

# Lockerbie Wildlife Trust

([www.lockerbie-wildlife-trust.co.uk](http://www.lockerbie-wildlife-trust.co.uk))

## Eskrigg Reserve

### August 2020 News Bulletin



Scottish Charity No:  
SC 005538

#### 1. Views of the pond

- a. Taken from the Jetty on the 1st of August by Sybille Spägle.



- b. Taken from the Red Squirrel Hide on the 17th of August by Jim Rae.

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

##### a. Birds

Blackbird, Blue Tit, Buzzard, Carrion Crow, Chaffinch, Chiffchaff, Coal Tit, Goldcrest, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Great Tit, Greenfinch, House Sparrow, Jay, Mallard, Moorhen, Mute Swan, Nuthatch, Pheasant, Raven, Robin, Rook, Siskin, Sparrowhawk, Starling, Swallow, Swift, Willow Warbler, Wood Pigeon, Wren.

##### b. Mammals

Bank Vole, Fox, Grey Squirrel, Mole, Rabbit, Red Squirrel.

##### c. Reptiles and Amphibians

Common Lizard.

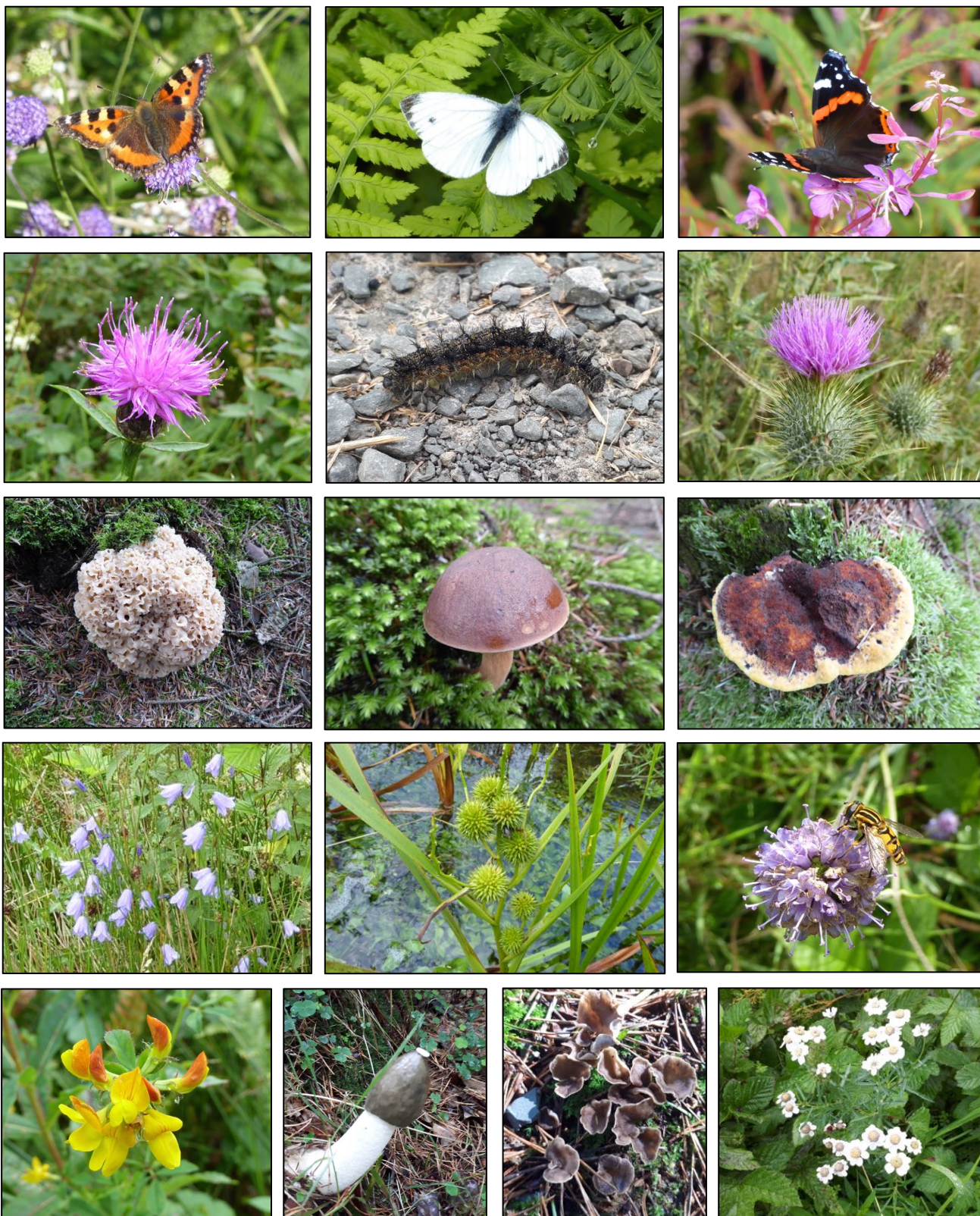
##### d. Butterflies

Green-veined White, Large White, Peacock, Red Admiral, Small Copper, Small Tortoiseshell.



Red Admiral on Sneezewort - Jim Rae

### 3. Eskrigg Reserve - August 2020 Photo-gallery



1st Row: Small Tortoiseshell, Green-veined White, Red Admiral  
 2nd Row: Knapweed, Small Tortoiseshell caterpillar, Spear Thistle  
 3rd Row: Cauliflower Fungus, Bay Bolete, Dyer's Mazegill  
 4th Row: Harebells, Branched Bur-reed, Hoverfly on Devil's-bit Scabious  
 5th Row: Bird's-foot Trefoil, Stinkhorn, Ashen Chanterelle, Sneezewort

Photographs by Jim Rae

#### 4. The Miller (*Acronicta leporina*)

While Jim was working at the Reserve on the 6th of August a bright, pale-green caterpillar, with a dense covering of white hairs, fell from a tree and landed on his head.

He had never seen one of these before. It turned out to be the caterpillar of the Miller moth. This is a new record for Eskrigg Reserve despite the fact that the larval food plants include the Downy Birch, Silver Birch, Alder and Grey Willow which are all found in the Reserve. The flight season is late May till early August. The larva burrows into rotten wood and over winters as a pupa.



Picture source -  
UK Moths

#### 5. Ash dieback

This is a highly destructive disease of ash trees (*Fraxinus* species), especially the United Kingdom's native ash species, common ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). It is caused by a fungus named *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*, which is of eastern Asian origin. The disease is also known as 'chalara' ash dieback, which helps to distinguish it from dieback on ash trees caused by other agents.

**Distribution:** Chalara ash dieback is present in most parts of the United Kingdom. Its effects are most visible in regions where the fungus has been present for the longest time, and where local conditions are most suitable for the fungus.

**The Threat:** Chalara ash dieback has the potential to cause significant damage to the UK's ash population, with implications for woodland biodiversity and ecology, and for the hardwood industries. The fungus can kill young and coppiced ash trees quite quickly. However, older trees can resist it for some time until prolonged exposure, or another pest or pathogen, such as *Armillaria* (honey fungus), attacking them in their weakened state eventually causes them to succumb.

Ash is one of our most useful and versatile native tree species, providing valuable habitat for a wide range of dependent species. It can grow in a variety of soils and climatic conditions. The 'airy' nature of its foliage allows light to penetrate to the woodland floor, encouraging ground plants and fauna. A number of insects, other invertebrates, lichens and mosses depend wholly on ash for habitat.

A number of growers across the UK produce ash for the timber market. Ash timber is strong, durable, flexible and attractive, with a wide range of practical and decorative uses such as tool handles, flooring, furniture, joinery and sports goods, such as rowing oars and hurling sticks. These industries might be forced to consider alternative materials if the disease causes a shortage of suitable ash timber.

Unfortunately there are a number of affected ash trees within the Reserve and these will be removed in the near future.



#### 6. Oak Mildew

The powdery mildew on oak leaves is caused by the fungus *Erysiphe alphitoides* and it is a common foliar pathogen of oak throughout Europe. *E. alphitoides* attacks young leaves and soft shoots, covering them with a felty-white mycelium, causing them to shrivel and blacken. Also, since the 1990s, *E. alphitoides* has shown a change in its life cycle. It used to reproduce almost entirely by means of its asexual spores (conidia), which make up the white covering on the oak leaves, together with the superficial mycelium. Nowadays, the fungus also regularly forms its formerly rare sexual fruiting structures on oak leaves in the autumn. These blackish spherical structures, which can just be seen with the naked eye, are called chasmothecia. They persist on the fallen leaves into the following growing season, eventually releasing spores (ascospores), which can colonise oak leaves during the summer.



## 7. August Volunteer Activities at Eskrigg Reserve

Once again **Jim Rae** has been lone-working for most of the month, but with much appreciated help on occasions from **Steven Dalglish**, **Sybill Spägle**, **Alistair Gordon** and **Ian Kerr**.

**5<sup>th</sup>** Following the report of a Grey Squirrel along the west side of the woods, Ian Kerr helped Jim set up four squirrel traps in the area. Over the next fortnight, one red squirrel was caught and released but no greys caught.



**6<sup>th</sup>** Sybille pruned the trees round the Northern Loop while Jim pruned some along the forest road. Steven then helped to gather up the cut branches.

**7<sup>th</sup>** Jim strimmed the sides of the Larch and Pipeline Walks while Sybille raked up the strimmings.

**9<sup>th</sup>** Jim strimmed and raked the Bog Myrtle Walk.

**12<sup>th</sup>** Jim and Steven fixed the boards to the netting around the rear platform at the East Hide.

**13<sup>th</sup>** Jim filled up the potholes on the Eskrigg Farm road then added 14mm sub-base to the platform.

**14<sup>th</sup>** Jim cut the timbers for the steps up to the platform and then filled the platform itself with 10mm gravel topping.



**15<sup>th</sup>** Jim strimmed and raked the sides of the path between the Shelter and the dog bin.

**15<sup>th</sup>** **Alistair Gordon** installed the five new picnic tables that he had made at home for the Reserve.



**17<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>** Steps up to the gabion platform for the new East Hide.



Castlemilk Estate kindly supplied the treated timber. Then, over a number of days, Steven and Jim constructed the timber framework, backed it with Terram membrane, and filled in the hardcore steps. The hand rails will be attached once the joiner, Scott McLean, has had the time to erect the new hide.

**23<sup>rd</sup>** **Jim** moved the squirrel traps to a different part of the Well Springs Plantation and over the next week caught and released three Red Squirrels but caught no Greys.

**24<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup>** During any dry spells, **Jim** weeded and raked the paths into and through the Reserve.

Photographs by Jim Rae

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