

Lound Lakes News

Harris Hawk

A Harris Hawk has been sighted regularly at Lound Lakes and is thought to have escaped from or been released by its owner who sadly seems to have no intention of retrieving it. Harris Hawks natural habitat is in sparse woodland or semi-desert in central parts of the Americas. They are social birds and one of the few birds that hunt in packs. The term "packs" is used instead of flocks because their hunting methods have been compared to that of wolves. In England they are used in falconry



Harris Hawk (*Parabuteo unicinctus*), Lound WTW.
By Roger Jarmey

because they are intelligent and easy to train. The Harris Hawk at Lound has been sighted feasting on a moorhen. It is always a concern when a non-native species occurs on the reserve because of their potential impact on the carefully balanced natural food chain. It is also irresponsible and uncaring to release a captive bred into the wild and force it to fend for itself in unsuitable conditions, potentially causing suffering for the bird. For the birds welfare, and to ensure natural bird and mammal populations are not affected, it would be best to try and recapture the bird and find a suitable home for it. If you are interested in helping us with this crusade please report any sightings of the Harris Hawk to Holly Berwick.

Is Pillwort losing the fight at Lound?

This summer a survey of the lakes at Lound was carried out, funded by the Suffolk and Norfolk Biodiversity Partnerships (Lound Lakes form the county border) and the landowner Essex & Suffolk Water. The aim of the survey was to see if the interesting plant communities around the edges of the lakes had changed since the last survey in 2002. A specific focus was a tiny fern called Pillwort (*Pilularia globulifera*), a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species for both counties.



Pillwort (*Pilularia globulifera*), Hopton 2.
By Hannah Gray

Pillwort is a small fern that is easily mistaken for a delicate grass. It is semi-aquatic, growing by, or just submerged in, muddy shallow water bodies including lakes, ponds and marshes, often on bare acid soils with fluctuating water levels.

To be brutally honest, we weren't optimistic about the results, because the invasive species, *Crassula helmsii* (New Zealand Pygmyweed), has been established and expanding its range at Lound for over a decade. Unfortunately, our fears were realised, as the survey found no evidence of Pillwort.

What now? Pillwort is a very rare plant in Norfolk and Suffolk, occurring in only a couple of locations. Lound has always been considered a stronghold for this species. We need to think about creative ways of revitalising this species – evidence shows that the spores can remain viable in lake substrate for many years, and the plant will come back if conditions are right. If we can find a way to create the right water levels and manage the *Crassula* expansion, we could see a reverse in the fortunes of this species at Lound lakes, as well as other delicate native plants that would naturally co-exist with Pillwort.

Lound Site Warden: Holly Berwick

Mobile: 07795 460 866. Email: holly.berwick@eswater.co.uk

Lound Lakes News

Injured Osprey

In October last year we had a visit from an Osprey. They are regularly sighted in the Broads and surrounding areas while migrating to Africa for the winter in autumn and again heading north in the spring. Unfortunately, the bird managed to injure itself while fishing over the lakes and was seen struggling in the shallows. Luckily it managed to drag itself out on the bank and survived a night without being attacked by predators. In the morning, it was found by Scot Elliot (ESW) and Holly Berwick (Warden) and taken to the Raptor Trust to be seen by a specialist vet. Having sustained a compound fracture to its metacarpals (broken wing), which would have been near impossible to recover from, the bird was sadly put to sleep. It was a ringed bird all the way from Stockholme and was in its first year. A juvenile osprey must learn to skilfully catch fish by diving into lakes and this can be a common cause of injury for these inexperienced birds. Although this is an upsetting story for this particular osprey, the population as a whole is in recovery and release programs have been very successful. With this in mind, lets hope for more visiting osprey at Lound - so keep your eyes peeled in march!



Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) Lound WTW
By Holly Berwick

Tony Brown's Diary - 15th December 1970

"My ramble this morning was mainly in the eastern end of the reserve, there were very few fungi specimens around many of them having had an excellent early season but now well past their best and their season having ended. A holly tree was absolutely laden with berries and a small flock of redwings were busily gorging themselves on them. Using my knife I dug into an old rotting log on the ground to see what I could find. I found two specimens of the beetle pterostichus madidus and a violet ground beetle carabus violaceus all in hibernation. Under another rotten log I found a beautiful slow worm all coiled up that just momentarily stirred and then lay still. I left it uncovered just long enough to take a photograph and then rolled the log back again. A small flock of goldcrests were flitting around in the conifer trees and a flock of around fifteen siskins were feeding on the remaining alder seeds. I stood watching a heron standing by a mole hill, through my binoculars. A large flock of probably 100 fieldfares flew over cackling. The heron stood motionless by the hillock, he must have seen some movement of the soil caused by the mole below and hoped he could secure the little fellow for a meal. I didn't see him succeed in this since I continued my ramble. As is normal on my early morning rambles, time catches up and I had to leave for my days work."



Slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*)

It is interesting to think about how Lound Lakes has change over the last 40 years and is reassuring that all the birds and animal Tony mentions are still sighted across the reserve. It is unfortunate that it is not the same story for pillwort. If you are interested in helping maintain and improve the habitat at Lound Lakes join our friendly volunteers group. For more details contact Holly Berwick.

Lound Site Warden: Holly Berwick

Mobile: 07795 460 866. Email: holly.berwick@eswater.co.uk