

March 2026

# eden estuary

Newsletter

At the time of writing the weather has significantly improved, but a short while ago we were experiencing horrendous conditions, which the sightings highlighted below can attest to:

## Bird News: February

**Waterfowl:** Mute Swan only had a few records with a peak count of 5 on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Whooper Swan had only one record on the 27<sup>th</sup> but a great count of 53 seen from the Eden Centre! The Pink-footed Goose roost peaked at 4000 on the 19<sup>th</sup>, again with considerable fluctuations throughout February. From the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 23<sup>rd</sup>, White-fronted Geese of the Russian-race were seen amongst them feeding on the fields upriver, peaking at 3 on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Pale-bellied Brent Geese, within the Balgove Bay area peaked at a count of 25 on the 17<sup>th</sup> and Barnacle Geese were reported on the 21<sup>st</sup> (2) and 22<sup>nd</sup> (1) seen around the Guardbridge area.

Mallard had a peak count of 80 on the 14<sup>th</sup>, similar to last month, but Wigeon had a peak count of 73 on the 12<sup>th</sup>, a huge drop on January. Teal numbers peaked at 127 on the 9<sup>th</sup>. Goldeneye were reported regularly, with courtship displays now active, and peaked at 20 on the 13<sup>th</sup>. Only 1 Scaup was reported on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> and two female Tufted Duck were seen from the Eden Centre on the 14<sup>th</sup>.

Shelduck's estuary-wide peak count was 187 on the 12<sup>th</sup>, the Eider peak count was 181 on the 19<sup>th</sup> and the Pintail peak count was only 22 on the 19<sup>th</sup>, a big drop from last month. Long-tailed Duck were only reported twice, 14 on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 2 on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

No sightings of Goosander were reported, but Red-breasted Merganser were still seen, peaking at 5 on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Waders:** The Oystercatcher peak count was 821 on the 7<sup>th</sup>. Curlew's peak count was 124 on the 19<sup>th</sup> and for Redshank it was 578 on the 9<sup>th</sup>. Greenshank had 6 reports, peaking at 14 on the 19<sup>th</sup>. Black-tailed Godwit had a peak of 17 on the 9<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> and Bar-tailed Godwit peaked at 47 on the 7<sup>th</sup>.

Grey Plover had only 1 record of 30 at Goosepools on the 19<sup>th</sup> and Lapwing had a peak count of only 22 on the 19<sup>th</sup>, one of only three reports.

Dunlin had regular sightings, peaking at approx. 500 on the 22<sup>nd</sup> from the Eden Centre. Knot only had 1 record of 210 at Goosepools on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

Snipe only had 1 record in February of 3 on the 13<sup>th</sup>, in the reedbeds upriver.

**Other notables:** Little Egret had a peak count of 4 on the 7<sup>th</sup> and Grey Heron only had a peak of 2 on the 9<sup>th</sup> but will be very active at their heronries. Cormorant had a peak count of 14 on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

Little Grebe only peaked at 2 on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, Great Crested Grebe had a report of 2 on the 19<sup>th</sup> and Slavonian Grebe peaked at 2 on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, with a solo bird frequenting the river in front of the Eden Centre and upriver of the bridges from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup>.

Two Great Northern Divers were reported on the 14<sup>th</sup> seen from Outhead.

Kingfisher only had a single record in February, of a solo bird seen from the Eden Centre on the 5<sup>th</sup>. An Iceland Gull was also seen from the Eden Centre on the 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>, a Little Gull was reported on the 9<sup>th</sup>, seen from Outhead and on the 19<sup>th</sup> a good count of 651 Common Gull was seen at Edenside.

Sparrowhawk had one report on the 6<sup>th</sup> seen upriver of the bridges, Buzzard

were again seen regularly, with a nice display of 4 circling on a thermal on the 13<sup>th</sup> along Kincaple Path. Peregrine had 4 records throughout February, with good views of hunting behaviour on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> from the Eden Centre and a Marsh Harrier was reported at Coble Shore on 18<sup>th</sup>.

## Bird of the Month: Common Crane

We had a surprise visit to the fields just south of Balgove Bay from this very unexpected species, first reported on the 17<sup>th</sup> and still about the morning after. To my knowledge, this is the only record of this species at the Estuary!



Photo by Jacqueline Herrington

## Mammal News: February

Roe Deer were listed on 4 occasions with 12 seen on the morning of the 6<sup>th</sup> near the upper-most reaches of the reserve. Later an Otter was viewed early afternoon for many minutes from Kincaple Path, catching flat-fish and porpoising upriver from the bridges.

## Reserve News: Eden Centre

The Eden Estuary Centre's access code was changed at the beginning of December. If you would like the new code, please contact me on the number or email address below or by phoning our head office on 01592 656080. Please note that **contact is best from Mon to Fri 9am-5pm (4.30pm Fri)**.

*Dominic*