



moorhen and mallard usually have several clutches during a season so if you don't want new nest tenants, make the site unattractive.

Nature up close

For those who don't need to move, it's lovely to watch nature up close for a few weeks, awaiting the chirps of newly hatched babies and seeing them grow. Sue Reeves' duck from last year (hers is one of the pictures) had us all reading the updates on the community page! But if you're likely to need the service wharf, are planning a spring cruise, want to turn the boat around or have a blacking booked in the next couple of months, then you need to take precautions!

Stuck with a Duck?

It's Spring and the Marina's water fowl (the ducks, coots, moorhens, tufties, geese, swans ...) are all looking out for nesting sites. Whilst swans and geese rarely nest on boats, many of the others (particularly the ducks, coots and moorhens) are more than happy to find a fender, rest on a rudder, pop in a flower pot or even in an engine bay (have a look at the two photographs, both Marina birds)!

The Legal Stuff

Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 states it is an offence to take, damage, or destroy the nest of any wild bird while the nest is in use. This means moving a boat which hosts an occupied nest would be illegal. Whether a liveaboard or leisure boater, even though your diesel may be running out and your toilet tank full, you can't move your boat without committing an offence and the penalty could be a large fine or up to six month's imprisonment.

Water fowl incubate their eggs for around 20-30 days depending on the type of bird so, if you ARE stuck with a duck, or a coot or moorhen watch what's going on. Once the chicks are swimming in the water, and they've not returned to the nest for a week then it's safe to move the nest. Coot,

Spot the signs

Check your boat and if you spot the signs of preliminary nest building take action. If you're a leisure moorer, perhaps ask a neighbouring liveaboard to keep an eye open. It's not difficult to change a Des Res to a No Go - a rustling, blowabout, shiny bin bag wrapped around a fender is one easy and often-used remedy.





Here's an alarming but little-known figure—stray cats and pet cats allowed outdoors kill 3.6 million birds every day on average in the United States, for a total of at least 1.3 billion birds per year. That's most likely a sizable chunk out of the U.S. land-bird population, which the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center estimates is around 10-20 billion. While habitat loss and climate change pose long-term dangers to birds in this country, recent research shows that outdoor cats currently kill more of them than any other threat caused by humans.



"It's not just a problem in the U.S. A 2011 study found that domestic cats have directly contributed to extinctions of 22 bird species on islands around the world, and threatened dozens more. Researchers in the UK estimated that 55 million birds fall prey to domestic cats there each year; in Australia, threats to endangered species led government officials to announce plans for euthanizing 2 million feral cats. "Cat predation of wildlife, in other words, is a worldwide issue. But here's something else that stretches across borders: People love cats. In the U.S., there are about 84 million pet cats, and around 46 million of them are allowed to roam outside. An estimated 30-80 million more live as strays. That's a lot of cats, and many spend their days doing what they've done since the first cats were domesticated more than 9,000 years ago: hunting small animals. Humans originally used domesticated cats as efficient predators, protecting stores of food from vermin. But there's little need for working cats anymore; these days, most people just think of them as gentle companions and Internet memes. But their instincts haven't caught up to our evolving needs—cats are still highly effective stealth hunters. And our having them around in such numbers means trouble for birds.



"Some cat owners aren't aware of the problem; some are, but feel that the companionship they receive from their pet outweighs their small contribution to a broader issue. But some cat lovers are also bird lovers. Two of them, a birdwatcher named Nancy Brennan and a bird biologist named Susan Willson, have developed what they believe is a solution.

"Brennan, 57, spent much of her career in conservation and environmental planning. She grew up in rural New England, where cats lived indoors and outdoors; she and her husband, who live in the Vermont woodlands near Green Mountain National Forest, took the same approach with their cat George. But hunting opportunities near their home are abundant, and for months after they moved in Brennan became increasingly frustrated as George dragged bird after bird into the house.



"The breaking point, Brennan recalls, happened on the first spring-like day of 2008, when she heard "a ruckus" coming from just outside the house. It was George, struggling to pull a ruffed grouse, a gamebird the size of a small chicken,

through the cat door. That morning, she vowed to either find a way to stop George's hunting habits or bring him to the Humane Society.



"Brennan already knew George couldn't become an indoor cat, but her past attempts to keep him away from birds had failed. She had tried tying bells on his collar, but it seemed the cat moved too stealthily for the bells to have any sort of warning effect on his prey. "Then she recalled something she'd read about birds—they have excellent color vision. Birds have four colour pigments in their eyes, compared to three in primates and just two in other mammals. While this adaptation helps birds find food and choose brightly colored mates, Brennan realized she might be able to put it to another use. She took up her sewing tools and gathered some multi-patterned fabric, piecing together something that resembled a ruffled Elizabethan collar with a bright colour scheme. She then fastened it as a cover over George's usual collar.



"Sure enough, George returned home later that day without any birds—and none the next few days, either. As spring and summer passed without a single bird, she began to believe that she might be on to something that could work for other cat owners, too. She began tinkering with the prototype and created a website to sell the collar, which she named Birdbesafe. Since then she has used customer feedback to zero in on which colours and patterns worked best.

"The collars began to sell steadily, but they still remained scientifically unproven until 2013, when Willson, who studies tropical birds at St. Lawrence University stumbled upon the Birdbesafe website.

You can buy a multi-coloured collar at: everythingwildlife.co.uk/product/Birds-be-safe-collar-covers-introductory-price



Mary Bodman, our senior and much-loved moorer, with family and friends at her 92nd birthday party at Lotus recently.



Golden Windlass Award

Danni Powell receiving her Golden Windlass recently. Danni was nominated for her efforts to help a fellow boater after the loss of his dog. Danni helped the boater by making all arrangements for a new dog for him to look after. Well deserved and another good example of the fantastic community spirit here.



Swanning About

The Mercia Swan's 2019 sailing season starts on Wednesday 17 April. To book a scheduled trip please call 07399 875552 for enquiries. For a private charter call 07398 821650.

Silent Fireworks

You know how disturbing big noises like fireworks can be for your dogs. Now noise-cancelling technology has come to the rescue



with acoustic isolation, soundproof ventilation, and an automatic door. These come together to build a little kennel which will be a cosy, quiet haven for your pooch. When microphones inside the kennel detect the sound of fireworks, a built-in audio system emits opposing frequencies to cancel out or significantly reduce the noise and protect your dog's super sensitive hearing. Are you queuing up, dog-owning boaters?

Filling Up

Please note that the latest time to ring for diesel is now 4.30pm. The change is due to the Grounds' Team now serving the diesel and they finish at 5pm. Thank you.

Stop Press

Tony Haslam and Dave Bradbury put their very best (if sore) feet forward on the Trent & Mersey Canal Walk and doubled their £1,000 sponsorship target. More than £2,000 is going to Prostate Cancer Research UK. *Prostrate Cancer UK is a registered charity in England and Wales (1005541) and in Scotland (SC039332). Reg. Company number 2653887*

M.A.C. CALENDAR FOR APRIL

Below are the leisure activities for April. All events are in the Willow Tree Tea Rooms, and generally start at 7pm.



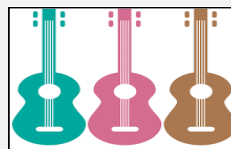
Watercolour Class

Monday 1 April
Monday 8 April
Monday 15 April
Monday 22 April
Monday 29 April



Craft Group

Wednesday 3 April
Tuesday 9 April
Tuesday 16 April



Ukulele Group

Thursday 4 April
Thursday 11 April
Thursday 18 April
Thursday 25 April

OTHER EVENTS IN APRIL

Sixties Night (Sold Out)

Saturday 6 April

Bingo Night

Wednesday 17 April

Book Club

Tuesday 23 April

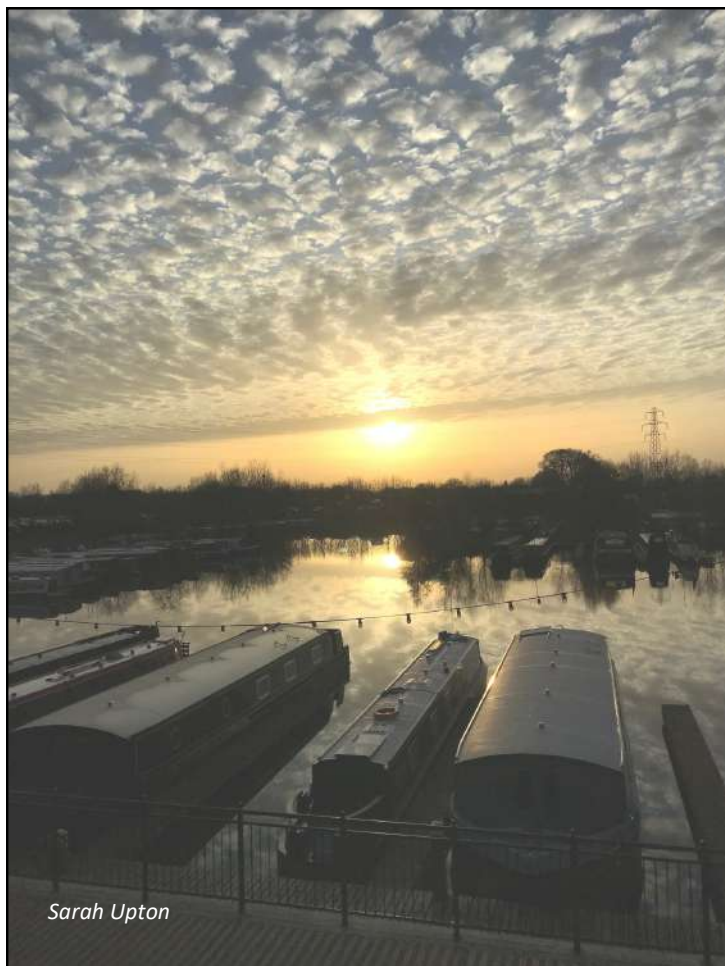
First Aid Friday

Friday 26 April

Music Night

Tuesday 30 April

If you wish to know more about anything leisure-based please email: events@merciamarina.co.uk



Sarah Upton



Ben Belcher



Julia Barnes

Mercia Photography Winners

The cold, frosty weather of February brought with it some dramatic skies over the marina and these feature in this month's photography winners photographs who were Sarah Upton, Ben Belcher and Julia Barnes.

All winners receive either a bottle of Prosecco or a box of chocolates from the Marina Office.

If you have a photograph of the Marina you think is worthy of entry then let the office have a copy and you might see it on the back page of the *Mercia Mercury* next month.

To enter the monthly competition, send your 'Mercia Marina' photographs to tony@merciamarina.co.uk

Just Desserts for Lotus Eaters

Lotus' has a new addition to their regular menu, unique desserts created to have Indian twists on well-known classics. Do you fancy a Chocolate Chai Brownie, served warm with vanilla ice cream or maybe their Eastern Mess – a take on an Eton Mess but with mango, coconut, lime and crushed meringue folded into whipped cream. Finally a Cardamom Cheesecake with Raspberry Coulis.

Perhaps you should go with friends, order all of them and do a Lotus-style share! Their wonderful Carrot Halva Cake will still be there as an afternoon offering along with a Cream Tea.

The main menu has a few minor changes and some vegetarian additions, including the ultimate Punjabi comfort food Aloo Chole (chickpea and potato curry).

