

Lockerbie Wildlife Trust

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

Eskrigg Reserve

April 2020 News Bulletin



Scottish Charity No:
SC 005538

1. View of the pond from where the East Hide used to be, taken on the 20th of April.



2. Confirmed wildlife sightings at the Reserve during April.

a. Birds

Blackbird, Blackcap, Blue Tit, Bullfinch, Buzzard, Carrion Crow, Chaffinch, Chiffchaff, Coal Tit, Collared Dove, Crossbill, Dunnock, Goldcrest, Goldfinch, Grasshopper Warbler, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Great Tit, Greenfinch, Grey Heron, Greylag Goose, Grey Partridge, **Hen Harrier***, Herring Gull, House Martin, House Sparrow, Jackdaw, Jay, Mallard, Mandarin, Moorhen, Mute Swan, Nuthatch, Oystercatcher, Pheasant, Pintail, Raven, Red Kite, Reed Bunting, Robin, Rook, Siskin, Song Thrush, Sparrowhawk, Starling, Swallow, Tawny Owl, Treecreeper, Willow Warbler, Wood Pigeon, Wren.



b. Mammals

Bank Vole, Brown Hare, Rabbit, Red Squirrel, Stoat, Woodmouse.

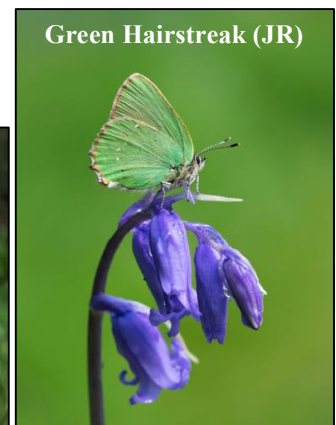
c. Amphibians and Reptiles

Frog, Toad.

d. Butterflies

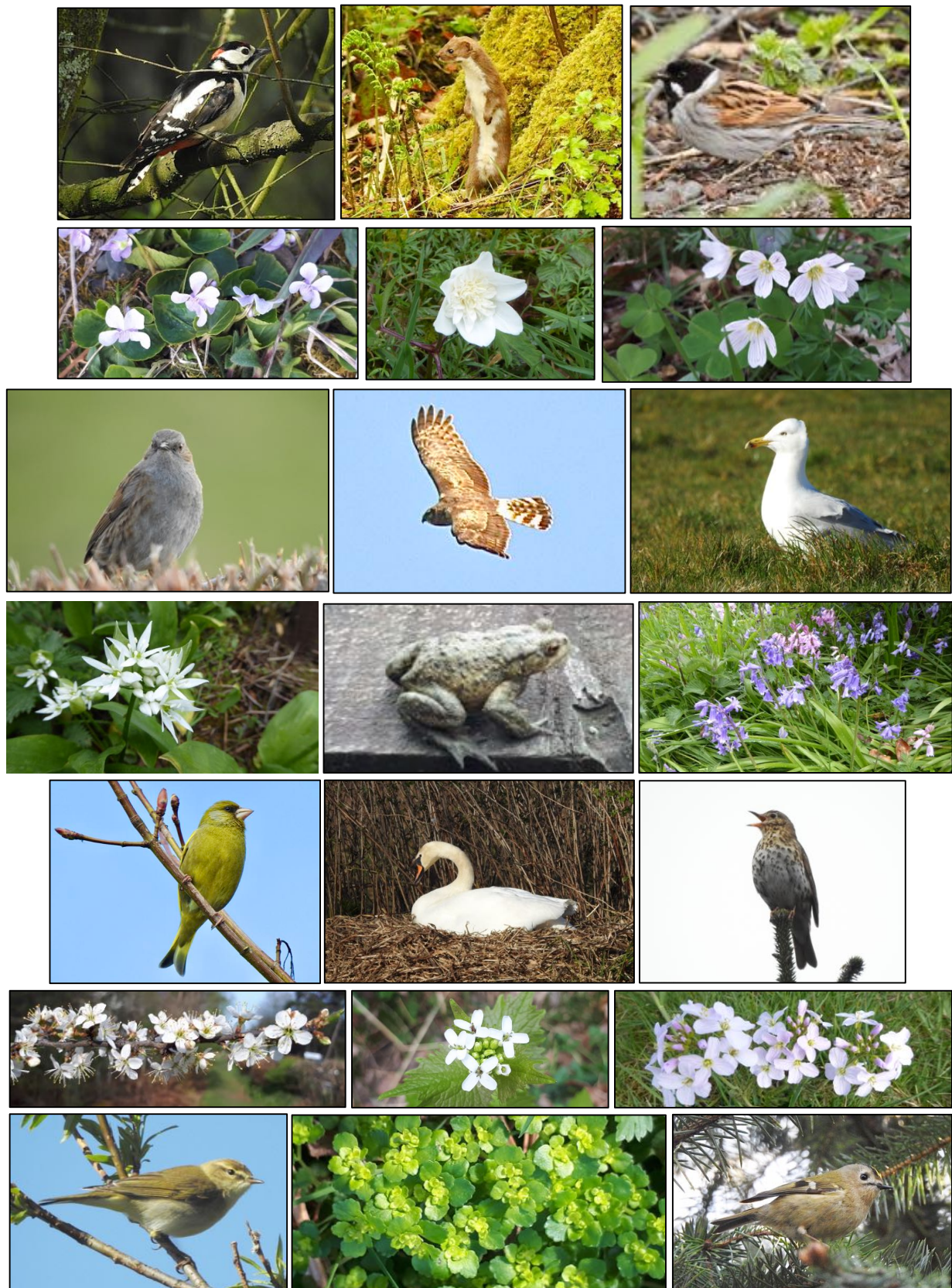
Green Hairstreak*, Green-veined White, Orange-tip, Peacock, Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell, Small White.

***New species for Eskrigg Reserve**



Photographs by Gary Shanks (GS) and Jim Rae (JR).

3. Eskrigg Reserve - April Photo-gallery



1st Row (GS): Great Spotted Woodpecker, Stoat, Reed Bunting.

2nd Row (JR): Dog Violet, Wood Anemone, Wood Sorrel.

3rd Row: Dunnock (JR), Hen Harrier (GS), Herring Gull (JR).

4th Row (JR): Wild Garlic, Toad, Wild Hyacinths.

5th Row: Greenfinch (GS), Mute Swan - female on nest (JR), Song Thrush (JR).

6th Row (JR): Blackthorn, Garlic Mustard, Cuckoo Flower.

7th Row: Willow Warbler (GS), Golden Saxifrage (JR), Goldcrest (GS).

Photographs by: Gary Shanks (GS) and Jim Rae (JR)

4. April Volunteer Activities at Eskrigg Reserve

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, Jim Rae (Reserve Manager) worked in his own garden for most of the first half of the month and was **lone-working at the Reserve** throughout the last two weeks of April. As usual, the feeders were topped up each day, the dog bins were emptied once or twice each week and, at the same time, dog dirt and litter were cleared from the paths.

Sun. 5th The inner, timber lining and door of the East Hide were removed.

Mon. 6th The Reserve Car Park was closed at the request of the local police.

Wed. 8th Despite the lockdown and travel restrictions, Vicky McNamara was still travelling from Dumfries to the woods next to the Reserve almost every day in order to hand-feed the few remaining Red Squirrels and woodland birds for up to six hours at a time. With Castle Milk Estate's approval, and as instructed by Police Scotland, Vicky McNamara's camp site was cleared and her property handed in to the local police station. The Police returned her property to her and it was hoped that she would stop coming and give the squirrel population a chance to recover. The strategy has not worked - she is still coming and moved to a new site nearby. She still doesn't appreciate that by domesticating the squirrels she is endangering their lives.

Fri. 10th Three kilograms of empty nut shells and other food waste were removed from the cleared camp site to return the forest floor to normal.

Fri. 17th The roof and outer walls of the East Hide were taken down leaving the floor and bench seat.



Before

During

After

Sat. 18th The bench seat and hide floor were removed to expose the timber pontoon.

Sun. 19th The netting was removed from the walkway and the pontoon boards removed.

Mon. 20th The pontoon posts were removed in the morning and the walkway cleared in the afternoon.



Tue. 21st The Bilberry (1), Honeysuckle (2) and Larch Walks (3) were raked and weeded.

Wed. 22nd The northern section of the Pipeline Path (4) was raked and weeded.

Thu. 23rd The southern section of the Pipeline Path (5) was raked and weeded.



Photographs by Jim Rae

Fri. 24th The trees that had fallen across the stream near the foot of the path from the car park were removed and cut up.



Sat. 25th The section of the stream bed between the two bridges had accumulated a lot of silt into which several plant species had rooted. This mud was cleared to open up the channel.



Before

and

after

Sun. 26th An area of mud on the bottom of the pond was dug out (1), the tree stumps either side were pruned and tree roots cut back to create the base for the first two gabion baskets that will form part of the platform on which the new 'Kingfisher Hide' will be constructed.

Mon. 27th Four quad bike trailer loads of gabion stones were transported down the forest road to the area opposite the entrance to the Reserve (filled and emptied by hand).

Tue. 28th The first two gabion baskets were assembled and tied together with wire coils and then moved into position at the edge of the pond (2).

Wed. 29th Gabion stones were barrowed from beside the forest road to the south-east corner of the pond, along the new hardcore path, carried up to and fitted into the gabion baskets until the bottom of both baskets were covered (3).



In the last fortnight, Jim spent a total of 112 hours (14 days @ 8 hours per day), on his own, doing the above maintenance and development work at the Reserve.

Photographs by Jim Rae

Best wishes to everyone, stay safe.

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