

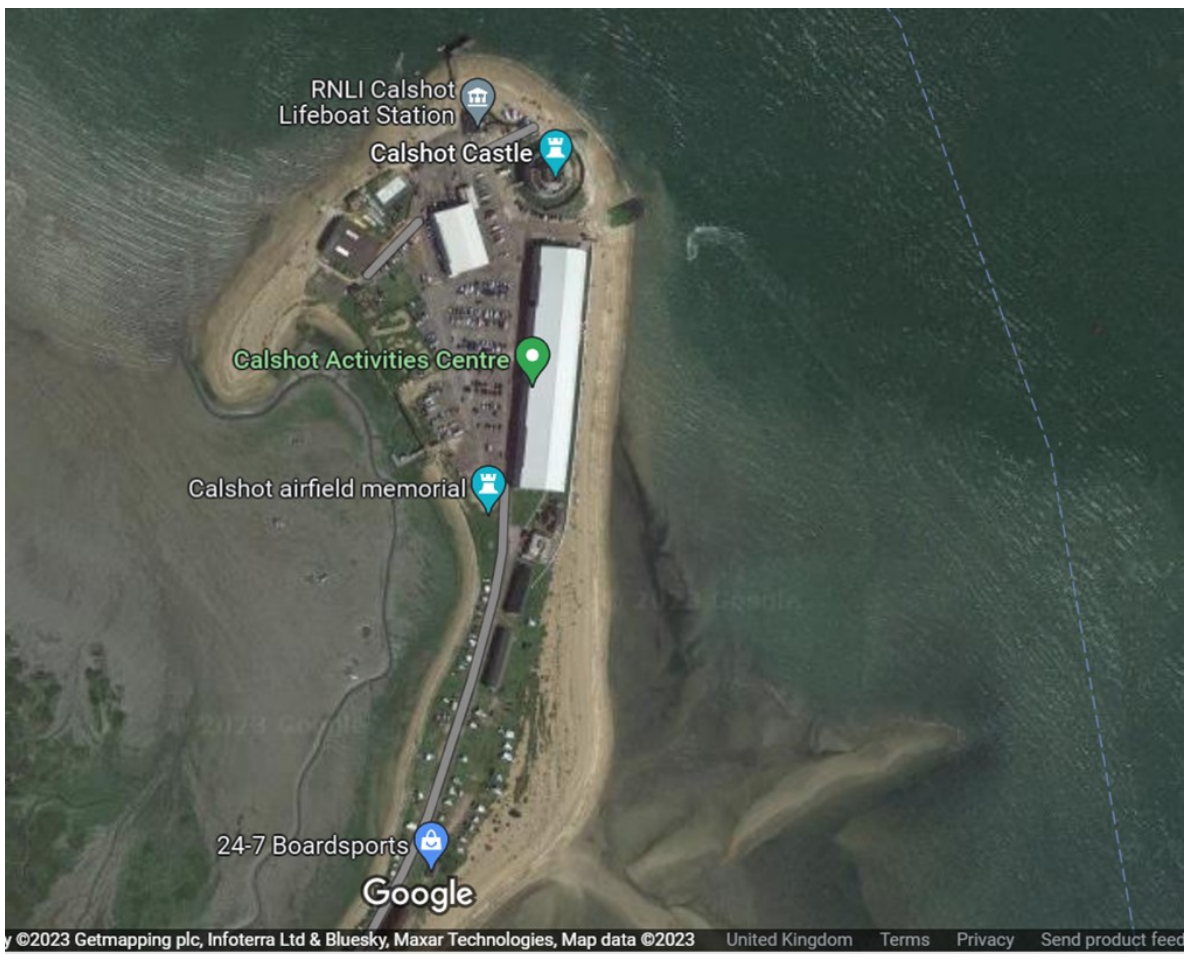
Calshot Beach Nesting Birds 2024 Report

Mark Appleton, RSPB
Project Officer



Project LIFE on the edge: improving the condition and long-term resilience of key coastal SPAs in S, E and N England is supported by the LIFE Programme of the European Union.

Calshot



Site introduction:

- Habitat in use by beach nesting birds:
 - Shingle
 - Saltmarsh/islands
- Access
 - Public access through automated barrier for Activity Centres car park, also can walk in.
 - Pay and display car parks.
 - From Camp site
 - From Activities centre
- Potential issues impacting beach nesting birds:
 - Dog walkers and public disturbance.
 - Water sport activities/users, perfect habitat on spit unusable due to use by water sports centre.
 - Predation by ravens and crows. Rats may be a problem.
- Pressures
 - High footfall
 - Campers

Breeding Season

A successful season with further important information gained.

Four Ringed Plover fledged this year from the beach. Two nests were predated and we suspect rats as the cause as one was caught on trail camera.

Three Oystercatcher fledged from nest boxes. One nest box was predated and another nest on the beach was predated inside the fenced area.

The season began with three Ringed Plover eggs located on the shingle on 14th April.



Ringed Plover nest (Mark Appleton).

Interventions

- Permissions were gained from Natural England to deploy Ringed Plover nest cages, temporary signage and temporary fencing.
- Continuing on from last season, an area was fenced off shown by the yellow shading below:-



- Mesh fencing was used this year. Symbolic rope fencing was used for nests that were laid outside the fence. Approximately 320m of mesh fencing was used for the enclosure and the area was just under 0.5ha. The fencing and signage were installed on the 19th March.
- Various signage was installed, including a Plover Periodical.



Mesh fencing with sign (Mark Appleton).



New sign installed at Calshot with volunteer, Andy (Mark Appleton).

- A Plover Periodical board was installed to provide updates to the public. End of season update provided below: -

CALSHOT RINGED PLOVER PROJECT 2024 – END OF SEASON REPORT

THANK YOU

Thank you to all our visitors for your help and understanding in keeping our Ringed Plovers safe. You have helped fledge four Ringed Plover chicks from this beach. Temporary mesh fencing, nest cages, signage, and leaflets were used to protect them and to raise awareness. The area within the fence was used as a safe haven for nests and chicks to roam. As nesting season has now ended, the temporary fence has been removed. Ringed Plover are on the RSPB endangered red list and every chick that hatches and fledges makes a difference to their species survival. Ringed Plover nest on the shingle and are very vulnerable to human disturbance and dogs off lead, as well as predators such as foxes, crows, gulls, and ravens.



- Nest Cages: Three Ringed Plover nest cages were used. Two were successful. Eggs went missing from one cage, suspect rats as caught on trail camera. One dummy cage was deployed.
- Volunteer Patrols
- New leaflets were designed and distributed to Calshot activities centre for distribution as well as a leaflet box on the beach.

“Oystercatcher boxes”

5 Oystercatcher boxes were built and installed at predefined locations at Calshot Activities Centre. In previous years there had been a lot of disturbance to Oystercatcher nests here that have failed. I liaised with the activities centre manager to pick 5 acceptable locations around the site to install the boxes off the ground. Volunteer Andy installed all nest boxes around the site as well as making three of them:-



Oystercatcher nest box (Mark Appleton).



Oystercatcher nest box on shed roof (Mark Appleton).



Oystercatcher nest box on shed roof (Mark Appleton).



Oystercatcher nest box on side of compound fence (Mark Appleton).



Eggs in Oystercatcher nest box (Mark Appleton).

Three out of the 5 Oystercatcher boxes were occupied. One box failed. Three Oystercatchers fledged from the remaining two boxes:



Oystercatcher with chick in nest box (Mark Appleton).



Oystercatcher near fledged (Mark Appleton).



Oystercatcher near fledged (Mark Appleton).

Engagement – A conservation day was held on 24th March with the RSPB contributing with a stand: -





“Spot the birds, win a badge!” (Wez Smith - Parent).



Recommendations for 2025:

- Pre-season monitoring with trail cameras and bait boxes to monitor for rats.
- Provide Leaflets to education team to raise awareness.
- Continue with temporary mesh fencing. Survived storms and thicker posts helped stability.
- Continue with regular updates on Plover Periodical board.
- Recruit volunteer rangers for monitoring and patrols.
- Habitat Management. We would suggest the bramble and small Holm Oak bush(invasive) be removed from the nesting area. The beach can quickly become very overgrown encroaching on the shingle and providing less nesting space and providing cover for predators.
- Continue trialling nest cages with trail cameras. Try modified design.
- Obtain new permissions from Natural England
- Trial Oystercatcher nesting trays around the site. Implementing various designs of platforms/trays topped with shingle as nesting areas for the Oystercatcher around the site. This could be a good project for students.

Examples positions: -

Any flat roof or container roof

On other side of play area on the shingle near beach

Small shingle island near car park (where first aid training gets performed)

- Calshot is ripe for engagement and propose a conservation day at Calshot with pop up stands. MA happy to provide presentations to students on visits here if required. Prefer this to happen late March/early April before the beach nesting bird season begins to raise awareness for the season ahead.