

Idle Valley Nature Sightings

December 2025

What's On – January 2026

Thursday 8th January – NWT North Notts Local Group – Indoor Meeting. The subject is **NWT - Local Nature Recovery Strategy** – a presentation by Neve Bradley & manager Catherine Meyhew on the delivery phase of this new strategy. Meeting starts at 7:00pm at the **Rural Learning Centre, Bellmoor**. Entry is £3 per person. Group main contact email: janwilliamson133@gmail.com

Saturday 10th January – Idle Valley Wildlife Watch: Investigating Nature. Seasonal wildlife activities for 7 to 12 year olds, with a walk in the reserve. Meeting Point is the Idle Valley Visitor Centre at 10:30am until 12:30pm. **£2.00 per child.** Leader is Ros Schwarz. Contact email: idlevatch@nottswt.co.uk

Sunday 11th January – Lound Bird Club – Bird Walk at Idle Valley NR. 9-00am until midday. Meet along Chainbridge Lane at the gate at the lane to the Water Ski Lake. Please Park sensibly on the left hand side of the road by the corner of Chainbridge Scrape (West). The leader for this walk will be one of LBC committee members. Contact email/mobile number: stuart.daven@btinternet.com 07763895265

Sunday 18th January – Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) Organised by **Lound Bird Club** in conjunction with the BTO Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS). If you can help, please contact Phil Cadman on email: philip.cadman@sky.com

Wednesday 21st January – NEW 'Footsteps into Nature' (formerly known as Gary's 'Birdwatching & Wildlife' Walks) walk at Idle Valley NR. Please note the new earlier start time of **8:00am** and we will be walking until no later than midday. Also, we often gather for a well-earned hot drink in the Rural Learning Centre afterwards. Meet along Walters Lane by the Lower Sheep Fields. Loop walk to Tiln Wood and round Tiln Pits and back to the cars. Looking for wintering birds and other wildlife. Leader is Gary Hobson. email/mobile number: gh1bc@hotmail.co.uk 07464964879

Wednesday 28th January – Lound Bird Club – Indoor Meeting. An illustrated talk titled '**Birding through Montevideo to South Georgia & the Antarctic Peninsular – Including following in the footsteps of Sir Ernest Shackleton**' by Mike Vickers and Ian Cowgill. Meeting starts at 7:00pm at **Sutton-cum-Lound Village Hall**. Entry fee is £3.00 per person. Parking is available around the hall. Contact email/mobile number: stuart.daven@btinternet.com 07763895265

Every Tuesday each month – Wellbeing Walk (Bellmoor Lake area) from the Idle Valley Visitor Centre Cafe at 10:30am. Volunteer led walk sponsored by Co-op Lincolnshire.

Every Wednesday each month – Wellbeing Walk (Bellmoor Lake) from the Idle Valley Visitor Centre Cafe at the new time of 1:00pm. Volunteer led walk sponsored by Co-op Lincolnshire.

Reserve News from Alex Morley - NWT Reserves Manager (North).

Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust in the north of the county have had a productive year: the Three Rivers project ended after improving 32km of waterways damaged by the colliery industry; our Farmed Landscape project worked with 35 landowners to make 250 hectares of land more suitable for wildlife; there were over 200 hectares of habitat interventions as part of the South Sherwood project; the Water Vole project have significantly reduced numbers of American mink in the north of the county to the extent that it is now 12months since any have been recorded on the Idle Valley nature reserve or the surround landscape, plus, a further 99 captive bred water voles were released at the site; work has begun on the Ryton catchment to introduce natural flood management measures, impacting 8000ha of land west

of Worksop and into Derbyshire & Yorkshire; and, work has also begun on creating & restoring 81 hectares of fen peatland in the north of the county which will also function to sequester carbon. Most of these projects are in proximity to our existing nature reserves, which chimes well with the 2010 Making Space for Nature report, that actions for nature conservation need to be "bigger, better, and more joined up".

A significant piece of work has taken place recently at the Idle Valley reserve's Barn Field, with the creation of a series of ditches: the design has been used elsewhere on the site to favour water voles. The work dovetails well with plans to cope with standing water on nearby tracks & paths, and repair damage which has occurred over the years.



Elsewhere on the site, work is now complete on felling operations in Bunker Wood as part of expanding the existing wood pasture with the removal of a hybrid poplar plantation, thinning of dense areas of hawthorn, and felling a small number of oak trees. Work has already started on putting some of this timber to use as seating and signage. As part of a project supported by the Trust's North Nottinghamshire local group and Lound Bird Club to create a bird viewing area close to the cafe, our volunteers have been using specially grown willow harvested from the reserve to weave panels for the structure. These are now being installed, and the facility should be completed early in the new year. The Trust now uses an app and online system for people to record hours undertaking work for us - habitat & site management, walk leading, wardening, litter picking, and technical skills from welding through to GIS mapping. 2025 saw close to 3500 hours logged, and we recently hosted our annual festive thank you celebration where the local group also donated four swift boxes for installation at the reserve.



North Notts Local Group from David Schwarz – Chairman.

Local Groups are part of the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust and exist to promote and support the charitable objectives of the Trust. The North Notts Group was established in 2018, when two long-established Local Groups from Retford and Worksop agreed to merge.

We hold monthly public meetings from September through to April, where we invite a speaker to talk on a subject of wildlife or environmental interest, with a focus on the local area in many of the lectures. We normally pay a fee to the guest speaker and ask a small admission charge to attend the meetings, which are held at the Idle Valley Visitor Centre. During the Summer months we organise occasional guided walks to local sites of interest, and throughout the year Gary Hobson, a group Committee member, also runs guided birdwatching walks from around the Idle Valley Nature Reserve. We also organise a Quiz night and Social each year in December. The Committee, which is elected annually by NWT members attending our Annual General Meeting, meets a few times every year and consults with the Wildlife Trust management team and manages our finances. Through the Wildlife Trust we are able to network with the other Local Groups in the County and share best practice.

We have also been able to establish links with relevant sections of the local community. Our operations generate a small financial surplus, which we use to support local projects and recently we have funded the creation of a dipping pond for the Wildlife Watch Group at the Idle Valley Nature Reserve, we made donations to two local Bird Ringing groups and to the Notts Dormouse Group and we have also enabled the purchase of Bat and Swift boxes for the Idle Valley Nature Reserve.

If you would more information and would like to be added to the local group mailing list the main contact email is:- janwilliamson133@gmail.com

Footsteps into Nature



New Walk Group from Gary Hobson - Walk leader.

New for 2026, '**Footsteps into Nature**' will now become the new name for the walk group formerly known as 'Gary's Birdwatching & Wildlife Walks'. Personal changes to my working pattern has geared this change a little, but for some time now I have also wanted to, less personalise, the current group name into a more 'wildlife' friendly name. Going forward, the walks will also be slightly different, some shorter in duration, but sometimes longer in duration, though not necessarily in the distance covered. I will also be choosing different days of the week, so that hopefully more people can join in regularly and I also intend to introduce some simple 'real-time' wildlife recording as we go. More of that later. Sticking mainly with the Idle Valley Nature Reserve and continuing to highlight different wildlife that can be found in different seasons throughout the year, but with some variation in the type of walks, some special events and the occasional off-site walk will also be added throughout the coming year. There is still lots to go at, but hopefully we can also help the wildlife on the reserve by firstly enjoying and learning about the things that we observe, but with the important addition of recording that knowledge to hopefully better 'our' reserve in the future.

These walks will continue to be run in conjunction with Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust who own and manage their Idle Valley Nature Reserve. I would also like to thank Stuart Davenport and Tim Carter for their fantastic work in co-leading and leading my past walks and I will also look forward to them once again sharing their wealth of knowledge to the walk group participants. Lastly, a massive thanks to everyone who attended the walks over the past two years and for their brilliant contribution on the group What's App page.

The first walk in 2026 will be on Wednesday 21st January and will start at the earlier time of 8:00am, more details in the What's On section above each month.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year for 2026.

If you would like more information about the group and be added to the group WhatsApp page the contact email/mobile numbers are: ghlbc@hotmail.co.uk 07464964879

Bird Club News from Stuart Davenport - LBC Chairman.

As birdwatchers and wildlife lovers we are blessed with a whole array of identification guides on offer. There seems to be excellent books available to aid the identification of every wildlife subject matter of which you could think. As well as books, there are of course websites, and now apps for your phone, that will identify things for you. Merlin, Seek and Obsidentify to name but a few of them. Of course, these are great, but for me, nothing is better than getting out in the field and identifying things yourself. With the many walks available, whether with the Lound Bird Club, Gary's walks or on planned walks with the Wildlife Trust, there is always someone willing to share a little bit of their knowledge, or vice versa.

However long you have been studying your favourite aspects of wildlife, very few people would class themselves as an expert, we are all learning all the time. Every time I go on an organised walk, there is always someone pointing out a tiny plant I've never even spotted before, or an unusual plant gall, or a tiny insect, and proof that the old saying "every day's a school day" is true! Why not make it your New Years Resolution to come along to some of these walks and share what you know and even learn from others? It'll certainly be easier to keep than giving up chocolate or going to the gym lol.

On a personal note, 2025 has been a massive learning curve. I have been collaborating with a company that undertakes ecological surveys. This has included bats, newts and nocturnal bird surveys. In recent weeks we have been out at night around Market Weighton and Howden area of East Yorkshire, and have been seeing plenty of Woodcock, Jack Snipe and good numbers of wildfowl. Very interesting work and getting paid for doing something I enjoy is even better, and I seem to learn something new every night. Hopefully see you all on a walk in 2026 (Below) © S.Davenport.



Bird Sightings for November 2025 compiled by Gary Hobson.

The few highlights were noted, including the two Glossy Ibis remaining from October, a single Firecrest was reported to BirdGuides on one date and there was also single Merlin noted on the edge of the recording area on one date. Once again, no WeBS count was completed so very few waterfowl reports were submitted.

Two reports of **Pink-footed Goose**, including 100+ moving NE over Chainbridge Lane on the 2nd and 150 over the area on the 16th. Three reports of **Whooper Swan**, including a family part of 6 (2 adults + 4 juveniles) briefly on Bellmoor Lake on the 7th, 20 birds flew over the area on the 16th with others heard over Clayworth Common the same day and finally 6 adults flew E over Clayworth Common on the very chilly morning of the 19th. Just a couple of reports of **Egyptian Goose**, including 8 on the Lower Sheep Fields on the 16th and a single on Chainbridge Pit on the 19th. Three reports of **Shelduck**, including a single bird, remaining from October, at Chainbridge Pit on the 16th, at Chainbridge Scrape (East) on the 28th and then 2 newly arrived adults were noted at Neatholme Fen on the 30th. Chainbridge Scrape (West) continued to be a key location for **Pintail** sightings with 11 there on the 1st, 5 on the 13th and 4 on the 16th. Neatholme Scrape also held a number of birds, including 3 in the 13th, 4 on the 16th and 4 again on the 21st. Just a single report of **Red-crested Pochard** with 5 birds noted at Linghurst Lakes on the 2nd. Just a single report of **Pochard** with 15 birds noted on Bellmoor Lake on the 19th. Still very few **Goldeneye** were noted around the recording area with 1-7 birds noted on 4 dates across the usual locations, with 7 being the maximum count at Neatholme Scrape on the 21st. Up to 6 **Goosander** were generally spread over the recording area throughout with the exception of a roost gathering of 40+ on the Water Ski Lake on the 16th. A single report of 8 **Grey Partridge** at Tilm North on the 13th. Single **Water Rail** were reported at Neatholme Scrape on the 16th and at Chainbridge Scrape (East) on the 21st.

Just a single report of **Little Grebe** with 3 at Linghurst Lakes on the 30th. The number of **Lapwing** fluctuated throughout with 115 on Neatholme Fen on the 2nd, 60+ noted on the 7th, circa 3,000 birds were noted to be in the recording area on the 16th, 150-300 were then noted at Chainbridge Scrape (East) between the 19th-28th and finally 230+ were at Neatholme Fen on the 30th. Just two reports of **Golden Plover**, including 180+ over the Parish Park and Neatholme Fen area on the 2nd and just 12 birds at Neatholme Fen on the 13th. A single report of 2 **Ruff** noted on the 6th, but none thereafter. A single report of a single **Dunlin** at Chainbridge Scrape (East) on the 16th. Two **Woodcock** were flushed from the Bunker Wood area on the 23rd. Very few **Snipe** were noted with a single at Neatholme Fen on the 2nd, 12 were noted on the 6th, a single at Chainbridge Scrape (East) on the 16th and finally 2 were noted at Bellmoor Lake on the 19th. Between 1-3 **Green Sandpiper** were noted on 4 dates from the 6th-24th. A returning partial 'leucistic' **Black-headed Gull** was noted again at the Neatholme Scrape gull roost on the 16th. A partial 'leucistic' first-winter **Common Gull** was also noted in the roost on Neatholme Scrape on the 16th. Three adult **Herring Gull** were at Bellmoor Lake on the 2nd. Two counts of **Cormorant**, with 22 at Chainbridge Pit on the 19th and 33 at Neatholme Scrape on the 21st. The two **Glossy Ibis** from October remained in the Chainbridge/Tiln North area being seen at Tiln North on the 1st, a single at Chainbridge Pit on the 6th, 2 again at Chainbridge Scrape (East) on the 7th & 13th with the final sighting of both birds were video recorded feeding in the riverside 'Conservation Meadow' next to Chainbridge Pit on the 15th (Below left) ©D. Whall.



Just a single report of a single **Bittern** feeding in grass on the edge of the River Idle at Bellmoor Lake on the 14th. (Above right) ©R. White. A good sprinkling of **Cattle Egret** reports peaking with up to 23 birds on the 8th. The following table shows all recorded birds:-

Area/Date	6th	8th	16th	19th	21st
Lower Sheep Fields		23			
Neatholme Scrape			10		
Chainbridge Scrape (E)				1	2
Chainbridge Pit				1	
Location Unknown	20				
Total	20	23	10	2	2

Very few **Grey Heron** were noted with a maximum of 4 birds across the recording area on the 2nd and 2 were at Linghurst Lakes and a single at Neatholme Fen on the 30th. Between 1-5 **Great White Egret** were present across the recording area throughout with five birds noted on the 2nd and 16th. A peak count of 8 **Little Egret** at Neatholme Fen on the 2nd, with 4 at Chainbridge Pit on the 16th and singles at Chainbridge Pit, on the 19th and at Neatholme Fen on the 30th (Below left) ©T. Carter. Two reports of single female **Sparrowhawk** noted at Bunker wood on the 23rd and at Chainbridge Scrape (East) on the 28th. At least two different **Marsh Harrier** were present with a single adult female noted at Neatholme Fen on the 2nd and a 'cream-crowned' immature bird at Neatholme Scrape on the 13th and the same aged birds at Chainbridge Scrape (East) on the 19th, 24th and 28th (Below left) ©G. Hobson. A single report of 2 calling **Tawny Owl** at Bellmoor Rural Learning Centre on the evening of the 22nd. Just a single report of a single **Green Woodpecker** at Neatholme Fen on the 2nd. A single **Kestrel** was noted at Chainbridge Pit on the 19th; this species seems to be getting locally scarce this year. A single female **Merlin** was noted hunting passerines at Eel Pool Road at

Drakeholes on the 20th. Four reports of **Peregrine**, including a single south over Chainbridge Lane near Lound village on the 2nd, a single was reported on the 6th, a single moving over Chainbridge Scrape (East) on the 13th and finally 2 birds were noted over Neatholme Scrape on the 28th. Several **Jay** were around the recording area with 3 at Bunker Wood on the 23rd and up to 5 were in the Linghurst Lakes/Neatholme Lane area on the 30th. Five reports of **Raven**, including 3 birds at Bellmoor Pits/Bunker Wood area on the 2nd, a single at Neatholme Scrape on the 13th, a single noted on the 24th, and finally a single at Linghurst Wood and a further 2 birds again at Bellmoor Lake on the 30th (Below right) ©G. Hobson.



A single **Coal Tit** was calling at Bunker Wood on the 23rd. A single **Chiffchaff** was noted at Neatholme Scrape on the 16th. A single **Firecrest**, locally still a rare bird during winter, was reported to BirdGuides as being present at Tiln Gravel Pits on the 7th. A total of 6 **Goldcrest** were noted in the Bunker Wood area on the 23rd. Two single reports of **Treecreeper** at Linghurst Lakes and Linghurst Wood on the 2nd and 30th. Four reports of **Redwing**, including 10 at Linghurst Lakes and 80+ at Bellmoor Pits/Bunker Wood on the 2nd, 30+ over Chainbridge Scrape (East) on the 19th and 100+ again in the Bunker Wood area on the 23rd. Very few **Fieldfare** were noted with 5 birds at Neatholme Fen and a single at Linghurst Wood on the 2nd, a small flock was along Chainbridge Lane on the 6th and a single was at Chainbridge Pit on the 19th. A pair of **Stonechat** remained at Tiln North being noted there on the 1st, 13th and 19th (Below) ©T. Carter. A single report of 3 **Pied Wagtail** at Neatholme Fen on the 2nd. Just three reports of **Bullfinch**, including 4 birds at Linghurst Lakes on the 2nd, 7 in the Bunker Wood area on the 23rd and a single along Neatholme Lane on the 30th. A group of 5 **Common Crossbill** were at Broom Wood, off Tiln Lane on the 2nd and a number of birds were noted there again on the 24th. Four counts of **Lesser Redpoll**, including 45 at Chainbridge Wood and 25 at Linghurst Lakes on the 13th, 6 were over Chainbridge Pit on the 21st and finally 50+ were at Bunker Wood on the 23rd.



R. White, D. Whall, S. Harrison, K. Beaumont, D. Richardson, P. Cooper, I. Baxter, S. Wilkinson, P. Cottam, K. Fisher, K. Driver, P. J. Freeman, B. Hopkinson, K. Snowe, D. Anderson, S. Came, J & J Shepherd, P & R. White, N. Powell, C & C Parker, S. Hughes, B. Merrick, A. Merrick V.Bell, G. Widdison, T. Carter, G. Hobson, D. Housman, M. B. Vickers, S. Davenport, V. Giles, P. Cadman, P & E Hobson, I. Hunt, RBA, BirdGuides, Lound Bird Club (Website), Nottinghamshire Birdwatchers (Website), Idle Valley Bird Sightings (Facebook), Lound & Idle Valley Bird News (What's App), Notts Bird News (What's App), Notts Rare & Scarce (What's App) plus the various Idle Valley Walks (What's App). Please submit bird sightings to the above groups/pages or email them to gblbc@hotmail.co.uk

Nature Sightings for November 2025 compiled by Gary Hobson.

Butterflies

The only reported butterfly was a single **Comma** at Bellmoor Lake on the 2nd.

Moths

The following are just a small selection of moth species that were significant during the month. List compiled from data held by resident moth expert Philip Cadman, who is also the local 'Entomology Recorder' for the Idle Valley NR & Lound Bird Club recording area.

Two trapping sessions were conducted at Carr Hill School on the 5th and at Bellmoor Lake on the 27th. A single **72.024 *Phragmatobia fuliginosa* Ruby Tiger** caterpillar was noted crossing the boardwalk at Bellmoor Lake on the 2nd. Single **73.2060 *Lithopane leautieri* Blair's Shoulder Knot** (Below left) ©P. Hobson and **63.054 *Cydalima perspectalis* Box-Tree Moth** were at Carr Hill School on the 5th. A single **70.256 *Erannis defoliaria* Mottled Umber** was netted and potted at Sutton Lane, Sutton-cum-Lound on the evening of the 26th (Below centre) ©G. Hobson, and finally 35+ **70.106 *Operophtera brumata* Winter Moth** and 12 **66.001 *Poecilocampa populi* December Moth** were noted at Bellmoor Lake on the 27th (Below right) ©G Hobson.



Dragonfly & Damselflies

The only species noted were four records of single **Common Darter**, including singles at Linghurst Pool, Neatholme Fen and Bellmoor Lake on the 2nd with a single at Chainbridge Scrape (East) on the 10th (Below) ©V. Bell.



Mammals & Amphibians

Two **Muntjac Deer**, a pair but only the female was photographed, were noted following each other at Bunker Wood on the 23rd (Below) ©G. Hobson.



C. Watkin, S. Harrison, B. Merrick, K. Driver, J & J. Shepherd, T. Carter, V. Bell, S. Hughes, P. Cadman, I. Hunt, M. N, G. Hobson, P & E. Hobson, S. Davenport, Trevor & Dilys Pendleton (www.eakringbirds.com), Gary's Birdwatching & Wildlife Walks (What's App) Group, plus the various Idle Valley NR - Wellness Walks (What's App) Groups.

Next month's - January 2026 issue

What's On - February 2026 Events + Reserve News + Bird News for December 2025 + Additional Nature Sightings for December 2025

Submissions for inclusion in this publication can be sent to **Gary Hobson** via ghlbc@hotmail.co.uk Please state (species/observer/location/date) for all images.

In the case of regular **bird and wildlife sightings**, please submit sightings via the relevant **Wellness, Birdwatching or Photography 'WhatsApp' & 'Facebook' groups** linked to Idle Valley NR.

Submit all **Lepidoptera (moths and butterflies)** plus any **Dragonfly & Damselfly** sightings to our recorder, **Philip Cadman**, via philip.cadman@sky.com



Wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas and a fabulous New Year in 2026.