

Lockerbie Wildlife Trust

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



Eskrigg Reserve

January 2018 News Bulletin

Scottish Charity No:
SC 005538

1. Views of the Reserve

- a. Frosty morning just before sunrise (7th)
- c. Feeding frenzy on a snowy afternoon (21st)

- b. Snowy morning just before sunrise (17th)
- d. Calm evening just before sunset (25th)



2. Confirmed wildlife sightings at the Reserve during January.

- a. **Birds** Blackbird, Black-headed Gull, Blue Tit, Bullfinch, Buzzard, Carrion Crow, Chaffinch, Coal Tit, Dunnock, Fieldfare, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Great Tit, Greenfinch, Grey Heron, House Sparrow, Jackdaw, Jay, Kingfisher, Lapwing, Long-tailed Tit, Mallard, Mandarin, Mistle Thrush, Moorhen, Mute Swan, Nuthatch, Pheasant, Pintail, Raven, Redwing, Robin, Rook, Siskin, Song Thrush, Sparrowhawk, Starling, Stock Dove, Tawny Owl, Treecreeper, Wood Pigeon, Wren.

- b. **Mammals**

Badger, Brown Hare, Fox, Mole, Rabbit, Red Squirrel, Roe Deer, Stoat.

- c. **Fish, Amphibians, Reptiles**

Undeveloped Frog Spawn.



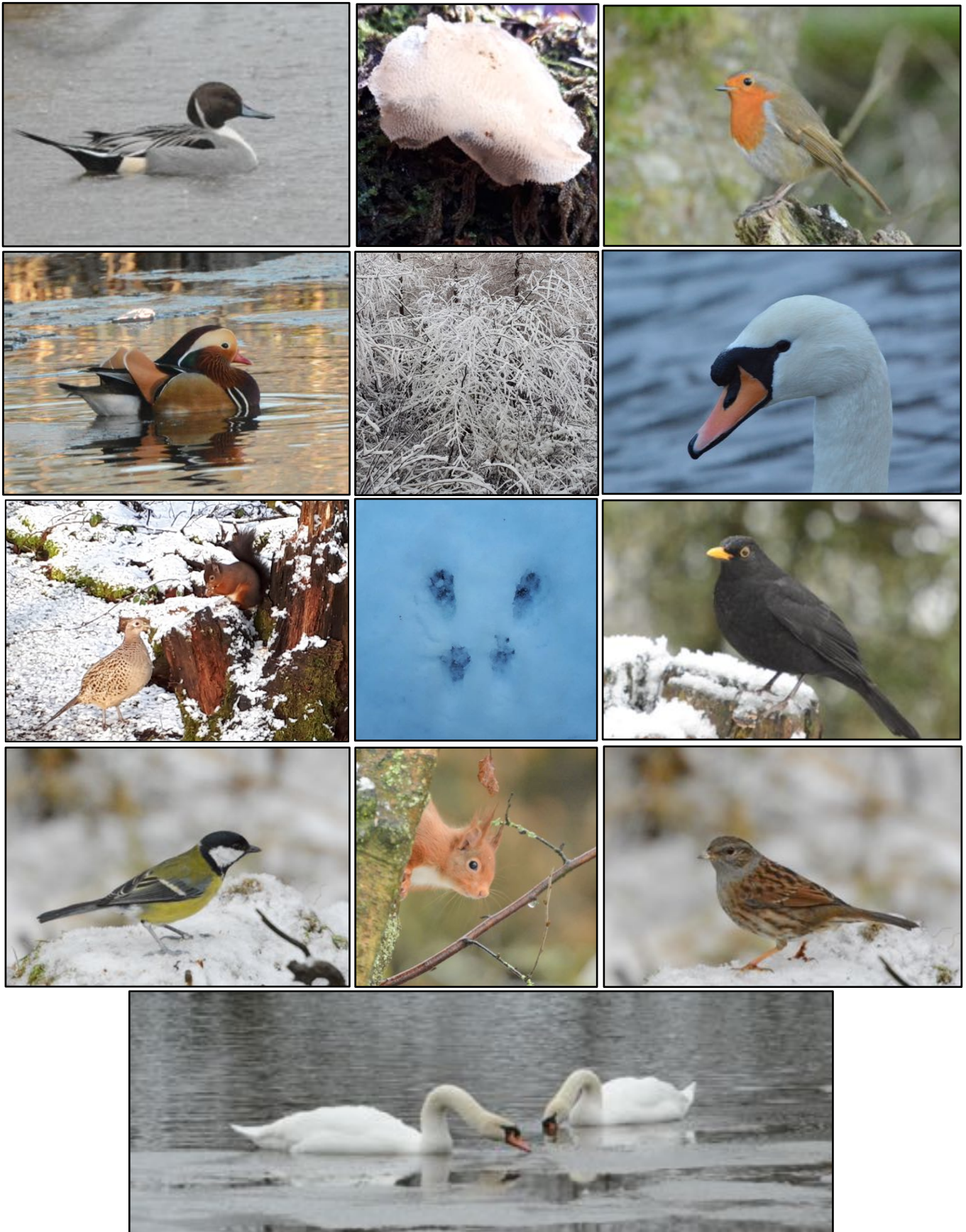
Lapwing 21.01.18



Undeveloped Spawn

Photographs by Jim Rae

3. January Photo Gallery



Row 1: Male Pintail, Jelly Tongue, Robin
Row 2: Mandarin, Frosted Bush, Mute Swan
Row 3: Hen Pheasant and Red Squirrel, Red Squirrel footprints, Blackbird
Row 4: Great Tit, Red Squirrel, Dunnock
Row 5: Mute Swans

Photographs by Jim Rae

4. Planned Activities in January

Fri. 5th Applegarth Primary Eco-group visited the Reserve to put up some new bird nest boxes that they had made before Christmas. The boxes were attached with band rather than being nailed on, so as not to harm the trees.



Minibus emerging from the mist



Bird Nest Box

Tue. 30th



Lockerbie Academy Rural Skills Class carried out the **RSPB Big Schools Birdwatch** at the Eskrigg Centre and Red Squirrel hide.

5. Volunteer Activities in January

Sat. 6th Members of the **E-team**, **Neil Stewart**, **Patrick Malone**, **Michael Kerr** and **Heather Donaldson**, helped lay Terram membrane and type 1 sub-base on another section of the Woodland Walks.



Sat. 13th In the morning, three of the **E-team**, **Neil Stewart**, **Patrick Malone** and **Rory Holden**, helped to complete another section of the Woodland Walks.



Jim Rae completed the base layer in the afternoon.



Looking South



Looking North

Views of the pipeline path, from the mid-point, looking South and North.

Sat. 20th E-team members, **Neil Stewart**, **Michael Kerr**, **Rory Holden**, **Patrick Malone**, **Nathan McKenzie** and **Heather Donaldson**, helped **Jim** apply fine gravel topping to a section of the woodland walk.



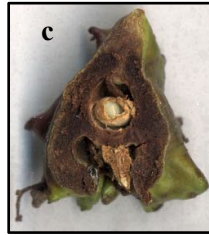
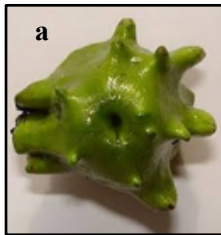
Photographs by Jim Rae

6. Knopper Gall

The following article was written in response to John Reid spotting these unusual growths on an oak tree.

A Knopper gall develops as a chemically induced distortion of a growing acorn on the pedunculate oak tree, *Quercus robur*. It is caused by the asexual generation of a Cynipid gall wasp called *Andricus quercuscalicis*. The word knopper is derived from the German word 'Knoppe', meaning a kind of felt cap or helmet worn during the 17th century.

The large gall (2 cm diameter) is roughly conical and often strongly ridged or knobbly (a). Green and sticky at first, the galls often take on a reddish tinge as they mature (b), and then become brown and woody. A terminal opening leads to a large cavity containing an egg-shaped inner gall (c). Two or more galls may develop on a single acorn and completely conceal it.



Knopper Gall by John Reid

Galled acorns fall from the tree in late summer. The wasp larvae will pupate and the adult insects wriggle out of vents in the galls in the following spring, although some may remain in their galls for up to four years. The emerging wasps, exclusively female, will fly off to find a Turkey oak, *Quercus cerris*, an evergreen introduced into Britain in 1735, to lay their unfertilised eggs in the oak buds. These eggs develop by parthenogenesis into a second, sexual generation of wasps (containing both sexes). As they develop, the larvae induce tiny cone-shaped galls on the male catkins. When adults, they lay their eggs in the native oak, *Quercus robur*, creating knoppers.

The knopper gall arrived in Britain in the 1960s and caused great alarm for a while because of the widespread destruction of the acorn crop but, although it is extremely abundant in some years, there are still plenty of viable acorns to ensure the survival of our oaks. Knopper galls were first noted at Canonbie in southern Scotland in 1995 and their distribution is often restricted to old country and urban estates where the Turkey oak has been previously planted.

The galls are themselves communities. They contain micro-habitants such as inquilines and parasitoids. Inquilines include cynipid wasps which lay eggs in the gall and whose larvae feed harmlessly on the oak tissue. Parasitoids, such as chalcid and ichneumon wasps, inject their eggs into the gall wasp larvae to feed on them.

7. Forest Harvesting Operations

On the Friday, 19th January, work began to fell the mature Scots Pine compartment north of the Reserve. The harvester was brought in and checked to see that it was working properly during the afternoon. Felling continued on the Saturday morning.



The harvester worked away steadily during the following week, sometimes in the dark, and cleared much of the wood above the power lines.



The Harvester

On Saturday 27th, a sign was put up at the end of the Eskrigg Farm Road, letting visitors know that the path from the Reserve Car Park to the Reserve would be closed off from the Monday 29th for work to begin in the area between the access path and the Reserve. On the Monday, the Reserve was closed until further notice. On the 30th the electricity was turned off and the trees either side of the power lines and next to the Reserve were felled over the next few days. The Reserve will open again once the path to it is cleared.

Photographs by Jim Rae

Jim Rae (Eskrigg Reserve Manager)

Address: Carradale, 12 Douglas Terrace, Lockerbie, Dumfries and Galloway, DG11 2DZ.

Home Tel.: 01576 203 314 / Mobile No.: 07739 987 009

Email: jim.rae2012@gmail.com