

Lockerbie Wildlife Trust

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



Scottish Charity No:
SC 005538

Eskrigg Reserve

February 2023 News Bulletin

1. Eskrigg pond being drained in order to dig out the silt.



2. Confirmed wildlife sightings at the Reserve during February.

a. Birds:

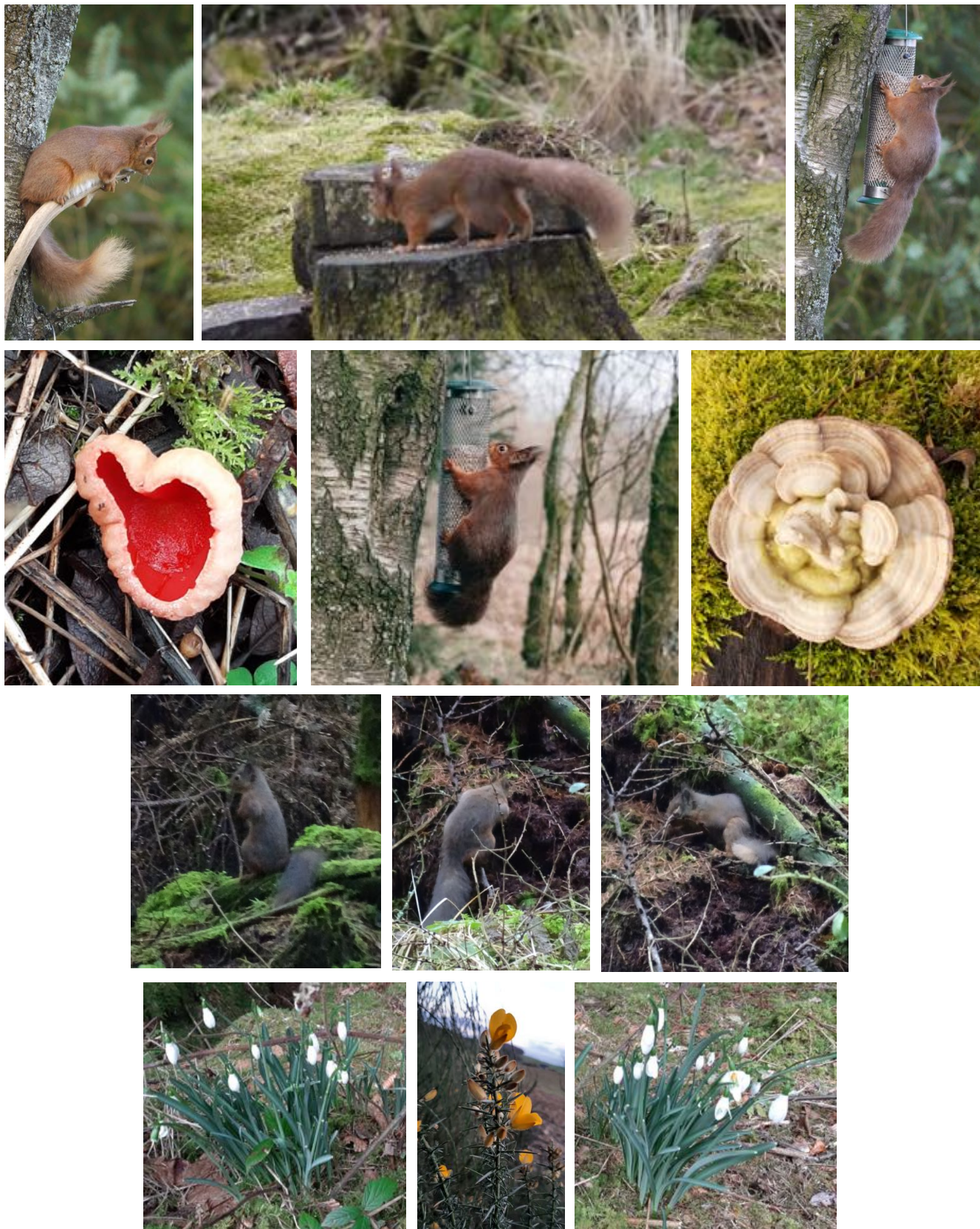
Blackbird, Blue Tit, Buzzard, Carrion Crow, Chaffinch, Coal Tit, Dunnock, Fieldfare, Goldcrest, Goldfinch, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Great Tit, Greenfinch, Greylag Goose, House Sparrow, Kestrel, Lesser Redpoll, Long-tailed Tit, Mallard, Moorhen, Nuthatch, Pheasant, Raven, Red Kite, Robin, Siskin, Song Thrush, Sparrowhawk, Stock Dove, Tawny Owl, Treecreeper, Tree Sparrow, Woodpigeon, Wren.

b. Mammals:

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

Photographs by Jim Rae

3. February 2023 Photo-gallery



Row 1 (EG): Red Squirrels

Row 2: Scarlet Elfcup (JR), Red Squirrel (OF), Lumpy Bracket (*Trametes gibbosa*) (JR)

Row 3 (AF): “Phantom Grey” Red Squirrel

Row 4 (JR): Snowdrops, Whin, Snowdrops

Photographs by Oliver Findlay (OF), Anthony Fox (AF), Elizabeth Gibson (EG), Jim Rae (JR)

4. Construction and Maintenance Work during February.



Wed. 8 **Jim Rae** cleared 40m of the feeder burn in preparation for the Annual Nut Race. **Gordon Reid** cleared some birch branches from the bank of the burn and then removed some logs from the field below the Reserve and stacked them, temporarily, near the compost toilet.



Thu. 9 **Jim** cut up some branches with the chainsaw and then he and **Noah Nightingale** took all the logs out to the stack beside the forest road.

Fri. 10 **Jim** took delivery of a load of gravel from **Grange Quarry** at the Reserve Car Park at 7.30am.

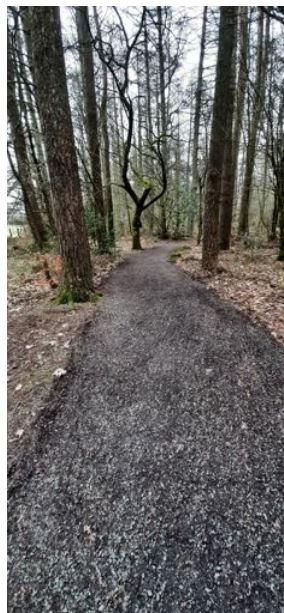
The Fire Extinguishers at the Eskrigg Centre were serviced by **D & G Fire Protection Ltd** later in the morning.

In the afternoon **Jim** cleared another 30m of the feeder burn in preparation for the Nut Race.



Sat. 11 **Joe Borthwick** and **Derek Campbell** helped **Jim** in the morning to clear a large area of self-seeded birch trees and bramble bushes east of the shelter. A hazel bush will be planted in the area in memory of **Bobby Mitchell** who loved the Reserve and helped in various ways in years past. In the afternoon, **Jim** cut out the trees blocking the Pipeline Walk and raked part of the path.

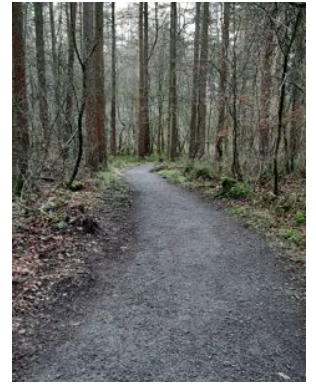
Sun. 12 **Jim** finished tidying the Pipeline Walk and started to rake the Larch Walk.



Photographs by Jim Rae

Mon. 13 **Tom Hargreaves** and **Jim** cut back the brambles along several path and raked the rest of the Larch Walk.

Jim then raked the Bilberry Walk.



Tue. 14 **Anthony Fox** spotted a grey-coloured Red Squirrel (see Phantom Grey on page 1). This is more than likely the “Grey” that had been reported at various times in the preceding months.

Thu. 16 & Fri. 17 **Jim** cleared other sections of the feeder burn in preparation for the Nut Race.

Sat. 18 **Jim** cut up and cleared branches from the soakaway, while **Sybille Spägle** and **Joe Borthwick** cleared logs from the field and stacked them next to the compost toilet.

Mon. 20 **James Kennedy** had started the mounding of the forest area next to the Reserve so **Jim** checked with **Sir John Buchanan-Jardine** that **James** could leave/clear a path across the area to provide a digger access to the Reserve Pond. **Sir John** confirmed that this was to be done. **Jim** and **Sybille** helped clear the route by removing some brash.

Jim also got permission from **Ian** and **Colin Paterson** for the digger to go through the field south of the Reserve in order to clear and open the sluice gate for draining the pond.

Jim then obtained a quote from **Garry Russell of GTR**

Contracts Ltd for **James Kennedy** to use the digger to clear and open the sluice with the digger and had the quote of **£275** approved by the Lockerbie Wildlife Trust Management Committee.



However, Garry Russell and his wife Tanya decided to have this work done free of charge in order to support the Trust. The Management Committee greatly appreciated this generous gesture.

Tue. 21 **James Kennedy** took the excavator along the Reserve path, into the field, across the outlet burn, back across the by-pass burn, across the path to the Kingfisher Hide and up onto the sluice dyke. He then used the digger to clear some silt from in front of the sluice and help **Jim** open up the sluice gate. **James** then retraced his path with the digger and tidied up behind himself on his way out. **Jim** then helped to reinstate the field fences.



Photographs by Jim Rae

The pond was draining well, although **Jim** did have to check that the sluice gate was clear each morning.



Fri. 24 Sybille Spägele and Gordon Reid helped Jim fill up the potholes on the Eskrigg Farm Road. They then reinstated the amphibian signs that had had to be taken out while the sluice was being opened and moved a commemorative tree and post to a new position.



Sat. 25 Sybille and Joe Borthwick helped Jim finish the clearing of the burn for the Annual Nut Race.

Above photographs by Jim Rae

5. Annual Nut Race (Sunday 26 February)



Photograph of participants taken by Allan Devlin

The water level in the feeder burn was too low to run the 12 heats and final race down the full 100 metres.

Instead the children drew 3 nuts from each of the 12 bags of 50 walnuts and these were run down a 20m stretch of the burn that had just enough water flowing down it.



Pick a Number:
Jim Rae with Freya McLatchie



Lucky Numbers?
Allish and Mairi Bodell

The first three nuts, their sponsors and prizes were as follows:

- 1st Light Blue 58 – Mary Colville - £25**
- 2nd Dark Blue 3 – Campbell Grieve - £15**
- 3rd Green 59 – Julius Rae - £5.**

All participants received a Chocolate Easter Egg.
The eggs and the cash prizes were generously donated by **Liz McDonnell**.

The youngsters then took part in a cream egg hunt in the heathland area,
with the cream egg prizes kindly donated by the management of the
Applegreen Service Station
in Lockerbie.

Photographs by Allan Devlin

Average Daily People Count for February = 59

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