

Lockerbie Wildlife Trust

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



Eskrigg Reserve January 2026 News Bulletin

Scottish Charity No:
SC 005538

1. Eskrigg Pond at 8.22am on Thursday 1st of January 2026



2. Reported wildlife sightings at the Reserve during January

a. Birds:

Blackbird, Blue Tit, Bullfinch, Buzzard, Carrion Crow, Chaffinch, Coal Tit, Dunnock, 'Farm Duck', Goldcrest, Goldfinch, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Great Tit, Greenfinch, Greylag, Heron, Jackdaw, Jay, Kestrel, Kingfisher, Long-tailed Tit, Magpie, Mallard, Moorhen, Mute Swan, Nuthatch, Pheasant, Red Kite, Redwing, Reed Bunting, Robin, Rook, Siskin, Song Thrush, Sparrowhawk, Starling, Stockdove, Treecreeper, Woodcock, Woodpigeon, Wren

b. Mammals:

Bank Vole, Grey Squirrel, Mole, Rabbit, Red Squirrel, Stoat, Weasel



Long-tailed
Tits on feeder

3. Selection of January Wildlife photographs



Row 1: Buzzard (SF), Great Spotted Woodpecker (JR), Kingfisher (SF)
Row 2: Red Squirrel (SF), Great Spotted Woodpecker (JR), Red Squirrel (JR)

Row 3 (JR): Winter Fungus, Oak Galls, Winter Fungus

Row 4: Kingfisher (DB), Grey Heron (JR), Kingfisher (DB)

Row 5 (JR): Red Squirrel, Grey Heron, Robin

Photographs by David Brantom (DB), Steve Fearon (SF), Jim Rae (JR)

4. Farewell to Ailsa (Female Mute Swan)

On Saturday morning, 3rd January, most of the pond had frozen over. While the hides were being opened up, Ailsa was seen taking off and fly east over Eskrigg Farm. About 5 minutes later she returned.

(This was the very first time Ailsa had been seen to fly properly since she was brought from the South of Scotland Wildlife Hospital on the 8th of March 2025. For months her male companion, Sammy, had encouraged her to exercise her wings, and she would flutter across the pond, keeping her feet in contact with the water but never taking off properly. Sammy disappeared at the beginning of October 2025.)

During the Saturday afternoon, Ailsa spent a long time trying to keep a small area of the pond in front of the Red Squirrel Hide clear of ice for the few mallard that remained.



However, she was fighting a losing battle. By Sunday morning, 4th January, the pond had frozen over completely. Ailsa was looking very lonely as she walked across the ice with no mallard in sight.

On Sunday night there was a light fall of snow.

On Monday morning, 5th January, Ailsa was seen taking off and flying away. This time she did not return.

The following morning, when Jim was opening up the Kingfisher Hide at 8.30am, he noticed these marks in the snow on the ice and realised that this was the trail left by Ailsa as she took off for the last time.

It was as if Ailsa had signed her autograph before leaving.

Later that day the snow melted and the tracks disappeared.



Goodbye Ailsa, and Sammy.
We hope you both have a good life,
wherever you are.

Photographs by Jim Rae (JR) & Sybille Spägle (SS)

5. Bird Box Donation

On the Monday 19th, **Jim** received the kind donation of 4 Bird Nest Boxes from **Kane Shambrook and Beth Hopkins**. These will be put up within the Reserve shortly so that the birds can make use of them this Spring.



6. Maintenance Work

Fri. 02 **Sybille Spägle, Derek Campbell, Richard Arnott** and **Jim Rae** cleared branches from the path between Pearl's Place and Pip's Corner.

Sat. 17 **Jim Rae** spent the day raking up plant debris from the Reserve paths and part of the Southern Loop.



Mon. 19 **Jim** spent the morning tidying the edges and resurfacing the lower part of the path down from the Reserve Car Park (L).

The weather during much of January was so cold, wet and windy that the Reserve Volunteers could not maintain the surface of the farm road leading to the Reserve Car Park and the potholes were getting bigger and bigger.

In the interests of safety, the Reserve Manager made the decision to close the Reserve Car Park on the 23rd of January, until the surface of the access road could be reinstated.

Meanwhile, pedestrian access to the Reserve will continue.

Photographs by Jim Rae

Total people count for January = 1223 - Average number per day = 40

Jim Rae (Eskrigg Reserve Manager)

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