

Drumoig Wildlife Forum (DWF) Newsletter 5 – March 2018



Welcome to the fifth newsletter for the Drumoig Wildlife Forum and the start of Spring, albeit and cold and snowy beginning. However, one of the surest signs of that spring here is seeing primroses, our plant of the month.

Plant of the month – Is the Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*)

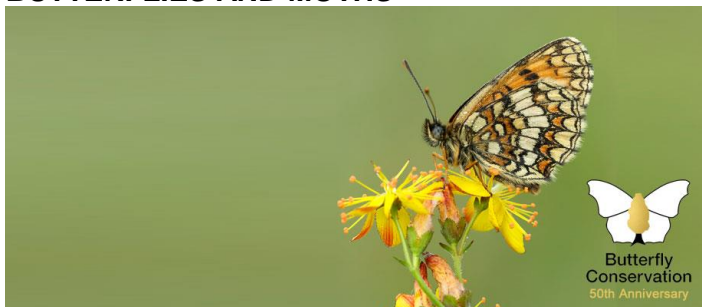
This is a species of flowering plant in the family Primulaceae, native to western and southern Europe, northwest Africa, and southwest Asia. The name is derived from the Latin *prima rosa* meaning 'first rose' of the year, despite not being a member of the rose family. It is also known as Common primrose, English primrose, Butter Rose, Easter Rose and Lent Rose.

The primrose is a perennial growing 10–30 cm (4–12 in) tall, the flowers are typically pale yellow, though white or pink forms are often seen in nature and are delicately scented. The leaves are 5–25 cm long and 2–6 cm broad, often heavily wrinkled. In appropriate conditions, the primrose can cover the ground in open woods and shaded hedgerows. Both flowers and leaves are edible, the flavour ranging between mild lettuce and more bitter salad greens. The leaves can also be used for tea, and the young flowers can be made into primrose wine.

Did you know that

- 19 April is named “Primrose Day” as it commemorates the anniversary of the death in 1881 of British statesman and prime minister Benjamin Disraeli, 1st Earl of Beaconsfield. It was said to be his favourite flower and Queen Victoria would often send bunches of them from Windsor and Osborne House and sent a wreath of primroses to his funeral.
- There is Clan Primrose in Scotland https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clan_Prимrose
- To prevent excessive damage to the species, picking of primroses or the removal of primrose plants from the wild is illegal in the UK under the [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#), Section 13, part 1b).

BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS



The Butterfly Conservation is celebrating its 50th Anniversary this year, it was first conceived, in a London apartment in 1968, and its' founders could not have imagined a UK-wide organisation with the level of support afforded today. For more information on Butterflies and the work of the Butterfly Conservation go to: <https://butterfly-conservation.org/>

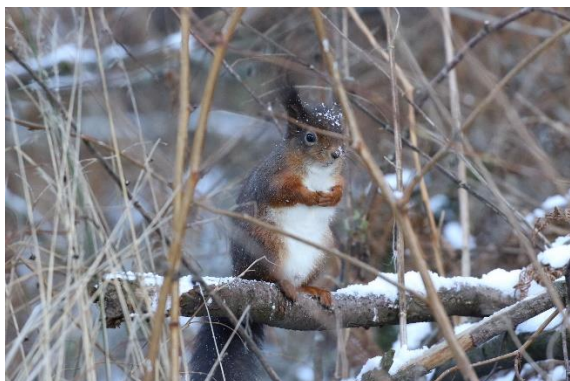
If you haven't seen a butterfly yet this year, then keep looking. The Butterfly Conservation say that around 15 butterfly species had been seen by the end of March in 2017. To see this year's sightings go to: <https://butterfly-conservation.org/52/first-butterfly-sightings-2018.html>

And don't forget - 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>

RED SQUIRRELS

It has been encouraging to receive more confirmed sightings of Red Squirrels on Drumoig, they have now been seen in Comerton, Forgan and Craigie as well as on the golf course. Please keep sending in your sightings and any photos.

Here are some photos Paul Edwards took at Morton Lochs on the first day of the snow.



In general, the good news is Scotland's red squirrel numbers have stabilised according to an article on the BBC News website. See link below. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-42987025>

In addition, a major study published in the scientific journal Biodiversity and Conservation has concluded that the spread of pine martens, who were once persecuted to the verge of extinction, but are now under legal protection, could be a "critical factor" in the success or failure of grey squirrels. A survey of over 9000 square kilometres in central Ireland found red squirrels became common and greys suffered a "population crash" in areas where pine martens were active. Apparently, the grey squirrels are fatter and slower than the nimble reds, so make a more attractive and easier meal for the martens, which are known to be ferocious and opportunistic predators.

However grey squirrels are still in this area with recent sightings at Craigsanquhar, Cupar just 11 miles away and Kingsbarns just 16 miles away. You can report sightings of grey squirrels (and red squirrels) through the Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels website at:

<https://scottishsquirrels.org.uk/squirrel-sightings/>

This information is very important to them in assessing the numbers of Red Squirrels and concentrating on areas where support is needed.

Lastly footprints in the snow



The above photo comes from Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels website and shows Red Squirrel footprints (with a glove to give indication of size).

BIRDS

Bird Boxes

The BTO National Nest Box Week (NNBW) was held from 14 to 21 February 2018. The Drumoig Bird boxes have been checked and where necessary repaired or re-sited, we still have 20 bird boxes around the Drumoig Golf Course and during maintenance evidence of 9 nests were found. The photo on the right is an example of one we found. If you want advice on buying or making your own box and where best to put it, please go to:

https://www.bto.org/about-birds/nnbw?dm_i=IG4,5DI8Q,J62F2G,KSA5V,1



Bird Feeding

It's important to provide for birds all year-round. In wintry conditions, food and water are in scarce supply and so we should do everything we can to provide them with the supplies they need. Dobbie's Garden Centre have produced this recipe for Fat-Cake Feeder. We have tried this and our Blackbirds love them: <https://www.dobbies.com/ideas-advice/seasons/winter/how-to-create-a-fat-cake-feeder-for-birds/>

Spring is an appropriate time to give bird feeders, bird tables and water features a good clean and then to make sure they are filled regularly with food and fresh water. During spring and summer, birds will be searching for tasty treats to help them care for their young and keep up an active lifestyle. Dobbie's have also produced an excellent chart on "How to Feed birds". It covers different type of food and which birds prefer them. This can be found by clicking on the following link: <https://www.dobbies.com/ideas-advice/seasons/spring/how-to-feed-birds/>

Bird Count

RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch was held from Saturday 27 to Monday 29 January 2018 and they are now calculating the results which I will publish as soon as I receive them.

What's that bird?

The recent harsh weather has meant that the bird feeders and tables have been extra busy. With a number of residents seeing new or rarely seen birds in their gardens. To help with identification four information sheets have been created and uploaded to the DCT website. They show several types of birds by family and cover Buntings, Finches, Thrushes and Tits. The links to the information sheets can be found below:

<http://drumoig.btck.co.uk/Build/Default.aspx?page=%2fDrumoigWildlifeForum%2fWildlifeInformationSheets&mode=edit>

Cormorant at Comerton



One of the most unusual garden visitors this month was a Cormorant.

Debbie McKee from Comerton sent this photo of the bird in her garden. It has also been seen in one of the lakes on the golf course.

To learn more about Cormorants see the following link

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/cormorant>

Local News

Tentsmuir Forest Visitor car park plan

Forest Enterprise Scotland have a number of proposed changes to the Car Park area at Tentsmuir, following on from the tree felling. These include a new play area to be situated at the north end of the car park, due to be delivered in the spring. Some additional trails to allow non-motorised visitors to pass round the car park area safely, an area of hard standing to further upgrade the food concession facility, and a further area of hard standing on which to develop a cycle hire concession.

I am currently in contact with the Beat Forester (Fife, Angus and Lowland Perthshire) to obtain more information and copies of their plans and designs have been uploaded to the website.

Past events

Drumoig Community Trust AGM on 24 January 2018 - Christine Edwards gave an update on the first year of the Drumoig Wildlife Forum. A poster had been produced highlighting the events and is attached to this newsletter and can also be found on the DCT website at:

<http://btckstorage.blob.core.windows.net/site13789/18.01.24.DWF%20Poster2.pdf>

A book sale was held to raise funds for the Drumoig Wildlife Forum and £11 was raised. Thank you to all those who made purchases.

Talks and walks – Dates for the diary

Spring / Summer Programme

Talks on Birds in Fife by Norman Elkins, BTO, including Corn Buntings; a talk on Hedgehogs by Scottish Wildlife and a talk about trees by the Woodland Trust and about Tentsmuir Forest 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 or have any sightings you would like to report or photos you would like to share then please contact me at 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



Weds 18 January - DWF launched at AGM

Tues 28 February - Biodiversity talk by Johanna Willi, shown here on the right presenting Moira Cuthbertson with her quiz prize of a bird feeder set



Weds 25 January - On-line survey issued



14-21 February - BTO National Nest Box Week



Sat 28 – Mon 30 January -RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch

Tues 11 April - Bumblebee and Moth Talk



Photo on the left shows Jeannie Duncan (centre) winner of the quiz prize (wildflower plants) with Clare McElroy, Bumble Bee Conservation Trust (left) and Duncan Davidson, Butterfly Conservation (right).

Tues 16 May - Bird Walk at Birnie and Gaddon



**2017
A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF THE DRUMOIG WILDLIFE FORUM
(DWF)**



June



We took on our biggest (and highest) challenge this month with the building and installation of a Tawny Owl Box



Sat 10 June - Moth Trapping and reveal with Duncan Davidson, Butterfly Conservation

Tues 27 June - Guided Walk at the Botanic Gardens, St Andrews.



Saturday 19 August at 10am – 2nd Moth Trapping and reveal with Duncan Davidson, Butterfly Conservation



Tues 26 September - Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels talk by Ken Neil



Ken presenting Anne Gibson with her quiz prize of a mug featuring a Red Squirrel

Buntings

The buntings of Europe, Asia and Africa are related to American sparrows. They are rather finch-like but have differently-structured bills, slightly flatter heads, longer bodies, and many have longer tails with white sides.

Reed bunting



<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/reed-bunting/>

Yellowhammer



<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/yellowhammer/>

Snow Bunting



<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/snow-bunting/>

Corn bunting



<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/corn-bunting/>

Cirl Bunting



<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/cirl-bunting/>

Lapland bunting











<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/lapland-bunting/>

Finches

These are small birds with forked or notched tails, moderately pointed wings, rounded or elongated bodies and round heads, normally with triangular bills.

The bill shape varies according to the principal type of food, from short and rounded to rather long and sharp. They have distinctive flight calls and simple, but sometimes musical, songs.

Bullfinch 	Chaffinch 
https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/bullfinch	https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/chaffinch
Brambling 	Goldfinch 
https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/brambling	https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/goldfinch
Greenfinch 	Linnet 
https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/greenfinch	https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/linnet
Common Redpoll 	Scottish Crossbill 
https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/common-redpoll	https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/scottish-crossbill

Siskin



<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/siskin>

Twite



<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/twite>

Common Rosefinch



<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/common-rosefinch>

Crossbill



<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/crossbill>

Hawfinch



<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/hawfinch>

Lesser Redpoll



<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/lesser-redpoll>

Parrot Crossbill



<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/parrot-crossbill>

Serin



<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/serin>

Thrush family

There are many thrushes worldwide. However, in the UK only six are normally seen, with four breeding regularly and two normally only seen in the winter. Below are there photos and links to the RSPB website to help with identification.

Red Wing



<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/redwing>

Field Fare



<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/fieldfare>

This is also a useful link to help identification between the above two birds
<https://www.bto.org/about-birds/bird-id/bto-bird-id-redwing-and-fieldfare>

Mistle Thrush



<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/mistle-thrush>

Song Thrush



<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/song-thrush>

Blackbird



<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/blackbird/>








Ring Ouzel



<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/ring-ouzel/>

Bird family Tits

In the UK, there are six breeding species. They are social birds, often in mixed flocks, but territorial when nesting. They are among the most persistent and successful visitors to garden feeders.

<p>Blue Tit</p> 	<p>Coal Tit</p> 
<p>https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/blue-tit</p>	<p>https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/coal-tit</p>
<p>Crested Tit</p> 	<p>Great Tit</p> 
<p>https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/crested-tit/</p>	<p>https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/great-tit</p>
<p>Marsh Tit</p> 	<p>Willow Tit</p> 
<p>https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/marsh-tit/</p>	<p>https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/willow-tit/</p>
<p>Long-tailed Tit</p> 	<p>Long-tailed tits are related to several species in Asia but are the only member of the family found in the UK and Europe. They have small-bodies and long-tails, with short legs and tiny, triangular bills. https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/long-tailed-tit</p>