

Perthshire Society of Natural Science

Nature Section Newsletter

September 2023

Our winter season of talks is imminent and yet the 'summer' season of outings is not yet completed. Autumn is the main season for Fungal Forays, and such is the theme of our late outing. Tayside and Fife Fungal Group have extended an invitation to us to join them, and Dundee Naturalists, at Birnam on Saturday, 16th September. Our last outing but TAFFG will continue.

Summer Outings

We are grateful to the leaders of the outings this year, who have put in some stimulating work in getting to the right places, finding a range of specimens and imparting knowledge of – firstly, how to find them and – the identification.



Long-tailed Tits were seen on the first outing, to Moncrieffe Island. Their 'chatter' as they foraged in a small flock struck me as similar to the 'gossip' of the Goldfinches seen later. A highlight was the Tree-creeper although elusive and not staying long in view, unlike the Bullfinches, which wanted to join our party.

June 3rd in Glen Fender was well supported and there was a well satisfied group at the end of the day. The orchids received a good examination, and it was interesting how, once 'one got one's eye in,' attendees could keep finding the smallest of plants, the moonworts.

At Caputh on the 2nd July amongst some really nice plants, including an

impressively tall Giant Lettuce by the River Tay, growing on the rocky boulders imported to keep the river flowing straight at this point. The Agrimony in the grass at our lunch spot was a lovely find. The area of river shingle was particularly interesting with Stone Bramble, Purple Loosestrife, Bladder Sedge and lots of other things. In all 165 plant species, but the birds, bees, butterflies and a damselfly all added to the total sightings list..

Every outing had its highlights, especially as the weather was generally good as well. Full reports will be published in the Bulletin at the end of the year.

Butterflies and Moths

The Butterfly Conservation is having an autumn gathering in the AK Bell Library on Saturday, 7th October. If interested in attending, in person or on zoom, look at their web site, butterfly-conservation.org, for details. Scotland Manager, Anthony McCluskey visits us in March to speak about their work.

Spiders?

Also anticipating this years' programme, we look forward to a talk from Dr Alistair Lavery on spiders. I ought to know what this one is (a 'money spider'?) but I shall have to come to the December meeting to be sure.



Curious Minds

Another fantastic series of talks has been arranged for Friday nights in the Soutar Theatre, covering a range of topics. Consider buying a season ticket for all the talks, a significant saving if you go to all, and it also avoids the hassle of buying a ticket every fortnight! (Must be purchased before the first talk on 6th October)

The Nature Section Winter Programme

2023

October 25th, **“Earth: a user guide,”**

How the Earth works and how we can live within its means.
Dr Clive Mitchell, Strategic Resource Manager: Nature and Climate. NatureScot

November 15th, **“Doing Bird.....,”**

An archive birdsong project in HMP Perth
Steve Urquhart, Sound Artist and Radio Producer

December 6th, **“Scottish Spiders,”**

Dr Alistair Lavery, arachnologist

2024

January 10th, **“The Isle of May Uncovered,”**

Work and life on the island, research to puffins and everything in between. And what you can see during the year.

David Steel, Nature Reserve Manager, NatureScot

January 31st, **“My first year as BSBI Scotland Officer”**

The role, botanical highlights of the year, the Plant Atlas promotion and a look to the future of BSBI in Scotland

Matt Harding, BSBI Scotland Officer

February 28th, **“Perthshire Local Biodiversity sites; projects progress and their place in planning,”**

Robert Wills, PKC

March 6th, **“Perthshire’s threatened Butterflies and Moths,”**

Anthony McCluskey, Conservation Manager, Butterfly Conservation, Scotland

March 20th, **AGM and Member’s Night**

Invasive species?

The Egyptian Goose was introduced in the south of England in the 17th century. It is noteworthy now as it spreads north and the wild population (it was originally an

ornamental introduction to country parks) has seen a dramatic increase. BTO's Breeding Bird Survey reports a 56% increase in the number of occupied 1km squares that are monitored in the survey and an increase in the number of birds counted, over the last 3 years.

A wee bit bigger than a shelduck, to which it is closely related, and a bit smaller than a Greylag Goose, it can make its presence known with a loud honk, which didn't strike me as fitting for an 'ornamental.'



Loch of the Lowes, 2022

Footnote

The legumes produce such lovely flowers so here's a bit more summer sun



Common Vetch, *Vicia sativa*