



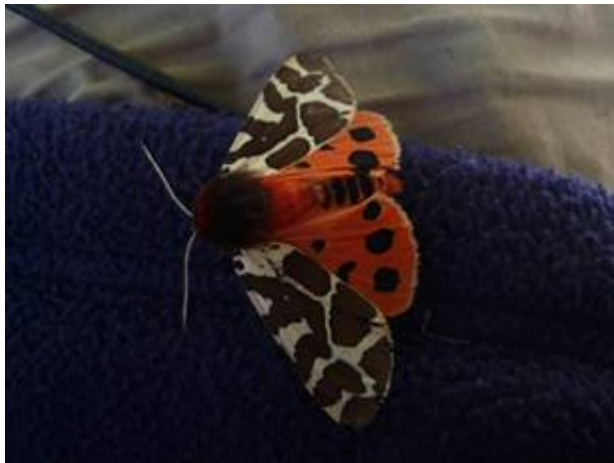
LANARK AREA MEMBER CENTRE BULLETIN ISSUE 41: AUGUST 2011

WELCOME

Welcome to the August issue of the Lanark Area MC's bulletin 2011, which contains articles of general and local interest, updates on talks, events, etc. I hope you will all contribute news and events to future bulletin editions. Send any articles, photos and ideas to postmaster@lanarkswt.org.uk.

Upcoming events

The new programme is published as a full page at the end of the bulletin, for ease of printing. The first talk will be about moths by Jo Davis on the 27th of September, and to whet your appetite, there's a moths trip (see below) run by the Falls of Clyde Visitor Centre.



Garden Tiger, Lizy Smith

The Member Centre's next field trip will be to Argaty Red Kites in November. More details will appear in the next bulletin, but we envisage the cost being £20 per person including transport from Lanark Bus Station. This will be shortly after Mike McDonnell's October talk about the Red Kites Project.

Moth Madness – Falls of Clyde, 25th August

Come and join our ranger team in taking a closer look at moths: The mysterious visitors in the night. Many people are afraid of moths or just annoyed with them for eating their clothing but the Moth is a sadly misunderstood creature. More brightly coloured than butterflies, and capable of outwitting the bats that hunt them, moths are a fascinating and diverse group of creatures. July and August are the peak months for moth emergence and moth trapping on the reserve has been catching some truly spectacular specimens. Over 100 species have been found on the reserve so far this year and new additions to our list are being found in every trapping session.

If you'd like to see this bounty for yourself then come along and let us show you the marvels of the moth world. We will be using light traps and sugar ropes to attract the moths to us and then get a closer look at them. As many people know from their own experience, moths are attracted to light and we can use this to our advantage by using special light traps to catch them. The moths hit the light and are stunned, sliding down a funnel into a plastic bucket filled with egg boxes where they can roost safely for the night. Many moths are also attracted to rotting fruit where they feed, often getting quite drunk on the fermenting sugars! We will be mimicking this by using a special mixture of sugar and alcohol to bring the moths in. This technique can be quite persuasive to certain species of moths which don't seem to be attracted to the light.

Our moth madness event starts at 9pm on Thursday the 25th of August and lasts until 11pm Adults cost £6 and children £3. We'll start at the Falls of Clyde Visitor Centre and then walk up through the reserve to our trapping site. As well as moths there'll also be the chance to see lots of other night-time wildlife on the reserve including bats, owls and maybe even badgers.

Falls of Clyde News

The Falls of Clyde Visitor Centre have changed their optics supplier to the well-known and respected Opticron company. The full range of Opticron products are now available at the Visitor Centre or with next-day delivery. Now is the time to upgrade or to buy quality optics at affordable prices. All SWT members qualify for a 10% discount. Also, as a result of the change remaining stock optics are available with significant price reductions.

Nethan Woods land purchase

This is a reminder about the Nethan Woods land purchase. At the moment the two Nethan Reserves consist of a series of disconnected woodland fragments. The SWT hopes to buy and convert some agricultural land into woodland, thus creating a continuous woodland belt throughout the Nethan Gorge. To complete the jigsaw however, the appeal needs £30K before the end of August. More for more details on the purchase, see <http://www.swt.org.uk/support-us/nethan-woods-land-purchase/>.

Other news

Sei whale spotted in Scottish waters

A rare Sei whale has been sighted between the waters of Islay and Gigha. The whale is a smaller relative of the Fin whale. Sei whales occupy temperate and subpolar regions in the summer, migrating to sub-tropical waters during the winter months. There have been only eight other confirmed sightings in Scotland in the past 50 years. It is thought there may be only about 13,500 Sei whales in all of the North Atlantic - their numbers having been severely depleted by whaling and fishing. By the 1960's they were considered 'commercially extinct.' Since 1979 the International Whaling Commission (IWC) has banned hunting thus offering them some protection.

Adult Sei whales can weigh between 20 and 30 tonnes and grow up to 19.5m in length. Sei whales have arched steel-grey backs with irregular white markings on their bellies. They have relatively slender bodies with pointed snouts, short pectoral fins and a compressed tail section that abruptly joins the flukes. The dorsal fin is sickle shaped and measures 10 to 20 inches in height. Seis have 38-56 deep grooves in their ventral (front) regions which may aid in feeding. Each side of their upper jaw contains 300 - 380 greyish-black baleen plates with fine whitish inner bristles. The mammals can live up to 70 years and are among the fastest cetaceans, swimming at speeds of up to 30 miles per hour in short bursts.

Sei whales feed by skimming through the water on their sides through swarms of prey and straining food through their comb-like baleen plates. An average Sei whale eats about one ton of copepods, amphipods, krill, and small fish every day. Although distinguished by their speed, Sei whales are not remarkable divers, preferring to stay near the surface or diving only to shallow depths where they remain submerged for only five to ten minutes at a time.



Photo by Danny Kerr

Rare Black Mountain Moth spotted at Glencoe and Ben Lawers

Experts at the National Trust for Scotland have reported the first sightings of the black mountain moth (*Glacies coracina*) at Glencoe and Ben Lawers this summer. It is the first time that the day-flying moth has been spotted in these areas. There are hopes that this nationally scarce species is expanding into new territories. The moth has never been recorded from Glencoe before, and this would appear to be the first record for Argyll, the nearest known locations being in Perthshire. As the name suggests, it is a true montane species, only found in the Scottish Highlands within Britain and rarely seen below 2000 feet. The moth's wingspan is 18-24 mm and the dark colour helps it to absorb heat from sunlight more effectively than pale moths do. Adults are on wing from June to August and are day active.



Photo: SNH

Rare and unusual visitor at Montrose Basin

Some rare and unusual visitors have been spotted in the mud at Montrose. Three spoonbills (*Platalea leucorodia*) have been seen at the Scottish Wildlife Trust's Montrose Basin Reserve. The spoonbill is a striking white wader bird. It has a long black flattened bill which resembles a spoon at the tip. Spoonbills are very rare in the UK; there are only around 75 sightings a year and they have never been seen at Montrose Basin in these numbers before. The species is of European Conservation Concern.

Scottish Wildlife Trust Perthshire Ranger Anna Cheshier said: "There is now a rare opportunity to see an unusual visitor to these shores. The spoonbill is unmistakable. It really stands out at Montrose Basin and we have been watching them carefully since the first sighting on the 28th June. I have never seen more than one spoonbill at Montrose Basin so it is great news to see a group. This group has been at the basin over a week now and we think they will stay for a while. But people should come along to Montrose as soon as they can for a chance to see these striking birds."



Photo: BBC

Storm Petrel Colony doubles in size

A survey carried out by RSPB Scotland and SNH on the island of Mousa, Shetland, has recorded an estimated 11,800 pairs of European storm-petrels – often called simply storm petrels. This is a massive increase on the 5,400 pairs found there in 1996. They are however very difficult to count, as they nest in dry stone walls and boulder beaches on Mousa, but also famously in cavities in the Iron Age broch – and they're nocturnal, only returning to their nests under cover of darkness. Instead of observing the birds directly, researchers had to play recordings of storm petrel calls into potential nest sites and wait for a return call.

Mousa is the largest storm petrel colony in the country, housing 40% of the UK population. The key to the colony's success is the absence of ground-dwelling

predators such as rats, mink and domestic cats. Given the declines of many other seabird species in the UK, the storm petrel's success is noteworthy. Unlike several seabirds which are reliant on sand-eels and therefore tied to the fortunes of these fish, storm petrels forage on a wide variety of prey species and are therefore resilient to declines in an individual food type.



Storm Petrel, Mousa Broch, credit commons.wikipedia.org/otter

NEW LANARK AREA MC PROGRAMME 2011-12

Tuesday 27th September
“Moths – Night flying butterflies”
Speaker: Jo Davis

Tuesday 25th October
“The Red Kites Project at Argaty”
Speaker: Mike McDonnell, Head Ranger, Argaty Red Kite Project

Sunday 6th November
Trip to Argaty Red Kites, Doune

Tuesday 29th November
A short AGM followed by “California –From Slugs to Seals”
Speaker: Dr Jason Newton, University of Glasgow

Tuesday 13th December
Members Night with Members Talks

Tuesday 31st January 2012
“Darwin's fishes - the diversity, evolution & ecology of the Arctic charr”
Speaker: Prof. Colin Adams, Scottish Centre for Ecology & the Natural Environment,
University of Glasgow

Tuesday 28th February
“Local adaptation: Scottish frogs in a changing climate”
Speaker: Anna Muir, Froglife

Tuesday 27th March
“Scottish Ants”
Speaker: Jonny Hughes, Head of Policy at the Scottish Wildlife Trust

Tuesday 24th April
“Animals of the Cairngorm National Park”
Speaker: Alan Bantick, SWT Chairman

All talks start at 7:30pm & are held in St Nicholas Parish Church Main Hall at
Castlegate, Lanark SWT

Members: FREE; Non-Members £1.