

# Lockerbie Wildlife Trust

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

## Eskrigg Reserve

### August 2024 News Bulletin



Scottish Charity No:  
SC 005538

#### 1. Eskrigg Pond on 13th August.



#### 2. Reported wildlife sightings at the Reserve during August.

##### a. Birds:

Blackbird, Blackcap, Blue Tit, Bullfinch, Buzzard, Carrion Crow, Chaffinch, Chiffchaff, Coal Tit, Collared Dove, Dunnock, Goldcrest, Goldfinch, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Great Tit, Greenfinch, Grey Heron, House Martin, House Sparrow, Jay, Kingfisher, Little Grebe, Long-tailed Tit, Magpie, Mallard, Moorhen, Nuthatch, Oystercatcher, Pheasant, Raven, Robin, Sedge Warbler, Siskin, Song Thrush, Sparrowhawk, Spotted Flycatcher, Starling, Stock Dove, Swallow, Tree Creeper, Tree Sparrow, Willow Warbler, Woodpigeon, Wren.

##### b. Mammals:

Bank Vole, Fox, Mole, Rabbit, Red Squirrel, Roe Deer, Wood Mouse.

##### c. Reptiles: Common Lizard

**Amphibians:** Frog, Toad.

##### d. Insects:

**Butterflies:** Green-veined White, Large White, Peacock, Red Admiral, Small Skipper, Small White, Wall Brown.

**Moths:** Copper Underwing.

**Damselflies:** Common Blue, Large Red.

**Dragonflies:** Common Darter, Emperor, Southern Hawker,

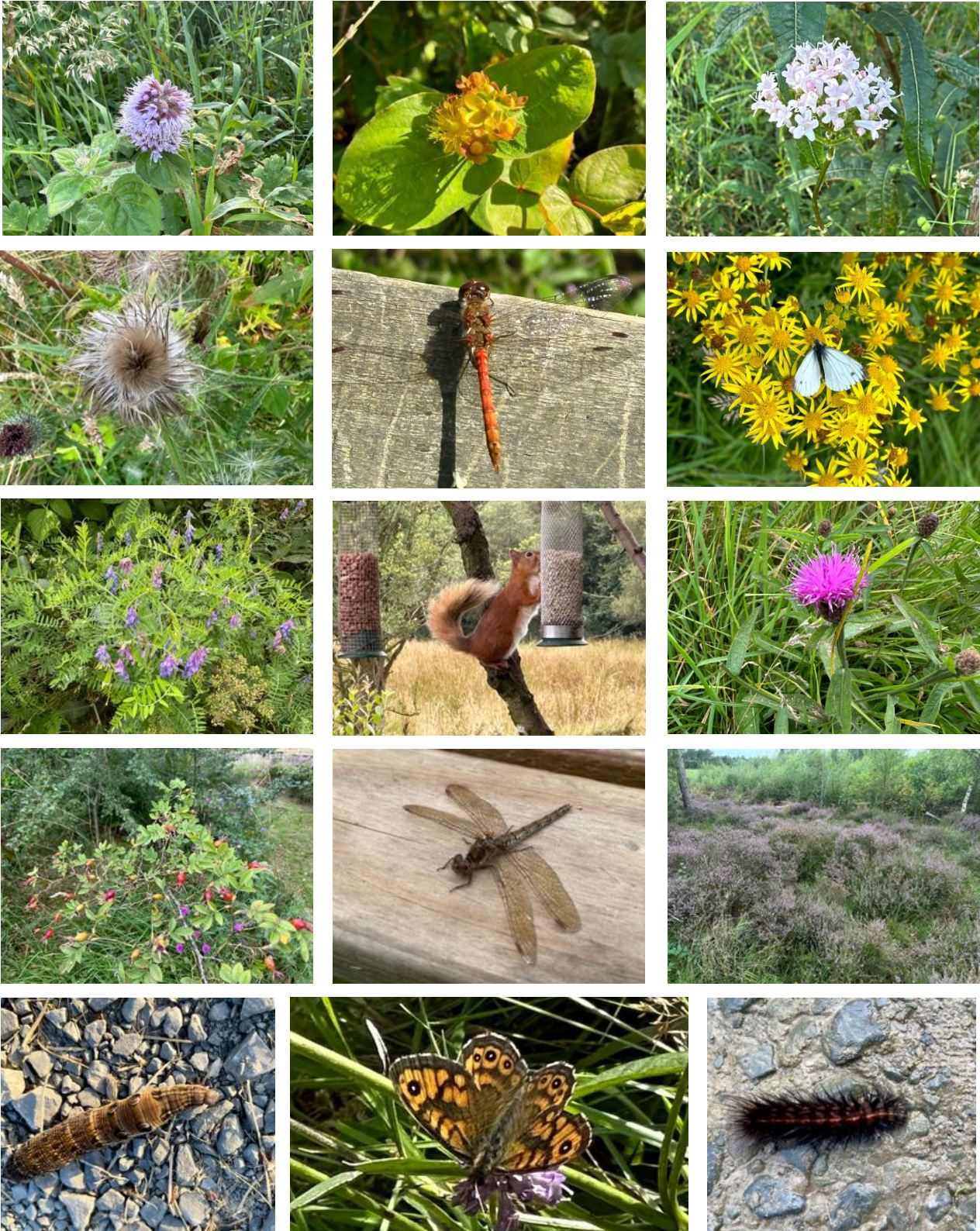
**Others:** Common Green Grasshopper, Forest Shieldbug.



Common Darter

Photographs by Jim Rae

3. August 2024 Photo-gallery.



Row 1: Water Mint, Tutsan, Valerian

Row 2: Seed-head of a Spear Thistle, Large Red Damselfly, Small White Butterfly on Marsh Ragwort

Row 3: Tufted Vetch, Red Squirrel, Knapweed

Row 4: Rose Hips, Common Darter (SS), Heather in flower

Row 5: Elephant Hawkmoth Caterpillar (SS), Wall Brown, White Ermine Caterpillar (SS)

Photographs by Jim Rae and Sybille Spägle (SS)

#### 4. Construction and Maintenance Work during August.

**Fri. 09** During the morning, **Gordon Reid** and **Sam Pattinson** (two on the left) strimmed and raked a section of the Northern Loop, while **Brian Mauson** and **Robert Gray** (two on the right) cleared some of the woodland walks of pine needles.



**Nathan Moloney, Gill Houston, Allan Nicol** and **Cat Armstrong**, Mortgage and Protection Advisers from the **Cumberland Building Society**,

spent their Annual Cumberland Community Day at Eskrigg Reserve helping **Jim** (the Reserve Manager) by clearing the banks along the section of the feeder burn above the wide bridge of self-seeded trees and other plants as well as trimming the hedge between the burn and the path at the start of the Northern Loop. **Jim** then strimmed the banks and removed the plant debris from the water course itself.



Also on Friday, **Greig Gibson** and **Liam McNeillie**, two lads working for **Alan Thomson** (Blacksmith), finished welding steel strips on to the old ammunition shed to repair and seal the front wall and then they repaired a hole in the rear chamber.



**Sat. 10** **Jim** and **Anna Spägele** cleared cuttings from the Northern Loop.

**Sun. 11** In the morning, **Jim Rae** finished coating the outside of the old ammunition shed with Red Oxide preservative. In the afternoon he gave the shed a coat of dark green paint. The shed is now ready for the joiner to fit a timber lining inside.



**Fri. 16 & Sat 17** On the Friday morning, **Gordon Reid, Robert Gray** and **Jim Rae** started to clear the section of the feeder burn upstream of the area worked on, on the 9th. Jim carried on with the clearance on the Friday afternoon and finished it on the Saturday.

#### **Sun. 18 Volunteer Maintenance Sunday**

There was an excellent turnout of volunteers this month and the weather was kind to us.



From left to right in the two pictures: **Gordon Reid, Elizabeth Blennerhassett, Andrew Berry, Findlay Farmer, Karen King, Alistair Bertram, Sybille Spägele, Karen Miller** and **John Miller**.  
Not in the photographs are: **Robert Gray** and Reserve Manager - **Jim Rae**.

The day started with Jim strimming the entrance path from the forest road and the path to the Kingfisher Hide. Alistair, Elizabeth\* (see pict), Andrew and Karen K. raked and cleared up after him. They then moved on to the area around the duck feeder, the area in front of the Red Squirrel Hide, the area around the apple trees and the picnic area in the heathland.

Meanwhile, Sybille, Karen M., Gordon, Findlay, Robert and John tackled the feeder burn - pulling up 'water-weeds', cutting self-seeded birches and shrubs on the banks and path, and clearing them all into the adjacent woodland where they will decompose and nourish the commercial plantation.



Later in the day the groups combined to complete the stream clearance as far as the silt trap, and in the early evening, Jim was able to strim the bank and path.

**Many, many thanks to one and all for a job well done.**

Photographs by Jim Rae

**Mon. 19** In the morning, **Sybille** cleared the burn of grass cuttings<sup>1</sup> and the entrance to the silt trap of weeds<sup>2</sup> while **Jim** strimmed the silt trap and surrounding area. The two then emptied the silt trap of grass cuttings and tidied up<sup>3</sup>.



1



2



3

**Thu. 22** The strong winds and heavy rain during the previous 24 hours brought down a large birch tree on top of an oak and a rowan. At 7.20am the trees were just clear of the forest road and a timber lorry managed to get past and load up. At 7.50am the lorry got away and Jim got down to the Reserve to open up. An hour later, the oak and rowan collapsed under the weight of the birch and all three trees crashed down across the road. **Jim** spent the next few hours clearing the fallen trees and opening up the road again.



**Fri. 23** With the tree felling finished until October, **Sam Pattinson, Gordon Reid** and **Jim** were able to access the path that runs from the Forest Road, through the middle of the wood to the Pipe Line Walk, now called the **Middle Walk**. They cleared the broken branches and then raked a section of the path. They also laid some Terram Membrane and gravel where the Middle Walk meets the Pipeline Walk - the site where the seat, dedicated to Pearl Horsburgh will be sited. In the afternoon, **Jim** strimmed the edges of some of the Middle Walk until the rain became too heavy to continue.

**Mon. 26** **Jim** strimmed and raked the rest of the Middle Walk as far as the second bridge. **Jim** and **Sybille Spägele** also cut back the large Willow stump on the Kingfisher Walk and pruned the Beech tree behind the seat at Pip's Corner.

**Wed. 28 - Fri. 30** **Scott McLean** installed a new lining to the ammunition shed with insulation and dry wooden boards. (There are just a few more boards to fit once they too have dried out.) Scott then replaced some boards on the Eskrigg Centre, that had delaminated, with solid timbers.

**Fri. 30** **Brian Mauson, Gordon Reid** and **Jim Rae** filled in some of the pot-holes on the Eskrigg Farm Road and **Sybille Spägele** cleared self-seeded trees and brambles from amongst the heather on the Southern Loop.



**Sat. 31** **Felicity Jackson** and **Jim Rae** gave the new boards on the Centre a coat of wood preservative.

## 5. August Events.

**Mon. 05** **Alison Wyllie** set up the Reserve's Forest Classroom ready for her first session with the **Forest Babes**, part of the **Early Years Scotland programme**. These sessions will run for several weeks and are already fully booked.

The planned activities include: natural sensory play, woodland songs and stories, nature crafts and mindfulness activities.



Photographs by Sybille Spägele (SS) and Jim Rae (JR)



**Sun. 11 Visit by Annan Walking Group.**

The group passed through the Reserve whilst on their Sunday Walk in the area.



**Sun. 18** At 2.30pm, **Jim** drove down to the **Ukrainian Chapel**, on the Dalton Road, to meet up with a party of seventeen youngsters from **Lyubotin** in war-torn **Ukraine**, their guides and minibus drivers. He then took the Ukrainian party to the Eskrigg Nature Reserve, where he gave the group a short, guided tour. The group then went on to visit the Alpacas at Gilmourbank, near Lochmaben, where they were welcomed by Bryan and Margot Woods. To end the day the children were treated to fish and chips from the local chippie in Lochmaben.

**Wed. 28/Thu. 29 Moth Trapping at the Reserve (New species in red)**

		Pine Wood Small Trap	Pine Wood Medium Trap	Pond Fringe Large Trap
<b>Macro-moths</b>				
<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Scientific Name</b>			
Autumnal Rustic	<i>Eugnorisma glareosa</i>	-	1	2
Canary-shouldered Thorn	<i>Ennomos alniaria</i>	-	-	1
Common Footman	<i>Eilema lurideola</i>	1	-	1
Common Marbled Carpet	<i>Chloroclysta truncata</i>	-	1	3
Copper Underwing	<i>Amphipyra pyramidea</i>	1	3	-
Dark Marbled Carpet	<i>Chloroclysta citrata</i>	-	-	1
Devon Carpet	<i>Lampropteryx otregiata</i>	-	-	1
Galium Carpet	<i>Epirrhoe galiata</i>	1	-	-
<b>Heath Rustic</b>	<b><i>Xestia agathina</i></b>	-	<b>1</b>	-
July Highflyer	<i>Hydriomena furcata</i>	14	5	10
Oblique Carpet	<i>Orthonama vittata</i>	-	-	1
Purple Clay	<i>Diarsia brunnea</i>	-	1	-
Small Square-spot	<i>Diarsia rubi</i>	-	-	1
Rosy Rustic	<i>Hydraecia micacea</i>	-	-	2
Sallow	<i>Xanthia icteritia</i>	-	-	1
Square-spot Rustic	<i>Xestia xanthographa</i>	-	-	1
Straw Dot	<i>Rivula sericealis</i>	-	1	-

**Micro-moths**



***Acleris laterana***  
***Dioryctria sylvestrella***  
*Eudonia mercurella*



**Heath Rustic**  
**(*Xestia agathina*)**     ***Dioryctria sylvestrella***     ***Eudonia mercurella***     ***Acleris laterana***

Thanks to Alison Robertson, who helped with the moth identification.

## 6. Plant of the Month - Heather (Ling) - *Calluna vulgaris*

Heather is distributed throughout the whole of the British Isles except for the most intensively farmed clays and chalk soils of the lowlands.

### Distribution in Scotland

Heather is one of the commonest and most widely distributed plants in Scotland, occurring in all parts of the country, and in a range of habitats, including open woodland on acid soils (for example the native pinewoods of the Caledonian Forest), dunes, moors, wet heaths and bogs. It grows from sea level to elevations of about 1,000 metres in the mountains, and, as heather moorland, is the most abundant vegetation community in large parts of the upland areas.



However, the prevalence and predominance of heather today is, to a considerable extent, a human-created condition, resulting from past deforestation. Following the removal of the trees, the subsequent management of the land through burning (e.g. to maintain heather moorland for grouse shooting) or grazing, has prevented the return of the forest. This is known as arrested succession, in which the natural process of ecological succession, whereby one group of plants or vegetation community is naturally replaced by another, is halted by human intervention. Although this has created large extents of heather moorland, it has also kept heather out of some areas, for example in the headwaters of the Affric River watershed. There, intensive grazing has maintained the presence of grasses, and prevented the natural succession to heather and then trees.

This evergreen dwarf shrub flowers from late July to early October and is pollinated by a wide variety of insects, particularly bees and thrips, and by wind.

The plants can live for up to 40 years. The tough woody stems of heather are pliable and coarse, becoming twisted and tangled around one another and close to the ground in exposed areas. The pairs of short green leaves, arising directly from the stem, have two projections at their base. Those that grow from the short side stems are close together and often overlapping, while those on the main stem are more spaced out.

The delicate pink/pale purple flowers are solitary, either on the main stem or on lateral branches. They are rounded in appearance and have four tiny sepal-like structures at their bases. The pale purple stigma and style of the female parts protrude from the centre of each flower. After fertilisation the flowers lose their colour and form dark brown capsules which are easily detached in the wind. Heather flowers are prolific producers of nectar and are much sought after by bees. Each flower has eight nectaries which are arranged alternately with the stamens. As the plant matures the nectar flow diminishes, but other factors such as the nature of the soil and the subsoil, the age of the plant, the amount of rainfall and the altitude, all influence the nectar flow.

The young juicy shoots and the seeds of heather are the principal food of the Red Grouse (*Lagopus scoticus*), and ripe seeds of heather are eaten by many other species of birds. Small heather beetles are found deep in the foliage and the green larvae of the Emperor Moth feed on heather in June, July and August.

### Did you know?

Historically, heather has been used for many purposes, such as fuel, fodder, building materials, thatch, packing and ropes. It was also used to make brooms, which is how it got its Latin name - *Callunais* derived from the Greek word *kalluna* meaning 'to brush'.

White-flowered heather is traditionally believed to bring good luck.

Heather is perhaps as much a symbol of Scotland as the famous thistle, especially in the Highlands where it thrives. The Gaelic for heather is *fraoch*. It appears in many place names including Allt Fraoch Coire (stream of the heather corrie) in Glen Affric.

Photograph by Jim Rae

## 7. Animal of the Month - Large Red Slug - *Arion rufus*

This species is known to feed on live plant material; however, it has an extensive omnivorous diet and more readily feeds on decaying vegetation and food waste.

**Size:** 6-15cm when mature.

### Appearance:

Its colour can be extremely variable, even within individual populations. Most commonly it is grey or orange, but extreme morphs of black and almost white are rarely recorded.

The foot fringe is virtually always bright orange and is strongly lineolated.

The sole is paler than the body sides, often with a distinctive orange tinge, particularly towards the head. Lines extending from the fringe can commonly be observed on the sole and can sometimes stretch almost to its centre.

The tentacles and head are almost always darker than the rest of the slug. Mucus is thick, sticky and colourless. Tubercles are large, but can often appear flattened. Juveniles can be strongly banded and are often brighter in colour.

### Habitat

They are ubiquitous in lowland regions; commonly occur in gardens, woods, moors and agricultural land. They can also be found in several upland locations.

### Similar Species

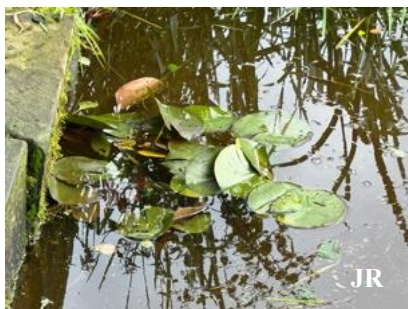
Adults of this species can be almost impossible to accurately distinguish from both *Arion ater* and *Arion vulgaris*; this is not helped by the fact that it is believed the three species may be prone to hybridism. This species usually has a lighter sole and body, and brighter coloured foot fringe than the other two species.

*A. rufus* also often appears chunkier and slightly less elongate; however, these are by no means fool-proof distinctions and dissection is often the only way to identify this species.



## 8. Water Lily

On the 22nd of August, **Margaret Edwards** kindly donated a Water Lily to the Reserve. It was put into the pond on the 22nd of August, but we were not sure if it would survive, let alone produce flowers. However, on the 24th, a flower bud appeared and on the 27th of August it opened out.



**Total people count for August = 1978    Average number per day = 64**

**Jim Rae (Eskrigg Reserve Manager)**

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