



News from The Moors at Arne



October 2024 edition



Welcome to the latest update from The Moors at Arne project where you can find out all about the latest happenings on site and learn more about this fascinating project.

This month we have lots of lovely ecology updates for you as well as a round up of construction highlights. We hope you enjoy this edition.

Site updates

A specialist machine has been spraying seed mixed with water and mulch onto the new embankments using a process called hydroseeding. This is a very efficient way to seed a large area and the biodegradable mulch, which gives the bank the green hue, will help to ensure that the seed stays in place as it establishes.

Next year, the seed that was brush-harvested from site will be added to the embankments. This is an important step to help ensure that plant genetics are maintained within the site.



Turf translocation continues with an area of turf the size of 16 football pitches being moved from the future intertidal area into the new western freshwater area. This process, using thick slabs of turf, will ensure that the freshwater area contains plenty of the same high quality grassland habitat which currently exists at Arne Moors.

The structures are also progressing. We are now working on the three small flow control structures to the east of site as well as fitting the special fish and eel friendly flap valves onto the Furzebrook structure.

Bird surveys Q&A – Part two



Last month we shared the first part of a Q&A with principal ecologist Matt Clarke. If you missed this you can catch up with the previous issue on the project web page.

This month we are pleased to share the second half of this interesting overview of birdlife at Arne Moors, with a look towards the future.

Why is intertidal habitat so important for birds?

Inter-tidal habitat is dynamic and supports a wide range of specialist invertebrates and plants that in turn provide vital feeding grounds for many bird species in particular on passage through the UK as well as for over-wintering species and some breeding species around the coast of the UK. This resource fuels the demands of the great migratory journeys that many birds undertake each year across the globe and also provides sustenance at times of year when food is scarce on land.

Do you expect to see a difference in bird species visiting the site once the breaches are made and the intertidal area is established?

Yes there will be a marked change in the bird population present on site once the intertidal habitats have established. Waders and wildfowl currently recorded occasionally on site and at the northern fringes will be much more abundant here. More specialist shorebirds such as black-winged godwits, dunlin, knot and common and green sandpiper are likely to colonise the new habitats in the inundation area but species such as shelduck and redshank will remain and increase in number on site. Freshwater areas to the south of the new embankment, both newly created and retained, will continue to support the assemblage of birds present previously on site.

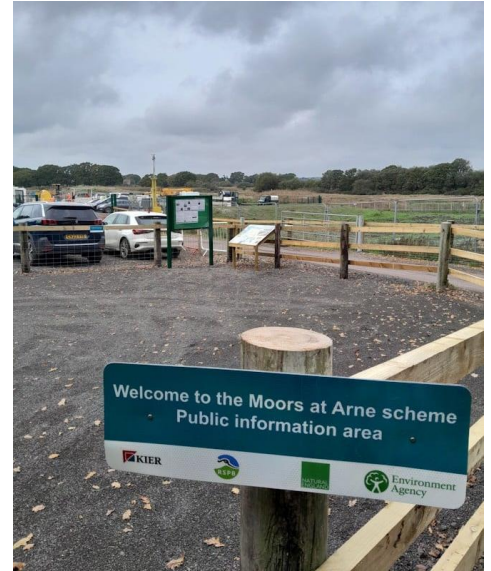
Ruby Jarvis is our Environment Adviser on the project and plays an important role in ensuring the results of the bird surveys are factored into the construction programme.

Ruby explained how the team ensure nesting birds are not disturbed during the works:

Working in such proximity to a harbour gives us many ecological constraints, with nesting birds being the biggest as our construction period overlaps with nesting bird season. During this time Matt was able to watch behaviours of birds across the site, focusing on areas where works were occurring. The ecology team were doing daily checks ensuring no nests were on machines and putting up exclusion zones where birds were displaying nesting behaviour. The exclusion zone locations were also mapped and communicated to the wider team. With the teams' efforts we were able to see a wide range of birds successfully fledge.

Community updates

As part of our commitment to keeping local people informed about the project we have now created a small information area near the site entrance. Here, anyone can pop in and view information about the scheme during the construction phase. The noticeboard will be updated regularly until the scheme is complete. We would welcome any feedback on how this area could be further improved.



The team recently held a Macmillan coffee morning at the site offices to help raise vital funds for this special charity which means so much to so many.

The keen bakers among us brought in a selection of delicious treats which were enjoyed by staff, sub-contractors and visitors during the morning. In total an amazing £198 was raised for Macmillan.



Ecology updates



Water voles are listed as a rare and most threatened species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act and all works which have potential to disturb them or their habitat require a licence from Natural England. We have obtained such a licence and there is a strategy to support its delivery.

Yes, that is a Pringles tube and yes, that is a water vole poking out of it!

As part of the licenced water vole mitigation measures here on site, some of the ecology team recently undertook some specialist training to enable them to safely trap and handle water voles.

But why the Pringles tubes? Whilst it may seem a little strange at first, it's actually very similar in shape and size to a water vole burrow. As prey animals, their instinct is to hide away so the tubes provide a perfect refuge.

The team thoroughly enjoyed the training and are now applying their learning out on site.



In the last month, over 30 water voles have been carefully trapped and relocated to a suitable alternative location away from site. Here are some of them all packed up with a supply of snacks and plenty of cosy hay ready for their journey. The water vole strategy also involves keeping a healthy population of water voles on site and this is done using specialist fencing which ensures the remaining water voles are kept safe until they can be released into the new freshwater area which has been designed with great care to ensure plenty of optimal water vole habitat.



The ecology team have also started to humanely trap other small mammals and move them away from the construction activity in order to keep as many animals as possible safe. This initiative started after the team discovered harvest mice nesting in an area where works were due to take place. During the first day, three wood mice and three field voles were trapped and released. As the traps were opened indoors on this occasion, each trap was placed in a large bag before being opened to prevent any creatures darting off inside the building! Each mammal was checked and recorded then taken

outside for release. We have since trapped and released several bank voles as well as some harvest mice which are an endangered species and are being transferred to a captive breeding programme.

What's next?

We are almost at the end of the working season for 2024 and will be focussing on completing some of the structures as well as the western embankment and tie-in works.



Ecological works such as surveying will continue throughout the winter as well as certain maintenance activities including as vegetation management.

Keeping in touch

We welcome your feedback and are here to answer any questions you may have about the project. Please email arne@kier.co.uk

For more information about the project please visit our web pages <https://www.dorsetcoast.com/project/moors-at-arne-coastal-change-project/>

