



## VIEW FROM THE CHAIR



Dr Peter Cornes

Since its formation in 1989 INCA has made a major contribution to both economic regeneration and to achieving biodiversity gains particularly on our business members' land holdings.

Since 1989 attitudes to the environment have changed. The environment is no longer a side issue to businesses. It now sits alongside Health and Safety in its importance. Due in part to the work of INCA, there is now a mature relationship between industry, regulators and nature conservation organisations. Emissions to air, land and water are a fraction of what they used to be and the environment has responded. INCA has recently published a "State of the Natural Environment of the Tees Estuary" (SONET II) report which documents how the river has come back to life and how the ecology of the estuary and the land surrounding it are now a haven for wildlife.

Despite the success in making these improvements INCA's work is still not complete. In the present economic downturn, INCA has a key role to play

working with Tees Valley Unlimited, Local Authorities and developers to help facilitate economic development. Our in depth knowledge of the local environment and the data we hold is invaluable in helping developers avoid potential nature conservation impediments and speed up the completion of new developments.

We also continue to help existing businesses maximise the nature conservation value of their land holdings as well as helping them to prepare for and respond to incidents. INCA produces ecological reports for many businesses detailing nature conservation features within 10km of their operations. We help businesses evaluate the impact of potential release scenarios on these features so, where the impact on the environment is assessed to be potentially significant, additional control measures can be considered. We are also able to provide a rapid response should an incident occur.

It is a sign of the times that a growing work area for INCA is helping businesses to decommission redundant sites. The nightmare scenario is for decommissioning work to be stopped following identification of protected species such as bats or Great Crested Newt, possibly for a prolonged period

until mitigation is agreed. We are now able to offer a service starting with a site ecological risk assessment, through monitoring, to finally, if needed, helping agree with the regulator mitigation measures.

INCA is a membership organisation which has always strived to provide a value for money service. Our model is to have a small core staff with knowledge of the local environment and an understanding of the needs of regulators developers, local authorities, nature conservation organisations and industry. This team is supplemented by the use of specialist providers where appropriate for the scale or content of the work undertaken. Provided it does not conflict with the needs of our membership we provide paid ecological services to non-member clients, especially developers, where the work helps to further our overall aims. Our members are however our absolute priority. This client work has helped us gain income enabling us to freeze our membership fees for the last two years.

I hope you will continue to support INCA and we can continue to work with you to achieve the twin goals of a thriving local economy and a healthy local environment, as well as helping to dispel Tees Valley's unjustified "smoggie" image.

## *SABIC Brinefields - Working with Wildlife*

INCA continues to advise SABIC on ecological management of the North Tees Brinefields and since the beginning of the year the company has worked with INCA on a variety of projects. Not unexpectedly the Brinefields support some of the best saline habitats in the Teesmouth area and a long-term study of the saltmarsh plant *Salicornia* on the SABIC site began in 2010. One of the objectives of the study is to monitor the colonisation and spread of this key species over time.

Management work was also carried out on the island in the Saline Lagoon to improve this habitat for nesting birds. This has proved successful with Common Terns, Little Ringed Plover and Avocet all returning to breed in the spring (see also Avocets article on page 3). SABIC have also erected a Sand Martin nesting tower near to the sea wall. Although the installation was completed too late for the 2010 nesting season we have high hopes that when the first Sand Martins arrive in early spring 2011 they will appreciate the Seal Sands new high rise.

Stewart Swales and Ray Malcolm have entered the Brinefields in the British Trust for Ornithology Business Bird Challenge and with the help of observations from the Teesmouth Bird Club and INCA, have logged 103 species during the first quarter of the year. This would be an excellent score even for a top nature reserve, but the Brinefields are an operational industrial site!

In order to keep visitors informed about the wildlife interests of the site SABIC asked INCA to up-date the existing Saline Lagoon information board and commissioned a new panel called *Working with Wildlife*. Both of these are installed in the public hide overlooking the Saline Lagoon on No. 4 Brinefield.

## *INCA gains Green Business Network Award*

In July INCA was presented with bronze Green Business Network (GBN) award demonstrating that we are running our business in an environmentally responsible way. We now intend to further raise our standard in order to qualify for a silver award. This will include calculating our carbon footprint, having an independent environment review, and demonstrating visible management commitment.

More information on joining the Tees Valley Green Business Network and registering for an award can be obtained at [www.greenteesvalley.org](http://www.greenteesvalley.org)



*Bob Pailor receiving Award*

## *Seals*

The annual seal monitoring season started once again at the end of June. Early indications are good, with at least 11 healthy pups having been born to date (the record is 12). More information will follow in our next newsletter.

We extend our thanks to the project funders for this season, who are British Waterways, Corus and Dow. We are also indebted to our dedicated team of seal monitors who are in the field in all weathers gathering the data which support the project.



*Seal Pup*

## *Dabholme Gut comes back to life*

Until the mid 1990's Dabholme Gut was an "effluent carrier" receiving partially treated domestic sewage and industrial effluent from the Wilton International site. As a result Dabholme was grossly polluted and supported nothing except pollution tolerant species. In these years waterfowl and wading birds were very scarce visitors to Dabholme, with no more than two or three individuals being occasionally present. Even when birds were recorded they appeared to be "accidental" visitors showing no signs of feeding activity.

Things have now changed for the better. Since 1997 Northumbrian Water Limited have biologically treated domestic sewage and many industrial effluents at their Bran Sands treatment works. In addition industrial operators have modified processes and installed abatement.

Since 2000 observations have shown that waterbirds have been visiting Dabholme at an increasing frequency. The bird visitors have been actively feeding, suggesting an increase in invertebrate food. This increased use of Dabholme Gut by waterbirds has now been verified by INCA who since 2006 have carried out twice monthly bird observations. During the

2009/2010 winter period we recorded large numbers of ducks and waders using the site. At times over 60 Shelduck, nearly 190 Teal and 115 Redshank were present. These counts represent significant numbers and show that Dabholme is now making a significant contribution to the waterbird population of the estuary.



*At times, Dabholme supports a significant proportion of the Teesmouth Teal*



*Dabholme Gut looking towards the River Tees*

## *The Avocets Return*

In 2008 Avocets bred successfully for the first time in Tees Valley using the Saline Lagoon island on SABIC's No. 4 Brinefield. Avocets prefer sparsely vegetated substrates of pebbles or seashells for nesting. In preparation for the 2010 breeding season SABIC arranged for 30 tonnes of cockle shells to be imported from Morecambe Bay. With the help of INCA, the Tees Valley Wildlife Trust and 20 strong volunteers the shells were carried manually to the island to create the best possible nesting habitat for the Avocets and other birds such as Little Ringed Plover and Common Tern.



*Avocet*

The hard work paid off and the first Avocets arrived back on the site in mid March. Numbers built up during the spring with up to 30 birds present at the end of May and 14 pairs settling to breed mostly on the Brinefields. The first chicks arrived on the 5 May and by early June, 18 chicks had hatched. Predation and natural losses were high this year so this was slightly fewer chicks than we would have hoped for. Nevertheless a breeding productivity of just over one chick per pair is a very reasonable result.

## Tees Valley Arts and Green TV

Tees Valley Arts (TVA) is a not-for-profit organisation managing creative projects of varied sizes and scales, using different art forms, working with varied sectors across the Tees Valley. TVA is currently managing Green TV - a three year programme of environmental engagement and learning through the arts, based on wildlife sites and working in partnership with RSPB Saltholme, the Tees Valley Wildlife Trust, Teesmouth Field Centre, and Darlington Council's Parks and Countryside Department, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. This major programme of activity will deliver 20 educational and 10 community residencies, a schedule of regular Continuing Professional Development sessions for the artists, teachers and wildlife personnel involved, and a final celebratory conference.

Green TV is the latest 'science through the arts' project undertaken by TVA, who have previously delivered the 'Evolve' programme, funded through the European Social fund (ESF), which delivered curriculum science through the arts in 36 schools across the Tees Valley, and 'Going Underground', funded by the DEFRA's Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund which explored the world of aggregates and geological forces through drama, photography and print-making!

TVA is keen to work with industry, particularly where companies and organisations have exciting messages to share with the world, but possibly find the world a little less excited than it should be! Well thought-through creative activities can deliver environmental, scientific and technological learning and engagement in innovative and unexpected ways, and this kind of hands-on learning lasts. If you interested in working with TVA or if you require more information, please visit [www.teesvalleyarts.org.uk](http://www.teesvalleyarts.org.uk) or contact Rowena Sommerville, Director TVA (01642 264651).



*Photos: Bob Mitchell for TVA (Green TV)*

## Bumper year for Dingy Skipper butterfly

The Dingy Skipper (*Erynnis tages*) butterfly is distributed locally throughout Britain but has declined seriously in recent years. It is on this basis that the butterfly is now recognised as a conservation priority, being a UKBAP and Tees Valley BAP species.

Brownfield sites are often favoured by this butterfly as the low nutrient conditions of the substrate in such areas favours growth of Bird's-foot Trefoil the host foodplant of the Dingy Skipper caterpillar. The butterfly has been seen in many locations across the Tees Valley this year, including good numbers on Huntsman Pigments' land at Greenabella Marsh and new sites for the species at Lucite Cassel Works in Billingham and BPCATS on Seal Sands Industrial Estate. This is a good indication of the importance of our industrial sites for interesting and significant wildlife.



Dingy Skipper

## Bats & Deconstruction

The current economic climate has led to a rise in the frequency of site decommissioning taking place across the Tees Valley. It is good practice that before such activity takes place that the site is assessed for the presence of protected species.

One aspect of this relates to a survey of bats. All species of bat and their roosts are fully protected under European and UK legislation. This protection includes reckless or intentional disturbance or damage to roosting places. Eight of the 16 UK breeding bat species are also listed in the UKBAP as priority species and all eight species found in the Tees Valley are noted as priority species within the TVBAP, including the commonest, the Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*).

The penalties for causing harm to bats or their roosts are high. In addition the lack of a bat survey can lead to significant additional expense as work must be stopped, until suitable mitigation is agreed, in the event of bats unexpectedly being found.

Of the bat species found in the Tees Valley the Pipistrelle shows a preference for urban sites. There is however a possibility that bats may also be present on industrial sites, particularly in areas which are relatively undisturbed. Many industrial sites have suitable feeding habitat, as well as possible opportunities for roosting. Bats have been found by INCA on industrial sites during summer 2010.

INCA can assist in the decommissioning process at the planning stage by carrying out risk assessments relating to the possible presence of protected species including bats and if necessary can arrange bat surveys in season (May to September). For more information contact Robert Woods (01642 455104)

## Great Crested Newt

INCA staff have had many sleepless nights this spring. The dreaded Great Crested Newt (GCN) has been exercising our thoughts as we have surveyed a number of development locations for members (and some for non members). The GCN is protected under European Directive and not only are its breeding ponds protected but so to are the individuals. If there is a known breeding site within 500m of your development it is necessary to take actions to prevent harm to GCN. This usually takes the form of making the site newt proof and collecting any of the little blighters that might be in there.

Most of the work we have been doing has been precautionary checking that ponds do not have GCN and then to show that the risk to GCN is very low. This then means that the developer does not necessarily have to take measures to prevent harm. It does not negate the need for vigilance as the animals remain protected and should not be harmed on the site but it does give confidence that they are unlikely to be present.

Close investigation of a large number of waterbodies has been very interesting and over near Greatham Village we were helped one night by the Police who hovered above us in their helicopter with a much stronger torch than we had. They were observing us observing the newts in the pond. We had warned the Police that we would be there but no one had thought to tell the helicopter crew!



*Great Crested Newt*

## Little Tern

INCA's warden of the Little Tern colony at Crimden Denemouth must certainly be accused of "counting his chicken before they have hatched". In early June it looked like our Little Tern colony was on its way to breaking more records. Last year we had more chicks raised than ever before and beat all other sites in the UK for productivity. This year we had 91 pairs of birds sitting which was almost 50% up on our previous highest count of 65 pairs. Food seemed to be plentiful and everything looked set for a great season until disaster struck.

A pair of Kestrel nested in Crimdon Dene and the male Kestrel got a taste for tern chicks. By hovering over the Hartlepool golf course some distance away from the nest site he was able to sight chicks on the beach and then swoop in and pick up his kill before the colony was aroused to his attack. Time and time again this strategy has worked and over the ensuing weeks every chick be that Little Tern or Ringed Plover, has been taken from the beach.

So from a possible triumph of achievement we have reaped an abject disaster. Discussions are already taking place on how we can prevent this happening again next year because having had such a good food supply this year it is very likely that the kestrel will chose to nest in the same location again next year.

We extend our thanks to the project funders for this season, who are Able UK and Corus. We are also indebted to our warden, Trevor Stephenson, and also to the volunteers who helped us to fence off the colony.



*Nesting Little Tern*

## *Dates for your diary*

**INCA Annual General Meeting.** Our AGM will be held at the Wilton Visitor Centre at 1300 hours on Friday 10 September 2010. The visitor centre is located at the South East Redcar gate to the Wilton International Site. A buffet lunch will be available from 1230 hours and to help with catering would members please let us know if you will be attending by e-mailing [tracy.smith@inca.uk.com](mailto:tracy.smith@inca.uk.com).

**COMAH Workshop.** We will be holding a COMAH workshop at Castlegate Quay, Stockton on 21st September at 13:15 hours for those members that subscribe to our COMAH service. The purpose of the workshop is to hear from the Environment Agency on the process, procedures and guidance for 5 yearly COMAH resubmissions. Those who do not subscribe to our COMAH service can also attend for a contribution of £20 towards room hire and catering. A buffet lunch will be available from 12:30 hours. Would those wishing to attend please e-mail [tracy.smith@inca.uk.com](mailto:tracy.smith@inca.uk.com).

## *Who's Who : INCA staff and Board Directors*

### **Staff**

Bob Pailor - Director

Geoff Barber - Senior Ecologist

Robert Woods - Ecologist

Ken Smith - Consultant

Tracy Smith - Business Support

### **Directors**

Dr Peter Cornes, Chair

Dr Paul Gavens, Sembcorp UK

Captain Gerry Drewitt, PD Ports

Kate Simpson, ConocoPhillips

Neil Kenley, Tees Valley Unlimited

Dave Simpson, Petroplus

Brad Tooze, Natural England

Jeff Lupton

Councillor Sylvia Szintai, Redcar & Cleveland BC

Joe Campbell

Bill Beattie, Huntsman Pigments

## *Our Current Members...as of 1st April 2010*

### **Industrial/Commercial**

Able (UK) Ltd  
Air Products  
Anderson Barrowcliff LLP  
Augean PLC  
BP Exploration Operating Co Ltd  
British Waterways  
Cleveland Potash Ltd  
ConocoPhillips Ltd  
Corus Plc  
Dow Chemical Company Ltd  
Exwold Technology  
Fine Organics Ltd  
Growhow  
Huntsman Pigments  
Huntsman Polyurethanes  
Invista UK Ltd  
Johnson Matthey  
Koppers (UK) Ltd  
Lotte Chemicals UK Ltd  
Lucite International UK Ltd  
North East Process Industry Cluster (NEPIC)  
Northumbrian Water plc  
nPower Cogen  
PD Teesport Ltd  
Petroplus  
Px Limited  
SABIC UK Petrochemicals  
SembCorp Utilities UK Ltd  
Simon Storage Ltd  
SITA Tees Valley Ltd  
Tees Bay Pilots Ltd  
Teesside Power Ltd  
Univar Ltd  
Vertellus Specialties UK Ltd  
Vopak

### **Nature Conservation Agencies**

Nature's World  
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)  
Tees Valley Wildlife Trust  
Teessmouth Bird Club  
Teessmouth Field Centre  
Teesside Environmental Trust  
Wildfowl & Wetland Trust

### **Statutory Authorities**

Environment Agency  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Middlesbrough Borough Council  
Natural England  
Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council  
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

### **Contact Information**

Further information can be obtained from the INCA website  
[www.inca.uk.com](http://www.inca.uk.com).

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