



Weir Wood News

The Newsletter of the Friends of Weir Wood Society no 113

Summer 2026



Chairman's Notes

Welcome to our summer newsletter. After a very dry April, May and the first half of June were a bit of a mixed bag weather-wise, then came the heat! Everything has appeared to be about two weeks ahead of last year, with the early flowering of the bluebells being particularly noticeable. This is the time of year when we welcome our returning summer migrant birds and enjoy seeing our many butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies on the wing again.

Whillet's meadows will soon be full of flowers and we hope to see you at our wildflower walk on **19th July** (details below – note new date).

Wildlife Surveys

Our annual survey programme is in full swing and as usual we will share the results with you in our autumn newsletter. There are encouraging results from our nest boxes (both large and small) and this year looks like being a particularly good one for breeding Mandarin Ducks. Two Tawny Owl chicks successfully fledged from one of our boxes in May. We have had a run of successful Tawny fledgings in recent years which is good news (unless you are a small rodent!).



Tawny Owlets – Weir Wood May '26
Photo: Martin Jeffree

The generally warm dry weather means that our surveys so far show that things are looking up for our butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies too.

Work Parties

As we are now into the nesting season our activities are naturally curtailed with larger tasks put on hold until later in the year. The Tuesday work parties have mainly been involved with general housekeeping around the reserve.

We had a request from a member at our last AGM to provide a form of “blog” to provide current information on the Work Party’s activities. This is now in place on our website (Work Party News and Updates) and you can find out what we’ve been up to by following this link: [Work Party News & Updates – Friends of Weir Wood Society](#)

South Bank Reed Bed

Long standing members will be aware of Southern Water's attempt (about 8 years ago) to establish a reed bed on the south bank of the reservoir. We advised at the time that planting the reeds in the autumn whilst maintaining high water levels would mean that the young plants would "drown" and die off. Although it gave us no pleasure to watch this come to pass, we were proved right.

The planting cages remained *in situ* however and in the early summer of 2022 we transplanted a number of reed plants from Whilleys reed bed to these cages. This was the year when water levels were reduced to allow repairs to the dam wall and so we were able to plant directly into damp mud. In 2024 we noticed that one or two plants might have taken. Last year it was clear that a significant number of plants had survived and had started to spread. A visit in May this year showed that the reed bed had started to motor and it was particularly pleasing to see both Reed Warblers and Reed Buntings in amongst the reeds here.



Reed Warbler in the new reed bed

Photo: Richard Allan



Reed Bunting in the new reed bed

Photo: Richard Allan

Sand Martin Bank

Sadly but perhaps not surprisingly, Sand Martins decided not to use our artificial bank this spring. It was always a long shot. However it is possible that young birds on migration in the autumn might have a look at the bank and perhaps decide to nest there next spring. Evidence from other similar projects suggests that it might take a while for the bank to be colonised but once established, the birds will return every year and in increasing numbers.

This brought to mind our Kingfisher bank which we built some years ago now but which remained unused until fairly recently. We now have breeding Kingfishers there every year.

Southern Water - Biodiversity Visit

In March this year we were approached by members of Southern Water's (SW) newly formed Biodiversity Team. With encouragement from the water regulator, SW are taking steps to improve biodiversity on their sites. SW are prioritising areas of their land which are designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest such as Weir Wood. Representatives from SW's new team, including an expert botanist, have visited several times as they establish a "baseline" from which they can monitor the impact of their future actions. Members of the Friends' Committee showed them, and provided information about, many key flora and fauna indicator species found within the SSSI area. Their initial visit on April 8th was planned for only a half-day but took all day as there was so much of interest to show them.

It was clear that the team were impressed by the variety and quality of habitats at the reserve and were appreciative of the Friends' efforts over the years. The botanist remarked favourably on our range of plant species and was particularly enthused by our Marsh Valerians. The team were of the view that with further careful management our meadows at Pintail Point and on the north bank could within a few years become full of wildflowers.

They will want to visit the reserve again at some point this year and they are now considering what support, possibly financial and certainly in terms of manpower and specialist knowledge they could offer us.

It is encouraging that SW are showing an interest in the habitat, flora and fauna of our reserve and indeed the Friends, but as we know with SW "the proof of the pudding will be in the eating". We didn't miss the opportunity to go on about the high water levels and the impact this has had either!

Passive Acoustic Monitoring - Song Meter

In our last newsletter we reported that the reserve had been included in the SOS's Lesser Spotted Woodpecker Survey. A passive acoustic monitoring device (A Song Meter) had been deployed in this regard. This piqued our interest as the Song Meter records all bird song and is always "on" and we wondered what birds were about

when we were not on the reserve. Proprietary AI bird song identification software is available for free in order to analyse our recordings.

We have acquired a Song Meter and have deployed it at various places on the reserve. The ID software is not 100% reliable (it initially threw up some anomalies – mostly American birds!) but careful tweaking has led to more consistent results.

So far most of the species identified are ones that we would expect on the reserve but it has identified a few birds of interest such as a Curlew. This is not a bird we would expect to see on the reserve but it may well have been calling as it flew over. We will let you know if other species of interest are identified.

Mink Control

As members will be aware, we currently take steps to control American Mink on the reserve. This is a non-native invasive species which escaped from fur farms. It is a voracious predator and a serious threat to our native wildlife. It has no natural enemies in the UK. American Mink are behind the collapse of the water vole population in England and as we know from our experience on the reserve they predate the nests of our water birds and climb up into our large nest boxes and take eggs, chicks or even the adult birds. The good news is that where mink have been removed from a habitat there has been a marked recovery in water vole numbers.

A mink eradication programme run by the Waterlife Recovery Trust (WRT) has proved a success in East Anglia and this is being extended to Kent and Sussex. We have agreed to participate in this programme, along with other wildlife and nature conservation groups operating in South East England. We have established links with WRT's local representative who is involved in the North Weald element of this eradication project. We are co-ordinating our efforts with him and providing him with valuable data. You can find out more about this project on the Waterlife Recovery Trust's website : www.waterliferecoverytrust.org.uk

Plans for updated information in the hide

Visitors to the reserve will know that we have a number of wildlife charts on the walls in the hide at Legsheath Lane. These are now starting to fade and they are affected from time to time by acts of petty vandalism. The charts are also fairly generic, can be difficult to read in poor light and feature species that will never be seen on the reserve.

We are now planning to make our own bespoke information for the hide and to focus on fewer species and on those most likely to be seen from the hide and the surrounding area. Our aim is to assist "non birders" and perhaps their children or grandchildren identify easily what they are looking at. We have been influenced by the way in which information is displayed in the hides at the Rye Harbour Nature Reserve - large clear pictures of the species together with brief information underneath. Watch this space



Example from Rye Harbour NR
Photo: John Edwards

Spring Walk April 2026

A very successful members' spring walk went ahead as planned on Sunday 26th April. Although the bluebells were just past their best, it was a lovely morning and we were blessed with warm and sunny weather. A walk report was sent to members by e-mail in May.

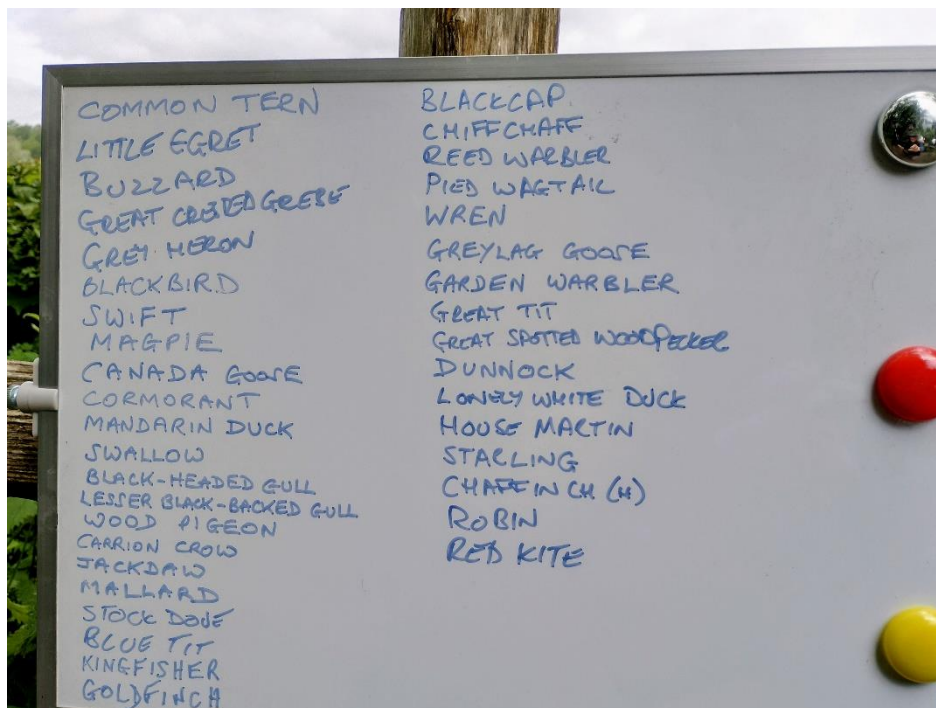
Telescope Morning / Meet the Birds of Weir Wood – 7th June 2026

Many thanks to the handful of members who turned up for our first dedicated telescope morning at the reserve. It was an enjoyable morning for all and although no rarities were on show we saw or heard 38 species. At one point we had three Kingfishers perched up in front of us. We had hoped to showcase nesting Common Terns and Black-headed Gulls on the rafts but sadly it appeared that all but one of the nests had been predated (or perhaps washed away in the heavy rain?) the day before. A Great Black-backed Gull had been seen near the rafts recently so predation is possibly the most likely reason.

Given the low turnout on the day, we will have a rethink about this event. Telescope viewing has always proved popular at our Open Days in the past and it may be that it is not so popular when run as an isolated event. It is possible that if we run this event again we will consider tying it in to another event such as our summer wildflower walk.



At least it didn't rain!
Photo: Ian Hodgson



The morning's sightings' board
Photo: John Edwards

Dates for your Diary:

19th July 2026 – Summer Half Day Event / Wildflower Walk – Note the new date

This half day event will follow the format of last year. Just turn up any time from **09.00** (the event will finish by **13.00**). We will be based in Whilleys meadows for the

morning (park in the Legsheath Lane car park and walk to the Whilleys gate) and the focus will be on the profusion of wildflowers and attendant butterflies. We will be leading guided walks of 45 mins duration (approx.) starting at **09.15**, **10.15** and **11.15** to help you identify the various flowers and butterflies and anything else that might be around on the day. You are of course welcome to come along and just have a wander around the meadows at your own pace.

We hope to have pond dipping in Meadow Pond during the morning too. We will also have a telescope set up in the car park if you fancy a bit of bird watching before you make your way to Whilleys.

31st October 2026 – Members Autumn Walk

This has now been fixed for Saturday 31st October. We will meet in the Legsheath Lane car park for a 13.30 start finishing by 16.00. We will walk out to Pintail Point and then retrace our steps before heading to Whilleys Meadows. The focus of the walk will be fungi and late autumn birdlife. Final details will follow in the autumn newsletter.

2026 Breeding Bird Survey (BBS)

Here is Ian Hodgson's summary report from this year's BBS:

"Each spring a survey is carried out in the Whillet's meadows section of Weir Wood Reservoir Local Nature Reserve, focused on smaller birds where territories tend to be restricted to smaller areas. However, the results include some larger birds where there has been known breeding activity.

Six surveys are completed between the end of March and the beginning of June, which involves recording the location of every bird seen or heard. Additional note is taken of any sightings or relevant bird behaviour during other visits to the survey area, such as work party visits. Special note is also taken where birds are paired up, nests are identified or where birds are seen to be carrying food for their young.

Mapping of the recordings indicated the following number of territories in 2026 plus comparable figures to enable trend analysis over a five-year period:

<u>Species</u>	<u>2026</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Wren	13	11	12	11	9
Blue Tit	11	8	10	8	8
Chiffchaff	10	9	9	11	10
Robin	8	7	6	4	3
Great Tit	7	5	4	5	3
Blackcap	3	3	5	5	4
Blackbird	3	3	5	4	3
Reed Warbler*	3	3	3	4	8
Common Whitethroat	3	3	2	4	7
Song Thrush	2	1	2	2	1
Stock Dove	2	1	1	1	-

Garden Warbler	1	2	1	2	2
Goldfinch	1	2	1	-	-
Long-tailed Tit	1	1	2	1	1
Mandarin Duck	1	1	2	2	-
Dunnock	1	1	2	1	-
Reed Bunting	1	1	1	2	2
Bullfinch	1	1	-	1	-
Marsh Tit	1	1	-	-	-
Mallard	1	-	-	1	-
Nuthatch	1	-	-	-	2
Chaffinch	1	-	-	-	-
Tawny Owl	-	1	-	1	-
Moorhen	-	1	-	-	-
Goldcrest	-	-	1	1	1
Treecreeper	-	-	-	1	-
Willow Warbler	-	-	-	-	1
Kingfisher	-	-	-	-	1

* Recording the number of Reed Warbler territories is particularly difficult as their habitat is largely hidden, restricted to the reed beds and surrounding vegetation at Whillet's Pool. Based on the limited sightings and singing heard, it is estimated that there were approximately 3 breeding pairs in the reed bed again this year.

Analysis of the results suggests that in general the number of territories is reasonably consistent with previous years. Due to a wet and generally mild winter followed by a dry mild spring (apart from a few overnight frosts), vegetation growth commenced early, which in turn encouraged good insect numbers and therefore an early abundance of food for our breeding birds.

The "Top Five" (Wren, Blue Tit, Chiffchaff, Robin, and Great Tit) all increased their territory numbers compared to the remaining birds in Whillet's, with Wren, Blue Tit, and Great Tit succeeding particularly strongly compared to 2025. Robin and Great Tit have impressively more than doubled their territory numbers in the last 5 years. It was particularly pleasing to see the return of the Chaffinch after many years absence. In 2022 we had no recordings of finches, so it is good to see Goldfinch, Bullfinch, and Chaffinch on our list. Another positive in 2026 has been the Nuthatch, which fledged 5 young from one of our small nest boxes.

The following birds listed are those species that were registered only once or twice during the survey period, and/or were often at widely separate locations, making it difficult to justify the existence of a territory:

Treecreeper, Goldcrest, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Jay, Magpie, Snipe, Pheasant, Kingfisher, and Mistle Thrush.

The Flowers of Weir Wood – Devil's-bit Scabious

From July onwards, amongst the sea of purple created by the flowering Betony in the second meadow at Whilleys, there is the occasional "pop" of a lighter shade of

purple. Closer examination will show this to be the delicate flower of the Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa or Scabiosa Pratensis*). We are probably all familiar with the Field Scabious which likes dry chalky soils and which in its cultivated form can now be found in garden centres (and even in LIDL!). Devil's-bit Scabious although not uncommon is perhaps less well-known. Unlike its cousin it prefers wetter ground and can tolerate mildly acidic soils. It is a member of the honeysuckle family. Its flowers attract a variety of bees and other insects and if you watched the recent series of Springwatch, you will know that it is the food plant for the scarce Marsh Fritillary butterfly.

In times gone by, plants from the scabious family were used to treat scabies and other skin conditions. The name for these plants (and indeed the disease) has its origins in the Latin word "scabere" meaning to scratch. The Devil's-bit Scabious has a noticeably truncated root system as if bitten off. Legend has it that the Devil was so displeased with medicinal success of this plant that he bit off its roots in order to kill it. Other sources suggest that the name came from the fact that scabies was sometimes known as the Devil's bite.

This lovely plant may be in flower in time for our summer walk on 19th July.





Devil's-bit Scabious
Both photos: Richard Allan

Bird Sightings Report

April

After the wet winter and early spring, April was warm, sunny and exceptionally dry. This is the month when our summer visitors return in earnest and this year was no exception with many “first of the year” sightings recorded. We also scale back our bird feeding towards the end of the month with the feeders being taken down at the month end. There is plenty of food available in the wild in the summer and the feeders will be reinstated in the late autumn. Coincidentally, this ties in with the latest RSPB guidance on feeders and disease control.

Sightings at the dam end in the first part of the month were affected to an extent by extensive works and vegetation clearance on and around the dam wall. Thankfully works finished mid-month and as will be seen there were some excellent sightings at the dam end towards the end of the month.

April is typically “Osprey time” but it has to be said that there were fewer sightings reported than in recent years. There were only three **Osprey** sightings this month, all at the dam end, the first on the 4th then on the 14th and finally on the 28th. The first returning **Hobby** was spotted at the dam end on the 21st and then seen again on the 28th and 30th. All the usual raptors (**Buzzard**, **Red Kite**, **Sparrowhawk** and **Kestrel**) were seen throughout the month. As mentioned in previous newsletters, **Goshawks** are now a regular feature at the reserve and there were regular sightings during the month.

Hirundines started to feature more regularly. We reported isolated sightings of **Barn Swallow** and **Sand Martin** at the end of March, but numbers picked up noticeably during April. They were joined by **House Martins** on the 10th and thereafter. Sand Martins were seen in good numbers at the dam end with 38 recorded on the 10th and 40 on the 14th. There has been no recorded interest yet in our new sand martin bank; it is still very early days. The first **Swift** of the year was seen at the dam end on the 19th. The work party spotted one mid reservoir on the 21st and four were spotted at the dam end on the 29th.

Summer waders were in evidence too, all at the dam end on the concrete “beach” in front of the dam wall. **Common Sandpipers** were most numerous and seen most days in numbers between three and six. The exception was the 30th when 19 were spotted. **Little Ringed Plovers** kept the sandpipers company for the month, usually in twos and threes. The first sighting was on the 4th and two were seen mating on the 23rd. Other waders that popped by here included six **Greenshanks** on the 29th, two **Bar-tailed Godwits** in the early hours of the 23rd, a **Whimbrel** on the 27th and a **Wood Sandpiper** on the 29th.

Summer warblers arrived to join the already present **Chiffchaffs** and **Blackcaps**. A **Garden Warbler** was recorded at the dam end on the 19th and this species was subsequently heard all round the reserve. The first **Reed Warbler** of the year was heard in the reed bed on the 11th, it was soon joined by more. Reed Warblers were heard at the reservoir’s edge in Legsheath Lane and in front of the hide. Two **Common Whitethroats** were seen in Whilleys meadows on the 11th too and seen regularly there thereafter. The first **Willow Warbler** was heard and seen on the 15th. It was singing from a tree along Legsheath Lane not far from the hide. This particular bird has incorporated Chiffchaff song into its repertoire so you are not quite sure what you are hearing at first. There is an article in the latest edition of British Wildlife which suggests that this is not unusual where Chiffchaffs outnumber Willow Warblers which is increasingly becoming the case given the decline of Willow Warblers in southern England.

On the water, **Greylag**, **Canada** and **Egyptian Geese** were ever present in varying numbers, ditto with **Great Crested Grebes**. **Mandarin** and **Mallard** were typically the only ducks about, with Mandarins noticeably increasing in number as they start to nest in the woodland adjoining the reservoir. They were joined from time to time by ones and twos of **Teal** and **Gadwall**. Other related sightings included a **Shoveler** on the 7th, four **Tufted Ducks** on the 17th and a **Pochard** on the 25th. Two **Shelducks** were seen at the dam end on the 21st and again on the 26th. Three **Common Scoter** were seen at the Dam End on the 30th.

The first **Common Tern** of the year was seen at the west end on the 17th. Two were then seen on the following day, again on the 21st, and six were seen flying around the rafts on the 25th. Unusually an **Arctic Tern** was recorded at the dam end on the 28th.

Black-headed Gulls took up residence on the rafts during the month. Ominously there were regular sightings of **Herring Gull**, **Great and Lesser Black-backed Gulls** from about the same time. Two **Mediterranean Gulls** were heard by the work party at Pintail Point on the 7th. Four were spotted subsequently at the dam end on the 15th.

The **Grey Herons** and **Cormorants** continued to be busy in their nests and a more detailed report about the heronry this year will follow in a later edition of the newsletter. The heron and cormorants were joined occasionally by a **Little Egret** and very occasionally by a **Great White Egret**.

Kingfishers were seen throughout the month mostly flying back and forth to the artificial nest bank on the north bank opposite the hide. We have high hopes of breeding success again this year. There were a few final sightings of **Common Snipe** off Pintail Point on the 6th and 17th.

Other sightings of interest included a **Skylark** and a **Yellow Wagtail** at the dam end both on the 4th, a **White Stork** flyover on the 25th and a **Cuckoo** flyover at the dam end on the 29th.

May

The weather started off a little more unsettled and cooler than in April but still not enough rain to make a noticeable difference. The reservoir remained full nevertheless! The dry cooler weather persisted until later in the month when temperatures rocketed and we were treated to a mini heatwave which persisted until the end of the month.

Our usual raptors were on show across the reserve during the month. The mass hatching of Mayflies at the dam end at the beginning of the month attracted the attention of the **Hobbies**. Numbers increased gradually, starting with two on the 2nd, five on the 5th six on the 13th and 14th and finally 8 on the 22nd. There were just two **Osprey** sightings in the month, both at the dam end on the 2nd and 21st respectively. **Goshawks** were seen throughout the month and must now be added to our “usual raptors” list. **Peregrine Falcons** were spotted regularly during the month and in June too.

Common Sandpipers and **Little Ringed Plovers** were much in evidence on and around the dam wall during the month. All the waders disappeared towards the end of the month. Six Common Sandpipers and 2 Little Ringed Plovers were seen on the 1st and numbers of both fluctuated slightly thereafter. It is suspected that a pair of the latter attempted to breed during the month. An **Oystercatcher** was reported at the dam end on the 2nd. A **Dunlin** in summer plumage was seen at the dam end on the 4th and 12th and a **Sanderling** was seen at the same location in the early hours of the 22nd.

The summer warblers continued to be present across the reserve and they were joined by a **Lesser Whitethroat** at the west end on the 12th, the first record of this bird for the year.

Hirundines were seen in increasing numbers at both ends of the reservoir in the month but mainly at the dam end. The majority were **Swallows** with smaller numbers of **House Martins** and **Swifts**. For example on the 11th, 70 Swallows, 25 House Martins and four Swifts were seen. On the 14th circa 200 hirundines (mostly Swallows) were seen and at the end of the month on the 27th, 50 swallows, 30 House Martins and 20 Swifts were recorded.

The **Grey Herons** and **Cormorants** continued to be busy. **Little Egrets** in ones and twos were seen regularly at both the west and dam ends. The Little Egrets were often to be seen in around the heronry, perhaps they will have another attempt at

breeding this year? A **Great White Egret** was seen at the west end on the 12th and at the dam end on the 22nd.

On the water the three regular species of geese were very evident as were **Great Crested Grebes**. It was generally very quiet on the duck front although as stated earlier in this newsletter, **Mandarin Ducks** appear to have done well and 11 were seen in total at the west end on the 4th. A **Tufted Duck** was seen at the dam end on the 14th. **Kingfishers** were ever present at the west end.

On the rafts a pair of **Black-headed Gulls** appear to be nesting on one raft whilst two pairs of **Common Terns** appear to be nesting on two of the other rafts. Four to six Common Terns were seen regularly at the west end, although seven were seen on the 7th. 15+ Common Terns were spotted at the dam end on the 19th and there was some speculation whether a few of them might be Arctic Terns.

A pair of **Reed Warblers** established themselves in front of the hide and their scratchy song could be heard most days. 8 of these birds were counted in Whilleys reed bed on the 30th.

Stock Doves are becoming an ever more regular sight at the west end. Their numbers have increased noticeably in recent years which is good news as this is an attractive bird. 24 Stock Doves were counted at the west end on the 8th.

Other notable sightings included a **Wheatear** at the dam end on the 2nd, three **Greenfinches** at the west end on the 21st and a **Tawny Owl** at the west end on the 26th.

June

After the heatwave at the end of May, June started out cold and wet and very windy, with one month's rainfall falling in the first week and a half of the month. Thankfully the weather improved from the middle of the month and we had more typical summer weather thereafter, albeit interrupted by a week-long mini heatwave.

The month started on a high when Tuesday's work party were delighted to see an **Avocet** flying around at the west end on the morning of the 9th. It was clearly looking for a place to land and had the water levels in reservoir not been so high it may well have done so. Having not found anywhere to land, it flew off in the direction of Whilleys meadows. Avocets seem to be coming more regular visitors to the reserve; usually at the dam end, either on the dam or on the small "beach" in front of the dam wall. One was also seen briefly on the water at the west end in February last year. We just need some more mud



Avocet – June '26
Photo: Richard Allan

Generally though, it was a quiet month on the bird front which is unsurprising as it is peak nesting time. Most of the birds seen in the previous month, warblers, buntings and other passerines etc were still much in evidence on the reserve in June.

Both **Common Terns** and **Black-headed Gulls** were seen on the rafts at the west end throughout the month and despite the apparent bad news reported at our “telescope morning” on the 7th, it appears that both species have had some breeding success. Six Common Terns were seen on the 4th, eight on the 14th (four pairs) and nine on the 23rd. Four nests have been identified on the rafts. Sadly predation by larger gulls is an ever present threat, although there are now a sufficient number of terns to see them off – fingers crossed.

Great Crested Grebes continued to be seen in good numbers with 30 recorded on the 1st and two birds seen on nests. A further two nests were identified at the west end on the 28th. On the 20th a Grebe was seen with a chick on its back.

17 **Grey Herons** were seen at the west end on the 2nd along with one **Little Egret**. On the same day, but at the dam end this time, two **Great White Egrets** were reported. Little Egrets in ones and twos were seen sporadically around the heronry during the month. There does not appear to be any nesting activity however.

Our regular cast of raptors was joined by a **Hobby**, seen at the dam end on the 4th and 9th. **Honey-buzzards** were spotted too with one seen flying over the dam in the direction of Ashdown Forest on the 4th and another seen at the west end on the 6th. A **Goshawk** (now a regular cast member) was seen at the west end on the 4th and 26th. A **Tawny Owl** was seen during daylight hours on the 7th.

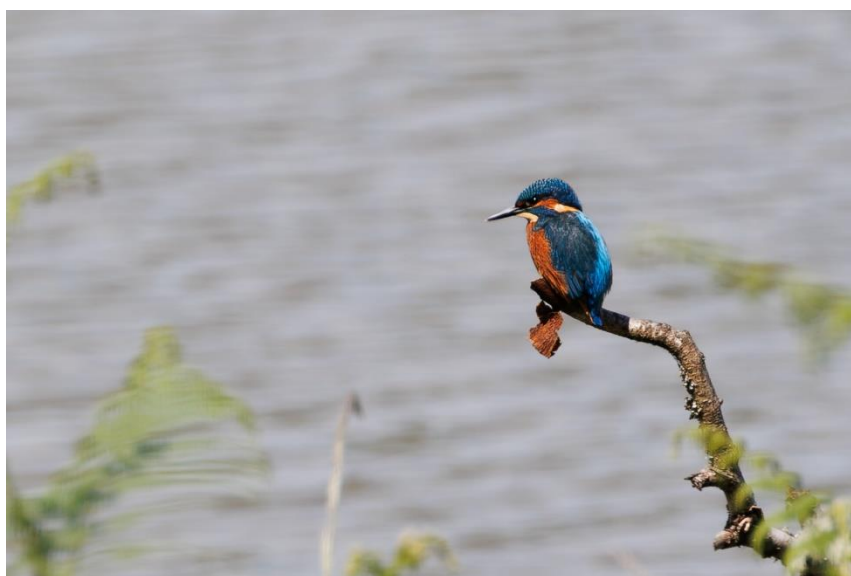
Last month proved to be good for hirundine sightings and for swallows in particular. This continued to be the case but June appeared to be the month for **Swifts** in particular. Swifts were seen regularly at both ends of the reservoir and in large numbers at the dam end. For example 150+ were seen on the 7th and 200+ were

seen on the 9th. Returning **Sand Martins** were seen at the west end on the 9th and the dam end on the 14th. Let's hope that one of the "returnees" pops its head into our sand martin box as it passes through.

There were plenty of geese on the water during the month (mostly Greylags) and they were joined by two **Mute Swans** on the 30th.

In spite of the lack of mud, there were a handful of nice wader sightings (in addition to the Avocet) during the month. A **Little Ringed Plover** was seen at the dam end on the 5th and 6th. A **Grey Plover** in summer plumage was reported at the dam end on the 9th; this is a rare sighting for the reserve. The 29th was clearly "wader day" with a returning **Common Sandpiper** and a **Green Sandpiper** seen at the west end together with a **Lapwing**.

We were pleased to note that our **Kingfishers** appeared to have bred successfully this year and were much in evidence around the reservoir during the month. This male below obligingly posed for us in front of the hide, perched on one of the sticks we placed at the water's edge earlier in the year.



Kingfisher – June '26
Photo: Richard Allan

The Report above just provides some of the highlights and a detailed list of sightings can be found on our website at: www.weirwood.me.uk/sightings/. Remember to check our Facebook page too for regular sightings and photos.

And finally

In late May we were very pleased to find a Broad-leaved Helleborine growing on the north bank of the reservoir. Although this member of the orchid family is widespread, sightings at Weir Wood have become increasingly rare in recent years, with the last one recorded over 10 years ago. Sadly when we went to look at it two weeks later, it had been the victim of deer browsing and all that was left was a bit of stalk and a leaf ☹. Hopefully there will be enough genetic material left for it to emerge again next year and we can take suitable steps to protect it.



**Broad-leaved Helleborine at Weir Wood before “munching”
Photo: John Edwards**

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