

Welcome to the Birnie and Gaddon Newsletter

We had a warm, dry, day for the Bioblitz at the end of the month. Thank you to all who attended the guided walks and thank you to Fife Nature Records Centre and Fife Amphibian and Reptile Group for their hard work and displays. More news soon!

Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) Counts 08/07/2019

Birnie Loch (9:05)

39 x Mallard, 2 x Mute Swan, 13 x Greylag Goose, 2 x Black-headed Gulls, 1 x Reed Bunting

Gaddon Loch (9:26)

16 x Mallard, 1 x Mute Swan, 1 x Grey Heron, 1 x Reed Bunting, Sand Martin and Swallow also present

Plant of the Month

Creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*)



Often underappreciated and sometimes despised; thistles are

a widespread and common group of plants. Whilst out at Gaddon Meadow last month we came across a rather nice, white-headed, creeping thistle. Distinguished from other thistles by its slender form and short crinkly leaves - crumpled up a bit like a crisp packet can be - this thistle is commonly found in large numbers on grasslands because of its 'creeping' habit. Some large roots are sent out horizontally under the soil, searching for a place to attach and put down smaller roots, and when it does root a new clonal plant can grow.

The white flower heads are not uncommon, usually though they are light-purple, blending in a bit more with the surrounding knapweeds. Unlike knapweeds however, creeping thistles have clusters of flowerheads on each plant. If you look closely at the stem, you will also find that there are no spines, only the leaves and bracts have them – another good way to tell this plant apart from, the very spiny, spear and marsh thistles.

Accessing the Hides

The Birnie Hide is closed until further notice because of a wasp nest. For further information and to obtain the new access codes please call 01592 656080.

Wildlife Records



Our July monthly volunteer day was at Gaddon Orchard, and we found two newts! Please remember to note down what you see and contact us via the details given or on ask.us@fifecountryside.co.uk. The Fife Nature Records Centre would also be happy to take details of any wildlife sightings you have from Birnie and Gaddon, contact them at nature.info@fife.gov.uk, or use the online recording form by searching for them online.

Feeding the Ducks

You can still bring your own seed, oats, or peas and corn (defrosted if frozen) if you wish. **DO NOT** bring bread, as it pollutes the water and is bad for the birds' health. Thank you.

