

UPDATE 3rd August 2025



Arctic tern, sandwich tern and common tern present at Rue Point on the 17th July



Two recently fledged little terns hiding in the rocks

BAP
Species

Schedule 1

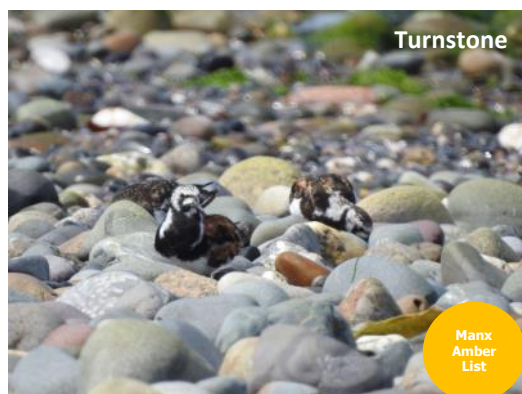
Legally protected
from disturbance
when nesting or with
dependent young

Manx
Red
List

A **knot** in breeding plumage was present at Rue Point from the 12th to 18th July and good numbers of sanderling have been stopping off to feed up.



Manx
Red
List



Turnstone

Manx
Amber
List



Sparrowhawk



Beach Nesting Birds Thirty pairs of **little tern** fledged a provisional 15 young. Approximately thirty-five pairs of **oystercatcher** and thirty pairs of **ringed plover** nested between Rue Point and the Point of Ayre and for both species an estimated third went on to fledge a single young.

At the Point of Ayre (privately owned) approximately 95% of **Arctic tern** eggs hatched successfully producing an estimated 70 chicks. Sadly herring gulls persistently predated all the chicks including those that had just learnt to fly. We will look to design new tern shelters over the winter to prevent gulls extracting chicks from the shelters. Ten pairs of **common gull** fledged twelve young. To find out more about beach nesting birds see the **Beach Nesting Birds Biodiversity Action Plan** <https://www.biosphere.im/our-projects/baps>

Beach A post-breeding flock of 100+ **curlew** are feeding and roosting on the beach on the NNR. Additionally, large flocks of **eider** duck are resting on the beach and feeding offshore and up to 300 eider can be seen. A flock of approximately 60 adult and juvenile **sandwich tern** are feeding off-shore and roosting at Rue Point. **Sanderling** and **dunlin** have arrived from their breeding grounds in Iceland and Greenland and are busily feeding up along the entire coastline before they travel further south for the winter. **Ringed plover** numbers are also increasing as birds nesting further north stop off to feed up before continuing their journeys to their wintering areas. There are also smaller numbers of **turnstone** stopping off to feed up on invertebrates before flying further south. A **knot**, 12 **redshank**, 2 **common tern** and 4 **Arctic tern** were also present for a few days in July.

Shingle beach plants produce a huge amount of seed to ensure they survive through to the next year. This seed source attracts large flocks of **linnets**. **Merlin** and **sparrowhawk** hunt the small waders and linnetts.

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Dunes and heath The final broods of **meadow pipits** and **skylarks** have fledged and they are no longer singing and displaying over heath. **Stonechat** had a good breeding season with most pairs fledging several broods. Twenty-one pairs of **curlew** attempted to breed and chick failure was far higher in 2025 compared to 2024. Small flocks of adult and juvenile **chough** are searching out their invertebrate food in the dune grassland. An adult **kestrel** is back hunting over the heath following an absence over the breeding season. The leucistic female **hen harrier** has returned to her wintering grounds and has been seen a few times recently hunting on the reserve.



Peter Christian

Offshore North-West Marine Nature Reserve Gannets, Manx shearwaters and large flocks of eider and shag are feeding off-shore. There are also small rafts of guillemot and razorbills; the mournful calls between adults and young can be heard some distance inland. The occasional Arctic skua has been spotted chasing sandwich terns to steal their catches. Over the next few weeks red-throated divers will return from their summer breeding grounds.



Field gentians will be starting to flower over the next few weeks. If the weather is favourable, these plants will flower for at least a month. The Ayres is the only place on the Isle of Man where this rare plant now occurs and it particularly likes growing on the paths. See [the Biodiversity Action Plan for more information](#).

A small moth trap was put out over night on the beach on 18th July and it caught 17 species including the nationally scarce shore wainscot and sand dart. Other less common species included Archer's dart and shuttle-shaped dart. All moths were released unharmed.

Archer's dart

Caterpillars feed on bed-straws and stitchworts

Shore wainscot (NS)

The larvae feed on marram during the night, burrowing in the sand to hide by day



Shuttle-shaped dart

Caterpillars feed on a variety of herbaceous plants

Sand dart (NS)

Caterpillars feed on sea rocket, frosted orache and prickly saltwort



Over the past two weeks **Heath bee flies** *Bombylius minor* have been recorded over a wide area. They emit a high pitched hum that is usually heard before the fly (that mimics a bee) is seen. To find out more about these fascinating creatures see the [Heath Bee fly Biodiversity Action Plan](#).



Phosphuga atrata also known as the black snail beetle has an elongated neck that it uses to reach into snail shells, which it sprays with a digestive fluid. The beetle feeds on live snails, insects and earthworms as well as carrion. Found in a wide variety of habitats including sand dunes.



Dune dappling



Dune waxcap

The fungi season will soon be with us. The fruiting bodies are found in a wide range of habitats. Many dune fungi are rare or unusual and are important components of dune biodiversity.



Dune cavalier



Dune inkcap



Blue roundhead

Grassland fungi come in a wide variety of colours and shapes including clubs, earth tongues, corals, puffballs and caps. The Isle of Man is notable for its species rich fungi grasslands and the Ayres is a good example. See the [Waxcap Grassland Biodiversity Action Plan](#) for more information.

Meadow coral



Star pinkgill

Earth tongues

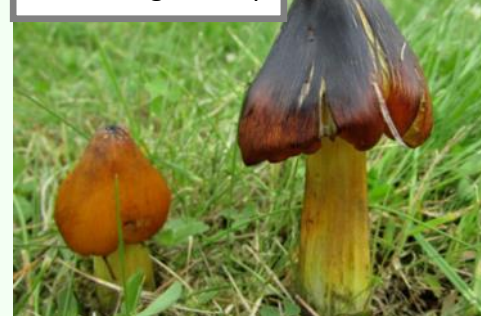


Blue-edged pinkgill

Mosaic puffball



Blackening waxcap



Ayres NNR Plantation



The Ayres NNR plantation covers 1 hectare and is included in the Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) and National Nature Reserve (NNR) designations. The small woodland was planted in 1967 before the nature conservation value of the Ayres was fully recognised. The majority of trees planted are **Scots pine** at the southern end and **lodgepole pine** in the northern section; there are also a few large **Monterey pines** and these are the ones that produce very large pine cones.

Now that the plantation is well established, it provides nesting habitat for **chaffinch**, **goldcrest**, **wood pigeon**, **raven** and **mistle thrush** and occasionally **kestrel**, **sparrowhawk** and **long-eared owl**. Ravens nest in the same place year after year and the massive stick nest is very obvious. Mistle thrush make beautiful nests in the forks of trees out of lichens and grasses. **Crossbill** occasionally visit the plantation and feed on pine cone seeds; these colourful birds are a treat to watch, their 'glip, glip' call is a clue to their presence.

Spring beauty, as it's name suggests, flowers in spring and grows extensively in the plantation. More recently the plantation has become colonised by **Tramman trees** (elder) from seed brought in by wood pigeons and expelled in their poo. Other woodland plants that have become established are **ivy**, **red campion**, **honeysuckle**, **male fern** and **broad buckler fern**.

The sheltered edges of the plantation are excellent places to spot invertebrates. There are still good numbers of **grayling** and **meadow brown** taking advantage of the favourable micro-climate created by the plantation.

The patch of **rock samphire** is currently flowering. This plant is rare in the north of the Island and usually favours rocky shorelines but its gradually expanding on the NNR.



The **western gorse** and **bell heather** are currently flowering offering great photo opportunities.

Tern fencing will be removed over the next week (weather permitting).