



KINGS DYKE NEWS

FEBRUARY 2020



WELCOME TO ANOTHER YEAR'S WILDLIFE WATCHING!

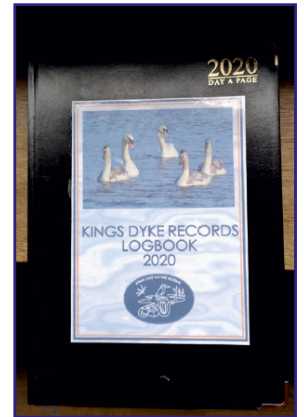


A January view from the bird hide
© Copyright Tony Esposito

Another decade at Kings Dyke Nature Reserve has commenced! Thank you to all of our dedicated members who support our work at Kings Dyke and to all of the fantastic volunteers who work so hard assisting with various management projects throughout the year. We hope you all continue to enjoy your membership and have a fantastic year's wildlife watching!

BIRD RECORDS

In 2019, a total of 111 species of birds were recorded at the reserve. 2 of these species (nightingale and hawfinch), were new to the reserve. The total of 111 is 5 less than 2018's 116 record total, but an average score over recent years. With almost 500 active members, it is notable just how many people do not submit their sightings (either in the



Bird hide records book
© Copyright Philip Parker

hide log book or via the Facebook group). The continued funding of the reserve depends on us demonstrating the nature reserve's success, and submitting sightings is one way in which we can do this. Don't worry if you can't identify everything you see, please just note down anything you can identify, no matter how common.

MANAGEMENT WORK DAYS

A slippage of clay off the cliff behind the fossil hunting area in August 2019 damaged the fence and gate leading to the extension, and it meant we had to temporarily close access to the extension. The slipped area was re-cut in November 2019 but left a slope which remained difficult to pass. In January 2020, a management day was arranged and a group of hard working volunteers spent the day repairing the fence and building a new path up the slope. Thank you to those who worked so hard. A fantastic job was done by all. Additionally, 2 new benches have been installed on the extension walk, offering respite opportunities, to sit and enjoy the views, with a welcome flask or some sandwiches. There will be more management work days organised throughout the year. Information of these will be posted on the Facebook Group.



Clay slippage being reprofiled
© Copyright Terry McKenna



Re-cut slope
© Copyright Philip Parker



Path building volunteer group
© Copyright Philip Parker



Grand opening
© Copyright Philip Parker

SCHOOL VISITS/OPEN EVENTS

During 2019, in excess of 6000 people visited the nature reserve. 700 school children enjoyed outside hands on learning trips and 500 people visited during our free open week events. Other groups/organisations who visited are Froglife/Groundwork (300 people), Whittlesey Walking Group (100 people), organised fossil hunting groups (200 people), other occasional groups (100 people) and Natural England (20 people). We also gained approximately 175 new nature reserve members during the year.



Park Lane School visit in March 2019
© Copyright Philip Parker

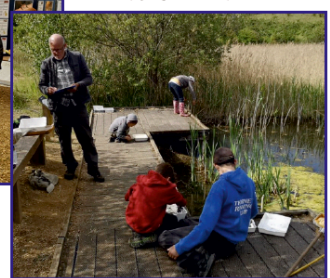
In 2020, our free open events will take place on **Tuesday 26th May, Thursday 28th May and Saturday 30th May 2020**, midday until 6pm.

Some special events will also be announced via the facebook page.



Open day displays/snake handling in the marquee
© Copyright Philip Parker

Pond dipping with invertebrate expert Dr Peter Kirby
© Copyright Philip Parker



HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Despite considerable concerns, housing development works have now commenced on the site of the old nursery, bordering the nature reserve to the east. We are keeping a close eye on the development by inspecting our boundaries on a regular basis, but if you have any concerns at all regarding the development, please do not hesitate to let us know. We are in direct contact with the Wildlife Officer at Peterborough City Council, if anything needs to be raised.

CONTACT US

01553 630842 : 07850 275605
admin@philipparkerassociates.co.uk

kingsdykenaturereserve.com

Type 'Kings Dyke Nature Reserve' into the search box

Bringing Industry and Nature Together



KINGS DYKE NEWS

FEBRUARY 2020



2018/2019 BIOBLITZ & 20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS



In 2018, Kings Dyke Nature Reserve was invited to participate in Chris Packham's UK Bioblitz - "Nature Reserve's are not enough" campaign, which spanned 48 nature reserves across Scotland, Northern Ireland, England and Wales. Species recording at Kings Dyke

commenced at midday on Saturday 21st July until midday on Sunday 22nd July 2018. Chris Packham attended from 08:00 until 10:00 on the Sunday, touring part of the reserve, speaking to recorders and filming. There was a fantastic turnout from both members and recorders at the event, with an amazing total of 1139 species recorded during the 24 hour period, crowning Kings Dyke the winner of all the sites visited! (<https://www.chrispackham.co.uk/news/uk-bioblitz-data-summary>).



Chris Packham enjoying KDNR
© Copyright Terry McKenna



Chris Packham pond dipping during 2018 Bioblitz © Copyright Peterbroughtoday.co.uk

As part of the Bioblitz funding, we were kindly offered £150, which was spent on purchasing 3 new pairs of binoculars to be used by visiting school groups in the bird hide. Chris Packham said "The data suggests that former brownfield sites - quarries in this instance - offer the most diverse spread of species, and deserve further investigation. Brownfield sites are particularly important for promoting biodiversity, invertebrates especially; and, if sympathetically managed, sites such as Kings Dyke Nature Reserves can flourish".



Celebrations as KDNR turns 20 years old!
© Copyright Peterbroughtoday.co.uk

An second Bioblitz took place on 22nd/23rd of June 2019, to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the reserve's opening, (1st July 1999). This time 1250 species were recorded, which was a fantastic way to celebrate the reserve's

anniversary and goes to show that Kings Dyke Nature Reserve and the local area have a thriving biodiversity. A Bioblitz is also planned for May 2020, more details to follow.

A MEMBER'S DILEMMA ... KD OR NOT KD? - Article by Terry McKenna

"KD or not KD" that is the question the Bard might have asked himself on that sunny morning on which he'd planned to write a new play. Had he decided to go to KD, it is conceivable that he would not have written "Hamlet" or "Romeo and Juliet," and what a terrible loss that would have been to the literary world.

Frequently, I find myself faced with the same dilemma: "Do I go to the Reserve or should I stay at home and write a new song?" Usually, (and this is a shameful admission for someone who has been writing songs for most of his life) I go to the Reserve. I dare not dwell too much on what "Hit" songs I might have written had I chosen to stay at home.

However, on the other hand, I more often ask myself: "Should I go to KD or go somewhere else." By "somewhere

else" I mean other nature reserves, including RSPB Titchwell, RSPB Frampton Marsh or Woodwalton Fen. Although KD is my favourite by a country mile, I do, occasionally, like to visit those aforementioned Reserves.

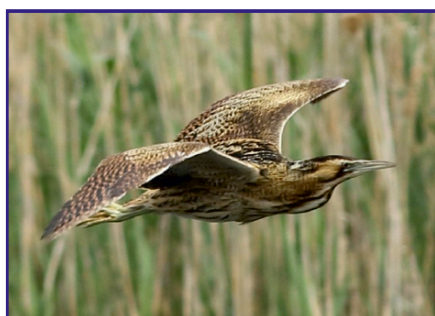
But then, while sitting in Titchwell's Parrinder Hide, Frampton's 360 Hide or Rothschild's Hide at Woodwalton, I find myself wondering what I could be missing by not being at KD. On such "away days", when I have been absent from my much-loved reserve, I suffer a sense of anxiety when I return home and I log into KD's Facebook Group. I torture myself thinking about what other members have posted whilst I've been playing hooky? Did I lose a chance of photographing the Otter that's been spotted a couple of times in the Mere? Has the Kingfisher been posing perfectly in front of the hide? Who's been the first to spot a Bittern this year?

Yet, when I've been seduced by news of the latest "rarities" at another Nature Reserve, I truly look forward to visiting the site and, to be honest, I have had some very good days out. I've photographed Snow Buntings at Holkham Beach, Parrot Crossbills at Santon Downham, and Puffins at Bampton Cliffs, to name just three bird species that have not yet been seen

at KD. But, it's my honest opinion that none of these places, nor any others, have the lure or the enchantment, of KD.

Set in its own man-made "valley", in an old clay quarry with a mere, surrounded by high ground layered with scrub, trees, bushes and reed beds, the unique reserve is home to a wide variety of wildlife. It would be true to say that most people associate KD with the good selection of birds to be seen there, but that would be to overlook the extensive list of additional species present at the reserve including insects, wildflowers, and mammals, both large and small. If you are a long-standing member, you will already know that KD has much to offer nature lovers. If you intend making your first visit, take a walk around, wander through the meadow, then spend some time in the hide. Like so many before you have done, you'll soon fall in love with the place. I guarantee you'll begin a lasting relationship which will become more intense and passionate with every following visit. After more than ten years of being a member, my love affair with the reserve is as strong now as it ever was.

As I finish writing these words, I look out of the window and see a perfect day for wandering around with my camera. "KD or not KD?" That is the question. But it is not to be KD. Nor will I be going elsewhere, come to that. Actually, I'm a bit behind with the housework...



Bittern in flight across the mere (June 2019)
© Copyright Terry McKenna