September 2011

1. **View of the pond on the 26th.**

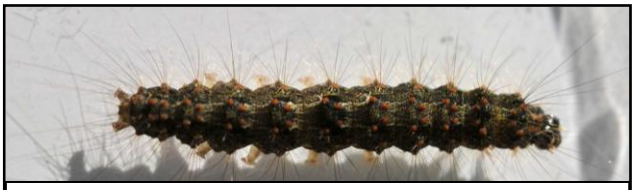
2. **Confirmed wildlife sightings:**
   a. **Birds:**
   Blackbird, Blue Tit, Buzzard, Carrion Crow, Chaffinch, Coal Tit, Dunnock, Goldfinch, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Great Tit, Greenfinch, Jay, Little Grebe, Long-tailed Tit, Mallard, Moorhen, Nuthatch, Pheasant, Raven, Robin, Siskin, Sparrowhawk, Spotted Flycatcher, Swallow, Tree Creeper, Tree Sparrow, Whitethroat, Willow Tit, Willow Warbler, Wood Pigeon, Wren.

   It is not clear why, all the Little Grebes disappeared from the pond early in September and have not been seen since. On the 23rd, sixteen Mallard were introduced to the pond to replace those that departed during the breeding season.

   b. **Mammals:**
   Bank Vole, Brown Hare, Common Shrew, Fox, Rabbit and Red Squirrel. There was also a possible sighting of a Water Vole.

   c. **Amphibians and Reptiles:**
   Frog, Palmate Newt, Toad and Common Lizard.

   d. **Butterflies:**
   Peacock, Red Admiral and Small Tortoiseshell.
   The larva (caterpillar) of a Heath Fritillary (*Mellicta athalia*) was found in one of the moth traps on the 22nd of September.



Heath Fritillary (*Mellicta athalia*) larva

   e. **Harvestmen**
   The harvestmen in the August bulletin have been identified as:

Leiobunum rotundum (F)

Mitopus morio (M)

3. Events at Eskrigg:

On the 2nd, the Trust held its annual "Eskrigg Nightlife" event at Eskrigg Centre. Thanks to Ross Gemmell and Freda Seddon for a very entertaining and informative evening.

On the 11th, Duncan Ford ran a very successful Fungal Foray and found 36 different species. A number of other species were noted at various times during the month.

Laccaria amethystina

Hydnum repandum

Cantharellus tubaeformis

Scientific Name	Common Name	Scientific Name	Common Name
Amenita fulva	Tawny Grisette	*Lactarius rufus*	Rufous Milk Cap
Amenita vaginata	Grisette	*Lactarius turpis*	Ugly Milk Cap
Amenita muscaria	Fly Agaric	*Leccinum scabrum*	Brown Birch Boletus
Amenita rubescens	The Blusher	*Leotia lubrica*	Jelly Babies
Armillaria cepistipes	Fine-scaley Honey Fungus	*Lenzites betulinus*	Birch Mazegill
Boletus badius	Bay Boletus	*Lycoperdon perlatum*	Common Puffball
Boletus edulis	Penny Bun	*Paxillus involutus*	Brown Roll Rim
Calocera viscosa	Yellow Staghorn	*Piptoporus betulinus*	Birch Polypore
Cantharellus cibarius	Chanterelle	*Pluteus cervinus*	Fawn Pluteus
Cantharellus tubaeformis	Chanterelle	*Russula claroflava*	Yellow Swamp Russula
Cortinarius bolaris	Red-dappled Web Cap	*Russula emetica*	The Sickener
Cortinarius violaceus	Violet Web Cap	*Russula ochroleuca*	Yellow-ochre Russula
Hydnum repandum	Hedgehog Fungus	*Russula erythropus*	-
Hypholoma fasciculare	Sulphur Tuft	*Scleroderma citrinum*	Common Earthball
Inocybe griseolilacina	Grey and Lilac Fibre Cap	*Suillus variegatus*	Variegated Boletus
Laccaria amethystina	Amethyst Deceiver	*Trametes versicolor*	Many-zoned Bracket
Lactarius blennius	Slimey Milk Cap	*Tricholoma columbetta*	Dove-colour Tricholoma
Lactarius mitissimus	Mild Milk Cap	*Tricholoma fulvum*	Birch Knight- Cap

On the 17th, Lockerbie and Lochmaben District Guides, Brownies and Rainbows spent an action-packed afternoon at the Reserve.

The activities included:

Pond Dipping,
Minibeasts,
Wildlife Orienteering,
The 'Un'-nature Hunt,
Den Building,
Wildlife Orienteering and
Scavenger Hunt.

Despite the very wet weather, the youngsters enjoyed themselves.

On the 19th, Keith Kirk ran part 2 of his course on 'Wildlife Photography for the Digital SLR User', this time concentrating on macro-photography. The course was very helpful and enjoyable for those who attended.

On the 20th, Ian Dunn once again helped with maintenance work – pruning bushes on the pond fringe.

On the 22nd, Keith Naylor and Anna White once again kindly helped to identify the moths trapped over the previous night. This time the weather had been cold and wet. Nevertheless a few more 'new' species were found:

1. Silver Y *Autographa gamma*
2. Pink-barred Sallow *Xanthia togata*
3. Pine Carpet *Thera firmata*
4. Red-line Quaker *Agrochola lota*

On the morning of the 23rd, 16 mallard were released onto the pond to replace those that had flown away earlier in the year. These were supplied by Mike Green, Thornethwaite.

On the evening of the 23rd, Lockerbie Cubs, accompanied by their leaders, visited in order to undertake the Eskrigg Junior Wildlife Challenge. All completed the task successfully and were awarded their certificates.

On the 26th, the Advanced Higher Biology class from Dumfries Academy, with teacher Callum Grierson, carried out a detailed study of the pond life at Eskrigg and found some hitherto unrecorded species.

4. The Enemy Within

Did you ever see the science fiction film "Alien"? You know the famous scene where the monster bursts out of John Hurt's chest at the dinner table? Ever wonder if that could really happen? In the world of the Braconids it's a regular way of life.

Braconids are a type of parasitoid wasp. They come in many different shapes, sizes and colours, but the thing they all have in common is that they spend their childhood inside another species!

Female Braconids inject their own eggs into the bodies of other insects.

It is believed that the eggs are coated in a virus which disables the host's immune system, allowing the eggs to hatch, and the larvae to grow, without the host knowing. The larvae feed on the insides of the living creature, cleverly avoiding the vital organs, thereby keeping their host alive. When the Braconid larvae are fully grown they eat their way out of their host by chewing a small hole in the skin. The wasp larvae wriggle out and pupate beside their host.

Braconid Wasp (*Aleiodes indiscretus*) laying egg in Gypsy Moth caterpillar.

You might think that after all this the unlucky host would just collapse and die. Incredibly, the nightmare for the caterpillar is still not over. As if in some zombie-like state, it spins a web of silk over the Braconid cocoons to protect them. The developing cocoons are prone to attack by an even smaller species of parasitic wasp (hyperparasitoids) called *Lysibia nanus*. To prevent this happening, the barely alive host caterpillar keeps watch over the developing parasitoids, flicking away intruders until the adult Braconid wasps emerge.

5. LWT Excursion

On the 24th, some members of the Trust went on an excursion to Knowetop Lochs, a SWT Nature Reserve. A wide range of wildlife was spotted including woodland birds, fungi, slime moulds, lizards, caterpillars, grasshoppers and dragonflies. Large numbers of Black Darters were flying and mating throughout the area. The group was surprised to find no waterfowl on the lochs.

Knowetop Lochs (WB)

Mating Black Darters

Slime Mould (WB)

Intrepid Photographer

Grasshopper

American Crayfish

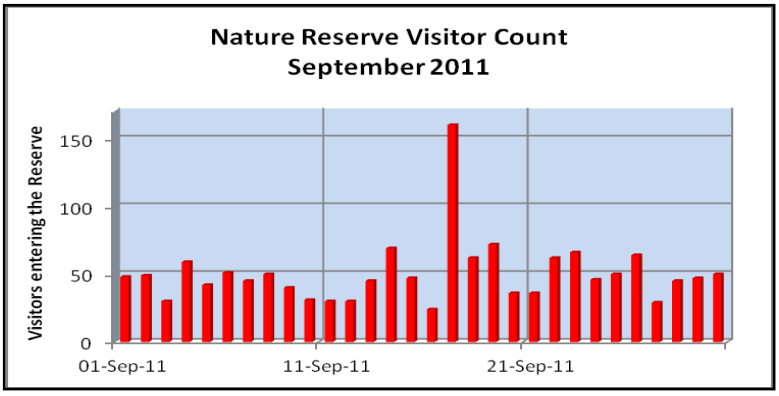
Willow sculpture of hedgehog

Red Kite

A picnic lunch followed at the Ken Bridge Hotel where fisherman were busy catching American Crayfish in large numbers. The party then went on to the feeding station near Lauriston to watch and photograph the Red Kites. The trip finished with a brief visit to the nature trail (with its large willow sculpture of a hedgehog) and the shop at Kilnford Farm. The weather was good and the group had a very pleasant day.

6. Visitor Records:

Month	Total number of Visitors	Daily Average Visitors
April	2234	74
May	1846	60
June	1504	50
July	1689	54
August	1661	54
September	1515	51

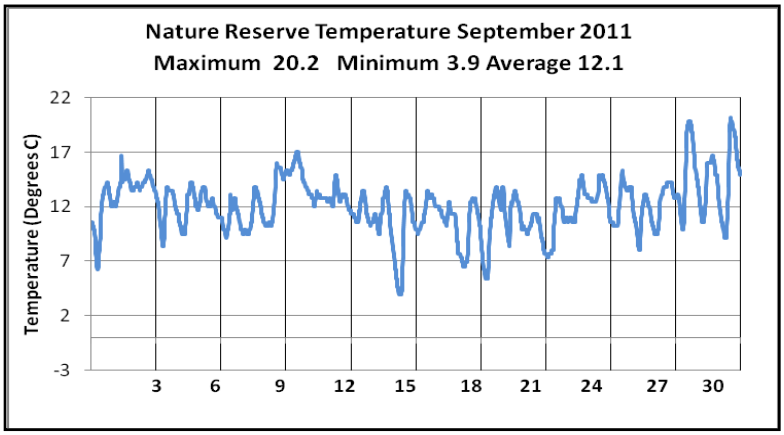


The high count on the 17th of September was due members of the Lockerbie and Lochmaben District Guides, Brownies and Rainbows going to and from the Reserve during their activity afternoon.

7. Weather Records:

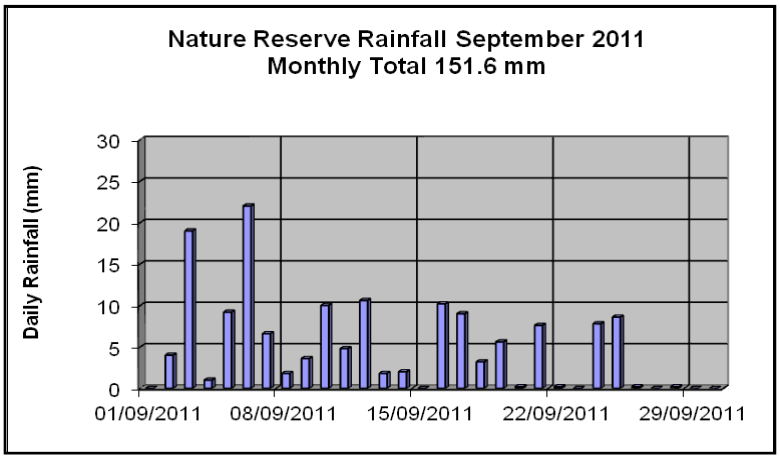
a. Air temperature

Month	Maximum	Minimum	Average
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
September	20.2	3.9	12.1



b. Precipitation

Month	Rainfall (mm)
March	71.9
April	55.8
May	158.9
June	85.4
July	155.65
August	127.6
September	151.6



8. Monitoring Red Squirrel Feeding Behaviour