

Lockerbie Wildlife Trust
Trustees Annual Report for the year ending 31st August 2009
Part 1 – Report on Trust activities throughout the year.

September 2008

The AGM was held on the 24th. On the 27th Duncan Ford ran a very successful Fungal Foray.

Duncan pointed out examples of the major groups of fungi found in the area and helped us learn the main characteristics of these groups. One of the most interesting, and also the largest specimen found, was the edible Cauliflower Fungus. It was delicious when gently fried in butter!

October 2008

On the 15th PC Ian Leggat (Wildlife Liaison Officer) gave an interesting, illustrated talk entitled “Wildlife & the Law”.

Nuthatches were seen for the very first time at the reserve at the beginning of October. Over the next few months they were regular visitors to the two squirrel feeders, where they were joined by blue tits, great tits, coal tits and great spotted woodpeckers. Nuts that fell to the ground were enjoyed by the chaffinches and pheasants.

On the 23rd October the strong winds brought down some large branches from a number of willows and these were cleared away the following day. The large sprawling willow near the jetty was cut back and will be allowed to coppice or, when the new hide is built, it may be removed altogether. The sides of the paths and the boardwalk were also tidied up.

November 2008

On the 19th, Anne Saunders, of the Marine Conservation Society, talked to members about “Cool Seas for Scotland”.

The cold spell at the end of the month made life difficult for the waterfowl. However, they always managed to keep at least one part of the pond from freezing over.

December 2008

On the 17th, Keith Ringland discussed the feasibility of re-introducing Scottish Wildcats into the South West of Scotland.

At least seven different red squirrels visited the feeders during the month.

January 2009

The Burns’ Supper planned for the 24th of January had to be cancelled for a variety of reasons.

The number of pheasants coming to the feeders increased over the month and on one occasion five hens and two cocks could be seen nearby.

February 2009

The Annual Members’ Night was held on the 11th of February.

The feeder burn was made ready for the Annual Nut Race on the 22nd, when there was the usual good turnout.

March 2009

On the 19th David Clark from Tullie House brought members up to date with the Dragonflies and Damselflies now to be found in Dumfries & Galloway.

A red squirrel was spotted on one of the feeders with an unusually red left eye - which was apparently not just a photographic aberration. However, the squirrel was not seen again. Many frogs and toads returned to the pond to breed this year. There was very little spawn spotted, however, hundreds of tiny froglets and toadlets left the pond a few months later.

April 2009

On the 17th there was a Pond Dipping event held at Eskrigg Reserve as part of the Dumfries and Galloway Wildlife Festival.

Children were given the opportunity to find out about the life lurking below the surface of the pond. A good turnout of adults and children was experienced and over thirty pond species were identified.

Sunflower hearts and nyjer seeds were added to the menu at the feeding station and, as well as being popular with the tits and chaffinches they attracted siskins and the occasional goldfinch.

The mallard, moorhen and dabchicks all had a successful breeding season.

May 2009

The Annual Coffee Morning was held on the 16th of May and was the usual success thanks to Kathy Davidson and her team.

A pair of Pink Footed Geese visited the pond for a week.

June 2009

On the 27th of June, Peter Norman kindly ran a moth workshop.

Despite the very poor turnout, a wide variety of moths were identified, including several new species.

All the common woodland bird species were in evidence over the month. At times it was difficult to walk along the path and avoid standing on the tiny amphibians that were leaving the pond to grow and mature in the neighbouring woodland.

July 2009

The number of red squirrels visiting the feeder dropped off during July, partly due to the presence of good quantities of natural foods, and partly, as it turned out, due to a bad batch of peanuts. Some stripped green pine cones were found suggesting the possible presence of grey squirrels. One sickly red squirrel was spotted in mid-July and then no reds spotted for the remainder of the month, suggesting possible spread of the squirrel pox virus.

August 2009

Freda Seddon ran a very successful 'Bat Talk and Walk' on the 21st of August. It was well attended and many different bats were seen and 'heard' using bat detectors.

At the end of July and start of August there was a spate of vandalism. One side of the shelter was smashed, the six toadstool seats uprooted and five of them burned, a picnic table smashed and burned, twenty of the boards lining the path were pulled up and burned and the door the the east hide badly damaged. The police have a number of suspects but we have not heard further. Our thanks to those who reported the incidents and those who helped clear up afterwards. Repairs are being effected as quickly as possible.

There was a reported sighting of two greys chasing a red in August. The Grey Squirrel Control Officer, Ian Kerr, was duly informed.

September 2009

Many thanks to Duncan Ford for leading another successful Fungal Foray on the 12th of September.

Ian Kerr carried out an intensive and systematic trapping exercise in the woods around the reserve and turned up over twenty red squirrels and no grey squirrels in the area. New squirrel feeders have been installed and a new supply of nuts obtained. Red squirrels have recently been spotted in the area of the feeders once again.

Kingfishers have been seen frequently at the pond this month. The boards along the side of the path near the shelter have now been replaced.

At the Reserve, this has been another very good year, marred only by the continuing threat posed by the grey squirrels and the mindless vandalism carried out by a few individuals. I look forward with optimism to the months ahead and the construction of the new hide with disabled access.

Many thanks to all who assisted on maintenance days and with the events that took place at the Reserve.

Photographs

There have been insufficient entries for the photograph competition this year so there will be no calendar for 2010. The Nature Notelets have proved quite popular and so will be continued, improved and added to as time goes on. The marketing of the notelets will be reviewed.

Eskrigg Centre

It is anticipated that the revised plans for the new hide with disabled access will be approved in a matter of weeks. Thanks again to **Clive Wilsenham** for his input. The contract to build the hide will be given to one of the tendering firms and work should start on the site before the end of October.

Newsletter

During the course of the year four newsletters were published and circulated to members to keep them updated on the Trust's activities. We are very grateful to **Freda Seddon** who compiles the newsletters.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee and all the other members of the Trust who have worked hard over the year to achieve the aims and objects of the Trust.

**This report was compiled on behalf of the Trustees by the Reserve Manager
Jim Rae 30.09.09**