



OCTOBER 2018
NEWSLETTER



IN THIS ISSUE

PG. 2

Meet the team and an update on the England Coast Path

PG. 3

North Kent WeBS team meeting

PG. 4

A Beluga whale in the Thames and everything else.....



ENGLAND COAST PATH

Sections of the England Coast Path are already open around the country, including some in Kent. There are 4 sections due to come through the Bird Wise area in north Kent and we are keen to ensure that disturbance is mitigated using media and messages consistent with the Bird Wise project.

On 25 October, we visited a number of sensitive sites along the proposed route to look at signage options with Natural England. Fortunately the sun was shining so we saw plenty of birds enjoying the calm conditions, including this Ringed Plover (pictured right).

We will be working with Natural England on designing signage and interpretation to inform users of the coast path about the importance of this landscape and how they can enjoy the coast without disturbing the birds.

You can find the latest information on the sections of coast path in north Kent [here](#)

MEET THE TEAM

Welcome to the first Bird Wise newsletter! Each month we will be updating you on the project and letting you know what we've been up to.

Back in the summer we advertised for two Seasonal Rangers to work over the winter season. The response was fantastic, giving us an excellent selection of candidates to choose from. The successful pair were Julie Ackroyd and Mel Green (pictured left with project manager Hayley).

They are both keen wildlife enthusiasts and are looking forward to getting out on sites across north Kent through the winter, helping people to be Bird Wise when visiting the coast.

As well as providing on-site wardening, they will be going into schools and meeting with local groups to share the Bird Wise messages with as wide an audience as possible.

You can read more about the team on our news section of the website [here](#)





WEBS COUNTER MEETING

We were invited along to the annual meeting of the north Kent Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counters on 28 October. These dedicated volunteers go out in all weathers to provide monthly counts of our estuarine birds through autumn and winter.

The meeting included representatives from across the Thames, Medway and Swale. We were grateful to be given the opportunity to introduce them to Bird Wise and emphasise how crucial their counts are in providing us with supporting data. We also encourage them to report any disturbance they witness when undertaking their counts.

Local birder, Kevin Thornton, gave a presentation on the importance of ensuring that data provided through the WeBS counts is complete and detailed enough to allow bodies such as Natural England to adopt it. The data provides us with trends which can be used to inform local and national policy.

It was great to meet so many people that care passionately about the birds of north Kent and we look forward to working closely with them.

“WeBS data provides us with trends which can be used to inform local and national policy”



AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR

Of all the sights we see when out on site, a Beluga Whale is not one we expect in north Kent. First spotted in the Thames Estuary near Gravesend on 25 September, the whale has been nicknamed 'Benny' and would normally be found in the icy waters around Greenland, Svalbard or the Barents Sea. We carried out a site visit on 1 October but sadly didn't manage to catch a glimpse of 'Benny' but did use the opportunity to speak to the crowds of spectators about Bird Wise. The latest sightings indicate that 'Benny' is feeding well and seems to be in good condition so could be with us for the winter!

OUT AND ABOUT

Although Bird Wise focuses on the birds that arrive in Kent to spend the winter with us, that doesn't mean that we shut up shop for the summer season. This year we were busy raising awareness of Bird Wise at a number of events and gave presentations to various groups and forums across north Kent including:

- The Medway and Swale Boating Association
- The Kent Nature Partnership
- North Kent Internal Drainage Board
- Swale Green Grid Forum
- Guardians of the Deep
- Sheppey Beach Users Forum
- Dog focused events in Medway

After visiting all of our sites between Gravesend and Whitstable, a site information pack was produced for our rangers to give them all the information they need to get the most from their visits and to ensure they stay safe.

We are currently working on educational material to be delivered in primary schools and to local community groups.

We hope you have enjoyed this first edition of our newsletter and look forward to bringing you lots more news next month. Until then, you can keep up to date with Bird Wise through our social media pages on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter @birdwisenk or via our website.

Until next month.... stay #BirdWise

