

Lockerbie Wildlife Trust

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

Eskrigg Reserve

March 2015 News Bulletin



Scottish Charity No:
SC 005538

1. View of the heathland area on the 2nd and pond on the 19th of March.



2. Confirmed wildlife sightings at the Reserve in March.

a. Birds

Blackbird, Black Redstart, Blue Tit, Bullfinch, Buzzard, Canada Goose, Carrion Crow, Chaffinch, Chiffchaff, Coal Tit, Dunnock, Goldcrest, Goldfinch, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Great Tit, Greenfinch, Grey Heron, Greylag Goose, Jay, Kestrel, Lapwing, Long-tailed Tit, Mallard, Moorhen, Mute Swan, Nuthatch, Pheasant, Raven, Robin, Rook, Siskin, Song Thrush, Sparrowhawk, Starling, Teal, Treecreeper, Willow Tit, Woodpigeon, Wren.



Dunnock (master of camouflage)

b. Mammals

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

c. Amphibians and Reptiles

The frogs and toads were first seen at the Reserve on the 17th of March as usual. The males started returning a day or two before the females and could be heard croaking to attract a partner. Soon the competition for females became so intense that the males were ambushing the females before they had even reached the pond. We now have masses of spawn in parts of the pond.



Male waiting for a female

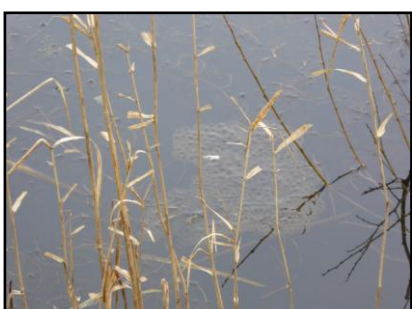
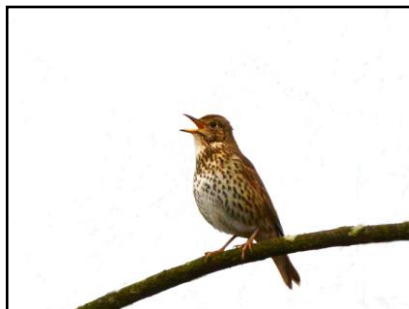


Toads in amplexus



3 males compete for 1 female

3. March photo-gallery



4. Volunteer Work

Sat. 7th – Duke of Edinburgh Volunteers (LtoR - Michael Kerr, Patrick Malone, Keir Stewart, Rory Holden and Andrew Whitty) helped to extend the gravel path through the woods.



Tues. 10th – Thomas Gibbs helped rake the path through the Reserve.

Sat. 21st – Rory Holden helped replace the netting on the bridge below the silt-trap.



Tues. 24th – Thomas Gibbs helped put up bird nest boxes at Annan

Distillery.

Sun. 28th March - Maintenance Day – David Hughes, Sybille Spägele and Jim made some repairs to the boardwalk before the rain set in around lunchtime.

5. Planned Activities

Tues. 3rd – Visit by the U3A Ramblers

Jim met the group at the new car park and led them down to the Reserve. After being briefed about the history of the site the visitors explored the area and took time to observe the squirrels and other wildlife. Some members stayed at the Reserve to do some wildlife photography while others enjoyed a short ramble through the woods before all retired to the Queens Hotel for lunch.



Photographs by David Haydon.

Sat. 14th – Dumfries and Galloway Environment Fair

Lockerbie Wildlife Trust ran a stall at this year's fair, organised by Dumfries and Galloway Ranger Service and held at the Crichton Campus in Dumfries. While Jim manned the main stand and told people about the Lockerbie Wildlife Trust and Eskrigg Reserve, Kirsty Liddon helped lots of children to make Red Squirrel face masks. It was a very successful publicity exercise. Thanks Kirsty.

Wed. 18th – Visit by Dr. Cat Barlow

Cat was going to give a talk to members of the Lockerbie Wildlife Trust in the evening about the Langholm Moorland Project and decided to visit the Reserve in the afternoon beforehand. Jim gave her a guided tour. However, the Red Squirrels were the true ambassadors. Fourteen different squirrels were seen within about twenty minutes at different parts of the Reserve.

Thur. 19th – Visit by P1 pupils from Hoddum Primary School



Kirsty Liddon supervised the 'Wee Woodland Beasties' activity while Jim did the Pond Dipping. The children had a snack and enjoyed a Gruffalo Hunt during the break and then swapped activities. The pupils later wrote some lovely thank you letters, saying how much they had enjoyed themselves.



6. Pill Millipede (*Glomeris marginata*)

The Pill Millipede is found amongst leaf litter in woodlands, fields and hedgerows. It feeds on dead organic matter such as old rotting leaves, particularly beech leaves, and can be responsible for recycling a significant proportion of the nutrients of leaf litter. It is mainly active at night and shows



a preference for damp, shaded places, such as under logs and stones, in order to avoid desiccation. Its ability to roll into a ball makes it more tolerant of dry conditions than other species of millipede. It also adopts this defensive posture when disturbed.

Males transfer sperm to females by means of heavily built, modified rear legs known as gonopods. Eggs are laid singly and are coated in a protective layer of digested earth, secreted from the anus. It takes around 3 years for the juveniles to reach maturity during which time they progress through nine moults. The adults continue to moult periodically. British Pill Millipedes normally live for up to seven years but have been known to live as long as eleven years.

7. County Flowers of Dumfries and Galloway

Wigtownshire - Yellow iris (*Iris pseudacorus*) Also known as 'yellow flag'.

A tall plant (it can grow up to a metre and a half in height) with branched stems and large, bright yellow flowers. Its leaves are long and sword-shaped. The county's marshy hollows are often flooded with its bright 'flags'. It is known locally as 'segg' or 'sword-grass', a reference to the equally remarkable blade-like leaves.

Habitat: A plant of damp places, from lake and river margins to wet woodland and marshes.

Best time to see: Flowers from May to July.



Kirkcudbrightshire - Bog-rosemary (*Andromeda polifolia*)

A beautiful relative of heather. The delicate pink bells and rosemary-like foliage of this wildflower never fail to enchant those lucky enough to find it during its brief flowering in late spring. A declining species, it is a particular feature of the much-reduced bogs and flowers of Galloway.

Habitat: Bogs.

Best time to see: Flowers from May to June



Dumfriesshire - Harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*)

Despite its papery petals and delicate appearance, the harebell is incredibly tough and resilient. It is a wild flower of dry, open places from the bare slopes of hills to the windswept coast.

Habitat: Dry, grassy places.

Best time to see: July to September.



If you had to choose one flower to symbolise the whole of Dumfries and Galloway, what would it be?

Photographs by Jim Rae unless otherwise stated.

For more information call Jim Rae or visit our website.

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