



Niall Benvie

Springing into action

Volunteers, Montrose Sailing Club and even the RNLI help us gear up for a busy summer season

Tern raft

Regular volunteers and visitors to the Wildlife Centre will have noticed that something has been missing on the Basin during the second half of March, our tern raft!

Don't fret, however, it isn't floating aimlessly across the North Sea. We have brought it ashore near Montrose Sailing Club to carry out some minor maintenance and install a frame for a new HD camera.

We are approaching the end of the project to upgrade our wildlife watching cameras and the fantastic new tern raft camera is the final process. It will allow us to transmit superb footage of nesting terns not only to the Centre but also onto the internet via the Scottish Wildlife Trust website.

The raft will be towed back out at the start of April, and the terns should return near the end of the month.

As you can imagine, bringing a 64m² tern raft ashore was no mean feat and it could not have been achieved without the help, time and efforts of both Montrose Sailing Club and



Douglas Craig, Montrose Sailing Club

Surveys & Monitoring

Here at Montrose we are involved in a range of surveys and biological monitoring.

As well as carrying out the monthly Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) on the Basin, staff and volunteers also participate in the Bird Atlas, undertake bird-ringing, monitor moths, butterflies, mammals, breeding waders and breeding wildfowl.

Conducting surveys is a great way to get out into the countryside, improve your skills and knowledge, meet enthusiastic people and contribute to a wider database and help protect Scotland's wildlife for the future.

If you have expertise in a particular field of

Montrose RNLI crew, we owe them a debt of thanks for all their help.

Wildflower Meadow

Staff and volunteers have also been working hard to create a wildflower meadow near the entrance to the Visitor Centre which will hopefully attract a broad range of bugs and insects.



© Steve Gardner

The old hedgerow and shrubs were removed, opening the area up, allowing more light in. The area was then sown with a wide selection of seeds from native species which have been donated or were collected last autumn.

Once the site becomes established we hope our Teacher Naturalists will be able to use the site during educational visits, as well as looking very pretty for visitors to enjoy!

If you would like to enquire about practical volunteering on the reserve at Montrose Basin, please speak to a member of staff in the Visitor Centre or contact the Scottish Wildlife Trust Ranger, Adam McClure on amclure@swt.org.uk



natural history, or would like to improve your skills and would like to help out, even as a scribe, please contact our staff at the Montrose Basin Visitor Centre.

The highest counts from the March WeBS count at Montrose are:

Curlew	846	Whooper swan	224
Eider	721	Greylag	143
Shelduck	609	Common gull	90
Wigeon	545	Pintail	80
Pink-feet	553	Herring gull	72
Redshank	531	Mallard	69
Oystercatcher	359	R-b merganser	61

Reserve Rarities

A jay was seen near Mains of Dun farm on 15th February, and this was followed up by a sighting of a magpie feeding on the Mains of Dun on 24th February. Unlike most of the country, this is an uncommon sighting in the Montrose area.

Although a common sight off the Angus coast, an unfamiliar visitor to the Basin was a guillemot on 15th March.

Sightings of less common wildfowl over the month have included a snow goose, which was seen with a flock of c.200 pink-footed geese coming into roost on 20th March, two gadwall (27th March) and on the morning of 28th March a white-fronted goose was recorded with a small group of 14 whooper swans on the River South Esk near the Shelduck Hide.

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

First summer migrants arrive

It's always an exciting time for birdwatchers during March and April, witnessing the return of our summer migrants after a long, cold and harsh winter. They say "one swallow doesn't make a summer", however, it never fails to lift your mood when you see that small black silhouette with long, distinctive tail streamers for the first time. You know summer is on the way.

At the time of writing the first sand martins and chiffchaff have already been recorded on the reserve on 23rd and 24th March respectively, however, there are still many more species to arrive, so keep an eye (and ear!) out for these wonderful birds.

To give you an idea of when we can expect to see each of our migrants returning to Montrose, the common migratory species at Montrose and the date they were first recorded here in 2010 are listed below:

Warblers: chiffchaff (26th March); sedge warbler (25th April); willow warbler (11th April); whitethroat (25th April)

Hirundines: sand martin (27th March); swallow (11th April);

Terns: Arctic tern (25th April); common tern - pictured to right (25th April); sandwich tern (28th April)

Others: osprey (4th April); swift (30th April)



Upcoming events

There is plenty going on at Montrose Basin to keep the whole family entertained this spring:

Children's Activities - Mud glorious mud	Wednesday 6th April	10.30am-12.30pm
Children's Activities - Art in the outdoors	Wednesday 13th April	10.30am-12.30pm
Meet the Ranger	Saturday 16th April	11.45am-1.45pm
Dawn chorus	Sunday 1st May	5.30am-8.30am
Optical fair	Saturday 21st & Sunday 22nd May	10.30am-5.00pm
Journey to the centre of the mud*	Sunday 19th June	10.00am-2.30pm

Information on all Scottish Wildlife Trust events at Montrose Basin, including prices and meeting points can be obtained from the Visitor Centre. We also have full programmes for events right across Scotland.



*Booking essential, please contact Montrose Basin Visitor Centre

New staff member

Meet Ian Lawrence, the latest addition to the staff here at Montrose Basin. Ian is on a six-month contract and will be working both in the Visitor Centre and on the reserve.

Originally from Stoke, Ian has previously worked on projects in County Cork and Staffordshire. Welcome to the team!

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