

Drumoig Wildlife Forum (DWF) Newsletter 16 – July 2020



Welcome to the sixteenth newsletter for the Drumoig Wildlife Forum.

Bird of the month

In the last edition I started with an article about the Swallow, unfortunately we have not had any nesting on our house this year but are thrilled to have House Martins.

The House Martin belongs to the group 'Hirundines' (as do Sand Martins and Swallows). It is a smallish bird (around 14cm in length), its head is two-toned, black above the bill and white under and it has a black eye. It has a glossy blue-black back and pure white underparts and distinct white rump. It has a forked tail but doesn't have the long streamers that a swallow and it is all black has which is the best way to tell the House Martin from a Swallow at a glance when in flight. Adult males and females are alike. They spend about 6 months here arriving in April and leaving in October. They are widespread across Europe and are known as the House Swallow in the Netherlands (*huiswaluw*) and Window Swallow in France (*hirondelle de fenêtre*). The House Martin spends the majority of their time airborne and their diet is made up entirely flying insects caught on the wing, they drink water from pools by low flying skimming.



In urban environments the House Martin will nest under the eaves of a house creating a rounded half-cup which is constructed of mud and some plant material, then lined with feathers and soft grass. The nest takes the birds up to 10 days to construct and is made up of at least 1,000 beak-sized mud pellets and a suitable supply of mud nearby is essential. This year's hot and dry spell at nest building time must have made that a difficult task. Often existing nests from a previous season will be repaired and reused, which can be done in just a few days.

There are normally two broods per season with a clutch size of four to five eggs, though occasionally a third brood is attempted which may result in the young birds not leaving the nest until October. Both sexes build the nest, incubate the eggs, and feed the young. The eggs take 14-16 days before they hatch and then the female broods them for a week until they can maintain their own body temperature.

The young from the first brood have often been observed helping their parents feed the next brood. Although the same pair will remain together for a single breeding season, it is rare for the to two pair again the following year, even if both survive.



For more information on House Martins see:

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/house-martin/>
<https://www.bto.org/understanding-birds/species-focus/house-martin>

Around the Golf Course

The is the second edition written during the 'Lockdown' and those who have walked around the golf course have seen winter turn into spring and have witnessed bare branches on trees develop buds, blossom and leaves and for different wildflowers and grasses to appear almost daily and seen birds going into our nest boxes and Mallards with their ducklings. Other sightings have been a Bullfinch, Linnet, two young stoats and a Deer with her fawn. Here are some photos taken during this time.



Female Mallard with 10 ducklings



Canada Goose

(By kind permission of Martin Hepworth)



Heron in Flight

(By kind permission of Martin Hepworth)



Badger Cub crossing fairway

(By kind permission of Norman Dalrymple)



Reed Bunting



Willow Warbler

(By kind permission of Paul Edwards)

Trees of Drumoig

During the few months I have taken the opportunity to undertake a tree and shrub survey around the golf course



I have been able to identify 20 species of trees so far a list of names is shown on the right. Above shows samples of some of the leaves.

During my research I discovered trees such as the Hawthorn, Rowan, Whitebeam, Crab Apple and Cherry belong to the Rose Family – *Rosaceae* (they have simple flower structures and proagation is by seed or grafting) and the Laburnum a favourite in many gardens belongs to the Pea family – *Leguminosae* (meaning pod bearing).

Trees

1. Alder - *Alnus glutinosa*
2. Ash (Common) - *Fraxinus excelsior*
3. Aspen - *Populus tremula*
4. Beech (Common) *Fagus sylvatica*
5. Elderberry (Common) *Sambucus nigra*
6. Blackthorn or Sloe - *Prunus Spinosa*
7. Hazel (Common) - *Corylus avellane*
8. Crab Apple - *Malus sylvestris*
9. Dogwood – *Cornus sanguinea*
10. Hawthorn - *Crataegus monogyna*
11. Holly (Common) – *Ilex aquifolium*
12. Larch – *Larix decidua*
13. Oak - *Quercus robur*
14. Rowan or Mountain Ash – *Sorbus aucuparia*
15. Scots Pine - *Pinus sylvestris*
16. Silver Birch - *Betula pendula*
17. WhiteBeam - *Sorbus aria*
18. Wild Cherry – *Prunus avium*
19. Willow (White) - *Salix alba*
20. Willow (Goats or Pussy) also known as Sallow - *Salix Caprea*



Hawthorn in full bloom



Rowan Tree

Shrubs of Drumoig



Rugosa Rose



Dog Rose

I have also been able to identify 8 species of shrubs as detailed below.

1. Bramble - *Rubus fruticosus*
2. Broom - *Cytisus scoparius*
3. Buddleia – *Buddleja davidii*
4. Currant - *Ribes*
5. Dogwood – *Cornus sanguinea*
6. Gorse – *Ulex europaeus*
7. Rose (Dog) - *Rosa canina*
8. Rose (Rugosa) - *Rugosa Rosa*

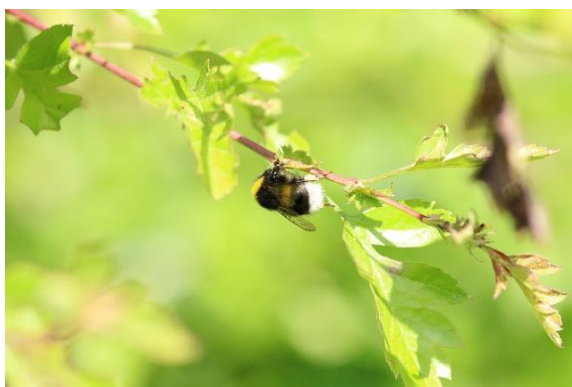
Life in the garden

It's been a great time to watch wildlife in the garden, our are bird feeders are being emptied daily and we have seen Great Tit, Blue Tit, Goldfinch and Starling Fledglings. We were also delighted to see 2 Greenfinch and a Song Thrush and this week a Greater Spotted Woodpecker has been visiting the nut feeder.

Thank you to residents who have sent in their sightings and photographs, a selection of them are shown below.



These two photos show Sloe or Hairy Shield Bugs (confirmation awaited) on a dandelion and inside the dandelion clock. (By kind permission of Martin Hepworth)



White-tailed Bumble Bee



Common Carder Bee



Ringlet



Orange Tipped Butterfly

(The above four photos by kind permission of Paul Edwards)



Female Pheasant having a dust bath
(By kind permission of Martin Hepworth)



Collared Dove
(By kind permission of Liz Ogilve)



Female Pheasants – group and individual (By kind permission of Liz Ogilve)



A trio of lovely Red Squirrels
(By kind permission of Liz Ogilve)



Red Squirrels inside and queuing for the 'Squirrel Proof' feeder
(By kind permission of Lesley Burden)



More Drumoig Red Squirrels



What's On - Wildlife Organisations

National Insect week - 22-28 June 2020

Information on this year's National Insect Week can be found at: <https://www.nationalinsectweek.co.uk/get-involved>

The idea behind this event is to encourage everyone to discover the insects in their gardens, parks and green spaces – to take photos, create art, identify species and celebrate the insects all around us.

Although the event itself is over you can still enter their photography competition at:

<https://www.nationalinsectweek.co.uk/photography>



Big Butterfly Count from Friday 17th July - Sunday 9th August

To take part in the 2020 Big Butterfly Count there will be a new, improved app for phones and tablets, or you can download a form. Details are now available at bigbutterflycount.org.

Dragonfly week is from Saturday 18 – Sunday 26 July 2020

<https://british-dragonflies.org.uk/event/dragonfly-week-2020/>



The Scottish Wildlife Trust have a very good website and you can sign up for their weekly newsletter.

<https://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/scotlands-wildlife/>

During lockdown they have produced a weekly 'Wild Trivia' quiz, which is a great way of learning about nature.

<https://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/category/wild-trivia/>

They have also produced 'Wild week' which is a series of short videos that includes photos and videos taken by members of the public. Here are the links to the June videos

1 June – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WnN2sLoNVpM>

8 June – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WnN2sLoNVpM>

15 June – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7pUYlWodlw>

22 June – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7gAfHDLmn_g

29 June –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KNFiG8NCxk&feature=youtu.be>

There is also an interesting video by an officer from Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqw_G7jE6fc

Springwatch 2020

If you didn't watch the recent series of Springwatch I can highly recommend it. The new lockdown format worked well, and you can see all the episodes on I Player. There is also lots of interesting information, blogs and photo galleries. To find out more go to:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b007qgm3>

BBC
TWO



<https://www.bumblebeeconservation.org/bumblebee-species-guide/>

Focus on Bees

This is a good time to focus on bees and look out for them in your garden.



The Bumblebee Conservation Trust has just launched an App which gives users a new view of bumblebees through an augmented reality 3D function. The free 'What's that Bumblebee' app lets people engage with nature in a different and fun way by bringing a three-dimensional bumblebee to virtual life in the user's own garden or living room, for studying in detail and with the option of capturing images to send to family and friends. The app also makes it easy for bumblebee-beginners to identify which of the UK's most common eight species of these important pollinating insects.

There are currently 24 species of bumblebee resident in Britain. Another, the Short-haired bumblebee (*Bombus subterraneus*), is being reintroduced after going extinct in 1988. Britain also has two extinct bumblebee species: Cullum's bumblebee (*Bombus cullumanus*) last recorded on the Berkshire Downs in 1941, and the Apple bumblebee (*Bombus pomorum*), a short-lived establishment on the south coast in the mid-1800s.

Seven species of bumblebee (the 'Big 7') are widespread across most of Britain. These are:

1. Red-tailed (*Bombus lapidarius*)
2. Early (*Bombus pratorum*)
3. Common carder (*Bombus pascuorum*)
4. White-tailed (*Bombus lucorum*)
5. Buff-tailed (*Bombus terrestris*)
6. Garden (*Bombus hortorum*)
7. Tree (*Bombus hypnorum*)

Did you Know?

Unlike the Honeybee, bumblebees do not make honey, as they do not need to store food for winter. Instead, the season's new queens hibernate and emerge to find their own nests in the spring.

Do you want to attract bees to your garden?

Plant pollinator favourite plants – Lavender, single dahlia, lupins, asters, buddleia, aubretia

A list of bee-friendly plants can be downloaded for free from:

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/conservation-biodiversity/wildlife/plants-for-pollinators>

2020 Used Stamp Appeal



For more information see:

<https://www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk/>



British Hedgehog Preservation Society

Please don't forget that the collection for this year's appeal (British Hedgehog Preservation Society) is still ongoing. Please save your stamps and once the Drumoig Hotel reopens then stamps can be deposited in the collection box in the entrance hall.

You may remember that our 2019 collection of postage stamps was for the RSPB Albatross Task Force.

They were used to raise funds for the RSPB who are working with fishing crews to promote simple ways to stop killing seabirds, and with governments to implement regulations. South Africa has been a shining example of how this can work, with an astounding 99% reduction in albatross deaths since their team started there in 2006.

Friday 19 June 2020 was the world's first ever World Albatross Day and has been introduced by the RSPB to highlight the conservation crisis faced by these magnificent birds, so hopefully this good work will continue.



The Gough Island Restoration Programme

Many albatrosses are also facing trouble breeding, as their remote island homes are overrun with non-native predators that prey on their eggs and chicks. Yet we can turn this round through international efforts like [The Gough Island Restoration Programme](#) which aims to prevent the loss of two million eggs and chicks each year, and save the Critically Endangered Tristan albatross.

VE Day Celebrations



Lockdown didn't stop VE Day celebrations in Drumoig
(By kind permission of Malcolm Hodgson)

Ticks



As the DRA Secretary has reported previously the tick season has begun and wooded areas and the areas with long grass around Drumoig are known to have ticks. This magnified photo of a tick has been sent in by Martin Hepworth.

Further details about ticks, their effects and the potential for Lyme disease, and how to deal with them can be found at:

<https://www.lymediseaseaction.org.uk/>

or on the NHS

website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/lyme-disease/>

Drumoig Golf Course

During 'Lockdown' it has been a privilege and a joy to spend time walking around the Drumoig golf course during the day. As golf resumes, thanks should go to the Drumoig Golf club and their staff for keeping the course in such excellent condition.



And finally – As we start to move out of Lockdown



This lovely photo from Martin Hepworth of a snail is entitled "A Long road ahead" and seems pertinent as we come slowly emerge from the lockdown.

Please keep sending your sightings or any other interesting information or photos you have on wildlife in your garden or around Drumoig to me at drumoig.wildlife@gmail.com

Stay safe and keep well and let nature give you hope in these uncertain times.

Thank you and kind regards.

Christine Edwards, Drumoig Wildlife Forum Co-ordinator