

Drumoig Wildlife Forum (DWF) Newsletter 9 – February 2019



Welcome to the ninth newsletter for the Drumoig Wildlife Forum.

Plant of the month

The above photo shows the Snowdrop or Common Snowdrop (*Galanthus*). This is always such a welcome sight as it means that spring is on its way and as an early flowering plant snowdrops can be important for insects, such as flies.

The genus *Galanthus* is derived from the Greek gala meaning milk, probably referring to the milk-white flowers and is native to Europe and the Middle East and although it is often thought of as a British native wild flower, or to have been brought to the British Isles by the Romans, it was probably introduced around the early 16th century.

The snowdrop is an herbaceous, perennial plant that grows from a bulb. It doesn't have petals but is composed of six white flower segments known as tepals (they look like petals). The inner three tepals are smaller and have a notch in the tip, with a green upturned 'v' pattern visible. As a species they are surprisingly varied in height, flower shape and even colouring.

The bulbs need to be planted Late April or May and will flower between January and March. They prefer partial shade and are very hardy. Height is normally 12cm (5in) and spread by 20cm (8 in).

Traditionally snowdrops were used to treat headaches and as a painkiller but in modern medicine a compound in the bulb of the snowdrop has been used to develop a dementia treatment. A lectin compound contained in snowdrop is known as an effective insecticide. Snowdrops and their bulbs are poisonous to humans and can cause nausea, diarrhoea and vomiting if eaten.

Photos from Drumoig



By kind permission of
Martin Hepworth (Comerton)



By kind permission of Alec Burden (Craigie)

Events

On Tuesday 12 February 2019 twenty-nine residents, our largest audience to date, which also include two younger members of our community, attended the sixth Drumoig Wildlife Forum talk. Our speaker was Monica Arso Civil a Research Fellow at the School of Biology, Scottish Oceans Institute, University of St Andrews. Monica's research interests focus on marine mammal populations around St Andrews Bay and the Firth of Tay.



Bottlenose Dolphins



Grey Seal



Harbour Seal

Monica gave two excellent talks, the first on bottlenose dolphins and the second on Grey and Harbour Seals, her talks were very informative, and we all learnt a lot about the life cycle, habits and locations of these species and particularly the decline in harbour seals. Monica made the talks very enjoyable and she delivered them with great enthusiasm and was asked many questions by the audience. If you would like more information about the research Monica is doing with the harbour seals, the link to her fieldwork blog is: <https://synergy.st-andrews.ac.uk/harbourseals/> this has excellent photos and videos of harbour seals.

Monica also spoke about the Scottish Marine Animal Stranding Scheme, this is where people can report dead or stranded marine mammals (seals, dolphins). These reports are particularly useful to Monica and her colleagues research.

Website: <http://www.strandings.org/smass/report/index.html#ReportStranding>

Telephone Numbers: Their phone number is 07979 245893 or 01463 243030

E-mail: strandings@sruc.ac.uk

Facebook <https://en-gb.facebook.com/Strandings/>

An update on the Drumoig Wildlife Forum, was given and plans for talks and events in 2019 were also outlined. A contribution towards the refreshments raised £27.



A quiz was held and was won by Jeanie Duncan the prize is a book on Whales, Dolphins and Seals: A Field Guide to the Marine Mammals of the World and was presented to her by Monica.

A book called 2020 Vision was raffled and raised £36, the winner was Anne Gibson, and this was also presented by Monica.



Plans for talks and events in 2019.

These hopefully will include:

1. A boat trip along the River Tay in the summer.
2. A walk at Tentsmuir in the Autumn, with Tom Cunningham where we may spot seals and learn about the coastline
3. A talk by Fife Countryside Trust or the RNL

Please keep sending your sightings or any other interesting information or photos you have on wildlife in your garden or around Drumoig.

If you have any questions or would like more information on the Drumoig Wildlife Forum, please contact me at drumoig.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>

Local News and Events

Thursday 14 – Thursday 21 February 2019

The BTO National Nest Box Week

If you are thinking of putting up a bird-box, then now is the time.

On Saturday 2 March 2019 from 10am to 12 noon

Winter Tree Identification Walk at Birnie and Gaddon Lochs

You can join the Fife Countryside Trust Rangers on a walk around these local lochs. They will be looking at the various trees and shrubs found there, including the orchard. You will learn ways to identify different species when they are not in leaf or bloom and to understand some basic tree ecology. You need to wear suitable outdoor clothing and sturdy footwear as the footpaths can be difficult. The event is suitable for adults and will involve a walk of around 3 miles. For more information and to book go to: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/winter-tree-identification-walk-tickets-54753165191>

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>

Education and Visitors Pavilion - Tentsmuir National Nature Reserve (TNNR)

In August last year Tom Cunningham, Reserve Manager of TNNR, advised me that they were applying for funding for an Education and Visitors Pavilion at Tentsmuir and many residents sent letters of support. The good news is that the application was successful and plans to build have been approved and building started in December 2018 and they hope to open in March 2019.

2018 Used Stamp Appeal

Thank you to everyone who supported last year's appeal.

The stamps have now been parcelled up and are on their way to the RNLI



2019 Used Stamp Appeal



Please start collecting now for this year's appeal, and encourage your friends, relatives and colleagues to do the same.

The Drumoig hotel is supporting the appeal and there is a collection box in the entrance hall. Further collections will be made in December or contact Christine Edwards Who will arrange to collect them.

drumoig.wildlife@gmail.com

This appeal is in aid of the RSPB Albatross Task Force The project works with fishing crews to reduce the number of albatross's killed by being accidentally caught in trawl and longline fishing nets.



For more information see:

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/our-work/our-positions-and-casework/our-positions/marine-and-coastal/saving-seabirds-globally/the-albatross-task-force/>

And Finally

Thank you to everyone who donated books to the Summer Fayre last year. The sale of these books helped the Drumoig Wildlife Forum (DWF) purchase 4 bird boxes, a squirrel feeder and bird seed.



Leftover books have been donated to local causes / charities which include, British Heart Foundation, Cancer Research, Forgan Arts Centre, Newport-on-Tay library, Rotary Club of North Fife, St Andrews Choral Society and St Andrews Preservation Trust Museum.

However, there are still some books are still left to help raise funds for the DWF in 2019.