



## SWT Aberdeen Newsletter Spring 2015

<http://www.swtaberdeen.org.uk/>



### Chairman's News

I have to use this "Chairman's News" to make a very strong plea for assistance with organising local SWT group activities. A number of long-standing committee members, who have provided long and valuable service, have had to step down this year. We desperately need a few people now to step forward and offer to help. The help we need ranges from forming a rota to provide tea and biscuits at indoor meets (I have one offer but on condition we find others for a rota so that no-one has to do it more than twice in the winter lecture series) to editing the newsletter. This latter task is now pretty straightforward: the committee solicits articles and the newsletter is distributed nationally. We need someone to select and collate the articles and walks and talks, send it to the co-editor who will format them into a newsletter and send the finished product to the printers in Edinburgh. We have already had an offer to re-vamp the website – so that is covered for now. It would also be useful if someone could trawl planning applications locally to see which ones SWT might wish to comment upon. With a local membership of 1400 you would have thought we could find a few to help. Please do volunteer to help. Contact me at: [roger@owen25.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:roger@owen25.fsnet.co.uk)

**Roger Owen – Chair Aberdeen Members Centre**

### Update From Reserves Manager - December 2014

#### Red Moss of Netherley

Funding is now in place to carry out further damming work and scrub clearance. A contractor has been appointed who will carry out this work between January and March. This will involve the use of a helicopter to get materials on site. The damming work previously carried out by the Dundee Conservation Team seems to be working well. Negotiations are STILL on going with regard bringing all of the SSSI within SWT's management.

Nick and Rose, as always, are doing an excellent job as Convenors.

#### Coulnacraig Meadow

Nothing to report.

#### Gight Wood

Our contractor continues to carry out footpath maintenance, including replacing a small section of boardwalk at the far end of the reserve. Further non-native tree felling work has been completed for this year. A group from BP (Aberdeen) spent a day on the reserve with myself, and removed almost all of the tree tubes from the trees planted some years ago. They also kindly donated £1,000 for further work at Gight. A visitor to the reserve was trampled by a cow just before entering the reserve at Gight Castle. She ended up in hospital with several broken bones. We advised her to contact Haddo Estate who own the land and would know who the cows belong to. Ealasaid and Dr Mark Young continue to patrol the reserve and report back to me any issues

#### Longhaven Cliffs

Footpath maintenance has been completed for the year. The possibility of an electricity cable coming ashore from Norway at the reserve is once again a possibility and I am liaising with the company concerned.

I have just completed budget requests to HQ for all the reserves for 2015. I now wait to see how much I will be allocated!

As always I am happy to answer any questions. It is easiest to contact me at [rpotter@swt.org.uk](mailto:rpotter@swt.org.uk)

**Rab Potter - Reserves Manager North East**

### Macduff Marine Aquarium Claire Matthews, Aquarium Manager

We all know that the North East corner of Scotland has a spectacular coastline and is home to an amazing variety of marine wildlife – from dolphins and seals to magnificent gannets and puffins – all of which can be seen from the land or by boat. But to discover the incredible diversity of sealife under the waves, without getting wet, a visit to Macduff Marine Aquarium is a must.

Macduff Marine Aquarium takes visitors on a journey of discovery beneath the steely blue waters of the Moray Firth. The fascinating exhibits at the aquarium lead from the coastal estuaries, cliffs and rocky shores, out to the fringing

kelp reefs and beyond to deeper reefs and the sandy seabed. On the way, visitors come face to face with hundreds of local fishy characters, including fearsome wolf fish, small sharks, ancient lobsters, gentle jellyfish and many other denizens of the deep that you never knew you lived so close to!



Visitors can also get hands on with starfish, anemones and other seashore life in the touch pools. It's always fun to watch a feeding frenzy in the kelp reef exhibit when scuba divers hand feed the fish. Look out for the shark nursery and the native seahorses display. In the summer months, there is even a chance to spy on breeding gannets via a live-camera link to the cliffs along the coast at Troup Head – the only mainland gannet colony in Scotland.

Feeding shows, illustrated talks and presentations throughout the day, as well as fun quizzes for the kids, mean that visitors can make the most of their all-day ticket. Enthusiastic staff are always on hand to provide extra information to ensure that nobody goes home without learning something about our own marine life and having fun in the process!

If you haven't yet discovered the aquarium, it is a great day out for people of all ages and is open throughout the autumn and winter. Keep up with the aquarium's news on Facebook or check the website – [www.macduff-aquarium.org.uk](http://www.macduff-aquarium.org.uk) – for further information.

### Wildlife Watch – Alan Benton

Wildlife Watch is the junior branch of The Wildlife Trusts' and the UK's leading environmental action club for kids. If you care about nature and the environment & want to explore your local wildlife – this is the club for YOUR children!

There are over 150,000 youngsters who are Wildlife Watch members throughout the UK at hundreds of Watch Groups but in Scotland the **Scottish Wildlife Trust** arranges loads of fun events and activities for children through their own network of children's Wildlife Watch Groups. There are more than 25 of these clubs in Scotland with over 5,000 members aged between 5 and 14. Since there is no hard and fast rules about the age individual groups may well accept youngsters outside these ages.

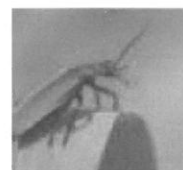
Surprisingly there is not a Wildlife Watch Group in Aberdeen and although we feel there should be one in the meantime **Stonehaven Wildlife Watch Group** is the nearest one to the city with others based in Elgin with a Moray group nearby and Montrose further south.



The **Stonehaven Wildlife Watch** group re-formed in June 2012 after a short interval because the original leaders had to disband for a variety of reasons. There are currently three leaders with Stonehaven WW group and we put on activities for kids aged 5 up to 14 year olds such as nature trails, scavenger hunts, arts & crafts activities, fungal forays and rock pooling at one of our local beaches; but there are loads of other cool ways to get closer to wildlife in the area.

**Stonehaven Wildlife Watch** group has no permanent meeting place but generally get-together in various locations once a month with no specific dates or times since they're always geared to specific activities. More often than not we tend to meet on Sunday afternoons typically for 2-hours (i.e. 2-4pm). If you and your family would like to find out more about or come along to any of our events you will need to book ahead by contacting Alan Belton at [braeburn513@btinternet.com](mailto:braeburn513@btinternet.com) and enter Wildlife Watch enquiry in the email subject line.

If you'd like to get your youngsters involved in fun activities like pond dipping, badger watching, bat detecting and bush craft why not join the SWT's Wildlife Watch and come along to your local group? By becoming a member your children will also receive loads of exciting wildlife goodies throughout the year including a cool magazine called Wildlife Watch Scotland which regularly contains a giant wildlife activity poster.



To find out more about Scottish Wildlife Trust's network of Wildlife Watch groups including Stonehaven please go to <http://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/things-to-do/activities-for-children> where you'll also find out how to contact any of the groups.

The best thing about becoming a member is that by joining Wildlife Watch you'll be helping your local Wildlife Trust to care for the wildlife where you live!

### **British Science Week - Dr Yashka Smith**

British Science Week is returning again this year, between 13th – 22nd March, with a host of exciting science, technology, engineering and maths events, and activities aimed at people of all ages. The British Science Association Aberdeen Branch co-ordinate a full and varied programme of events throughout the week, from evening lectures, insights into cutting edge science from the local area, and family fun days across Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. Full details of all activities can be found on this website from February; [www.abdn.ac.uk/engage/nsew](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/engage/nsew)

### **Raffle Prizes**

The members centre runs a raffle at the winter meetings. Members kindly donate all the prizes, meaning that all the money raised goes to member centre funds. So if anyone would like to donate items for prizes for meetings this Autumn they will be greatly appreciated. Please hand them to any committee member if you have any suitable items.

### **RSPB Friends of Strathbeg – Bird Food Sales**

Money raised is now nearly £88,000 - a big thanks for all your support. Due to fluctuating prices, it has been impossible to include a price list with this newsletter. Latest prices and orders forms will be available to download from the SWT website: [www.swtaberdeen.org.uk/](http://www.swtaberdeen.org.uk/)

### **Indoor talks and outings for 2015**

Indoor meetings take place at Main Lecture Theatre, School of Biological and Environmental Sciences, University of Aberdeen, Tillydrone Ave, AB24 2TZ at 7.30 pm.

**Thursday 19th February 2015** Introduction to Bee Keeping Rosie Crichton Aberdeen and District Beekeepers Association

**Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2015** River Dee and its wildlife Joanna Dick, Dee Catchment Outreach Officer  
*As part of British Science Week the Aberdeen Biodiversity Centre and Museum will be open from 6.30 for people to look around before the talk.*

**Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2015** AGM then Educating for the Environment, Marie Fish Aberdeen Biodiversity Centre

### **Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2015 10.30am**

Red Moss of Netherley with Reserve Conveners  
Meet at lay-by on Netherley- Cookney Road  
NO858933  
Packed lunch and Wellington boots recommended  
(walking stick optional!!)  
Booking essential  
Further details and booking contact: Roger Owen  
01569 762479

### **29-31<sup>st</sup> May**

May Festival-Aberdeen University  
SWT will have a stand  
An all-encompassing arts and science festival  
For more information go to:  
<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/mayfestival/>

### **Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2015 10:00am**

Botanical Outing to Fourman Hill (and other sites in the Huntly area) with David Welch  
Meet at Car park (NJ530408) by Huntly Castle/Huntly Nordic Ski Centre (from the centre of Huntly follow the road NNE though the Gordons School, past the golf course entrance and down to the castle, turn sharp left over the bridge and immediately right into the car park). Car sharing to sites.  
Packed lunch and stout footwear  
Booking essential  
Further details and booking contact: David Elston 01224 868153

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2015 13.00-16.00**

Wildlife of the River Dee – with Joanna Dick

Meet at Cambus O'May car park (NO 422 974) located just off the A93 and is signposted.

Packed lunch and stout footwear

Booking essential

Further details and booking contact: Rodney Payne 01569 763742

**Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2015 1300-1600**

Joint meeting with Wildlife Watch Group at Montrose Basin Visitor Centre

Meet in Visitor Centre, Montrose Basin, Rossie Braes, Angus DD10 9TA

Packed lunch, Wellington boots essential (walking stick optional!!)

Booking essential

Further details and booking contact: Alan Belton 01569 767662

**Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2015 10:30am**

Fungi Outing to Gight Woods with Liz Holden (joint outing with Grampian Fungus Group)

Meet at Car park at NJ832399 off the B9005, 4Km NW of Methlick (in Badiebath Wood on OS 50000 map).

Packed lunch and stout footwear

Booking essential

Further details and booking contact: Rodney Payne 01569 763742

**Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

Moray Firth Marine Life -Sandra Bisset- Macduff

Aquarium Learning Officer

**Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

Aberdeen Red Kites - Past, Present and Future Jenny Lennon RSPB

**Contacts for Members**

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Photo from Aquarium article "Aberdeenshire Council"

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