

Lockerbie Wildlife Trust

(www.lockerbie-wildlife-trust.co.uk)

Eskrigg Reserve

March 2012 News Bulletin



Scottish Charity No:
SC 005538

1. View of the pond on the 19th March.

2. Confirmed wildlife sightings:

a. Birds:

Blackbird, Blue Tit, Buzzard, Carrion Crow, Chaffinch, Chiffchaff, Coal Tit, Dunnock, Goldfinch, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Great Tit, Grey Heron, Grey Wagtail, Jay, Kestrel, Little Grebe, Long-tailed Tit, Mallard, Marsh Tit, Moorhen, Nuthatch, Pheasant, Raven, Robin, Siskin, Song Thrush, Sparrowhawk, Tawny Owl, Teal, Tree Creeper, Tree Sparrow, Wigeon, Willow Tit, Wood Pigeon, Wren.



Nuthatch - PC



Wigeon - GT



Willow Tit - AL

This is the first recorded visit of a wigeon since the Reserve opened in 1987.

b. Mammals:

Bank Vole, Fox, Hedgehog, Mole, Rabbit, Red Squirrel, Roe Deer, Water Shrew (1st record).



NT



TL



SS

Photographs: Norah Muirhead (NM), Pam Copland (PC), George Trudt (GT), Andrina Laidler (AL), Norman Tait (NT), Tom Langlands (TL), Suzanne Storm (SS).

c. Insects:



(Photographs by Roddy Armstrong)

3. Spring at Eskrigg



(Photographs by Jim Rae)

Top: Larch needles, Birch leaves, Hawthorn leaves.

Middle: Pink Purslane, Gorse, Primrose, Daisy.

Bottom: Golden Saxifrage, Coltsfoot, Marsh Marigold, Wood Sorrel.

4. Activities at the Reserve during March:

10th March: Nicola Scott (purple jacket) organised a guided walk from Lockerbie Town Hall to Eskrigg Reserve and back in order to promote the recently published **GoSmart Lockerbie Sustainable Travel Guide**. Copies of the leaflet are available at Eskrigg Centre and at Lockerbie Library. The leaflet gives details of the rail links, road networks, bus routes, walks and bike trails in and around Lockerbie. It also includes a map of the walks and bike trails around Eskrigg Reserve.



13th March: John Charteris, Chairman of South West Environmental Action Trust **SWEAT**), presented a cheque for £500.77 to David Hughes, Chairman of Lockerbie Wildlife Trust, to fund a new flat-bottomed work boat and buoyancy aids to assist with maintenance work on the pond and islands at Eskrigg Nature Reserve. Each year pond weed and reed-grass has to be manually cleared from the old curling pond and the vegetation on the islands has to be managed. The boat will be extremely useful in this regard. A wall plaque acknowledging the generous donation will be on permanent display in the Eskrigg Centre.



19th March: Lockerbie Primary 4/5 Walk for Wildlife. Elizabeth Graham's P4/5 class organised a sponsored walk on the 27th of February to raise funds for Lockerbie Wildlife Trust. Once the sponsor money was all collected in, the class invited the Jim Rae and Bob Glaister to the school to receive a cheque for the magnificent sum of £632.21. In return, Jim presented each pupil with a Certificate of Appreciation. As members know, the red squirrels and birds at Eskrigg Reserve are fed each day in order that there are always animals around for visitors to watch and photograph. The grain, nuts and seeds are very expensive and this donation will help immensely.



19th March: LA S1 Environmental Studies Class.

Under the watchful eye of support teacher Norah Muirhead, the three boys (L to R: Connor Jardine, Lee Gage and Isaac Hann) gave the fence, at the Dumfries Road entrance to the Reserve and Woodland Walks, its annual coat of wood preservative. As visitors to the Reserve can testify, the boys did an excellent job. Over the year, the lads will be practising new skills whilst helping the Lockerbie Wildlife Trust in the process.



23rd March: LA S2 & S3 Environmental Studies Classes.

The pupils in these two classes joined forces on the Friday afternoon to give the generator box, trellis and ramp rails their annual coat of wood preservative. They worked well as a team and even had their supervisors helping in order to complete the task at the one visit.



25th March: Maintenance Day

Volunteers (L to R: Rosie Miller, David Hughes and Karen Miller) worked with Jim Rae to give the outside of the Eskrigg Centre its annual coat of wood preservative. The weather was good on the day and the group even managed to coat the entrance ramp as well. In the following days the inside of the Centre was given a spring clean.



31st March: Saturday volunteers.

On most Saturday mornings a team of three young volunteers, working towards their Duke of Edinburgh Award, may be seen helping to replace the boards alongside the path through the Reserve. On this particular Saturday, Innes Green and Duncan Burgess helped the Reserve Manager to lay some concrete slabs to form a base for the toilet tent. These two lads are normally joined by their friend Lewis Carruthers. Innes has now completed over 50 hours of voluntary work at Eskrigg Reserve and will be nominated for an MV Award – which gives national recognition from the Scottish Government for the voluntary work that young people do.



5. Easter Bunny:



Did you know the Easter Bunny, portrayed nowadays as a rabbit, was originally a hare? In pre-Christian times the hare was the traditional spring animal because it was associated with Eostre (Ostara) the goddess of the dawn, spring and fertility. It's easy to see the connection as hares are very fertile animals. They can have up to four litters in a year, and each litter can have up to four young (leverets). The females can actually conceive a second litter while still pregnant with the first.



6. Easter Eggs:

Many birds have completed their courtship and are now busy building nests and, in some cases, incubating eggs. A number of empty Mallard eggshells have been seen. However, compared to last year, there are fewer crows around so perhaps we may be lucky and see some ducklings on the pond this year. The Little Grebes appear to be quite settled in their first nest site this year. Let's hope they too are successful. The Blue Tits are taking up residence in the same bird box as last year so we may be able to get some video footage.

[Photographs: Jim Rae (JR), Jim Thomson (JT), Sheena Weild (SW), Pam Copland (PC).]

7. Visitor Records:

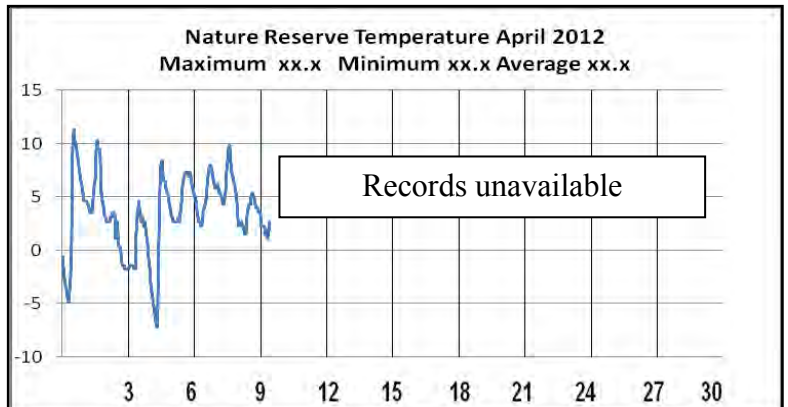
| Month | Total number of Visitors | Daily Average Visitors |
|----------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| October | 1763 | 57 |
| November | 1432 | 48 |
| December | 1373 | 44 |
| January | 2180 | 70 |
| February | 1597 | 55 |
| March | 2795 | 90 |



8. Weather Records:

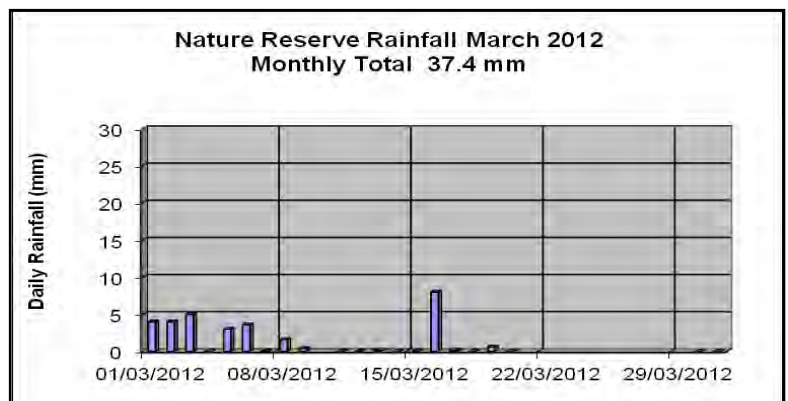
a. Air temperature

| Month | Maximum | Minimum | Average |
|----------|---------|---------|---------|
| October | 17.0 | -1.8 | 9.2 |
| November | 12.4 | -3.5 | 6.6 |
| December | 14.1 | -3.5 | 2.89 |
| January | 5.8 | -8.2 | -0.24 |
| February | 8.0 | -9.7 | 0.39 |
| March | - | - | - |

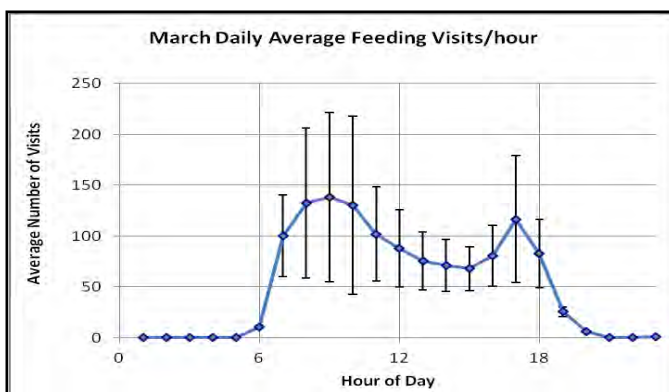


b. Precipitation

| Month | Rainfall (mm) |
|----------|---------------|
| October | 167.6 |
| November | 96.8 |
| December | 148.8 |
| January | 88.5 |
| February | 36.6 |
| March | 37.4 |



9. Monitoring Red Squirrel Feeding Behaviour



Jim Rae (Eskrigg Reserve Manager)
Address: Carradale, 12 Douglas Terrace, Lockerbie, Dumfries and Galloway, D11 2DZ.
Home Tel.: 01576 203 314 / Mobile No.: 07739 987 009
Email: jim_rae2000@yahoo.co.uk