Lockerbie Wildlife Trust

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

Eskrigg Reserve

March 2024 News Bulletin



Scottish Charity No: SC 005538

Eskrigg Pond on the 23rd of March. 1.



Reported wildlife sightings at the Reserve during March. 2.

a. Birds:

Blackbird, Blackcap, Blue Tit, Brambling, Bullfinch, Buzzard, Canada Goose, Carrion Crow, Chaffinch, Chiffchaff, Coal Tit, Collared Dove, Cormorant, Crossbill, Dunnock, Fieldfare, Goldcrest, Goldfinch, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Great Tit, Greenfinch, Grey Heron, Greylag Goose, Hooded Crow, House Sparrow, Jackdaw, Jay, Kestrel, Kingfisher, Lesser Redpoll, Little Grebe, Long-tailed Tit, Magpie, Mallard, Mistle Thrush, Moorhen, Nuthatch, Pheasant, Pink-footed Goose, Pintail, Raven, Red Kite, Redwing, Reed Bunting, Robin, Rook, Siskin, Song Thrush, Sparrowhawk, Starling, Stock Dove, Stonechat, Treecreeper, Tree Sparrow, Woodpigeon, Wren.

b. Mammals:

Bank Vole, Fox, Hare, Mole, Otter, Pipistrelle Bat, Rabbit, Red Squirrel, Roe Deer, Stoat, Woodmouse.

c. Amphibians:

Toads (arrived 12th March), Frogs (arrived 17th March).

a. Marsh Marigold (in Reserve), b. Lady's Smock (near Reserve), Flowers: c. Variegated Yellow Archangel (near Reserve).

Plants that came into flower at the end of March.







Photographs by Jim Rae

3. March 2024 Photo-gallery.



Row 1: Red Squirrel (SR), Bank Vole (BF), Ten Spot Ladybird (JR), BankVole (BF), Treecreeper (SR) Row 2 (JD): Red Squirrel, Robin, Red Squirrel Row 3: Toads (GS), Toad Spawn (BF), Toads (BF) Row 4 (JR): Mistle Thrust, Canada Geese, Stonechat Row 5 (JR): Jelly Ear fungus on Elder, Hazel catkins with female flower insert, Bilberry in flower

Photographs by John Dickson (JD), Bob Fitzsimmons (BF), Jim Rae (JR) Sandy Robertson (SR), Gwen Scott (GS)

4. Construction and Maintenance Work during March.



Sat. 02 & Sun. 03 Jim cleared the remaining logs from the soak-away.



Fri. 01 Pupils from Lockerbie Academy, down to lend a hand with maintenance work.



Thu. 07 Jim cut away the last of the fallen trees **and** cut back the stumps in the soak-away.

Fri. 08 Gordon, Sam and Robert helped Jim lay some new boards at the side of the Reserve path.



Wed. 20 Castlemilk Estate started felling the young Larch plantation, north of the Reserve, which had become infected by *Phytophthora ramorum*.



Fri. 22 Gordon and **Robert**, once again helping Jim to lay new boards along the side of the Reserve path.

Sun. 23 Jim replaced the old duck feeder with a new one.



spotted a **pipistrelle bat**, hiding in the timber stack. He moved it to a place of safety.

Fri. 29 Gordon and Robert helped Jim fill in some of the potholes on the Eskrigg Farm road.





Thu. 28 Sybille Spägele and **Jim** cleared three trailer loads of scrap plastic, metal and wood items from the side of the forest road and took them to the Oakbank Depot in Dumfries for disposal. While doing so **Jim**



Photographs by Jim Rae and Sybille Spägelle (SS)

5. March Events.

Wed. 13 Visit by primary 7 pupils from Mount Cameron Primary School, East Kilbride. After a picnic lunch in the Centre the weather cleared up and the youngsters investigated the Minibeasts in the Scot's Pine Woodland before going on a Scavenger Hunt.





Wed. 27 Local families took part in another Woodland Minibeast activity as part of the Reserve's Easter Family Programme. Animals caught in the pitfall traps included: beetles and beetle larvae, flies and fly larvae, earthworms, ground beetles, moth caterpillar, springtails, millipedes, slugs and spiders.

Sun. 31 No-one booked in for the **Stream Study** - part of the **Reserve's Easter Family Programme.** However, **Emma-Jane Sadler** joined **Sybille Spägele** and **Jim Rae** to sample the stream and record the species present. These included:

Flatworms (*Polycelis nigra*), Earthworms (*Lumbricus sp.*), Freshwater Shrimps (*Gammarus pulex*), Riffle Beetles (*Limnius volckmari**), Stoneflies nymphs (*Nemoura cinerea*), Mayfly nymphs (*Ecdyonurus venosus, Rhithrogena semicoloratus, Paraleptophlebia submarginata* & Baetis rhodani*), Simulid larvae (*Simulium sp.*) and Hairy-eyed Cranefly larvae*. (*Newly recorded species for Eskrigg.)

6. Plant of the month: Honeysuckle (Lonicera periclymenum) - Flowering June - September

long tongues can reach the nectar.

Habitat: Honeysuckle grows in woodland, scrubs and along hedgerows, weaving up and through shrubs and trees. It is common and widespread throughout the British Isles.







nest sites and material for birds, such as Blackbirds and Pied Flycatchers. The whorls of creamy-white, tubular **flowers** turn yellow-orange, often with a red or pink flush, once the flowers are pollinated. Pollinating moths, such as the Elephant Hawk-moth, are attracted to the nectar-rich flowers at night, when their sweet, heady scent is at its strongest. The moths transfer pollen from the outstretched stamens of one flower to the protruding stigmas of another flower. Bees and flies also land on honeysuckle but only those with

The **leaves** are grey-green and oval, with no or very short stalks, and arranged in opposite pairs. The stems climb clockwise around the branches and stems of other plants, sometimes distorting them. New shoots attract blackfly which bring hungry Blue Tits, lacewings and ladybirds; its climbing stems provide

The **fruit** consists of clusters of red berries which ripen in late summer and autumn and attract birds, including thrushes, warblers and Bullfinches. They are also eaten by Red Squirrels. The berries are poisonous to humans, but birds and other animals eat the fleshy parts and discard the hard seeds on their travels, and this is one way the plant is spread around the countryside.

Photographs by Jim Rae

Honeysuckle (Lonicera periclymenum) continued:

Mythology and symbolism

It was once believed that if honeysuckle grew around a home's entrance, it would bring good luck and stop any evil spirits from entering. It has also long been considered a symbol of fidelity, and in Victorian times young girls were banned from bringing honeysuckle into the house because it was believed the strong smell would make them have suggestive dreams!

Uses of honeysuckle

Man has long made use of honeysuckle. The berries used to be crushed and applied to be stings. A highly-prized find was a blackthorn stem shaped like a corkscrew after being distorted by honeysuckle, because it made an attractive walking stick. The shoots are sometimes woven into baskets and they can make a handy piece of twine if nothing more suitable is available.

While the berries are poisonous, the leaves, flowers and seeds have been used for medicinal purposes for a variety of conditions.

7. Animal of the month: Honeysuckle Leaf Miner (Chromatomyia aprilina)



This is one of many Dipteran species whose larvae live in mines within Honeysuckle leaves.

The very first part of its mine is a quite inconspicuous, lower-surface epidermal corridor, that ends upon the midrib. Then the larva bores into the midrib from which there may be several short narrow galleries into the leaf. It then makes long upper-surface corridors. In the main gallery there may be alternate lower surface and upper surface stretches. Frass (the excrement of the insect larvae) is

deposited in conspicuous long streaks. Often the latest corridor that is made is much longer than the others, and follows the leaf outline in a loose loop. Frass is deposited in long strings at the extreme side of the mine. Pupation takes place in the mine, in a lower-surface puparium chamber.



There is a winter form of the larva of this species that is not associated with the midrib and has a mine that meanders throughout the leaf. Frass is deposited in long strings at the extreme side of the mine. Once again, pupation takes place in the mine, in a lower-surface puparium chamber.

Note: Diptera larvae may live in a corridor mine, a corridor-blotch mine, or a blotch mine, but never in a case, a rolled or folded leaf, a tentiform mine or sandwiched between two more or less circular leaf sections in later instars. Pupation never takes place in a cocoon. All mining Diptera larvae are leg-less maggots without a head capsule. They never have thoracic or abdominal legs. They do not have chewing mouthparts, although they do have a characteristic cephalo-pharyngeal skeleton, usually visible internally through the body wall. The larvae lie on their sides within the mine and use their pick-like mouthparts to feed on plant tissue. In some corridors, miners' frass may lie in two rows on alternate sides of the mine. In order to vacate the mine, the fully grown larva cuts an exit slit, which is usually semi-circular. The pupa is formed within the hardened last larval skin or puparium and as a result sheaths enclosing head appendages, wings and legs are not visible externally.

Photographs by William Ellis (WE) and Jim Rae (JR)

Total people count for March = 1,606 Average number per day = 52

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