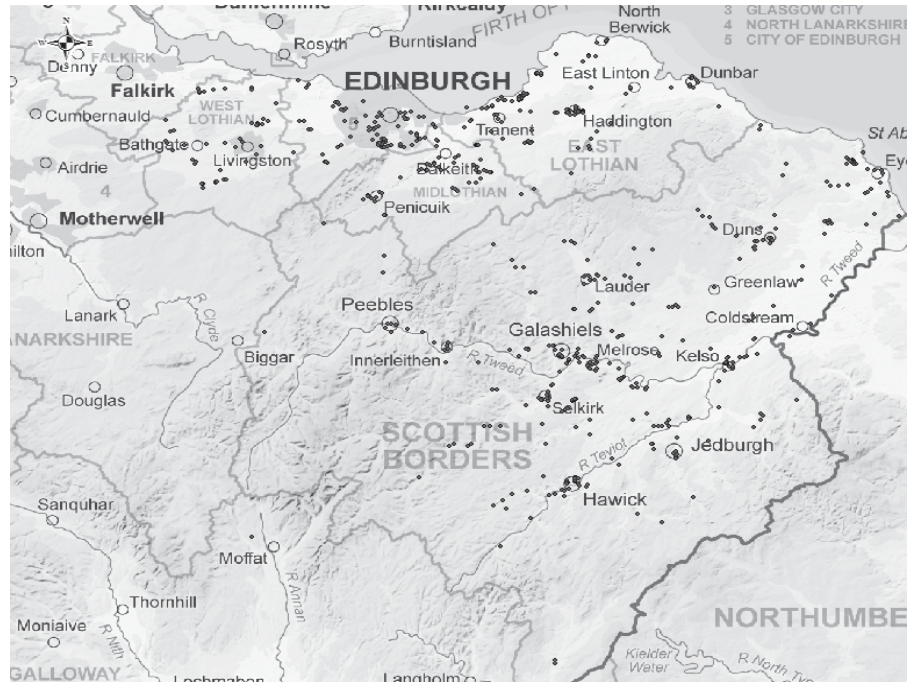


## Learning about our Local Wildlife

Steve Hannah, GIS and Data Officer of The Wildlife Information Centre based at Vogrie Country Park, Midlothian, reports on the TWIC Hedgehog Project.



through our online data form. The results of the survey to date are quite interesting. The majority of sightings, as expected, come from major settlements, such as Edinburgh, Livingston and Galashiels, and where the population is sparser, such as western Borders, there are very few records. Many of the sightings also come from major roads such as the B712 southwest of Peebles, where sadly many of the sightings are dead hedgehogs hit by fast-moving vehicles.

TWIC currently holds over 1300 hedgehog records in total, meaning that the survey has more than doubled our existing holdings. We are still eagerly looking for more hedgehog records, and reports continue to come in though at a much slower rate. If you have seen a hedgehog recently, whether alive or dead, please visit our website at [www.wildlifeinformation.co.uk/hedgehog\\_sightings.php](http://www.wildlifeinformation.co.uk/hedgehog_sightings.php) where you can submit records of hedgehogs. The more records we can get of hedgehogs, the better we can understand their distribution and management needs.

### Woodland variety at Woodhall Dean

On 5th May, an excellent turnout of 17 members enjoyed a stimulating visit observing the diverse floral, arboreal and faunal mix of the Woodhall Dean wildlife reserve, guided by Lesley Fairweather, the reserve convenor. We saw a typical assemblage of deciduous woodland flowers, highlights being the inconspicuous but fascinating moschatel, mats of the petal-less golden saxifrage along the burns, together with dog's mercury, woodsage, wood sorrel, wall lettuce and greater stitchwort. The deans preserve both mature and pollarded sessile oak, *Quercus petraea*, and we learned the difference between coppicing and pollarding as practised in former times; latterly, a mix of traditional Scottish hardwoods has been added. Lesley pointed out the rare microscopic lichen, *Gyalecta ulmae* ("minute jam tarts") locally colonising the red conglomerate, and an indicator of the former presence of mature elms. Woodland birds – willow warbler, chiffchaff, blackcap – were more easily heard than seen, but near the end a lusty willow warbler above our heads allowed us to match bird with song. Faunal sightings comprised a brown hare blissfully unaware of our presence, a shy roe deer, and several badger signs – a prominent track crossing and an oft-visited latrine, both distant from the large family sett. On behalf of those present, thanks once again to Lesley Fairweather.

Ian Jackson

In April 2010 TWIC launched its Hedgehog Survey across the Lothians and Borders. Despite holding a comprehensive database of species for the region, we had very few hedgehog records. By launching a survey of hedgehogs and inviting everyone to send in details of all their hedgehog sightings, we hoped to develop a clear picture of the status of hedgehogs in this region. We then hoped to establish a baseline to monitor the status of hedgehogs across the region in the future.

We had an excellent response to our survey, getting over 700 records between April 2011 and April 2012 both from postcards and from records submitted

### West Lothian Notes

Livingston MP Graeme Morrice has given his backing to a formal complaint to the Bern Convention on the subject of badger culling in England and Wales, already embarked upon by the Westminster Government. The likelihood is that Mr Morrice, quite understandably, felt that a risk exists for a similar programme of culling to be introduced north of Hadrian's Wall, and that his intervention, even as a Scottish MP, in an English and Welsh matter was justified as well as perfectly legal. The upholding of the complaint by the Bern Convention could, if all goes well, result in a ruling which would give Scottish badgers some measure of long term protection.

Tom Inglis



# Lothian Talk

Lothians Members Centre Newsletter  
Autumn 2012

<http://www.swtlothians.org.uk>

## Evening Events

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> October

### Perspectives on the Pentlands

The Pentland Hills have for centuries been a place for work and enterprise and play for the people of Edinburgh and the Lothians. What has been the impact on wildlife of this human activity – and what will the future hold? In a meeting which takes a different form from our usual, we invite three people who know these hills intimately to help us understand the issues. Bob Barr and Alastair Cowan, who farm in these hills, and Michael Jones, retired from the Pentlands Ranger service, will offer their thoughts and lead us in a discussion from their different perspectives.

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> November

### The Water of Leith - A Ribbon of Green Through our Capital City

A speaker from the Water of Leith Conservation Trust, will lead us in an armchair tour of the river, revealing the natural and industrial heritage which make the Water of Leith such a special place. We will also hear about the work of the Conservation Trust to conserve the river and protect its wildlife.

*This lecture was postponed from last November because of weather.*

## News from Wildlife Watch

The Newhailes Nature Detectives club has run at Newhailes for a number of years. We have 86 acres of Newhailes Estate that we can use. We also use Inveresk Lodge Garden with its amazing pond and great woodland, which the children get to visit throughout the year. The club has done various things like den building, pond dipping, bat walks and learning about the volcanoes that used to be in the East Lothian area, some of which is mind boggling. I think as an urban fringe ranger it's a great thing to contribute to, and sometimes as a leader thinking out the box is what is required – for example, a salmon assault course, not with salmon but teaching the children about a salmon life cycle in the River Esk in a fun but informative way. We are also looking for new Detectives as children move on due to age, so if you have a child who is interested please get in touch.

The Newhailes Wildlife Detectives club is run once a month by the National Trust for Scotland, supported by the Scottish Wildlife Trust. Check out their programme here: <http://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/things-to-do/activities-for-children/east-lothian> or contact: Stuart Whittaker, Lothian Area Ranger, National Trust for Scotland, Newhailes, Newhailes Road, Musselburgh, East Lothian, EH21 6RY 0844 493 2124

Stuart Whittaker

The *Scottish Wildlife Trust* is a company limited by guarantee, registered in Scotland (registered number SC040247) having its registered office at *Scottish Wildlife Trust, 110 Commercial Street, Edinburgh, EH4 6NF*. It is also a Scottish registered charity (charity number SC005792).

Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> Dec

### Woodlanders and Tales from the Forest

We are delighted that Ian Edwards, editor of *Woodlanders*, will be doing the December lecture on Thursday 13. Advance notice: His two books – *Woodlanders* (2010) and his new book *Tales from the Forest* (2011) make excellent Christmas presents and will be available for signing at discount price.

**Lectures start at 7.30 and are held at 33 Melville Street Edinburgh. Admission is free but donations appreciated. Non-members welcome.**

**Disabled access available by prior arrangement - contact Averil Stewart 01506 842676**





Planning Matters - Spring 2012

City of Edinburgh Council

Developments at the Craighouse campus (formerly Edinburgh Napier University) adjacent to the Easter Craiglockhart Hill LNR are being watched closely with a planning application expected before Christmas. It is possible that ultimately this privately-owned but publicly-used greenspace could be well defined for future public use and appropriate management without too much loss of actual green habitat – but locals are very concerned.

The council has completed version 1.0 of a Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) action to “identify areas of urban Edinburgh which are greater than 300m from their nearest natural green space.” The key word for this model is *natural*. This 300m target approximates the 400m walking distance target adopted by Natural England and the Scottish Wildlife Trust.

A range of datasets were used to define natural green space, including an Open Space Audit and identification of natural heritage and woodland sites. The key findings from version 1.0 of the model are that Edinburgh has 15,288.1 hectares of natural green network, comprised of 488 patches, with the three largest patches comprising 82% of the network. An equivalent of 82% of Edinburgh’s residences meet the target of being within 400m walking distance to their nearest natural green space. This means that LBAP process participants, including SWT, can focus on improving habitat for biodiversity within the 18% ‘biodiversity access’ deficit areas and steadily move towards the 100% target for Edinburgh.

Reminder: for Midlothian and East Lothian planning matters please write to Susan Manson, Castlesteads, Dalkeith, EH22 2NJ, in the first instance

Tim Duffy, Lothians Members Centre Chair and Planning Secretary  
Flat 4F2, 34 Warrender Park Terrace, Edinburgh, EH9 1ED Tel/Ans 0131 228 8785

Situation Vacant - Membership Promotion for SWT

Would you like to earn some extra income from doing something that you really believe in? Do you have 16-20 hours a week (flexible) to spare, during weekday evenings/weekend afternoons? Would you like to help the Scottish Wildlife Trust find some new supporters in your area and beyond?

Home based, you will be working for FMR Solutions Ltd – a fundraising agency – on behalf of the Scottish Wildlife Trust. Following a tried and tested "Soft Approach" formula, the post involves a bit of market research undertaken by walking around your local area and beyond, asking householders a simple yes/no question about their interest in wildlife conservation, and leaving information booklets about the Scottish Wildlife Trust with interested people. When you find people who wish to support the Trust, you help with the setting up of a Direct Debit contribution.

The work combines outdoor exercise with good potential earnings on a freelance/commission basis, typically between March and October. Promoters can also work on a waged basis.

You will have good all-round communication skills, be socially confident in a wide variety of situations, and be good at organising your time and motivating yourself. You will have a genuine interest in wildlife conservation, but expert knowledge is not required. You will have your own transport (bicycle OK in cities and larger towns). This post does not involve any selling or persuasion, but some sales, marketing, promotion, face to face, or public engagement experience is desirable. Full training is provided.

If you'd like to know more about this post and apply, please visit the FMR Solutions website [www.fmr solutions.co.uk](http://www.fmr solutions.co.uk) or email [j.leathart@btinternet.com](mailto:j.leathart@btinternet.com)  
Jeremy Leathart

Outdoor Events

**Bat Walk**  
**Thursday 9 August 8.45pm**  
**Blackford Pond Edinburgh**  
Meet inside the gate to Blackford Pond on Cluny Gardens at the junction with Oswald Road. A £3.00 donation to Lothian Bat Group requested. Full details in Spring *Lothian Talk* and *Events and Activities* booklet.

**Musselburgh Lagoons:**  
**September 15 11.30am**  
Our regular outing to this waterfowl-rich location, led by Nick Aitken. Meet at 10.30am at Goose Green, end of Balcarres Road, near the mouth of the Esk (OS Landranger 66: NT 347734).

**Aberlady Bay:**  
**October 13 3pm**  
Led as usual by John Harrison. Meet at 10.30am at Aberlady Reserve Car Park (OS Landranger 66: NT 472804).

Lothian Talk

Feedback and contributions to the Editor, Quintin Blane, at:  
**[lothiantalk@qab.org.uk](mailto:lothiantalk@qab.org.uk)**  
**Tel 01968 670017**

News from Lothian Reserves 2011

In the last reserves news I remarked that there had been five records of otter in *Duddingston Loch* and *Bawsinch* Reserve during November. Over the winter this happy state of affairs continued with frequent sightings of both a dog otter and a female with two young. Some lucky visitors to the Bawsinch hide managed to see several otters together and individual sightings have been quite regular.

In addition there was much excitement among birdwatchers with the presence for several weeks during February on Duddingston Loch of a wintering bittern. This is the first seen for almost twenty years on the Loch when bitterns were recorded for several successive years.

A considerable amount of management work was done on our reserves in 2011 and to do this is inevitably costly. We are therefore grateful to the various funding bodies and organisations that assisted our work and, in particular, to our local volunteers who helped with can collections at supermarkets, raising significant funds much of which has gone towards work on Lothian reserves. At *Red Moss*, last year’s replacement of the southern boardwalk was followed this year by replacement of the interpretative panels; this work was funded variously by WREN (Waste Recycling Environmental Ltd), Scottish Natural Heritage and Lothian Members Centre. We are now applying for funds to allow us to replace the northern boardwalk, also showing now signs of age. At *East Lammermuir Deans* a new footpath around Sheeppath Glen was built by our Conservation Teams and funded by Community Windpower Limited. Scottish Rural Development Programme funding was used for two projects; one at *Hermand Birchwood*, where a new boardwalk has been constructed, and another at *Petershill* where the funding paid to bring in a machine to clean out the pools, remnants of the earlier reservoir, which had become overgrown. At *Longridge Moss* funding from Levenseat Trust (Landfill Tax Credits) paid for replacement of 400m of stock fencing to allow grazing to continue, essential for management of the raised bog. At *Tailend Moss* we have been generously assisted financially by Macrae Edinburgh Ltd, who have their seafood production plant adjacent to the reserve, and they also helped with practical work by a work party made up of their employees. The work included an extension to the footpath and installation of further dams to reduce drainage from the moss. At *Woodhall Dean*, restoration of a section of boundary drystone wall was made practical by the donation, and delivery to the reserve, by Lafarge of recycled stone. At *Bawsinch*, as at Petershill, we used an excavator to clear vegetation from Gunn pond which had become almost completely overgrown, and at the same time we took the opportunity to reduce the extent of pond vegetation in some of the other ponds and did a little reshaping of steep banks. This work was paid for solely by Members Centre funds. This theme of maintaining ponds was also the case at *Milkhall Pond* where a lot of hard physical work was done hand-pulling out vegetation from the ponds. Unfortunately these ponds are inaccessible for machine – a pity as it is such a lot easier just commanding a machine to do the hard work!

*Ken Knowles*

Visit to Carrifran Wildwood Saturday 22 September 2012

In 1993 a group of visionaries conceived the idea of restoring a denuded Scottish Borders valley to its natural state before the activities of man. The valley was bought in 2000 and work began to exclude grazing animals and plant trees, many of which had been nurtured by the group for years before, with the intention of restoring authentic native woodland. Since then the determination, enthusiasm, and hard work of many has resulted in *Carrifran Wildwood*, now a distinct entity within the administration of the Borders Forest Trust. Today their efforts can be seen in the greening of the valley and surrounding slopes, and the changing nature of the wildlife present. Lothians Members now have the opportunity to visit.

Crinan Alexander, whose talk in March aroused much interest in the project, has offered to guide us round this unique site. A member of the Carrifran Steering Group, involved from the beginning, he is well-qualified to show us how this once denuded, barren landscape is already enriched after 12 years of tree planting and “constructive neglect.”

There is an easy track from the road for about 2km; thereafter the going is rough with some steep ascents, so some visitors may be content to return down the track, while others climb higher to view the changing habitats. There is only a small car park and we plan to share cars. We aim to meet at 10am for a minimum of two hours walking; bring lunch if you and your driver wish to make a day of it. Please let us know if you plan to come and whether you can offer or need a lift using the form below.

Send to **Colin Shepherd, 79 Lothian Road, EH3 9AW Tel 0131 229 5727**

Visit to Carrifran Wildwood Sat 22 Sept 2012

Name..... Contact Tel No..... E-mail:.....

Offering /Requiring Places (delete as appropriate) No of places offered/sought..... Car reg.....