



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

WNFC Newsletter

Issue number 34

June 2014

Welcome to the June issue of WNFC newsletter

UPCOMING CLUB EVENTS

All lectures take place in The Pumphouse at 8pm.

July

Thursday 3rd

'Integrated Constructed Wetlands (ICW): Reanimating requisite functional ecosystems' by Dr. Rory Harrington

Saturday 12th

Butterfly Identification Workshop - Instead of our usual field trip we are holding a workshop on Saturday 12th July, 10am – 4pm at Jamestown Nature Reserve. Dr. Tomás Murray, National Biodiversity Data Centre, Waterford will give a short presentation on the Butterfly Monitoring scheme followed by a crash course in identification. Following lunch (tea/coffee, sandwiches) Tomás and Chris Wilson will lead the group on a butterfly walk around the farm and reserve. Cost €5, which includes lunch. Booking essential. Contact Marion Brady (086)8290163 or info@wexfordnaturalists.com.

August

Thursday 7th

"A Beginners Guide to Identifying Irish Ferns and Fern Allies" by Dr. Noeleen Smyth, National Botanic Gardens.

Saturday 9th

Field trip to look at ferns at The Soldiers Hole, Borodale, Enniscorthy. Meet at 2pm in the car park at Borodale. Leader: Paul Green.

September

Saturday 13th

Wexford Naturalists' Field Club was founded in October 2004 and to mark our 10th Birthday we are having a party! The fun starts at 6.30pm on **Saturday 13th September** at the Irish National Heritage Park in Ferrycarrig. Refreshments will be served and the winners of the Club Photography Competition will be announced. The winning entries will be on display and there will also be photo albums packed with memories from various Club events over the years. Why not come along and meet with friends old and new?

The party will be followed at 8pm by an audiovisual presentation **"Flora and Fauna of the High Arctic"** by Jack Malins, Wildlife Photographer.

Tickets (€10) *for the party* can be booked by contacting Marion Brady (086)8290163 or info@wexfordnaturalists.com or can be purchased at the July and August lectures.

If you wish to attend the lecture only, admission is free. 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 out what books are available on www.wexfordnaturalists.com/library or find out more details from Will Warham, club librarian.

The club has purchased a pair of binoculars for use by club members at outdoor events. They will be brought to events by Janet and, if required, can be pre-booked.

LIBRARY

Contact Will Warham, club librarian, at any of the club's events if you wish to borrow a book from the club library. A detailed list, which includes ISBN references, is available on the club's website.

WNFC PHOTO COMPETITION

There are only a few weeks left to submit entries for the club photo competition. Remember the closing date is 8th August 2014 but you can use photos taken during 2013 as well. So get snapping so we can have a good exhibition of entries for our 10th birthday celebrations in September. Three entries per member on any aspect of Wexford's wonderful wildlife. Email to info@wexfordnaturalists.com; See page 4 for further details

WELCOME

Special welcome to the following new members: Jimmy Sheridan, Wexford; Carol Collins, Taghmon; Mary Hatton, Crossabeg; Selina Scott, Wexford; Concepta Broderick, Duncannon; Lynn Cassidy, Ballymurn; William and Patricia Wood, Enniscorthy.

ARTICLES FOR NEWSLETTER

The next newsletter will be published in September. 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 on 086 0757976. If you would like to save paper and help reduce the club's carbon footprint, please contact Nicholas to receive your newsletter by email.

"The Lepidoptera of County Wexford" is for sale at all club events and is great value at €5.



CLUB JACKETS

Club jackets can be purchased from Blazing Embroidery, Crescent Quay, Wexford. They are available in Black, Green or Navy at a price of €55. Prices correct at time of going to press.

RECORDING

Records

A new online record submission form, developed for the Club by staff at the National Biodiversity Data Centre, can now be accessed on <http://www.wexfordnaturalists.com/recording>. This system will allow members to analyse their own data or download their records. In addition the Records Officer can view all the records submitted for Co. Wexford (not just limited to the records submitted through customised Wexford Naturalists' Field Club forms). Remember the Club wants records for all species, even for the common ones e.g. Daisy (*Bellis perennis*), many of which appear to be under recorded in the county so, for those members who have internet access, please give this new system a try. If any member has a query, or needs help with the form, please contact a member of the committee. Members can, of course, continue to submit records by dropping them into the Suggestion Box at any meeting, by post to **WNFC Records Officer, c/o Wexford Wildfowl Reserve, North Slob, Wexford**, by email to records@wexfordnaturalists.com or verbally to Michael O'Donnell at any Club event. All plant records will be passed on to Paul Green for inclusion in his database of the Flora of Co. Wexford.

THE ODONATA OF COUNTY WEXFORD

(Dragonfly and Damselfly recording)

So far this year we have had plenty of reports of Dragonflies and Damselflies all over the county. 5 new species have been recorded in different squares which is great. So if you would like to contribute to this survey please send all records to records@wexfordnaturalists.com or info@wildside.ie and for further information please contact newsletter.wnfc@gmail.com. If anyone would like to contribute photos for possible inclusion in our publication of odonata please forward them to newsletter.wnfc@gmail.com



BLUE TAILED DAMSELFLY (photo Zoe Delvin)

BIOBLITZ

22 members attended this year's BioBlitz which was held at Dunbrody Country House Hotel, Arthurstown. 365 species were recorded including Lesser Wax Moth, a new record for Co. Wexford. A short video clip showing a fox, and rabbits in

the background, caught by camera trap during the night can be seen on the Club's Facebook page.

2014 WEEKEND TRIP TO WATERFORD AND CORK

A very comprehensive report has been submitted by Edel Nolan and Bernie Rowe and has been posted on the Club's website. The following is a brief summary.

On Friday 20th June the members visited Dulhallow which was fascinating and deserving in the future of an extended visit. In the main house, (a convent which previously belonged to the Sisters of St. Joseph), we were met by Dr. Fran Igoe of IRD (a company that combines the efforts and resources of state bodies, local authorities, local communities and individual entrepreneurs. After a brief tour of the house and viewing the ongoing restoration, Dr. Igoe brought our group to see the grounds of the house and gave us a detailed account of the ongoing projects there. We then proceeded to Dalua River where there is quite a bit of collaboration between Dr. Igoe and local farmers. Sand martins were observed coming out of their nesting area on the riverbank. This bank is in danger of collapsing, so a very new venture is the construction of a sand martin wall.

Late Friday evening we met Jimmy Lucey on his farm near Macroom and visited the site where in previous years hen harriers had been nesting. Unfortunately this year there have been no sightings but we observed the habitat and the upland mountain areas that suit nesting harriers during the summer as they are a familiar sight in winter roosting at the North Slob and Tacumshane.

On Saturday afternoon we headed to The Gearagh, which is a flood plain created by the ESB in the 1950s. It is now a Special Area of Conservation and the only ancient post-glacial alluvial forest in Western Europe.

On Sunday morning, we went to Cunnigar Strand just before Dungarvan. This is a large open beach and a great area to spot migrant birds. In the afternoon we went to Dunhill Ecopark in Co. Waterford to see a constructed wetland project that takes the wastewater from the local GAA club and Dunhill Enterprise Centre. There was a hard surface pathway with the original river on one side and manmade ponds opposite. These ponds hosted busy Damsel and Dragonflies.



GROUP ON CORK TRIP (photo Bernard Smith)

KILMORE QUAY SEAFOOD FESTIVAL 2014

Annual Festival Lecture "Kilmore Quay's Natural Heritage". Friday 11th July in The Wooden House, Kilmore Quay, at 8pm. In this year's festival lecture local naturalist Jim Hurley highlights both the natural heritage of Kilmore Quay and surrounding area and Wexford's new Heritage Trail. Admission is free and all are welcome. Why not come early and treat yourself to a delicious seafood platter? Full festival details at www.kilmorequayseafoodfestival.com.



Kilmore Quay Seafood Festival 2014: Nature Walk at Ballyteige Burrow with Jim Hurley on Saturday 12th July at 2pm. Guided walk to see ancient rocks, landforms, plants, animals and drainage works dating from the Great Potato Famine of the 1840s. Admission is free and all are welcome. Meet at 1.50pm beside the promenade by the children's playground in Kilmore Quay. Why not come early and treat yourself to a delicious seafood platter? Full festival details at www.kilmorequayseafoodfestival.com.

THE TERN COLONY AT LADY'S ISLAND LAKE

Brian O'Connor

(Thanks to Dave Daly for his help in compiling this article)



LADY'S ISLAND LAKE, taken from the mainland, with Inish in the background and Sgarbheen on the right (photo Dave Daly)

Each summer, the brackish lagoon of Lady's Island Lake on the south coast of County Wexford is the site of one of Europe's largest breeding tern colonies. We are lucky enough to have four of the five Irish breeding species of tern nesting at Lady's Island, including the very rare Roseate Tern. The terns nest on the lake's two islands – Inish and Sgarbheen, with the largest concentration of birds found on the former (visitors to Lady's Island will recognise Inish as the island with the Monterey Pine growing on it).

The terns started to breed at Lady's Island after their former haunt, Tern Island, a sandbank in Wexford Harbour, was destroyed by storms in the 1970s. Today, Lady's Island holds approximately 1,600 pairs of Sandwich Terns, 800 pairs of Common Terns, 800 pairs of Arctic Terns and 150 pairs of Roseate Terns.

In 1984, the Lady's Island Lake Tern Conservation Project was initiated. This entails the colonies being protected and monitored by a warden (with Dave Daly filling the role for the last 14 years, with myself as assistant this year). The initiative has resulted in a dramatic increase in the numbers of all of the terns species present, making it a great success.

It is a real privilege for Wexford to host the beautiful Roseate Tern, and all the more when one considers that the colony at Lady's Island is the second largest in Ireland (that at Rockabill Island off the Dublin coast being the biggest). The Roseate Tern is one of Europe's rarest seabirds. It actually became extinct as a breeding species in Ireland in the mid-nineteenth century before returning, when it bred on the Keeragh Islands. As a country, and indeed a county, we have a great responsibility to continue the tern conservation project at Lady's Island Lake. As part of the project, nest boxes are provided for the Roseate Tern with the primary aim of increasing their numbers. The birds on the Island are also studied in some detail, part of which requires the ringing of chicks with special identification rings which can be read using a telescope from a hide.

WNFC also has a connection with the terns, most notably the fact that a tern forms our logo. Due to this link, the Club "adopted" two Roseate Tern chicks on Inish in 2011 (while one unfortunately died, hopefully the other - AD52 - will be back to breed itself this year) and we sponsored Roseate Tern in BirdAtlas 2007-2011, probably the most important publication with regard to bird distribution in Ireland and Britain for two decades.

In addition to the terns, Inish Island is also home to a large colony of Black-headed Gulls and is one of the few places in Ireland where Mediterranean Gull breeds. This bird, stunning in its summer plumage, only colonised Ireland in the last few decades, before which it was a rare sight here. This year sees 23 pairs nesting on Inish.



ADULT ROSEATE TERN with a sandeel (photo Dave Daly)

HOVERFLIES

Hoverflies mimic the appearance of bumblebees. They lay their eggs in a bumblebee nest, then the larvae clean up the detritus in the nest and are in that way helpful to the bees.



VOLUCELLA BOMBYLANS



VOLUCELLA PELLUCANS (photo Janet Whelehan)

In the last newsletter we mentioned leaflets about Saltee Islands and Balliteigue these are available at <http://www.wexfordnaturalists.com/library/miscellaneous>.

Wexford Naturalists' Field Club Photo Competition



Subject: Nature in Wexford

- Open to members of WNFC only
- Photographs must have been taken in County Wexford in 2013/2014
- Entries limited to 3 photos per person
- Submit photos digitally by email (5 MB; 300 DPI) to: info@wexfordnaturalists.com
- Include title of photo, where and when taken, and your name, address and phone number
- Closing date: 8th August 2014

Three prizes will be awarded:

1st - €50 voucher, winning photo framed, plus 1 year individual club membership

2nd - €50 voucher, plus 1 year individual club membership

3rd - €25 voucher, plus 1 year individual club membership

So dust off those cameras and get snapping. Whether it be the spider in the corner, the frog in the pond, that majestic oak tree, those bluebells, anything and everything that shows off our wildlife, take the time to stop and look at nature and capture its beauty in an instant with just the click of a shutter.

Entries judged by wildlife photographer, Jack Malins. Judge's decision is final. Prizes awarded at the Wexford Naturalists' Field Club 10th Anniversary party on Saturday 13th September in the Irish National Heritage Park at Ferrycarrig. Prize giving will be followed by a presentation on "Flora and Fauna of the High Arctic" by Jack Malins. Anyone else wishing to attend the party, prize giving and presentation should contact Marion Brady at info@wexfordnaturalists.com.

