



NOVEMBER 2019  
**NEWSLETTER**



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## WEBS MEETING 2019

On Sunday 20 October, we were invited along to Elmley Reserve on the Isle of Sheppey for the annual meeting of the north Kent Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counters.

The counts are undertaken by volunteers who brave some wild weather to provide monthly surveys of the estuarine birds throughout the year, but especially in winter.

Updates were given on how the bird populations are faring on the Thames Estuary, Medway Estuary and The Swale. It was a mixed picture with some species showing in good numbers and others not so good. One really positive story was from Elmley Reserve who gave an update on their breeding Lapwings, a record year for fledged chicks in 2019!

Establishing good working relationships with the WeBS counters is key for us as they can report disturbance they witness when completing their counts.

You can discover more about WeBS online [here](#)

## BACK IN BUSINESS

Just like the Brent geese pictured on the front cover and below, our team is back to full strength for the winter season in north Kent. Pictured left L-R Julie, Hayley and Mel with ranger dog Jasper.

We are delighted to have Julie and Mel back with us as they are a familiar sight to many of people who visit the north Kent coast. Having rangers that know the coastline well has meant we are able to get straight out on site, raising awareness about bird disturbance with coastal users.

Over the summer, Mel stayed with us on a part time basis whilst Julie was busy working as a wildlife guide, sailing around the Hebrides in Scotland. Hayley is mostly office based but has covered many of the events we attended over the summer, sometimes with Jasper for company.

Our rangers will be out on sites between Gravesend and Whitstable from now until the end of March 2020 including weekends. Please stop for a chat if you see us, we are always keen to hear what you've spotted out on site.

You can read more updates from the team in our news section of the website [here](#)







## OUT AND ABOUT WITH THE RANGERS

This season we are leading a series of guided walks to give you the opportunity to learn more about the birds that spend winter on our coastline. The first of these walks was held at Oare Marshes on 30 October, and although a freezing cold wind was blowing we were treated to views of many different ducks, geese, waders, raptors and a rather fetching Stonechat, pictured below left, that seemed happy to pose for photos.

Don't worry if you missed this walk, there will be more in November and December and details of how to book are on our website [here](#)

|                        |          |
|------------------------|----------|
| Riverside Country Park | 25/11/19 |
| Hoo St Werburgh        | 26/11/19 |
| Seasalter              | 29/11/19 |
| Cliffe Pools RSPB      | 09/12/19 |
| Allhallows             | 10/12/19 |
| Leysdown               | 13/12/19 |

Numbers are limited so pre-booking is essential, well behaved dogs on leads are welcome too.



## LIBRARY TALKS AND TOUR

If you prefer to learn about birds in the warm, why not come along to Strood Library on 5 December to hear our rangers talk about migration and what ranger life is like. You can find more information on how to book your place [here](#)

If you can't make it to the talk we also have an exhibition travelling around some of the Medway Libraries between now and April 2020.

- 21/10 – 26/11 Hoo
- 2/12 – 19/12 Strood
- 23/12 – 9/1 Rainham
- 13/1 – 30/1 Twydall
- 3/2 – 20/2 Gillingham
- 24/2 – 12/3 Rochester
- 16/3 – 3/4 Chatham

## FUN AND GAMES

We've designed a game to highlight the hazards that migrating birds face throughout their lives. It focuses on a Brent Goose from hatching in Siberia, wintering in the UK and travelling back to Siberia to breed (or not!).

We were invited by the 5<sup>th</sup> Gillingham Beaver group to give a talk about birds and had an opportunity to test the game out for the first time. It was a lot of fun, and the children enjoyed following their chick on the migration journey.

We are developing further educational materials to use in schools and other groups. Please get in contact if you would like us to visit your school or group to talk about bird migration.



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