

Lockerbie Wildlife Trust

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

Eskrigg Reserve

April 2012 News Bulletin



Scottish Charity No:
SC 005538

1. View of the pond on the 4th April.

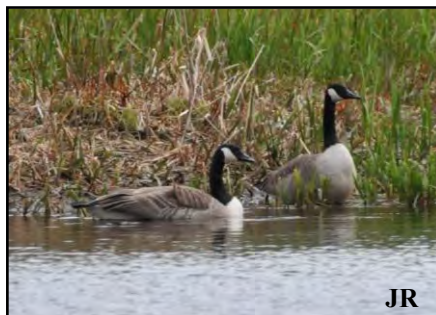
Strong winds the previous night blew the top-hat duck feeder into the pond.



2. Confirmed wildlife sightings:

a. Birds:

Blackbird, Blue Tit, Bullfinch, Buzzard, Canada Goose, Carrion Crow, Chaffinch, Chiffchaff, Coal Tit, Crossbill, Goldcrest, Goldfinch, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Great Tit, Greenfinch, Grey Heron, Jay, Kestrel, Little Grebe, Long-tailed Tit, Mallard, Moorhen, Nuthatch, Pheasant, Raven, Reed Bunting, Robin, Siskin, Song Thrush, Sparrowhawk, Tawny Owl, Tree Pipit, Willow Tit, Willow Warbler, Wood Pigeon, Wren, Yellowhammer.



Top row: Little Grebe, Tree Pipit, Female Crossbill
Middle row: Tawny Owl, Canada Geese, Male Crossbill
Bottom row: Grey Heron



b. Mammals:

Bank Vole, Fox, Mole, Rabbit, Red Squirrel, Roe Deer, Stoat, Weasel, Wood Mouse.

c. Amphibians:



Common Newt (JR)



Palmate Newt (male) JR



Palmate Newt (female) JR

d. Invertebrates

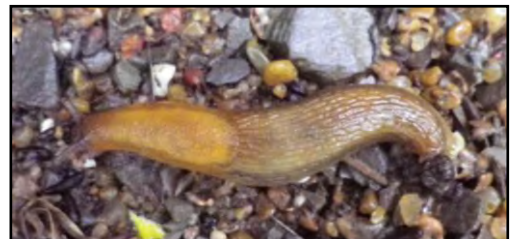
1. Slugs:



Black Slug (*Arion ater*) JR



Slug eggs



Field Slug (*Arion sp.*) JR

The warmer weather, coupled with April showers, created a paradise for slugs. This is the time when slugs start to multiply, and if you turn over stones and logs you can often find their pearly looking eggs - about 2 to 3mm across. There are more than thirty species of slug in Britain in an amazing array of shapes and colours.

Slugs prefer a diet of dead vegetation and fungus and thrive in the damp conditions found in woodlands. After a wet night they may be seen in large numbers on the gravel path. They are also hermaphrodites, having both female and male reproductive organs. They often climb trees to mate at night. When mating, both slugs pass sperm to each other, and a few days later, both slugs lay their eggs in the ground. Their natural predators include hedgehogs, thrushes, slow-worms, frogs and toads.

2. Insects:



Alder Fly (JR)



14-Spot Ladybird (*Calvia 14-guttata*) JR

These two insects were photographed whilst pond dipping. They landed on the sampling nets.

This **Greater or Common Bee-fly (*Bombylius major*)** was spotted by Roddy Armstrong near Dryfebridge. They are also found at Eskrigg Reserve in spring along the edges of the wood and in the willow carr. They mimic a Bumblebee by hovering in the air while sucking the nectar from spring flowers such as primroses or dandelions like this one. *B. major* often shows a preference for flowers with blue petals such as the Marsh Violet. As larvae they are parasitic on solitary bees.



3. Ticks

Signs have been put up at the Reserve to warn visitors, particularly dog-walkers, about the dangers of ticks and Lyme Disease, generally between April and October. A folder has been placed in Eskrigg Centre containing information and advice about the subject, and a tool for removing ticks should that be necessary.

LIFE CYCLE

The tick (*Ixodes ricinus*) is a tiny spider-like creature whose appearance changes with the different stages of its life cycle. The cycle includes three feeding sessions, usually over a three year period. However, in some areas, mild winters and cool summers can modify what is described here.



Year One

Females deposit several thousand fertilised eggs in soil crevices. By the summer, the eggs have hatched into larvae, which remain inactive in the shelter of leaf litter until the following spring. It has been shown that ticks may be brought into the home and lay eggs. Regular vacuum cleaning should remove them.

Year Two

In the spring, the larvae become active, climb up vegetation and wait to attach themselves to their host, usually a small mammal such as a field mouse or vole, for a blood meal. After the feed, the larvae fall to the ground, moult into the nymph stage and remain inactive until the following spring.

Year Three

In the spring, the nymphs become active again and have a blood meal. This may be on a mouse, vole or a larger animal such as a rabbit or hare. After the feed, the nymph falls to the ground to mature into the adult stage. Adults emerging in the autumn or, more usually, the following spring, climb up the vegetation and attach and feed on a passing host (commonly a deer, but also sheep, horses or dogs.) Mating may then take place on the host; the male dies and the female drops off. The female then lays her eggs to complete the life cycle.

During one of the blood meals the tick may acquire the spirochaete *Borrelia burgdorferi* (the cause of Lyme Disease) from the host animal or transmit the parasite to the host.

Lyme Disease is usually transmitted to humans by infected nymphs (during year three of their life cycle,) when they bite people. In the nymph stage, the ticks are quite small and will not be felt on the skin. Infected adult ticks, when they emerge looking for larger hosts, can transmit Lyme Disease to human beings. As the tick feeds, it swells with the blood of the host and becomes more obvious on the skin.

3. Activities at the Reserve during April:

2nd and 9th April: Water Wonders

There was a good turnout for the two pond dipping events during the D & G Wildlife Festival and Wild Spring. Pond organisms caught included: Pea Mussel, Pond Snail, Bloodworm, Caddis larvae, Crane fly pupa, Damselfly nymph, Mayfly nymph, Midge larva, Water Beetle, Leeches (2 species), Lesser Water Boatman, Water Mite, Stickleback and Palmate Newt. Also caught, but not in the water, were the adult Crane fly and a 14-Spot Ladybird (*Calvia 14-guttata*) shown on page 2.

3rd / 4th April: Strong Winds

Very strong north-easterly winds overnight brought down twelve mature Scots Pines along the edge of South Turnmuir Plantation. One of them came down across the entrance to the mountain bike trail and the main forest road. The following morning the top of the tree was cut off to clear the road. The rest of the tree will be cleared by Castle Milk Estate in due course. Many small branches and needles came down on the path through the Reserve and were also raked up in the morning.



8th and 15th April: Spring at Eskrigg

Each afternoon Jim led a guided walk through the Reserve and neighbouring woodland to observe the spring flora and fauna.



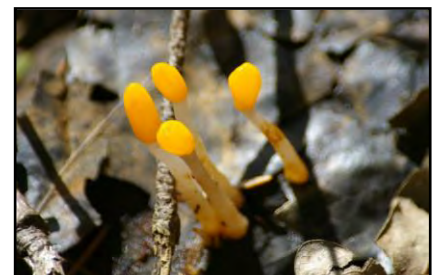
Top row (L to R): Adder's Tongue Fern, Rowan, Bilberry, Buckler Fern

Bottom Row (L to R): Pink Purslane, Wood Sorrel, Wild Garlic, Marsh Violet.



Unidentified Fungus (JR)

These two fungi were also discovered but unfortunately only one of them could be identified.



Mitrula paludosa (RA)

12th April: Moth Trapping and Identification with Peter Norman

5 moth traps (1 Robinson Trap, 2 Skinner traps and 2 Heath traps) were set out the night before in different habitats (pond fringe, willow carr, heathland, spruce plantation and pine plantation) and on the morning of the event these were collected in and brought to the Centre where the moths caught in each were identified by Peter Norman assisted by David Foreman, Janet Foreman and Jim Rae.

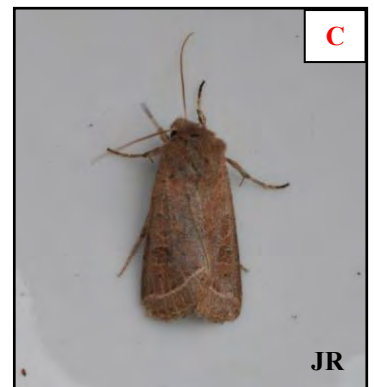
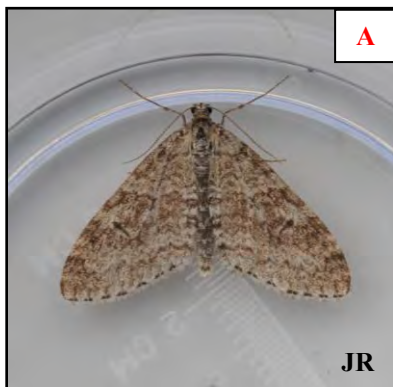
Total Catch (49):

- 1 Chestnut (*Conistra vaccinii*)
- 7 Clouded Drab (*Orthosia incerta*)
- 10 Common Quaker (*Orthosia cerasi*)
- 3 Early Tooth-striped (*Trichopteryx carpinata*)* - A**
- 1 Engrailed (*Ectropis bistortata*)
- 22 Hebrew Character (*Orthosia gothica*)
- 1 Micro-moth (*Eriocrania subpurpurella*)* - B**
- 1 Pine Beauty (*Panolis flammea*)
- 1 Small Quaker (*Orthosia cruda*)* - C**
- 2 Twin-spotted Quaker (*Orthosia munda*)

***Moths identified for the first time at Eskrigg**



Early Thorn (*Selenia dentaria*)
Seen on the 11th April



20th April: Lockerbie Nursery groups 1 and 2 Pond Dipping and Gruffalo Hunt.



23rd April: Lockerbie Nursery groups 3 and 4 Pond Dipping and Gruffalo Hunt



23rd April: Lockerbie Academy S1 Environmental Studies class.

Lee, Isaac and Connor first visited the heathland area to see what wildlife they could spot. They then watched the Nursery group pond dipping before having a go at it themselves.



25th April: Lockerbie Academy S2 Environmental Studies class.

At Lockerbie Academy the students had drafted newsletters about Eskrigg Reserve for sending out to primary schools. While at the Reserve they discussed possible improvements to these with Jim. They then helped to barrow gravel to the new steps at the West Hide.

27th April: Lockerbie Academy S3 Environmental Studies class.

Teri, Danny and Pamela gathered litter from around the woodland walks.



29th April: Reserve Maintenance Day

The Reserve path was raked and the paved path to the toilet tent completed. A trail camera was installed to monitor the squirrel feeders and to try to identify individual Red Squirrels.

30th April: Lockerbie Nursery groups 5 and 6 Pond Dipping and Gruffalo Hunt



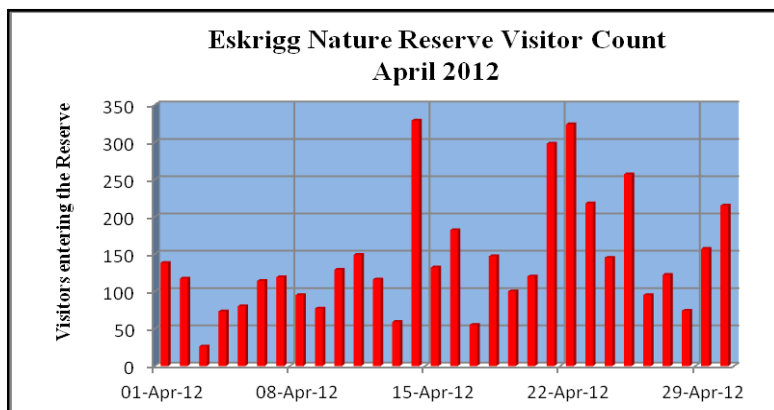
Pond organisms caught by the Nursery children included:

Alderfly Nymph, stone-cased Caddis-fly larva, Common Newt, Crane Fly pupa, Damselfly Nymph, Flatworm, Frog Spawn and tadpoles, Gnat pupa, Great Diving Beetle Larva, Leech (2 sp.), Lesser Water Boatman, Mayfly nymph, Midge larva (2 sp.), Palmate Newt, Pea Mussel, Pond Skater, Pond Snail (3 sp.) and eggs, Stone Loach, Stonefly nymph, Three-spined Stickleback, Toad spawn and tadpoles, Water Boatman, Water Mite (2 sp.), Water Scorpion nymph.

Photo Credits: George Trudt (GT), Jim Rae (JR), Roddy Armstrong (RA), Norah Muirhead (NM), Ann Good (AG), Lockerbie Nursery (LN)

4. Visitor Records:

Month	Total number of Visitors	Daily Average Visitors
November	1432	48
December	1373	44
January	2180	70
February	1597	55
March	2795	90
April	4262	142

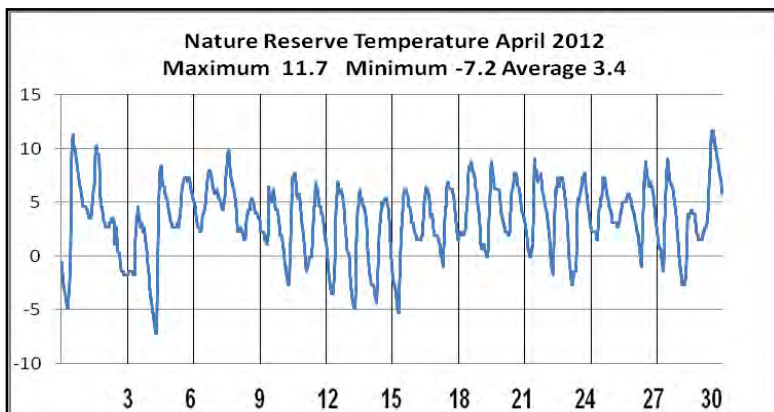


During April there were some 'ghost visitors' – some birds triggered the sensor whilst investigating the box as a potential nest site.

5. Weather Records:

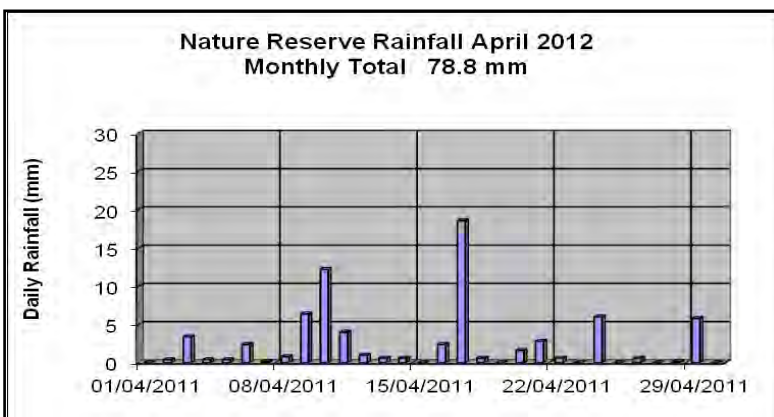
a. Air temperature

Month	Maximum	Minimum	Average
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	-	-	-
April	11.7	-7.2	3.4

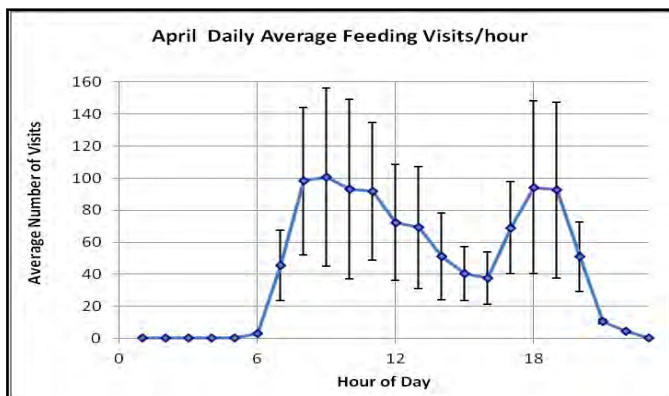


b. Precipitation

Month	Rainfall (mm)
November	96.8
December	148.8
January	88.5
February	36.6
March	37.4
April	78.8



6. Monitoring Red Squirrel Feeding Behaviour



Jim Rae (Eskrigg Reserve Manager)

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