

Drumoig Wildlife Forum (DWF)

Newsletter 10 – April 2019



Welcome to the tenth newsletter for the Drumoig Wildlife Forum.

We are now officially in Spring and how lovely it is to see the primroses in bloom and bulbs pushing their way through, trees and bushes are also coming into bud / leaves and birds are pairing up and making their nests. Everywhere we turn in our garden we find ladybirds, great clusters – see photo below – apparently a group of ladybirds is called a ‘loveliness’, think that quite fitting. The first bumblebee spotted at Craigie on 20 March and there are reports of frogs and toads appearing – however please watch out when walking particularly at night, so you don’t step on them!

Plant of the month

The above photo shows the Goat Willow (*Salix caprea*) commonly known as the Pussy Willow after the silky grey male flowers, which resemble a cat’s paw. It is a deciduous broadleaf tree native to the UK, most of Europe and parts of Asia. Goat willow is found growing in woodland, hedgerows and scrub, and on damper, more open ground such as near lakes, streams and canals. Mature trees grow to 10m and can live for 300 years. The bark is grey-brown and develops diamond-shaped fissures with age. Twigs are hairy at first but become smooth and can appear red-yellow in sunlight.

The Goat Willow is dioecious, meaning male and female flowers grow on separate trees, in early spring. Male catkins are grey, stout and oval, which become yellow when ripe with pollen. Female catkins are longer and green. The timber is soft and yellow in colour and unlike most willows, its brittle twigs are not suitable for weaving, but traditional uses for its wood included clothes pegs, while the foliage was used as a winter feed for cattle. The wood also burns well and makes a good fuel. Traditionally willows were used to relieve pain, and the painkiller Aspirin is derived from salicin, a compound found in the bark of all *Salix* species.

Goat Willow is of value to wildlife with the foliage eaten by caterpillars of a number of moths, including the sallow kitten, sallow clearwing, dusky clearwing and lunar hornet clearwing. It is also the main food plant for the purple emperor butterfly. Catkins provide an important early source of pollen and nectar for bees and other insects, and birds use goat willow to forage for caterpillars and other insects.

Do You Know why birds sing so early at this time of the year?

According to the RSPB singing at dawn appears to have several advantages. The dim light means the birds may be harder to spot by a predator. Similarly, the poor light makes foraging for food difficult, so perhaps it is a better time to be singing for a mate. Sound can also carry further: as the air is often still at this time and, with less background noise, bird song can carry up to 20 times as far.

To find out more about how and why birds sing and to identify bird sounds go to:

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/bird-songs/>

RSPB Big Garden Watch 2019

The results have been issued and the RSPB have reported that 472,758 people across the UK took part (52,269 more than 2018) and recorded 7,669,138 birds (904,663 more than 2018). For full results click here: https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/birdwatch/results?sourcecode=BWKEML0099&utm_source=BGBW_results_email&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=birdwatch2019&utm_content=b0_cta

Residents Photos



By kind permission of
Martin Hepworth (Comerton)



By kind permission of
Paul Edwards (Craigie)

New dates for your diary

Saturday 8 June 2019 – Summer Fayre at the Drumoig Hotel

The Drumoig Wildlife Forum will have a stall selling various items as well as a plant stall, which will include garden and wildlife plants.

As you start work in your gardens, sowing seeds or splitting up plants, please consider potting up some plants for the stall, and label them with their name (if known), indication of size they grow to and colour. Michael Duncan has kindly agreed to co-ordinate the plant collection and plants can be taken to him at **9 Craigie Hill**. If anyone needs any seed trays or plants pots, then please contact Christine Edwards at drumoig.wildlife@gmail.com

Saturday 15 June 2019 – Boat trip on the Tay leaving at 11am

The Pirate Boats Ltd runs a 1 hour Fast 'Rib' boat tour around the sights of the Tay Estuary including The V & A, the Larick Beacon and City Quay from April to November at a cost of £24 per person. When Dolphins are about, they will go and watch them and learn about their habits.

The boats take a maximum of 11 passengers at a time. Trips can be booked and paid for directly on-line
<https://www.pirateboatsltd.com/trips.html>



The Meeting point is the Life Buoy immediately adjacent to the Broughty Ferry Harbour slipway, adjacent to Broughty Castle

Saturday 20 July 2019 - 10am at the large Drumoig Car Park

This will be our third moth trap and reveal this time with Colin Edwards from the Forestry Commission. It is hoped we can find some new species to add to our current total of 55.

Tuesday 24 September 2019- 7pm at the Drumoig Hotel

A talk by the Fife Coast and Countryside Trust rangers. The first by Gavin Legg, Assistant Ranger, West Sands, St Andrews on their work on West Sands, such as sand dune restoration and their work with the St Andrews Links Trust. The second by Randal Strachan, Ranger for the wider North Fife area including the Eden Estuary Nature Reserve, on the projects, paths and reserves he looks after.

Local News and Events

Friday 22 March to Tuesday 23 April 2019 - *The Great British Spring Clean 2019*

This is a countrywide project to clean up the environment around us particularly nature areas. Anyone can take part, and this can be a small effort such as picking up rubbish when you go dog walking to a planned beach clean. To sign up at log on to <https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/get-involved/support-our-campaigns/great-british-spring-clean/how-get-started>

Mon 1 April 2019

The Isle of May is now open for visitors – to find out the latest news on sightings go to: <https://isleofmaybirdobs.org/bird-news/>

Friday 31st May to Sunday
2nd June 2019

Gardening Scotland 

The Royal Highland Centre, Edinburgh – for more info go to <http://www.gardeningscotland.com/>

Butterfly Conservation newsletter link

<https://butterfly-conservation.org/sites/default/files/2019-03/E-news%20Spring%202019.pdf>

Friday 19th July to Sunday, 11th August 2019 - Big Butterfly Count

See www.bigbutterflycount.org for more information.

Thursday 26th and Saturday 28th September - Moth Night 2019

This event will be celebrating its 20th year since its launch in 1998. See www.mothnight.info/ for more information.

And finally

Residents at the top of Craigie are delighted that the Red Squirrels have now arrived in their gardens. The following photos were taken in February.



By kind permission of Betty Morgan (Craigie)



By kind permission of Audrey Pirie (Craigie)

If you have any photos or sightings, then please send them to me at drumoig.wildlife@gmail.com

Don't forget to visit the web page - <http://drumoig.btck.co.uk/DrumoigWildlifeForum>