

June 2011

1. Views of Eskrigg Centre and the pond in mid-June.



2. Confirmed wildlife sightings:

a. Birds:

Blackbird, Blackcap, Blue Tit, Bullfinch, Buzzard, Carrion Crow, Chaffinch, Chiffchaff, Coal Tit, Collared Dove, Garden Warbler, Goldcrest, Goldfinch, Grasshopper Warbler, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Great Tit, Greenfinch, Grey Heron, House Martin, Jay, Little Grebe, Long-tailed Tit, Mallard, Moorhen, Nuthatch, Oystercatcher, Pheasant, Pied Wagtail, Raven, Robin, Rook, Sedge Warbler, Siskin, Song Thrush, Sparrowhawk, Spotted Flycatcher, Swallow, Tawny Owl, Treecreeper, Tree Pipit, Willow Tit, Willow Warbler, Wood Pigeon, Wren, Yellowhammer.



The Grasshopper Warbler on the left and the Sedge Warbler on the right were recorded at Eskrigg for the first time in June 2011, the former on the 25th and the latter on the 29th.



b. Mammals:

The young squirrels have done well this month, thrilling visitors as they chase each through the trees. Rabbits, hares, bank voles, moles, and stoats have also been seen.

c. Amphibians and Reptiles:

Hundreds of tiny frogs and toads left the pond in June and headed into the woods to feed and grow. When they are three years old some of them will return to the pond to breed themselves. There are many young newts in the pond and common lizards are frequently seen in the heathland.



d. Insects:

On the 16th of June Andy Riches kindly helped at the **Moth Workshop** to identify sixty species of moth including the following species of macro-moths new to the Reserve:

	Common Name	Scientific Name
1	Beautiful Golden Y	<i>Autographa pulchrina</i>
2	Bordered White (Northern)	<i>Bupalus piniaria</i>
3	Chimney Sweeper	<i>Odezia atrata</i>
4	Flame, The	<i>Axylia putris</i>
5	Gold Swift	<i>Hepialus hecta</i>
6	Lesser Cream Wave	<i>Scopula immutata</i>
7	Lesser Swallow Prominent	<i>Pheosia gnoma</i>
8	Marbled Minor	<i>Oligia strigilis</i>
9	Red-necked Footman	<i>Atolmis ribricollis</i>
10	Small Angle Shades	<i>Euplexia lucipara</i>
11	Small Argent & Sable	<i>Epirrhoe tristata</i>
12	Small Yellow Wave	<i>Hydrelia flameolaria</i>
13	Spectacle	<i>Abrostola tripartita</i>

The micro-moths are much more difficult to identify and usually don't have a common name. We are very grateful to Peter Norman who identified the following eight species, all new to the Reserve:

Agonopterix arenella, *Capua vulgana*, *Celypha lunana*, *Cryptoblabes bistriga*, *Lobesia littoralis*, *Mompha locupletella*, *Scoparia ambigualis*, *Udea olivalis*.

According to Peter, *Lobesia littoralis* is usually a coastal species which feeds on thrift, though it is known to occur on garden varieties. Some of these species are quite scarce locally and some nationally. Most notable is *Cryptoblabes bistriga* (picture on the right) which appears to be new for D&G and there is only one other Scottish record, near Ullapool.



On the 10th of June I came across a clump of tiny insect nymphs. They turned out to be a species of predatory shieldbug (*Picromerus bidens*). This species usually overwinters as eggs and less frequently as nymphs,



Late instar nymphs



Adult

becoming adult by July/August. The nymphs are greyish-black, with pale banded legs and yellow banded antennae. Like the adults, they are predatory, feeding on the larvae of other insects, particularly caterpillars, but will also suck sap from plants.

They are widespread across Britain and Ireland, but scarcer further north and only recorded recently in Scotland. They are found in a variety of habitats; particularly heathland but also in damp flower-rich meadows and on chalk downland.

Visitors to the Centre could not fail to notice the wasps going in and out the shutter slots at the front windows. They are obviously nesting in the wall of the Centre. The photograph opposite shows one of the wasps fanning the entrance to help keep the nest cool.



Anyone taking a gentle stroll round the reserve on one of the sunnier days in June was treated to a colourful display by a wide variety of insects. Can you identify the following insects in the pictures below?

Ringlet, Flesh-fly, Common Green Grasshopper, Common Blue Damselfly, Scorpion Fly, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Chimney Sweeper, Froghopper, Flea Beetle, Green Bottle, Large Skipper, Marmalade Hoverfly.



One of the of the pictures shows an insect that is not in the above list – can you name it?

It is hoped to attract a few more insect species to the Reserve by creating a small wildlife garden next to the Centre. Once a willow stump has been removed the site will prepared and sown with the seed of native plants favoured by insects and their larvae. Native plants may also be transplanted on to the site.

Any assistance to remove the stump would be greatly appreciated. Contact Jim on 07739987009.

e. A few of the flowering plants seen this month.



1



2



3



4



5



6

1. Dog Rose 2. Elder 3. Marsh Orchid 4. Marsh Cinquefoil 5. Ragged Robin 6. Red Campion

3. Maintenance work – Volunteer Assistance

During the month the Dumfries Road entrance and several paths were cleared using the lawn-mower and strimmer. A trellis was erected beside the Centre to reduce the disturbance to wildlife caused by visitors approaching the Centre and thereby cause less disruption for photographers who may be in the process of trying to capture shots of the birds from inside the hide. If the trellis is not enough it will be boarded over in the future to create a full screen.



During the **Maintenance Day** on the 26th, Chris Trott and David Hughes helped Jim to prune back the trees and bushes along the forest road and fill in some more of the pot-holes.



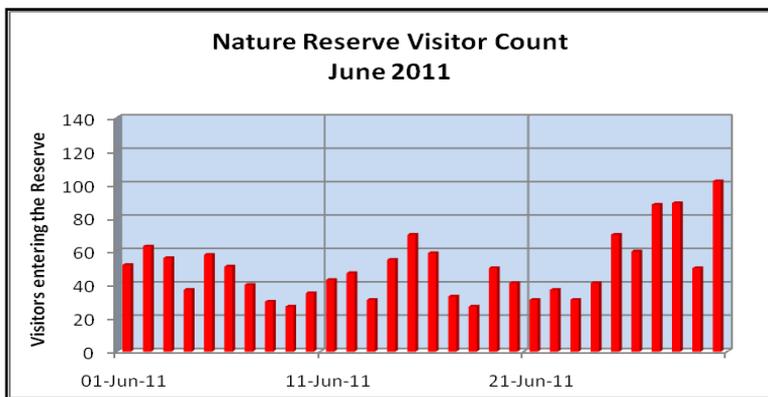
Before



After

4. Visitor Records:

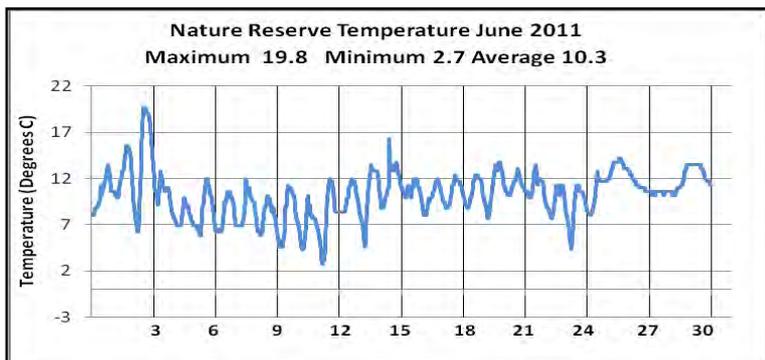
Month	Total number of Visitors	Daily Average Visitors
January	1472	47
February	1603	57
March	1866	60
April	2234	74
May	1846	60
June	1504	50



5. Weather Records:

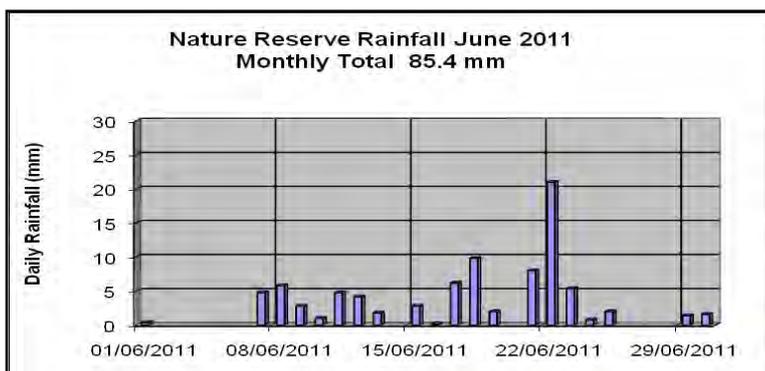
a. Air temperature

Month	Maximum	Minimum	Average
December	2.3	-17.6	-6.5
January	5.4	-9.2	-1.5
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

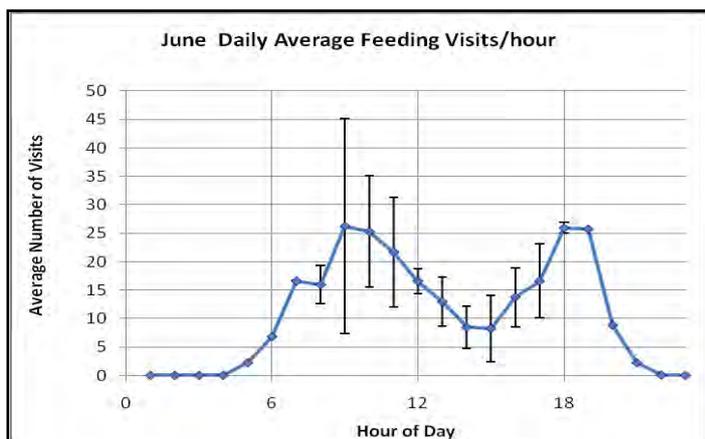
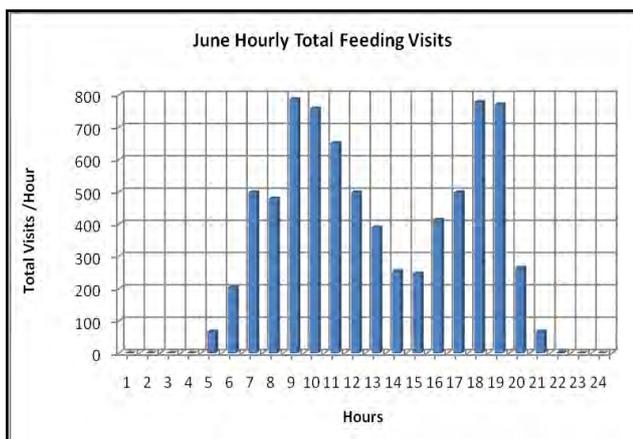


b. Precipitation

Month	Rainfall (mm)
December	29.7
January	108.8
February	189.6
March	71.9
April	55.8
May	158.9
June	85.4



6. Monitoring Red Squirrel Feeding Behaviour



The squirrels are now feeding between 4:30 and 21:00hrs. The increase in feeding rate is due partly to the increased number of young squirrels and partly to the smaller average size of the peanuts in the last batch from Gardenwise. The young squirrels are still feeding regularly at the sunflower heart and bird seed feeders. These feeders do not have monitors on them.

7. Visiting Groups: 15th June:



1st and 2nd year Environmental Studies pupils from **Lockerbie Academy** organised a sponsored walk on the 15th of June to raise funds for Eskrigg Reserve. During the walk they called in at the Reserve to have a picnic. At the end of term the group presented Jim Rae with a cheque for £406. The Trust appreciates the initiative and effort made by these young people over the year and thanks them for their support. The Trust would also like to thank the school staff who work with these youngsters.

27th June:

Staff and senior pupils from **Eastriggs Community School**, with head teacher Grace Leopold, visited the Reserve on the 27th to carry out a mini-beast study of the heathland area and pond and try out their skills at orienteering. The pupils had a good time and followed up the visit by writing reports about the animals they had seen. Their reports and thank-you letters are on display in the Centre. Thanks to Ross Gemmell for helping on the day.



28th June:



The **Lockerbie Ladies Learning** group, organised by Margaret Cameron, visited the Reserve on the 28th to learn about the history of the Reserve and see for themselves the great variety of habitats and wildlife within it. After a short presentation at the Centre they had a guided walk round the Reserve and enjoyed a relaxing picnic lunch at the shelter in the heathland area.

29th June:

A 3rd year biology class from **Lockerbie Academy**, and their teacher Rosie Bowker, came down to the Reserve on the 29th to carry out some course field work. They practised the use of biological keys, looked at examples of all the major plant groups around the Reserve and discussed the role of lichens as pollution indicator organisms. After doing a number of line transects in the pine wood they enjoyed a packed lunch before heading back to the school.

