

Lockerbie Wildlife Trust

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

Eskrigg Reserve

June 2023 News Bulletin



Scottish Charity No:
SC 005538

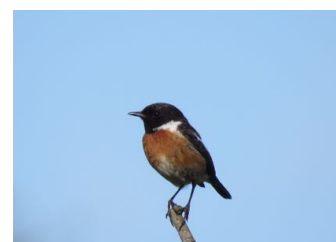
1. Eskrigg pond from the Red Squirrel Hide (13.06.23)



2. Confirmed wildlife sightings at the Reserve during June

a. Birds:

Blackbird, Blackcap, Blue Tit, Bullfinch, Buzzard, Carrion Crow, Chaffinch, Chiffchaff, Coal Tit, Collared Dove, Curlew, Dunnock, Fieldfare, Garden Warbler, Goldcrest, Goldfinch, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Grasshopper Warbler, Great Tit, Greenfinch, Grey Heron, Grey Wagtail, Greylag Goose, House Martin, House Sparrow, Jay, Kestrel, Long-tailed Tit, Mallard, Moorhen, Nuthatch, Oystercatcher, Pheasant, Pied Wagtail, Raven, Robin, Sedge Warbler, Siskin, Song Thrush, Sparrowhawk, Starling, Stock Dove, Stonechat, Swallow, Tawny Owl, Treecreeper, Tree Sparrow, Willow Warbler, Woodpigeon, Wren.



Stonechat (DA)

b. Mammals:

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

c. Amphibians and Reptiles:

Young Frogs & Toads.

d. Insects:

Butterflies: Green-veined White, Meadow Brown, Orange Tip, Peacock, Ringlet, Small Skipper.

Moths: Chimney Sweeper, Clouded Border, Drinker caterpillar.

Others: Grasshopper, Broad Bodied Chaser*, Four-spotted Chaser.

* New species for Eskrigg



Drinker caterpillar (JR)

Photographs by David Allan (DA) and Jim Rae (JR)

3. June 2023 Photo-gallery



Row 1 (JR): Marsh Woundwort, Ringlet, Buck's-beard

Row 2 (MG): Red Squirrels

Row 3 (JR): Ragged Robin, Marsh Yellow-cress*, Blue Water-speedwell, Spear Thistle

Row 4 (JR): Common Valerian, Wild Raspberry Fruit, Wild Angelica

Row 5 (JR): Heath Spotted Orchid, Clouded Border, Climbing Corydalis

** New species for Eskrigg*

Photographs by Michael Gault (MG), Jim Rae (JR)

4. Construction and Maintenance Work during June

Fri. 02 **Jim Rae** (who took the photograph), and four other volunteers (L to R) **Brian Mauson**, **Gordon Reid**, **Sybille Spägele**, and **Richard Bradley** cleared small tree stumps, self-seeded trees, bushes and brambles from the sides of the path along a section of the Southern Loop in order to clear the ditch and allow the heather to grow.



Sat. 03 **John Spence**, who is working towards his Duke of Edinburgh Bronze award, helped **Jim** clear another section of the Southern Loop.

Tue. 06 **Jim** strimmed the entrance opposite the Cemetery Lodge and the path along side the Dumfries road.



Fri. 09 **Sybille**, **Gordon** and **Jim** tidied up a section of path round the Northern Loop by strimming and raking the grass verges, cutting the broom, thistles and nettles and pruning back the trees.



Thu. 15 **Jim** strimmed, raked and pruned other sections of the Northern Loop.



Tue. 20 – Tue. 27

Gordon Reid kindly kept an eye on the Reserve, opening up in the mornings, topping up the bird feeders and closing up in the evenings. This allowed **Jim Rae** to take a week off in order to visit the Black Forest area in Germany.

Wed. 28 **Cairn Douglas** helped **Jim** rake a path and weed the area around the Eskrigg Centre.

5. Lockerbie Academy Charity Fair

On Friday 16 June, between 9.00am and 4.00pm, Lockerbie Wildlife Trust ran a stall at the Charity Fair. The stall was manned by committee members **Gordon Reid**, **John Reid**, **David Hughes**, **Norah Muirhead** and **Jim Rae**. Several students showed interest in volunteering at the Reserve.

6. Vandalism

The damage to Reserve property continued at the start of June, with the Plant Identification/Information posts and posters being interfered with and the drawing board clips being removed. The Police were given a full report on all the vandalism in recent weeks and a report put in the local paper. Shortly afterwards the vandalism stopped.

7. Activities at the Reserve during June

Thu. 01 Georgetown Primary School Visit 1



Thu. 08 Georgetown Primary School Visit 2



On each occasion the pupils were split up into three groups and these groups then took part in three activities in rotation.

Activity 1: Stream Study with Jim Rae (Eskrigg Reserve Manager)

The pupils were shown how to sample a stream in order to study the animals living there. Despite the very low level of water in the stream the groups found a fairly good selection of organisms: frog and toad tadpoles, freshwater shrimps, mayfly nymphs, caddis larvae, simuliid larvae, bloodworms, nematode worms, flatworms and a stickleback.

Activity 2: Scavenger Hunt with Duncan Ford (Countryside Ranger for Hoddum and Kinmount Estates)

The pupils had to collect a variety of objects such as a feather, a pine cone, an oak-leaf, a stone, and, even, the sun! Next, they had to sort their finds into living and non-living things. This led to a lot of thoughtful discussion and many perceptive questions. For example: What do we mean by living? If not alive now, has it ever been? If so, does that mean it is a living thing? Is a cone a living thing while it is on the tree? Are the seeds it contains living things? Why do plants need leaves to live? Why is the sun so important for life?

Activity 3: Woodland Minibeasts with Sybille Spägle (Vice Chairman of Lockerbie Wildlife Trust)

The groups gathered in a number of pitfall traps that had been set up in the pine wood and then examined the organisms caught in them using the magnifying posts. The animals found included: fly, woodlouse, four types of ground beetle, rove beetle, harvestmen, spiders, springtails, centipedes, millipedes and annelid worms.

8. Plant of the Month – St. John's-wort (genus *Hypericum*)

In the last few years three forms of St. John's-wort have appeared in the woods next to Eskrigg Reserve.

Slender St. John's-wort (*Hypericum pulchrum*)

This hairless plant has smooth, rounded stems that are sometimes reddish. Its leaves are opposite and heart-shaped. The flowers have five sepals and five yellow petals often with red markings on the underside. Both the sepals and petals have small black dots (sometimes stalked) on the periphery. The stamens are long and numerous. They have distinctive orange pollen. The sepals are less than half as long as the petals and are rhombic, with a 90 degree chamfer at the apex. The flowers bloom from late June to the end of August and are at their peak around Mid-summer's Day 21st June.

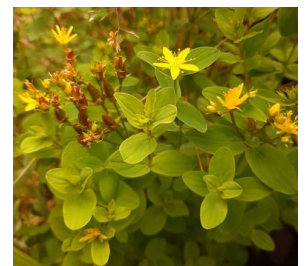


Trailing St. John's-wort (*Hypericum humifusum*)

This hairless perennial is a low, creeping plant and much smaller than most other *Hypericum* species. The thin, wiry stems have two lines on opposite sides. The pale green leaves, in opposite pairs, are less than 15mm long. The flowers are typically 8 to 10mm across. The five rich yellow oval petals and five green sepals have black dots on their periphery. There are up to 15 stamens bearing yellow pollen. The central spherical ovary has 3 styles. The unopened buds are reddish.

Square-stalked St. John's-wort (*Hypericum tetrapterum*)

This erect plant can grow to 60cm high. The stems are square with a wing running down each corner. The leaves have tiny translucent dots, best seen when held up to the light. The leaves also have black glands on the edges. Sometimes there are also black glands on the petals and sepals. The sepals are narrow and pointed. The flowers are small, 9mm to 13mm across, with pale yellow petals.



Photographs by Jim Rae

9. Animal of the Month – Woodlouse

A **woodlouse** (plural **woodlice**) is a crustacean within the order Isopoda. Woodlice evolved from marine isopods that are presumed to have colonised land in the Carboniferous, though the oldest known fossils are from the Cretaceous period. Five species are especially common throughout the British Isles, and are known as the "famous five species". They are *Porcellio scaber* (the common rough woodlouse), *Oniscus asellus* (the common shiny woodlouse), *Philoscia muscorum* (the common striped woodlouse), *Trichoniscus pusillus* (the common pygmy woodlouse) and *Armadillidium vulgare* (the common pill bug).



Oniscus asellus



Philoscia muscorum



Trichoniscus pusillus



Armadillidium vulgare

The common rough woodlouse (*Porcellio scaber*) – Length 1.5 cm



The Woodlouse has a segmented, dorso-ventrally flattened body with seven pairs of jointed legs. Its shell-like exoskeleton must progressively shed as it grows. The moult (ecdysis) takes place in two stages; the back half is lost first, followed two or three days later by the front. This method of moulting is different from that of most arthropods, which shed their cuticle in a single process.

It has specialised appendages for respiration.

A female woodlouse will carry fertilised eggs in a brood pouch (known as a marsupium) on the underside of her body, which covers the under surface of the thorax and is formed by overlapping plates attached to the bases of the first five pairs of legs. The brood pouch provides developing embryos with water, oxygen and nutrients. The immature young hatch as mancae (offspring that look like small white woodlice curled up in balls, although initially without the last pair of legs) and receive further maternal care. The mother then appears to "give birth" to her offspring. The juveniles stay with their mother for a few months while they go through a series of moults before reaching maturity. Each female can have up to three clutches of between 12 and 36 eggs per year. Females are also capable of reproducing asexually.

The woodlouse can munch its way through just about anything it can find (leaf litter, dead animals, fungi, fruit and even its own faeces) and is an expert in recycling nutrients. Woodlice look for food at night and hide in rotting wood and under rocks during the day. They stay in cool places because they are very prone to drying out.

Woodlice don't urinate, they release ammonia gas instead. This means they can smell quite bad in groups, earning them local names like 'stinky pigs'.

Photographs downloaded from the Internet

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