

Fobney Island wetland Reserve: biological monitoring January- December 2012

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So far monitoring arrangements have been put in place for plants, butterflies (and day-flying moths), dragonflies and damsel flies, mammals and birds (Table 2). The R&DAA has started monitoring for caddis, may and olive flies and freshwater shrimps. Monitoring for other invertebrates has yet to be arranged.



Fixed point photography has been started from three points on the island and is being done about quarterly.

View from East gate 2 May 2012 after a prolonged dry period.



View from East gate 22 July 2012 after heavy rainfall during June and early July.

Table 1 summarises the bird records for 2012 to date. The new habitat got off to a good start, attracting a pair of Little Ringed Plover, two pairs of Lapwing, Kingfisher and Gadwall. The Little Ringed Plovers were displaying through May and June, but did not appear to have nested. The floods destroyed the nesting attempts of LRPs at most sites in Berkshire and resulted in a lot of mobile birds – there being a maximum of four on Fobney at one point in June. Two broods of Lapwing chicks were seen, though probably only one individual finally fledged. A pair of Kingfishers that had been displaying along the Kennet at around the middle of the island were not seen after the floods. A pair of Gadwall nested in tall grass at the west end of the island; no ducklings were seen, though this species can be particularly elusive when breeding.

Table 1

Fobney: Bird species recorded January- December 2012*Total species recorded* 75*Total confirmed breeding* 14*Total probable breeding* 18

Species	Breeding code	Species	Breeding code
Mute Swan	● ON	Sand Martin	●
Greylag Goose	●	Swallow	●
Canada Goose	● FL	House Martin	●
Egyptian Goose	● P	Meadow Pipit	●
Shelduck	●	Grey Wagtail	● FL
Mandarin Duck	● P	Pied-White Wagtail	● P
Gadwall	● ON	Wren	● T
Teal	●	Duncock	● T
Mallard	● FL	Robin	● FL
Pochard	●	Blackbird	● T
Tufted Duck	●	Fieldfare	●
Pheasant	● T	Song Thrush	● T
Cormorant	●	Redwing	●
Little Egret	●	Mistle Thrush	●
Grey Heron	●	Sedge Warbler	● T
Red Kite	●	Blackcap	●
Buzzard	●	Garden Warbler	● FF
Kestrel	●	Lesser Whitethroat	● FF
Hobby	●	Whitethroat	● FL
Moorhen	● P	Chiffchaff	● T
Coot	● ON	Willow Warbler	●
Oystercatcher	●	Goldcrest	●
Little Ringed Plover	● P	Long-tailed Tit	● FL
Lapwing	● FL	Blue Tit	● FL
Common Sandpiper	●	Great Tit	● FL
Green Sandpiper	●	Treecreeper	●
Black-headed Gull	●	Jay	●
Lesser Black-backed Gull	●	Magpie	●
Herring Gull	●	Rook	●
Common Tern	●	Carrion Crow	●
Feral Pigeon	●	Starling	●
Stock Dove	● T	Chaffinch	● T
Woodpigeon	● T	Greenfinch	● T
Collared Dove	●	Goldfinch	● T
Swift	●	Siskin	●
Kingfisher	● D	Linnet	●
Green Woodpecker	●	Bullfinch	●
Great Spotted Woodpecker	●	Reed Bunting	●
Skylark	●		

Table 2: Fobney monitoring summary: January-December 2012

Taxa	By whom	Frequency	Comments
Birds	Renton Righelato/BOC	Monthly + casual recording. Started February 2012 + Breeding Bird Survey (BBS)	BBS recording all territories/breeding pairs on the island. Casual coverage of island + towpath + south bank of R Kennet (boundaries to be determined). 73 species recorded so far in 2012. Breeding confirmed for 14 species; probable for a further 18 species. Recent use of the scrapes by migrating waders: Common and Green Sandpipers.
Mammals Bats	Berkshire Mammal Group (Becky Thomas) Berkshire & S Bucks Bat Group (Hilton Bartlett)	To be determined	Preliminary site survey done September 2012. Trapping planned for October/November Bat monitoring to start in 2013
Butterflies	John Lerpiniere	Fortnightly in summer Started	Transect currently along towpath and south side of R. Kennet. Route to be routed through the island when open. Data entered into Transect Walker for the national Butterfly Monitoring Scheme. With little vegetation on the island in 2012, few butterflies were noted; but with some nice habitat to the south of the river 16 species were recorded. Most butterflies and other invertebrates are to the southeast. But the island should attract many more butterflies as the habitat develops.
Dragonflies, damselflies	Mike Turton	Started. Monthly from end April to late September,	Transect along path on island between gate and 1 st hide – check water on both sides of the path. Scan western lake from hide to pick up larger dragonflies. Also check bank between eastern lake and river. No visits carried out between April and late June due to poor weather conditions. The following species have already started to use the new lakes on the island: Banded Demoiselle (max 42 counted); Common Blue Damselfly (around 1100 counted over the lakes); Red-eyed Damselfly (max 10 counted); Blue-tailed Damselfly (max 3 counted); Black-tailed Skimmer (max 5 counted). Common Blue Damselflies are already using the site for breeding, though there is currently very little emergent vegetation for the nymphs to use when they are ready to emerge – hopefully there will be more next year when this happens. Red-eyed Damselfly prefer sites with floating vegetation, so numbers are likely to remain low until such vegetation is established.
Fly monitoring	R&DAA/Graham Scholey	Annual?	August survey: Fobney score is already quite good, comparable to other angling sites on the Kennet. One or two of the missing categories - such as 'mayfly' - are more likely to move in as the riffle develops more embedded silt over time, which they will burrow into.
Plants	Chris Bucke/RDNHS	Started May. Approximately 6 weekly in Spring/Autumn	In mid June it was very wet and the plant life was singularly uninteresting. There were many seedlings of annuals such as goosefoots and fat hen (<i>Chenopodiums</i> and possibly <i>Amaranthus</i>), some of which may be unusual, as well as horsetails and willowherbs. In August/September some plants assumed to be from the wildflower seeding were in evidence: <i>eg</i> poppies and ox-eye daisies.