

Newsletter

November/January 2019/20



Anaclann Éan Fian Loch Garman
Wexford Wildfowl Reserve

Welcome to the third newsletter from the Wexford Wildfowl Reserve.

In here you'll find information on what has been happening around the Centre and the environs as well as events which will be coming up in the future. As always, if you have any questions, suggestions or comments then please feel free to contact us by phone, email or through facebook.



Hare Disease

If you've visited the Centre recently you will have hopefully noticed all the signs and footbaths positioned around the Reserve.

This is due to an outbreak of RHD2 or Rabbit haemorrhagic disease. This second strain of an existing disease was first detected in France in 2010 but was not found in Ireland until last year when it was confirmed in domestic rabbits. This year it has been detected in wild rabbits and a couple of months' ago it was found in a wild hare here at the Wildfowl Reserve.

The disease is highly contagious and can be spread between animals as well as by insects and on clothing.

The disease is of no threat to human health but obviously a widespread loss of wild rabbits would have a serious knock on effect on other creatures in the food chain. The loss of our native Irish Hare would be catastrophic in terms of their iconic status and importance to so many people.

We would ask that you be vigilant and report any sightings of diseased or dead rabbits and hares. This can be done by phoning 1890 383 000 or by contacting us here at the Reserve on 076 100 2660.



50th Anniversary Open Day



Our Open Day to celebrate 50 years' of the Wexford Wildfowl Reserve was held on Sunday 27th October 2019.

We were certainly blessed with the weather; a murky start giving way to bright sunshine and clear skies later in the day. Attendance was steady throughout the day with some people not realising we were having an Open Day and just thought we gave out tea and biscuits every Sunday (we don't, just in case you were wondering!).

With talks on the history of the Reserve, the Greenland White-fronted Geese and a film on the North Slobs from the 1970s, as well as guided tours by different members of staff, we



hope that people were informed and entertained.

Having one of the Rangers stationed up in the Observation Tower certainly proved popular as he was able to point out all the different birds to people, including a Kingfisher which is always a welcome sight.

We would like to thank everybody who came to help commemorate this very special day and especially staff from Wicklow Mountains National Park who came to lend a hand.

We can't promise tea and biscuits every weekend but hopefully that won't stop you from visiting us again soon!



End of year report

This year has seen various events happening, both good and bad, here are a few!

January

Reports of a White-tailed Eagle seen in the County.

February

The first Woodpecker of the year is heard at the Reserve.

March

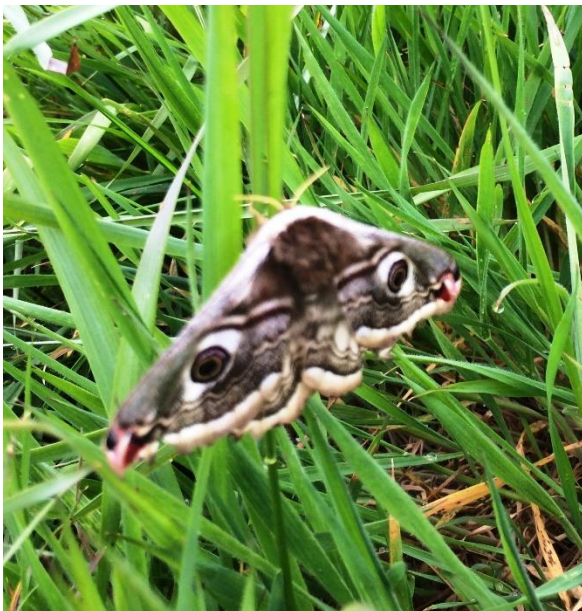
The White-tailed Eagle is seen at the Reserve and manages to scare all the Greenland White-fronts with quite a few deciding to leave and head back to Greenland.

April

A Barn Owl is seen on the sea wall.

May

An Emperor Moth is spotted in the Snipe Field.



You can contact the Centre on

t: 076 1002660

e: wwwreducation@ahg.gov.ie

w: www.wexfordwildfowlreserve.ie

f: facebook.com/npws-wexford-wildfowl-reserve

June

Work on the pond is continuing.



July

A Pygmy shrew is caught trying to break in to the office! Well the door was open and it started to walk in before being chased out again for its own safety.

August

Heritage Week was a great success with a high turnout for each of our events.

September

The last of this year's swallows fledged.

Also, on foot of the attempted break in by the Pygmy shrew in July, a Stoat also tried his luck at getting in to the office. He was advised against it and retreated hastily.

October

The first of the Greenland White-fronts arrived.

Our 50th Open Day was held over the Bank Holiday weekend.

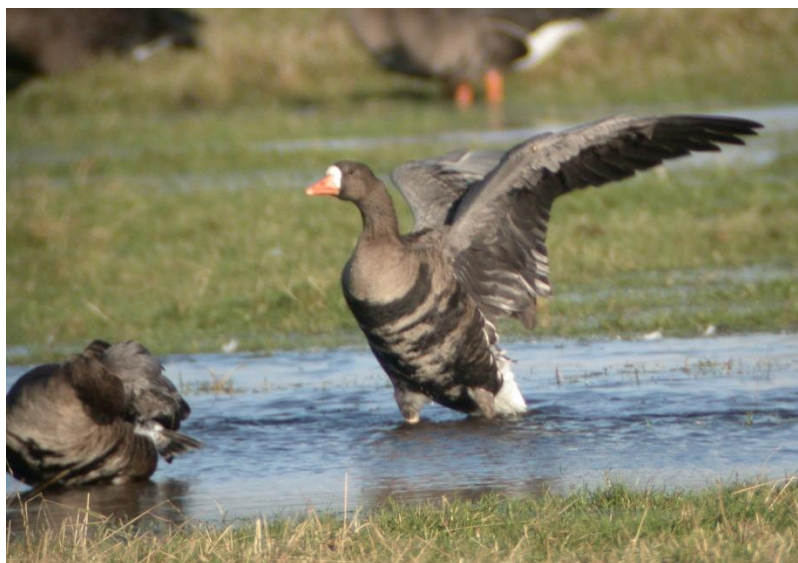
November

We will be taking on 4 Transition Year students for their work experience placements towards the end of this month.

Latest news from the Greenland White-fronted Geese

The latest report on the global status of the Greenland White-fronted Geese was published at the end of October and is the 37th annual census done in Great Britain, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

It showed a 5.8% increase on the previous year's spring count. Numbers were slightly down here at the Reserve and breeding success was very low again.

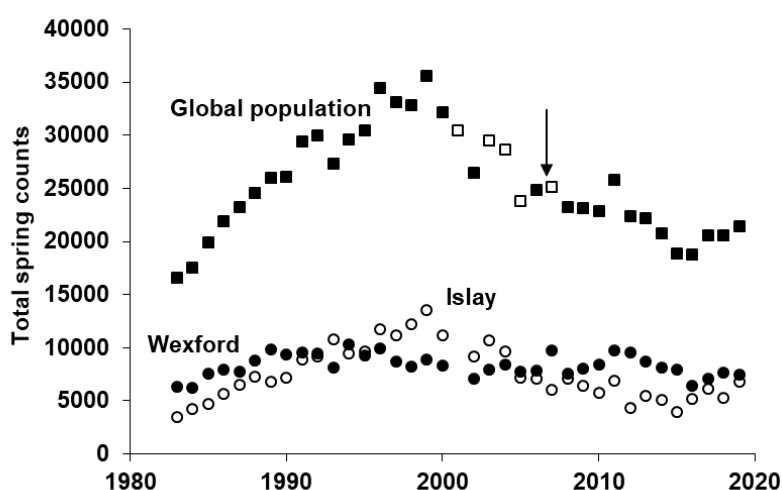


Spring population census totals for Greenland White-fronted Geese, 2014-2019

| | Spring 2014 | Spring 2015 | Spring 2016 | Spring 2017 | Spring 2018 | Spring 2019 |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Wexford | 8110 | 7984 | 6421 | 7047 | 7637 | 7436 |
| Rest of Ireland | 2512 | 2282 | 2172 | 1912 | 1950 | 1899 |
| Islay | 5093 | 3995 | 5183 | 6141 | 5319 | 6771 |
| Rest of Britain | 5082 | 4593 | 5103 | 5456 | 5379 | 5360 |
| Population total | 20797 | 18854 | 18879 | 20556 | 20285 | 21466 |

The first of the wintering birds arrived here on the 1st October; a family of five. By the 21st October this number had increased to 700 and less than a week later, had climbed again to 4500. Another couple of thousand are expected in the first few weeks of November.

In the 50th year of the Reserve it is worth noting that the continued presence of the Greenland White-fronts is a testament to the management of the land by the local farmers and the Department. With nearly half of the world's population wintering here, the preservation of the land, free from disturbance, is perhaps more vital than ever.



This graph shows the spring count of the geese from the Wexford Slob and Islay as well as the global population.

