

Lockerbie Wildlife Trust

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

Eskrigg Reserve

September 2024 News Bulletin



Scottish Charity No:
SC 005538

1. Eskrigg Pond on the 7th of September.



2. Reported wildlife sightings at the Reserve during September.

a. Birds:

Blackbird, Blackcap, Blue Tit, Bullfinch, Buzzard, Carrion Crow, Chaffinch, Chiffchaff, Coal Tit, Collared Dove, Dunnock, **Egret***, Goldcrest, Goldfinch, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Great Tit, Greenfinch, Grey Wagtail, House Sparrow, Jackdaw, Jay, Kingfisher, Linnet, Long-tailed Tit, Magpie, Mallard, Meadow Pipit, Moorhen, Nuthatch, Pheasant, Raven, Robin, Rook, Siskin, Song Thrush, Sparrowhawk, Spotted Flycatcher, Starling, Stock Dove, Swallow, Tree Creeper, Tree Sparrow, Woodpigeon, Wren.

b. Mammals:

Bank Vole, Fox, Grey Squirrel, Hare, 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 Tortoiseshell.

Moths: Copper Underwing.

Damselflies: Common Blue, Large Red.

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

Others: Common Green Grasshopper, Hawthorn Shieldbug.



EW

Southern Hawker

***First time sighting of an Egret at Eskrigg Reserve, unfortunately no photograph. (26.09.24).**

Photographs by Emma Westmancott (EW) & Jim Rae (JR)

3. September 2024 Photo-gallery.



Row 1: Lesser Knapweed (JR), Hawthorn Shieldbug (JR), Puffball (JR), Kingfisher (SB), Large Trefoil (JR)

Row 2 (JR): Deadly Webcap, Red Squirrel, Chanterelle

Row 3 (JR): Warlock's Butter, Brambles, Fly Agaric

Row 4 (JR): Rowan with orange berries, Red Squirrel, Rowan with red berries

Row 5 (JR): Amethyst Deceiver, **Fennel Pondweed***, Porcelain Fungus

***Fennel Pondweed (*Stuckenia pectinata*) has not been found in the pond until this year.**

Photographs by Susan Breen (SB), Jim Rae (JR)

4. Construction and Maintenance Work during September.

Tue. 3 & Wed. 4 Pearl's Place

These seats at **Pearl's Place** were designed, crafted and assembled by **Alistair Gordon** in memory of **Pearl Horsburgh**. The materials were bought with the funds donated at Pearl's funeral.



In picture 1 **Alistair** is assembling the seats. In picture 2 the seats are down and ready to be sat on. When not in use the seats should be left in the up position, as in picture 3, so that they don't get wet when it rains.

Fri. 6 Volunteers **Gordon Reid**, **Robert Gray** and **Sam Pattinson** helped **Jim Rae** to fill up the potholes on the Eskrigg Farm Road with gravel. Meanwhile, **Scott McLean** carried out some repairs to the Eskrigg Centre and Red Squirrel Hide.



Sat. 7 **Felicity Jackson** and **Jim Rae** treated the new timbers on the Centre with wood preservative.

Wed. 11 **Scott McLean** finished relining the old ammunition shed and it will be brought back into use.

Fri. 13 **Derek Campbell** helped **Jim** to trim and rake the sides of the Reserve Car Park and the first section of the path to the Reserve.

Sat. 14 **Felicity Jackson** and **Jim** attached some non-slip plates to boards on the Jetty. There are more to come.



Sun. 15 Volunteer Maintenance Sunday



In the morning, **Alistair Bertram** lifted the edging boards and retaining posts from a section of the path through the Reserve and stacked them ready for removal. Meanwhile, **Jim** strimmed and raked another section of the path down to the Reserve. In the afternoon, **Jim** cleared the stacked timbers and finished strimming the path down from the car park.

Tue. 17 **Jim** strimmed and raked the area at the Cemetery Entrance and the path parallel to the Dumfries Road. In the evening, he set out the moth traps which would be switched on overnight.



Fri. 20 **Scott McLean** kindly repaired the inner doors of the Eskrigg Centre.

5. September Events

Mon. 9 Alison Wyllie's 'Forest Babes' events were set up in the Forest Classroom. These events ran on Mondays, between 10am and 11am, from the 5th of August to the 23rd of September. The theme on this particular day was "The Gruffalo".



Tue. 17/Wed. 18 September - Moth Trapping - The following moths were trapped overnight:

Common Name	Scientific Name	Pond Fringe	Pinewood
Common Marbled Carpet	<i>Chloroclysta truncata</i>	-	4
Copper Underwing	<i>Amphipyra pyramidea</i>	-	1
Green-brindled Crescent	<i>Allophyes oxyacanthae</i>	-	1
Herald	<i>Scoliopteryx libratix</i>	1	-
July Highflyer	<i>Hydriomena furcata</i>	4	6
Pinion-streaked Snout	<i>Schrankia costaeatrigalis</i>	1	-
Pink-barred Sallow	<i>Xanthia togata</i>	8	1
Twenty-plume Moth	<i>Alucota hexadactyla</i>	-	1



Herald



Green-brindled
Crescent



Common Marbled
Carpet 1



Common Marbled
Carpet 2



Pink-barred
Sallow



Copper
Underwing



Pinion-streaked
Snout



Twenty-plume Moth

Photographs by Jim Rae

Fri. 20 Visit by Carlisle U3A Bird and Nature Group.

The group had planned to go on a Fungal Foray but, this year, there were very, very few fungi showing along the Reserve and Woodland Walks. So, instead, Jim showed the group a power point presentation about the fungi normally found in the area at this time of the year.



Fri. 27 David Hughes and Jim Rae set up a Lockerbie Wildlife Trust stall at the Lockerbie Academy Wider Achievement Fair.

Sat. 28 'Dumfries Woodland Trust' arranged with Lockerbie Wildlife Trust to run an event at Eskrigg Nature Reserve entitled "Medieval Woodland Foraging: Perspectives from the Past"

Have you ever wondered what foraging in a woodland throughout time was like?

People were invited to join Historical Forager and Viking re-enactor, Katlin Ulfsdottir (Kat of Wild Kat Foraging), on a tour of Eskrigg Nature Reserve, to explore how people from our past may have seen our woodland species or used them for food, medicine, craft, or more, throughout time. Our guide was extremely knowledgeable. She took us



on a journey from the Mesolithic, through the Viking era to Victorian times and the present day.

She told us some of the many facts relating to the Silver Birch, Hazel and Oak trees, and the common plants Nettle, Meadowsweet, Rosebay Willowherb and Wood Aven. She raised the possibility that the increased heat of a fire stoked with hazel shells heralded the arrival of the Bronze age.

The event ended with a lovely cup of Rosebay Willow Herb tea and delicious biscuits containing birch and hazel catkins. You could even add some homemade honey. Well done, Kat.

Mon. 30 Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels arranged a Red Squirrel Guided Walk at Eskrigg Nature Reserve and Woodland Walks, hosted by Steve McKillop, between 11.00am and 1.00pm.

Unfortunately, despite the advanced publicity on the SSRS web site and elsewhere, Steve McKillop and Jim Rae were the only people to turn up so the walk was cancelled.

6. Plant of the Month - Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*)

The Silver Birch can take 80 or more years to mature and grow to a height of 30m, with a light canopy of drooping branches up to 20m wide. It is found in most woodlands on dry sandy or gravelly soils and on steep hillsides. It is an aggressive coloniser of forest clearings, ungrazed heaths and areas which have suffered recent burning. Its tiny winged seeds spread in profusion and germinate quickly to invade new areas. The pioneer trees form dense thickets of fast-growing saplings. The Silver Birch could be confused with the Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*) and the two easily hybridise. New shoots on the Silver Birch are hairless and warty whereas those of the Downy Birch are smooth and covered in soft hairs.



Bark: Its silvery-white bark sheds layers like tissue paper and becomes black and rugged at the base. As the tree matures, the bark develops dark, diamond-shaped fissures. The bark contains betulinic acid, which is insoluble in water, and this helps to preserve the bark of fallen branches while the wood beneath rots away. This results in an excellent habitat for small mammals and many insect species. The further north you go and the colder the climate, the thicker the bark grows. Due to its high oil content, the bark has a waterproof property which humans used for thousands of years in order to make containers for food storage, water transport and even for building canoes. The bark is also good for catching a spark to get a fire lit.

Sap: In the spring there is a copious flow of sap through the trunk and in some country districts this is collected by tapping the trees; the liquid is fermented into wine.

Leaves: The foliage appears towards the end of April, the leaves unfolding from small, pointed buds that are arranged alternately along the thin purplish-brown twigs. The bright green leaves can vary from 3 to 6cm long. The leaves of younger birches are often larger than those of more mature trees. They are usually triangular in outline but the shape may vary from diamond to oval. Their margins are unevenly toothed and they taper to a sharp point. They are light green in the summer and turn a golden yellow in the autumn. Young Silver Birch leaves can be eaten raw or cooked in a variety of dishes and although they are bitter in flavour, they have a good nutritional value. The leaves can also be brewed to make a medicinal tea or used to dye cloth a rich yellow-to-green colour.



Flowers: The Silver Birch is a monoecious species, meaning that both male and female flowering parts are found on the same tree. The male catkins develop during the autumn and by April or May have turned into clusters of 2-3 dangling catkins about 5cm long, covered with reddish brown scales which separate to release their pollen. The female catkins are harder to spot, being smaller. They appear with the unfolding leaves. They are held erect on the twigs, 2-3cm long, and are made up of overlapping green scales, each shielding an ovary from which two purple stigmas protrude to catch the pollen wafted on the wind. After fertilisation the female catkins expand into club-shaped, cone-like structures which slowly disintegrate in autumn to release the tiny winged fruits.



female catkins



male catkins

Witches Broom: Many birch trees appear to have large birds' nests among their branches. In fact, these untidy tangles of twigs are galls, a growth deformity caused when the buds are attacked by either a fungus or a tiny mite. A dense mass of twigs sprouts at the point of attack to form the so-called witches broom.

Value to wildlife: Birch woods have a light, open canopy, providing ideal conditions for grasses, mosses, wood anemones, bluebells, wood sorrel and violets to grow. Silver Birch provides food and habitat for more than 300 insect species - the leaves attracting aphids which provide food for ladybirds and other species further up the food chain. The leaves are a food plant for the caterpillars of many moths, including the Angle-shades, Buff Tip and Pebble Hook-tip. Woodpeckers and other hole-nesting birds often nest in the trunk, while the seeds are eaten by Siskins, Greenfinches and Redpolls.

Fungi: Birch trees are particularly associated with specific fungi including Woolly Milk Cap, Birch Milk Cap, Birch Brittle-gill, Birch Knight and Chanterelle. The Horse's Hoof fungus (*Fomes fomentarius*) has been used for thousands of years as a tinder to catch a spark in order to start a fire. The Birch Polypore (*Fomitopsis betulina*) is commonly known as the Razor Strop Fungus: when people used straight razors for shaving, they would use this fungus to strop the razor's edge to bring back its sharpness. Birch trees also have a relationship with the Fly Agaric fungus (*Amanita muscaria*) which attaches to the tree roots. The fungal hyphae wrap around the root hairs of a tree and speed up the entry of soil nutrients into the tree's root system in return for sugars manufactured by the tree. Thus, both species benefit from this ectomycorrhizal association - a mutualistic form of symbiosis.

Photographs on this page downloaded from the internet

Total people count for September = 1978 Average number per day = 64

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