this individual.

Date: Sunday 5th September 2010

Late summer drifting into autumn is usually a quiet time on the reserve as the birds of summer have mostly left us. There are still passage migrants heading through the reserve including swifts taking a drink at the scrape and reed warbler, chiff chaff and blackcap have all been seen this last week. A large mixed tit flock is currently roaming the woodland. Fifty plus long-tailed tits with chiff chaff and tree creepers amongst them. Keep an eye out for a lesser spotted woodpecker in the mix. A continental coal tit was also spotted on the Whitely hide tables today. Kingfisher seem to be making a come back with increased sightings at the scrape and along the river.

On the mammal front look out for water vole at the southern end of the new drain as you approach the river and stoat activity in the woodland areas. The later being seen quite regularly on the board walk.

The morning of the 4th had been foggy and water droplets on the cobwebs in the meadow emphasised the fact there are many thousands of creatures all around us that go almost unnoticed.



Cobwebs on the meadow.

Date: Saturday 14th August 2010

The last three marsh harrier chicks are now airborne and hunting for food. It has been a very good year for our star birds with nine chicks in total. It is particularly good to see juvenile bullfinches coming to the feeders at the Whitely hide. Common and green sandpiper have been paying regular visits to the wetland area along with common snipe. This is due, in part to the highland cattle grazing in the areas around the scrape and other pools. The cattle dung is a source of food for the beetle and other insect larvae that are in turn food for these wading birds.

Visitors to the reserve in the next few weeks will see that our volunteers are doing a lot of late summer work on the fen area. This includes removing unwanted saplings and cutting reed, sedge, and grass. This work is vital to maintain the fenland habitat. If left, the dead material from these plants increases the nutrition in the soil allowing the more water hungry shrubs and trees to grow and dry up the peaty soil. One of our targets this year is to purchase a baler so we can store the cut vegetation to feed the cattle over the winter. At £10,500 this is a substantial cost to the reserve and your donations will be gratefully received.

Date: Tuesday 3 August 2010

Kingfisher was observed on the scrape over the weekend and two hobbies were seen dragonfly hunting in the same area on Sunday.

Both juvenile and adult great spotted woodpecker are providing good views on the feeders and oak tree by the visitor centre.

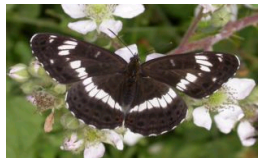
Butterfly numbers are starting to pick up and humming bird hawk moth is seen regularly on the lavender in the garden.

If you see anything interesting or unusual on the reserve pop in to the visitor centre and let us know or [email Mike](#)

Date: 28 July 2010

It's butterfly week! Currently on the wing:

Meadow brown, ringlet, gatekeeper, comma, green veined white, large white, small white, red admiral, white admiral, speckled wood, small skipper, large skipper, small tortoiseshell and painted lady.



White admiral - *Adrian Riley*

Peak time for dragonflies and damselflies. [See species list](#)



Hairy dragonfly - *Adrian Riley*

All of Sculthorpe's summer bird species including occasional visits by common sandpiper, green sandpiper, hobby and kingfisher in the wetland area. Spotted flycatcher feeding young on the main drain. Adult and juvenile marsh harriers in the air (another brood of three yet to fledge). [See species list for further details](#)



Kingfisher - *Gary K Smith*

Thousands of of toadlets and froglets, watch your step!