October 2026 Issue 21

Matters of the Mersey

A monthly newsletter by the Mersey Gateway Environmental Trust (MGET)



An artistic estuary view, Hannah Atkins



Mersey from Liverpool, Michael Johnson



Swan at Spike Island, Dave Flynn



Cormorant flying, Paula Terry



Photographs submitted by you...

Thank you for submitting your photos! If you'd like to be featured in our next newsletter, please send your photos to **info@mget.org.uk**

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www.mget.org.uk

Matters of the Mersey

A message from our Chief Executive



If you have been a regular reader of our newsletter, you know how proud I am of the work that takes place here in the Mersey estuary. The other day, I was fortunate enough to be invited to an Environment Agency Celebration Event to present the work we have done on the estuary to enhance the saltmarsh over the last year to a national audience. For a small charity like us, this is a major step in being recognised for the work we do.

In this edition, I also recognise the work of our Biodiversity Manager, Andy, who will have left the Trust by the time you are reading this. I am thankful, as well as proud, of four years of dedicated and passionate work, many ideas and getting stuck- in to improve the Mersey.

This means that the winter months might be a bit quieter now, as we're settling into a new staff routine. However, there is still plenty to see at this time of year: I recently read the summary of the Mersey WeBS count coordinator that we have over 15,000 pink footed geese on the estuary at the moment. And the next day, I stood and watched hundreds, if not thousands of those birds leave the estuary in the early morning in their recognisable V-shape formations to feed somewhere inland over the day. What wonderful thing to see at the start of the day. Keep an eye out for this fantastic sight!

I hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter.

- Andrea Drewitt, Chief Executive.

Matters of the Mersey

Fairwell Andy

This month we have sadly said farewell to our Biodiversity Manager, Andrew Wolfenden, who is moving on to an exciting new venture. Andy will be greatly missed, as will his incredible passion for and knowledge of the Mersey estuary.

Below is a goodbye from Andy, where he summarises his MGET experience...

'In 2022 I was lucky enough to be offered the position of Biodiversity Manager with the Mersey Gateway Environmental Trust, a job that has truly been one of the best I could have ever dreamed of. Now, sadly after four amazing years I will be leaving MGET to start a new adventure in the Lake District.

During my time as Biodiversity Manager I have worked on some truly amazing projects, these have ranged from sonar surveys and porpoise monitoring to sediment trapping and creek blocking (I did not anticipate I would become so familiar with coir sausages!). What has made them all so memorable though is the incredible people that I have worked with and got to know over the years.

MGET is a small charity, there are just three of us, but in reality we are so much more than that. Collaboration is at the heart of MGET and there are too many people who I have had the pleasure to work with to list here, but I just wanted to thank all of the community scientists that have helped us, all the students that have taught me so much, the universities and organisations that have supported our work and all the people that have stopped to talk to me when I've been out and about, and of course, all of the people who engage with us on social media. I'm so grateful to Andrea, Hannah, Steph and all of the amazing MGET directors for making my time so memorable.





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Fairwell Andy

As someone who grew up in the Mersey Valley, I have always been close to the river. As a teenager my dad would take me bird watching and my mum would take me fishing on the river in Woolston. Little did I know that 30 years later I would be fortunate enough to be working to help protect the river that had brought me so much happiness growing up.









I am going to really miss being part of the MGET family, working here has been way more than just a job to me and I have enjoyed every single minute. I am so proud of the work that we have done over the years and I know that MGET will continue to work hard to restore and enhance our beautiful river.'

We at MGET are incredibly thankful to Andy for his invaluable contribution to the Trust over the last 4 years, and wish him nothing but the very best for the future.

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Recent work: Bird survey training

A few of our volunteers that take place in our Water Quality Testing project are recent graduates looking to develop ecological skills. This month, we took them to Widnes Warth to provide training on how to conduct overwintering and breeding bird surveys.

The volunteers learned the methodology for conducting the different types of survey, including through walking transects and vantage point surveys, as well as gaining tips on improving their ID skills through sight and sound. They fed back that they had learned a lot from this session with Andy, with some of them hoping to pursue careers in survey work.









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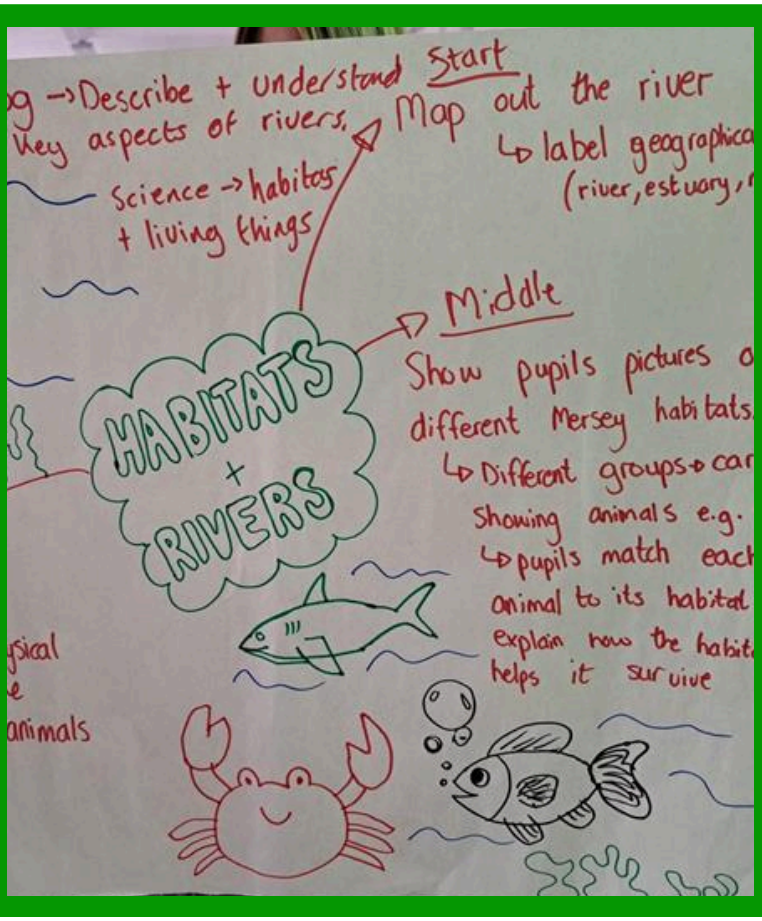
Matters of the Mersey

Recent work

Liverpool John Moores

We delivered a lecture to trainee teachers at LJMU this month. The lecture explored why teachers should teach pupils about the Mersey and where it fits into the curriculum.

From using Mersey wildlife as an example of a food chain, to learning about the impact of chemical pollution on the river, there are plenty of opportunities to including the Mersey in cross-curricular lessons.





Mersey Wilders talk

This month, we delivered a talk to Mersey Wilders, a group of young people united in a desire to bring ecological resilience and awareness to the Mersey.

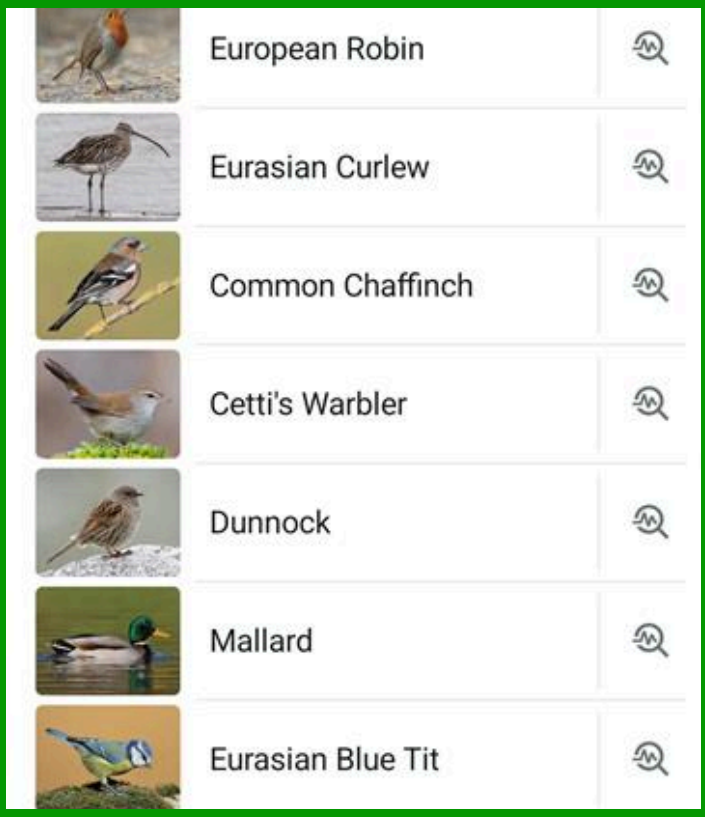
The group were enthusiastic to learn more from our Biodiversity Manager, Andy, about the wildlife of the Mersey estuary, and the projects we at MGET have been working on to discover new things about the estuary.

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Recent sightings

We've seen some exciting species around the estuary this month. We recorded the birds shown to the right using the bird ID app, Merlin. These species were recorded near the Future Flower in Widnes whilst doing bird survey training with some of our volunteers. We also saw and heard other species including common shelduck, kestrel, and meadow pipit. Hearing a curlew call on the Mersey estuary is really quite special.



Lots of fungi have been popping up at Wigg Island recently. If any fungi experts are interested in helping us brush up on our ID skills, please get in touch, as we would love to be less reliant on iNaturalist.











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Blog post: How you can contribute to biological recording

This month's blog was guest-written by Iona Cowell from RECORD, the Local Environmental Records Centre (LERC) for Cheshire, Halton, Warrington and Wirral. The core role of a LERC is to collect, manage and share environmental data for a specific region, helping to support conservation.





Some of the environmental data is habitat data (mapped information that tells us where important sites are and how they are protected), but a large proportion of this data is biological records. And the majority of these biological records come from people like you! Don't let the name put you off, a biological record is simply a wildlife observation.

If you've ever seen a butterfly, heard a bird singing, photographed a wildflower or spotted animal tracks, you're already halfway to creating a biological record. If you've ever taken part in citizen science initiatives such as the Big Garden Birdwatch, it's likely you've already created biological records without even knowing it! The blog explains how to to record wildlife sightings through the RECORD website or through apps like iNaturalist.

A huge thank you to Iona for writing this guest blog, which highlights how important it is to record wildlife sightings.

Head to www.mget.org.uk/news to read the full blog.

Thank you for reading!

Look out for our next Newsletter in November 2026.

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