

Lockerbie Wildlife Trust

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

Eskrigg Reserve

July 2024 News Bulletin



Scottish Charity No:
SC 005538

1. Eskrigg Pond 27th July.



2. Reported wildlife sightings at the Reserve during July.

a. Birds:

Blackbird, Blackcap, Blue Tit, Bullfinch, Buzzard, Carrion Crow, Cetti's Warbler, Chaffinch, Chiffchaff, Coal Tit, Collared Dove, Common Redstart, Crossbill, Dunnock, Goldcrest, Goldfinch, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Great Tit, Greenfinch, Grey Heron, House Sparrow, Jay, Kingfisher, Linnet, Little Grebe, Long-tailed Tit, Magpie, Mallard, Moorhen, Nuthatch, Oystercatcher, Pheasant, Red Kite, Reed Bunting, Robin, Siskin, Song Thrush, Sparrowhawk, Starling, Stock Dove, Swallow, Treecreeper, Tree Sparrow, Whitethroat, Willow Warbler, Woodpigeon, Wren.

b. Mammals:

Rabbit, Red Squirrel, Roe Deer, Wood Mouse.

c. Reptiles: Common Lizard.

Amphibians: Young Frogs and Toads.

d. Insects:

Butterflies: Green-veined White, Large White, Red Admiral, Ringlet, Small Skipper, Small Tortoiseshell.

Moths: Chimney Sweeper, Light Emerald.

Damselflies: Common Blue.

Dragonflies: Emperor, Four Spotted Chaser.



Small Skipper

Photographs by Jim Rae

3. July 2024 Photo-gallery.



Row 1: Red Squirrel, Spider in nest with eggs (13.07.24), Great Spotted Woodpecker

Row 2: Spider in nest with young (27.07.24)

Row 3: Hedge Woundwort, Developing Blackthorn Fruit (Sloes), Common Figwort

Row 4: Buck's Beard, Selfheal, Heath Spotted Orchid, Marsh Woundwort

Row 5: Large Trefoil, Elder, Red Clover, Autumn Hawkbit

Photographs by Jim Rae

4. Construction and Maintenance Work during July.

Thu. 04 Jim cleared trees from the side of the ditch along part of the Southern Loop to complete the area worked on last month.



Fri. 05 In the morning, **Jim** strimmed the path and cut the hedge at the end of the Northern Loop. In the afternoon he strimmed the section near the gravel heaps.

Sat. 06 Jim strimmed the feeding area next to the Red Squirrel Hide and cut the reeds east of the hide to improve the view from the hide across the pond.



Meanwhile, two lads, working for **Alan Thomson** the blacksmith, repaired the outside of the ammunition shed. They will be back to repair the inside at a later date.



Sun. 07 Jim repaired the second bridge on the path south of the Reserve that had been damaged by a rider on horseback. He then erected signs to try and stop riders using the path because the bridges were not constructed to take the weight of a horse and there could have been a very serious accident.



Mon. 08 Jim strimmed and raked the approach to the duck feeder and the section of the Southern Loop, known as the Beech Walk, from **Dod Gass's Bench** down to the forest road.



Tue. 9 Jim strimmed one of the Woodland Walks and the path to the Kingfisher Hide.

Wed. 10 Castle Milk's forestry staff kindly cleared fallen and dead trees in the area of Scots Pine immediately south of the Reserve in order to create an area for a new **Forest Classroom**.



Fri. 12 In the morning, **Norah Muirhead** and **Sam Pattinson** raked the Reserve paths while **Gordon Reid**, **Robert Gray** and **Jim Rae** filled up the potholes on the Eskrigg Farm Road. In the afternoon, **Jim** tidied part of a Woodland Walk and collected some new timbers for its edge.



Sun. 21 Two volunteers came along for the morning of the **Maintenance Sunday**, **Gordon Reid** (not photographed) and **Findlay Farmer**. They helped **Jim** tidy a stretch of the Northern Loop. In the afternoon, **Jim** tidied another section of the Northern Loop.

Fri. 26 Gordon Reid and **Jim Rae** fitted new timbers along the edge of a path while **Norah Muirhead** pruned the trees and shrubs along the Reserve paths.



The Reserve Manager, Jim Rae, would like to thank Gordon Reid for looking after the Reserve while he (Jim) was away on holiday at the end of July and start of August.

5. July Events.

Tue. 02 Jim met with Chris Miles who identified the roses mentioned in last month's bulletin.

A - Hairy Dog-rose - *Rosa corymbifera* located in the heathland and
 B - Sherard's Downy-rose - *Rosa sherardii* in the hedge alongside the Eskrigg Farm Road.



Fri. 05 In the late afternoon and early evening, the film crew and two of the team of experts from 'The Repair Shop', **Kirsten Ramsay** and **Will Kirk**, visited the Reserve to record material for a new series.



The Repair Shop Landrover



Kirsten Ramsay & Will Kirk



Film Crew* + Jim Rae

*Photographs by Jim Rae and one of the film crew

6. Plant of the Month - Common Figwort (*Scrophularia nodosa*)

The common figwort is an herbaceous perennial that is usually found in damp, deciduous woodland and hedgerows. It has a fetid smell.

Each plant can be up to 80cm tall, sometimes more. Its stem is square in cross section.

The toothed leaves arise as opposite pairs. They are oval and pointed and have short stalks. The young leaves sometimes have a purple tinge.

It has a tuberous root system with small nodules.



The small, inconspicuous flowers appear in small clusters from June to August.

There are five sepals with membranous edges.

The flowers have two lips. The upper lip has two lobes which are brown or maroon in colour. The lower lip has three, greenish lobes.

There are four stamens with anthers and a fifth stamen, or staminode, which has no anther.



Photograph by Jim Rae

7. Animal of the Month - The Garden Snail (*Cornu aspersum*)

The garden snail is a species of land snail in the family Helicidae, which includes some of the most familiar land snails. Of all terrestrial molluscs, this species may well be the most widely known. It was classified under the name *Helix aspersa* for over two centuries, but the prevailing classification now places it in the genus *Cornu*.

The snail is relished as a food item in some areas, but it is also widely regarded as a pest in gardens and in agriculture, especially in regions where it has been introduced accidentally, and where snails are not usually considered to be a menu item.

The adult bears a hard, thin calcareous shell 25–40 mm in diameter and 25–35 mm high, with four or five whorls. The shell is variable in colouring and shade of colour, but generally, it has a reticulated pattern of dark brown, brownish-golden, or chestnut with yellow stripes, flecks, or streaks (characteristically interrupted brown colour bands).

The aperture is large and characteristically oblique, its margin in adults is whitish and reflected.



The body is soft and slimy, brownish-grey, and able to be retracted entirely into the shell, which the animal does when inactive or threatened. When injured or badly irritated the snail produces a defensive froth of mucus that might repel some enemies or overwhelm aggressive small ants and the like. It has no operculum; during dry or cold weather it seals the aperture of the shell with a thin membrane of dried mucus; the term for such a membrane is epiphragm. The epiphragm helps the snail retain moisture and protects it from small predators such as some ants.

The snail's quiescent periods during heat and drought are known as aestivation; its quiescence during winter is known as overwintering. When overwintering, *Cornu aspersum* avoids the formation of ice in its tissues by altering the osmotic components of its blood (or haemolymph); this permits it to survive temperatures as low as -5°C . During aestivation, the mantle collar has the ability to change its permeability to water. The snail also has an osmoregulatory mechanism that prevents excessive absorption of water during hibernation. These mechanisms allow *Cornu aspersum* to avoid either fatal desiccation or hydration during months of either kind of quiescence.

During times of activity the snail's head and "foot" emerge. The head bears four tentacles; the upper two are larger and bear eye-like light sensors, and the lower two are tactile and olfactory sense organs. The snail extends the tentacles by internal pressure of body fluids, and retracts all four tentacles into the head by invagination when threatened or otherwise retreating into its shell. The mouth is located beneath the tentacles, and contains a chitinous radula with which the snail scrapes and manipulates food particles.

The shell of *Cornu aspersum* is almost always right-coiled, but exceptional left-coiled specimens are also known.

Photographs by Jim Rae

Total people count for July = 2517 Average number per day = 81

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