



Shoreline, Skyline, Treetop Messenger



*An Invisible Dust project in collaboration with
North Lincolnshire Museums
created by Juneau Projects*

Shoreline, Skyline, Treetop Messenger

Song Thrush



*Responses to North Lincolnshire Museums' collection of bird specimens and
the bird life of the North Lincolnshire area.*

Introduction

In the novel by Charlotte Bronte, Jane Eyre mentally escapes an inhospitable domestic situation by hiding away to read Bewick's 'A History of British Birds'. A lot of us found similar solace in birds whilst spending more time housebound during lockdown. Watching birds whose migratory route takes them across continents with no notion of national boundaries, at a time when travel was restricted and national boundaries more rigid, gives a sense of vicarious freedom.

Through this project I've learnt that this is even more pronounced around the east coast of England, as birds use areas on this coast as stop offs on the 'East Atlantic Flyway', the migratory route from the Arctic to Africa and vice versa. Climate changes or human impacts in one place on this route affect the bird populations in the others. The historic bird collection at North Lincolnshire Museum highlights the difference in biodiversity then and now, with various species in the collection either diminished or extinct.

Juneau Projects collaborate with people to produce artworks. Here the people have included bird scientists, members of a young curators' group, workshop participants and photographers from the local area. Often this process gently raises particular issues around nature and technology almost imperceptibly, while hands are busy doing something else, be that drawing, printing or sculpting. 'Shoreline, Skyline, Treetop Messenger' is a permanent testament to those moments of thinking while doing, and places the historic bird collection in the context of urgent contemporary issues around biodiversity.

Jeanine Griffin, Associate Curator, Invisible Dust

'Bewick was an iconic bird engraver that Juneau Projects studied during their residency at Cherryburn, Bewick's birthplace that is now a National Trust property.'

North Lincolnshire Museum

The first Scunthorpe Museum opened on 31 August 1909 in a single room of the town's first library in High Street East. The Museum soon outgrew these humble beginnings, moving first to the former Brumby & Frodingham Urban District Council offices in 1937, before arriving at its current home in the old Frodingham Vicarage in 1953. The Museum was established by a group of enthusiasts concerned about the loss of important archaeological and geological material from the area. Chief amongst them were A.C. Dalton and Harold Dudley, the first two curators, who both donated many objects.

Local government reform in 1996 saw the creation of North Lincolnshire. Though the Museum had always had a regional focus, collecting material from throughout the northern area of the historic county of Lincolnshire, the change of name to North Lincolnshire Museum made this focus clear. Today the rich collections represent the breadth of North Lincolnshire's history, from the geological origins to the modern day. Those collections are used in innovative ways to challenge perceptions and inspire wonder and joy in the local cultural and natural heritage. The Natural History collections feature a range of specimens including lepidoptera, herbarium sheets, bird's eggs, and taxidermy.

North Lincolnshire's diverse and iconic habitats include moorlands in the Isle of Axholme, ancient woodland at Broughton and Brumby, coversands heathland and the Humber wetlands. Each is rich in wonderful wildlife. But like habitats and wildlife throughout the world, all are increasingly threatened by human action and habitat loss. We hope that you enjoy this publication that celebrates the birds of North Lincolnshire and are inspired to learn more and act on bird conservation.

Rose Nicholson, Heritage Manager, North Lincolnshire Museums

Avocet



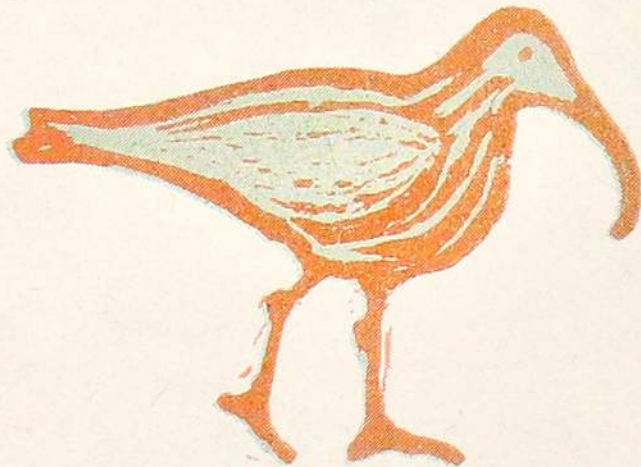
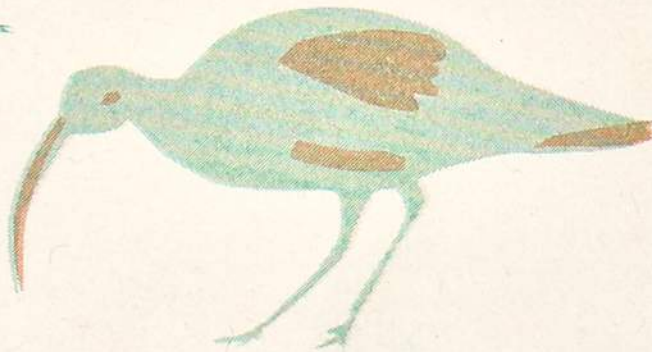
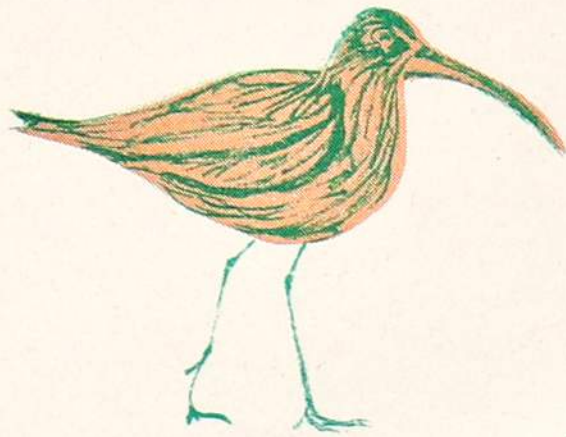
Cormorant



Black-headed Gull



Curlew



Most waterbird species migrate along flyways - a migration route that connects the species' breeding sites to wintering sites. Along their flyways, bird populations respond to changes in environmental conditions that are taking place across the globe e.g. climate change, loss and deterioration of estuarine and coastal habitats.

Whilst bird populations are a good indicator of global environmental changes, waterbirds also provide a range of services that benefit human populations; they can contribute to our spiritual and cultural well-being. For example, birds can provoke a range of emotions in humans which may be expressed through art, music and literature.

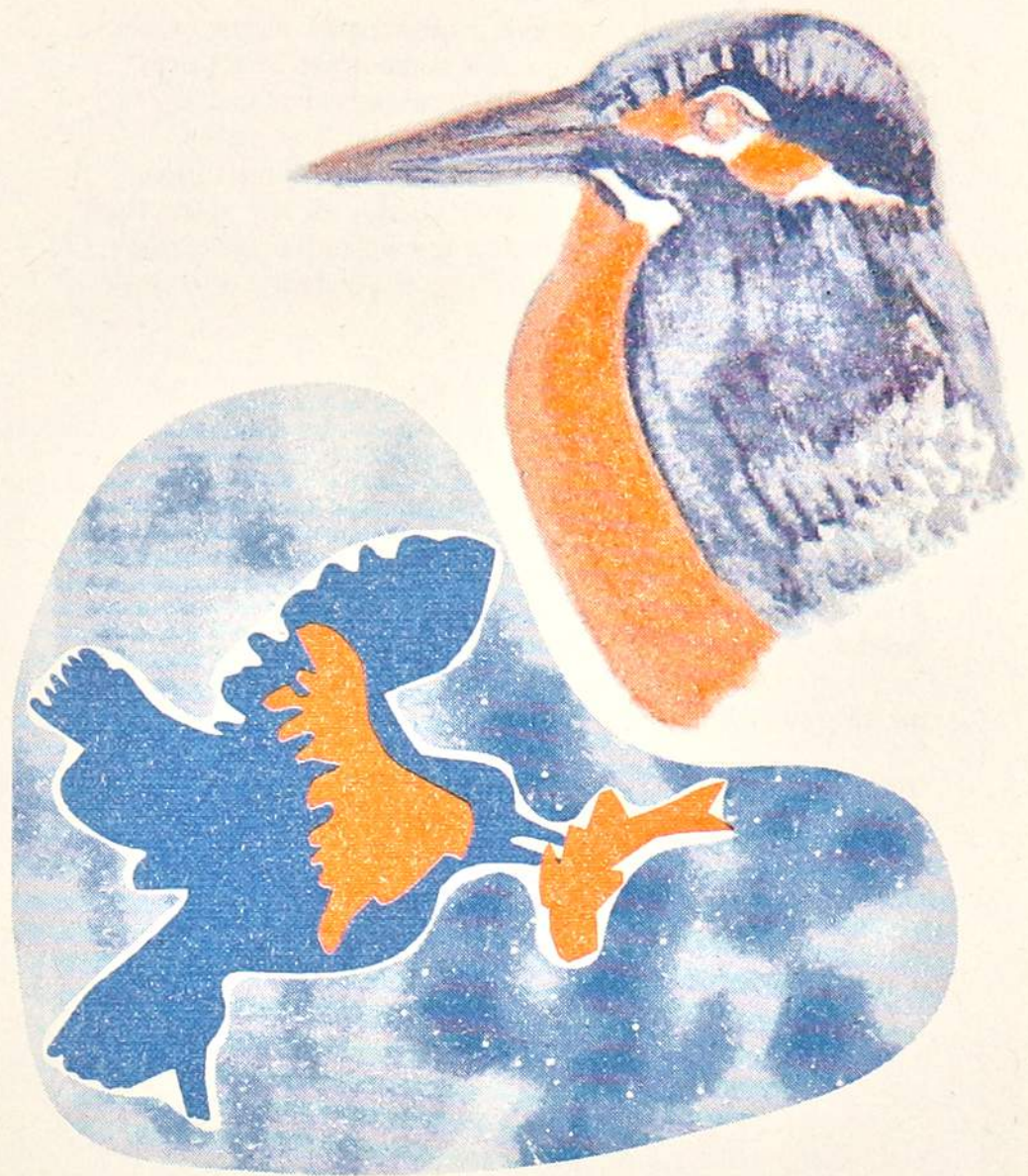
With an evocative call and a distinctive silhouette, the Curlew (*Numenius arquata*) is an iconic wader species which fascinates people. Once a common breeding bird of the lowlands of England, it is now declining dramatically across the UK. Despite a decline in breeding populations, Curlew continues to be a common visitor to our estuaries in winter. On the Humber Estuary, the tidal flats are visited by large numbers of wintering Curlew, which originate from breeding grounds in Scandinavia.

Lucas Mander, Research Associate, University of Hull

Curlew



Kingfisher

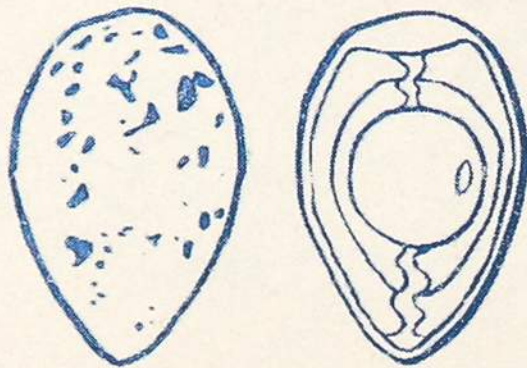


Eggs

A bird's egg provides almost everything the developing embryo needs. A package of nutritious yolk surrounded by watery, protein-rich albumen, all encased by membranes and a hard shell which protect against infection while allowing the embryo to breathe. This elegant, self-contained life support system is crafted inside the mother's body, usually in less than one day. Once laid, the protection and warmth of the parent and nest provide the final ingredients needed for a new chick to hatch.

Eggs and nests appear perfectly adapted for their function. However, human activity has dramatically changed the environments to which they are adapted, resulting in increased rates of reproductive failure and species decline. In particular, the way we use the land often leaves the eggs of ground-nesting birds, such as waders, exposed and vulnerable. Frequent disturbance, heightened threat from terrestrial predators, and reduced natural food availability all contribute to this problem. We must value, respect, and protect the nesting sites of these birds if we are to secure their future.

Dr Nicola Hemmings, Royal Society Dorothy Hodgkin Research Fellow, University of Sheffield



Lapwing



Robin

Chicken



Bittern



The Bittern's Boom

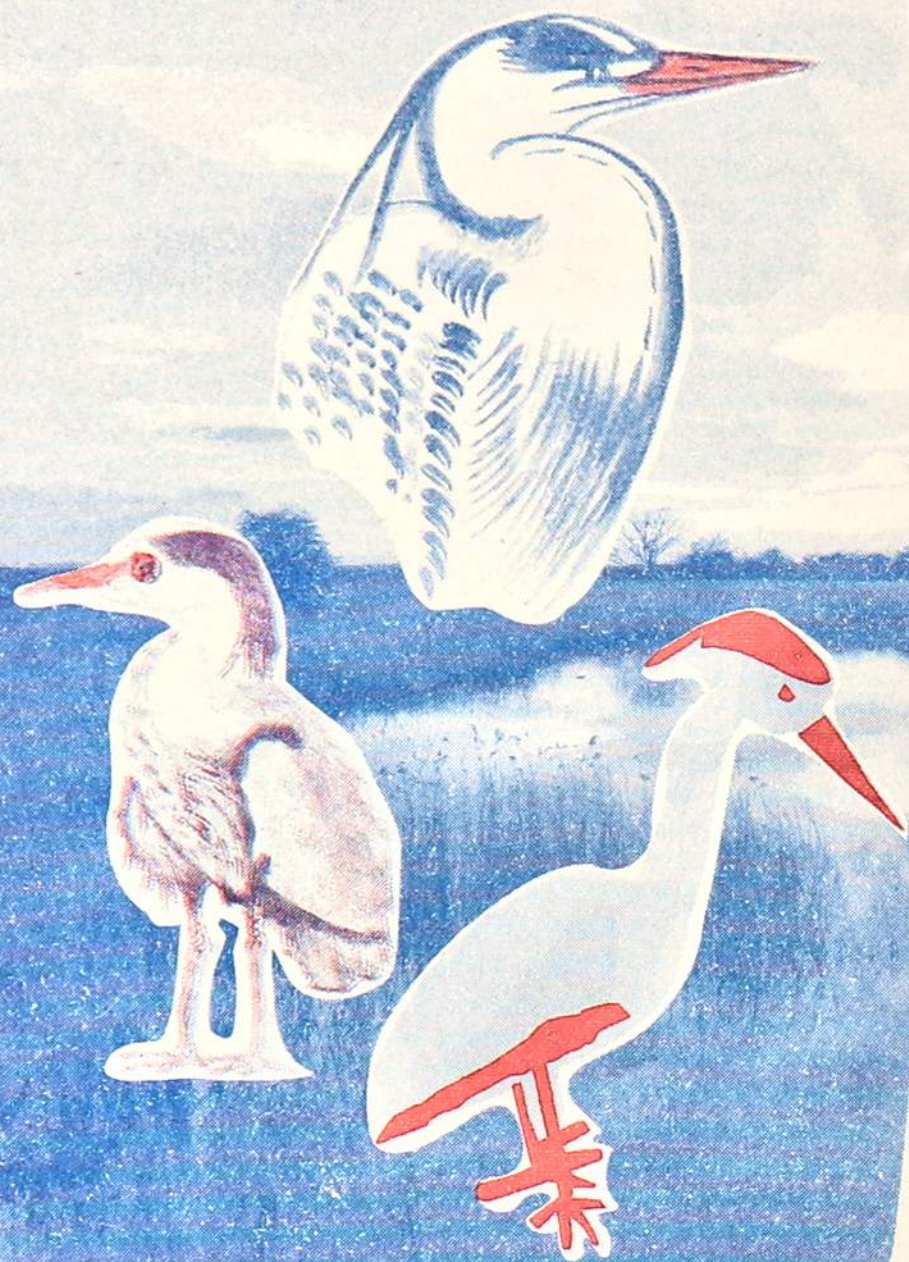
The boom of a Bittern is among the most extraordinary of bird sounds. So extraordinary in fact that for years, no one quite knew how the bird made it. Living deep within dense marshy vegetation, Bitterns are hard to see, and even harder to see booming. An old belief was that the Bittern 'thrust its bill into a reed, by the help whereof it makes that lowing or drumming noise ... Others say, it thrusts its bill into the water, or mud, or earth and by that means initiates the lowing of an ox' – hence its generic name *Botaurus* – imitating a bull's bellow.

The reality is that the Bittern booms by pushing air through its syrinx – the avian equivalent of a voice box – with its head and neck held erect. Booming is the male's territorial display that simultaneously says, 'This is my patch of marsh' and to any females within earshot (and that's several kilometres): 'I am available' for unlike many other British birds, male Bitterns are polygynous, often with a harem of two or three female partners.

The Bittern's boom, formerly considered 'ominous and presaging', is now a welcome sound since it signals the success of the conservation measures that have brought this species back from the brink of extinction in Britain.

Tim Birkhead FRS, Emeritus Professor of Behavioural Ecology,
University of Sheffield

Heron



Images by Photographers

During this project a number of photographers shared their work with us. These photographs were used in the workshops where people made the illustrations for this book, where they were used as guides for paper cutting, painting and lino-cut printing. A number of photographs are reproduced in this book as backgrounds to the illustrations, showing the kind of habitats in which the birds depicted are often found. The photographers also shared their knowledge and expertise with us, helping to shape the design of this book.



The photograph above by Dave Newman inspired the owl illustration on page 23 on the right hand side.



This photograph of a Kingfisher is also by Dave Newman and inspired the illustration on page 9.



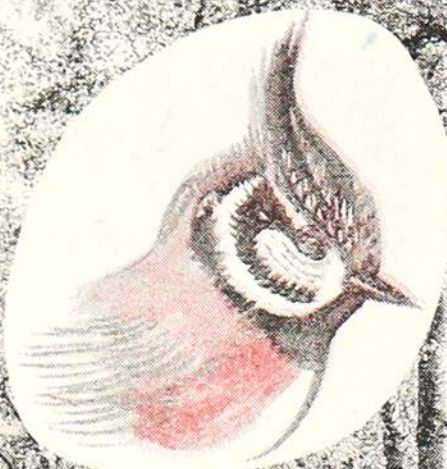
The photograph above is by Michael Flowers and is of a Bearded Tit. Michael told us an interesting story about this bird: "They have up to three broods of young on the Humber in the summer and happily eat insects. However, when the first frost comes, or cold days when there aren't many insects, they have to switch to eating the seeds of the reeds shown in the photograph. They can't automatically do this, but have to swallow little pieces of grit. This lodges in the gizzard, and allows them to grind the seeds into particles small enough for their digestive systems to cope with."

Barn Owl



Tawny Owl





Crested Tit



Crow

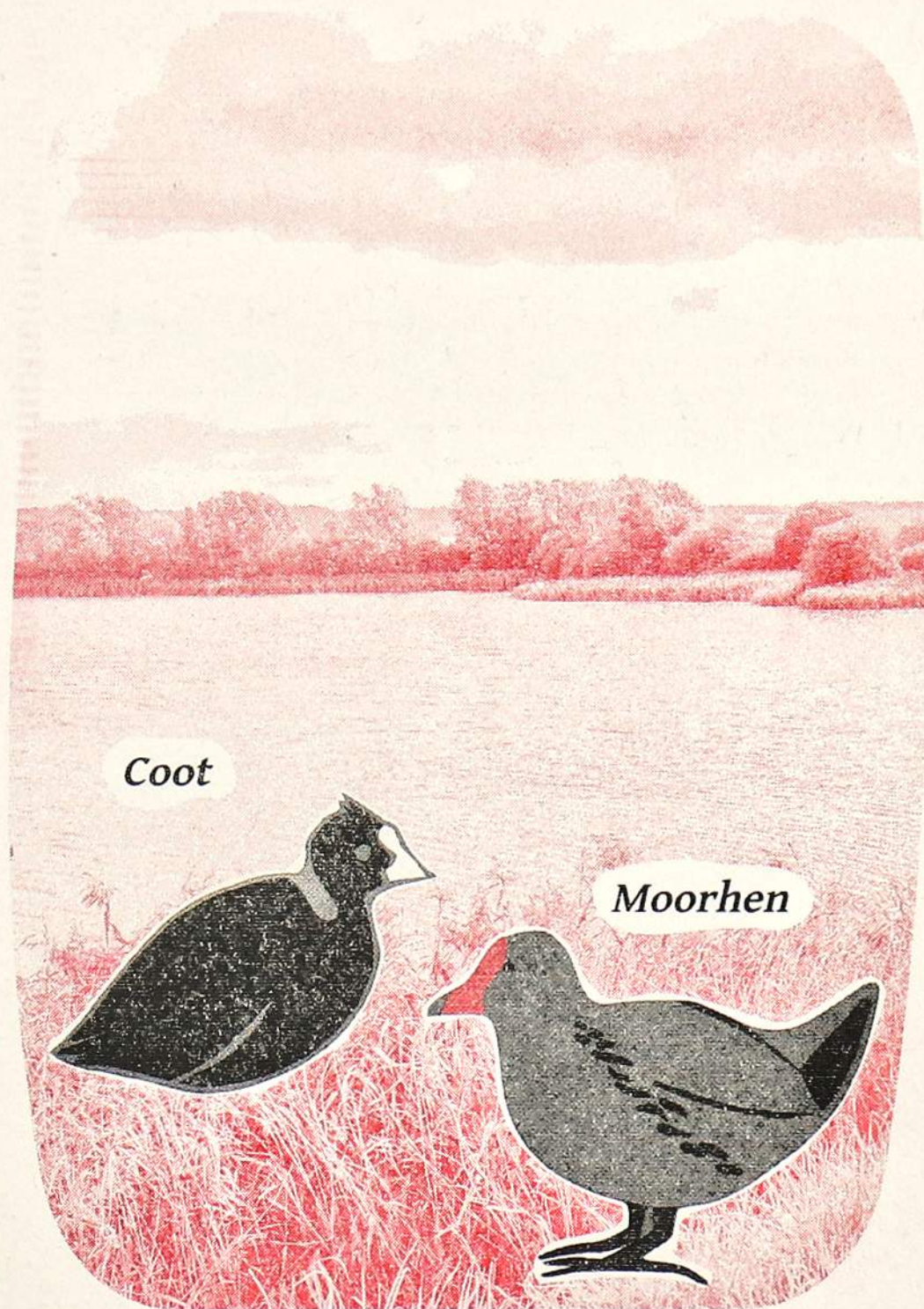
Green Woodpecker



Bullfinch

Pied Wagtail





Credits

Lucas Mander (p.7, text) is a Research Associate at University of Hull. His current work focuses on the effects and impacts of human-related activities on seabirds and waterbirds, including offshore wind farms, port developments and habitat restoration in estuaries.

Dr Nicola Hemmings (p.10, text and illustration) is Royal Society Dorothy Hodgkin Research Fellow at University of Sheffield. Nicola studies the reproductive behaviour and physiology of animals (mostly birds). She is also interested in developing equitable approaches for engaging people with science and research.

Tim Birkhead FRS (p.17, text) is Emeritus Professor of Behavioural Ecology at University of Sheffield. He has written for New Scientist, BBC Wildlife, Natural History magazine and is author of 'The Wisdom of Birds' and 'Bird Sense' amongst other publications.

'Shoreline, Skyline, Treetop Messenger' was commissioned by art science organisation Invisible Dust, as part of the 'Surroundings' project, in collaboration with Humber Museums Partnership. It contributes to Invisible Dust's mission to encourage awareness of, and meaningful responses to, climate change and environmental issues. It is funded by Arts Council England through Ambitions for Excellence and Wellcome Trust Sustaining Excellence.

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Thank you to all the workshop participants who made the illustrations in this book (page numbers in parentheses), and created the wax models (w) cast in bronze for the installation at North Lincolnshire Museum:

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Thank you also to the photographers that submitted the photographs used in the workshops (wk) and publication:

Michael Flowers (wk,8,12,21), Des Lloyd (wk,23,24,25,26,27), Dave Newman (wk,9,20,21), Tom Nicholson (wk,5,11,14,15,16,18,19), Fred Roberts (wk), Nathan Robinson (13).

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Philip Duckworth and Ben Sadler, Juneau Projects, 2020



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and the bird life of the North Lincolnshire area including
Illustrations by local people working with artists Juneau Projects
Images by local photographers
Texts by scientists Tim Birkhead FRS, Dr Nicola Hemmings and Lucas Mander

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