

## *Newsletter*

### Summer / Autumn 2006

Welcome to summer / autumn edition of the Caerlaverock National Nature Reserve newsletter. Although the NNR is considered by many to be at its best during the winter months there is still much to see and do on one of Scotland's finest reserves during the summer - read on to discover more.

### Reserve Update

The Reserve has been home to some interesting visitors the past few months, so always remember to bring your binoculars to check out that curious looking bird in the distance!

A pair of Marsh Harriers spent a couple of weeks hunting along the Merse and around the Flooders, the large reed beds providing ideal habitat for them. Hopefully in the future a pair may decide to stay on and breed.



A non-breeding pair of Ospreys arrived in June. The quiet of the Sanctuary merse, along with the excellent mullet fishing in the creeks and channels on the Blackshaw bank, made it the ideal place to spend the summer. A third bird joined up with them in August.

The River Nith has been frequented by up to 5 Little Egrets. These small white herons feed in shallow water, often dashing about after small fish. The individual pictured was observed on a wet September morning at the North Western boundary of the reserve at Kenneth Bank, so even if the weather is miserable take some time to check out Caerlaverock NNR as the sights may well make the weather not seem so bad after all.

August saw the first feral geese arriving with around 600 Greylag and 200 Canada geese. The first Pinkfeet arrived at the end of September, from their breeding grounds on the central plateau in Iceland. The NNR is often used as a stop over at this time of year before they travel further south to places like the Ribble and Wash estuaries.

The reserve's most famous visitors, Barnacle Geese, arrived in large numbers towards the end of September. The entire breeding population from Svalbard, a group of Norwegian islands in the Arctic Ocean, spend the winter on the Solway Firth.

## Reserve update.



Work begins the new pool situated on the Flooders down the loaning from Hollands Farm.

A 20 tonne digger was drafted in to excavate the first of some new pools on the reserve.

This pool is situated between a well established population of Natterjack toads towards the eastern edge of the reserve and a smaller population to the west. It is hoped this new pool will help to link the existing populations.

The rare Natterjack toad is at its most northerly point in the U.K. here on the inner Solway.

## Future Events

### **October 29<sup>th</sup>, 4.00 pm:- Evening Flight – Hollands Car park, Caerlaverock.**

Join SNH staff on this unusual event, and experience the sights and sounds of a wildfowl flight at close quarters.

### **November 7<sup>th</sup>, 12.00 pm:- High Tide – Castle Corner Car park, Caerlaverock.**

Come and witness the spectacle of a spring tide flooding over Blackshaw Bank, forcing thousands of wading birds onto high tide roosts on the merse. Bring your binoculars to make the most of close up views of the many different species that spend the majority of their time feeding far out on the vast mudflats on the NNR.

### **January 21<sup>st</sup>, 7.30 am:- Wild Goose Chase – Castle Corner Car park, Caerlaverock.**

An early start is essential in the winter months to observe thousands of geese leaving their roosting sites to travel inland to feed. The clamour of thousands of Barnacle geese make the early rise well worth the effort. Remember to bring something warm to keep the morning chill at bay.

**Please note booking is essential for all events! Just give the reserve office a call on 01387 770275.**

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