

# Lockerbie Wildlife Trust

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



## Eskrigg Reserve

### December 2019 News Bulletin

Scottish Charity No:  
SC 005538

#### 1. Photographs taken on the morning of the 1st of December - Top: Eskrigg Pond pre-dawn.



Left: Pip's Corner



Right: Looking towards Joe Graham's Monument from Pip's Corner

#### 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, Collared Dove, Dunnock, Fieldfare, Goldcrest, Goldfinch, Goosander, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Great Tit, Greenfinch, Grey Heron, Jackdaw, Jay, Kestrel, Kingfisher, Lesser Redpoll, Long-tailed Tit, Mallard, Mandarin, Moorhen, Mute Swan, Nuthatch, Pheasant, Pied Wagtail, Pink-footed Goose, Pintail, Raven, Robin, Rook, Siskin, Sparrowhawk, Starling, Treecreeper, Wood Pigeon, Wren.

##### b. Mammals

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

Photographs by Billy Jardine



### 3. Eskrigg Reserve December Photo-gallery



**1st Row: Female Kingfisher in action (JR)**

**2nd Row: Frosted Holly (BJ), Robin (BJ), Frosted Moss (BJ)**

**3rd Row: Carrion Crow (JR), Jelly Brain (JR), Blackbird (BJ)**

**4th Row: Crested Coral (JR), Nuthatch (BJ), Glistening Inkcap (JR)**

**5th Row: Red Squirrel (JR), Mandarin Duck (GT), Red Squirrel (JR)**

**Photographs by Billy Jardine (BJ), George Trudt (GT) and Jim Rae (JR)**

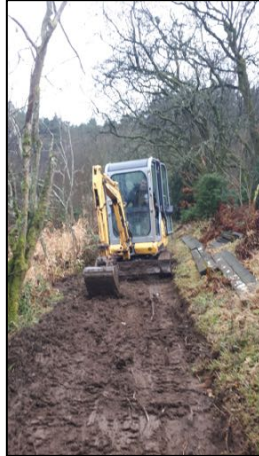


#### 4. Volunteer Activities at Eskrigg Reserve in December

**Sun 1<sup>st</sup> to Thu 19<sup>th</sup>** **Billy Jardine, Gary Shanks and David Hughes** helped **Jim Rae** with the opening of the Eskrigg Centre and topping up of the bird and squirrel feeders in the mornings and the locking up of the Centre in the evenings.

**Wed. 4<sup>th</sup>** **Ross Gemmell** brought his mini-digger and a motorised, tracked, tipper-barrow and, with very little assistance from **Jim Rae**, levelled the last section of the board-walk route ready for laying the new path.

Unfortunately, the path will not be completed until Jim's back heals up - hopefully sometime early in the new year.



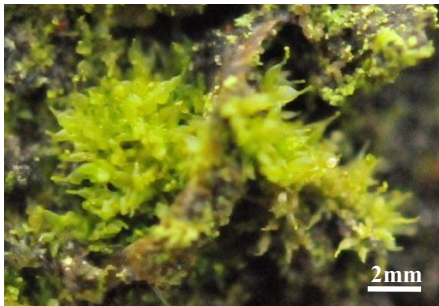
**24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>** **Neil Stewart** very kindly opened and closed the Eskrigg Centre and topped up the bird and squirrel feeders to allow Jim to spend Christmas Day with his family in Linlithgow.

**25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup>** **Bert Kirkpatrick** spent 3 hours each day during his Christmas break clearing some of the debris he had removed from the ditch in November.

#### 5. December Events at Eskrigg Reserve

**Sat. 1<sup>st</sup>** Bryophyte expert **Liz Kungu**, assisted by **Ronald Lamb, Bob Merrit, Emma Sadler, Drew Davidson and John Rutherford**, carried out a survey of the **Mosses and Liverworts** in the Reserve and neighbouring woodlands. (Liz did the first Bryophyte survey at the Reserve in 1987.)

The group found 63 species, including at least one new species for Eskrigg Reserve - the Epiphytic Leafy Liverwort *Colura calyptrifolia*.



L to R: Drew Davidson, Ronald Lamb, Emma Sadler, Elizabeth Kungu and Bob Merrit (John Rutherford arrived later).

*Colura calyptrifolia* is the only species of leafy liverwort found in the British Isles. It is very small, with leaves about 1.5 mm long by 0.5 mm wide. It is an epiphyte, which has been expanding its range in recent decades, presumably due to improved air quality. It is predominantly a Western plant in the UK and especially so in Scotland. There is only one old record in Dumfries and Galloway, from White Laggan Linn, Kirkcudbrightshire in 1959. However in recent decades there have been a number of finds in the Dumfries and Galloway region, four from Wigtownshire in 2010 and 2012, two from Kirkcudbrightshire in 2009 and 2012, and one from Dumfriesshire in 2005, from Kerr Plantation to the west of Langholm, so this is the 2nd record for Dumfriesshire. Always a pleasing find, as it is such a small plant. One of its preferred habitats are Willows at the edge of conifer plantations, which maybe why it is now on the Reserve, though in this case it was actually only found on one Birch tree! It is not a Nationally scarce species, but as you can see, it is locally scarce, but probably expanding, in this region.

Photographs by Jim Rae, Bryophyte facts by Liz Kungu.

## 6. Wetland Visitors - 3. Mandarin (*Aix galericulata*)



Male



Female

The Mandarin is smaller than the Mallard. For most of the year the male has the beautiful, coloured plumage seen in the first picture on the left. It moults between May and August and is flightless for about a month during that period. The Male in 'eclipse' plumage resembles the female but with less obvious face markings.

The female is grey/brown with spotted flanks, a spectacle-like mark around and behind the eye and a small grey bill.

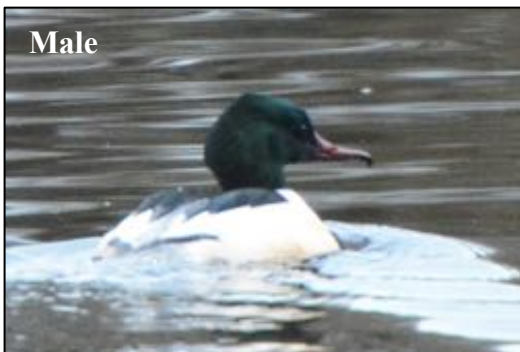
The Mandarin breeds around lowland lakes and rivers where there are trees and bushes overhanging the water.

Mandarins are omnivorous, feeding on aquatic insects in spring and summer. At other times they feed mainly on vegetation, including seeds, nuts and acorns in the autumn. They also eat snails.

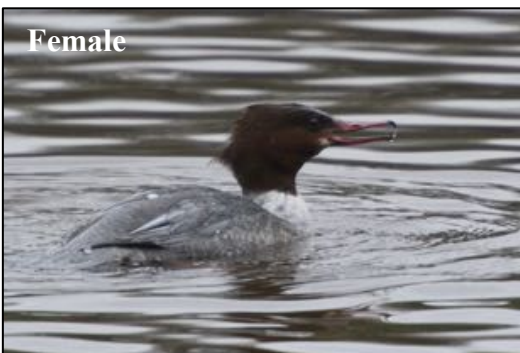
Mandarins begin breeding in mid-April. The usual nest site is in a hole in a tree, sometimes at ground level but more often at heights up to about 10m. The clutch of 9-12 eggs is laid in a cup of down feathers and incubated by the female for about 28 days. The young fly after 40 days and can breed at 1 year old.

Mandarins are native to the eastern Siberia, China, Korea and Japan. Some birds were present in Britain before 1745 but most birds have escaped or were released more recently from private collections.

## Wetland Visitors - 4. Goosander (*Mergus merganser*)



Male



Female

The Goosander is larger than a Mallard. It is a diving duck with a long, slender, hook-tipped, red sawbill. The male has a white body, flushed with pink in the winter, black back and dark green head.

The female has a grey body, reddish-brown head with a bulbous drooping crest, brown neck and white throat.

Moulting takes place between July and September and both sexes are flightless for about a month. In eclipse, the male resembles the female but with larger white wing patches.

The Goosander swims low in the water. When swimming in search for food, it repeatedly dips its head under the water and dives frequently.

It normally breeds in upland areas with lakes and slow-flowing rivers, usually close to woods or forests. Outside the breeding season they are mostly seen on freshwater lakes, reservoirs and old gravel workings.

They feed on a wide range of fish. At Eskrigg they feed mainly on sticklebacks and eels. They also eat small mammals and insects.

Photographs by Jim Rae

**Jim Rae (Eskrigg Reserve Manager)**

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