



Dundee and Angus Wildlife News

Protecting Scotland's wildlife for the future

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

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Introduction

What a wonderful sunny summer! OK, perhaps it's been too dry for some small animals and for many plants, but we haven't had such a long warm dry spell since the mid-1970s. The break in the drought in mid-August, though, came as a welcome relief to many plants.

The outings notes below recount the success of this summer's forays to see and enjoy our local wildlife. We've been busy at other events as well, notably the Dundee Food & Flower Festival in Camperdown Park, Dundee, and the reports from the reserves briefly describe the latest situations.

Outing to Fowlesheugh Cliffs

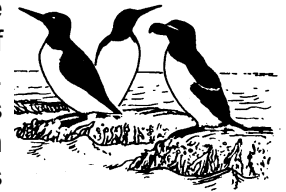
Sunday 3rd June

A small but enthusiastic group met at the Montrose Basin Visitor Centre and soon set off to visit the fabulous RSPB sea cliffs reserve at Fowlesheugh, not far from Stonehaven.

It was a great pity that thick haar restricted visibility out to sea although the comings and goings on and around the nesting cliffs were clearly observed.

Guillemots and Razorbills were the predominant species nesting on the cliff ledges but Herring Gulls and Fulmars were also present in good numbers as well. The highlight of the day, though, were two encounters with small groups of Puffin.

It was interesting to note the various stages of the breeding cycle not only displayed between species but also between individuals of the same species. With Guillemot and Razorbill for example, whereas some birds were in the process of pair-bonding, others had eggs. Examination of predated eggs found by the cliff-top path revealed that while some eggs appeared fresh laid others were well-set with the remains of embryos present.



*Guillemots and
Razorbill*

Herring Gulls were the most advanced, with some pairs attending to chicks. Other species recorded on the visit included Skylark, Meadow Pipit, Whitethroat, Jackdaw, Carrion Crow and Yellowhammer.

It was not only the birds which drew the group's attention. Many areas of the cliff-top were carpeted with wild flowers including Thrift, Common Scurvy Grass and Sea Campion. Dotted along the path were clumps of Common Bird's-Foot-Trefoil.

It was a memorable day, with the lines of breeding birds, others wheeling in the air currents along the cliffs, the festoons of colourful flowers dotted about and, to top it all, the sounds and smells. If you missed a visit to Fowlesheugh this year, be sure to add it to your 'to-do' list for next year!

Ken Slater

Seaton Cliffs

Sunday 8th June

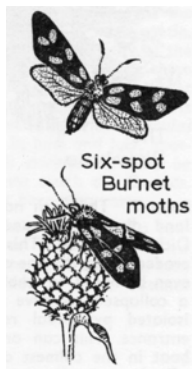
A group of 20 enthusiastic members and friends joined the walk along Seaton Cliffs to Carlingsheugh Bay. On the way, we admired the clumps of white flowers of Sea Campion and blue flowers of tufted vetch, along with the few tufts of sea pink or thrift that were still showing colour. Liz Houghton and Barbara Thompson led the way towards Carlingsheugh Bay while Russel Nisbet and Alban Houghton kept an eye on the birds settled on the cliffs and flying past.

At the side of the cliff-top path not far from the Deil's Heid rock pinnacle, we spent a few minutes watching the holes at the mining bee colony for any signs of movement. Perhaps it was a little too chilly

but we weren't rewarded with a sighting. Tom and Mary looked for butterflies along the path and caught sight of a few wind-blown whites, and one or two 6-spot burnet moths but no blue butterflies.

At the Flairs Richard Brinklow took no time to assemble his net and, along with Ian and Shiona Baird, start checking the seaweeds and rock pools for small animals. There was a good range of all kinds of 'wee beasties' in evidence, from small fish, starfish, sea anemones, crabs and shells.

Most of the party followed Liz and Barbara along to the 'light cave' which they walked through to spend a short while having a look around at the other side of the headland. They returned, by torchlight, down the very rough path through the 'dark cave'. It was a great adventure for the youngsters among us (and some of the adults as well). Coming back to the Flairs, several of the group took up the offer of small hand-nets and were able to catch and admire some of the small fish (perhaps young mackerel) and a variety of aggressive shore crabs, tucked-in hermit crabs and one or two edible crabs. It was a great day.



then spent the morning going through the catch. Once identified the moths were released, apart from the specimens retained for the display. We admired the burnished brass, the several swifts and the garden tiger – which were all released unharmed later in the day. The other insects of note were several blue damselflies and a couple of emeralds beside and over the scrapes, which most people managed to see clearly.

The plant group, meanwhile had a productive morning beside the mouth of the Buddon Burn, finding ragged robin, giant water-dock, Parnassus grass and a variety of sedges and grasses. Both bird and plant groups headed for the wetter ground of Happy Valley to find orchids, the iconic adder's-tongue ferns (a very good display) and a variety of other plants, birds and butterflies. Once again we were fortunate to find such a variety of interesting wildlife and – even better – the rain stayed off until the evening!

News from the Reserves

Balgavies Loch: The osprey family fledged successfully and the birds generally appear to have had a good year. Development of the site continues and various proposals to renew and improve the fencing are being considered. We still hope to be able to graze the south meadow to reduce the coarser grasses and improve the diversity. Ken Slater has been running a 'continuous effort' mist-netting survey, recording some interesting results so far.

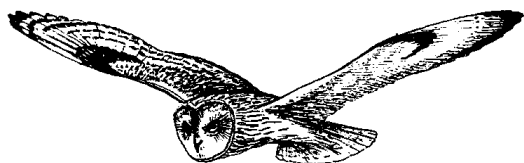
Lintrathen Loch: Again, bird life seems to have had a successful summer with a variety of breeding species. The paths to the hides have been maintained as usual and the reserve sub-committee are producing a leaflet, describing the loch and its wildlife, which we hope will be available before too long. A series of nest boxes are planned for next spring while the planting of a variety of trees and bushes is being considered.

Montrose Basin:
The Visitor Centre continues to attract good numbers of visitors and birders who come to be able to catch great views of the variety of life both on the water or mud, depending on the tide, and the in the vegetation around about. Notable bird visitors included ruffs and marsh harriers earlier in the season with the kingfishers and numbers of ospreys latterly. The autumn migrants are just starting to arrive, with several thousand pink-

Barry-Buddon

Sunday 19th August

The morning was rather damp to start with and only small numbers, just over 25, appeared but everybody there was keen to get going. However, the weather soon improved and both the birding and botanical parties had a good day.



Short-eared owl

The birders, led by Graham, Keith and Bob, recorded a total of 56 birds, the most notable being buzzard, kestrel and particularly, a single and then a pair of short-eared owls over the short grass near the High Lighthouse. Along the shore were a small variety of waders with flocks of eiders bobbing offshore, along with diving sandwich terns and, further out, a few gannets but, unfortunately, no dolphins.

At lunchtime we all gathered in the small car park by the lighthouse and took time to admire the numerous moths in the display arranged and identified by Anne and David. They had, as usual, run a moth trap overnight beside the lighthouse and



foot geese and a few pale-bellied Brents already. Repairs on the tern raft are now fully-funded and, hopefully, will be carried out fairly soon, ready for next year.

Seaton Cliffs, Arbroath: The dry summer suppressed plant growth and the tiny area of cliff heath showed little of the usual variety of orchids and related species. However, the bird life thrived along and around the cliffs and the mining bees seem to have a fruitful year. There has been some concern, though, about climbing with the use of artificial aids on the reserve and the safety of the old path beside the cliff-fall which, despite being closed, some people persist in using.

The Miley, Dundee: The tunnel was repainted earlier and has shown little damage lately. The gates have been repainted recently as well. One of the bins has been heavily damaged and will be replaced as soon as possible. Maintenance on the path continues; it has remained in good condition and attracts numbers of walkers, cyclists and dog owners every day.

New Website

The Angus & Dundee group has got a new website address (see next page) with its own domain name and a new email address (see next page and below).

The new site will be developed over the coming months so please drop in and let us know of any problems.

Dundee Group

It's been an active summer; taking on a number of advisory tasks to help promote the conservation of wildlife habitats in Dundee. In the evening of Monday 9th July a small group of 5 members met at the site of the old Kingspark School and its grounds to look at the habitat, its vegetation and any associated wildlife. We split into two groups, Brian, Liz and Mary in one with Ian and Jim forming the other, and set off to explore the area. It is good to note that Lynn Watson's group has reported, very recently, that the development proposals have been rejected and the site will be returned as a public park and wildlife site,

On the morning of Tuesday 9th another small group joined a few members of the planning department of Dundee Council to advise on the placing of items of fitness equipment along the Stannergate beach trail. The idea is to space out the rowing machine, push-up bars and similar items so that runners and cyclists will be able to stop, carry out a fitness routine and then carry on to the next group.

Mary and Tom also took part in the open day on the Law and managed to interest a number of members of the public in the work of the Trust.

Meanwhile, members continued the weekly clear-ups along the line of the Miley, the old Lochee railway line. This continues to be necessary since some people seem to feel it is acceptable to drop litter almost anywhere.

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

Website:

swtdundeeangus.org.uk

Email:

info@swtdundeeangus.org.uk

OFFICE BEARERS

Angus & Dundee Group

Chairman: Jim Cook

Secretary: Liz Houghton
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North Angus Group

Chairman: Andy Wakelin
Tel: 01674 676783

Secretary: Joyce Cooper
Tel: 01674 676783

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 2019

Montrose Basin Visitor Centre News

Montrose Basin Visitor Centre will be open between 1st November and mid-February 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.



Scottish Wildlife Trust Family Membership includes children's Wildlife Watch membership
For activity programme see the website at:
tinyurl.com/SWTMontroseW

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Saturday 26th January 2019

Winter walk at Montrose Basin

Meet at Tayock car park off the A935 (NO709590) at 10:30am. Followed by lunch at the Links Hotel.

Thursday 7th March 2019

"The Bog Squad - Restoring Scotland's Peatlands"

Talk by Rebecca Crawford, Butterfly Conservation. 7:30 pm in the Upper Reid Hall, Castle St. Forfar.
Entry by donation, children free.

Thursday 25th April 2019

"The Isle of May"

Talk by Russell Nisbet, Naturalist and previous warden at Isle of May.
Following short AGM at 7:30 pm in the Upper Reid Hall, Castle St. Forfar
Entry by donation, children free.

Saturday 27th April 2019

Montrose Coffee Morning

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

Saturday 18th May 2019

Dundee Plant Sale

Demonstration Gardens, Dawson Park, Caenlochan Rd. Dundee.
10:30am-2pm
All plant donations very welcome.

Mid week mid June 2019

Isle of May visit

For details see website and Events Booklet.
Guided visit for seabirds and marine mammals. Timings dependent on tides, to be released later, see website.
Ferry bookings to be made directly with the May Princess, www.anstrutherpleasurecruises.co.uk or 07957 585200

Sunday 21st July 2019

Bankhead Moss visit

Small raised bog with hide and walks, for bog plants, damsel and dragonflies.
NE Fife, near Peat Inn, access from B940, meet at 2pm in small carpark opposite road entrance to Greigston House, (NO447105)

Sunday 8th September 2019

Barry Buddon Open Day

Guided walks for birds, insects & flowers. Meet at 10am, Monifieth Playing Fields. (NO 502323) Bring binoculars and lunch.

Sunday 29th September 2019

Fungus Foray

With Jim Cook and Tayside & Fife Fungus Group.
Meet at 2pm Tentsmuir Forest, Kinshaldy car park (£2 parking fee). (NO499243)

Thursday 14th November 2019

"Mountain Hares, Ecology, Conservation & Management"

Talk by Scott Newey, Hutton Institute.
7:30 pm in the Upper Reid Hall, Castle St. Forfar.
Entry by donation, children free.

The World "Wild" Web

Angus and Dundee Group website is at
swtdundeeangus.org.uk
and you can email on
info@swtdundeeangus.org.uk

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

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!