



Newsletter, Autumn 2022

Red Kite Breeding, Ringing and Wing-Tagging – Ken Sanderson & John Barrett

In the Summer Newsletter we reported that only two active nests had been located in Northumberland and that we were hopeful that more successful breeding sites would be found as there had been a significant increase in kite sightings in the west of the county. Those hopes were realised with the sightings of fledged juveniles at three further locations taking the number of breeding sites in Northumberland to five. One other location in Northumberland has been designated as an occupied territory but no nest was found and no fledged juveniles noted. There were concerns that the number of fledged kite chicks was going to be significantly down on last year as only thirty-four were counted in the known active nests at the end of June, but the sighting of additional fledged juveniles in early July brought this total to forty-two (forty-four last year) from twenty-one nests.



The ringing and wing tagging of kite chicks was carried out on the 14th June. Work was carried out on only three nests where five chicks were ringed and tagged (wing tags X0 to X4). In general, nests were earlier this year and we were slightly later with visits, so chicks were too big to process in the majority of nests being monitored. An earlier date will be chosen next year. This year's right wing tag colour is yellow.

Time To Renew Your Membership – Jennifer Adams

September is an important month in the Friends of Red Kites calendar. The work carried out throughout the year by our team of dedicated volunteers who monitor the health and welfare of the red kites in the Derwent Valley, and surrounding areas, is very dependent on our wonderful members giving their continued support to enable this essential work to prevail.

Sadly, 2022, has seen an increase in the number of dead kites recovered in the area, some of which are still under investigation. The work FoRK undertakes, has never been more vital - the renewal of your membership contributes greatly to our mission to sustain and protect the stunningly, beautiful red kite adorning our skies.

Friends of Red Kites have had to cancel social and fundraising events in 2021-2022 due to Covid-19 safety concerns. It is very much hoped some events will be able to go ahead in the next twelve months.

Members will be sent information of any upcoming events along with the newsletter that is posted out four times a year.

FoRK look forward to having you as a member in 2022 – 2023.

Please find the membership form sent out as a separate document along with this newsletter.

Annual General Meeting - Harold Dobson

After an absence of three years, due to Covid-19, we held our first face-to-face AGM on Wednesday 22nd June at Swalwell Cricket Club with 20 members attending.

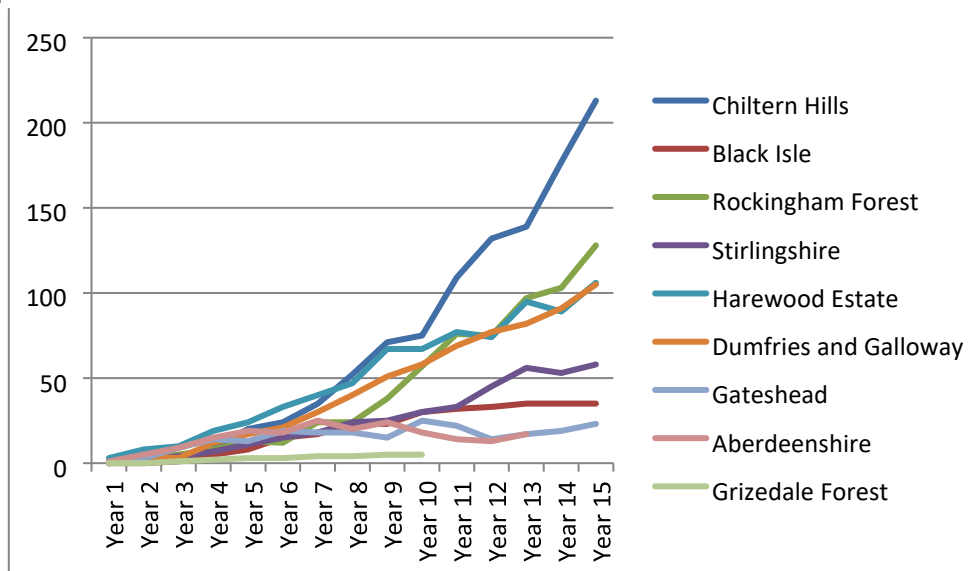
We got through the business in 20 minutes and welcomed Jennifer Adams & Lori Smith to the Committee.

Our Welfare Officer, John Barrett, gave an interesting 30-minute presentation having done research on the development or otherwise of the red kite populations in each of the UK reintroduction programmes. It appeared that our red kite population was not expanding at all. Discussion ensued as to the possible reasons why. [See next item]

The evening finished with a delightful buffet supper.

How are our red kites doing? - John Barrett

By comparing the populations of all the mainland red kite releases, it is possible to evaluate the relative success of each release. The graph below charts the growth of the number of breeding pairs from the various releases in the 15 years following each release.



There is a significant amount of variation in the observed population growth of each release. The number of breeding pairs from the Gateshead release after 15 years totalled only 23. By comparison the number in the Chilterns after 15 years was 213. Whilst the increase in the Chilterns population is significantly higher than in Gateshead, the range expansion (how far the birds disperse from the release area) is also

significantly greater. Red kites can be seen all over the south of England whilst our population is still largely confined to the Derwent Valley and immediate surrounds. The very slow rate of population growth and lack of any significant range expansion is a cause for concern. We are currently investigating the possible reasons for this and will provide updates in future newsletters.

Merchandise – Lori Smith

After a couple of difficult years, FoRK merchandise is once again available to purchase and, as usual, is proving popular with our health walkers. Although the Health Walks have not quite reached pre- Covid numbers, there are now enough regular walkers, plus some new walkers, to make it worthwhile. The garments do give us exposure and create interest when worn out and about.

We have a new order form and items listed are:

- sweatshirts
- zip-up Fleeces with zipped pockets
- polo shirts (long and short-sleeved)
- T-shirts
- beanies

They all come in a variety of colours and sizes, are of the same excellent quality as always and, of course, all are individually embroidered with the FoRK logo.



Due to a minimum order requirement, the items may take a little longer to arrive. However, everyone seems ok with this.

Order forms will be available on Health Walks and FoRK events.

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An Invitation – Sylvia Jones

You are warmly invited to join friends and enjoy home-made cakes and biscuits with a cup of tea or coffee at

The Red Kite Coffee Morning

AT: Fellside Church Hall, Ancaster Road, off Fellside Road, Whickham NE16 5BJ

WHEN: Saturday 29th October 2022

FROM: 10 am until 12 noon

Donations of cakes, biscuits or scones are warmly welcome, but not essential, on the day. We look forward to seeing you.



Lines from Wordsworth's "Written in early Spring" – Jim Third

When thinking of a poem to put in this Newsletter I was inspired by the fact when my children were young, they loved to go on holiday, at this time of the year, to the Lake District and visit "Rydal Mount", Wordsworth's House, and play in the lovely garden there. "Willy Wordsworth's Backyard" they called it ... so this is for them and all who love the Lakes and gardens.

*I heard a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sat reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts Bring
sad thoughts to the mind.*

*To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran;
And much it grieved my heart to think What man
has made of man.*

*Through primrose tufts in that green bower,
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.*

*The budding twigs spread out their fan,
To catch the breezy air; And I
must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.*

*If this belief from heaven be sent,
If such be Nature's holy plan, Have
I not reason to lament
What man has made of man?*



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