
Dates of summer events.

Saturday 13th July

A morning observing moths.

SWT Red Moss of Balerno.

The Red Moss SWT reserve is a fantastic site for moths, including some of the most uncommon species, also including several rarely recorded elsewhere in Midlothian. Come along to this event to see some of the moths we will catch in moth traps set the night before. There will be opportunity for observation and photographs and to learn more about them before they are released back into the bog's habitat. **BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL.** The Event invitation will be circulated closer to the date.

Sunday 28th July 12 noon – 5pm

International Bog Day at the Red Moss

Join us to celebrate International Bog Day at the Red Moss of Balerno – including boardwalks, pond dipping and guided walks.

Sunday 4th August

A guided walk at SWT Bawsinch Reserve,

A guided walk at Bawsinch Reserve, led by SWT's Reserve Manager Julian Warman.

Meeting at the entrance of Bawsinch.

BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL. The event invitation will be circulated nearer the time.

Thursday 5th September

Observing Bats at Blackford Pond.

A guided evening walk with Natalie Todman of Lothian Bats Group. **BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL.** The event invitation will be circulated nearer the time.

Talks and indoor events: There are no indoor or online talks during the summer months. The autumn programme is being developed and will be shared in the autumn newsletter.

Full details of all events are available online

[Lothian Talk | Scottish Wildlife Trust Lothians](https://www.lothiantalk.org.uk)
[swtlothians.org.uk](https://www.swtlothians.org.uk)

Content queries to: editor@swtlothians.org.uk

News from springtime events

Nextdoor Nature



The Pilton Youth Children Project visits Bass Rock

It has been a great pleasure to co-run the Nextdoor Nature project with the PYCP, which has now ended. From January to March, we held three nature-based workshops at the PYCP centre. In May, the young people went on a boat trip around the incredible Bass Rock.

The trip to Bass Rock provided a unique opportunity for the young people. They not only visited North Berwick but also enjoyed a boat ride and saw an iconic piece of nature in our country. For most, it was their first time on a boat.

It was wonderful to see the young people trying new things and enjoying themselves, both at the beach and on the boat trip.

All the young people thoroughly enjoyed themselves, with them all giving positive feedback.

"The best bit was seeing all the birds", "I loved going on the boat", "I loved seeing the puffins and the dolphin, I would go back", "I've never been on a boat before and I was nervous but I really liked it", "it was really fun, 100/100!!"

By Kate Walker and Nick Warren.

Guided Walk by The River Esk at Newbattle 25.04.24

This was an excellent walk led by Elijah Graham from The Forth Rivers Trust. We learnt about the plight of rivers caused by historical and current manmade factors – straightening of rivers, weirs and dams, overloaded sewage stems, pollution from agricultural, industrial and domestic chemicals, road pollution including car tyre particulates, invasive species e.g. Himalayan Balsam etc. The focus was less on direct observation of wildlife and more on the essential need for healthy rivers to support

Planning Matters

Midlothian

The Hewan Wood and Hewan Bog are on a wild parcel of land sloping down to the River North Esk. The Hewan Bog is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, largely for its geological interest, also as a parcel of wet grassland, only lightly grazed, so of significant plant interest. The Wood which surrounds the Bog is owned by the Esk Valley Trust. The Hewan Bog has recently come into the ownership of the EV Trust

West Lothian

By the time you are reading this a new draft Local Biodiversity Action Plan for West Lothian will have been published – please read and send any comments to the council or to Tim below.

City of Edinburgh Council

The Roseburn Path and adjacent Local Biodiversity Site is under threat of conversion into a tramway route, which would destroy – however good the intentions – most of the biodiversity value that gave the site its planning policy protection. A public consultation is promised to consider both an on-road route as well as a route along this old railway line. However, we believe that different departments of the council are not taking into account past, current and long-term (the recent new Local Plan) approved council policy. The two alternative routes to be considered should BOTH be away from a designated and extremely well used LBS.

East Lothian

Many of you have stepped forward to become trained habitat surveyors for the monitoring of 54 LBS' in 2024 -2025. We have identified a shorter list of Plant notable priority species (with records older than 2016) that we would like to see if we can find again. Please contact me to be sent the lists and see if you would like to look for these species at the appropriate time of year and join the EL LBS teams.

By Dr Tim Duffy SWT Lothians Planning Secretary

See: [SWT Planning Matters | Scottish Wildlife Trust Lothians \(swtlothians.org.uk\)](#)

Planning contacts: Midlothian: Susan Manson – susanmanson12@btinternet.com

East Lothian & CoEC & West Lothian Tim Duffy timduffy1@gmail.com

our ecosystem in the face of the climate crisis and serious ecological degradation. We were sent a excellent report after the walk – DO READ = SEE BELOW pages 5-6

by Alison Edelsten

Woodhall Dean Outing – Saturday 18th May

We arrived at Woodhall Dean in welcome sunshine, following days of haar. Lesley Fairweather, reserve convenor, met us at the gate and gave a brief history and then led us through parts of the reserve. We saw Stitchwort, Red Campion and Bluebells and Wood Vetch (not yet in flower) We heard and/or saw many birds - Willow Warbler, Cuckoo, Song Thrush, Yellowhammer, Garden Warbler, Redpoll, Chiffchaff, Blackcap, Chaffinch, Wren, Whitethroat. and possibly a Redstart. We saw Orange Tip, Peacock and Red Admiral butterflies, though a bit too early to see Purple Hairstreak butterflies. We glimpsed a common lizard.

We saw the remains of a mature oak tree which had fallen from a steep rock face during a recent storm. Though sad, it is part of the natural cycle of nature and helps to open up the canopy, thus increasing the opportunity for new growth on the woodland floor. Two geologists in our group explained that the rock face type was part of the Great Conglomerate, dating from the Devonian period c400 million years ago.

We saw evidence of coppicing and pollarding, which is an indication of the earlier active economic management of the woodland. We stopped at Bob and Betty's bench, named in memory of Bob Smith, a previous Convenor of the Reserve, and his wife Betty, who was an expert on dragonflies.

It was a wonderful visit, and we all expressed our appreciation, especially those unfamiliar with the site.



By Colin Shepherd.

THE FULL ARTICLE IS BELOW page 3-4

Full versions of most articles are available online at swtlothians.org.uk/lothian-talk

The Scottish Wildlife Trust is a company limited by guarantee, registered in Scotland (Registered number SC040247) and a Scottish Registered Charity, number C005792. The registered office is Scottish Wildlife Trust, 110, Commercial Street, Edinburgh, EH4 5NF.

Lothian Talk is printed by Abbey Print of Dalkeith on environmentally friendly FSC paper (Forestry Stewardship Council)

Woodhall Dean Outing – Saturday 18th May



With a bank of the haer which had kept many areas of the east coast under a chilly blanket for much of the previous week lying out over the Forth, it was a delight to find Woodhall Dean bathed in warm sunshine as our group met up at the reserve entrance. The surrounding Hawthorn bushes were swathed in creamy blossom, with the vibrant yellow of the Gorse providing a strong contrast, while in the distance we could see a slope covered in Bluebells. The air was filled with birdsong including Chiffchaff, Blackcap, Chaffinch, Wren and the scratchy notes of a Whitethroat.

Reserve Convenor Lesley Fairweather provided us with a brief introduction to the history of the Reserve before leading us through the entrance gate and along a path surrounded by flowers, including Stitchwort, Red Campion and many more Bluebells. After a short distance we came to the remains of a large old oak tree which had been growing on a steep rock face but had come down in a recent storm. Whilst it is always sad to see a mature old tree such as this one brought down, it is part of the natural cycle and helps open up the canopy, giving the opportunity for new growth on the woodland floor. In falling, the tree had also created an exposure of rock and as we had a couple of geologists amongst our number, they were able to explain that the rock type was part of a feature known as the Great Conglomerate, dating from the Devonian period around 400 million years ago and had been created as a result of huge flash floods occurring after a period of mountain building.

After crossing the wooden bridge in the centre of the Reserve, Lesley pointed out a patch of Wood Vetch, one of the rarer plants on the Reserve, though we were a little too early to see it in flower. Climbing towards the top of the reserve we passed through an area where the trees showed evidence of both coppicing and pollarding, an indication of the earlier active economic management of the woodland. In this area we also heard many Willow Warblers singing and a Song Thrush in fine voice. At the top end of the reserve we saw Yellowhammer and as we looped back round to the other side of the Glen we were lucky enough to hear the superb song of a Garden Warbler at very close range. Some of us caught a very brief glimpse of the bird as it flew off, but without the song it would have been very difficult to identify. In the same area some people were lucky enough to spot a probable Redstart but again it flew off before most of us were able to get a positive ID.

We stopped for refreshments at Bob and Betty's bench which provides a fine open vista over the upper part of the reserve, showing the tree canopy snaking through the open fields well up towards the summit

of the Lammermuirs. The bench is named in memory of Bob Smith, who was for many years Convenor of the Reserve, and his redoubtable wife Betty, an expert on dragonflies, who died a few years ago at a very good age. As we were sitting there in the warm sunshine enjoying the view we heard the call of a distant cuckoo, and a pair of Redpolls flew over.

As we started our descent, we passed through the area of flower meadow where a couple of people spotted a Common Lizard basking in the sun, but unfortunately this had scurried into the longer grass before the rest of us could see it.

With this part of the path down providing good views over the oak canopy, Lesley mentioned it was a good place to look for Purple Hairstreak butterflies, though we were a bit too early in the season to see them. At various points on the walk however we did see Orange Tip, Peacock and Red Admiral butterflies.

It would be difficult to imagine a better day for a visit to the Reserve, which was looking at its absolute best, and all the participants expressed their appreciation, especially those previously unfamiliar with the site.

Colin Shepherd





[Citizen Esk | Forth Rivers Trust](#)

CITIZEN ESK/FORTH RIVERS TRUST - a report from the walk on 25.04.24

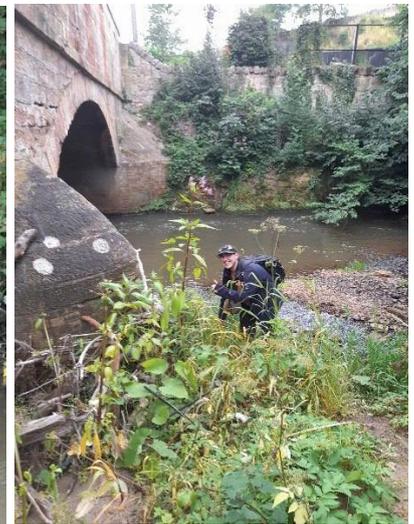
By Elijah Graham – FRT staff member leading the walk.

Thanks again for joining Forth Rivers Trust staff on your guided walk. We hope you enjoyed the experience with us and learned a little more about our freshwater rivers, the various pressures facing them, and how you can help. Please see below a short summary of some of the discussion points.

By bringing together residents of the local community, we walk alongside the river helping you gain an increased understanding of the issues affecting it and encouraging use of collective power to pressure relevant authorities and help push for change.

Pressures on rivers

- In short: many!
- **Human:** urbanisation/growth of development: sewage discharges, plastic pollution, agricultural runoff, canalisation of rivers, changing land uses, social values: how people interact with rivers
- **Industrial:** groundwater pollution, impermeable surfaces, legacy infrastructure on the landscape, physical alterations (e.g. barriers, weirs, dams, reinforcement) impact on fish passage
- **Ecological:** biodiversity loss, Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) presence
- **Economic:** lack of resources across the sector, funding difficulties (restricted funding, tied to timeframe of delivery, may not cover post-works monitoring)



Above left: A photo from a pollution incident on the North Esk. Note the cloudy discolouration of the river water and the grey-white 'fungus' at the water line. There was also a distinctive smell...

Above right: Elijah spotting some Himalayan Balsam on the North Esk near Ironmills Park. This is 1 of 3 main Invasive Non-Native plant species that disrupt our riverbanks and negatively affect the surrounding environment.

Helping our rivers

- **Being informed:** understanding your local river is the first step to recognising what issues might be affecting it and how you can take action – so by attending our walk you've already learned a little more, we hope!
- **Community:** engaging and empowering, educating and upskilling those who live near the river, sharing knowledge, lessons learned and best practice alongside campaigning for improvement.

- **Nature-based solutions:** ‘leaky dams’, instream woody debris, brash bank protection, biodiverse riverbank planning
- **Catchment-scale solutions:** solutions need be implemented across large areas and involve multiple stakeholders, now more than ever – with everyone’s voices heard ‘at the table’. There are many organisations, smaller and larger, working to support our environment, but collaborating these efforts is key when we are facing the twin crises of biodiversity loss and climate change.
- **Getting involved:** by offering some time to volunteer, whether that’s outfall safari surveying, INNS spotting, or other areas that interest you, you can play a part in helping protect your local river.

Thanks for taking the time to join us and engage with your local river. If you have any questions or comments about anything we covered or about the Midlothian Esks, feel free to contact Ross at r.hughes@forthriverstrust.org. Citizen Esk is directed by the needs of the community. If you would like to help guide our project, we are looking for volunteers to join our steering group.

If you’d like to get more involved with the Citizen Esk project, find out how [here](#)

Keep an eye on [our Eventbrite page](#) for upcoming training we will be delivering, on Invasive Non Native Species (INNS) mapping, Outfall Safari surveying, and an opportunity to visit a Coal Authority site to learn more about minewater treatment. [You can join the project mailing list here.](#)

Finally, please feel free to pass on any feedback you have about the walks to us – it helps our funders better understand the work we’re doing with Citizen Esk.



Above: a visit to the Esk near Musselburgh. A walk participant is observing the weir which presents a barrier for fish passage.

[Additional links/resources](#)

[SEPA pollution reporting tool](#) – full guidance on how to report is available on this page, as well as what is considered ‘reportable’. You can also phone but remember online reporting is best for keeping track of when you reported the incident, and you want to state clearly that you’d like an update on the pollution incident and its resolution.

[Forth Rivers Trust’s INNS reporting tool](#) – if you spot an Invasive Species in the Forth catchment, let us know – we’re building a database of invasive species which allows us to map their presence and help build a plan to tackle them!

[Scottish Water’s data on ‘overflow events’](#) (note on the page: data is for 2018-2022)

[Unblocktober campaign / Scottish Water’s ‘Nature Calls’ campaign](#) – awareness raising campaigns mentioned on the walk

[A news story about Scottish Water installing more monitors on CSO’s this year](#) – will this prove successful in helping us better monitor sewage spills into our rivers? Only me will tell...

[Nature Based Solutions: The River Restoration Centre](#) (the RRC page has a wealth of information about river restoration, this is just one page of info from them but do explore more of their website if you’re interested)