

# Drumoig Wildlife Forum (DWF)

## Newsletter 3 - July 2017



**Welcome** to the third newsletter for the Drumoig Wildlife Forum. Thank you to those residents that have attended events or who have sent details of their sightings. It has again been a busy time and below is the progress so far:

**Wildflower of the month** is the Northern Marsh Orchid *Dactylorhiza purpurella*.

Location: It is widespread in north and west Wales, northern England and Scotland. It likes damp wet sites such as marshes, grassland, fens and lake margins. It has also been found colonising old quarries, urban brownfield or old industrial sites and can be seen in many areas of Drumoig.

When does it flower: From late May to late July, but mainly early June to mid-July.

Description: Plant height is 10–30cm. The spike is oval to cylindrical and dense with usually 10–40 deep magenta to red-purple flowers. The lip is relatively small and distinctively diamond-shaped, patterned with dark crimson lines and dots, the leaves are unspotted or with a few spots. It is pollinated by various species of bee and butterflies.

### Where are all the Birds?

#### **Are you wondering why you no longer hear any bird song and you are no longer woken by the dawn chorus?**

I've looked on the RSPB website and they say, it's because birds sing to establish and defend a territory and to attract a mate, and therefore mainly only sing during spring and early summer. Also, some birds only raise one brood and even those that raise several broods don't have a need to continue singing much after June. Once the chicks from the first brood of many birds leave the nest, the adults no longer need to defend their territory so vocally.

So, there's no need to worry - it's just a normal change in their behavior.

You will also notice a decline of birds in your gardens in August, and a reduction in the food taken from your bird tables and feeders. This is another natural change and a part of the annual cycle of birds. There are two reasons for this.

1. Once birds have completed their breeding for the year, they start to moult into fresh new feathers, this takes several weeks. During this period birds look rather scruffy, and while they are moulting their wing feathers, they are less able to escape predators. So, they conceal themselves as much as possible to avoid predators and territory disputes.
2. In late summer, there is a bounty of natural food available such as grain, berries and fruit. In areas where farmland is nearby, house sparrows, starlings and many finches move from their nesting areas out to fields to feast on the grain before it is harvested, and on the spilt grain after the harvest. In cities, sparrows and finches are attracted to any piece of rough ground that provides a good crop of weed seeds. Tits tend to abandon their territories soon after their young fledge, and spend most of their time in the late summer high up in tree canopies, where they are easily missed and blackbirds and song thrushes tend to move to where there is an abundance of fruit or berries.

But don't worry, they will return in the autumn particularly when the temperature drops and a frost appears.

## Past Events

Saturday 10 June was a damp morning, but 7 residents braved the weather to attend the Moth Trapping reveal. Duncan Davidson, from the Butterfly Conservation had set 4 moth traps on Friday, and then brought them to the Drumoig Golf Club car park to show us.



There was a wide range of colour and sizes and being nocturnal and a little chilly, we watch in amazement as they vibrated their wings to warm up and fly.

Duncan who is Fife Recorder for the Butterfly Conservation was again excellent in his knowledge of moths, their habitats and life cycles. Although each species has a Latin name, the common names, were fascinating with species such as White Ermine, Green Carpet, Double Square Spot, Flame Shoulder and Heart and Dart. Although my favourite was Timothy Totrix.

However, nothing prepared us for the Poplar Hawk-moth, shown below.



who'd have thought we shared our location with such a fantastic specimen.

Moths fly in the day as well as night, if you see a moth and want to identify it the Butterfly Conservation have an excellent website <http://butterfly-conservation.org/51/2/identify-a-moth.html>



On Tuesday 27 May eight residents braved the rain to join a guided walk at the St Andrews Botanic Garden.

This beautiful and inspirational landscaped 18-acre garden in the heart of historic St Andrews dates back to 1889. It provides a haven for the rare and unusual amidst mature trees and shrubs, a rock and scree garden, ponds and waterfall, woodland gardens and herbaceous borders. It also has a vegetable plot, herb garden and orchard. There are also several glasshouses showing a range of habitats: desert, alpine, temperate and exotic. Our guide Peter (shown here second from the right) took us around the various areas of the garden and introduced us to species of plants that were good for wildlife. For more information on the gardens visit their website on: [https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~gdk/stabg\\_new/index.html](https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~gdk/stabg_new/index.html)

Following tea in the garden café, four residents then visited the Tropical Butterfly House where we saw many species of exotic butterflies.



## Future events – Dates for the diary

- **Big Butterfly Count - 14th July to 6th August**

The Butterfly Conservation are holding their Big Butterfly County. They just ask you to pop outside on a sunny day and count butterflies and moths for 15 minutes and record your sightings online! See [www.bigbutterflycount.org](http://www.bigbutterflycount.org) for more details and to download your counting chart.

*Did you know that Scotland has around 36 butterflies and around 1500 moths, so lots to find?*

The Butterfly Conservation has an excellent website with lots of information about butterflies and moths which will help you identify the species you find. See: <http://butterfly-conservation.org/44/butterflies-and-moths.html>

- **On Wednesday 26 July, Saturday 29 July, Saturday 5 August and Wednesday 9 August** - the RSPB, in partnership with Forest Enterprise Scotland are running a series of guided walks along the Tentsmuir beach (approx. 4 km) in the search for sea eagles, these start at 10am at the picnic area by the Kinshaldy car park at the Tentsmuir National Nature Reserve and should last approx. 2 hours. There is a £2 car parking charge to enter Tentsmuir, the guided walk is free, but donations are welcome. Booking is essential as there are limited places available, please contact 01738 630783 or email [perth.admin@rspb.org.uk](mailto:perth.admin@rspb.org.uk)
- **Saturday 19 August at 10am** – we will meet Duncan Davidson, Butterfly Conservation at the large car park at the Drumoig Hotel, where he will again give us the opportunity to see the moths he has trapped on the previous evening (and then release them). This visit is expected to reveal other species than those revealed in June.
- **Saturday 26 August** - as it is the 10th anniversary of the East Scotland Sea Eagles reintroduction project this year a special Sea Eagle Festival event will be held at Tayport on to celebrate! The event is taking place at The Common, Tayport promenade from 12 - 4 pm and activities include willow weaving a giant nest, storytelling with Chatterbox Stories, creating eagle cartoons, a guided bird walk and much more. To mark the 10-year anniversary, the RSPB have invited a few people involved in the project to give a short talk from 3 pm and there will also be *music from the Ferryport Fiddlers to enjoy*
- **On Tuesday 26 September at 2pm at the Drumoig Hotel**  
Many residents have reported sightings of Red Squirrels on the golf course (around the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>) this is very encouraging. So, the next talk will be on the subject of Red Squirrels and will be given by Ken Neil who up to his recent retirement worked for 'Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels'. Please continue to send your sightings to me so we can build up our database.
- **Winter Spring Programme**  
Talks on Birds in Fife by Norman Elkins, BTO, a talk on Hedgehogs by Scottish Wildlife and a talk about trees by the Woodland Trust are being considered as well as a guided walk at Morton Lochs.

## And Finally

If you have any questions or would like more information on the Drumoig Wildlife Forum please contact me at [dct.wildlife@gmail.com](mailto:dct.wildlife@gmail.com)

Don't forget to visit the web page. If you can think of any other information that would be useful please let me know. The link is: <http://drumoig.btck.co.uk/DrumoigWildlifeForum>

**Christine Edwards, Drumoig Wildlife Co-ordinator**