

Warden's report June 2011

We should have been ringing Young Black headed gulls this month however due to a combination of high tides, strong winds, heavy rain and low temperatures the gulls have lost two batches of eggs and those that haven't given up are sitting on there third clutch, the only Gull chick that we have found was a Med gull this was caught and rung.

The Walton Wild fowlers have added 3 more rafts to the one in the Lagoon on Stone Point, these have immediately been accepted by some of the Black headed gulls and 9 pairs of Common Terns all of which are sitting on eggs.

We have been out ringing the Barn owl chicks in the nest boxes around the Backwaters; we had 4 chicks on Bramble, 2 chicks at Landermere, 3 chicks in Lower Kirby and 3 chicks at the Naze, these are from 7 pairs, last year we had a total of 20 chicks from the same boxes so numbers are down this is possibly due to the wet weather this month.

The Little Terns seem to be doing ok and we have a more accurate figure of 55 pairs, The more sensible of these that have nested high on the Horsey sand now have young. Again this year the sand on Horsey has proved to be a very good nests site with Avocets, Oystercatchers, Ringed plovers, BH Gulls and Common Terns all nesting successfully.

The Marsh harriers have been seen out hunting on a regular basis and we have observed "food passes" between the male and female this points to them rearing young but again we have not been able to pinpoint the exact location of there nest sites.

We have seen plenty of Greylag, Canada and a few Barnacle geese out and about with young in tow, and we have seen a few pairs of Shellduck shepherding their broods. The seal numbers have risen even more prior to pupping, the first pup this year was spotted on the 15th and we now have 24 we think. At present all seem to be doing well and growing fast.

The weather has seemed to keep numbers of boats down this month however this has not stopped a few finding the odd mud spit on a falling tide and we have assisted one or two, and one or two we have been unable to help but have kept an eye on until the have safely refloated.

Leon Woodrow

Nature Warden