



Message from Stewart Collier, Chair



The birds are singing and the bees buzzing, its that wonderful time of year when venturing outside can be so rewarding.

On the Group's May field meeting at Ceres I was pleased to identify a patch of Goldilocks Buttercup *Ranunculus auricomus*,

growing on the roadside. This is a plant that I have never knowingly seen before.

One of our volunteers recently visited the Trust's West Quarry Braes reserve and noted "It's looking good apart from the paths getting overgrown with nettles. Great for insects including at least three butterfly species and I had 24 species of bird including five warbler species. Also evidence of roe deer activity". On the negative side it has been noted that someone visited this reserve on a quad bike!

Several Trust members supported the two day Kilminning Reserve big tree event with over 1,000 native plug and bare root specimens to plant. Due to the sun and cold drying wind, preventing the bare rooted plants from drying out before planting was a concern. Action to cover the plants with sacks and dampening the roots was taken. On a subsequent visit to the reserve I was pleased to see that most of the new plants have "green shoots". Along the access road and near the car park future generations will see a vastly different habitat that should prove a magnet for wildlife.

At all times of the year regular cleaning of bird feeders is important but we occasionally see sick Greenfinch and Chaffinch visiting our garden. By removing the food source for a few days and ensuring the bird baths are kept clean the ailing bird "disappears". Wood pigeons

can be infection carriers so debris catch trays underneath feeders and only half filling bird baths will reduce the amount of time these birds spend in and around gardens.

This newsletter is an essential way to communicate with members and the Fife and Kinross Group has been fortunate to benefit from Robertson's sympathetic sponsorship for several years. This has now ended and the Group is financially secure but having to meet the printing cost of FAWN from our own funds will inevitably eat into our finances. The Group Committee intend to continue producing FAWN and are actively looking for a new sponsor. If anyone is aware of an organisation that may look favourably towards supporting FAWN please contact either myself or the Group Secretary Louise.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers that supported our wildlife stall at the Fife Show. It was rewarding to see such a large level of interest shown by the public and Trust members. Everyone played their part to interact with visitors who I am sure gained a positive image of the organisation. THANK YOU!

It has been a pleasure to work with Tracy Lambert who covered the position of Reserves Manager East Central Scotland in Rory's absence. The committee and work party volunteers found Tracy very responsive and approachable. The Group now has four trained First Aider's and has also received risk assessment training. Risk assessments have to be undertaken before organising any field meetings or activities on reserves.

"Study nature, love nature, stay close to nature. It will never fail you."

-Frank Lloyd Wright.

RESERVES ROUNDUP

Barnyards Marsh

There are two new co-convenors (Ken Weir and Elizabeth Bracher) at the Marshes who will have the help of some volunteers from the village and hopefully some knowledgeable input from the previous convenor. Also they are looking forward to much-appreciated help from SWT.

On a recent inspection, species such as Northern Marsh Orchid were present but the main species is Meadowsweet which is becoming quite rampant throughout the area.



Northern Marsh Orchid

Transect work will be done to compile a more up-to-date record of the condition of other species in the Marsh.

On-going maintenance to keep the paths clear should be undertaken and the boardwalks inspected and where necessary repaired. The pond should be cleared out and restored to the original in autumn as well as the drain to the north of the reserve being cleared.

Hopefully there will be an Open Day later in the summer.

Kenneth Weir

Dumbarnie Links

In early December 2021 Deidre Munro led a count of hibernating butterflies in the pillboxes. There were no roosting bats but in the locked pillbox (the Battery) 29 Small Tortoiseshell, 9 Peacock and 1 herald moth were seen. The open pillbox hosted 19 Small Tortoiseshell, 9 Peacock and 2 herald moths. Deidre is planning a moth evening in early August.

A relatively dry winter meant that there was no repeat of the dramatic flooding in the slacks that was seen last year.



There was only enough rain to generate low levels of water in the slacks for a month or so in the New Year.

The spring has seen a fine display of primrose on one side and cowslips on the other with hybrids in between. Whitethroat, Stonechat and Reed Buntings are all nesting in the reserve.

Spring has also seen the return of Myxomatosis which has devastated the rabbit population in and around the reserve. This will impact on the amount of grazing in the dune slacks.

Litter was cleared from the pillboxes in the spring (probably just making room for more).

The reserve has been quiet so far this year with little pressure from camping, and hikers and bicyclists have returned to pre-Covid levels which makes it an even nicer place to walk on a sunny day.

David Jenkins

West Quarry Braes

With the help of a pool of 12 volunteers, over 6 workdays in January, February and March, the reserve has been transformed into a more wildlife friendly and accessible environment. The original goals were: (i) removal of litter; (ii) creation of paths and (iii) removal of non-native and invasive plant species. A large quantity of litter, including a lot of plastic tree guards, was removed. By cutting back fallen trees and brush, a path has been established more or less around the periphery of the reserve. In addition a small area has been planted with 15 rowan trees.



The two main non-native plants were *Rosa rugosa* and variegated archangel the latter being a vigorous ground cover plant which blankets large areas of the reserve. The former was tackled by cutting back to ground level followed by digging up the roots.



This was very successful, although further work will be required to completely eradicate it. To tackle the variegated archangel, since we were not permitted to use herbicides or brush cutters, an experimental area was covered with sheets of cardboard, weighted down with cut branches and rocks. By depriving the plants of light, it was hoped this approach would suppress growth and, in the long term eradicate them altogether. Unfortunately, this approach

has not been an unqualified success as vigorous growth, now also flowering, can be seen pushing out between and underneath the sheets of cardboard (see photo). The good news is that the bees like the flowers!



Native flora include cowslips of which, at the time of writing in May, there are several large clumps at the south-eastern edge of the reserve.



More work will be carried out from September, but the intention now is to leave the West Quarry Braes relatively undisturbed. Fife Bird Club are keen to carry out some mist netting and ringing as the reserve is an attractive habitat for migrants. Blackcaps, sedge warblers and willow warblers are already in evidence. Coots, moorhens, teal, wigeon and mallard can be seen regularly on the small pond in the adjacent field to the north.

Ian Hunter

EVENTS SUMMER 2022

Any suggestions? Able to lead a walk? Give a talk? Get in touch : secfifekinswt@gmail.com



All welcome. We advise sturdy footwear and suitable clothing for outdoor events.

IMPORTANT: For these and all events, places must be booked via the Scottish Wildlife Trust Main Website: <https://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/things-to-do/wildlife-events/>

Be aware that these and almost all events have limits on numbers so early booking is advised.

For anyone who absolutely does not have access to the internet, you may phone committee member, Alison Irvine, (01337 830366) to make a booking for an event, if spaces are

Wednesday 27 July 2022 7:00 p.m Outing: Lochore Meadows - The Clune

A short walk from the park centre, The Clune is an area of ancient grassland with wild flowers and scrub. This will be a general wildlife walk lasting about 1 1/2 hrs with Alison Irvine.

Meet: Lochore Centre Car Park: NT170 961

Saturday 22 October 2022 2:00 pm: Outing: Loch Leven

A walk (1 1/2 hrs) with Ian Hunter along the Heritage Trail on the look out for the first winter visitors on the loch and beside the trail. Refreshment opportunity at Loch Leven Lodges Coffee Shop.

Meet: Findatie Car Park: NT171 992

Sunday 30 October 2022 10:00 am: AGM - Falkland Community Hall

Details to follow. Check our Facebook pages and the group website (see below).

Fife Show 21st May 2022

The Fife & Kinross Group were fortunate to have a stall in the Children's marquee at the Fife Show this year on the 200 year anniversary of the show. It turned out to be great day for all who attended with the weather remaining dry and sunny all day, although it was a little bit windy. We enjoyed meeting the next generation of wildlife enthusiasts and sharing information about the local reserves with the parents and members who came along to say hi. The collection of skulls and feathers we had on display drew in a good crowd and we handed out lots of

leaflets about the reserves. Thank you to everyone who visited our stall and to all the volunteers who helped on the day and with preparations.



Events Updates and Latest News

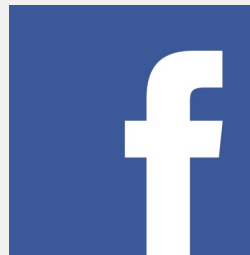
Be sure to regularly check our web site:

(<https://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/local-group/fife-and-kinross/>)

and Facebook pages

(<https://www.facebook.com/swtfifeandkinrossmc>)

for news and important changes and updates to the programme plus FAWN in colour!



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