

Lockerbie Wildlife Trust

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



Scottish Charity No:
SC 005538

Eskrigg Reserve

September 2022 News Bulletin

1. 28 September – The rising sun lifting the mist.



2. Confirmed wildlife sightings at the Reserve during August.

a. Birds:

Blackbird, Blue Tit, Bullfinch, Buzzard, Carrion Crow, Chaffinch, Chiffchaff, Coal Tit, Dunnock, Goldcrest, Goldfinch, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Great Tit, Greenfinch, Grey Heron, Greylag Goose, Jay, Long-tailed Tit, Mallard, Moorhen, Mute Swan, Nuthatch, Pheasant, Raven, Red Kite, Robin, Siskin, Sparrowhawk, Spotted Flycatcher, Stock Dove, Swallow, Treecreeper, Woodpigeon, Wren.

b. Mammals: Bank Vole, Mole, Rabbit, Red Squirrel, Roe Deer, and assorted Bats (see Events).

c. Insects: [Sloe Bug](#) or Hairy Shield Bug (*Dolycoris baccarum*).

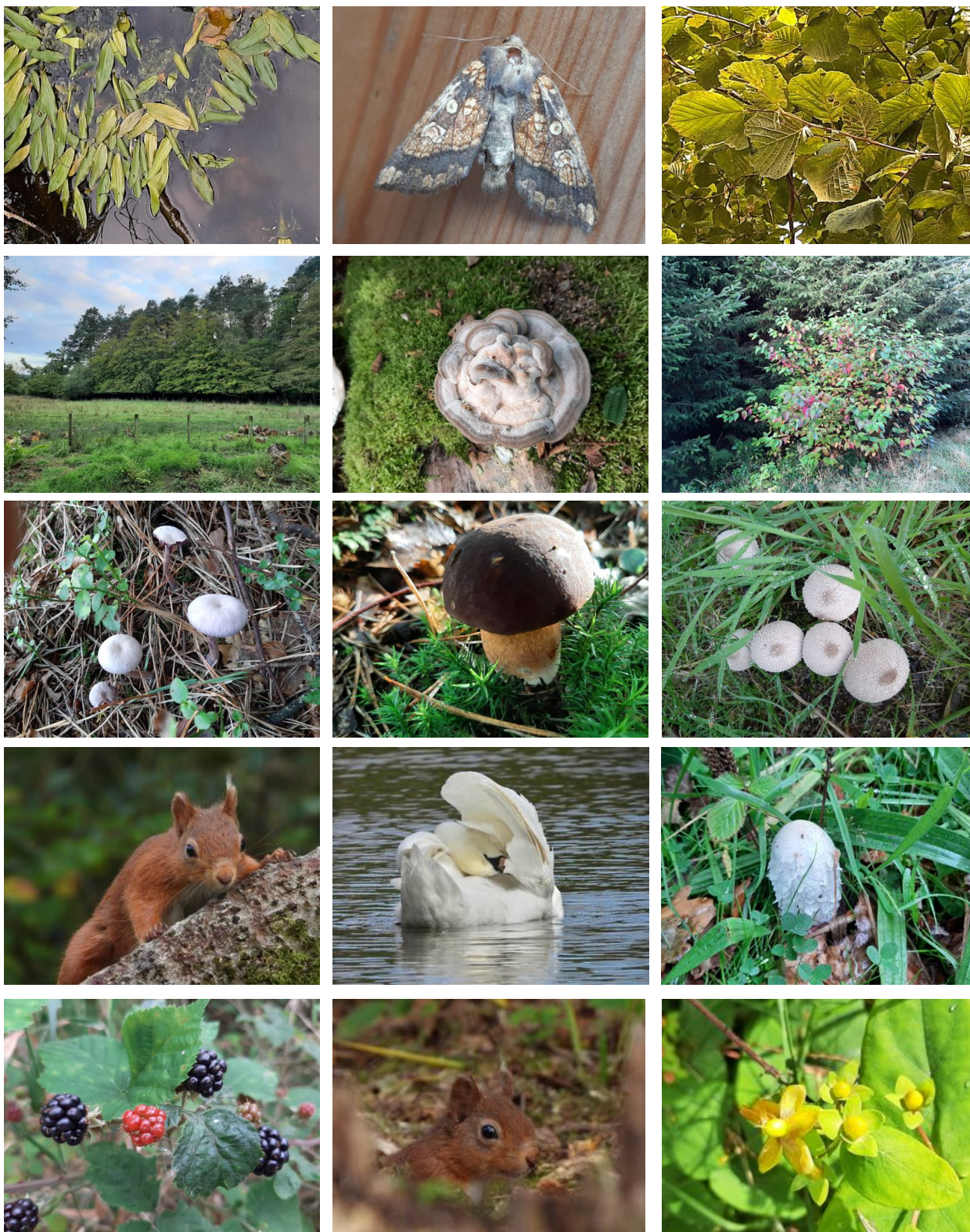
Butterflies: Red Admiral.

Moths: Frosted Orange, [Oblique Carpet](#).



Photographs by Jim Rae

3. September 2022 Photo-gallery.



Row 1 (JR): Potamogeton sp., Frosted Orange (moth), Male catkins on Hazel
Row 2 (JR): Beech Trees changing colour, Unidentified Fungus, Dogwood changing colour
Row 3 (JR): Amethyst Deceiver, Penny Bun, Common Puffball
Row 4: Red Squirrel (GB), Mute Swan (GB), Shaggy Inkcap (JR)
Row 5: Bramble (JR), Red Squirrel (GB), Tutsan (JR)

Photographs by Gary Black (GB), Jim Rae (JR)

4. Construction and Maintenance Work during September.

Sat. 03 Someone reversed their car into the fence at the entrance to the Reserve car park. The fence post was bent over, one board broken and others damaged. The fence has still to be repaired.



Mon. 05 **Tom Hargreaves** cleared self-seeded trees from the heathland and grassland areas to the south of the Reserve path and **Sybille Spägle** cleared the self-seeded trees west of the shelter.

Meanwhile, **Jim Rae** strimmed and raked the southern bank of the feeder burn.

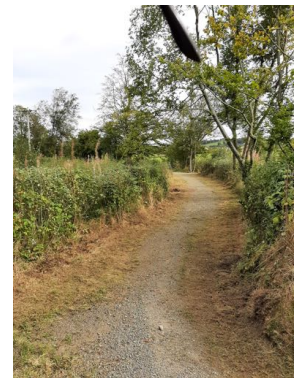
Tue. 06 **Jim** strimmed the area around the shelter and in the picnic area then felled and cut up a large, overhanging willow. Gordon Reid and Sybille Spägle raked up and cleared the grass cuttings, removed self-seeded trees from the picnic area and then helped Jim clear the willow logs.



Sat. 10 **Joe Borthwick** helped **Jim** to fill up the pot holes on the Eskrigg Farm road.

Sat. 17 **Joe** and **Jim** started to clear the section of path between the wide and narrow bridges on the north side of the feeder burn. On the 18th, Jim finished the job.

Monday 19th September 2022
The Eskrigg Centre and Hides were closed as a mark of respect for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II



Sat. 24 **Joe** and **Jim** strimmed and raked the section of path between the silt trap and a third of the way down the west side of the Reserve.

Tue. 27 **Gordon** and **Jim** strimmed and raked the rest of the path through the Reserve.



Photographs by Jim Rae

5. September Events

Wed. 31/08 - Fri. 02/09 Bat Survey by Freda Seddon

Freda recorded the bats flying around the pond over the 2 days and the equipment detected: Soprano Pipistrelle, Common Pipistrelle, Myotis spp. Noctule and Brown Long-eared bats. The Myotis species were probably Daubentons bats, but could have been either Natterers or Whiskered bats.

Wed. 07 Someone stole the wall clock from the Eskrigg Centre.

Thu. 22 RH Youth Organization visited Eskrigg with a **Lochmaben Youth Group** to do den building and stream sampling. The stream animals found were: Annelid Worms, Nematode Worms, Mayfly nymphs, Simulid larvae, Tipulid larvae, Cased Caddis, Case-less Caddis and Freshwater Shrimps.



Fri. 23 Lockerbie Wildlife Trust had a stall at **Lockerbie Academy's Wider Achievement Fair**. It was an interesting event with 40 youngsters expressing an interest in doing voluntary work at the Reserve. Many thanks to the following Committee Members who came along to help: Gary Black, David Hughes, Norah Muirhead, Jim Rae and Gordon Reid.

Sat. 24 Freda Seddon held a BAT WALK at Eskrigg Reserve.

There was a good turnout of interested people but unfortunately the bats were few in number and the only species detected were some Pipistrelles and a Noctule.

Fri. 29 RH Youth Organization visited Eskrigg Reserve with a **Lockerbie Group** for a scavenger hunt and a picnic.



6. September flowers identified at Eskrigg Reserve and Woodland Walks.

American Willowherb, Autumn Hawkbit, Bell Heather, Bird's-foot Trefoil, Bitter Dock, Bramble, Canadian Goldenrod, Common Valerian, Creeping Buttercup, Creeping Thistle, Cross-leaved Heath, Cut-leaved Crane's bill, Devil's-bit Scabious, Greater Willowherb, Harebell, Hazel, Herb-Robert, Honeysuckle, Knapweed, Lesser Spearwort, Lesser Stitchwort, Ling Heather, Marsh Bedstraw, Marsh Thistle, Marsh Woundwort, Meadow Vetchling, Mouse-ear Hawkweed, Nipplewort, Pink Purslane, Prickly Sow-thistle, Ragwort, Red Campion, Rosebay Willowherb, Selfheal, Smooth Hawkweed, Sneezewort, Spear Thistle, Stinging Nettle, Trailing St. John's-wort, Tufted Vetch, Tutsan, Water Mint, Wild Raspberry, Wood Forget-me-not, Yarrow, Yellow Pimpernel.

Photographs by Jim Rae and a member of the RHYO

7. The Mute Swan

Striking Appearance

The mute swan is one of the most easily identifiable of British birds. The adult's plumage is pure white and the thickly feathered neck is long and curves in a graceful 'S' shape. The head is small with a down-pointed, orange-red beak tipped with a black nail,



and there is a black knob over the nostrils at the base of the bill. This knob is more pronounced on the male than the female – and most obvious in the spring. The webbed feet are black. The young swan has a greyish plumage which begins to turn white by the third spring, while the beak takes two years to assume its bright orange-red colour.



The swan uses its long neck to feed on underwater plants; pondweed and semi-aquatic plants make up the bulk of its diet. It also eats algae and shore plants and occasionally will take worms, insects and fish; it swallows grit and fine gravel roughage. In deep water, where its neck is not long enough to reach certain food, it upends like a duck.

Its calls are quite out of character with its name and appearance, since it will snort, grunt and hiss threateningly when provoked; it also gives a shrill, trumpet-like call – particularly to the young who reply to the adult in a high-pitched tone.

Taking to the air

An adult swan is too heavy to take off from a standing position. To gain momentum it runs along (on land or on the surface of the water) with its neck outstretched and its wings thrashing violently. In flight the wing beats make a loud rhythmical noise. In order to land, the swan slows itself down by spreading out its wings and using its feet as breaks.

Mating breeding and nesting

Mute swans pair up, often in the autumn, when they are between two and four years old. Paired swans are not gregarious, preferring to nest isolated in their own aggressively defended territory. Non-breeding individuals and those of pre-breeding age may congregate together in areas where there is plenty of food and space. In spring, when their courtship and mating rituals reach a peak, you can see a pair of swans facing each other, swaying their heads sideways or dipping their heads in the water, extending their necks and bills vertically and even upending. Once the pair has been established, the cob (male) and pen (female) return annually to the same territory to breed again. Swans seldom change their mat, unless they fail to breed.

The cob selects a nest site close to the water's edge and well away from other nests. Building the nest is mainly the pen's task, although the cob helps gathering vegetation, often from previous nests, and passing it to her. The pair makes little attempt to camouflage the nest, which is a huge pile of reeds and sticks lined with a thin layer of down.

The pen lays her chalky, round-ended eggs every other day for up to 12 days; this occurs any time from April to July. The pen does most of the incubating, although the cob will take his turn and keep guard over the nest.



The eggs hatch after 35-41 days and the pen carries the broken shells to the water's edge. The young, which are born with their eyes open, are covered with soft, fur-like grey down; this is replaced by woolly feathers which change slowly to a drab brown colour. At five days they are independent enough to leave the nest during the daytime, although for up to a month they may continue to gather in the nest at night. Cygnets will walk long distances to water, marching along in single file behind their parents. You may see one riding on its parent's back between the arched wings. They fly at four months and are usually driven away from the nest area in the following spring, when their plumage has changed from grey and when territories are redefined and their parents begin to

prepare for the next brood. After leaving the nest the young join the summer flocks of non-breeders until they are ready to mate. Young birds will generally not start breeding until the third year of adult life.

Less than half the swans in the British Isles are breeding stock. You can easily identify the non-breeders, which are immature birds or those which have yet to form a nesting pair, since they have pale pink bills and small nostril-lobes.



Moulting and migration

If you come across a scattering of white feathers in July or August, do not assume this is the result of a fight; swans moult their flight feathers in the summer after nesting. When moulting they are vulnerable because they cannot fly.

Some breeding adults, whose young cannot yet take to the air, moult at the nest site, but most make long journeys to find a safe place where they will not be threatened during the flightless period. When moulting, they lose their primary feathers first and then the secondaries. They are able to fly again after a month, four weeks before the feathers have reached full length again. The return journey is made in September or October.

Photographs by Jim Rae

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