



Wexford Naturalists' Field Club,
c/o Wexford Wildfowl Reserve, North Slob, Wexford, Ireland.

WNFC Newsletter

Issue number 36

December

2014

Welcome to the December issue of WNFC newsletter.

UPCOMING CLUB EVENTS

January

Friday 9th: (*note change of day & date*) “**Duhallow LIFE Project**” by Dr. Fran Igoe, Project Co-ordinator.

Saturday 10th: Field trip to Arthurstown to identify gulls and other seabirds with Simon Collins. Meet at 2pm on Strand Road in Arthurstown.

February

Thursday 5th: AGM at 7pm followed at 8pm by “**A Wild Ireland Tour – celebrating Ireland’s wildlife**” by Dr. Liam Lysaght, Director National Biodiversity Data Centre.

Saturday 14th: Nature walk and “Leave No Trace” training programme in the Irish National Heritage Park, Ferrycarrig. With Eoin McMahon Leave No Trace Trainer. Meet at 10am outside Reception (T 010 228).

March

Thursday 5th: Gerald Barrett-Hamilton Memorial Lecture “**The Secret Life of an Irish Marine Mammal, the Grey Seal**” by Dr. Michelle Cronin, Coastal and Marine Research Centre, University College Cork.

Saturday 14th: Coach trip to Cabragh Wetlands, Co. Tipperary. Cost €25. To book a place contact Club Secretary or email info@wexfordnaturalists.com. €10 non-refundable deposit required.

Our regular monthly lectures take place in The Pumphouse, Wexford Wildfowl Reserve at 8pm.

2015 PROGRAMME

A copy of the next year’s Programme of Events is enclosed with this newsletter. Thanks once again to all members who submitted suggestions for lectures and field trips. All ideas were taken into consideration by the committee and as many subjects as possible have been included to suit all tastes.

We encourage members to become actively involved. When attending field trips bring field guides, lenses and binoculars where available and, most importantly, a notebook and pen/pencil to record what you see. Think of the environment and car pool if possible.

NOTE TO MEMBERS

If you wish to receive emails with reminders of upcoming club events, and details of other events which may be of interest,

please ensure that Nicholas Egan, Membership Secretary, has an up to date email address for you. Since events may change due to unforeseen circumstances please check for last minute updates on our website, www.wexfordnaturalists.com or phone Wexford Wildfowl Reserve, (076) 1002660.

Where available bring field guides, lenses, binoculars etc. to field events. Don’t forget a notebook and pen/pencil to record all you see and hear! There are a number of guide books in the Club Library. Check these out on www.wexfordnaturalists.com/library or find out more details from Margaret Scally or Will Warham.

WELCOME

Special welcome to the following new members: Jim Fitzgibbon, New Ross; Brian Kennedy and Alanne O’Kelly, Bannow.

ODONATA UPDATE

(Dragonfly and Damselfly recording)

The WNFC Publication on the distribution of Damselflies & Dragonflies is in its final production stages. We are looking for people to sponsor different species in this book at €50 per species and your name will appear in the book below the one you have sponsored (8 species have been snapped up so far!!). Anyone interested contact us at newsletter.wnfc@gmail.com.

AGM NOTICE

Under Section 4 of the Club Constitution, Members who wish to stand for any position on the Committee, Officer or General member, should submit their names, plus that of a proposer and seconder, to the Club Secretary for receipt at least 21 days (this year that will be 15th Jan 2015) before the AGM which is being held on Thursday 5th Feb 2015. Officers are Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer, and there can be up to 6 General members. Nominations to WNFC, c/o Wexford Wildfowl Reserve, North Slob, Wexford. Email: info@wexfordnaturalists.com.

Any nominee who is unopposed will be automatically elected at the AGM. Where there is no nominee for an Officer position, or the number of General members falls short of 6, the vacant positions may be filled by election at the AGM itself. Elections by secret ballot will only occur at the AGM, where there is more than one candidate for an Officer position or where the nominations for General member exceed 6. Items for inclusion on the agenda should also be submitted by 15th Jan. 2015 (See section 5.2 of the constitution).

CLUB OUTING TO CABRAGH WETLANDS

Cabragh Wetlands are situated 4km from Thurles, Co. Tipperary. The Cabragh Wetlands Trust was registered in 1993 in an effort to save a vast area of wetland habitats from destruction after the filling-in of the settling pools by the Thurles Sugar Factory during its closure. These lagoons used to be an oasis of wildlife, particularly birds. The Trust was formed and acquired the land adjacent to the filled-in lagoons to ensure the continuation of this resting place for migratory birds. The Wetlands have no less than 15 different habitats including ponds, reed swamps, hedgerows, streams and wild flower meadows. During our visit on Saturday 14th March, members will have a short introduction to the site as well as a guided walk. More details will be announced nearer the time. To book a place for this trip contact Club Secretary or email info@wexfordnaturalists.com. €10 non-refundable deposit required.

LEAVE NO TRACE

Leave No Trace Ireland is a conservation charity committed to raising awareness of Ireland's rich natural heritage and protecting the outdoors for future generations. The organisation teaches people of all ages how to enjoy the outdoors responsibly and is the most widely accepted outdoor ethics programme in Ireland. At the heart of Leave No Trace are seven principles for reducing the damage caused by outdoor activities.

The committee recently decided that the Club would adopt these principles and, in order to spread the message among members, a Leave No Trace Awareness Workshop will be held on Saturday 14th February at The Irish National Heritage Park from 10.00am – 2.00pm. The day will provide an opportunity to learn about the outdoor environment and to talk about how partners can help to raise awareness of the programme. We will start indoors followed by a walk in the park and finish up indoors. Please bring warm comfortable outdoor gear including a rain jacket and footwear for use on wet ground. A pen and paper might be useful but, as the Leave No Trace Manager has stated, the best thing to bring would be a bit of curiosity!

Members should bring a packed lunch or alternatively food can be purchased in the restaurant in the Park. For more information on Leave No Trace, see www.leavenotraceireland.org

REQUEST FOR RECORDS

One of the aims of the Club is to encourage the recording of the wildlife of Wexford. Whether it is through taking part in a systematic survey such as the Hedgerow Survey or noting what you see when you are out and about or even recording what is in your own garden, all information is valuable and is greatly welcomed. It doesn't have to be something rare or unusual. All records, even of the most common species, are welcome. We ask that you submit all your sightings of wildlife in County Wexford, preferably through our online recording form at <http://www.wexfordnaturalists.com/recording/records-submission>, or by any of the other methods mentioned on the records submission page.



Members photographed with Nigel Monaghan, Keeper Natural History Museum, Dublin following their recent visit to the museum. Nigel is holding an antler recovered from Wexford Harbour and donated to the museum by Dominic Berridge, WNFC Member and Warden Wexford Wildfowl Reserve (photo M. Foley)

HEDGEROW SURVEY UPDATE OCTOBER 2014

In 2014, 12 recorders took on a total of 21 sections of hedgerow around the county to record all the birds, butterflies, bumblebees and other wildlife that uses our hedgerows. This has confirmed the importance of hedgerows to wildlife, not just during the breeding season but throughout the year. To date, we have received over 2,200 bird records of 54 species. For the first time since the survey began in January 2013, Robins have become the most frequently recorded and the most abundant, overtaking Blackbirds which have topped the table since the survey began. Robins have clearly had a very good year because 722 have been recorded so far this year compared with 647 for the whole of 2013. Some of our summer migrants also seem to have done well with higher numbers of Blackcap, Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler.

It was a strange year for butterflies. They appeared earlier this year but, while they were slightly more numerous in May and June than in 2013, they were well down on the numbers recorded in July and August of last year.

Most bumblebees seem to have also had a good year but Honeybees seem to have particularly well with 680 recorded to date compared with only 35 for last year.

This survey is providing very valuable information but we need more people to take part. If you would like to take part in 2015 please contact Michael O'Donnell for details at records@wexfordnaturalists.com. Don't worry if you can't identify everything you see. If you only want to count birds or some other group, that's fine. All records are welcome.

ARTICLES FOR NEWSLETTER

The next newsletter will be published in March. This is your newsletter, and natural history articles are always welcome. Items for inclusion may be passed on to me, Nicholas Egan, at newsletter.wnfc@gmail.com; or 086 0757976.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from Wexford Naturalists' Field Club