

Lockerbie Wildlife Trust

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

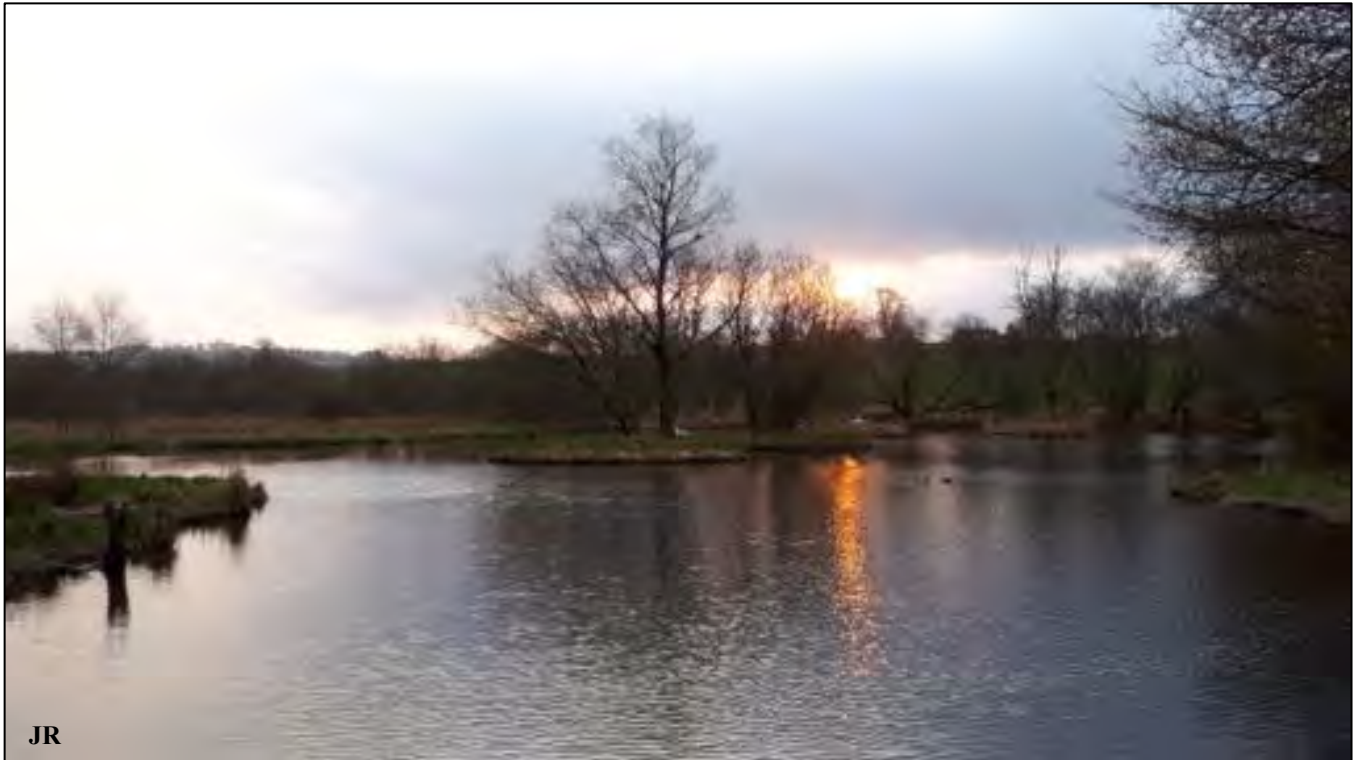
Eskrigg Reserve

April 2019 News Bulletin



Scottish Charity No:
SC 005538

1. Eskrigg Pond just after sunrise on the 8th of April.



JR

2. Confirmed wildlife sightings at the Reserve during April.

a. Birds

Blackbird, Black-headed Gull, Blue Tit, Bullfinch, Buzzard, Carrion Crow, Chaffinch, Chiffchaff, Coal Tit, Common Gull, Dunnock, Goldfinch, Goshawk, Grasshopper Warbler, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Great Tit, Greenfinch, Grey Heron, Greylag Goose, Grey Wagtail, House Sparrow, Jackdaw, Jay, Kestrel, Lesser Redpoll, Linnets, Mallard, Moorhen, Mute Swan, Nuthatch, Oystercatcher, Pheasant, Pied Wagtail, Raven, Reed Bunting, Robin, Rook, Siskin, Song Thrush, Sparrowhawk, Starling, Tawny Owl, Treecreeper, Wheatear, Willow Warbler, Wood Pigeon, Wren.

b. Mammals

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

c. Amphibians

Frogs, Toads.



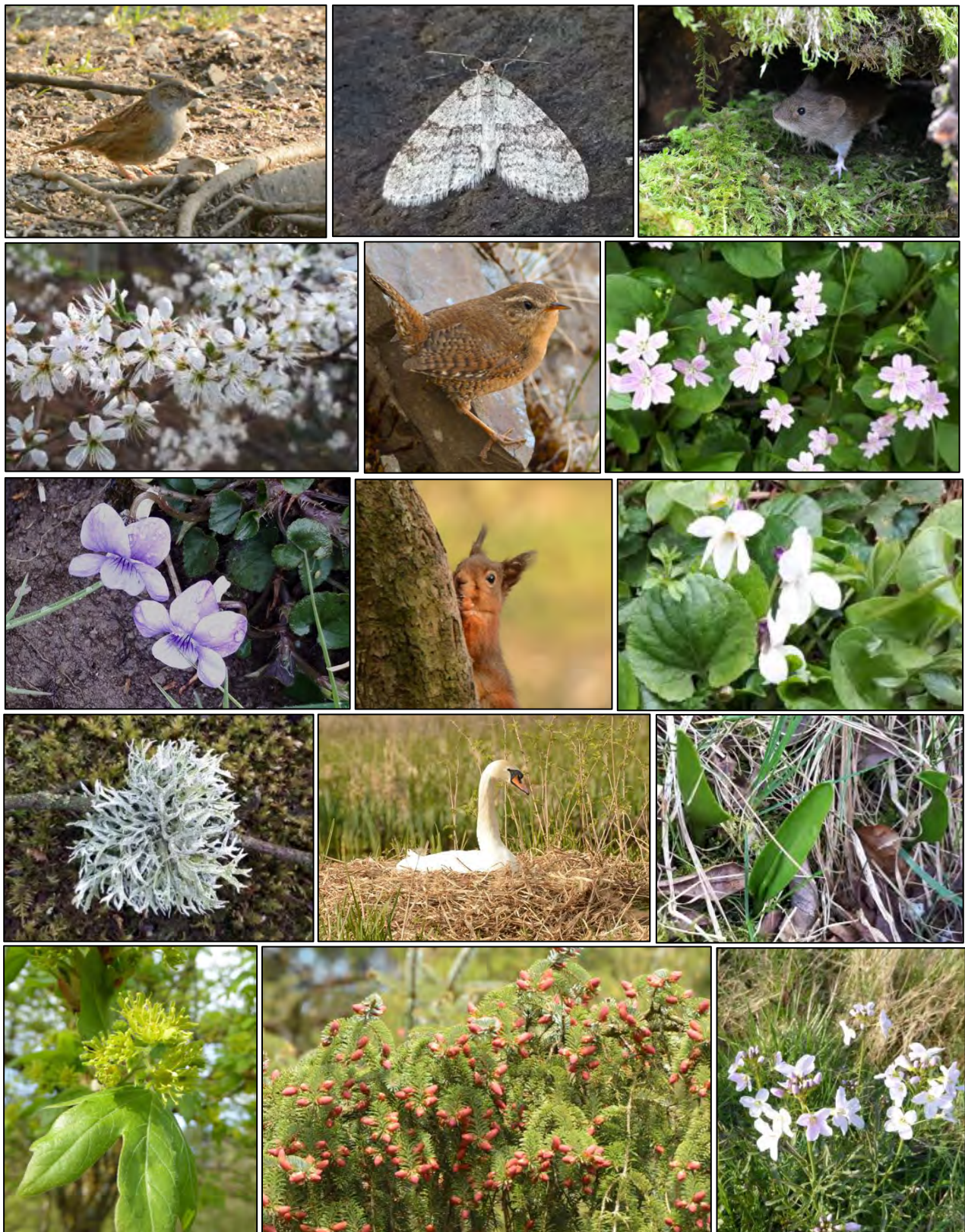
Song Thrush (JR)



Rabbit (JR)

Photographs by Jim Rae (JR).

3. Eskrigg Reserve April Photo-gallery



1st Row: Dunnock (JR), Early Tooth-striped (JR), Bank Vole (PW).
2nd Row: Blackthorn Blossom (JR), Wren (WJ), Pink Purslane (JR).
3rd Row: Dog Violet (JR), Red Squirrel (JR), Sweet Violet (JR).
4th Row: *Evernia prunastri* (JR), Mute Swan (JR), Adder's Tongue Fern (JR).
5th Row: Field Maple in flower (JR), new Sitka Spruce cones developing (JR), Lady's Smock (JR).

Photographs by Billy Jardine (BJ), Paul Wharton (PW), Jim Rae (JR)

4. Volunteer Activities in April

There were no young volunteers during the School Holidays between the 5th and 22nd of April.

Mon. 15th Castle Milk forestry staff felled a large Ash tree and several willows along the sluice dyke and winched another tree out of the pond in preparation for replacing the boardwalk with a hardcore path.

Tue. 23rd Steven Dalglish, Steven Jackson and Findlay Crossan helped Jim clear some of the cut branches from along the boardwalk.

Wed. 24th Steven Jackson kindly came to the Reserve to help for an hour and a half while ITV Border were filming.



Sun. 28th & Mon. 29th Jim spent Sunday afternoon and Monday morning clearing branches from along the boardwalk.

Tue. 30th Steven Dalglish, Steven Jackson and Findlay Crossan helped Jim clear yet more branches from along the boardwalk.



5. April Events at the Reserve

Tue. 2nd S3 Biology Students from Dumfries Academy, accompanied by their teacher Keith Walker, visited the Reserve to carry out some fieldwork. They first examined the small mammal traps that Jim had set out the evening before. Out of the nine traps set there were three with bank voles and six with woodmice. The next activity was to examine the pitfall traps set out in the Pine Wood. The youngsters identified the usual selection of ground beetles, rove beetles, beetle larvae, millipedes, springtails, spiders, harvestmen and woodlice. The group then did a little pond dipping, before the rain started, and found Pond Snail's eggs, Midge pupae and Stonefly larvae. After lunch they carried out a Scavenger Hunt en route back to the Reserve car park.



Fri. 5th Jim Rae was invited up to Lockerbie Academy for a press photograph. The school was recently winner of the LANTRA Schools Project Award, at the Scottish Land-based and Aquaculture Learner of the Year Awards 2019, in recognition of the school's commitment to delivering rural training. Jim has worked with the school to provide work experience and help teach rural skills for a number of years. Working at Eskrigg Reserve also makes some students eligible for the John Muir Trust Award, the Duke of Edinburgh Award or the Saltire Award.

Fri. 5th Moth Trapping - Eskrigg Reserve 5th April 2019 - Moths identified by Alison Robertson the following morning at the Eskrigg Reserve Open Day.

	Pond Fringe Robinson (125W MV)	Spruce Wood Heath Trap (6W Actinia)	Pine Wood Heath Trap (15W Actinia)	Total
Brindled Pug	1	-	2	3
Clouded Drab	6	11	4	21
Common Quaker	50	26	11	87
<i>Diurnea fagella</i>	-	1	1	2
Early Grey	2	-	-	2
Early Tooth-striped	-	-	1	1
Hebrew Character	58	25	34	117
Pine Beauty	1	-	-	1
Powdered Quaker	2	-	-	2
Red Chestnut	4	3	-	7
Small Quaker	2	1	-	3
Twin-spotted Quaker	1	8	4	13
			Total	259

Sat. 6th Open Day at Eskrigg Reserve

Trust Volunteers set up a tent at the bottom of the path from the car park and logged in visitors as they arrived at the Reserve. Some had a go at the **Red Squirrel Trail Quiz**, some took part in the **Scavenger Hunt**, while others were there to photograph the wildlife, have a stroll or walk the dog. No-one managed to answer all 20 quiz questions about the squirrels correctly but one did collect all 15 scavenger hunt items. The majority of children achieved enough marks in both challenges to be awarded an Eskrigg Reserve Challenge Certificate.



There were three stalls set up during the event. From left to right in the pictures:

1. **Peter Norman**, from the South West Scotland Environment Information Centre (SWSEIC), told people about the work of SWSEIC and also provided a game for children whereby they could design their own insects.
2. **Alison Robertson**, moth recorder, told visitors about the various moths caught in the traps at the Reserve during the previous night and explained how the traps worked.
3. **Freda Seddon**, of the Dumfries and Galloway Bat Group, displayed some bat specimens and was there to answer any questions about bats and what people are allowed to do if bats are found roosting in their house.

Refreshments (fruit shoots and potato crisps) were available for all event participants, courtesy of Steven Dalglish and his family (Fraser, Jennifer and Erin).

Also helping to organise the Open Day where:

LWT Volunteers: Kathy Davidson, Alan Elkington, Kath Hughes, David Hughes, Ann Legg, Jim Rae and John Reid.

Other Volunteers: Lewis Carrick, Anthony Ison, Steven Jackson, Graham Robson, Paul Wharton.



Thanks to all who helped to make the day so enjoyable.

Photographs by Jim Rae

Sat. 6th During the Open Day, **Morag Moffat** and **Margaret Jackson** presented a cheque for £130 from Lockerbie and Lochmaben Ladies Darts to **Jim Rae**. This generous donation was to be used to further the work of Lockerbie Wildlife Trust at Eskrigg Reserve. Thank you Ladies.



GT



JR

Tue. 9th Members of the **Lochmaben WI** were given a guided tour of the Reserve by **Jim Rae**.



JR

Thu. 18th Four children from **Mid-Annandale Playcare (MAP)**, accompanied by their teacher, visited the Reserve for a few hours. They studied the Woodland Mini-beasts before lunch and enjoyed the challenge of a Scavenger Hunt after lunch.

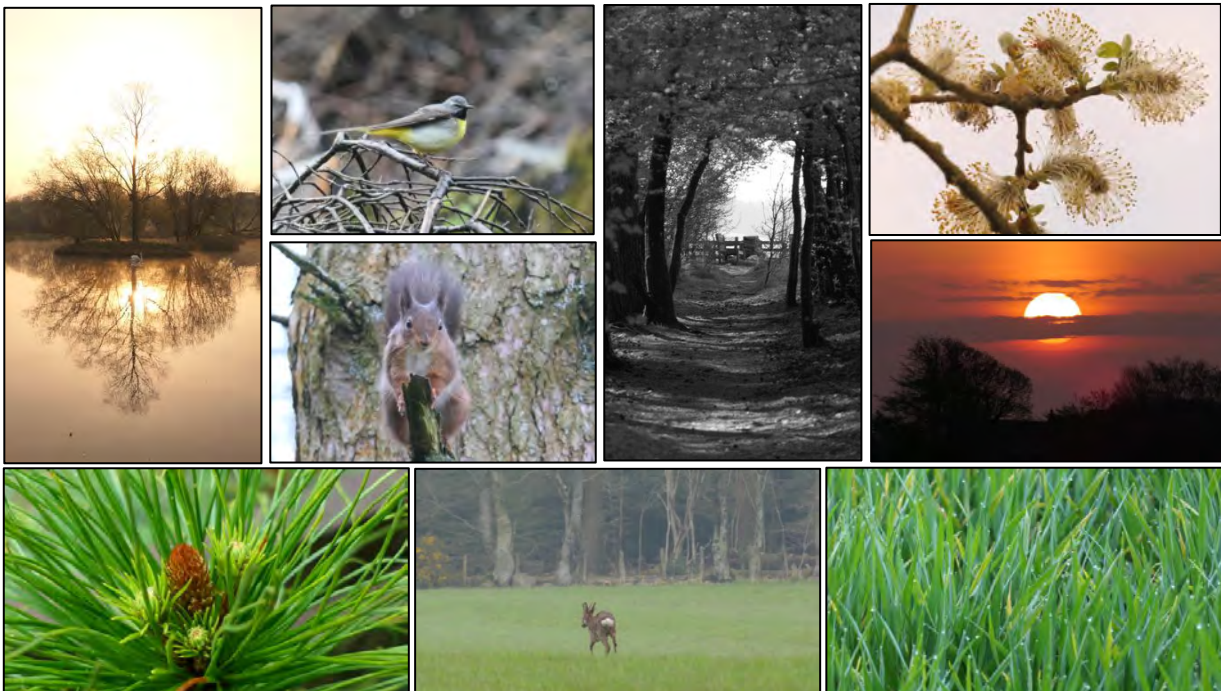


JR

Wed. 24th **Fiona Armstrong**, presenter of **ITV Border Life**, visited the Reserve to interview **Jim Rae** and learn about his work at Eskrigg Reserve over the past thirty-three years. Her cameraman, Paul, filmed some of the wildlife as well as Fiona talking to some of the people who visited the Reserve during the day. The picture shows Fiona interviewing **Crispin McCreery** when he brought Jim some peanuts for the birds and squirrels.

Above photographs by George Trudt (GT) and Jim Rae (JR).

6. Selection of photographs taken by **Billy Jardine** during the last few weeks.



7. Selection of photographs taken by Brian Taylor during the last few weeks.



8. The Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*)



The Mute Swans arrived at the Reserve, as a pair, in September 2015. In the spring of 2016, they mated, built a nest and the pen incubated seven eggs. However, the swans were still not fully mature and the eggs were not successfully fertilised and so did not develop. By the spring of 2017, the swans were fully mature, produced seven eggs and all hatched. Unfortunately, predators killed all seven cygnets before they were three weeks old.

In the spring of 2018, the pen laid seven eggs once again, but only four hatched. One cygnet was very weak and died within hours. A predator took the second cygnet when it was two weeks old. The other two cygnets survived. One of the young birds flew off in the late autumn, as expected. However, the remaining cygnet would not fly off. It stayed with the parents right through the winter. In the spring of 2019, the parents tried hard to get it to leave. On some occasions, when all three were having their exercise flights around the pond, the cob would fly below the cygnet and try to prevent it landing. On other occasions, the cob would land in the water first and make threatening gestures with its wings to intimidate the young, but without success. Then, one Wednesday, both parents flew off and took the young one on a sightseeing tour. All three came back on the Thursday and on the Friday the young swan took off and hasn't been seen since.

The parents then set about re-establishing their pair bond and built a new nest on the third island. The pen has now laid eggs and is incubating them while the cob guards her and the nest. In a few weeks time we hope to see another batch of cygnets circling the pond on their mother's back.

Jim Rae (Eskrigg Reserve Manager)

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