



The geese are back!

First wintering pink-footed geese return to Scottish Wildlife Trust Montrose Basin reserve

Scottish Wildlife Trust staff at Montrose Basin are delighted to report that the first wintering pink-footed geese have arrived back to the reserve having spent the summer months on their breeding grounds in Iceland.

With over 65,000 geese on the Basin at the end of September, last year's record of 51,000 has been well beaten. Numbers are expected to peak around the middle of October.

The geese come into the Basin in the evenings to roost in the safety of the reserve before leaving again at first light when they make their way to surrounding fields where they will spend the day feeding.

As an internationally important site for our wintering population of pink-feet, staff and volunteers must keep a close eye on the number of geese visiting Montrose Basin.

A dedicated team of hardy goose counters will endure the dark, cold winter mornings to monitor the number of geese roosting on the Basin.

Counters are located at specific sites around the Basin and they count the number of geese in the skeins which fly over their heads as they make their way to feed.

For an up-to-date count of the number of pink-footed geese currently on the reserve, keep an eye on the sightings board in the Visitor Centre.



Andy Wakelin

Surveys & Monitoring Wetland Bird Survey

Most numerous species recorded during WeBS count on Sunday 19th September:

Species	No. seen
Pink-footed goose	3027
Eider	1619
Wigeon	1555
Redshank	1347
Oystercatcher	1204

Montrose Basin Reserve Work Team News RWT give Shelduck Hide and Tayock some TLC

Our thanks must go to the many volunteers who continue to put in (literally) hundreds of hours to help us run the reserve here at Montrose Basin, both in the Centre and outside on the Reserve.

August's team day saw the Reserve Work Team giving the Shelduck Hide a much needed lick of paint as well as new internal panelling, in an effort



to try and cut out draughts for birders braving the Basin over the winter months.

As part of September's team day volunteers gave Tayock a bit of a tidy-up, cutting path edges, pulling weeds and pruning hedges.

For more information on volunteering at Montrose Basin either inside the Centre or out on the Reserve, please contact the Visitor Centre on 01674 676336.



Reserve Rarities

The 9 ruddy shelduck which caused a stir during the summer months were last seen on 17th August and a little egret was on the Basin from early August, last seen on 2nd September. A common crane has been recorded on the Basin since 8th August and is believed currently to be in moult.

On 22nd September staff were lucky enough to witness a great skua chasing a sandwich tern across the Basin in front of the Visitor Centre, this is the first confirmed sighting for the Basin and is an excellent record for the reserve.

Other notable sightings include goshawk (01/09), honey buzzard (01/09), little stint (16/09), wheatear (08/08 and 28/09), 2 whinchat on Rossie Island (22/09) and curlew sandpiper have been recorded in small numbers throughout the September.

Keep up to date with reserve sightings by following the monthly Ranger Blog which can be found by visiting the reserve page for Montrose Basin on the Scottish Wildlife Trust website - www.swt.org.uk

Busy summer at Montrose Basin Visitor Centre

The Visitor Centre has been a hive of activity this summer and recently hosted an event on behalf of Tayside Police to launch the Partnership Against Wildlife crime group (PAW). The visit was attended by Environment Minister, Roseanna Cunningham and varying interested parties including Scottish Natural Heritage, RSPB and Angus Council.

Our events have been well attended this season with visitors enjoying our annual family fun day, children's summer activities and one of our new events "Nighthunters".

We were delighted to welcome the Postcode Lottery to the Visitor Centre and accept a cheque for £1,262,455 on behalf of the Scottish Wildlife Trust. Their camera crew spent a couple of days filming on the Reserve so keep an eye out for a short video of the Basin on STV.



"Flying Flock" touch down at Montrose Basin

As reported in the last edition of Basin Bugle, in order to control vegetation in the Salt Pans, Scottish Wildlife Trust are utilising our very own flock of sheep to graze the site.

Grazing with the flock, which are used on our reserves across Scotland, will:

- Enhance the salt marsh habitat and many transitional swamp communities.
- Maintain high biodiversity within the sward.
- Encourage wildfowl by providing a more palatable sward for grazing.



- Encourage wading birds by improving visibility for predator evasion.
- Encourage breeding waders through overall habitat improvements.
- Encourage waders to feed by muddying pool margins.

Meet the Sheep!

As part of the international campaign to support the use of wool, Wool Week will be held from 11th-17th October. Here at Scottish Wildlife Trust we are doing our bit and offering visitors a chance to get up close and personal with our woolly wonders.

The event will run from 11am-4pm at Montrose Basin Visitor Centre on Sunday 17th October.

And finally....

A team from Montrose Basin successfully completed the Aonach Eagach Ridge in Glencoe on 18th-19th September. Caroline, Adam, Hugh and Richard would like to thank everyone who donated money which will go directly to projects here at Montrose Basin.



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