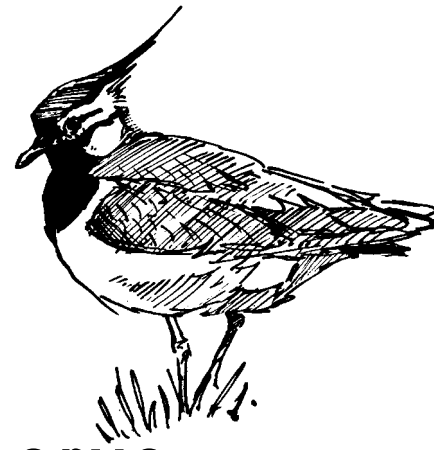




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January 2013

Loch of Kinnordy Nature Reserve Newsletter

Reserve News

Reserve management has involved clearing up after the winter weather that has hit the reserve. A huge beech tree, by the Sluice Bridge, was unfortunately brought down by the winds back in September. As a health and safety issue, instead of leaving the fallen beech – leaving it would result in deadwood that insects would appreciate and relish - it had to be chopped down as the weight of the beech was leaning on other smaller trees that were right next to the path.



K. Ross, Sept 2012

More recently, there was some very heavy rainfall just before Christmas. This resulted in having more water than the loch can hold and subsequently the majority of the path was underwater for a few days during Christmas time. Access to East & Swamp was restricted, even with the aid of wellies. However since the

beginning of Jan, the path has become accessible again, but a bit of work needs done on re-gravelling the path again.

Some of our winter visitors, i.e. greylag geese, have been helping out with the reserve management. The big groups of ~ 250 greylag geese like to graze on and flatten down the bog-bean islands, seen in-front of Gullery hide. This is a huge benefit, especially to visitors – with the vegetation flattened, it makes it so much easier to see all those teal, snipe, mallard and wigeon hiding in the vegetation.

Wildlife Highlights

For migrating birds such as **greylag geese**, **pink-footed geese** and **whooper swans**, Kinnordy is a prime spot to come to for winter. And swan and geese numbers have increase rapidly since the wet weather. Before Christmas whooper swan numbers were not very high, but now a group of around 50 seem to prefer the waterlogged area to the left of Swamp hide, known as Middlemarsh – an area not usually used by many waterfowl as there is never usually that much open water there.

At present there is around 300 **mallard** and **teal** on the loch; **wigeon**, **shoveler** and **gadwall** numbers are increasing. There is also a good number of **goosander** and **goldeneye** for this time of year.



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For the third year in a row we have had wintering **smew** at Kinnordy – this year a male arrived on 18th Dec and has been seen fairly regularly since then.

More exciting sightings at Kinnordy during December and January have been **Bittern** and **Bearded Tits**. The first bittern sighting was made way back in November, but there have been a few more recent sightings since then. The same can be said for the bearded tits which like to flit between the reeds at all three hides.

Further along the path, walking towards Kirriemuir, there have been several sightings of a **dipper** flitting up and down the outflow channel.

What to look out for

Usual winter highlights to be on the look out for include **hen harriers**; passing through the reserve, flying low over the back of the reserve. **Bittern** is always a good winter favourite that visitors want to get a glimpse of – something easier said than done!

Last year, around mid November, a group of 15 **white fronted geese** were found regularly on the loch, and feeding on nearby fields – perhaps they could return again this year. It's unknown if they will, and they have not been spotted so far this winter, but if they do it is a great thing to see.



White-fronted goose, K. Ross,
Dec 2011

On the Loch itself common sightings include large groups of **teal**, **mallard**, **mute swans** and **greylag geese** (either first thing in the morning or mid-afternoon). Look out for groups consisting of **goldeneye**, **tufted duck**, **gadwall**, **goosander**, **wigeon** and **shoveler**.

On the paths you can see flocks of **blue tits**, **great tits**, **coal tits**, **bullfinches** and **long-tailed tits**. Perhaps you may even be lucky enough to spot some **red squirrels** in the trees. Peanuts and feed have been left out at the feeder areas and are topped-up regularly during winter.

Please record all sightings in the book supplied in Gullery hide, they are all kept and are very useful.

If you would like to ask about **joining the RSPB**; would like some information about birdwatching at Loch of Kinnordy; or have any questions about the work of the RSPB in general, please feel free to ask any of our volunteers, who can usually be found daily on site, and they will be more than happy to help you. Alternatively you can use the contact details below.

For further information, please contact:

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