

August 2011

1. View of the pond on the 15th showing large areas cleared of Canadian Pondweed.



2. Confirmed wildlife sightings:

a. Birds:

Blackbird, Blue Tit, Bullfinch, Buzzard, Carrion Crow, Chaffinch, Coal Tit, Dunnock, Goldfinch, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Great Tit, Greenfinch, House Martin, Jay, Kingfisher, Little Grebe, Long-tailed Tit, Mallard, Mistle Thrush, Moorhen, Nuthatch, Pheasant, Raven, Robin, Siskin, Song Thrush, Sparrowhawk, Swallow, Swift, Tree Creeper, Willow Tit, Willow Warbler, Wood Pigeon, Wren.

The Kingfisher was first spotted on the 4th of this month. George Trudt's patience and skill paid off when he got this picture of the bird on the 14th August.

I am pleased to report that all four young Little Grebes are doing well. This is a picture of one of them at exactly one month old on the 16th. The young Moorhen is also thriving.



b. Mammals:

Mammals spotted in the Reserve this month include Brown Hare, Mole, Pipistrelle Bat, Rabbit, Red Squirrel, Wood Mouse, Shrew and Stoat have been spotted in the Reserve.

c. Amphibians and Reptiles:

Frogs, Toads, Newts and Lizards have all been seen on the Reserve and in the woods.

d. The Insect Chorus:

The dawn chorus of birdsong has ended for this year, but the 'insect chorus' is in full swing now, *when the sun shines!* As well as the buzzing of bees, beetles, dragonflies and hoverflies, there's the familiar chirping sound of grasshoppers singing away in the Heathland area.

There are 11 different species of grasshopper native to Britain and we have at least 3, the Meadow, Common Field and Common Green Grasshoppers at the Reserve.



Each species has its own unique sound which experts find as recognisable as bird songs. The Meadow Grasshopper makes a pulsing chirp which repeats every few seconds. The sound can be amplified using a bat detector. You can also use the detector to make recordings and compare the calls of different species. The chirping sound is created by rubbing a row of pegs on their back legs against their wings. You can see the pegs with a good hand lens. The action is called 'stridulation'. Both sexes stridulate, but it's usually the males you can hear who make the noise in order to attract a mate.

Mating will go on until September, and once mated the females will lay their eggs in batches of about a dozen in dry soil. The nymphs will emerge next spring, around April or May. The Meadow Grasshopper is the only one of the UK species which cannot fly. It is also extremely variable in colour. It can be green, brown, purple, orange and even pink.

e. Butterflies:

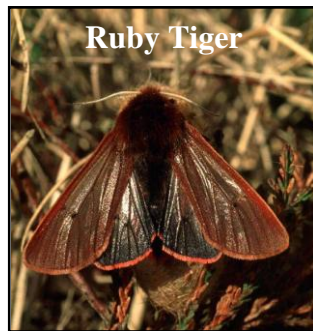
It has been a disappointing month for butterflies because of the wet weather. There were occasional sightings of Green-veined White, Peacock and Red Admiral and one sighting of a Meadow Brown.

f. Moths:

On the 13th of August Keith Naylor and Anna White very kindly came to Eskrigg Reserve and spent several hours identifying the moths that had been trapped during the previous night. Over 500 moths were caught and there were at least 58 different species. Once again, several species had not been caught at Eskrigg before. These were:

Macro-moths

Barred Chestnut - *Diarsia dahlii*, Dark Marbled Carpet - *Chloroclysta citrata*, The Dun-bar - *Cosmia trapezina*, Ruby Tiger - *Phragmatobia fuliginosa* and The Sallow - *Xanthia icteritia*.



Micro-moths

Straw Grass-veener - *Agriphilia straminella*), *Epinotia nisella*, *Epinotia ramella*, Little Grey - *Dipleurina lacustrata*, Pied Grey - *Eudonia delunella*, Small Grey - *Eudonia mercurella*, Ground-moss Grey - *Eudonia truncicolella*, Mother of Pearl - *Pleuroptya ruralis*, Mint Bent-wing - *Pseudopostega crespusculella*, Meadow Grey - *Scoparia pyralella*, Pale Straw Pearl - *Udea lutealis*.

This is the first time the **Mint Bent-wing** has been found in this area.

Following the Moth Workshop this Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing was spotted.



The caterpillar below was spotted feeding on a toadstool. **Can you identify it?**



g. Harvestmen



If there are any budding Arachnologists reading the bulletin who can identify these harvestmen found at the Reserve please get in touch?

h. Leaf-curling Sac Spider - *Clubiona phragmitis*



Leaf curled and sealed.

Female guarding egg sac.

Female spider.

This spider was found on the 3rd of August whilst clearing some of the reed-canary grass.

Clubiona is derived from the Greek "Kleos" meaning "glory" and "bios" meaning "life". The female spider is 7-11 mm long and the male 5-10 mm long. Its abdomen is a greyish- or reddish-brown with a silky pubescence. Its chelicerae are relatively large and dark. The female epigyne and male palp are distinctive and often discernible with a lens. The eyes are uniform in size and are arranged in 2 rows of 4. The first and fourth pairs of legs are the longest.

C. phragmitis is a nocturnal, free-ranging spider that aggressively chases prey on vegetation. With a speedy dash and a final jump, the prey is usually caught with its first pair of legs. It is an important agricultural pest controller. It is commonly called a leaf-curling spider because the female spins a retreat, for herself and the egg sac, in the heads of reeds.

Habitat: On vegetation, generally in marshy habitats but sometimes on sand dunes.

Distribution: Widespread but local distribution throughout Britain and northern Europe.

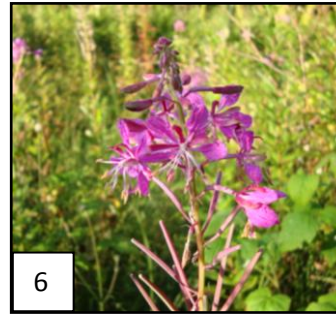
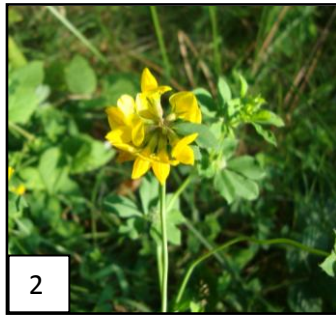
i. Fungi:



Another False Morel (*Gyromitra esculenta*) was also found at the side of the path.

Elf Saddle (*Helvella lacunosa*) found at side of path into the Reserve.

j. A few of the flowering plants worth noting this month:



1. Water Mint

4. Devil's Bit Scabious

2. Bird's Foot Trefoil

5. Meadow Vetchling

3. Knapweed

6. Rosebay Willowherb

k. Some of the plants whose fruits and seeds are already being dispersed.



1. Meadow Vetchling

4. Red Campion

2. Bramble

5. Cleavers

3. Foxglove

6. Burdock

3. Maintenance work – Volunteer Assistance

On several occasions during the month Jessica Peck and Innes Green carried out some maintenance work in order to gain their Duke of Edinburgh Award. Jessica spent hours replacing boards along the edge of the path. Innes helped Jessica with the path on one occasion and at other times cleared away some of the weed extracted from the pond. Ian Dunn, pictured in last month's bulletin, also cleared the banks of pondweed.



One evening Moira Weatherup and Bob Glaister assisted with clearing some of the Canadian pondweed from the middle of the pond. Moira did not have a pair of waders, but that did not stop her wading in in her jeans and trainers. *I am afraid I have no photographic evidence – probably just as well.*

Thank-you also to Moira Weatherup and Bob Glaister for splitting and delivering logs during the month.

Pondweed and Reed-canary Grass was cleared round the edges of the pond, the sides of the Reserve path and boardwalk were strimmed, the Reserve path raked and the grass at the Dumfries road end cut.

4. Fantastic Mr Fox Day 16th August:



Ross Gemmell talked to the group about the range of animal tracks and signs that we could look out for and gave us a short quiz to try out before going into the woods. We then followed a trail he had set out earlier in the day to look for a range of animal footprints on the muddy path. On discovering the tracks we had to draw them and identify them. Our efforts were checked on return to the Centre.

One of the participants had the bright idea of illustrating Fantastic Mr Fox using natural materials found around the Reserve so the youngsters made a fox from twigs, leaves and pine needles.

We finished the workshop by making Mr Fox face masks. A good time was had by all. Thanks Ross.

5. Carey Family Outing 18th August



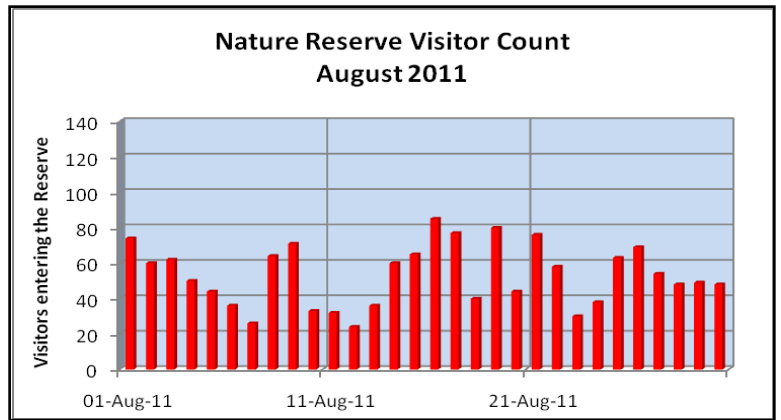
Young Holly and Rob Carey brought their grandparents along to Eskrigg for an afternoon's pond dipping. They caught a good range of aquatic organisms:

Alderfly larvae, Caddis larvae, Damselfly nymphs, 2 species of Leech, male and female Sticklebacks, **Great Diving Beetle**, Diving Beetle larvae, Water Boatmen, Lesser Water Boatmen, Mayfly nymphs, Palmate Newts, Pond Skaters, Pea Mussels, Pond Snails, Water Fleas but unfortunately no Water Scorpions.



6. Visitor Records:

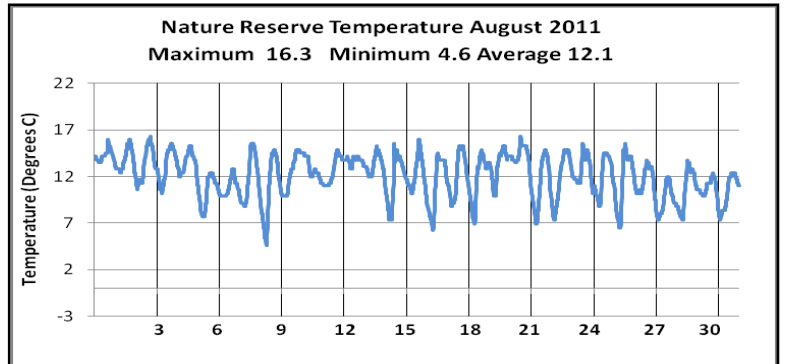
Month	Total number of Visitors	Daily Average Visitors
March	1866	60
April	2234	74
May	1846	60
June	1504	50
July	1689	54
August	1661	54



6. Weather Records:

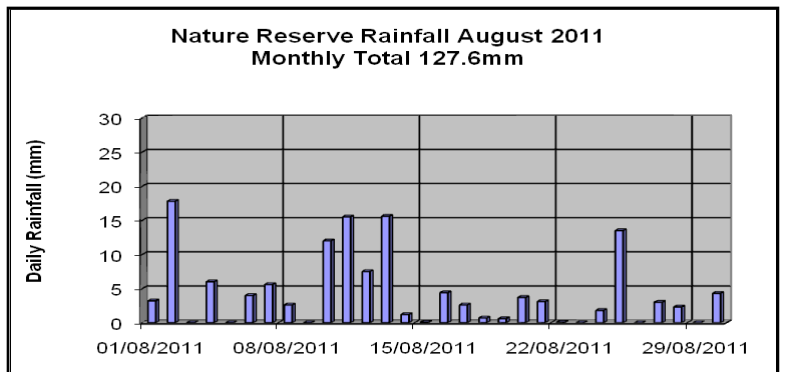
a. Air temperature

Month	Maximum	Minimum	Average
February	7.7	-4.4	1.7
March	11.0	-6.3	2.6
April	18.1	-2.7	7.9
May	14.5	-2.7	7.9
June	19.8	2.7	10.3
July	19.8	5.4	12.09
August	16.3	4.6	12.1

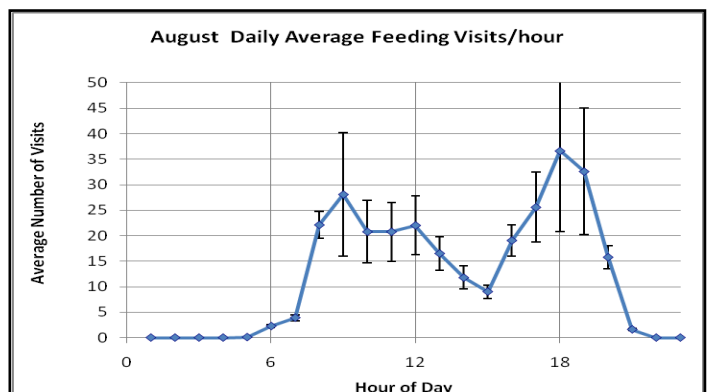
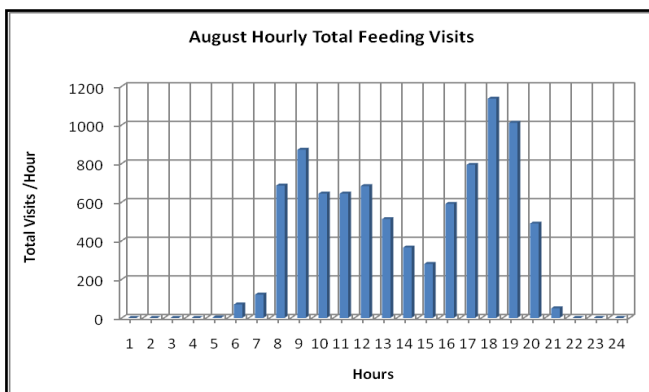


b. Precipitation

Month	Rainfall (mm)
February	189.6
March	71.9
April	55.8
May	158.9
June	85.4
July	155.65
August	127.6



7. Monitoring Red Squirrel Feeding Behaviour



This month there has been another change in the feeding pattern with the feeding in the morning being spread out over a longer period of time and the number of visits decreasing. The reason for the change is probably the increased availability of food materials in the woods, particularly fungi and fruit, at this time of year.