

# Lockerbie Wildlife Trust

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



## Eskrigg Reserve

### December 2017 News Bulletin

Scottish Charity No:  
SC 005538

#### 1. Views of the Reserve on the 13<sup>th</sup> (d) and 29<sup>th</sup> (a, b, c, e).



#### 2. Confirmed wildlife sightings at the Reserve during December.

##### a. Birds

Blackbird, Black-headed Gull, Blue Tit, Brambling, Bullfinch, Buzzard, Carrion Crow, Chaffinch, Coal Tit, Dunnock, Goldcrest, Goldfinch, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Great Tit, Greenfinch, House Sparrow, Jackdaw, Jay, Kingfisher, Lesser Redpoll, Long-tailed Tit, Mallard, Moorhen, Mute Swan, Nuthatch, Pheasant, Pintail, Raven, Robin, Rook, Siskin, Song Thrush, Sparrowhawk, Starling, Tawny Owl, Teal, Treecreeper, Wood Pigeon, Wren, Yellowhammer.



Male Pintail

##### b. Mammals

Bank Vole, Fox, Mole, Rabbit, Red Squirrel, Roe Deer, Stoat, Woodmouse.

##### c. Invertebrates

This Angle Shades moth caterpillar, only slightly longer than a spruce needle, was found on the path next to where Robins and Blackbirds had been searching through leaf litter for food.

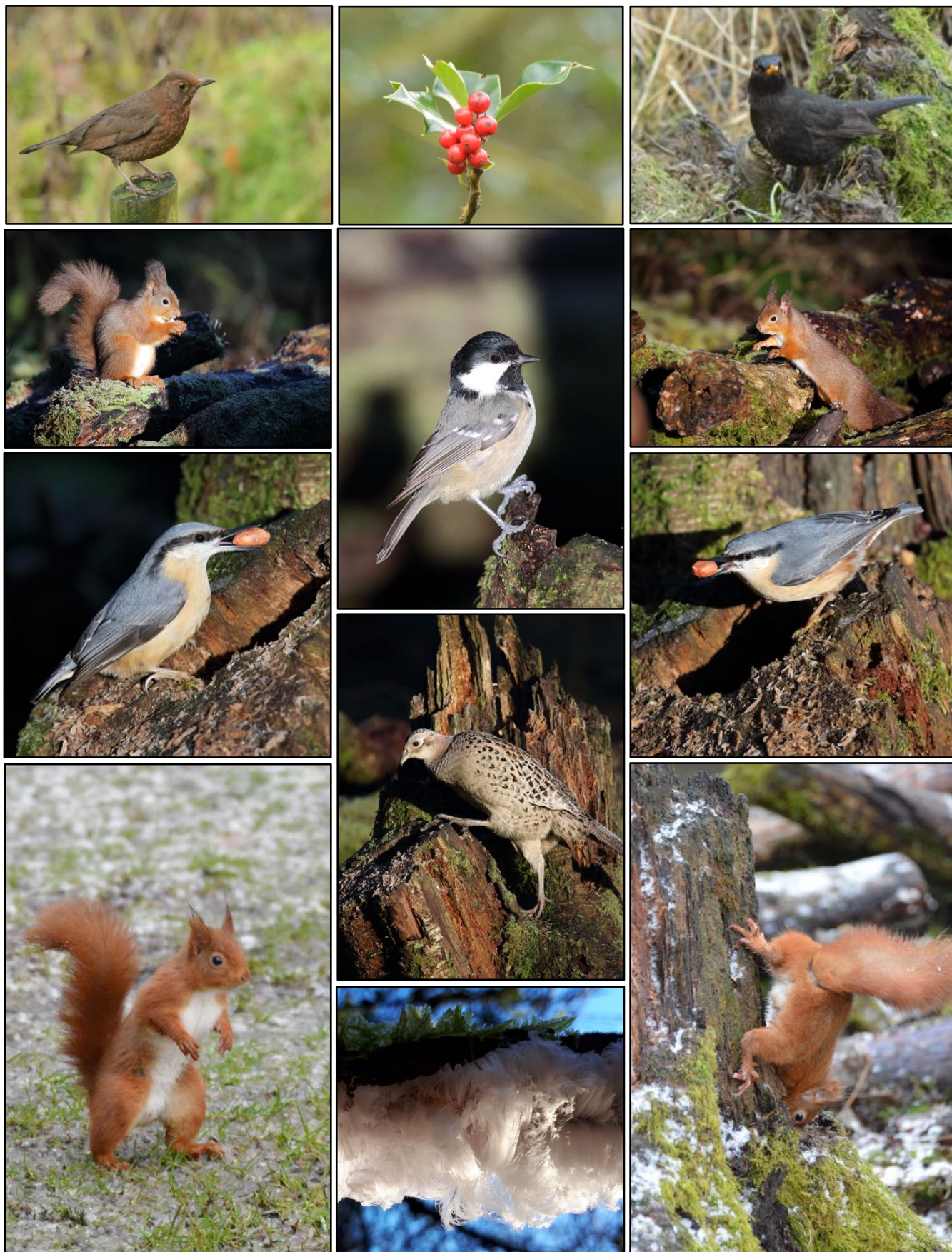
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Photographs by Ian Halliday (IH) and Jim Rae (JR)



### 3. December Photo Gallery



Row 1: Female Blackbird (JR), Holly Berries (JR), Male Blackbird (JR)

Row 2: Red Squirrel (BF), Coal Tit (BF), Red Squirrel (BF)

Row 3: Nuthatch (BF), Female Pheasant (BM), Nuthatch (BF)

Row 4: Red Squirrel (BM), Hair Ice (JR), Red Squirrel (BM)

Photographs by Bob Fitzsimmons (BF), Brian Murphy (BM), Jim Rae (JR)



#### 4. Planned Activities in December

**Tue. 5<sup>th</sup>** **Lockerbie Academy Rural Skills students** came down for just over an hour to help at the Reserve. While the boys worked on the pipeline path, some girls raked up leaves and others gave a wooden bench a second coat of wood preservative.

**Tue. 12<sup>th</sup>** **Lockerbie Academy Rural Skills students** came down to the Reserve to work on the pipeline path between 09:30 and 14:00hrs. The students took turns to use the quad bike and trailer whilst the others used barrows to transport the gravel.

#### 5. Volunteer Activities in December

**Fri. 1<sup>st</sup>** **Jim** met up with **Jenny Forsyth** to discuss possible volunteering activities.

**Sat. 2<sup>nd</sup>** **Neil Stewart, Patrick Malone, Michael Kerr, Nathan Mckenzie** and **Heather Donaldson** helped construct a new section of gravel path along the gas pipeline route.



**Sat. 9<sup>th</sup>** **Michael Kerr, Halime Yildiz, Heather Donaldson, Neil Stewart** and **Nathan Mckenzie** continued the work on the pipeline path.

**Mon. 25<sup>th</sup> and Tue. 26<sup>th</sup>**

A big thank you to **Dave Wardrope**, who covered for Jim on **Christmas Day and Boxing Day**.

All other planned volunteer activities during the month, including the Maintenance Day, were cancelled due to inclement weather. During any fair spells, **Jim** worked away on maintenance tasks - such as clearing blocked drains, pruning trees and hedges and raking up leaves.

**Thanks to all who have volunteered at the Reserve in 2017.**

#### 6. New Feeders

**David Groat** kindly provided two feeders he had constructed himself. These were put up at the feeding stations and stocked with peanuts. It will be interesting to see how long it takes the various species to learn how to access the feeders.



#### New Seat

The bench seat, donated by **Edna Eelbeck** in memory of her husband **Alan**, is being well used and greatly appreciated by many visitors.



#### 7. Looking ahead to 2018

**Eskrigg Reserve** was started in May 1988, with the digging out of the old curling pond. Keep a look out for posters advertising a **Woodland Fair** (perhaps in May 2018) and other events to celebrate the Reserve's **Thirtieth Anniversary**. This year, we also hope to complete a circuit of gravel paths providing **Access for All** to the **Woodland Walks**. The southern loop is nearly complete. With the support from **Tesco Bags of Help**, we plan to start the northern loop towards the end of January.

8.

### Angle Shades Moth (*Phlogophora meticulosa*)

#### Adult

The moth has a wingspan of 45 to 50mm. The wings are folded along the body at rest, which gives the impression of a withered leaf. The subtle shades of greens, pinkish-browns and browns are wonderfully cryptic when set against a background of autumnal leaves. It is widely distributed throughout most of the UK but commonest in the south where multiple broods can occur. The main flight period is between May and October but they can be recorded in almost any month of the year. The arrival of migrants from Europe can further boost numbers, particularly in the south.



August 2014



October 2017

The species occurs in a wide range of habitats including gardens, woodlands, fens and coastal regions. The adults are attracted to light and feed on flowers of Common Reed and other grasses. They are frequently seen during the day, resting in the open, on walls, fences or vegetation.

#### Caterpillar

The caterpillars grow up to 45mm and may be green or mixed shades of brown, sometimes with hints of yellow. The head varies from green to mottled brown and a fine, pale dorsal line runs down its back. A broad pale band extends along the length of the body below the spiracular line.

The larval food includes a diverse range of herbaceous plants, shrubs and deciduous trees including Chickweed (*Stellaria media*), Broad-leaved Dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), Common Nettle (*Urtica dioica*), Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), birches, oaks and willow.



24 December 2017

Once fully grown, the caterpillar spins a flimsy cocoon just below the surface of the soil or amongst leaf litter. Late broods overwinter as caterpillars and pupate during the spring. The adult moth emerges after about three weeks, depending on the temperature.

### 9. Full Moon - December 3<sup>rd</sup> / 4<sup>th</sup> 2017

The December full moon is often referred to as the Full Cold Moon or the Long Nights Moon. The winter solstice sees the shortest day and longest night of the year. This December's full moon was extra big and bright because it was the last **supermoon** of 2017. A **supermoon** is when the full moon happens at the same time as the moon's perigee - the moon's closest position to Earth in the moon's orbit. The moon was 222,443 miles away from Earth, 5 per cent closer than normal.



**With best wishes to all readers for a Happy New Year**

**Jim Rae (Eskrigg Reserve Manager)**

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