

Lincoln Swan Project

Newsletter Nov 2022

Dear Data Collector,

Welcome to the second Lincoln Swan Project Newsletter! We have a few updates from our birds, and an update on both our ringing activities this autumn, and avian influenza in the area.

We hope you find the newsletter interesting, and please don't hesitate to get in touch with us at swanrings@lincoln.ac.uk with any comments or feedback.

Thank you for submitting your swan sightings to us!

The Lincoln Swan Project Team

Avian Influenza

Sadly, Mute swans can be susceptible to avian influenza, and we are currently seeing unprecedented levels of this virus in a range of wild bird species across the UK, including several outbreaks in swans. While we haven't yet had confirmation of the presence of influenza in the Lincoln swan population, we have had higher than usual levels of mortality reported to us for this time of year, including four colour-ringed birds – L221, L225, L165 and L094 (see histories below).



What to do if you find dead swans

If you find one or more dead swans, please avoid directly touching the birds. Please call the Defra helpline on 03459 33 55 77 (Mon-Fri 8am to 6pm) and select option 7. Please also let us know – regardless of whether the bird is ringed. Contact information is below, or you can report this through the App – please say in the comments box that the bird was dead when found.

Photo: L094 seen on the River Witham in 2021. © Lincoln Swans data collector

As always, please keep an eye out for any colour ringed swans you see, and report any yellow colour rings starting L or Y to us! If you see these birds regularly, please do report each sighting if you can! More information about the project is available on the Lincoln Swan project website: <https://lincolnswans.blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/home-page/>, and you can follow the swans on Twitter @LincolnSwans, Facebook (The Lincoln Swan Project), or contact us at swanrings@lincoln.ac.uk.

Interesting resightings

L094 was first ringed in August 2019, as one of four cygnets hatched by L013 and L100 near Dixon Street, just south of Lincoln city centre. We have had quite a few sightings of her since, firstly in a non-breeding group on the River Witham just south of Meadow Lane



Photo: L094 in a non-breeding herd in 2020 © Lincoln Swans data collector

in May 2020. In June 2020 she was seen at Five Mile Lane, near Fiskerton and in December 2020 she had moved to just north of Blackmoor Lane. In August 2021, she was seen by herself on the River Witham, just south of Newark Road, where she was reported again in March 2022. In September 2022, she was rescued from a swimming pool (!) just outside Lincoln, and unfortunately, later that month she was reported dead near the Witham in North Hykeham.

L165 was one of the 2020 Brayford family, ringed in August 2020 as one of five cygnets. She stayed with her family on the Brayford until March 2021, and then turned up at Toft Newton reservoir with L225 and L229 in August 2022. In September 2022, she was reported dead at Whisby Garden Centre, with no obvious injuries.



Photo: L165 with her family on the Brayford slipway in 2020 © Lincoln Swans data collector



Photo: L221 (right) after his trip to Yorkshire © Lincoln Swans data collector

L221 was first ringed as one of three cygnets (although we only managed to catch two) in Boultham Park in August 2021. He was last reported in Boultham Park in Feb 2022, and then turned up at RSPB Fairburn Ings, in West Yorkshire, in May 2022. Later that month, he was reported back in Lincolnshire, on the River Witham at North Hykeham. Unfortunately, in September, we found him dead just south of Meadow Lane.



L225 was one of the 2021 Brayford family, ringed in August 2021 as one of seven cygnets. She was one of the last cygnets to leave the Brayford, last seen in March 2022. In August 2022, she was seen at Toft Newton reservoir where she stayed until mid-September. Unfortunately, she was reported dead along with another unringed swan in early October.

Photo: L225 and sibling L230 before they left the Brayford © Lincoln Swans data collector

If you are further afield and see any swans, please do check them for rings, as you never know where Lincoln swans might turn up next! Even if you see the same bird in the same place regularly, please do report your sightings, as you never know where the bird might have been in between!

Ringing update

August saw us carry out health checks on many of our breeding birds, as well as catching



and ringing this year's cygnets and any unringed adults. We caught and health checked 35 birds in total, but cancelled a ringing session planned for September out of an abundance of caution, because of the risk of avian influenza. We are closely monitoring the situation, and if it is safe to do so (both for birds and humans), we may try and catch any unringed birds in the coming months.

Photo: A swan family – L268, L270 and their cygnet, L269 – new to the project this year. This family seem to have dispersed since they were last seen together a few weeks after ringing, with L270 seen at Hartsholme in September!