

NUCLEUS St Johns Pool

THE NUCLEAR AND CAITHNESS ARCHIVES

St John's Pool (SJP) was the creation of local wildlife and landscape artist Julian Smith, and his wife Rosemary. Since 1989, this site has evolved into a unique facility which annually attracts hundreds of visitors to see the huge number of breeding birds, as well as a wide range of passage migrants.

You can see some more information and leaflets about St John's Pool here at Nucleus: the Nuclear and Caithness Archive.



As you can see from the aerial photographs, it was a major undertaking to create. And the site itself is even more demanding to maintain; local volunteers and High Life Highland's Countryside Rangers help with paths and other tasks outside the main season.



north.highlandarchive@highlifehighland.com

The well-managed habitats provide varied feeding and nesting opportunities for birds, which in turn attracts bird watchers, nature enthusiasts and wildlife photographers to name a few.



SJP offers the opportunity to come 'face to beak' with a wide range of bird species including some rare and exotic visitors from across the planet, including the only inland breeding colony of Sandwich Terns, and the second largest in Scotland, with over 100 pairs!

To date, there have been over 200 different species recorded onsite. An enviable amount for such an under-watched part of Britain

SJP also boasts the largest Black-headed gull colony in northern Scotland with c.600 pairs, and more records of American ducks than anywhere else in Caithness.



SJP encourages children's learning about Caithness wildlife and the landscape through a variety of activities available at the Pool, as well as talks, lessons and courses on birdwatching throughout Caithness.



In 2016 'SJP Bird Photography' was created to offer something special for dedicated photographers looking for that unique experience. To facilitate this, two water-level hides were installed, and are used frequently.

The ever-expanding archive of high quality images like those below, is testament to the attraction of the site to a wide variety of birds.



Arctic tern chicks just inches away. Irresistible! Photo: K. Crossan



Voluntary work party preparing tern nesting site - winter 2017. Wader hide and Tern hide ready for new season.

St John's Pool is a private reserve but open daily to the public.

For further information and to see more detailed images, please visit:

<https://www.facebook.com/SJPbirdphotography/>



In 1990s Redshank – was a common Caithness breeding wader and highly visible around St John's Pool. Just one generation on Redshanks are in a 'critical' situation county-wide. Photo: D. Devonport

