

## Drumoig Wildlife Forum report 2019

The Drumoig Wildlife Forum has now been running for three years and in 2019 we held two very interesting talks.

The first, in February, was given by Monica Arso Civil a Research Fellow at the School of Biology, Scottish Oceans Institute, University of St Andrews. Her talk on her research interests covered bottle-nosed dolphins and seals, particularly around St Andrews Bay and the Firth of Tay.

The second in September was given by Dominic Rye and Rachel Hunter, Assistant Countryside Rangers with the Fife Coast and Countryside Trust. Their talks covered their roles at the trust focussing on the Eden Estuary Local Nature Reserve and West Sands, St Andrews and on how Climate Change effects the coastal systems they look after.

In addition, there were two outdoor events. The first in June was a fast rib boat trip on the River Tay departing from Broughty Ferry Castle, travelling past the docks onto the V&A and then back under the Tay bridge to the Larick Beacon in search of dolphin.

The second in October and was a guided walk with Tom Cunningham, Reserve Manager of Tentsmuir Forest and his assistant Marijke Leith. This started at the new Education and Visitor Pavilion where we learnt the history of the site and the work being done to improve the heathland and then walked along to Tentsmuir Point.

The third moth trap and reveal had been planned for July but had to be cancelled due to the weather, hopefully another can be arranged for this year.

In the Spring of 2019, we had **32** nest boxes for woodland birds; Paul and I have undertaken our annual bird box survey and can report that **21** had nests in, this is an increase of **10** over last years' count. Of the other **11** – **7** have still to be checked and **4** were damaged. Thanks to the generosity of those who purchased books and plants at the Summer Fayre and raffle tickets at the talks a total of £150.45 was raised and has enabled **4** more bird boxes to be purchased which have now replaced those that were damaged.

The Tawny Owl nest box was also checked and had evidence of nesting material.

Three new species of moths were spotted over the summer, bringing our total identified to **55**.

The website continues to be updated with information on the talks and walks that have been held and general information on wildlife, wildlife organisations and places to visit. Thirteen newsletters have been issued since the start and in case you have missed them or the meeting quizzes these can all be found on the there too.

2019 saw the creation of a Wildlife gallery on the DRA website. This contains photos from around Drumoig and videos from the nature cams. I hope you have all had a chance to look at these, it gives a good insight of the wildlife we have living around and about us. I hope to add more in the coming year. My thanks go to Bob Kelly for revitalising our website and creating the video library and photo carousels, to Paul for siting the video cameras and for the many hours watching and categorising them and to Alec Burden for watching and linking together nearly 200 videos to make those seen on the website.

Thank you to all those who have donated used stamps for the RSPB Albatross Task Force Appeal. Please continue to collect used stamps the 2020 appeal the charity will be announced shortly.

Next year's DWF programme is currently being put together, it will have the theme 2020 (twenty twenty). One part of this is to raise £202 to purchase 8 more of the stronger Schwegler bird boxes to bring our total to 40 and other projects such as identifying 20 wildlife flowers on Drumoig, adding 20 more photos to the gallery etc.

In addition, a guide to wildlife gardening will be produced, this will hopefully be useful for new residents and for those wishing to encourage wildlife to your garden is due to be published in the Spring.

Please don't forget that the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch will start this **Saturday 25 – Monday 27 January**. You just need to spend 1 hour counting the birds in your garden. For more information go to the RSPB website.

And finally – 2020 will be my fourth and last year as Drumoig Wildlife Co-ordinator, and it has been a very enjoyable project to be part of. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee for their support and to all the residents that have attended outings and events and that have encouraged and supported wildlife in our community and have supplied information and photographs on their sightings over this time.

Christine Edwards

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