



**Scottish  
Wildlife  
Trust**

Winter 2016

# Lothian Talk

Scottish Wildlife Trust Lothians Group Newsletter

<http://swtlothians.org.uk>

## Chairman's notes

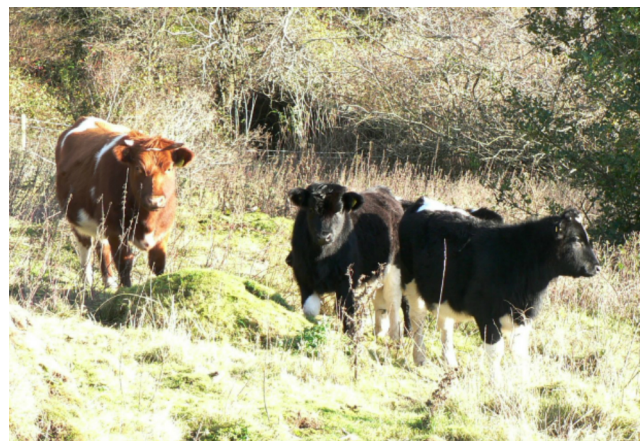
The single most important event in the last quarter for Lothians Group took place recently with Barbara Knowles taking over from Averil Stewart as the fundraising organiser. Averil has devoted 12 years to this task and done a wonderful job. At a rough estimate, the amount raised during Averil's tenure cannot be far short of £50,000, with the great majority of it coming through our regular supermarket can collections. We are extremely grateful to Averil for all the work she has done for the Lothian Group and would also like to thank Barbara for taking over. The can collections have proved a very effective way of raising funds for the Group but this can only continue if we can boost the numbers of volunteers willing to give up the occasional couple of hours to help by holding a can. We would very much like to hear from anyone who can assist – even a one-two hour stint at your local supermarket is a great help! Please contact Barbara at 0131 539 6643 if you would like to get involved.

On June 25 the RSPB organised a Bioblitz based in the grounds of Duddingston Kirk. We were closely involved and Bawsinch was used for some very well attended guided walks while various surveys were conducted both in Bawsinch and Murder Acre. The event was well attended and gave us an opportunity to meet a lot of people, particularly those living locally. We were also able to recruit a few new members for the Trust.

We are also involved, through our representation on the Pentland Hills Regional Park Advisory Committee, with giving input into the next Park Plan. Preparation of this has just started. While it is evident that the main issues relate to the management of recreational access in the Pentlands there are opportunities, particularly on public land, to include objectives in the plan to improve the natural environment.

By the time you are reading this we will have welcomed back cows to Murder Acre in our Bawsinch and Duddingston Loch Reserve, so if you are walking along the Innocent Cycleway or the Park Roads you should be able to spot them (though spotting all of them is sometimes a lot easier said than done!). The other sign of autumn is of course the start of our talks programme and we look forward to welcoming you to some of the interesting talks detailed within this issue of Lothian Talk.

Ken Knowles



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# Planning matters

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## Midlothian

Both Midlothian and East Lothian Councils are operating from older, although still valid, Local Plans. Midlothian's new finalised Local Development Plan is being discussed by the Planning Committee and the Local Development plan should be formally adopted later this year. It will be interesting to see if the Trust's comments in relation to biodiversity have been included - we have recently been informed that they have been "processed".

In preparation of Midlothian's annual Community Planning Development day in November, we have been contacted regarding the identification of key Environment priorities for Midlothian. Five priorities have initially been identified by the Council's Planning Service – they are bulleted so:

- Raising awareness of biodiversity issues in Midlothian
- Midlothian's response to climate change
- Encouraging the use and development of renewable energy technology in Midlothian
- Protection and enhancement of Midlothian's green and blue infrastructure and green networks
- Increasing awareness and enhancement of Midlothian's cultural heritage

They intentionally don't focus on the built environment. We are not sure whether cultural heritage would not fit better in a Culture focussed priorities list (and hence could be replaced by a more truly Environment priority) but it looks very encouraging when local biodiversity features in two of them. We will work with the council to expand and provide input to these biodiversity priorities.

## East Lothian

We have just been informed that the East Lothian proposed local development plan will have been published for public representation from 19th September 2016 to 31 October - we shall comment upon publication.

## Edinburgh

We have supported City of Edinburgh Council in its public consultation on promoting the Local Biodiversity Site Cammo Estate up to a formal council designated Local Nature Reserve, which will help to further ensure its future and allow certain new types of management grant to be applied for.

Another part of Craigpark quarry is having a new planning application assessed. The site is adjacent to the Union Canal Local Biodiversity Site opposite the climbing centre.

The Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership have reported that SNH are about to designate a Special Protection Area for shore and water birds in the Forth.

Tim Duffy

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## Planning Contacts

Midlothian and East Lothian: Susan Manson - mansons@castlesteads.net, or at Castlesteads, Dalkeith, EH22 2NJ.

West Lothian: Dr Cameron Easton - dr.c.easton@gmail.com or at 1 Bellsburn Avenue, Linlithgow, West Lothian, EH49 7LD.

And for Edinburgh wildlife issues please welcome new SWT Edinburgh Planning Representative Alan Templeton and contact him initially on email alan.templeton@hotmail.co.uk (the sharp eyed amongst you may note that the new planning rep. announced in the last Lothian Talk was a Mike Beard – unfortunately for us but fortunately for him he suddenly got a good job in Ecology and moved away – lucky for us Alan was waiting in the wings to take on this role, many thanks to both!).

Lothians Group Planning Secretary: Tim Duffy - Flat 4F2, 34 Warrender Park Terrace, Edinburgh, EH9 1ED, Tel/Ans 0131 2288785.

# Wildlife Watch round-up!

The Edinburgh Wildlife Watch group arranges a variety of fun activities and events for children aged 5 to 10. From nature trails to scavenger hunts, arts and crafts to fungal forays, there are loads of cool ways to get closer to wildlife in your area.

Find out more at: <http://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/things-to-do/activities-for-children/edinburgh/>

In May we went to Bawsinch Nature Reserve, to explore the woods and try pond dipping. We learnt about edible plants – Nettles, Wood sorrel and Garlic! A game of opposites allowed us to find slugs, snails, feathers and leaves that felt soft/hard/spiky/smooth. Pond dipping was cool, finding all sorts of different creatures - Ramshorn snail, Water scorpion, Diving beetle, Pond snail and Mosquito larvae! Then we went to the hide and looked over the loch to try and spot some birds. We were lucky to see Great crested grebes diving in the water and on their nest up close to the hide! Very exciting! Then we saw Herons on their heronry (big twiggy nest) hiding by the willow trees at the end of the loch, diving Tufted ducks and a Moorhen.

In June we were at the Water of Leith visitor centre. River dipping was the main activity with a few games in between. Lots of creatures were caught and brought back to the centre to look through the microscope at. We managed to find Water fleas, Freshwater shrimp, some Diving beetles, Pond skaters and a few Ramshorn snails. Also spotted some Mayfly lymph larvae which look like small bits of wood and are very hard to spot! There was time to play in the centre and learn about mills as well!

After a summer break we had a ranger-led session with rangers from Holyrood Park. After a food-chain game we walked to Hunters Bog and on the way we saw some Cinnabar moth caterpillars which are black and orange coloured to stop any predators from munching on them - the colouring is a warning that they are poisonous! We also looked for the rare flower Maiden pink, which is only found in a specific location in Edinburgh. Other plants we saw were Hare bells, Rosebay willow herb and Pineapple weed - which smells of pineapple! Then we got to feed the Mute swans and Mallards at the pond - with seeds rather than bread, which is unhealthy for them!

Katherine Rennie

## Upcoming sessions

Sunday 20th Nov: 10am - 12pm Cool Sea Explorers!

Meet at: Holyrood Park Ranger Centre

Join us to learn all about Scotland's seas and important ways we can look after and protect them. Featuring special guests from the Marine Conservation Society!

Sunday 18th Dec: 10am - 12pm Nature Noel!

Meet at: Holyrood Park Ranger Centre

Join us at Holyrood to make some festive crafts! Willow wreaths and fun christmas crackers! There will be some fun games too!



# Fundraising round-up, and a fond farewell

So far, our total over the 6 days collecting in 2016 amounts to £2,650.24. This is so helpful in supporting the management of local wildlife reserves, subsidising the Lothians Group events programme and Lothian Talk, and donating to both Lothian Conservation Volunteers and SWT HQ.

We took in £521.34 at Sainsbury's Cameron Toll on Sunday 4 September. A special thank you to Valerie, Christina, Peter, Heather and Irene plus both Ken and Barbara, for their efforts.

I now hand over the organisation to Barbara Knowles so you can expect to hear from her. At present there are no immediate days booked for collections – but over to her. I am sure you will be there to help her and a charity we believe in so strongly.

Many thanks for all your support. I will still look forward to sharing a shift with folk in the years to come.

Warm regards and best wishes.

Averil Stewart



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## Talks for your diary

Timing is everything: Phenology and Climate Change

Thursday 10th November. 7:30pm

The timing of spring events and their dependence on the weather has always captured the imagination of natural historians. Now, against the backdrop of a changing climate, the observations of timings by natural historians (or citizen scientists as they are often referred to nowadays) have become an invaluable scientific resource, revealing that spring is getting earlier but that not all species are advancing equally fast.

Dr. Alli Phillimore will give an overview of the research on phenology and then talk about some initial results arising from a 40-site field study looking at blue tits and how the timing of nesting impacts on the diet and growth of nestlings.

Contact: Peter Bain - 0131 447 8937

Talks are held at 33 Melville Street, Edinburgh and start at 7.30pm

All talks are free but donations are greatly appreciated

Disabled access available by prior arrangement, please contact Peter Bain - 0131 447 8937

A bicycle-stop tour of the 120 SWT Nature Reserves  
Thursday 8th December. 7:30pm

By Dr. Tim Duffy, the longest serving SWT trustee and the man who cycled them all for the Trust last year. Giving you a flavour of the variety and geographical spread of the reserves - from far-flung reaches, to those in your backyard you may have never thought to visit!

Contact: Declan Duffy - 0793 101 5891

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Protecting our Native Species  
Thursday 9th February. 7:30pm

Local biodiversity in the UK is under threat. Amy Cox, Vice Chair of the BIAZA Native Species Working Group, talks about the work being done by zoos across the country to help protect and conserve our native wildlife.

Contact: Declan Duffy - 0793 101 5891

Porpoises, Dolphins and Whales of Scotland - and their conservation  
Thursday 9th March. 7:30pm

A talk by Sarah Dolman from the Whale and Dolphin Society about cetaceans that are found in Scottish waters and the historic and current threats that they face.

Contact: Peter Bain - 0131 447 8937