

NOTES OF MARSH WORKING GROUP MEETING: 12 OCTOBER 2023

Present

CWaC Cllr Martin Barker
NTC Cllr Simon Davies
Miss Audrey Duncan (NTC Officer)
Dr Peter Enevoldson
Mr Graham Jones (RSPB Site Manager)

Apologies

NTC Cllr Brenda Marple

Monitoring

PE provided a report up to 10 October.

- Very large numbers of adults caught in traps, over 90% of which were marsh breeding mosquitoes. The surge was bigger and earlier than in previous years which was caused by a very wet July (ponds filled 2-9 July), mass synchronised hatching followed by a tide and another synchronised hatching and then a very warm September with a spring tide at the end of the month.
- Increase in the numbers of *Culiseta annulata* caught in traps compared to previous years which indicated that adult mosquitoes were surviving for longer.
- Trends appeared to be changing and surges were lasting longer (ie ending Oct/Nov instead of Sept/Oct).

The working group thanked PE for his helpful summary and for producing a written analysis. It was agreed that the report would be uploaded to the website once it had been updated to include data to the end of the year.

RSPB update

GJ reported that RSPB dredging works had concentrated on the reed bed that connected to the main ditch at Parkgate and that some new ditches had been added from Marshlands to Denhall (dog walking area). The main aim had been to keep sheep in and to protect this ecologically sensitive location.

GJ updated the Group on the ongoing sewerage overflow issues affecting the marshes and explained that there was an overflow pipe that went into a ditch by the car park at the bottom of Marshlands as well as pipes by the Old Quay pub and Denhall/Old Quay. As well as potentially clogging ditches, overflow could also enrich sediment resulting in heavily polluted waters unlikely to attract predators. GJ confirmed that discussions with Welsh Water were ongoing but urged that the profile of this problem be raised as a matter of environmental health as well as ecological threat.

Future dredging

It was agreed that, based on the results of the 2023 monitoring data, the priority for 2024 dredging should be West Vale and Little Neston and that a budget of £5,000 would be needed to undertake the work.

Any other business

AD to make contact with working group members in the new year to arrange a meeting for March 2024.