



Newsletter of the Friends of Avon Meadows



A thin layer of ice present on 30 Jan 19 after overnight frost.

Photo: Richard Stott

Newsletter No: 34

January 2019

Progress on the Wetland

Site Management

This is our busiest time of year for reserve management work. We are very grateful to Ed Dunn, our helpful farmer, who shifted eight - 1 tonne bags of gravel onto the scrape islands saving the volunteers endless wheelbarrow trips. This allowed the volunteers, with a huge effort, to spread gravel onto the 4 islands in a single Saturday morning! The aim here is to provide a favourable habitat for wading birds.

Dean Martin, the contractor, has cleared a number of drainage channels. We clear half this year and half next to preserve plants and creatures that live there by leaving a substantial population to spread in the interim.

There are plans in place to raise the surface of the gravel path beside the main pool to reduce the puddles and to level the boardwalk that runs towards the town.



CRASS VANDALISM! On 16 Jan 19 three silly youths set fire to our pond dipping platform destroying it completely. It will cost about £5000 to replace requiring a fund raising effort. Photo: Richard Stott

Member's Photographs



Great Spotted Woodpecker in the middle hedge taken on 28th November 2019. This shot was taken hand-held taking a brief opportunity when the bird was in full view and in sunlight!

Photo: Jeff Steady LRPS

Funding

We are very grateful for the expressions of support from the Pershore community following the destruction of the pond dipping platform. It is most heartening to learn that Avon Meadows is so much enjoyed by townsfolk.

We urgently need to raise £5000 to replace the pond dipping platform and will be seeking funding from a variety of sources but you can help too !

If you would like to make a donation to support the work of the Friends of Avon Meadows please go to our website at <http://www.avonmeadows.org.uk/>, scroll to the bottom of the first page and click the Donate button. All donations will be gratefully received.

Site Management (continued)

The first section of reed cutting, beside the scrape, is complete and the second section is well under way. This work will include clearing reed growth in front of the artificial Sand Martin bank.

Before the pond dipping planform is reinstated it is proposed to clear the encroaching reeds from surrounding the pool which have reduced its area by about half!

Looking ahead into 2019, Wychavon is planning to cut back the brambles outside the Avon Meadows boundary along Meadow Walk that are encroaching into the grassed area.

Another project we expect to start during the year is developing hedge bottom wild flowers. This is a key habitat for a large number of insects.

Surveys and Sightings

BIRDS

New Birds

The total species count for Avon Meadows now stands at 129. It keeps climbing in part because of increasing observer skill levels and effort but importantly because of the habitat we are creating.

The **RED-CRESTED POCHARD** that appeared on 31 December is our 129th species. There is a small population of these attractive ducks at the Cotswold Water Park but it is unusual to see them in the Vale of Evesham.

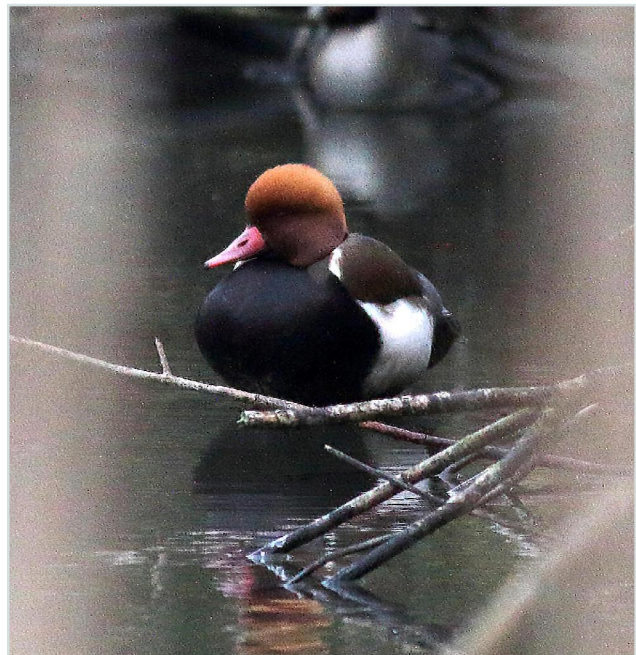
Weekly Bird Count

Looking back at 2018 it was a very successful year for different sorts of birds recorded. The total count for the year was 110 species, the best we have ever done. Additionally we achieved best monthly counts for every month of the year except September when we only managed to equal the best September of 2012 with a count of 55 species!

A number of species recorded on Avon Meadows in 2018 are rare with us and were recorded once only in 2018 (those marked * were new to Avon Meadows).

Common Shelduck	Common Redshank
Egyptian Goose*	Common Sandpiper
Red-crested Pochard*	Dunlin
Goosander	Iceland Gull*
Red-legged Partridge	Common Tern
Osprey	Nuthatch*
Hen Harrier*	

2019 has got off to an excellent start, no new birds but lots of regulars so our count so far is 66 species. Perhaps the best news is that we have at least 2 Cetti's Warblers present and upto 4 Water Rails. In 2018 the "beast from the east" stopped these species breeding so we are hoping for milder weather this year.



A Red-crested Pochard spent half a day on the main pool on 31 December 2019. *Photo: Richard Stott*

Winter Visitors

Numbers are down as many of them like to use the waterlogged meadows to feed. The dry January has resulted in very little lying water in the meadows. So Common Snipe and Meadow Pipits have been hard to find.

More interestingly a number of Blackcaps have arrived, presumably avoiding the very cold weather on the Continent.

A Coal Tit was heard calling on 24 Jan, several European Treecreepers have been recorded around the site and two Lesser Redpoll turned up with four Yellowhammers on 10 Jan. A Great Black-backed Gull was seen flying south along the river on 19 Jan, another unusual sighting this far inland.



Counting in the cold on 27 Dec. *Photo: Jeff Steady LRPS*

BUTTERFLIES & MOTHS

Not much of a time for insects but we did see a Red Admiral flying over the reed beds on 30 Nov 18!

Photography on Avon Meadows

Jeff Steady LRPS

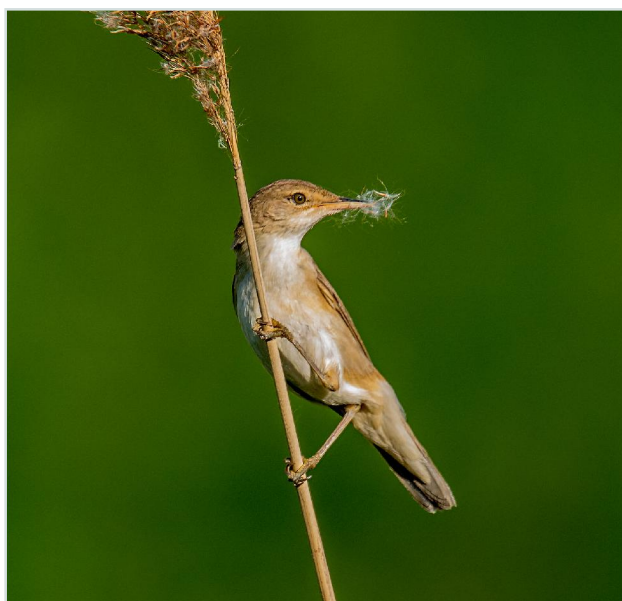
First, let me introduce myself as a relative newcomer to the scene. I retired more than ten years ago and among other things I took up photography at that time. I moved to Pershore with Frances about a year ago. Recently I gained the LRPS distinction for photography and I am now engaged in a Diploma for Nature Photography. You may have seen some of my photos in Avon Meadows newsletters. You may even have seen me on the Meadows with a long lens camera.

I love it. One of a number of reasons for moving to Pershore was the wildlife reserves we have in the area, not least Avon Meadows, and I can often be seen there either taking photos or scouting for photo potential, especially birds and seasonal scenes.

I like talking to other photographers and I especially like to see other people's images from the Meadows. They inform and hopefully enrich my own efforts. I do think the Meadows merit more photography, year round, in all its diverse corners and habitats and its huge range of species. I am always pleased when I see others on the Meadows with their cameras.

This is my chance to encourage you all to root out your camera or buy one and get shooting on the Meadows - and to keep sharing the results. Don't worry if your images are not international standard. Whose are! But by watching and waiting, and learning and observing, we can build up an exciting visual record. And there is always the prospect of a truly phenomenal shot that will rock us all.

[Congratulations to Jeff on becoming a Licentiate of the Royal Photographic Society (LRPS) which is an important photographic achievement for any of us. Ed.]



Here's a shot I took at the small pool earlier this year, of a Reed Warbler collecting nest material. It's not a perfect picture as it isn't perfectly sharp and there are some small over bright spots in the white areas. But it's still one of my favourites because of the intimate glimpse it gives of the life of this delightful creature. Hope you like it!

Photo: Jeff Steady LRPS

Diary Dates

Date	Activity	Date	Activity
Sat 2 Feb 19	Work Party 10h00-13h00	Sat 16 Mar 19	Work Party 10h00-13h00
Sat 9 Feb 19	Work Party 10h00-13h00	Sat 6 Apr 19	Work Party 10h00-13h00
Sat 16 Feb 19	Work Party 10h00-13h00	Sat 4 May 19	Work Party 10h00-13h00
Sat 2 Mar 19	Work Party 10h00-13h00	Sun 5 May 19	Tiddesley Wood Open Day 10h00-17h00
Sat 9 Mar 19	Work Party 10h00-13h00	Tue 7 May 19	Committee Meeting 14h30-16h30
Tue 12 Mar 19	Committee Meeting 14h30-16h30	Wed 12 Jun 19	AGM 18h30-20h00

Work parties are a valuable part of our activities on site and start at **10:00am** from the **HQ** just inside the main gate. Without your help we cannot maintain the area properly.

It is a good idea to let Ken know if you can come (KenPomfret@btinternet.com) a few days before (in case there are last minute changes) but do not worry if you cannot, just turn up at the far end of Cherry Orchard at 10:00am on the day.

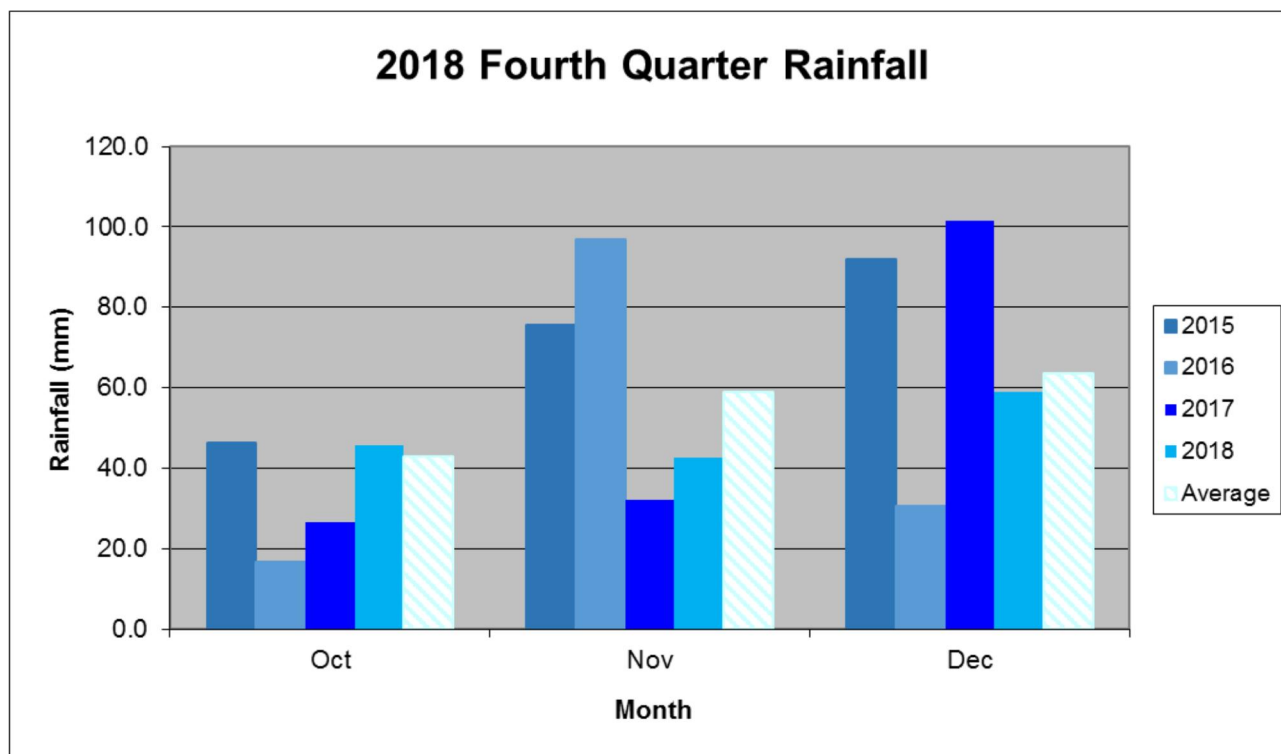
How you can help us

Work Parties - see Diary Dates above. Please come along, they are good fun! Cheaper than a gym subscription!

Interesting sightings - Take a picture. Send it to Liz, Bob or Richard with date, time and approximate location.

Newsletter Circulation - Know anyone who would like one? Let Richard have their name and eMail address.

Water Levels



Rainfall over the last quarter has been either close to or less than average. This together with a comparatively dry January has resulted in the meadows being mostly dry and firm underfoot. There is a small area of waterlogged grassland next to the boardwalk leading to the town but otherwise everything is dry. There has been enough rain to put some water into the scrape which is looking good at present.

Administration

Officers of the CIO Committee

Chairman - Richard Stott richarddestott@gmail.com

Treasurer - Bob Gillmor avon.meadows@btinternet.com

Secretary - Val Wood val@wood20.plus.com

Work Parties - Ken Pomfret KenPomfret@btinternet.com

Website

<http://www.avonmeadows.org.uk/>. The site will be kept current, check here first to see what is happening!

Coots Eye View blog: <http://cootseyeview.blogspot.co.uk/> is another way of finding out what is going on.

The Website holds a number of other interesting and useful links which are worth exploring.

Contacts

If you would like any more information about volunteering contact either an officer of the Committee directly by eMail or by telephone to;

Ms Liz Etheridge, Wychavon District Council.

Tel: 01386 565366

eMail: liz.etheridge@wychavon.gov.uk



Pershore's Community Wetland and Local Nature Reserve
www.avonmeadows.org.uk

Membership Application/Renewal

If you wish to join or renew by online banking, please use the following details:

SORT CODE 77-68-78 (TSB Bank), ACCOUNT NUMBER 01118468 and **QUOTE YOUR SURNAME AS THE PAYMENT REFERENCE**. Then please e-mail membership@avonmeadows.org.uk with the details requested below. If you would like to set up a standing order, please use the same details and again let us know by e-mail. We cannot currently handle direct debits.

If you wish to join or renew by cheque, please print and complete this form and send it together with your cheque, payable to **The Friends of Avon Meadows** to:

Mr. T.C. Hutton, 15 Green Close, Childswickham, Broadway WR12 7JJ

Family subscription £10 per annum ☐ **Individual subscription £5 per annum** ☐

FULL NAME: _____ TITLE (Mr, Mrs, Ms etc.): _____

ADDRESS: _____

TOWN: _____ POSTCODE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

Charity Governance/Fundraising standards and Data Protection (including GDPR)

I am happy to receive information from The Friends of Avon Meadows:

by e-mail ☐ please tick ✓ by post ☐ please tick ✓

We will never pass your details to any third party organisations.

Or:

Please do not contact me ☐ if you tick this box we will delete you from our records.