

Lothian Talk

Scottish Wildlife Trust Lothians Group Newsletter

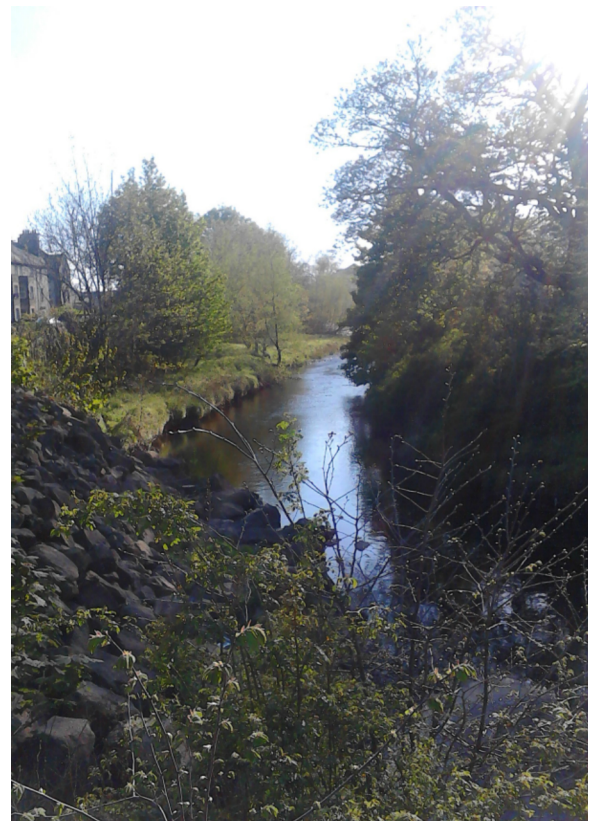
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Chairman's notes

Quite a change to our committees at the AGM in April at which I was elected as Chair of Lothian Group (Tim Duffy having completed his six year term) and Peter Bain was elected to chair the Membership Sub-Committee to replace Karen Pearson. Many thanks to both of them for all the work they have put in over the years on behalf of the members though I am very pleased to say that Tim will continue to be involved with the Group as a Vice-Chairman and as the Planning Secretary. It is also great to welcome Mike Beard both to the main committee and also as a Planning Contact for Edinburgh.

Tim and I attended the annual SWT Members Group Day on 30th April at Cumbernauld which was an excellent day that, in particular, provided food for thought in the impressive level of community involvement in our Cumbernauld Living Landscapes project.

Ken Knowles
Incoming Lothians group chair



Volunteer news

Congratulations and thanks to volunteers who helped bring in over £4,640 over 11 days during the last financial year. Money raised helps pay for Lothian Talk, supports the lecture programme and management of reserves and still gives £1000 to HQ.

However, if this is to be sustained, more volunteers are needed, especially since there have been resignations from long-standing and loyal stalwarts such as Betty Pentland, Jean Sobecki, Frances Cunningham and Wilma Hunter to whom many thanks are due.

After 12+ years in the role of organiser of fundraising, Averil is delighted to report that Barbara Knowles will shadow her, taking over in January 2017.

We can also report that £885.90 was collected at Tesco Corstorphine on 6 and 7 May. Why not come and join in for a 2-hour stint during 2016-17, in a store near you? If you're interested please contact Averil at gaveril.stewart@virgin.net to find out more.

Finally, the Lothians Membership Sub-Committee is in need of two new members. If meeting up a handful of times a year (in a pub) and helping organise some amazing SWT events in the Lothians sounds like something you'd be interested in then please contact Peter Bain on 0131 447 8937.

Planning matters

East Lothian

East Lothian Council approved the outlines of the new draft proposed Local Development Plan in November but the 'public' version is still being worked on by officials. It should be available for public consultation in the summer. There is much controversy about the location of new housing in and around Musselburgh. The councillors removed one potential housing site, Goshen Farm, from the final plan. This site has lain unmanaged for some years awaiting development and is developing into an interesting wildlife habitat. Its proximity to the Musselburgh Lagoons Local Biodiversity Site means that for the time being, there is some extension of bird usage including Grey Partridge and Curlews into and on the proposed development site. The site is now the subject of a planning appeal.

Midlothian

Both Midlothian and East Lothian Councils are operating from older, although still valid, Local Plans. Midlothian's new finalised Local Development Plan is being discussed by the Planning Committee this month (April) and the Local Development plan should be formally adopted later this year. It will be interesting to see if the Trust's comments in relation to biodiversity have been included.

The Trust has objected formally to the continued extraction of peat from Auchencorth Moss near Penicuik.

West Lothian

An exciting new river restoration project, run by the River Forth Fisheries Trust, will be adjacent to our Bog Burn SWT reserve and within the Bog Burn Lagoons Local Biodiversity Site (LBS). Julian Warman, our SWT Reserves Manager for South East Scotland, is confident that the project will be very good for habitat and biodiversity in the area as all these well run river restoration projects should be.

The council is planning the construction of a new secondary school in West Calder which will be directly adjacent to the council designated Parkhead East and Hermand Quarry LBS. From the detailed plans it looks like building work will not actually occur within the LBS boundary but that the adjacent western part of the LBS will be managed for habitat maintenance and biodiversity improvement. It can always be tricky when councils develop new schools on land they own and we must watch closely that the good intentions for wildlife are actually carried out so that the kids will have West Lothian's best outdoor environmental classroom only metres from their classroom doors!

Talks for your diary

Edinburgh's living landscape-
Thursday 20th October. 7.30pm

Leonie Alexander from Edinburgh's Living Landscape will give an introduction to this ambitious urban environment project as well as providing a number of examples of practical action taken so far.

Contact Colin Shepherd - 0131 229 5427
(colin.shepherd@swtlothians.org.uk)

Talks are held at 33 Melville Street, Edinburgh and start at 7.30pm.

All talks are free but donations are greatly appreciated

Disabled access available by prior arrangement, please contact Peter Bain - 0131 447 8937

Timing is everything: Phenology and climate change. Dr. Alli Phillimore-
Thursday 10th November. 7:30pm

The timing of spring events and their dependence on the weather has always captured the imagination of natural historians. Now against the backdrop of a changing climate, the observations of timings by natural historians (or citizen scientists as they are often referred to nowadays) have become an invaluable scientific resource, revealing that spring is getting earlier but that not all species are advancing equally fast.

This talk will give an overview of the research on phenology and then talk about some initial results arising from a 40-site field study looking at blue tits and how the timing of nesting impacts on the diet and growth of nestlings.

Contact: Peter Bain - 0131 447 8937

Edinburgh

A planning application for 53 residential units on a brownfield old Mill and Tannery site beside the Water of Leith LBS 70 metres Southwest of 351 Lanark Road West has been submitted. As well as being larger and taller than a previous consent on the site for a nursing home and surgery, adequate protection for legally protected Otters, Badgers and Bats around the site has not been made clear nor the effect on the Water of Leith LBS in its own right. The Council has requested further and more appropriately timed ecological survey work.

This quarter we have finished contributing to and starting the new Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2018 – the City of Edinburgh Council led Biodiversity partnership of all the relevant public sector and NGO bodies that have for decades worked to improve Biodiversity within the council area together and in a coordinated manner. We helped launch the first

Edinburgh Urban Nature Conservation Strategy way back in 1992 and the EBAP's have followed continuously from this. As well as managing and promoting our 4 reserves and their special Species Action Plan species in the district: Red Moss of Balerno, Johnston terrace, Pepper Wood and of course Bawsinch including the now famous Murder Acre extension and its 'flying herd', our highlight actions including continuing with re-introducing Pillwort and of course continuing to help assess and protect Edinburgh Local Biodiversity Sites. We also contribute to the associated Edinburgh Living Landscape action plan by promoting the use of 100% native species Wildflower meadows (true meadows with grasses) especially designed for Urban Pollinators (bees, hoverflies etc.) with a longer flowering period and with no 'nectar gap months' as with traditional such seed mixes. The 'Meadow for the Meadows' near Leamington walk South was a very successful and popular example last year.

Tim Duffy

Planning Contacts

Midlothian and East Lothian: Susan Manson - mansons@castlesteads.net, or at Castlesteads, Dalkeith, EH22 2NJ.

West Lothian: Dr Cameron Easton - dr.c.easton@gmail.com or at 1 Bellsburn Avenue, Linlithgow, West Lothian, EH49 7LD.

Edinburgh: Mike Beard - swt@mbeard.plus.com or at 48/7 Stewart Terrace, Edinburgh EH11 1UJ

Lothians Group Planning Secretary: Tim Duffy - Flat 4F2, 34 Warrender Park Terrace, Edinburgh, EH9 1ED, Tel/Ans 0131 2288785.

Anna Canning workshop

Fourteen of us had a fantastic morning at the Hermitage of Braid with Anna Canning on 23rd of April.

Anna started by telling us about the difference between herbal and folk medicine, helping us realise that we all knew at least one folk medicine cure- dock leaves for nettle stings! She then took us on a short walk filled with fascinating facts about food and medicinal uses for plants we're all used to treating as weeds. I was very interested to learn that the garlic smell persisting on the cycle track near my house is in fact due to the few-flowered leek and not wild garlic as I had always thought.

As she explained the uses for the plants we saw, Anna collected a selection of them which she showed us how to safely sterilise, then made into a delicious pesto for us all to try.

Thank you again to Anna for hosting such an interesting event, I think we were all inspired to try a bit of foraging ourselves.

Karen Pearson



Walks for your diary

Bat walk at Blackford pond - Thursday 11th August. 8:45pm

An event with volunteers from Lothian bat group who will bring bat detectors to enable us to hear the bats' ultrasonic echo-location calls. On previous walks we have seen pipistrelles and Daubenton's bats. Bring insect repellent!

Meet inside the gate to Blackford pond on Cluny gardens at the junction with Oswald road. Accessible by public transport. No need to pre-book.

A £3 donation is optional but much appreciated.

Contact: Peter Bain - 0131 447 8937

Water of Leith walk - Sunday 4th September. 11am

A walk along this fascinating river that runs through the centre of Edinburgh.

As a follow on from her talk last year Helen Brown will guide us along a stretch of this waterway giving us an overview of its flora and fauna as we go.

Meet at the Water of Leith visitor centre, 24 Lanark Road, EH14 1TQ at 11am. Accessible by public transport. No need to pre-book.

£3 per person.

Contact: Peter Bain - 0131 447 8937

Musselburgh lagoons walk - Saturday 1st October. 12pm

An Autumn bird watching visit to Musselburgh lagoons, led by ranger Nick Aitken.

We will be meeting at Goose Green, Balcarres Road, Musselburgh (NT347734) at 12pm, and the event will last approximately 2 hours. Bring suitable footwear, clothing and binoculars. Accessible by public transport. No need to pre-book.

Free.

Contact: Colin Shepherd - 0131 229 5427
(colin.shepherd@swtlothians.org.uk)

Aberlady bay walk- Saturday 8th October. 3.30pm

Guided goose watching walk at Aberlady bay led by reserve warden John Harrison.

We will be meeting up in the Aberlady reserve car park at 3:30pm and the event will last approximately 3 hours. Bring suitable footwear, clothing and binoculars. Accessible by public transport. No need to pre-book.

Free.

Contact: Colin Shepherd - 0131 229 05427
(colin.shepherd@swtlothians.org.uk)

Guided walks at Bawsinch - Sundays - 24th Jul/21st Aug/18th Sep/16th Oct. 2pm

Come along to our guided walks at Bawsinch. Take a guided walk in Bawsinch nature reserve or simply enjoy a walk around part of the normally closed reserve and take in some bird watching from the hide.

Meet at Bawsinch hide at 2pm. Bring suitable footwear, clothing and binoculars. Accessible by public transport. No need to pre-book.

Free but donations are much appreciated.

Contact: Ken Knowles - 0131 539 6643

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).

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