

Message from the Chair

There are changes happening at the reserve in the way we are governed and organised. I have outlined these briefly before. Equally, there are on-going discussions with the MoD about this and funding etc. The Board Trustees are committed to securing the future of the reserve as we go forward.

One constant in an ever-changing world is the value and impact that volunteers bring to the work of the reserve. This covers the full gambit from the groundwork to governance! All these roles are vital to the work, and I applaud the many volunteers involved at all levels. Efforts big and small are truly appreciated to support the work that needs to be done to maintain and manage the reserve.

The Board Trustees are hoping to meet volunteers just before Christmas (I know - the C word!) and we look forward to that exchange.

In the meantime, thanks again for the tireless work you do.

Peter
Chairman, Board of Trustees

All-inclusive bird screen

Some visitors to Foxglove Covert may have noticed a new structure at Spigot Mere. The new half hide, or 'podule' as we have christened it, was born of an idea we had to enable accessible viewing at Spigot, previously invisible to anyone in a wheelchair. We put the idea to Sophie and Gerry at the same time offering to sponsor the build. It was lovely that they took on the idea and that volunteers helped to make our idea a reality. A few fencing hurdles disguising anyone going to or fro completes the project.



Jan enjoying the view!

I have already spent some time just taking in all the new views distant and near. At this time of year, it is still a relaxing place to sit, a calming presence which lifts my spirits and refreshes my soul. The new hide will allow

anyone to sit and enjoy the mere all year round and be able to watch birds nesting, feeding and fledging as well as

damselies and dragonflies and so much more all year round. Another instance where Foxglove staff and volunteers have made the reserve even more accessible to all. My first time sitting and watching the mere inspired me to write this poem:

Something happened to me today
 Something much anticipated...
 Taking the newly laid path we ascended,
 Vistas, unseen by me before
 Bombarding my senses as we neared the top
 Eyes closed as Andrew sat me by the window
 Eyes open, I saw the mere, in all its beauty for the very first time
 Tears hovered as sun sparkled on water and wind blew reeds, I took it all in
 Just when I thought there would be none
 A dragonfly hovered above the reeds as if to say welcome
 It was glorious, it reached my soul and was happily received
 Something happened to me today,
 Something wonderful.

So, Foxglove, this stunning reserve has done it again, distracting me from my pain, raising my spirit and placing a joy in my heart. It has opened up the chance to look over Spigot Mere, a place where able and less able bodied alike can share the new platform and its views through the seasons.

Jan Gillings

Raising awareness

Funding for the work of the reserve is all important and some of this comes from the visitors we receive and the money they spend on car parking, donations and the shop etc. A small group of us are looking at how we 'market' and advertise the reserve to the public and military community. This is to see how we can improve raising awareness of the reserve and in turn improve visitor numbers, particularly of military personnel and the local community.

If you have any ideas on what you think might help or to raise additional funds, we would be glad to hear from you as this work gets started.

Peter and Mark (Trustees) and Sophie

Would you prefer to switch to an online version of Undergrowth?

**If so please email
foxglovelnr@btinternet.com**

CES Notes

Running a CES site helps us to better understand the causes of population change. It does this by measuring changes in abundance survival and productivity (number of juveniles caught per adult). National trends in survival and productivity are published as part of the BirdTrends report (www.bto.org/birdtrends) and on the CES website (www.bto.org/ces). The following page presents some results from Foxglove, alongside summarised data from other CES sites.

The plots show how our site (the red dot) compares in terms of catching efficiency (captures per metre of net). The thick black line each year marks the median across all sites. The median represents the midpoint of catches - there will be as many sites below as above this point. This includes both new and subsequent captures. The lowest and highest catches by site are indicated by the 'whiskers'. The middle 50% of sites fall within the boxes, so this represents the catch on a 'typical' site.

In the first plot, top left, the total catch of all species is shown for each year together with a summary of the catches on other CES sites. If the red dot falls within the box we caught about as well as everyone else that year; if the red dot falls on the upper (or lower) whisker then we fared better (or worse) than most. Top right our catch of young and adult birds for 2021 is plotted against everyone else's separately for the 12 most commonly caught species at our site. The lower pair of graphs shows how our catch of young and adult birds on each visit compared with everyone else's.

CES is supported by a partnership between the BTO and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) on behalf of the country agencies (Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, Scottish Natural Heritage and DAERA in Northern Ireland). It is part of the British and Irish Ringing Scheme which is funded by the BTO/JNCC Partnership, The National Parks and Wildlife Service (Ireland) and the ringers themselves.

Thank you for your continued support for CES.



The CES team

30 Species – An update

In our 30th year we decided that it would be fun to try to find 30 new species on the reserve, never really thinking that we would achieve such a grand goal.

As the year progressed the new species rolled in and they just kept coming, 30 came and went! There were invertebrates by the score. Although the cold moth morning in August only yielded few new moth species, the weekly moth trapping did record some. A recent survey of leaf mines which pupate into moths has added 20 new species to the list. Two new butterflies were recorded on the reserve. Avocets were spotted on Spigot Mere, and we are hoping that they will return next year. It has been an excellent year for fungi and the Species Team have excelled themselves finding many new ones.

Our current new species for the year stands at 83 new species, an amazing total! Thanks go to the specialists who have given their time to explore Foxglove and search out new species. Thanks also go to the Reserve Managers and volunteers whose hard work across the reserve to improve and maintain the many habitats for such a varied collection of species that call Foxglove home. And finally, thanks to the Species Team who have done much of the recording and collating of data.

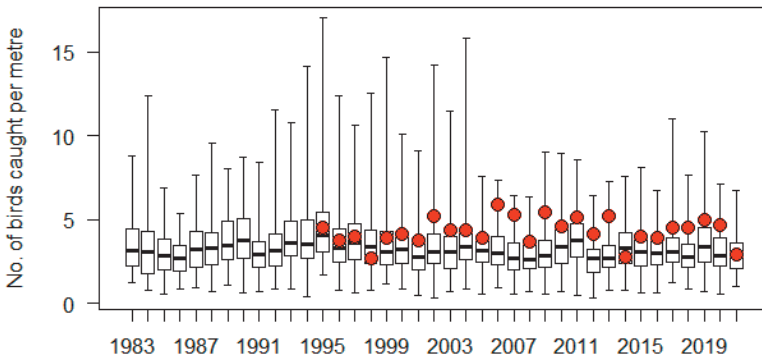
We are not yet at the end of the year so we are wondering if any more species will be found. Someone suggested we could reach 100?!

From September 2022 through to August 2023 we are carrying out an audit of species already on the list, especially those that have not been recorded recently. During this time, we will be asking people to look for certain species and record them on our observation boards.

Elizabeth Dickinson

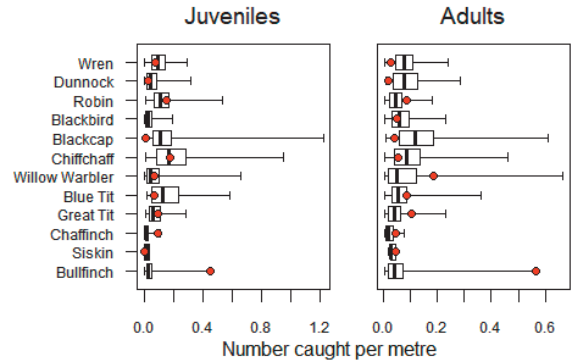
Results for CES Site 420 in 2021

How your site compares across years



In 2021 your site caught 2.94 birds per metre, compared to a median of 2.76 birds

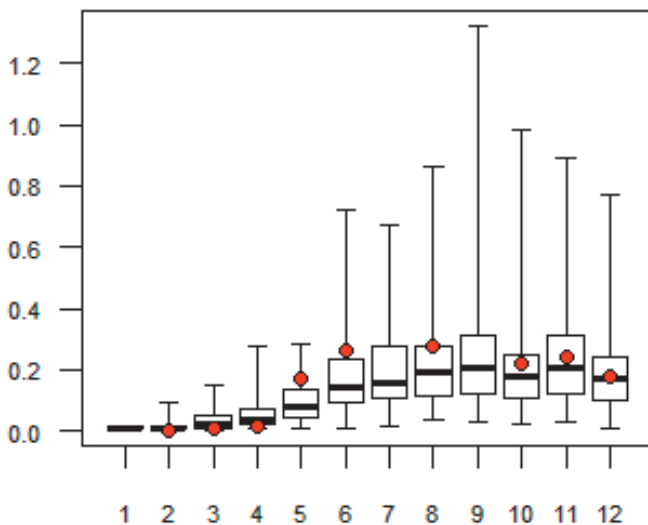
How your site did this year



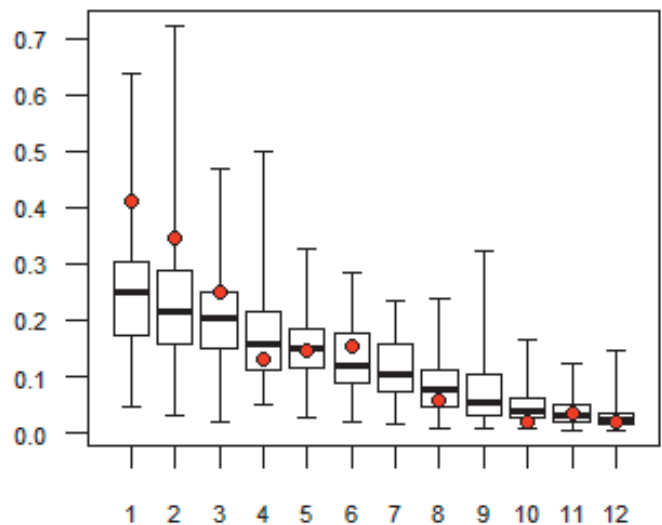
There were 380 juvenile captures and 434 adult captures in 2021

How the season went

Juveniles



Adults



Number of birds caught on each visit

Christmas shopping

If you are looking for something a little different for Christmas presents then Foxglove has a variety of different things for sale, from bird food, nest boxes, books, jewellery, printed bags, to tea towels, honey and candles. Drop into the Field Centre to have a browse.

Don't forget that there are also bird and bat boxes that can be adopted.



Our shop

My first year as a Foxglove Volunteer

I have been volunteering on the reserve for over a year now. Our planned move to Richmond from Fife in Scotland was somewhat delayed due to the pandemic but eventually we moved in April 2021. Movements and mixing indoors were still restricted so it was a while before I could start my much-anticipated volunteering at Foxglove Covert.

I had been an education volunteer for some years with the RSPB in Scotland, mainly working with primary age children outdoors so that was what I was particularly looking forward to when I first contacted the reserve managers in 2020. Of course, when the children were only just back in school, the education visits in summer 2021 were down on previous years because school staff had a lot on their plates. However, we did have a few school visits that summer, more in the autumn term and numbers have increased again this year.

The education facilities here are the best I've ever experienced with both indoor and outdoor classrooms and a huge range of habitats to work in. The excitement on the children's faces



Let's Learn Moor

when they catch sticklebacks and tadpoles not to mention pond snails and caddis larvae is truly infectious. Standing around the sinks on the dipping platforms admiring our catches after a pond dipping session is absolutely one of my favourite times.

Mini beast hunts are another favourite and sweep netting in the meadow with gasps of amazement as they see how far the grasshoppers jump is right up there too!

Other education highlights are volunteering on open days. Making leaf bunting by placing leaves between paper and cloth and hammering it on a slice of wood was one of my favourites. Noisy but satisfying! I also enjoyed being part of the team working with children from all over Yorkshire on the 'Let's Learn Moor' event, teaching them about bird ringing and identifying common bird songs.

However, what I didn't expect about my volunteering here was how much I would enjoy being part of the Tuesday and Thursday volunteer groups on weeks when there aren't any school groups. We are out on the reserve in all weathers and seasons and there are always plenty of jobs for us to do. Every week is different and some of the jobs are part of the annual or biennial reserve plan drawn up by the Reserve Managers maintaining habitats and maintaining and repairing sheds and board walks, but others are responding to the weather or major events such as storm Arwen last October when the reserve lost so many trees. Just a few of the activities I have been part of

include; cutting back bracken to allow meadow flowers to grow, coppicing Willow Carr and Hazel, weaving Hazel cuttings into a packed 'hedge', clearing paths to allow easy access for visitors, removing brash from the forested areas both for fire prevention and after the trees were so badly damaged, painting doors and squirrel baffles, filling and cleaning out bird feeders, removing reeds that had started to block waterways, replacing tree stakes and protectors that have been knocked down and much, much more.

The tasks are sometimes challenging and always fun because working in a group makes the time just fly by. I have made many friends and it's lovely to come into the reserve on a Tuesday or Thursday morning and catch up before we head out for our work that day. There are always plenty of drinks breaks where we can chat too (it's not all work).

Another aspect of volunteering that I've really enjoyed is learning how the reserve works and coming to appreciate the huge diversity of tasks that the reserve managers must do. Everything from how water flows through the reserve to how habitats are managed to organising activity days for visitors and writing blogs plus many more mundane tasks around running the visitor centre. I also really enjoy meeting visitors and chatting to them as they meet us working on the reserve.

The last aspect of volunteering that I have tried recently is joining the species team who meet on a Wednesday at the reserve (often at a very early hour to investigate what is in the moth traps that are set up on a Tuesday night). I have an awful lot to learn about moths, wildflowers and fungi and hope to continue doing that over the next few years.

Visiting the reserve in any of these volunteering capacities always lifts my spirits. A combination of being outdoors in beautiful surroundings and being part of a team is something I really enjoy. If you have some time to spare (even if it's not every week) I would really recommend you come and give it a try.

Elizabeth Downes

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