



Issue 168

APRIL 2026

Registered Charity No. 510146

Welcome to the Spring edition of the Newsletter. We are now producing digital Newsletters following the decision to move away from paper copies due to the increasing costs of printing and postal charges.

Sadly, I have to inform you of the passing of another of our committee members, David Colton who passed away peacefully on Christmas eve.

David was a longstanding member of the committee who was deeply involved with the DNS nature trail management until the land was taken over by National Grid.



Mike Pollard has recently taken over from Glenn Morris as the Bird Recorder for North East Wales - covering Flintshire and Denbighshire. Mike is keen to encourage anyone recording, studying or photographing birds in this area to get in touch with him as he is building up a contact list of active bird recorders in these counties. He would also welcome any articles about birds in this area (for example, species/site studies and site guides) and bird photographs taken locally (including Connah's Quay nature reserve, of course!) during 2025 for possible inclusion in the 2025 North East Wales Bird Report. Mike's email address is: newalesbirdrecords@outlook.com.

Notice Board

ALL MEMBERS AND GUESTS ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO THE DNS RESERVE OPEN DAY

August 15th, 2026 – 10.00am start

High tide 12.24pm, 8.9 metres

**Refreshments will be available in the
Field Study Centre**

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Unfortunately, the work being carried out by Uniper around the West hide is expected to take longer than anticipated. An estimated date for the hide to be accessible again is 20th April.

The new 100- page paper book with full colour illustrations and a complete bird list, plus a history of the Reserve.

It will be published on-line but it would be useful to get an idea of how many people would like a printed copy with a likely price of £10-£15 (depending on numbers).

glenmanc@hotmail.com

Get the NEW 2024 NE Wales Bird Report free at:

www.cofnod.org.uk/CBRG

Marbury Country Park – 11th Dec 2025



Marbury country park, although a little ‘manicured’, offers a selection of environments for many wild inhabitants. Originally the home estate of the Smith-Barry family and a former prisoner of war camp, it is now a central feature of the Northwich woodlands. Some of its features include the arboretum, the lime avenues and of course Budworth mere.

Our day at Marbury was probably the first for most of the members who made the trip. The weather was kind to us for the time of the year and so, on leaving the car park we made our way through the park checking out the various trees and shrubs which had goldfinch, chaffinch, and greenfinch alongside blue tit, great tit, dunnock and robin. After a short walk we arrive at the first hide overlooking a large lake which held good numbers of wildfowl including Pochard, Gadwall, Wigeon, Teal, Great-crested Grebe, Little Grebe, Moorhen, Goosander and Coot. On the far side of the lake the grazing fields held good numbers of Greylag and Canada geese. Also present were Cormorant, Heron and a good mixture of gulls.

To the left of the hide, the feeding station treated us to sightings of Coal Tit, Reed Bunting and Redpoll and to top it off a Kingfisher was displaying well on the water right in front of the hide. We moved on to a very rustic screen hide in a copse which gave us close up views of Goldcrest, Nuthatch, Treecreeper and Long-tailed Tit. Moving on through the various habitats we spotted Redwing, Mute Swan, Song Thrush, Shelduck and Buzzards.

As the day came to an end and making our way back to the cars several of us heard a Green Woodpecker and after a few patient moments we were treated to, not one but three!



A good day was had by all with a total of 46 species for the day. Many thanks to all those who made the trip.

Noel Hughes

Identify that Ladybird

Ladybirds usually mate in late April/ early May and lay their yellow eggs on the underside of leaves which take around a week to hatch. The newly hatched larva (scary looking) shed their outer skins a few times over the next month. By late June the larva is fully grown then will shed its skin for the final time and transform into a pupa. Inside the pupa shell the interior dissolves into a soupy mix which magically turns into an adult beetle. By around the end of July the adult (Imago) ladybird emerges from pupation very pale but will soon gain its colouration.



24 SPOT



BRYONY



13 SPOT



ADONIS



WATER



LARCH



16 SPOT



2 SPOT



10 SPOT



HARLEQUIN



7 SPOT



11 SPOT



HIEROGLYPHIC



5 SPOT



ORANGE



STRIPED



HEATHER



14 SPOT



KIDNEY SPOT



PINE



EYED



CREAM SPOT



18 SPOT



22 SPOT

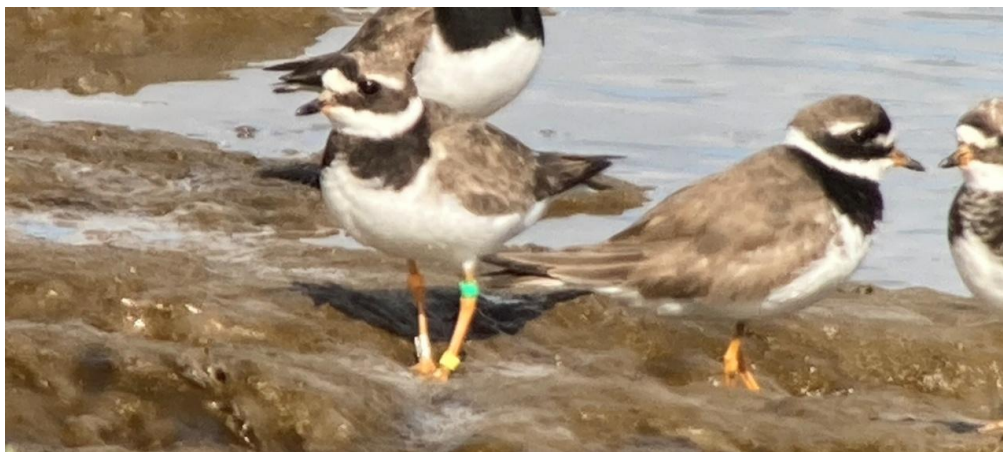


CREAM STREAK

First record of a Russian-ringed Ringed Plover to be sighted in the UK

I have been recording colour ringed birds at Connah's Quay Nature Reserve on the Dee Estuary for a couple of years and have found it useful to either use a smartphone adaptor on my telescope or use my camera with a long telephoto lens (that also has a built-in teleconverter). Sometimes you have to be quick, so it helps to practice taking these photos!

On the 8th of September I was watching waders from the excellent vantage point provided by the elevated West Hide. The tide was rising and small flocks of waders were moving closer to the hide. My interest was attracted by a flock of small waders that included Dunlins, Ringed Plovers, and a juvenile Curlew Sandpiper. After a period of time looking at these birds in detail, I realised that one of the Ringed Plovers was colour ringed. The birds were partially hidden behind a bank of saltmarsh, and I decided to quickly put the telescope adaptor on my phone and attached it to the telescope's eyepiece, then tried to home-in on the colour-ringed bird. I took seven photos and a short video before the flock was moved on by the rising tide. Only one of the photos showed all of the rings but it turned out that was all that was needed to find out where this bird had been ringed.



Female Ringed Plover, Connah's Quay Nature Reserve, 8th September 2025 Photo © Mike Pollard

When I got home, I studied the images on my computer and was able to work out the sequence of rings on each leg. I used this information to explore the colour ring database organised by the International Wader Study Group and filtered for Ringed Plovers. Try as I might I could not find a scheme to match so I knew I would need some help!

Fortunately, I am a member of a WhatsApp group that shares sightings of colour ringed and tagged birds in North Wales, which includes experts with an encyclopaedic knowledge of ringing schemes. I posted my best image of the bird and soon has a reply from Richard De Feu offering a couple of suggestions for who the ringer might be, but he thought it was most likely ringed in Russia. I followed up with an email to the ringer involved with the Russian ringing scheme and after a couple of weeks I received the exciting confirmation that it had indeed been ringed in Russia - on the remote Kolguev Island in the Barents Sea, Siberia. I then received an email from the ringer, Petr Glasov, of the Institute of Geography at the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow, and a cracking photo of the bird taken at the time of ringing.

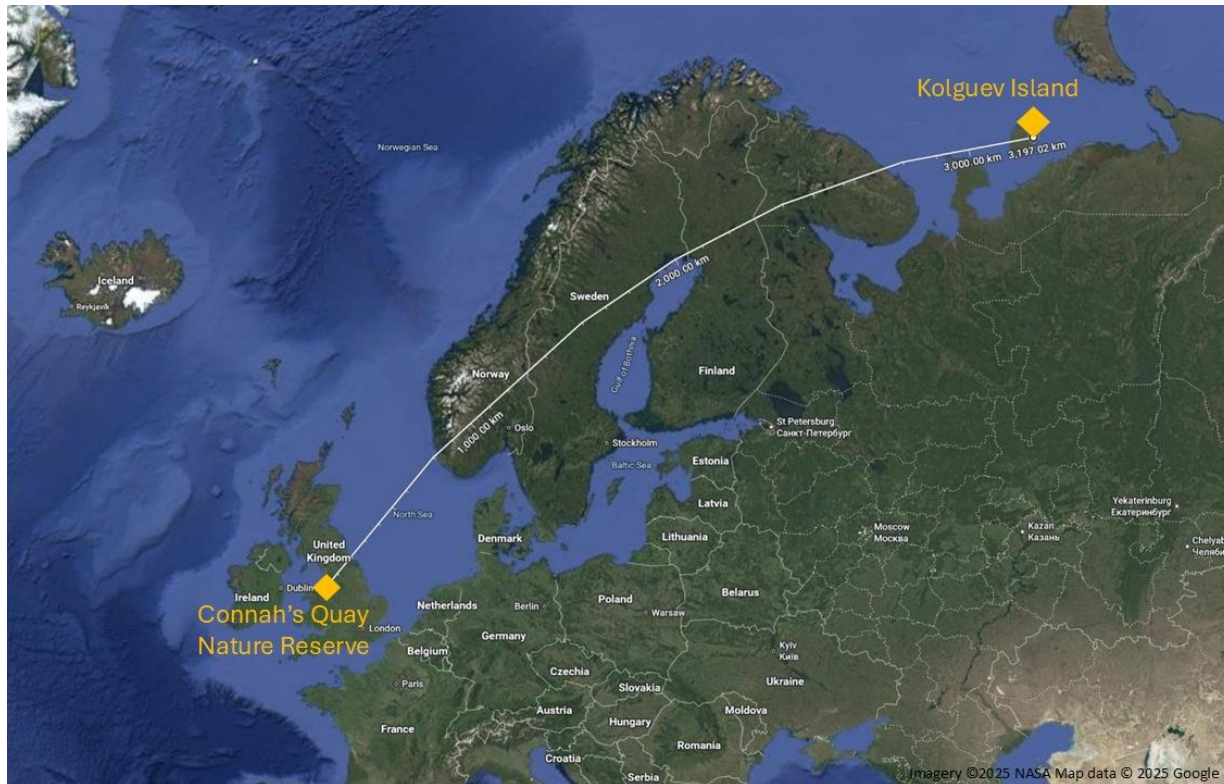


Female Ringed Plover, Kolguev Island, 7th July 2024. Photo © Petr Glasov

This bird is a female and of the arctic-breeding race of Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula tundrae*. She was caught at the nest using a cage trap on 7th July and the estimated hatching date was 18.07.2024. The research team left Kolguev on 14th July, so it is not known if the nest hatched successfully or not. The nest was located near the research camp on the sandy bank of the Peschanka River in an area typical of the tundra zone with breeding Dunlins, Temminck's Stints, Ruffs, Red-necked Phalaropes, Grey Plovers, Golden Plovers, Common Snipes, Little Stints and Wood Sandpipers.



Research Camp, Kolguev Island, 2024. Photo © Petr Glasov



Map to show location of ringing site, sighting location, and indicative migration route.

This Ringed Plover was not seen again at Connah's Quay – they are actually surprisingly scarce at this site compared to many other waders. It seems likely that this female had made a fairly brief stop on a southwards journey that may have ultimately taken it as far as West Africa. BTO confirmed that this was the first record of a Russian-ringed Ringed Plover in the UK! Plotting the route on Google Maps generated a direct distance of 3,196.97 km (1,986.51 mi).

This is splendid example of the many migratory waders using the Dee Estuary as a stopover during a much longer migration. In this case, possibly quite a short stop, but nonetheless a valuable time to feed and replenish fat reserves before making the next major flight.

Mike Pollard

Bird Report

Quite a bit of disruption throughout these months due to closure of the reserve while National grid replaced lines and Uniper carried out renovation work around the West hide.

At this moment the island on the Ash pool is under water and Avocet are already gathering and waiting for it to emerge.

October 2025.

Wheatear, Cetti's warbler, Grey Wagtail, 15 Spotted Redshanks, 35 Greenshank, 2000 Redshank, 1500 Black-tailed Godwit, 7 Avocet, Hen harrier, 3 Curlew Sandpiper, 2000 Knot, 16 Great white Egret, 40 Linnet, Common Sandpiper.

November 2025.

Peregrine, 2 Marsh Harrier, Goosander, Merlin, Sparrowhawk, Grey Plover, Shoveler, Redwing, Stonechat, Kingfisher, Stock Dove, Bullfinch, Greenshank, Spotted Redshank, Tufted duck, 2 Pintail, 10 Avocet, Chiffchaff, 8000 Starlings, 60 Snipe, Water Rail, Goldeneye.

December 2025.

8 Ringed Plover, 1900 Dunlin, Knot, Lapwings, 700 Wigeon, Teal, Red-breasted Merganser, 5 Goosander, 30 Turnstone, 12 Grey Plover, 40 Curlew, Mute Swans.

January 2026.

6 Bullfinch, Goldcrest, Kingfisher, 400 Chaffinch, 2 Collared Dove, Rooks, Spotted Redshank, Gadwall, House Sparrow, Skylark, Reed Bunting, Linnet, Raven, 5000 Teal, 32 Turnstone, 130 Pied Wagtail, 2 Jay, Merlin, Pink-footed geese, Avocet (24 th Jan), Goldeneye.

February 2026.

2 Sparrowhawk, 2 Merlin, 2 Buzzard, 400 Lapwing, 8 Avocet, 30 Redwing, Barnacle Goose, Turnstone,
4 Little grebe.

Peter & Sue Haslem (recorders)

Yellow legged Asian Hornets

The Yellow legged Asian hornet (*Vespa velutina*) was first found in France near Bordeaux inside a terracotta pot that had been shipped from China in 2004.

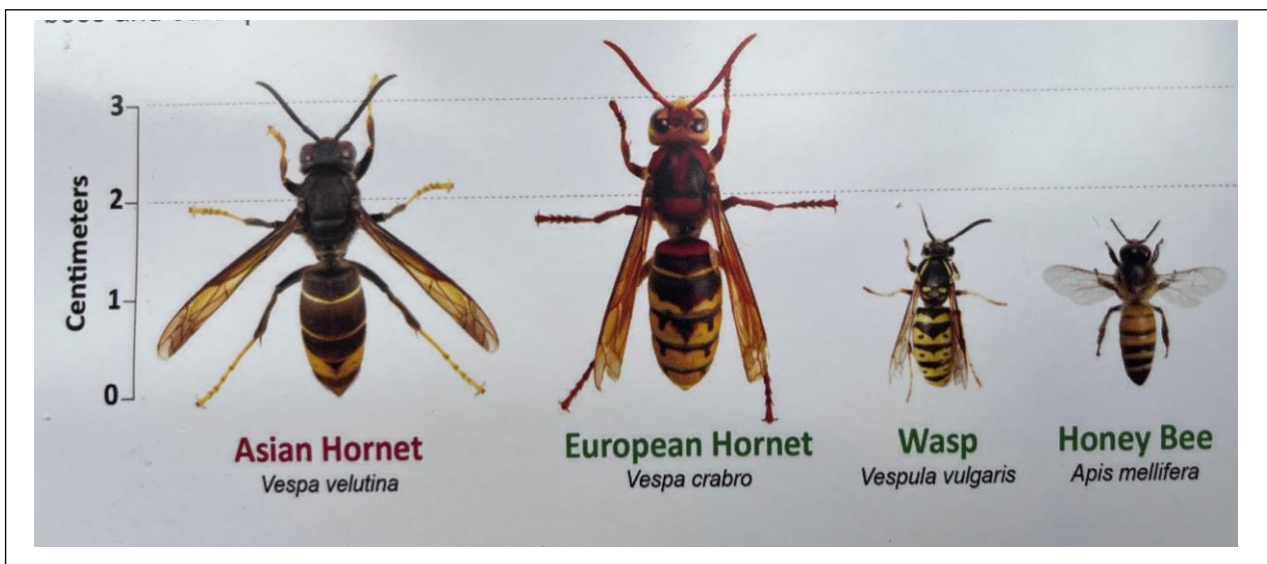
It has now spread throughout France, Spain, Greece and up into Holland. By 2025 nearly 400 reports and 100 nests had been reported.

The nearest to Flintshire is Runcorn and recently near Wrexham in a hedge.



In January the queens will hibernate until February/March and then form a primary nest just like a Solitary wasp, and then a secondary nest in a hedge or a tree. The workers predate on primarily insects (June – October)

NB. They are nasty and if you go too close (5 metres) the whole nest will attack, unlike wasps. People and beekeepers have died in France and Spain.



If you think you have seen one contact the Yellow legged Asian Hornet app.

Keith Davies

FIELD TRIPS 2026

There are currently no Field Trips organised for 2026 due to the sad passing of Bill, our field trip organiser.

If any member is keen to take up the role, involving 10-12 trips annually both locally and further afield, please contact the secretary by e mail.

secretary@deenats.org.uk

DNS Art Group

We are a small group of members who enjoy painting together each month. We paint in various mediums and gain stimulation and encouragement from each other. The venue is excellent for painting as it provides ample north facing light.

If you would like to join us, you would be most welcome. Our meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month in the Field Study Centre from 1-30 until 3-30 pm.

Contact Kay Mattocks on 01244 821810

Digital Media

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Email address: webeditor@deenats.org.uk

Facebook: MEMBERS OF DEESIDE NATURALIST SOCIETY