

Stirling Members Centre Annual Newsletter April 2011 - April 2012

1. Membership

Local membership stands at 605 households in 2012.

2. Meetings and Outings

We have had another series of excellent winter talks with audiences between 25-45 including a good number of non members. It has been nice to have the support and enthusiasm from the members of Stirling University Nature Society. The programme covered the following topics:

- Alpine plants in the Breadalbane Hills
- The serious problem of alien species in the Upper Forth
- Red kites in Stirlingshire
- East of Scotland sea eagles
- Why study moths?
- Scottish wildlife conservation policy
- Breathing new life into old woodlands

As a result of the talk on moth recording we have applied for a grant to purchase a generator for a moth trap with a view to running our own surveys..

We arranged a series of local '*nature rich walks*' one of which was featured on BBC Scotland's *Out of Doors* programme.

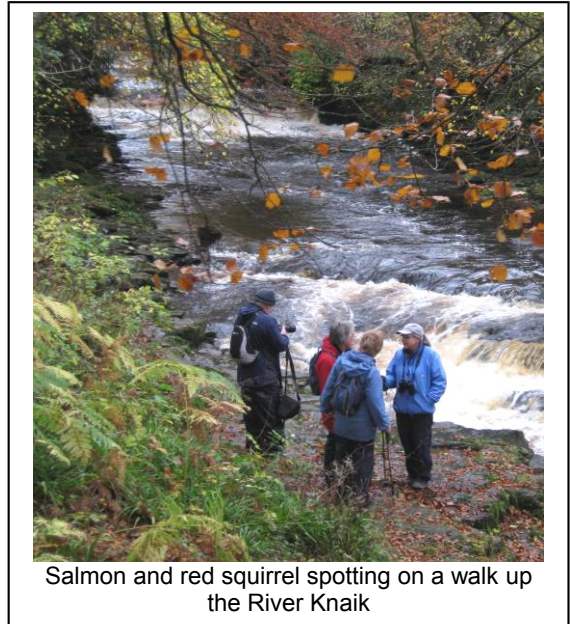
The group was delighted to be represented at the Forth Naturalist and Historian's Wildlife Forum which was organised by the local biodiversity officer Guy Harewood. The purpose of the event was to bring together those involved in local wildlife conservation. For many it proved an uplifting experience to find so many small groups like 'On the Verge', 'Ecoschools' etc. making such an impact.

The chairman has given a number of talks to local clubs and gatherings usually pointing out the relentless loss of local biodiversity.

Next year 2012 -13 the Raploch Community Centre has been booked for our talks on the 1st Tuesday in the month. There will be no talk in January

3. Conservation, Local Biodiversity Action Plans and Wildlife Monitoring

- The groups main practical conservation work involved scrub and rank grass removal from: Bridge of Allan orchid bank, Plean greater butterfly orchid meadow, Callander Golf course lesser butterfly orchid site, and the Balgair Muir frog orchid colony. We also helped with work in Mine Woods, Bridge of Allan, the bumblebee garden at Argaty and Wester Moss Fallin.
- The PLANT (Plant Local Action NeTwork) group continued its annual monitoring of endangered species at over 30 local sites. During the summer of 2011 a new site for the lesser butterfly orchid was found near Braco. As part of a UK wide survey of the small white orchid we found 46 plants at Morenish on Loch Tayside but sadly it appeared to be extinct at a site near Comrie.
- Moth trapping was carried out to study the pollinators of local populations of butterfly orchids. The burnished brass moth is a potential pollinator of lesser butterfly orchid.
- We have been growing seedlings of Petty Whin, Juniper, Wild Pansies and Herb Paris to reinvigorate seriously threatened local populations.



Salmon and red squirrel spotting on a walk up the River Knaik



Removal of scrub on Lecropt orchid bank

- We are involved in trying to save the last few plants of a Schleicher's thread moss which grows in a spring on the Touch Hills. It has been over-run by rushes at this its only remaining UK site.
- Together with Friends of Kings Park we are going to resurvey the flora of the area and compare it with a list of the plants that were present 100 years ago.
- The SWT is represented at the meetings of both Clackmannanshire and Stirlingshire's Biodiversity Action Plan steering committees. Our contribution to the Clacks BAP is limited to conservation work on our reserves at Alloa Inch, Tullibody Inch and Cambus Pools together with annual monitoring of orchid sites. In Stirling our main effort has been to finalise the Species of Conservation Concern lists which are used in planning application Environmental Impact Assessments. In the next few years we are committed to identifying and surveying new potential Local Nature Conservation Sites in both counties.



Small white orchid

4. Protecting the Wildlife Interests Associated with Local Authority Planning

- A network of members is in place to screen local Council planning applications for wildlife impact. Our membership also provides a steady stream of issues.
- We have commented on a number of major Stirling and Clacks planning proposals including the Beauty to Denny power line and objected to the Black Devon Wind Turbine application and the Holmehill development in Dunblane. A representative spoke at the council discussion of the planned development of the cowslip field and obtained a number of concessions from the developers.
- We have succeeded in getting both Clacks and Stirling Councils to recognise Local Nature Conservation Sites in their planning procedures (as defined in the New Local Development Plans). We are partners with the councils in a grant application to help fund the re-surveying of the sites that were designated in the 1980-90s. Our role will be to define new sites with the help of the local naturalist community.
- A number proposed development sites outlined in Stirling Council's draft New Local Development Plan which gave us wildlife concern have been dropped from the finalised lists of preferred sites.

5. Watch Group

Stirling's successful Watch Group continues to put on monthly programmes to which the MC contributed to the bat box making event. The group is run by Sue Hunter, and Debbie Spray. They have had problems funding meeting places and so have adopted a mainly outdoor programme.

6. Our Local Reserves

- **Alloa Inch:** (Convenor Roy Sexton). This 100 acre island reserve in the river Forth continues to attract large numbers of geese, ducks and waders. Due to poor weather conditions and lack of boat availability we unfortunately were unable to carry out our annual survey in 2011.
- **Cambus Pools** (Convenor Roger Gooch). These ponds at the side of the Forth at Cambus, continue to be overwhelmed by reeds. As a result of funding from The Clackmannanshire and Stirling Environment Trust (Administrators of Landfill Tax) the site has been fenced so it can be grazed by SWT's Shetland cattle.



Wind turbines Campsie Fells

7. The Committee

Thanks are due for the enormous amount of work done by the committee:

Chairman	Roy Sexton
Vice Chairman	Roger Gooch
Treasurer	Liz Albert
Membership Secretary	Jan Harbidge
Committee Members	Tony Rogers, Heather Young
Secretary	Sue Sexton (sextonsp@aol.com)



Alloa Inch (Centre) Courtesy Clackmannan Council

Alloa Inch: SWT's island reserve in the River Forth was once a flourishing farm which was protected from the tidal waters by 2m high surrounding banks. These were breached in 1980's when it became flooded at high tides and was converted into a 100 acre salt marsh. This now provides shelter for huge flocks of geese, ducks and waders. In spring it resembles a snow field covered with the white flowers of sea scurvy grass which in autumn is transformed to sheets of purple when the sea aster flowers.

The Scottish Wildlife Trust is a company limited by guarantee, registered in Scotland (registered number SC040247) having its registered office at Cramond House, Cramond Glebe Road, Edinburgh EH4 6NS. It is also a Scottish registered charity (charity number SC005792).