



**Scottish  
Wildlife  
Trust**

# Lothian Talk

Scottish Wildlife Trust: Lothians Group Newsletter

## Diary Dates

### In-person talk: **Meetings with moths**

- Thursday 14th March
- With Katty Baird

### Guided walk: **Blackford Hill spring walk**

- Friday 22nd March
- 10am-1pm, with Jo Doake

### In-person talk: **Project Seagrass: conservation / habitat restoration (& AGM)**

- Thursday 18th April
- With Caitlin Godfrey

### Guided walk: **Woodhall Dean nature reserve**

- Sat 18th May at 10am
- With Lesley Fairweather
- Booking essential

Unless otherwise stated, all talks run from 7.30-9pm and are free of charge. Cash donations accepted.

In-person talks are held at:

The Cornerstone Centre  
St. John's Church  
Princes Street  
Edinburgh EH2 4BJ

The centre is welcome to all.

**Full details of all events can be found online at [swtlothians.org.uk/events](https://swtlothians.org.uk/events)**



*Redshank on the shore by Colin Shepherd*

## Musselburgh Guided Walk

Following several weeks of very changeable weather, it was a huge relief to have an absolutely perfect day on our visit to Musselburgh in November for a walk led by East Lothian Council Wildlife Ranger, Kristian Purchase. Eighteen Wildlife Trust members met up with Kristian at the end of Balcarres Road. We then walked to the mouth of the River Esk where we saw good numbers of Redshank and Turnstone roosting on the concrete breakwater opposite and at least one Goldeneye on the water.

We then moved up to the westernmost hide of the newly landscaped lagoons area where Kristian explained the rationale behind the design of the large pools, with extensive areas of open shingle. Although there was nothing exceptional around, it was good to see large numbers of Oystercatchers, Curlew and Bar-tailed Godwits. There were also several Ringed Plovers and Kristian told us that they had already bred successfully on the site, nesting there even before the contractors had moved out in the early



## Supermarket collections

Much of the work that our SWT Lothians group are able to do is thanks to donations. For example, these donations enable us to cover the cost of our venues to keep events free or to support biodiversity surveys in the Lothians.

One way money is collected is through volunteers who hold our charity buckets at local supermarkets. A recent collection at Tesco in Colinton, Edinburgh raised £373 in cash alone! About £100 more was collected via the electronic card reader.

Thanks go to all the volunteers who help to collect the funds, which enable us to continue protecting native species and their habitats however and wherever it is needed most.



*Male bullfinch by Jo Young*

summer. Mute Swans, Wigeon and Gadwall were also present but we didn't spot any of the Grey Partridge which use the open areas of short vegetation towards the edge of the reserve.

After a short diversion to the sea wall where we spotted large rafts of Eider Duck and some Long-tailed Ducks in the distance, we moved round to the old scrapes where we saw Teal, Dunlin, Lapwing, more Wigeon and a very well camouflaged pair of Snipe. A (probable) Sparrowhawk caused brief mayhem amongst the waders as it flew over but it was too fast for us to get a positive identification.

Our thanks go Kristian for leading an extremely enjoyable and informative outing. It will be fascinating to see how the site develops in the coming years. He is keen to involve as many people as possible in volunteering on the site, so if you would like to help, please check the information at [www.elcv.org.uk](http://www.elcv.org.uk)

For specific information from the Ranger Service please contact [ranger@eastlothian.org.uk](mailto:ranger@eastlothian.org.uk)

*by Colin Shepherd*



*Perfect November day at Musselburgh Lagoons by Colin Shepherd*

*If you have anything you would like to contribute to future editions of Lothian Talk, or any suggestions for future walks or talks, please get in touch at [editor@swtlothians.org.uk](mailto:editor@swtlothians.org.uk)*

## Nextdoor Nature updates

### *Pilton Youth and Children's Project*

The SWT Lothians group received a small grant from the [Nextdoor Nature project](#) to run various activities.

One of these is with children at the [Pilton Youth and Children's Project](#) (PYCP) centre. Our project runs from February to May and combines workshops on nature in and around the centre, with a trip to the Bass Rock gannet colony during the breeding season. This Northern gannet colony - the largest in the world for the species - is an amazing example of Nature next door to us!

It has been a great experience co-creating this project with the PYCP and we will update you with how it went in the next edition of this newsletter.



*Words and photograph by Nick Warren*

### *Grassmarket Community Project*

Over the last few months our friends at the [Grassmarket Community Project](#) (GCP) have been busy designing and making the first of the window boxes for our Nextdoor Nature project. As you can see from the attached photos the boxes are stunning and are a real tribute to the talented guys at the [GCP wood workshop](#) (who also sell their pieces and take commissions!). The next phase is identifying suitable homes for the boxes, to be spread through the community and therefore contribute to the Nature Network. We are excitedly looking forward to when the GCP gardening group fill them up with enticing flowering plants for our local pollinators.



*Words and photographs by Catherine Sturrock*



# Planning Matters

## *Midlothian*

Midlothian Council is currently deliberating a controversial application near the village of North Middleton. Middleton Quarry has been in operation for many years as a limestone quarry and latterly as a landfill site. It is close to two Local Biodiversity Sites, namely Middleton Lime Quarry (East and West).

There is now a proposal to convert Lower Quarry to a waste transfer station and recycling centre. There is local opposition to the proposed development. The development is located in the countryside, which is contrary to the Council's own policy to locate such developments in more industrial areas.

The development was deemed by the Council not to require an Environmental Impact Statement (EIA).

## *East Lothian*

Several of our members have stepped forward to volunteer to help with phase 1 habitat survey of the outstanding 54 Local Biodiversity Sites (LBS'). They require monitoring as soon as possible and detailed guidance on how this can be done by non-specialist volunteers will be available in Spring. Several members with more specialist skills have volunteered to look for key notable species that were used to help justify the designation of these sites 10 years ago: outstanding specialisms include red squirrel (probably gone but we need to check), orchids, sea pearlwort, common centuary, dark green fritillaries, moonwort, sea wormwood, oysterplant, sea sandwort, bats, small pondweed, common wintergreen, newts, Black spleenwort, Toothwort, clubmosses, Northern brown argus, Fairy flax, otter, sand martins, badger setts, adder, common lizard, and upland mosses in general. These are just some of the eye catching species! If you think you can also help, please get in touch with Tim Duffy at the email address below.

Meanwhile we are engaging with the new Levenhall links management plan (that hopefully will lead to the site becoming a Local Nature Reserve) and I am looking for a local volunteer to take that further. That also means we are interested in the possible affects of the proposed flood prevention scheme nearby – particularly on the high quality dune system just west of the river/links. The council will be publicly consulting again on the proposed scheme in March and we hope to see more Nature Based Solutions in their proposals.

## *West Lothian*

Rob McIntosh has volunteered to replace Carmina as the West Lothian planning representative as she has become unavailable, and we thank Carmina for her years of thorough planning research.

*Dr Tim Duffy SWTLothians Planning Secretary - timrduffy1@gmail.com*

**Contacts For Planning Matters Affecting Wildlife Sites:** **Midlothian:** Susan Manson - susanmanson12@btinternet.com; **East Lothian and CEC:** Tim Duffy - timrduffy1@gmail.com; **West Lothian:** Rob McIntosh - robert.mcintosh1918@gmail.com