

Lockerbie Wildlife Trust

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

Eskrigg Reserve

February 2021 News Bulletin



Scottish Charity No:
SC 005538

1. Eskrigg Pond



9th of February

25th of February



2. Confirmed wildlife sightings at the Reserve during February.

a. Birds

Blackbird, Black-headed Gull, Blue Tit, Buzzard, Carrion Crow, Chaffinch, Coal Tit, Dunnock, Fieldfare, Goldcrest, Goldfinch, Goshawk, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Great Tit, Grey Heron, Jay, Little Egret, Long-tailed Tit, Mallard, Mandarin, Moorhen, Mute Swan, Nuthatch, Peregrine, Pheasant, Robin, Sparrowhawk, Starling, Stock Dove, Treecreeper, Woodpigeon, Wren.

b. Mammals

Mole, Red Squirrel, Roe Deer.

Photographs by Jim Rae

3. Eskrigg Reserve - February 2021 Photo-gallery



1st Row (JR): Hazel (male) catkins, Red Squirrel, Hazel (female) flower

2nd Row (JR): Cock Pheasant, Snowdrops, Mute Swan

3rd Row : Devil's Matchstick (BG), Juvenile Peregrine Falcon (GS), Devil's Matchstick (BG)

4th Row: Red Squirrel (BG)

4. 11th February - Tin roof fitted to Kingfisher Hide by Alan Thomson & Son.



Photographs by Gary Shanks (GS), Bob Glaister (BG) and Jim Rae (JR)

5. February Activities at Eskrigg Reserve

Once again there were no organised activities due to the Covid-19 restrictions.

6. Maintenance work at the Reserve and Woodland Walks

14th Jim raked the paths between the Reserve and the forest road.



26th Jim resurfaced the path between the Eskrigg Centre and the forest road.



27th Jim and Zack Nicholson filled in the pot-holes on the Eskrigg Farm road.



28th Jim started to clear and level the area beside the silt trap.



7. The fungus identified as the **Pale Oyster** (*Pleurotus pulmonarius*) in the December 2020 bulletin has, I think, been misidentified. It was spotted growing out of a log near the Eskrigg Centre last December, but was later knocked off the log and died. However, two new specimens have now grown to take their place and have grown well in the cold conditions we have had in recent weeks. Their identity is yet to be determined.



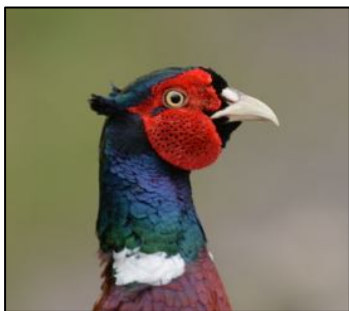
Photographs by Jim Rae

8. The Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)



Many people, including country-dwellers, may be surprised to learn that the pheasant is not a native of the British Isles, nor even Europe. It was introduced to these islands about a thousand years ago, certainly before AD 1060. The pheasant is a native of Asia. Its natural home extends from Turkey in the west to Korea and Taiwan in the east and from Mongolia in the north to Burma and southern China. Over this vast range many different varieties or subspecies have evolved. All the early introductions were of a subspecies in which the males did not have white collars. In the 18th century another subspecies was introduced in which the males did have a

white collar. This was the Chinese ring-necked pheasant. It hybridised with the natural collarless form, so that the modern male pheasant has a variable collar. In the 19th century, another pheasant species was introduced: the Japanese or green pheasant. Its hybridization with the existing forms is believed to be responsible for some dark green variants that are occasionally seen today.



Despite the variations in plumage, the cock pheasant cannot be confused with any other British bird. The head, neck and 'ear' tufts just behind the eyes are a glossy bottle green with a purple sheen. Around each eye is a bare area of skin from which hangs a wattle - both are vivid red. A collar may or may not be present at the base of the neck, or it may be incomplete and appear as a white crescent on either side of the neck.

The colour of the body is very variable, mainly brown or reddish-brown with black, white and purple markings.

The female by comparison, has buff coloured plumage with pinkish tinges and darker brown or black barring, primarily for camouflage. This is particularly important during incubation.

Pheasants roost in trees at night but spend most of their daytime on the ground and are potentially vulnerable to predators, especially the conspicuous males. Not surprisingly, they prefer habitats that provide them with some cover into which they can retreat when necessary.

When threatened, a pheasant usually runs for cover, but it can also take off, using its short powerful wings to lift itself vertically into the air with a noisy explosion of wing beats. Once airborne, flight is fast but rarely lasts long and is never high. These short flights give pheasants only limited powers of dispersal: they rarely move more than 10km (6 miles) from the place of birth during their lives.

Most males begin their territorial behaviour from late winter onwards, when the winter flocks breakup. The size of the territories depends on the food supply, the number of other competitors and the kind of habitat. During courtship the male parades around in front of its mate with short strutting steps. His head is held low, his feathers are fluffed, wattles inflated and ear tufts erect. The wing closest to the female is drooped and the tail spread partly out and tilted towards her. Each male may just have one hen, but usually the male is polygamous.

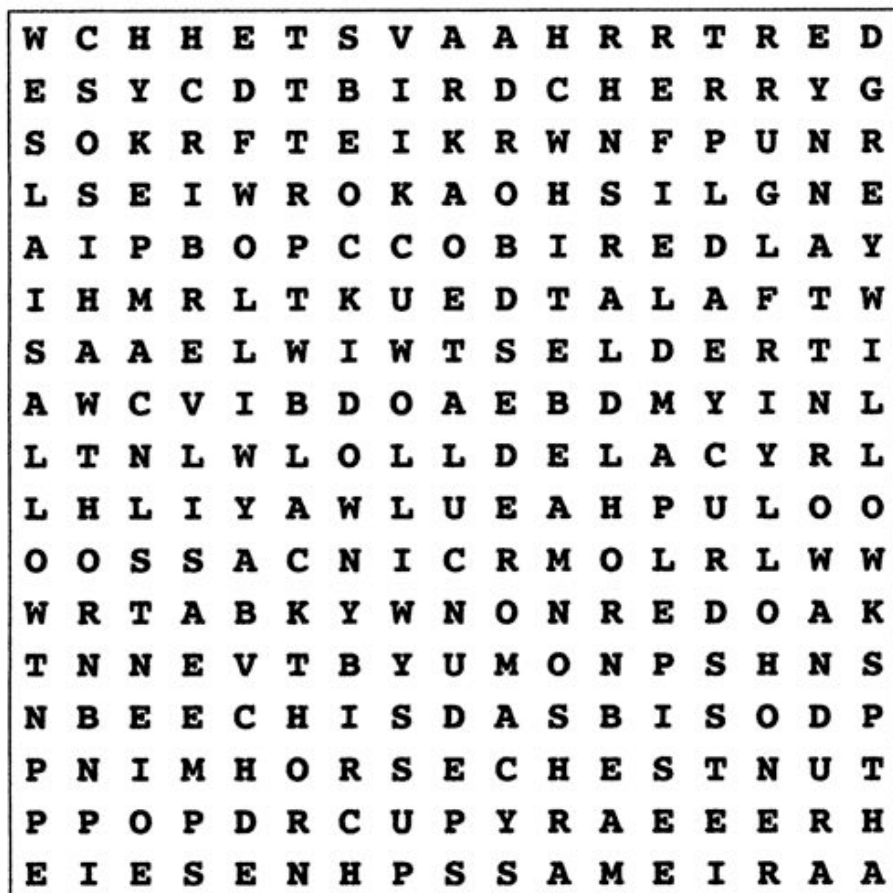
The nest made by the hen is usually a simple depression in the ground, in dense vegetation such as tall grass. Egg-laying begins in late March, about 8-15 eggs being laid at daily intervals. The hen waits until all have been laid, then incubates them together. This way, they all hatch at the same time. Incubation, by the female alone, takes between 23 and 28 days.

The chicks are born downy. During their first few days they eat little, relying mainly on a yolk store that becomes absorbed into their abdomens before they hatch. Once that is exhausted they feed themselves, though under close guard from the female. After only 12 days the chicks are able to make short flights, but they remain with their mother for up to 80 days. At first the chicks feed mainly on animal food, especially spiders. During the second week of life, the proportion of plant food starts to increase, beginning with green material but eventually including seeds. By the time the bird reaches adulthood, its diet consists almost entirely of vegetable matter obtained from the ground by scratching the surface. At Eskrigg Reserve they also help themselves to seeds that fall from the bird feeders or are scattered on the ground by the Reserve Manager.



Photographs by Jim Rae

Activity Page
a. Wordsearch



The following **DECIDUOUS TREES** can be found around Eskrigg Reserve and Woodland Walks.
Which **one** is not included in the above grid?

Alder	Ash	Bay Willow	Beech	Bird Cherry	Blackthorn
Crack Willow	Downy Birch	Elder	English Oak	Field Maple	Grey Willow
Hazel	Holly	Horse Chestnut	Hawthorn	Hornbeam	Lime
Osier	Pedunculate Oak	Pussy Willow	Red Oak	Rowan	Sallow
Silver Birch	Sycamore	Whitebeam			

b. Anagrams

Can you solve the following anagrams to identify the fifteen **CONIFEROUS TREES** growing around Eskrigg Reserve and Woodland Walks?

- | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1. CROSS SWAN YELPS | 2. LID OF SUGAR | 3. ELINOR SAFE UPRIVER |
| 4. FAR GRIND | 5. CLERK OWNS THEME | 6. A CHAPERONE LURE |
| 7. BIRCH HARDLY | 8. CARA HELPS JEAN | 9. AN IRONIC SPEC |
| 10. PEPE OGLED LION | 11. NICE SPOTS | 12. PIRATE DIANA |
| 13. CENTRES REWARDED | 14. CAPTURE KISS | 15. PROCURE YAWNS |

Answers to January 2021 activity: BUZZARD and GREY HERON.

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