



Scottish
Wildlife
Trust

Lothian Talk

Scottish Wildlife Trust: Lothians Group Newsletter

Winter 2024/25

Dates of winter events.

Thursday 21st November 7.30 – 9pm

Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels with Katie Berry

An online event,

Katie is Species Protection Officer with the Scottish Wildlife Trust.

Thursday 5th December 7,30-9pm

A talk about Bats with Natalie Todman

The Cornerstone Centre *

Natalie has been involved in bat conservation for over 25 years, in both ranger work and training and work with Historic Scotland.

Thursday 20th February

Peace with Nature – by Julian Caldecott

An online event.

Julian Caldecott will be discussing his new book Peace with Nature.

Thursday 20th March 7.30 – 9pm

The Cornerstone Centre*

Riverwoods – an update with Rosie McGuigan, Partnership Support Officer. Riverwoods is a partnership initiative to create thriving riverbank woods and healthy river systems across Scotland.

Thursday 24th April

Annual General Meeting 7.30-9pm

The Cornerstone Centre*

followed by a **talk** by Ben Averis.

Surveying Local Biodiversity Sites in the Lothians. Ben will give an update on the survey work across the Lothian. SWT Lothian volunteers are working on the East Lothian survey

*In person events are held at **The Cornerstone Centre**, St Johns Church, on the corner of Lothian Road and Princes Street (EH2 4BJ). This is an accessible and welcoming venue. Events are free but donations are welcome.

Full details of all events are available online

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

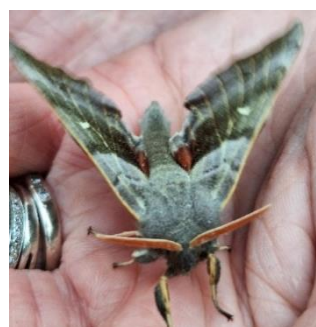
For any queries or ideas please contact

editor@swtlothians.org.uk

News from summer events.

13th July - Moth Day at Red Moss of Balerno.

The visit was held very early on a damp Saturday morning, apparently ideal moth conditions with 16 attendees suitably attired for the weather. The session was led by Mark Cubitt who set a number of specialist traps overnight



around the Red Moss bog site. These traps use ultraviolet light to attract the moths into an enclosed area. An amazing volume of moths were captured with over 20 species identified by Mark. The range of moth types, their sizes and general beauty

impressed everyone. Red Moss is a fantastic site for moths, including some of our most uncommon species, including several rarely recorded elsewhere in Midlothian. Moths' activity is evident throughout the year, and most are nocturnal, with about 2500 UK species recognised.

By Colin Murray, Red Moss Reserve Committee member.

28th July - Red Moss of Balerno open day.

World bog day was celebrated in style again this year at Red Moss of Balerno with good weather and around 80 visitors taking guided tours on all aspects of the peat bog. This was supported by a number of experts within the local volunteering team. The pond dipping was particularly popular and introduced many children to aquatic biology. As always the insect eating and other specialist bog plants were high on everyone's agenda to view. The site is managed by the SWT and is a rare lowland raised peat dome bog, the only one remaining in Edinburgh, and has an estimated 7500 visitors each year. It's open all year and wheelchair friendly. The site is something of a 'media star' regularly used for radio and TV interviews on wetland / peatland issues due to its proximity to Scotland's capital city. The Red Moss was designated as a SSSI in 1971 and managed by the SWT from 1975. It is home to several rare habitats and species not recorded elsewhere in the UK.

By Colin Murray, Red Moss Reserve Committee member.

On July 26th Scotland's Flow Country, the world's largest blanket bog, became the first Blanket bog to be designated as a World Heritage Site. The Flow Country is of huge environmental significance in our resistance against climate change and biodiversity loss.

Planning Matters

Midlothian

In the last Planning Matters we mentioned the Esk Valley Trust's acquisition of a part of Hewan Bog near Roslin. In July a team of members visited this new piece of land to start the process of gathering information. Led by local expert Alan Krumholz the team surveyed vegetation and discussed future management options. Part or all of this site is already a prospective Local Biodiversity Site (LBS) and this work will help build the case for this to be designated as a new LBS.

West Lothian

The draft Local Biodiversity Action Plan for West Lothian has been stakeholder consulted on – and the LBS' (as elsewhere in Scotland) form the current core of the Strategic Nature Network described. Look out for the council's forthcoming Public Consultation on the final draft.

City of Edinburgh Council

The Roseburn Path Local Biodiversity Site (and adjacent LBS') is under threat for conversion into a tramway route section which could destroy most of the biodiversity value that gave the site its planning policy protection, however good the on-ground intentions. Look out for the autumn Public Consultation on the final plans by the council.

East Lothian

Many SWT Lothians volunteers have been trained as habitat surveyors to review the LBS' for the next Local Development Plan. One volunteer has already checked 5 sites! This work will assist the council to reach its 2024 target by the end of the season - late October. Three times the number of sites need to be surveyed next year, starting in April – so do volunteer to join the team. We will also check that specific priority plant species (and other wildlife types) are still thriving in the LBS areas.

By Dr Tim Duffy SWT Lothians Planning Secretary

Full planning report is available online – see below

Planning contacts

East Lothian & CoEC & West Lothian

Tim Duffy timduffy1@gmail.com

Midlothian Susan Manson

susanmanson12@btinternet.com

Edinburgh Shoreline

- A NEW PROJECT: SHOW US YOUR MUSSELS

Since 2018 Edinburgh Shoreline has been working with community groups to rediscover the coast's fascinating and often unknown history and the rich plant and animal life that survives against the odds in unexpected places. The aim is to inspire people to explore and take responsibility for its future health. We have launched *Show us your Mussels* in response to a widespread reduction in abundance of blue mussels and to get a better understanding of current distribution and growth patterns around the Firth of Forth. Blue mussels are an important ecosystem engineer, as their beds create a complex habitat for a diverse range of invertebrates and they have a crucial ecological role as prime food for many sea birds and fish and offer important foraging for many invertebrates including crabs, sea stars, and whelks. We would like to get a better understanding of what is going on around the Firth of Forth where blue mussels were economically important in the past and clearly abundant – think Musselburgh! We are embarking on this Citizen Science project to find out exactly where blue mussels are in the Firth of Forth, how abundant they are, whether and where they are settling as spat, and their rate of survival.

Volunteers are welcome:

Would you like to be part of this research which is a collaboration between Edinburgh Shoreline and Heriot Watt University? If so, we invite you to choose a one kilometre stretch of the coast, visit the shoreline at low tide to look for blue mussels and report back.

Information is here on the project in more detail, and how to select a 1 km section of shoreline and full instructions on what to do: <https://edinburghshoreline.org.uk/show-us-your-mussels-project/>

By Leonie Alexander. Leonie is a founder member of Edinburgh Shoreline, along with Karen Chambers. Leonie was the Urban Biodiversity Officer at RBGE at the time of the initial start-up of Shoreline.



Full versions of edited articles are available online at [Lothian Talk | Scottish Wildlife Trust Lothians \(swtlothians.org.uk\)](https://www.lothiantalk.org.uk/)

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