

May 2020

Welcome to the Birnie and Gaddon Lochs Newsletter

The recent warm, sunny weather has been most enjoyable, but just as important is the rain. I'm sure those who have walked to B&G will have enjoyed the lush, green of late. These humid times accelerate plant growth, giving cover to all the wildlife nesting in trees and shrubs, and providing food for the insects buzzing around.

Thank you to all who have tried to help keep the place tidy, by taking away litter etc. This will be hugely important for those of us working on site; when we do return to a normal working pattern there will be a host of things to catch up on, therefore your assistance just now is hugely appreciated.

Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS)

The WeBS has been suspended across the country in light of Covid19.

Bird of the Month

Mute swan (*Cygnus olor*)



With the change in circumstances, it has of course made it more difficult for us to

keep a regular watch on the wildlife, but there is one thing that stands out just now at Birnie: our resident pair of swans. This photo was taken in mid-April and is interesting mostly because the nest they have built is on the edge of the island, rather than in the shelter of the marsh. We have checked our records, and with help of the local swan recorder, have found that the last pair to use the island was back in 2011. The female (ringed "PIX") is nesting for the second time at Birnie, her mate is unringed. Last year they brought one of their brood through to adulthood, hopefully they will have more success this year, it will be interesting to see.

NO FISHING

Birnie and Gaddon Lochs form a Local Nature Reserve, and as such the main function is to preserve and enhance provision for wildlife and maintain habitats. Therefore, no fishing, no swimming, and no boating. Please report incidents to us and Police Scotland 101.

Wildlife records

Please remember to note down what you see and contact us via the details given below 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

We have stopped filling the bird feed bin in line with our policy on outdoor facilities, and following government advice, to minimise risk of coronavirus spread. Please follow the latest government advice to stay safe if you visit the lochs.

Warmer weather is approaching, so supplementary feeding is not a necessity. You can of course 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.

Accessing the Hides

Please be aware that the bird hides are temporarily closed

