



Message from Andy Cage (Chair)



In the last newsletter I mentioned the challenges that wildlife charities might face in our changing world. The Scottish Wildlife Trust is not immune from such challenges.

Every few years the Trust carries out a comprehensive review of its reserves across Scotland to ensure that the charitable resources are being used to

maximise the benefit for wildlife and guarantee value for donors. This may mean fewer but better managed reserves allowing limited resources to be used to maximum effect which is particularly important in the current economic climate. The last review was in 2016, nine years ago. The latest review has now concluded and there are implications for a few reserves in Fife namely Fife Ness Muir, West Quarry Braes, Barnyards Marsh and Cullaloe.

Fife Ness Muir is currently owned by the Trust having been gifted to us by the late Jim Cobb. Historically it has always been primarily a site for bird migration and bird ringing and hasn't sat particularly comfortably within the Trust's portfolio of reserves. Approaches are being made to local community, birding and ringing groups in order to find a new owner who can better manage and enhance the site as a premier east coast migration monitoring point.

West Quarry Braes is owned by Fife Council and leased by the Trust. It was formerly a local rubbish dump which was capped in the days before more stringent landfill regulations were in force. Rubbish, including a lot of glass, is now coming to the surface posing a huge challenge. As the whole site may need recapping and replanting, which is beyond the Trust's resources, the reserve will be returned to Fife Council, along with a suggested environmental management plan, when the lease runs out in 2026.

Barnyards Marsh is currently owned by Church of Scotland. The boardwalk which was in a state of disrepair has been removed for reasons of health and safety. Access is now difficult and there is continuing encroachment by invasive Japanese Knotweed. The liabilities of maintaining

the site are too onerous for the Trust to continue managing it and responsibility will be returned to the Church.

Cullaloe reserve is owned by Fife Council but managed for them by the Trust as a Local Nature Reserve but with no financial support from the Council. The Trust will be requesting a management fee for the work that they do and if this is not agreed further options may be necessary.

I know that those of you with close links to any of these reserves will be saddened by these decisions but the hope is that the changes will allow the reserves team to focus more on much-needed work on the remaining reserves and be of more benefit for wildlife in the long run.

Reserves Roundup

Fife Ness Muir

Over the winter months work has continued on the reserve to remove gorse, manage some of the wooded areas through coppicing and pollarding, and take down the remains of the old Heligoland traps. Good progress was made on all tasks, particularly on the day of the volunteers work party in January. Thanks to Clare for organising and everyone who attended.

Spring 2025 has proved to be very quiet for birds migrating through the site. This has probably been due to the spell of very warm weather and clear skies experienced throughout the main migration period. Hopefully we get a more eventful autumn!



Chris Broome

Bankhead Moss

Bankhead Moss is unusually dry this year. The bunds on the southern slope of the raised bog, created three years ago, attracted four-spotted chaser dragonflies last year, but are unlikely to this year, as at the time of writing (mid-May), none have open water. Sheep are currently grazing the raised bog, in an attempt to control the thousands of birch saplings, which threaten the bog plant community. The fen habitat on the reserve is also drier than normal. During winter and spring, this held many common snipe and two jack snipe. Although a few common snipe stayed to breed in the past, there is no indication that any have done so this year. Moth activity has been surprisingly good this spring. In four visits up to mid-May, I recorded 49 species, appreciably more than in the previous two years. The best of these is scarce prominent. Bankhead Moss is the only site in the eastern half of Fife where the species has been recorded. Attached are a few moth photos taken on the reserve this spring.



Scarcely Prominent

Steve Buckland

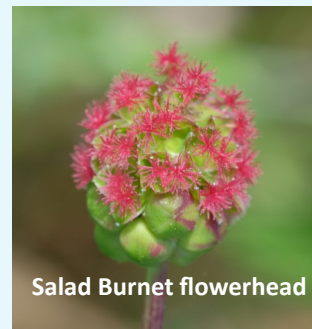
Lielowan Meadow

The accompanying pictures are from a visit I made to Lielowan on the 22nd of May this year, and show various plants including Bird's-foot-trefoil, Garlic Mustard, Pignut, Speedwell, Tormontil and Water Aven. The small patch of Salad Burnet toward the eastern side of the reserve was also holding it's own (just!) against the vigorous growth of Creeping Thistle and Meadowsweet.

There is still no resolution to the lack of grazing access, but Clare is evaluating the feasibility of getting a pull-off area constructed on the reserve, to allow safe unloading and loading of the flying flock.

Unless and until this can be accomplished there would be no value in getting the fence repaired.

Lastly I noticed that the reserve sign is beginning to look rather sorry for itself and is in need of some TLC (or replacement!).

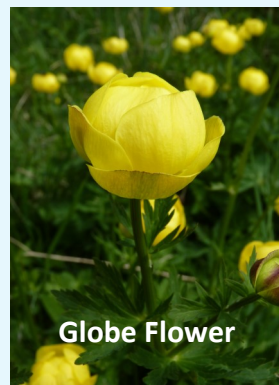


Salad Burnet flowerhead

Alan Harvey

Fleecefaulds Meadow

The Flying Flock of Chevease sheep have been grazing the meadows all winter. Last year the timing wasn't quite right and we ended up with them eating some of the plants in the middle meadow that we are trying to conserve (especially the globe



Globe Flower

flower) so this year we grazed that meadow early and moved them on before the new plant growth appeared. Time will tell if this approach has worked. Once again thanks are due to our great team of lookers who keep a daily eye on the flock - thank you Amy, Alison, Steve, Margaret, Dawn and Ian. We

have had a few trees down on the fences in strong winds which the Reserves Management team have been quick to remove. A number of trees by the roadside had severe ash dieback, a fungal disease causing leaf loss and often death of the tree, and have been felled on safety grounds. The three oaks donated by the Akin Project are thriving by the car park. Otherwise it has been a quiet spring with the most notable sightings being several woodcock which could often be flushed from the scrubby areas and lots of signs of badger activity even in the coldest weather. By mid-April willow warblers and chiffchaffs were back from their winter quarters and singing from nearly every bush.

Andy Cage

Green Shores: Scotland's longest running coastal restoration project!

*Helena Simmons, Haley Arnold & Clare Maynard
Eden Campus, University of St Andrews*

Nestled within our estuaries are glorious mudflats fringed by green and vibrant saltmarshes. From ospreys diving into the waters at high tide, shelducks raking through eelgrass beds, to colourful salt-tolerant flora clinging to the margins, wildlife abounds in the natural heritage of Scotland's low-lying muddy shores.

These green fringes of saltmarsh habitat are especially important, providing protection to valuable land assets from erosion by absorbing wave energy and sequestering and storing carbon in our battle with climate change. Unfortunately, much of Scotland's habitat was lost during the 20th century, buried under land reclamation, or as a dumping ground for waste, or constrained by highly developed hinterland. Once vast saltmarshes around our estuaries have become fragmented and isolated, vulnerable to a changing climate and adjacent land use pressures.

Over the last few years, award-winning Green Shores at the University of St Andrews has worked with NatureScot and coastal landowners to find a cost-effective, nature-friendly and sustainable solution by restoring degraded saltmarsh habitat in the Dornoch Firth, and the Tay and Eden Estuaries.

Unique to Scotland, Green Shores has developed various methods of protecting new transplants, using washout rates (number of transplants washed away over time), sedimentation rates and various other environmental indicators as measures of success. We are currently testing storm fencing to reduce wave energy on the restoration sites, a technique successfully piloted in the Dornoch Firth.

Recognising that natural saltmarshes may not be robust enough to act as a donor marsh and provide transplants for restoration, we established a coastal plant hub beside the Eden Estuary to grow native coastal vegetation to support the project and as an outreach facility for local volunteers. More recently, we established a second growing facility at Dornoch Academy in the Highlands, for the local school and community to be involved in the home-grown effort to restore saltmarshes on the Dornoch Firth's shoreline.

Green Shores has benefited from the support of multiple landowners and the Nature Restoration Fund, and from the help of dozens of enthusiastic volunteers, without whom this work would not be possible. Whether unemployed youths learning new skills, military personnel lending team

strength and camaraderie, students seeking conservation action opportunities, or chief executives simply taking a break from the office, we have found that hard, muddy work and a worthy cause unites people to do ever more to sustain their local communities.



Often overlooked, the importance of saltmarsh restoration as a nature-based solution for coastal defence, biodiversity and carbon storage is being increasingly recognised. Through our restoration work, Green Shores is improving saltmarsh conservation actions, contributing to an understanding of the importance of these ecosystems and increasing the capacity to restore saltmarshes across Scotland.

For more information and volunteering opportunities see our website <https://greenshores.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk/about/>

And please follow us on:

Mastodon: <https://ecoevo.social/@GreenShores>

Instagram: @greenshores1

Facebook: Green Shores 1

LinkedIn: Green Shores



Tayport saltmarsh, with older and newer plantings and the fragmented saltmarsh visible nearest the coast.

EVENTS SUMMER/AUTUMN 2025

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



We advise sturdy footwear and suitable clothing for outdoor events.

Tuesday 1st July: Outing - Wildlife on a disused railway line, Kilmany 10.00-13.00

Explore the wildlife on a disused railway line abandoned in the 1950s. We will take a linear walk in both directions from the village looking for wildlife including some non-native invasive species. The leader will talk about the bird species that he has seen here in 29 years of monitoring the site.

*Meet: Jim Clark Statue in Kilmany village, Fife, KY15 4PT
Grid Ref: NO 38664 21690 What3Words ///grips.storm.vampire. (Please park considerably beside the statue. Family friendly but children must be with an adult. Dogs on short leads please. Bring suitable outdoor footwear and clothing. Binoculars recommended.)*

Sunday 13th July: Outing - Moth trapping and identification 14.30-17.00

Identification of moths which have been caught the night before. Hopefully, weather permitting, there will be the catch from several traps to examine and identify - there may be 100 species or more if the weather has been kind. Finish time will depend on size of catch. If anyone wants to bring a trap over the evening before to add to the collection please email twwbrain@gmail.com by Thursday evening. I can accommodate up to 3 mains traps and as many battery traps as you like! Mains traps will need lead cables.

Meet: Keith Hills Farm, Rumbling Bridge, Kinross, KY13 0QQ. Map ref, NT 03614 98453. What3Words ///urban.sped.products. (The big green shed on the farm road to Keith Hills and Wester Aldie. NO DOGS due to proximity of sheep. Parking on site - in field opposite. Family

friendly. We will be inside the shed if raining. There are no toilet facilities.)

Tuesday 5th August: Outing - Birding for beginners at Morton Lochs 10.00-13.00

This event is aimed at beginners to birding. In a small group we will look for common water and woodland birds on the lochs and in Tentsmuir forest. We will discuss identification of these and similar species by sight and sound.

Meet: Morton Lochs NNR. Nearest postcode DD6 9PE. What3Words ///euphoric.flamingo.seated. (A level walk mostly on well-maintained paths. Waterproof clothing and footwear recommended. Family friendly but children must be with an adult. Dogs on short leads please. Binoculars recommended.)

Sunday 21st September: Outing - Beech and Beaches Ravenscraig Park, Kirkcaldy 10.30-13.00

Join us on a varied walk through Ravenscraig Park, Kirkcaldy - if the tide is right, a beach walk to the Harbourmaster's House with good views over the Firth of Forth and return through some mature woodland.

Meet: Pathhead Sands Car Park, Kirkcaldy, KY1 2PG. Grid ref: NT289922 What3Words ///races.type.bikes. (The shore may be rocky and uneven but the return walk will be on surfaced level paths. Some steep steps may be encountered. Waterproof clothing and strong footwear recommended. Family friendly but children must be with an adult. Dogs on short leads please. Binoculars recommended.)

How to access the Fife & Kinross Local Group web and Facebook pages

Go to scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk. Depending on the device you are using you will find a link called 'Groups' at the very top of the page or one called 'Local Groups' at the bottom. Click on this then scroll down and select 'Fife and Kinross'.

The 'Group News' page is now being regularly updated and along with our Facebook page:

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

These are the best places to find our forthcoming events and the latest issues of FAWN. Make sure to click on 'Explore all news' to see all the latest news. If you have any problems with the site please email secfifekinswt@gmail.com



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