



Dundee and Angus Wildlife News

Protecting Scotland's wildlife for the future

DAWN - Newsletter of the North Angus and Angus & Dundee Groups

Number 126 - November 2017

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Introduction

Once again, we've had a busy summer. As you'll see in this newsletter, the Barry-Buddon day was fortunate with the weather and with the wildlife but the Glen Isla excursion, although highly interesting and informative was not a good day, with low cloud and wind-borne spells of rain. The Family Day at Balgavies was even more unfortunate, with dull and damp conditions and heavy showers blowing through. However, there was still lots of wildlife to see and learn about. We hope that you will find next year's programme more attractive when allied with better weather.

Dundee Conservation Volunteers Report 2016 -17

The year past has been highly successful with all the tasks completed, co-operation with other conservation groups such as the Woodland Trust and the new Friends of Dundee Law group and several successful funding applications. The varied programme included scrub and rhododendron clearance, dry-stane dyking, path management, pond clean-up, woodland management and the continuing control of invasive alien plant species. In fact, on Moncrieff Hill (near Perth), the DCV group members now have to search for individual specimens of Himalayan Balsam instead of having to pull hundreds

of the plants only 3 years ago. The volunteers at each task ranged from 14 down to 7 (a highly creditable total of 101 volunteer-days) and averaged 9.2 per task day, a small improvement on the previous year.

Organisation and arrangement of the tasks and allocations of the days is carried out by John Whyman along with a variety of other related management activities. Full health and safety rules are followed, including risk assessments and complete briefings, with first-aid kits carried, a qualified first-aider always present and mobile phone coverage usually possible.

Finances this past year remained difficult but several sources have been very helpful. These include the Greggs Foundation in particular (who generously donated £850 over 2 years), Sustain Dundee (providing a valuable grant of £375) and insurance coverage through the SWT. Clients such as Mr Ramsay of the Bamff Estate and the Woodland Trust have paid their dues of £40 per task-day. The principal costs are for the vehicle and trailer, fuel, tools, protective gear and similar items. It is good to report that the total costs incurred are £881.48 and the income was £960, yielding a positive balance of £78.52.

The estimated volunteer inputs are highly instructive as well. If all the work days are taken into account, along with the 11 task-days themselves, the local group Treasurer's help and various other inputs, the total value reached the impressive figure of £5,800! We must remember that all this effort has been for the benefit of conservation management in Angus.

Information is included on the SWT Angus and Dundee Group website at:-

<http://myweb.tiscali.co.uk/adbswt/dcv.htm>

A Facebook page was started in 2013 on:-
www.facebook.com/DundeeConservationVolunteers

Each task is posted with photos after the event on the face-book page. Over 60 people receive notifications this way, with nearly 200 people receiving an email each month with invitations to the upcoming task. Those without online access are sent a copy of the printed programme leaflet.

John Whyman

Barry-Buddon Outing

Sunday 4th June

The day started with a bang, almost, but not in the way anyone wanted. We were still gathering in the football car park when just before 10am the black cloud overhead opened, with hail and heavy rain driving all rapidly to shelter. Ah, the joys of a Scottish summer! The best thing to do was move along to the camp car park and hope the rain would go off which, fortunately, it did. A little late we set off, the birders with Graham, Keith and Bob and the plant people with Jim Cook. This time, at least, there'd be no problems with the gates.

The birders had a good day, with numerous meadow pipits around, larks singing overhead and picking out a kestrel hanging in the wind. Several people saw a curlew, others picked out a sparrowhawk, buzzards wheeled overhead and a wide variety of other species of interest were located. The 'plant folk' also had a good day with an interesting array of small plants down by the Barry Burn mouth car park. Little Sasha, who had a whale of time with her bug-viewer, proved to be the star of the show and found all sorts of small beasties. The marshy area at the mouth of the Barry Burn yielded the usual array of marshland plants and the beach proved interesting as well, but unfortunately nobody could find any dwarf forget-me-not plants.

Lunchtime found us all, as usual, beside the car park at the light houses. Afterwards the groups all went across to the upper light tower to admire the range of moths trapped overnight and identified by the good services of Anne Reid and David Lampard. Most of us could not catch any glimpses of dolphins from the look-out point on the dunes but a variety of interesting sea birds and a few waders attracted attention instead. Nearby a few large hairy caterpillars (of Garden Tiger moths) were found in among the rough grasses and a grand display of northern marsh orchids enlivened a damp hollow.

At the Happy Valley site, we stopped to look at the creeping willow and a variety of hybrid willows and soon found a few leaves of adder's-tongue fern. The group soon realised we were looking at the largest number ever at that site. A few had fertile spikes, which showed why they were classed as ferns and also explained the common names. (Mind you, how many animals have you seen with a green tongue, let alone an adder?)

With rain threatening, we finished with a quick visit to the scrapes; with numerous tadpoles and water beetles sheltering in among the amphibious bistort. A few common blue damselfly were spotted resting on a few rush leaves but it was only by luck that we managed to find a dull-brown recently-moulted 'teneral' damselfly. The group didn't stay long but headed back to the main car park.

Glen Isla Excursion

Sunday 30th July

Twenty people booked to come on this visit to a sporting estate at Fergus in Glen Isla, arranged by Ian Baird and his son, and all turned up to enjoy a most interesting visit. We were transferred to several large 4x4 vehicles and headed up a steep rough track for higher ground. We soon picked out a herd of red deer on the skyline and then glimpsed several mountain hares on the hillside above. We stopped at a peat washout where our guide described the deer using the site as a wallow and the management of the surrounding moorland. At another stop on the hill top, we were surrounded by swirling cloud bases but at times got good views over the landscape. Ian saw a mountain hare at short range but, not surprisingly, it took off and disappeared. The whole group had good sightings of a grouse family, as well as a few ptarmigan. We also heard about the management of these birds and were able to find a pile of the medicated grit left out for the birds. It was a most fascinating visit and much easier than some had thought, with easy transport laid on. Many thanks to all involved in organising the event.

Family Day at Balgavies

Sunday 10th September

To say the Day was almost a wash-out is an understatement! The weather in the morning was very dull and damp, with smirrs of rain and not long after we arrived there was a heavy shower, followed by another some time later. However, Tom and Mary Harwood, along with Jim, were on site in plenty of time to get set up in the cover of the hide, soon followed by Ken Slater who started to set his mist nets up with the aid of Jim Hughes. Meanwhile Ian and Shiona Baird arrived to help in the hide and in the area. Heather Bowman from the Visitors' Centre at Montrose Basin soon set up, in among the showers, her nets and tanks down by the water. The male osprey was still around and brought in a fish to the dead tree on the island in the early afternoon.

Despite the weather a thin trickle of visitors came past and were most interested to see the variety of life in the water and also the birds visible from the hide. The mist nets attracted some attention although only single coal tit obliged by catching itself during the afternoon. Several family groups, well wrapped up, had great fun trying out the pond nets but only a few took the offered crisps and drinks. Later several photographers arrived to try their luck. Many thanks to all who helped out, both in the hide and outside at the nets in the field and down by the loch.

Dundee Group Activities

Dundee Food and Flower festival Friday - Sunday 1st - 3rd September

The Flower Show in Camperdown Park was the principal event to occupy the group's time. Mary and Tom Harwood were the main-stays of our stand and were joined by Brian Ballinger, with his display of wild flowers for the Botanical Society of Scotland, volunteer Linzi Harrow and Jim Cook. This time the children's marquee was joined directly to the 'Woodlands' marquee at the other end of the grounds, not far from the entrance, at the back of the 'Food' marquee. The new arrangement proved to be a winner compared to the past few years when the tent we were in was at the furthest reaches of the show grounds, well away from the entrance and widely separated from the Woodlands tent.

Friday was very busy with large numbers of enthusiastic school pupils occupying our time and finding the 'feely boxes' a great attraction. The living wildlife on hand, principally the snails 'loaned' by Lynn Watson from her garden, also gathered much fascinated attention.

Saturday was equally busy and many were interested in our stand and took leaflets. We had good sales of Mary's wildlife quiz sheet and spent time informing some of them of the importance and efforts of the Scottish Wildlife Trust.

Sunday morning was rather quiet but the afternoon was as busy as ever, only tailing off shortly before closing time. We were lucky with the weather and were pleased that the event was so successful.

News from the Reserves

Balgavies Loch The ospreys have had a successful season, fledging two young, and attracted the usual attentions from keen wildlife photographers. The south meadow has been grazed to a certain extent but still remains rather lush. There've been other incursions into this field, however. It seems a total of three cars managed to have problems with the corner on the road above and somehow cleared the fence with damaging it – or their occupants. They were retrieved by being lifted back over the fence.

The Miley The weekly clean-ups continue as before and the vegetation has grown up in a lush profusion as usual. Also as usual, the brambles straggle across the path and require continued cutting back. The thorough clean-up session in the spring made a considerable difference and the ditch clearance has helped to keep the path dry.

Montrose Basin Daily visits by up to 5 ospreys have delighted visitors, as has the kingfisher. Rarities include lesser yellow-legs and avocet.

Seaton Cliffs The summer breeding season has been reasonably successful and now the cliffs are quiet. There was an excellent array of flowering plants along the path and cliff tops and the sedges and rushes showed well in the small cliff-top acidic heath area. A few clean up sessions have helped to keep the litter under some control; usefully some groups from Arbroath have tackled the first stretch of the cliff-top path, the part before the SWT reserve.

For further information on these and other events, see the DAWN newsletter or contact the Group Secretaries.

Website:

myweb.tiscali.co.uk/adbswt

Email:

adbswt@tiscali.co.uk

OFFICE BEARERS

Angus & Dundee Group

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North Angus Group

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Secretary: Joyce Cooper
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Warm and waterproof clothing and stout footwear should be worn on outings.

Members are reminded to undertake only the walks within their capabilities. For wild country, food and drink should be carried and map and compass are desirable.

Bring your friends.

All children must be accompanied by adults.

The Scottish Wildlife Trust is a company limited by guarantee, registered in Scotland (registered number SC040247) having its registered office at 110 Commercial Street, Edinburgh, EH6 6NF
It is also a Scottish registered charity (charity number SC005792).



**Scottish
Wildlife
Trust**

Charity number SC005792

Angus & Dundee and North Angus Groups

Programme 2018

Montrose Basin Visitor Centre News

March 2018 - Newsletter
Copy Deadline - 9th January 2018

Montrose Basin Visitor Centre will open for an extra day this winter. Between 1st November and mid-February it will open on Fri, Sat, Sun and Mon from 10:30am to 4pm.

From mid-February to October the Visitor Centre is open all week 10:30am to 5pm.

More details can be found on
www.scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk
or www.montrosebasin.org.uk
on the Visitor Centre page.

If you have any report or item of news or details of future events for March to August 2018 that should be included in the next newsletter, please send it as soon as possible to the editor at the address below:

Email address is jim.strath91@gmail.com

The World "Wild" Web

Angus and Dundee Group website is at
myweb.tiscali.co.uk/adbswt
and you can email on
adbswt@tiscali.co.uk

The SWT's home Web Pages are at
www.scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk



SWT Family Membership includes children's Wildlife Watch membership

For activity programme see the website at:
tinyurl.com/SWTMontroseW

Dundee Conservation Volunteers

Contact John Whyman on (01382) 431848 (daytime), or 07940 165997 (mobile) for details of the current programme. A Sunday activity occurs once a month. The SWT minibus leaves Seagate Bus Station at 9:30am to the activity destination. Wear old clothes and stout boots. Bring waterproofs and lunch. It's your chance to help conserve wildlife actively!

The Scottish Wildlife Trust is a company limited by guarantee, registered in Scotland (registered number SC040247), having its registered office at Harbourside House, 110 Commercial Street, Edinburgh EH6 6NF. It is also a Scottish registered charity (charity number SC005792).

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Saturday 3rd. February

Visit and walk at Morton Lochs
Meet at 10:30 at Morton Lochs car park (NO465264) off B945 Tayport-St Michaels.
Followed by lunch at the Guardbridge Inn.

Thursday 8th March

"The State of Seabirds in the UK"
An overview by Dr. Julie Black, Senior Marine Ecologist, Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Aberdeen. 7:30pm in the Upper Reid Hall, Castle St, Forfar. Suggested donation £3.50 adults, accompanying children free.

Thursday 19th April

"Scotland's Wild Deer, opportunity or threat", Talk by Richard Cooke, Chair of the Association of Deer Management Groups, following short AGM. 7:30pm Upper Reid Hall, Castle St. Forfar.

Saturday TBA May

Montrose Coffee Morning
10am-12 Old & St. Andrews Church Hall, High St. Montrose. Suggested donation £2.

Saturday 19th May

Dundee Plant Sale
10:30-3pm at the Demonstration Gardens, Dawson Park, Caenlochan Rd. Dundee
All donations welcome.

Sunday 3rd June

Visit to Fowlsheugh (RSPB)
Meet at 10:30am in the Montrose Basin Centre car park, before travelling on to Fowlsheugh, as parking there limited. Bring binoculars and lunch.

Sunday 8th July

Coastal Day
Walk through Seaton Cliffs Reserve for wild flowers and butterflies to Carlingheugh Bay

where there are opportunities for rock pooling and exploring the caves. (Bring torch)
Meet at 2pm Victoria Park, Arbroath by the cliffs.

Sunday 19th August

Barry Buddon Open Day
Guided walks for birds, insects & flowers. Meet at 10am, Monifieth Playing Fields. (NO502323)
Bring binoculars and lunch.

Thursday 15th November

"Seaweed and Other Edible Marine Foods"
Talk by Dr. Gavin Hardy, Marine Phycologist, Newcastle University. 7:30pm in the Upper Reid Hall, Castle St. Forfar. Suggested donation £3.50 adults, accompanying children free.