



Newsletter

May 2019

Welcome to the first newsletter from the Wexford Wildfowl Reserve.

We hope to produce this quarterly, not only to inform you of what is happening down here at the Centre, but also around the region. Whether that be bird, mammal or nature related, if we think it will be of interest then we'll include it!



Work in progress!

Work is currently taking place on the pond at the Visitor Centre and the surrounding area. The redevelopment is in order to improve visitor access and experience.

We hope that you'll bear with us whilst this transition is taking place and appreciate that change takes time. Please keep an eye on our Facebook page for updates as they happen.

Good weather (hopefully)

With the weather slowly getting better, we know that people wish to be outside enjoying their environs. We wholeheartedly endorse this and would encourage everyone to get outside and enjoy our amazing countryside.

We must all take responsibility for our environment and ensure

that our enjoyment does not negatively impact others. The recent fires in Killarney and Donegal as well as last years at Curracloe show that we all have to be vigilant if we are to prevent such loss of habitat and wildlife occurring again.

As part of Leave No Trace Ireland we fully endorse their 7

core principles.

1. Plan ahead and prepare
2. Be considerate of others
3. Respect farm animals and wildlife
4. Travel and camp on durable ground
5. Leave what you find
6. Dispose of waste properly
7. Minimise the effects of fire



The first Sandwich Terns arrived back at Our Lady's Island on 22nd March. Whilst on the 13th April, two Sandwich Terns ringed at Lady's Island; one in 2016 and one in 2018, were spotted in Dakar, Senegal.

Peregrine Falcons

Unfortunately, not all stories can be good ones and not all ringed birds have a happy ending. Two Peregrine falcons, a male and a female, were found dead in Oaklands Quarry, New Ross.

The birds were taken for analysis to the Department of Agriculture veterinary laboratory in Kilkenny to determine the cause of their deaths.

Peregrine falcons are a protected species and therefore the deliberate killing of them is a criminal offence. Anyone with information is asked to contact their local garda station or the National Parks and Wildlife Service on 076 1002662.

You can contact the Centre on

t: 076 1002660

e: wwreducation@ahg.gov.ie

w: www.wexfordwildfowlreserve.ie

f: [facebook.com/npwswexfordwildfowlreserve](https://www.facebook.com/npwswexfordwildfowlreserve)

White-tailed Sea Eagle

This visitor was seen around the Centre over the weekend of 23rd and 24th March and then again on the Monday where its presence hastened the departure of a number of the Greenland White-fronted Geese. Whilst he was observed by various members of staff, we were unable to ascertain whether he was tagged.



Greenland White-fronted Geese

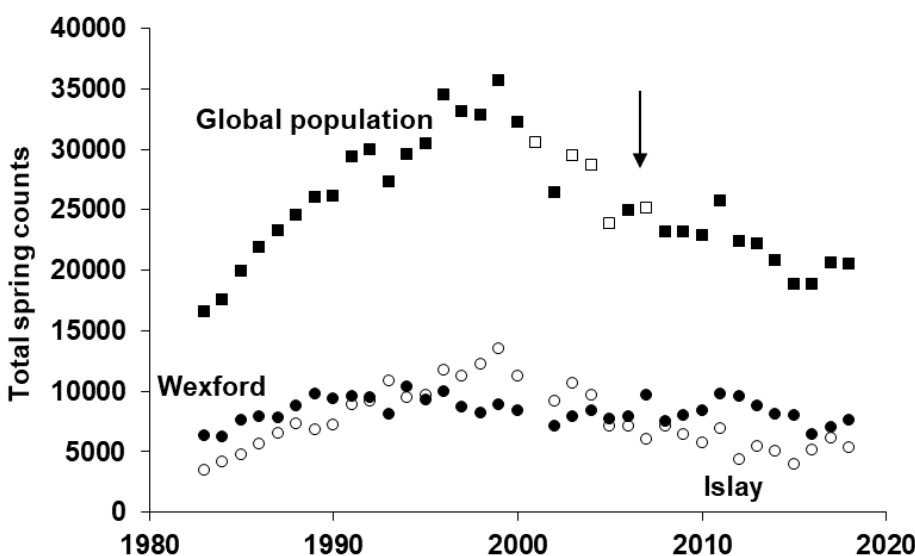
Our winter visitors have now left for their summer home in Greenland. They started to leave towards the end of March. Constant monitoring of the Geese provides us with vital information for their future protection.

In Spring 2018, the global population of White-fronts comprised 20,529 which was down very slightly on the 20,556 the previous year, in essence a difference of 27 birds. Numbers visiting

Wexford this year were around 7,200, down slightly from 7637 the previous year. The percentage of young in Wexford was 6.9% which is well below the figure desired of 14%. Brood size amongst the geese in Wexford was 2.88, roughly on a par with the previous count. Whilst here, 24 birds were caught, weighed, measured and ringed as ongoing research in to their movements, breeding and longevity.

Spring population census totals for Greenland White-fronted Geese 2013-2018

	Spring 2013	Spring 2014	Spring 2015	Spring 2016	Spring 2017	Spring 2018
<i>Wexford</i>	8751	8110	7984	6421	7047	7637
<i>Rest of Ireland</i>	2465	2512	2282	2172	1912	1950
<i>Islay</i>	5449	5093	3995	5183	6141	5319
<i>Rest of Britain</i>	5491	5082	4593	5103	5456	5623
Population total	22156	20797	18854	18879	20556	20529



Spring counts of Greenland White-fronted Geese from Wexford Slobs and Islay and the global population count, 1983-2018. Values for the total population size are missing in some years when complete coverage could not be achieved (open squares, for which estimated counts based on previous counts have been substituted). Values for spring 2001 were missing on account of the outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease that year and were therefore also estimated from previous counts. The arrow marks the point at which autumn hunting in Iceland was stopped in 2006.

50 years of the Wexford Wildfowl Reserve

The 17th April 2019 marked the 50th anniversary of the establishment of a Wildbird refuge, comprising two parts known as the Western refuge and the Eastern refuge, here on the North Slob. The agreement was between Bill Fiske who owned the land and the Irish Wildbird Conservancy (later to become BirdWatch Ireland). The Western refuge, covering 244 acres is now known as the Wexford Wildfowl Reserve.

A small gathering of local staff,

members of the Fiske family and Birdwatch Ireland met to mark the occasion with coffee and cake.

Discussions were held to plan a celebration later on in the year to commemorate the 50 years with the wider public. The planning is still ongoing but it seems likely that a weekend during Goose week at the end of October will be the preferred time. This is mainly due to the presence of the Greenland White-fronted Geese for whom the reserve is

such an important winter home and also to coincide with Goose week which is held during the Opera festival every year.

We hope to keep you informed of preparations as they happen, through the website, our facebook page and our next newsletter.

If you have any questions or suggestions then please contact us via email or through our facebook page.



Dominic Berridge, Conservation Ranger NPWS, Tom Fiske, son of Bill Fiske, owner of the land before NPWS, Niall Hatch, Birdwatch Ireland, at the beginning of celebrations to commemorate 50 years of the Wexford Wildfowl Reserve.

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www.wexfordwildfowlreserve.ie [facebook.com/npws-wexford-wildfowl-reserve](https://www.facebook.com/npws-wexford-wildfowl-reserve)



Anaclann Éan Fian Loch Garman
Wexford Wildfowl Reserve