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## **TENTSMUIR NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE**

### **NEWSLETTER No. 29**

#### **JUNE 2013**

Hi and welcome to the Spring and Summer edition of the Reserve Newsletter and let's hope we do have a summer this year! Inside there is some wonderful news, and articles for you to enjoy.

Our spring migrants have returned and you'll have noticed that the lochs, heath and foreshore have been alive with the flying acrobats the sand martins, house martins, swifts and swallows fresh from their long migrations from Africa, along with the birdsong of willow-warblers, sedge warblers, chiffchaff as well as the songs of our resident birds. We also have ospreys fishing the River Tay, and the white-tailed sea eagles are around. There have been a good number of highlights including a first, not only for the Reserve and Fife but a first in Scotland. Read on inside.

The Year of Natural Scotland 2013 campaign and events are well underway and more are planned over summer. Have you spotted and read some of the Big5 posters and leaflets, especially the Big5 Funbook? Get out there and do some spotting!

Artist in Residence, wildlife artist Derek Robertson has already created some beautiful paintings, and as well as being an artist Derek is an amazing wildlife expert. Derek has also increased the awareness of the Reserve by giving a series of talks about the project; and he was featured in a recent BBC Countryfile. Read more about Derek inside.

And learn more about our forthcoming events.



**Otters & gulls study - Painting kindly provided by Derek Robertson BA RSW SSA SAA**

**Tom Cunningham**  
Reserve Manager

## YEAR of NATURAL SCOTLAND 2013

The first event on the Reserve went really well, the John Muir Day in April, "Going to the woods is coming home". We created a little quiz based on John Muir and we went in search of red squirrels. Fortunately, they cooperated, and we saw several sightings as well as many other birds around the lochs and woods.

We continue to celebrate the Year of Natural Scotland 2013 and we will be holding several events over summer and the autumn school holidays.

- July 4<sup>th</sup> - The Annual Family Day "Five go to Tentsmuir". See the What's On page for details. **Booking essential.**

The following events are all free and you do not need to book, just turn up at Kinshaldy car park. Keep an eye open for our posters around the Reserve and at Kinshaldy car park for further details.

- July 25 - Tentsmuir Junk 'n Stuff family fun day.
- August 1- Trees... What can they do?
- August 8<sup>th</sup> - Red Squirrel Day 2 the Sequel with SNH, FCCT Sophie Eastwood & FCS.
- October 10th – Big5 Species event – "Five go to Tentsmuir again!" When artist and scientist meet. For further information keep an eye open for posters and news in the local newspapers.

The bat event will be restricted to 20 visitors so book by contacting the SNH Cupar office on 01334 654038.

- August 25 at 8pm - Going Batty at Tentsmuir Forest & Morton Lochs.

However, please keep a look out for information on these events and others that may happen. We will have articles in the local press, on our websites (see front page) and on the notice boards by the leaflet dispensers at Morton Lochs, Tayport Heath and Kinshaldy car park hub leaflet dispensers.

## TENTSMUIR NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE

### RESERVE PLANS 2012 TO 2022

The new Reserve Plan 2012 to 2022 moves into the final phase, and we are holding a public consultation on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2013, in the St Michael's Inn between 4pm and 6pm. Look out for details in the local newspapers.

### BEHAVIOUR & ATTITUDES STUDY

The Behaviour & Attitudes study which was carried out last year is now available on our website [www.nnr-scotland.org.uk](http://www.nnr-scotland.org.uk) under Tentsmuir NNR publications.

## TENTSMUIR POINT

### THE DYNAMIC COASTLINE

Astonishing, gobsmacking, overwhelming, jaw-dropping: just some of the terms we used when we surveyed the Reserve around the Icehouse footpath! Picture the scene. Some 20 metres forward of the Highland cow sculpture was a cover of deep sand almost obliterating the mature heath. The depth on the footpath was around 20cm in places. It was an incredible sight but also it looked like we may have lost some of the rich heath. The winter storms and easterly gales swept sand far inland. Now, every winter we have blow-outs and windblown sand up to 70 metres inland; but not to this extent. Several months later, and Spring arrived here very late this year. There are signs that the sedges, grasses and heathers are poking through. Some westerly winds have helped by blowing sand back towards the foreshore.

To the south of the Reserve there was some erosion. Virgin looking coastal defence concrete blocks have been uncovered, and some corrugated steel shuttering (which was the moulds for the blocks) was also revealed. Further south, the dune system grows further into the sea.

### MANAGEMENT

Sea salmon netmen Bob Ritchie and Mikey Smith carried out the annual maintenance on the sea fences and completely rebuilt the south sea fence.

The ditches on the Reserve were successfully cleaned out and hopefully the spoil will grass over fairly quickly. This will help the water flow onto the Reserve and of course be a water supply for the cattle..

The contract to control the numbers of crows and grey squirrels was again successful. Only three grey squirrels were trapped in the forest, which reflects on this valuable and highly successful management. Red Squirrel Officer Sophie Eastwood was delighted. Jim Allan also collected blood samples from the grey squirrels which were tested as part of the Squirrelpox Virus Surveillance Scheme, and all the greys trapped were free of the deadly virus. Elmwood College students continue to monitor the squirrels on the Reserve and forest.

Jim Allan also carried out the crow control; and again, as with the grey squirrel control, we have extended the area in this area of Fife. Already the benefits to ground nesting birds, in particular the lapwing, are very encouraging.

The herbicide programme to spray our target species on Tentsmuir Point and along Tayport Heath will start in early summer. This will protect the open heath and the sequence of dunes from the pine, birch, willow, gorse, rosebay willow herb and clumps of creeping thistle seeding and spreading. This highly successful management will continue this year.

The cattle will return as soon as the vegetation greens up. It is a lot slower this season due to the cold and wet weather.

## **EDUCATIONAL VISITS**

Primary school visits have picked up this year and already two have enjoyed our talk and three have planned visits in June. High School visits have been regular, and there has been an increase in students studying sand dune succession for their Higher grades and Advance Higher grades.

Elmwood College continue their field trips, and Head of Conservation Stuart MacDonald recognises the importance of the Reserve for studying the various subjects on site.

## **WILDLIFE UPDATE**

Last year the Scottish Entomologists Gathering held a weekend in Tentsmuir, and they found the Shore Wainscot moth and four other moths which were firsts for Fife and the Reserve. In early May, two members of the Fife Moth group discovered the caterpillars of the Shore Wainscot feeding on marram grass; and when this is confirmed, we will be delighted to say that individuals of this species are the first recorded in Scotland as actually breeding.



**Shore Wainscot caterpillar. Image by David Bryant.**

The winter gales and storms created havoc with the sea life and seabirds; it was a sad sight looking at the puffin wrecks, along with guillemots and razorbills. Many hundreds of cuttlefish, jellyfish, octopus, sea slugs, etc. were all washed up on the foreshore.

An osprey returned and white-tailed sea eagles have been observed over the River Tay, Lucky Scalp, sand dunes and forest. Some highlights include wood cock (29) seen by Derek Robertson, knot, sanderling, red throated diver, common scotor, golden plover, grey plover, ringed plover, long tailed duck, turnstones, common tern, cormorant, little stint, redshank and eider duck.

## **MORTON LOCHS**

### **MANAGEMENT**

A contractor cleaned out the entire ditch network at Morton Lochs and he dug out silt trap holes along each ditch. This will help to prevent silting up and increase the water flow through the loch system.

The Right-of-Way interpretation panel with a corrected orientation map was ordered and installed recently.

We were all glad to see the Forestry contractors come in and repair the access road up to Morton Lochs car park. Less teeth-rattling journeys now.

The sixth heather seeding plot on Garpit Moor was completed over winter by Patrick Bowden Smith using local heather seed. The cattle have returned and hopefully they will graze the dense grassy sward and reveal some heather. During the year we will try a new method of trying to establish heather by digging up large plots of mature heather from the forest and plant them in areas throughout the moor.

It was a constant battle to keep the loch levels at the agreed water level by manipulating the spillway boards. The Lead Burn and the surrounding land was flooded so often it made our job of managing the water levels very challenging.

Contractor David Mackie and his team will start the extensive herbicide programme around Morton Lochs and in the lochs themselves very soon.

### **WILDLIFE UPDATE**

As well as being an international wildlife artist Derek Robertson is an accomplished naturalist and he has observed three pairs of water rail and one single female on the lochs. Although we knew and had recorded the water rail we did not know how many were using the lochs. Both lochs have a mute swan pair and recently the north loch pair produced eight cygnets and the south loch pair had four.

The songs of the chiffchaff, sedge warblers, willow-warblers as well as many other birds can be heard throughout Morton Lochs woodland trails.

You can also read through Derek's article and see what else Derek has observed and filmed.

Frogs and toads mated late but already the lochs, ditches and ponds are teeming with tadpoles.

The three year investigation into the decline of teal at Morton Lochs is under way. The contractor monitors the teal and their habitat and provides SNH with the field data.

The two squirrel feeders are well used and not only with the red squirrels, since blue tits, great tits, long tailed tits and coal tits feed from them as well. Visitors are delighted to spot the red squirrels (and of course they are one of the Big5 species); and we can monitor their usage, the squirrels' condition, and just enjoy watching them.

### **ARTIST in RESIDENCE - DEREK ROBERTSON BA RSW SSA SAA**

It has been a very busy few months for me at Tentsmuir. I have been completing a new body of work which has mostly consisted of field studies and paintings in which I have gathered material on the wildlife of the reserve. Highlights have included otters and pintail at Morton Lochs, the sea eagles, seals and long-tailed ducks at the Point and jays in the woods.

I have been using trail cameras around the reserve and have gathered some great footage of roe deer, badgers, red squirrels, otters, woodcock and more. I have been able to use this footage to produce new sketches too - especially the badgers which I hardly ever see in daylight on the reserve.

I have been giving talks about the residency to art and wildlife societies, at the Scottish Birdfair at Hopetoun and a presentation for Creative Scotland which has been filmed and can be seen online on their "Imagining Natural Scotland" website. Paintings from the project have already been on display in group shows and exhibitions around Scotland as well as my own events through the year. We have some solo shows planned towards the end of 2013 and into 2014 - including the Piggery outdoor exhibition space at Taynish NNR in Argyll. I will also be taking part in some events on the reserve - organising a big, participative mural for the family fun day and a make-your-own clay red squirrel on the red squirrel day. I am expecting a huge delivery of red clay to arrive any day now! I will also be taking part in a creative, cross-disciplinary event on the Isle of May in August.

The publicity attracted by the project has been enormous with lots of articles in the local press and in SNH publications and also features on STV news. BBC Radio Scotland's Out of Doors programme has broadcast two interviews and

BBC Countryfile will screen a feature on 2nd June. Articles on international blogs, newsletters and social media sites have likewise reached tens of thousands.

A major element of the project has been to construct an online art trail. The material for this can be seen on the residency website at [www.memoryoftides.com](http://www.memoryoftides.com) and is already up and running onsite. I have constructed trails at Morton Lochs and Kinshaldy (with thanks to the Forestry Commission). As you walk around the trail you can see plaques featuring some of my individual sketches of a species that inhabits that part of the reserve and in the corner of each one is a QR code (a Quick Response code that looks like a square barcode). If you have a smart mobile phone or tablet you can scan the code and it will take you to an individual page on the website showing you all the drawings and paintings I have done of that particular animal near the spot you are standing. There is some writing and context about the animal and also a piece of video film taken with trail cameras around the reserve. This means you can see some of the hard to spot, shy and nocturnal animals that live there - even if you are there in a large and noisy crowd. The resource has already been used by educational groups where children can see the recognisable, individual animals that actually live near that spot - the otter with a small scar on its nose or the red squirrel with the very dark fur.

While spending time on the reserve I have been watching the wildlife there and seeing what I can discover. I have been sending my records and sightings to the Reserve Manager, Tom, and filling in forms on the BTO Birdtrack website. In the winter, I had a look around the marshy dunes near the Point and discovered large numbers of woodcock - counts of up to 30 which showed that this was an important winter foraging site for these birds in Fife. It was known that woodcock were present but not in these numbers. Just recently I did the first visit of a BTO breeding woodcock survey in the nearby forest and had a huge count of 32 birds in just over an hour, suggesting that it is a major habitat for breeding birds as well. In the spring I did a systematic survey of Morton Lochs for the elusive Water Rails. They are notoriously difficult to survey because they rarely leave dense cover and are almost never seen. My friend, Steve Moyes, and I developed a systematic way of surveying them in the Tay Reedbeds using audio playback. The method is now adopted as the standard survey technique for the species. At Morton, I located 3 pairs and a single female and heard the characteristic "tic-tic" call of a bird alarming to its young. The trail camera footage has identified that there are two cubs at the badger sett and at least 5 recognisable, individual adults and also that there are parties of at least 7 jays in the woods at Morton (I have never seen more than three at any one time but there are regularly 5 to 7 in shot on the cameras!).

So, it has really been a very busy few months. Looking ahead, I will be working up some larger paintings from the sketches I have completed and I am attempting to set up a large, cross-disciplinary project that brings together scientists/environmental managers and artists/creative practitioners to produce collaborative work at the end of the year. Those involved, from various different fields, have all been working on their own projects at Tentsmuir including dance, poetry, film, storytelling, geography, biology, conservation ecology and more. We are having a meeting together soon and will be working towards an event in October and a publication and exhibitions following that. I have already been working on ideas inspired by the poetry of Jim Stewart who is writer in residence at the reserve and



**"Still Beneath the Canopy" inspired by "Squirrel" - a poem by Jim Stewart.**

have been sketching out some ideas inspired by discussions with Rob Duck, (Professor of Environmental Geoscience and Dean of the School of the Environment, Dundee University - I have been working on ideas of changing land shapes), and Bernie McConnell (who is Senior research fellow, Seal Mammal Research Unit in the School of Biology, University of St Andrews - whose work on tracking the pattern of seal movements is absolutely fascinating). I also

spent a day with Professor Hans Kruuk who is an authority on badgers and otters and who kindly came down to look at the reserve and discuss how otters used the different habitats. Sophie Eastwood, who is the Red Squirrel Officer for Fife has given me a lot of great ideas and bravely gave a talk for Creative Scotland with me about collaborating on science/art projects. I'm really looking forward to developing these ideas in the second half of the year.

It has been wonderful working on this residency and I have been struck by how much local visitors value and treasure the reserve and the forest - I have really enjoyed meeting the many people who have come up, introduced themselves and asked about the project. Before I close, I just want to thank Tom Cunningham for his incredible help and enthusiasm and for the tremendous support I have been given by everyone at SNH in Cupar and Alec and all the Forestry Commission staff involved at Tentsmuir.

- [www.memoryoftides.com](http://www.memoryoftides.com) Residency Website
- [www.derekrobertson.com](http://www.derekrobertson.com) (Derek's Paintings of Wildlife and Countryside)
- [www.creativepastures.com](http://www.creativepastures.com) (Derek's Poetic Narrative Paintings, Assemblage and Sculpture)

Derek also provided these images of his wonderful wildlife art works.

## POET in RESIDENCE

Similarly to my good fortune with artist Derek Robertson coming on board in this special year, Jim Stewart kindly volunteered to be the Poet in Residence during YoNS2013. Jim is a lecturer in the English Department in the University of Dundee and has written poetry for many years. Jim has kindly provided two of his new poems about the Reserve & forest.

### Squirrel

Ankled in the mulch's grist and pulp,  
I climbed a slope,  
small under the canopies'  
unstirred air; and on the height,  
sucked a squirrel-savaged knuckle.

Hearing the squeals from a tangle  
where no struggle could save,  
I'd stripped back drapes and sticky jock  
to cradle that terror, the blood it drew  
spat on stalks of the sudden red grass.

Nearby, the sea sang  
of hair-raising purity.

I threw a stone, to hear its echo  
on the tree trunks.  
And threw another in the still pool  
to craze the weed and draggle the plants;  
and over the chaos, contemplate  
the violence that was done upon this water.

### Shore

*i*

This shore is where the water and the land  
compose their shifting strip of compromise.  
The dunes grow semi-stable; and the sand

faces down the tides' relentless tries  
to force a lack of shape upon each grain,  
and stop it ever rounding where it lies.

And marram grass's roots defy the rain  
of breakers pouring down: they help immure  
in density the form they stand to gain

bedded and compacted, to secure  
something's retrieval from a grudging sea,  
maybe something permanent and sure.



*ii*

The secret water hides its storied  
source. That's why the seabirds eye the weed  
it squanders, and harass the worried

crabs that scutter into the range of need.  
The current's always truculent and blind,  
dragged by the moon. Its longings feed

on sunken definitions. Uninclined  
to let emerge whatever doesn't flow  
in strict assimilation to its mind,

it dissolves by deep immersion. So  
no edge survives, or any sharpness not  
blunted by its determined undertow.

*iii*

Stranded in an agony of roots,  
the marinated driftwood drying out  
will never put out foliage, or shoots.

The only green its shining branches sprout  
fire from salt, it is the kindled deep  
that flaring from the saturated drought

had sunk all earthly difference in its steep.  
Futile to dream this sea might curb  
its urge; or think, because this is a neap

tide, the moon's forgotten to disturb  
your slowly bedded littoral of nouns,  
unsettled by the heaving of its verb.

## **VOLUNTEERS EXPERIENCE**

Long term volunteer Bill Alexander, who carried out the bird surveying on Tentsmuir Point for over seven years, decided to retire this year. Bill carried out this monthly task brilliantly and tirelessly and in all sorts of weather. We presented Bill with a book and our grateful thanks. Craig Ferries has volunteered to carry on with the important bird surveying on the north transect at Tentsmuir Point, and we wish Craig well.

As you all well know volunteers are the lifeblood of the work carried out on the Reserve and without them we couldn't possibly carry out all the tasks and projects that we achieve successfully. However, there are many benefits for the volunteers, especially on work experience, as well as learning and developing new skills, enjoyment and satisfaction, socialising and for some - employment. Some of our volunteers are retired, some with an interest in nature, some with an interest in a particular species, some are at college and universities, while others are looking for employment. We celebrated recently a success rate of six volunteers who have gone on to full time employment. One volunteer now works for SNH, one for a Ranger Service, two got into the Forestry Commission and RSPB; and Kirsten Campbell is now an ecologist.

Before Kirsten left she wrote the following;

"After studying and successfully graduating from my MSc Wildlife Biology & Conservation course back in 2010, I decided it was an idea to get some hands-on experience to facilitate my job hunting! I dropped the Cupar SNH office an email who kindly put me in touch with Tom Cunningham and the team at Tentsmuir NNR. How glad I am I did! Whilst working as a waitress, I visited Tentsmuir every Tuesday and got involved in a variety of work: from fence repairs and beach cleaning, to nursery visits and Family Fun Days. I even managed to get my face in the paper on a couple of occasions! As time progressed and I built on my skills and knowledge, I realised that I wanted to apply them in an ecology-based role and I became focused on pursuing a career in Ecological Consultancy. Through 'consultation' with Tom and the staff in the Cupar office, I decided to undertake a 'National Vegetation Classification & Rare Plant Survey' at Tentsmuir Point to help me in my quest. Although I carried out the planning and work required independently, I received all the support, information and equipment that I needed from the team. At the same time, due to my perseverance in volunteering, the SNH team generously offered me the position of Research Surveyor for their 'Monitoring Visitor Behaviour and Attitudes' study during the summer months, which I accepted without hesitation. Once this seasonal work was over and reports were finalised, I got down to the task of finding my dream job to kick-

start my career. It was Tom himself who forwarded me the email informing me that BEAR Scotland were on the look out for an ecologist to join their team. After sending my CV and securing an interview (my first one!) I was successful, and I am now working in the position of Graduate Ecologist, an ideal start in my chosen career! I can't thank everyone at Tentsmuir and SNH enough, as I've been reliably informed that it was my volunteering and the work that I conducted at the reserve that made me stand out from the other candidates. So for anyone considering getting involved in volunteering with SNH: don't hesitate, it's one of the best things I've ever done!"

We welcome two new volunteers Greg Robson and Jim Rougvie. Jim is a retired journalist and before he hangs up his keyboard I asked him to pen his first thoughts about volunteering.

"I thought we might be counting Mr Tufty and the boys in the treetops, seals on the beach, maybe. Or spending lazy afternoons in the hides at the lochs earnestly watching for rails or smews, whatever they are. Instead, the man pointed to a zillion felled and tangled young pines which had had the temerity to sprout where they were not wanted, and suggested we untangle and drag them into lines amongst the dunes, ready for burning. In the following weeks, it was ripping up at least ten miles of rabbit fencing laid down fifteen years ago and which had grown to be part of the forested landscape and carting and stacking armfuls of alder. Welcome to the world of volunteering with Scottish Natural Heritage and the Forestry Commission.

I retired more than five years ago but lately realised that golfing or fishing every other day, particularly in the summer, was not terribly fulfilling. I know, I know, for many it would be a dream come true. Anyway, I had always enjoyed the great outdoors and its beasties and thought, in a vague kind of way that I could involve myself constructively. I toyed with the notion of waterway volunteering, but the prospect of fishing shopping trolleys out of canals didn't appeal. And there wasn't a canal within 50 miles of Wormit. While trawling the net for inspiration, I came across SNH and its presence at Tentsmuir, an area I haunted with the dogs and kids for many years.

Like many, if not most, folk who enjoy our moors, streams and forests, I had no idea that people actually did stuff in them to keep them attractive, safe and welcoming for visitors. I was aware that our woods have been managed for many hundreds of years – true wildwoods do not flourish very well, nor its native inhabitants - but failed to appreciate the myriad tasks involved in keeping the place as pristine as possible. Even small tasks such as cleaning the algae from signage which warn visitors not to trample around the dunes during the nesting period, and picking up the (full) poo bags which dog walkers thoughtfully leave for the poo fairy to pick up, have to be done by someone.

The benches at the hides don't wobble quite so alarmingly now, and the lonely picnic tables move as if by magic to more scenic spots.

There is the occasional gratuitous vandalism, like the squirrel boxes emptied of peanuts or a bit of pointless gouging at the Morton Lochs hides, all of which have to be fixed.

But the obvious pleasure so many people get from wandering and cycling the many miles of tracks and pathways in Tentsmuir and all of the other SNH estates makes the torn breeks, the threat of midge and mossie attack and the aches and pains just that bit more worthwhile."

There are other important people who are not volunteers but submit their observations, which is very important for our records. Recording bird species and other flora & fauna species, two regular visitors George Adams and Tom Ross have been coming to Morton Lochs (and various other sites) for longer than they can remember. There are a good number of other spotters who record their observations in the bird hide books.

## WHAT'S ON

### **FAMILY DAY OUT - Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> July 2013 - "Five go to Tentsmuir" a great day out.**

The fourteenth free annual NNR event will be held on Thursday, 4th July and it should be another exciting day out. The event will be based around Scotland's Big5. However, we will have our own spin on the various species.

The new style shorter activity sessions will continue, so cram as many of the activities in and learn all about the flora and fauna and what goes on in the Reserve. So please be patient, enjoy, learn and try several different ones. Each activity will last 20 to 30 minutes; you finish one and then move onto the next one. Staff and volunteers will help you move on.

In addition to the short events and activities in store for you, we will have a special guest to entertain you **Gift Amu Logotse** (see below), back by popular demand. Amu will weave his wonderful stories and his array of drums and you can join in with the drumming.

So far the activities include;

- Artist Derek Robertson will have a giant mural and kids will help him.
- David Mitchell will be making animal and bird heads (out of paper)
- Maggie Gay leads the hunt for invertebrates in the sand.
- Kathryn Green leads the Tentsmuir Point's Big5 plants



- Gillian Fyfe leads the Big5 Habitat Hunt
- Jim Stewart will be in Poets Corner
- David Shepherd & Elspeth Christie are still working on ideas for their activities.

There may be more and better snappy titles, so keep this date in mind and book early to avoid disappointment.

With the exception of the £2 charge for the car park, it's all free! (It's now £2 at the barrier, please have change ready.)

There are normally 120 places available and the event books up fairly quickly. I also keep a reserve list, as there is usually a visitor or two who may have to cancel suddenly. If you are unable to attend after booking, please contact me as soon as possible to let me know, so I can call and let someone else take up your place. **Please don't let me or other visitors down.** Remember all children must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

***To book, please phone my office telephone and if I am not in, please leave a short message on the answer machine, with your name and telephone number and I will contact you to confirm the booking. If I do NOT contact you, you are not on my list!***

**Gift Amu Logotse** is an experienced creative and performing artist. Amu has collected over 300 stories: both traditional stories, and new stories based on continental African concepts and values, observations and social commentary which suit any environment.

Amu was born and brought up in Accra in Ghana, but his cultural roots are in a Ewe village in the Volta Region of the country. He sees himself as a tradition bearer and his artworks as symbols of communication.

## **RESPONSIBLE VISITORS**

**UPDATE: It continues in getting worse and worse, the dog poo around the Morton lochs car park and footpaths is disgusting. The irresponsible dog owners just do not care about other visitors, particularly the young nursery children who are using this lovely area to learn about nature! There are professional dog walkers using the area including Tentsmuir Point and in the forest with up to 12 dogs all careering all over disturbing wildlife... and they blissfully do not care.**

**Fife Council in conjunction with the Police has launched a new initiative to catch irresponsible dog owners and posters and cards have been distributed in all the towns and villages. Basically anyone can contact them on 08451 550022 and provide information leading to the identification of the dog owner. Let's hope we can help catch the culprits.**

**What do these people think they are doing?**

## **BIG THANKS**

The electronic version of the Newsletter is spreading throughout the world. It is read by some of our heroes in Afghanistan, as well as having readers in Hungary, France, Australia and New Zealand.

The response to our plea to receive an electronic copy of the Newsletter continues to be great; so if you can, help us reduce our carbon footprint. I would ask those who can, to request an electronic copy of the Newsletter. Please email me if you are able to receive an electronic copy as this will reduce our paper usage, photocopier use and postage. Also please remember if you change your email address to let me know. A few people must have changed recently as I did get some failures to deliver messages.

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to the Newsletter and the valuable data collected for our flora and fauna records and to the local newspapers for articles.

Enjoy your visits to all the sites in the Reserve. Take away only memories and images and leave behind only your footprints.

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PS The mighty Raith Rovers survived the season and their Division One status but it wasn't pretty. There were a lot of mutterings and the occasional use of strong language but hey ho, the season ticket is bought and daft as it sounds roll on the new season. "Come on you Raith".

**Be aware of ticks in the UK countryside** and elsewhere in Europe. This is a message from all the responsible environmental organisations in the UK who are aware of the rise in the number of ticks in our countryside. All visitors to our countryside should really examine themselves and check for ticks as soon as you can. If you do happen to have one attached remove it as soon as you can. To guard against ticks: Keep trousers tucked into socks and wear light coloured clothing. Examine your body for ticks in the backs of the knees, groin, under the arms and on the scalp. Dog owners should also check their dogs. Stay safe, be aware.

Useful websites: [www.snh.gov.uk](http://www.snh.gov.uk), [www.nnr-scotland.org.uk](http://www.nnr-scotland.org.uk) and [www.tentsmuir.org](http://www.tentsmuir.org) for information on the Reserve and surrounding area as well as our work in SNH.

Keep up to date on our Facebook page "Scotland's National Nature Reserves".

