

RED RIVER LNR

Quarterly SLA Report for Sept – end December 2021

General background aims and objectives.

The aim is to work in partnership with the Friends of Red River community group to deliver an annual work programme, agreed with Heanor and Loscoe Town Council representatives, on the Red River Local Nature Reserve at Loscoe.

The intention is to improve the site for the benefit of the local community by ensuring public access, and to manage, maintain and develop the site to improve habitats and encourage biodiversity of species. The Local Nature Reserve is home to a variety of both local and visiting wildlife. Regular wildlife recording visits are made to record the changing wildlife throughout the seasons.

Additional funding will be sought to deliver a selection of environmental events, activities, and guided walks to ensure ongoing public interest and involvement.



Summary of Volunteer Practical Tasks and Wildlife Recording Visits

This year continues to be much better than last year regarding Covid-19 and conservation tasks are going well. However Covid-19 has stopped us organising community conservation talks and events. We have carried out 6 days of conservation tasks this quarter. The details of these tasks are shown below. These have been very well attended with 16 individuals taking part and 20.5 volunteer days carried out. Three wildlife recording visits were made to ensure each month was covered during quarter three.

Conservation Task Day Details

OCTOBER

On Saturday 16 October we held a Friends of Red River conservation task in conjunction with the church. The tasks focussed on the grounds within the church yard and also the bank on the edge of the church car park. The annual vegetation clearance, included pruning and shaping bushes, cutting back willow, elder etc. Selectively coppicing some hazels and making habitat piles. The bank was strimmed to clear the

comfrey and nettles. This conservation task was well attended by 7 Red River volunteers and 2 volunteers from the church. The church kindly provided tea and coffee and Marion brought the biscuits.



NOVEMBER

On Friday 5 November's conservation task there was a good attendance of 6 volunteers and Marion. We coppiced 5 hazel and installed 3 more posts for the handrail for the steps up to football. Coppicing is a traditional way of managing woodland that has been carried out for centuries. By cutting back the hazel trees carefully to the ground in the winter (see photograph below), this promotes growth of straight useful sections of timber. This is usually carried out every 7 to 9 years in rotation. We have ensured that we have followed this format and across the whole of Red River and we have hazel trees at different ages to increase the value for wildlife. We have kept all the straight sections of hazel which are being used for as stakes for the hedgelaying.



On Saturday 13 November held a Friends of Red River conservation task. This was well attended by 9 volunteers and Marion. Five more hazels were coppiced and the young hedge on the meadow was cleared of bramble and trimmed back. We started hedgelaying the hedge that runs from the boundary close to the church going west along the top of the first meadow. We are lucky to have some experienced hedge layers within this group. Marion is particularly keen to include all the volunteers so that they gain new skills and knowledge. Please see photographs below clearing young hedge row and lovely habitat pile.



Below hedge before laying



In process of being hedge laid



On Friday 26 November's conservation task we continued with hedgelaying. There was a great turn out of 8 volunteers and Marion. It is pleasing that the group is interested in learning how to hedgelay. Ian is a natural! We completed 5 metres.

DECEMBER

On Saturday 11 December we held a Friends of Red River conservation task. This was attended by 6 volunteers led by Marion. We continued with the hedgelaying. A section of the hedge has failed (3 metres) and will need planting up with young trees in the New Year. We also had to pollard a field maple as it had been so damaged by Grey Squirrels. We made habitat piles with the brash which will provide a great home for lots of invertebrates. A litter pick was also carried out across the site. Casual observations of wildlife were also noted.

On Friday 17 December, we held another hedge laying session with a good attendance of 5 volunteers and Marion. Several over hanging ash branches also were taken back using the long pole saw. The group is

gaining more skills as time is going along. There is a great sense of satisfaction, and they all enjoy being out in the fresh air.



Meetings

The Friends of Red River held their first meeting for over a year (due to the Corona virus outbreak) on 17 November 2021 at 7pm at The Gate Inn. The meeting went well and many details were discussed. Particular discussion was held of whether to organise the annual public Christmas Wreath making event in December. The Committee decided against holding the event due to the ongoing concern regarding the Corona virus.

Publicity

Following the Committee Meeting publicity posters have now been updated with Marion's details and will be put up in local notice boards. Websites have also been updated.

Dates of our published task programme are now on various websites and volunteers are now being actively engaged in conservation tasks, though being mindful of social distancing.

Funding

The committee members and Groundwork staff continue to seek out funding opportunities to support our work on the reserve.

Statistics

Summary Statistics - Quarter 3	
No. of individual volunteers on practical tasks	16
No. of individual volunteers on wildlife recording	3
No. of Practical volunteer days contributed by adult volunteers (123.5hrs divide by 6hrs) = 20.5	20.5
No. of volunteer days contributed by volunteers on wildlife recording (12 hours divide by 6 hours) =2	2
No of activities/practical days delivered by Groundwork Staff	6
No of wildlife recording visits delivered by Groundwork Staff	3
No of additional days spent on site by extra Groundwork Staff	2

Wildlife Recording

Groundwork staff look and listen out for wildlife on most of the task days on the reserve, but often we are too involved with supervising the volunteers to systematically, record everything seen or heard. We are helped on these recording sessions by our regular volunteers which include Gary Wain, Chris Wain and Ben Wain who help with this. Recording visits took place on Monday 18 October, Friday 26 November and Tuesday 28 December 2021. These monthly recording visits help to build up a picture of what is likely to be seen during the year giving a good indication of the wildlife to be found on the reserve in the different

seasons. These types of records become more valuable over time and help to influence the habitat management on the reserve.

Birds

The bird species seen or heard during quarter 3, (October to the end of December 2021) are shown in the table below. The table shows a list of all the species seen in the previous 18 months – Herring Gull is a new bird which had not been recorded in the previous 18 months. The number of bird species recorded in quarter 3 was 32.

Monthly Records

The month by month summary is shown below:-

October

On the 18 October it was a bit misty and some rain later on however 11 species of bird were recorded – see table. In addition, it was good to record that both Red Campion and Rough Hawkbit were in flower and there were lovely rose hips on show. The trees were showing beautiful Autumn colours and there were lots of fungi seen.

November

Generally, it was a mild month but with a surprise of snow at the end of the month. On 26 November 22 species of bird were recorded which was very good. This included Redwing which is a winter migrant which takes advantage of our milder winters. There were lots of berries, Hawthorn and Guelder Rose which many birds were feeding on. Six Bullfinches were seen feeding at once on the edge of woodland close to the surfaced games area on Charles Hill fields.

During the conservation task earlier in the month on 5th November casual bird records which included 13 species of bird of which 4 species were not seen later in the month - Great Spotted Woodpecker, Green Woodpecker, Raven and Nuthatch. Also on 13 November during conservation task day – 2 additional bird species recorded – Grey Wagtail, Long Tailed Tit bringing the total number of bird species recorded during November to 28. Only Red campion was still in flower during this month.

December

There was no snow in December, though often cool and foggy and towards the end of the month it was unseasonably mild. Wildlife recording took place on 28 December 2021. There were no plants in flower and no butterflies and the only mammal recorded was Grey Squirrel. 18 Species of birds were recorded and in addition during 11 December conservation day casual observations of birds 10 species seen of which two Bullfinch, Blackbird were not recorded during 28 December wildlife recording session bringing up the total to 20 birds species seen. It is pleasing to that the Grey Wagtail was seen both on 11 and 28 December 2021. See bird records below.

Bird Species	Oct	Nov	Dec	Comments
Bullfinch	Y	Y	Y	6 seen together feeding on berries in Oct
Chaffinch		Y	Y	
Goldfinch		Y		
Greenfinch				
Buzzard		Y		
Sparrow Hawk				
Kestrel		Y		
Dunnock		Y		
Robin	Y	Y	Y	
Wren	Y	Y	Y	
Grey Wagtail		Y	Y	
Pied Wagtail		Y		
Great Tit	Y	Y	Y	
Blue Tit	Y	Y	Y	
Coal Tit		Y		
Long Tailed Tit	Y	Y	Y	Large family groups 10+ in November
Mallard	Y	Y	Y	
Moorhen		Y	Y	
Pheasant		Y		Heard rather than seen
Chiff Chaff				Summer migrant
Blackcap				Summer migrant

Willow Warbler				Summer migrant
Crow		Y	Y	
Magpie	Y	Y	Y	
Jackdaw				
Jay			Y	
Starling			Y	
House Sparrow				
Nuthatch		Y		
Goldcrest				
Lesser B. B. Gull				
B. H. Gull	Y	Y	Y	Flying over site
Wood Pigeon	Y	Y	Y	
Stock Dove			Y	
Feral Pigeon				
Collared Dove				
G. S. Woodpecker		Y		
Green Woodpecker		Y		
Mistle Thrush		Y	Y	
Song Thrush				
Blackbird	Y	Y	Y	
Swallow				
Swift				
Field Fare				
Redwing		Y		Winter migrant
Tree Creeper				
Skylark				
Raven		Y		Heard
Rook				
Lapwing				
Tawny Owl				
Herring Gull			Y	Flying over site
Monthly Totals	11	28	20	
Quarterly Total	32			

Butterflies/ Dragonflies/ Amphibians/ Reptiles - There have been no records during this quarter. The only mammal recorded this quarter was Grey Squirrel.

Future Tasks - Groundwork staff (with volunteers and Friends of Red River) will continue with conservation and maintenance tasks as Covid-19 restrictions allow.

Planned tasks for Quarter 4 include continuing with the hedgelaying, cutting back willow and repairs to the post and rail fencing/hand railings. The following dates are set but more will be added. Please check with Marion prior to attendance as these dates may change.

Saturdays 10am - 12pm, 8 January, 12 Feb and Saturday 12 March 2022.

Fridays 9.30am to 2.30pm, 21 January, 4 February, 25 February and Friday 25 March 2022.