



**Scottish
Wildlife
Trust**

Lothian Talk

Scottish Wildlife Trust: Lothians Group Newsletter

Dates for your Diary

Autumn talks

Our talks programme will start up again in autumn. If you or anyone you know would like to present a nature-based talk, please contact Allan Mathieson on chair@swtlothians.org.uk

To book onto a walk or talk go to:

scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/our-events/

Catch-up online

Watch recordings of any talks that you missed - scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/things-to-do/watch-wildlife-online/online-talks

Harbour seals talk link

In February, John Dickens presented a wonderful talk (see link above) about his seal studies around the world. Find out more about the St. Andrews Harbour Seal project here synergy.st-andrews.ac.uk/harbourseals and see his beautiful seabird and seal images on Instagram at www.instagram.com/johndickens.images

Full details of the talks and events programme can be found online at swtlothians.org.uk/events



Photograph by Colin Shepherd

Woodhall Dean Visit

With the bluebells approaching their peak, there could have been few better choices than the SWT's own local nature reserve, Woodhall Dean, for our inaugural event of 2022.

A group of 20 SWT members met up with Reserve Convenor, Lesley Fairweather, on a fine April morning. The reserve looked spectacular, with most of the trees now coming into leaf but still with gaps in the canopy allowing dappled sunlight to penetrate to the woodland floor. It accentuated the fresh green of the grasses and other ground cover plants such as Woodrush, Wild Garlic and Dog's Mercury. Other plants in flower included Dog Violet, Wood Sorrel and Stitchwort, as well as a surprising number of Primroses and a few late Lesser Celandines. Damper areas were carpeted in Golden Saxifrage and, on a drier bank, Lesley pointed out a small patch of Wood Vetch, one of the rarer plants on the Reserve, not yet in flower.

One of the most striking features of the visit was the chorus of bird song, with Song Thrush, Chaffinch and

Willow Warbler very much to the fore. On the way through the Reserve we also heard numerous Chiffchaffs and Blackcaps singing as well as one or two Redstarts. Buzzard was also seen circling over the open fields. For many of those present it was their first ever visit to Woodhall Dean and everyone was enthusiastic.

We hope you will all continue to visit the site throughout the year. While Spring is undoubtedly one of the best seasons, there is much of interest at any time of the year. If you do visit and see anything which you think of particular note, do remember to let us know.

by Colin Shepherd

Hermitage of Braid Walled Garden



This year marks the celebration of ten years since the Friends of the Hermitage developed the Walled Garden below the doocot in the Hermitage of Braid Local Nature Reserve. Created in partnership with Edinburgh Council and funded by the Heritage Lottery, Nature Scotland and the Council, the garden is intended as a demonstration wildflower and herb garden based around themes of medical, culinary, and pollinating plants.

This warm, south-facing, garden is maintained by a small group of volunteers who take pleasure both from working there and from the appreciative comments of passers-by. In 2017, a “Signs of Life” project, funded by Forestry Scotland, brought new life to the garden with animal cut-outs and explanatory text illustrating all of the creatures that have been seen or found, at some time, in the Reserve. The cut-outs are very popular with children, with some of the smallest toddlers, with proud parents in tow, reeling off the names of the animals and birds.

To date, six bee species have been identified, thanks to the variety of plants. There are frequent visits by students of botany and other environmental studies as well as interested members of the public. New volunteers are welcome and if you can spare an hour or two in the growing season to help maintain and expand the planting, do contact the Friends on enquiries@fohb.org

by Goff Cantley

If you have anything you would like to contribute, please get in touch via editor@swtlothians.org.uk

Planning Matters, June 2022

Midlothian Council hosted the annual Local Biodiversity Site (LBS) meeting in February. Officials in Midlothian continue to be supportive of the LBS process, and confirmed that they are committing resources to a site survey this season and an extra day of LBS management work in 2022/23.

Three sites (Auchendinny Wood, Borthwick Glen & Carrington Mill Wood) were all re-surveyed in 2021 and put forward for re-assessment. The three sites scored highly.

The plant community at the old Monktonhall Bing is interesting, and survives despite motorbikes and other pressures. Recently, Midlothian Council confirmed the bing was not scheduled for development. The site will now be added to the list of potential Local Biodiversity Sites (pLBS). This site was one highlighted by Barbara Sumner, who recently retired from the LBS committee. We and the council offer our grateful thanks to Barbara after many years of expert service.

A planning application for a treatment plant to deal with mine water on the River South Esk has been submitted, for a substantial development on the bank of the river in Dalkeith. The application is being assessed by the Council.

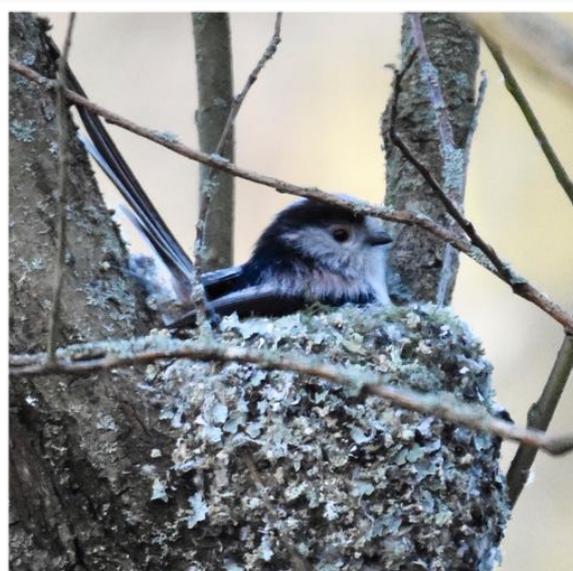
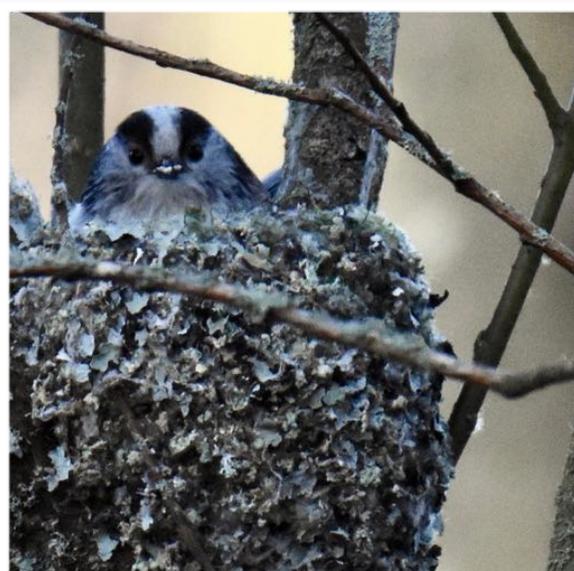
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New Editor Wanted!

Our Lothians Group subcommittee is looking for a new volunteer editor for this newsletter. If you think you might be interested in doing this, or perhaps job-sharing the role, please contact Kate Walters on editor@swtlothians.org.uk