

**BRISC****BIOLOGICAL RECORDING IN SCOTLAND****Issue No 80 January 2011**

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Thought originally to be extinct in the British Isles (Brown 1935), and apparently certainly extinct in Ireland (McCarthy 1975), the status of *Hirudo medicinalis* in Scotland was unclear prior to this study, but certainly threatened. The species was never found during extensive previous collecting by the author in several parts of Scotland (Maitland 1963, 1966, 1972, Maitland & Kellock 1971).



A live Medicinal Leech from Islay © Peter Maitland

The Medicinal Leech *Hirudo medicinalis* in Scotland

By Peter S Maitland

The Medicinal Leech *Hirudo medicinalis* Linnaeus was formerly commoner in Great Britain and the rest of Europe than it is now and was once important in medicine for blood-letting. Leeches have recently come to prominence again in medicine for their value in plastic and micro-surgery and in the production of pharmaceutical products. However, the species most commonly used now is *Hirudo verbana* Carena, a leech found mainly in continental Europe and the species most commonly obtained from commercial leech farms.

The medicinal leech in Great Britain is protected by its inclusion in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) and in Appendix II of the Convention on International trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (1987). It is also listed in Appendix III of the Bern Convention and Annex Va of the EC Habitats and Species Directive. It was listed as a priority species by the UK Biodiversity Steering Group in 1995.

An initial review of past records of the medicinal leech in Scotland indicated that there appeared to be only nine recorded sites (Maitland 1996); voucher specimens were available in the Royal Museum of Scotland for only one site. During 1995, all nine recorded sites were visited and sampled for *Hirudo medicinalis*, as well as for various other limnological features.

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Chairman's Column

On behalf of the BRISC Committee I wish all of our BRISC Members and their Families and other readers of the Newsletter best wishes for 2011.

I hope that Christmas was a happy few days and that you have not been too inconvenienced by the snow – perhaps even taking advantage of it. When I was about to start writing, in early December, we had 18 to 24 inches of snow on the ground and so it has remained. To go with it we have had some wonderful clear sunny days which made it a magical aspect, although on the negative side it has perhaps been inconvenient and time consuming if one had to do outside work! We sit above and look out over Loch Leven and it has been frozen over for some time and with a uniform covering of snow it looks perfect for a Bonspiel but it is probably not quite thick enough to take the weight of such a gathering.

At our Committee meeting in November, before all the snow arrived, we had a presentation from Paula Lightfoot, the NBN Data Access Officer, on both her role within the NBN and the wider activities of the NBN. It seems to me that the role of the NBN is now becoming much more recognised, since the time I first became aware of its existence, which was only some six years ago, with their Membership numbers increasing steadily. We are planning to run a regular feature on their work in the BRISC Newsletter, which I hope will keep our Members informed of the wider UK and International recording matters.

We have confirmed our AGM to take place in Glasgow on the evening of Thursday 10th March to be followed by a talk, organised in conjunction with the Glasgow Zoological Society. This is a different format to recent years and we hope it may suit and enable even more BRISC Members to attend but your views on this would be welcome, preferably at the meeting but equally helpful by other means. In 2011 we are due to elect a new Chairman and Jonathan Willet is being proposed by the current Committee. If there are other members who would like to stand for the Committee we would, as ever, be pleased to have names.

The Annual Conference will now be held in the autumn of 2011 – venue and theme still to be finalised.

With Best Wishes for 2011.

Patrick Milne Home

December 2010

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Editorial

A few weeks ago a friend sent me a copy of an editorial from the journal *Conservation Biology* (Vol.10) Feb. 1996, which lamented the decline of field naturalists and the shrinking army of anyone who could actually identify species in the field. The writer tells how he was asked to identify specimens on the spot as an integral part of his first job interview. The demise of taxonomy being taught at university level was mentioned as one of the factors responsible for this decline in practical skills.

Another realisation was that the taxonomic experts in their different fields were getting older and there seemed to be a dearth of a new generation moving up to replace them.

How familiar are we not with these arguments today? BRISC has been banging on about this for years, and so has practically anyone involved in biological recording in the UK. I remember listening to Sir John Burnet at a meeting at the Linnean Society in London saying very much the same thing back in the mid-1990s, and the seemingly increasing lack of expertise in the field was a real concern, just at the time when the international convention of biodiversity took place and people woke up to the fact that the world's wildlife was under serious and increasing threat. In the UK a biodiversity action plan was conceived, and the agencies for nature conservation proceeded to list what wildlife we had and where, something which is paramount before it could be considered how to conserve it. The concern here was if the skills involved in species identification were being lost, how could we then progress?

It seems to me that this wake-up call has in fact had a very substantial success, not necessarily due to government influence, but essentially due to the enthusiasm and lobbying of a great number of committed individuals across the board: people, like Sir John Burnet, who had the energy and cared deeply about our national environment. The meeting e.g. at the Linnean Society heralded the development of National Biodiversity Network, and the fact that this network now has access to ca. 60 million records must indicate that there are many naturalists out there collecting and submitting records. New national societies dedicated to the study and conservation of particular taxa, such as the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, keep emerging, and national schemes, such as the macro moth recording scheme, have had astonishing success.

Taxonomy may no longer be a critical part of a biology student's course, and society at large may not be as knowledgeable about nature as the Victorians, but there has surely seldom been a greater range of opportunities for the general public to become involved than today. Just look at all the delectable and enticing courses on offer listed in the last three pages of this issue. How could anyone resist?

Anne-Marie Smout

Deadline for the April Issue is 18 March 2011.

Please send all material, preferably electronically, to anne-marie@smout.org or by post to BRISC c/o Smout, Chesterhill – upper flat, Shore Road, Anstruther KY10 3DZ

Continued from p.1.

In addition, all other standing waters shown on the 1:25,000 OS maps within 3km of the nine sites were identified and visited. Some had disappeared and others were dry, but all those with open water were sampled as for the main sites. A further 21 sites on the mainland of Scotland were selected at random and also included in the sampling programme.



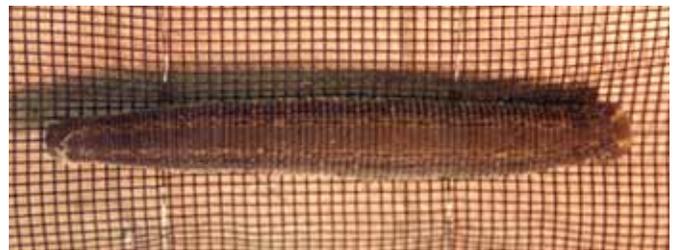
The Argyll site, showing the weedy littoral habitat favoured by the Medicinal Leech © Peter Maitland

Hirudo medicinalis was found at only two of the previously recorded sites (one on Islay and the other in Argyll) and at none of the other waters sampled. This first phase of the study indicated just how rare this species was in Scotland and that further studies were required. These, in 1996, involved important aspects of the conservation of *Hirudo medicinalis* and included taxonomic issues, the relevance of captive breeding, and surveys of possible translocation sites for the species.



Cocoon of Medicinal Leech *in situ* after turning over a stone.
© Peter Maitland

Difficulties encountered previously in separating the cocoons and some juveniles of the medicinal leech and the horse leech *Haemopsis sanguisuga* were resolved during this study (Maitland *et al.* 2000). The cocoons of *Hirudo medicinalis* are larger and have a different structure from those of *Haemopsis sanguisuga*. Some of the darker juveniles of *Haemopsis sanguisuga* may be confused with those of *Hirudo medicinalis*, but can be separated by careful examination of both dorsal and ventral colour patterns. The possibility of confusion with introduced *Hirudo verbana* must also be considered (Trontelj *et al.* 2004), but all Scottish specimens examined were *Hirudo medicinalis*.



Preserved Medicinal Leech, showing colour pattern © Peter Maitland

At least one of the original identifications from the previously recorded sites were found not to be *Hirudo medicinalis* but actually *Haemopsis sanguisuga*, and misidentifications may have led to some wasted effort during this study. This emphasises the importance, assuming that a licence is held, of obtaining and preserving voucher specimens (single specimens until the size of the population is known) and lodging them with an appropriate museum. Only in this way can the validity of past sites be assured.

It is known that *Hirudo* feeds on both the larvae and adults of frogs (*Rana*), toads (*Bufo*) and newts (*Triturus*). They not only suck blood from these Amphibia but also commonly kill them. This may be because, except when small, the leeches suck most of the blood from a host which is not much larger than themselves. At any rate, the presence of Amphibia can be important to adult *Hirudo*, they may be essential hosts for their young, and in some cases at least, *Hirudo* populations can thrive by feeding largely on them. A notable feature of the two sites verified in the present study was that, not only were frogs and toads abundant there in the spring, but that *Hirudo* were feeding actively on them at this time. Indeed, examining spawning Amphibia is believed to be one of the best ways of locating medicinal leeches at a site and is a recommended way of monitoring.



Medicinal Leeches attacking a pair of Toads © Peter Maitland

In view of the low number of populations and the likely chances of success it was recommended that translocations are carried out as possibly the only way in which the number of populations of *Hirudo medicinalis* are going to be increased in the short term. Given appropriate conditions, new populations could be established. Even artificial water bodies can be considered for this purpose for it has been shown that *Hirudo medicinalis* has become established in relatively new gravel pools in the south of England and in recently created fire ponds in Wales.

In the original study (Maitland 1996), recommendations were made for the future management of the two proven sites in relation to the conservation there of *Hirudo medicinalis*. Suitable local waters for possible translocations were identified and translocation procedures proposed. Unfortunately, none of the proposals arising from the study were ever developed and even the current status of the two populations verified appears to be unknown in 2010.

Acknowledgements

This study was funded by Scottish Natural Heritage. Voucher specimens of *Hirudo medicinalis* were lodged with the Royal Museum of Scotland. The author would be interested to hear from BRISC members of any sites where large Hirudinea, thought to be medicinal leeches, occur.

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The Appeal of, or an Appeal on Behalf of, Micro-lepidoptera

By Keith Bland

To all those interested in lepidoptera (moths and butterflies) I ask; "Why do you just consider the larger ones?" The smaller ones are just as interesting, if not more so due to their diversity. The division of lepidoptera into micro-lepidoptera (small moths) and macro-lepidoptera (larger moths and butterflies) is a purely artificial one based entirely on size. In Britain and Europe this division can be done without too much untidiness, as nearly all

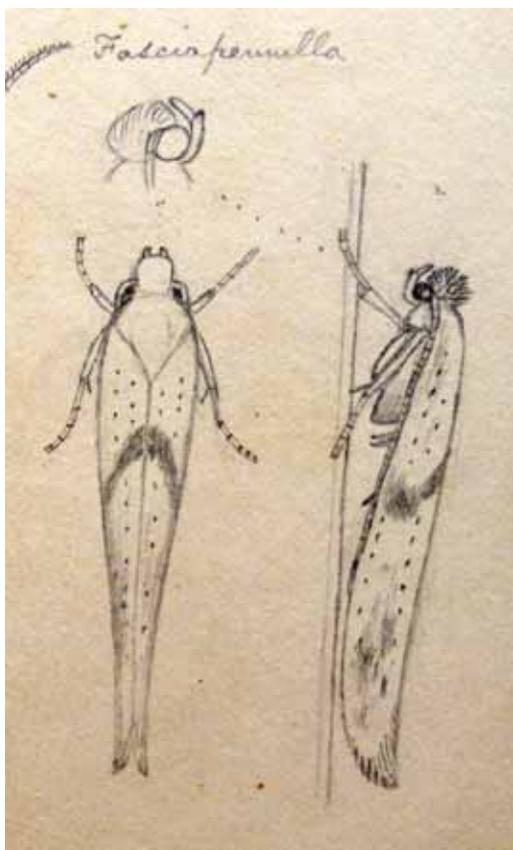
members of each taxonomic family fall in the same size category – however in the Tropics, where biodiversity is greater, things are not so clear cut, and large and small species occur in the same family. Of the approximately 2,500 British lepidoptera less than 1,000 are macro-lepidoptera (often abbreviated to 'macros'). The macros have received the most attention from lepidopterists because most can be identified on wing-pattern alone, unaided even by a lens. Many micro-lepidoptera ('micros') can also be done on wing-pattern, but their small size makes a lens or microscope an asset – unfortunately a few cannot safely be identified without microscopic examination (but this applies to some macros also).

Of the 1,500 or so British species of micro-lepidoptera only about 950 have been recorded in Scotland, however some 60 species of these are restricted to Scotland in the British Isles. We are hence *entirely* responsible for the well-being of these 60 species. Historically the recording of micros in Scotland has been down to a fairly small number of individuals, who had the perseverance to develop expertise in identification. Some of these stalwarts were William Reid (active in 1890s) in Aberdeenshire, F. Buchanan White (1842-1894) in Perthshire, James J.F.X.King (1855-1933) in Clydesdale, Robert F.Logan (1827-1887) and later William Evans (1851-1922) in the Lothians, and of course Teddy C Pelham-Clinton (1920-1988) who recorded all over Scotland. These workers laid the foundation of our knowledge of Scottish lepidoptera on which we have been able to build.

Identification of micros is less difficult for us now than it was for these individuals. Recent literature is well illustrated and identity confusions have been mostly ironed out. Furthermore the discovery of the uniqueness of the genitalia structure of each species has given us an almost absolute identification tool. We have the ten volume series *The Moths and Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland*, started in 1976 by John Heath who was also a prime figure in the founding of the Biological Records Centre. The series is still three volumes short of completion, but another volume (Vol.5 on Tortricidae) will be out in 2011, leaving only the families Pyralidae and Geometridae outstanding. The former family, the last of the micros, is currently dealt with in Barry Goater's *British Pyralid Moths*.

Unlike macros, many micros are daytime- or dusk-fliers and hence are infrequent visitors to light-traps. They are best caught while flying in late morning or at dusk. Of course rearing them from larva produces much more information about life history and habitat requirements than just netting the adults and may produce some interesting surprises. I once collected some curious looking 'sawfly' cocoons in Glen Clova, and when they emerged was surprised to find I had rediscovered the moth *Callisto coffeella* (see below). Recent advances in digital photography are tempting many to use this medium for capture but, unfortunately, however good the photograph(s) it may allow only a possible identification, whereas a retained dead specimen can invariably be identified with certainty. Let us base our knowledge on certainty rather than just possibility. Some recorders try to justify their avoidance of retaining a specimen on conservation grounds – very laudable but depriving a blue tit of a small fraction of one

day's breakfast will have little impact on either species; for those who have an aversion to killing, I hope they apply the same rules to midges, mosquitoes, fleas and ticks!



Original drawing (circa 1860) of *Kessleria fasciapennella* by Robert Logan – possibly extinct?

Many people seem to have a problem with insect names, and I regret that the modern trend of dumbing everything down is not helping. All insects known to science have a proper name that can be understood throughout the world, whatever language a country speaks. That name is Latinised, thus no favouritism is shown to any country or current language. The name is governed by an internationally accepted set of rules. The microlepidopteran *Plutella xylostella*, for example, is recognised by that name throughout the world, and its distribution is now worldwide. Even our neighbours in Europe would not know what you were talking about if you use the English trivial name 'cabbage diamond-back'. Some people have gone to great lengths to **manufacture** English trivial names for all the micros. Why? How foolish! Different people have even manufactured different names for the same species, e.g. *Kessleria fasciapennella* (see below) has been named 'large Argent' (it is not silver!) and 'lost ermel' (I have no idea what an ermel is). They have not even been aware of previous people's industry. Ask any 12-year old child what *Tyrannosaurus rex* is – they are not put off by the fact the name is in Latin.

With regard to the moths themselves, like all other animals, what we need to know about each species is where they occur and how they live. Scotland is a large place and it will need a lot of effort to understand fully the distribution of all the species. We are

however fortunate in that there is, in the National Museum in Edinburgh, a very comprehensive index to all past published records of localities for each individual species of Scottish insect; thus we have an historic context to build on and expand. Where do they live? What habitat do they favour? What do they feed on and how? For many species we do not know the answer to all these questions. Often the rarer the species the less we know. Once we know the life-history of a rare species we find new approaches to looking for it, and then often find it is less uncommon than we formerly thought.

Have any recent species become extinct? In Scotland we have five species of micros that have not been seen for over 100 years – but are they extinct? Consider the following table of Scottish rarities and their present status after targeted searching for them over the last 25 years:

Species name	Last seen	Rediscovered
<i>Kessleria fasciapennella</i>	1851	No
<i>Ethmia pyrausta</i>	1853*	1997 (D)
<i>Roesterstammia pronubella</i>	1854*	No
<i>Psychoides verhuella</i>	1878	1987 (S)
<i>Catoptria specularis</i>	1890*	No
<i>Gypsonoma nitidulana</i>	1908	No
<i>Gnorimoschema streliciella</i>	1909	No
<i>Apotomis infida</i>	1919	1979 (D)
<i>Pselnophorus heterodactylus</i>	1920	1990 (S)
<i>Eana argentana</i>	1920	1985 (S)
<i>Paraleucoptera sinuella</i>	1954	No
<i>Plutella haasi</i>	1954*	2009 (S)
<i>Stenoptilia islandica</i>	1954	1993 (S)
<i>Callisto coffeella</i>	1984*	1992 (D)
<i>Syncopacma albifrontella</i>	2002*	No

* Known from a single specimen only.

(S) Same site as original specimens.

(D) Different site to original ones.

It is possible that *Kessleria fasciapennella* in the Pentland hills, Edinburgh, and *Roesterstammia pronubella* in the Shin valley, Sutherland, are extinct, but remember *Ethmia pyrausta* turned up 144 years after its first discovery. Time alone will tell.

In the last decade there has also been new species arriving in Scotland. These have been primarily aliens that have become established by accidental importation into England and subsequently spread north. Watch the horse chestnut trees for the leafminer, *Cameraria ohridella*, that makes brown blotches on the leaves. It is due in southern Scotland any day now.

Keith Bland,
35 Charterhall Road, Edinburgh.

If you see this publication and feel tempted to join BRISC and support our work, you can down-load a membership form from our website at www.brisec.org.uk or request a form from Duncan Davidson, BRISC membership secretary. Individual membership is only £15 p.a. Corporate membership is £30 p.a.

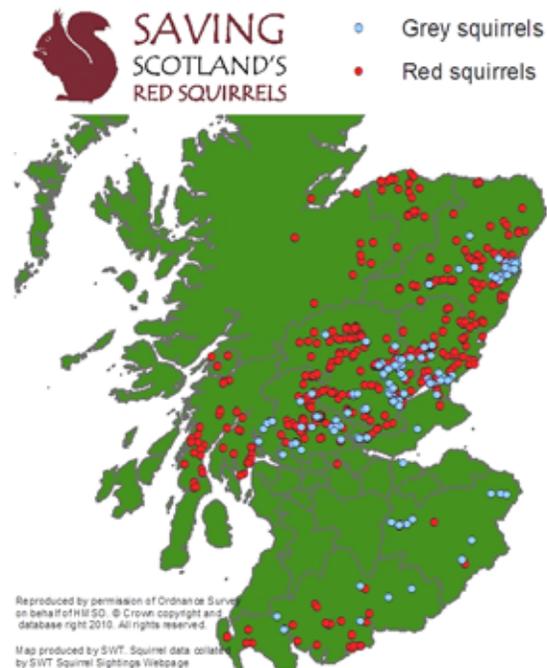
RECORD SQUIRREL SIGHTINGS ONLINE TO HELP SAVE THE RED SQUIRREL IN SCOTLAND

By Ian Mackenzie

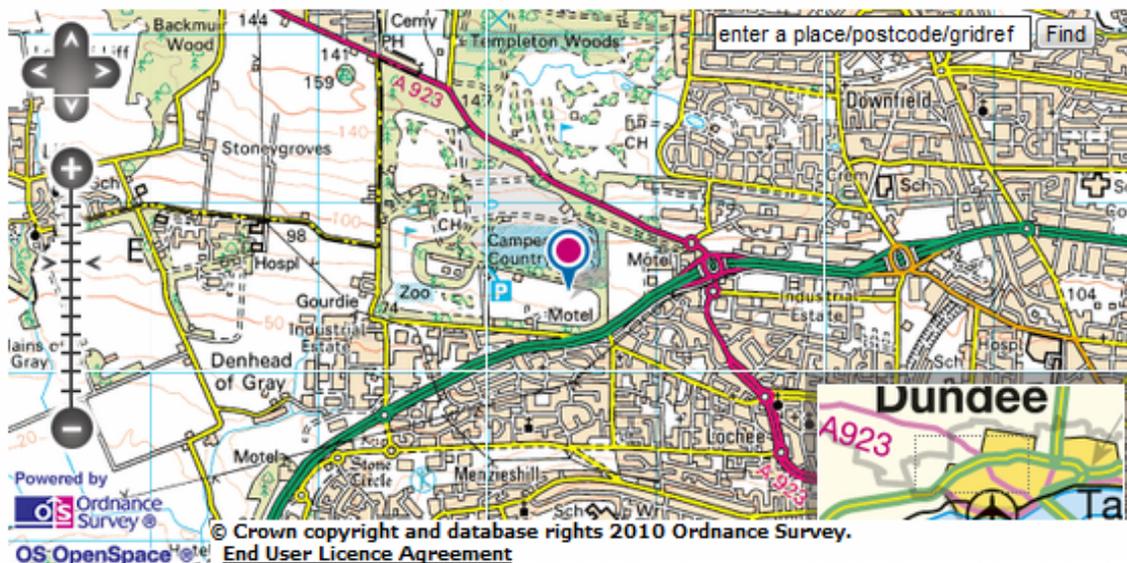
The Scottish Wildlife Trust is collecting information on the distribution of red and grey squirrels right across Scotland using our new online recording webpage. Users can enter their squirrel sightings on the map using a place name, postcode, grid reference or by clicking on the location.

The records go straight to a holding database for verification held by the Scottish Wildlife Trust. Weekly local reports are sent to the Saving Scotland Red Squirrel Project Officers to advise them of red or grey squirrels in unusual places. This allows us not only to identify areas of importance where habitat management or grey squirrel control will benefit red squirrel populations, but also to understand natural changes in their populations.

The map on the right shows confirmed 2010 squirrel sightings. Since the web page was published in August 2010 a total of 782 verified squirrel records have been submitted.



Please tell us where you saw these squirrels. Enter a town name, post code or grid reference in the find box below to be taken to the location. You can zoom in to record a more accurate position and move the pin marker by clicking on the map



This information will be added to the Scottish Squirrel Database and made available to Local Squirrel Groups; local records centres; government and non-government wildlife agencies; planners; local biodiversity partnerships and the National Biodiversity Network Gateway.

Please help us in our efforts to save Scotland's Red Squirrel by reporting your sightings of red or grey squirrels in each new place where you see them at

<http://www.swt.org.uk/wildlife/squirrelsightings>

Ian Mackenzie
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NEW iSPOT BIODIVERSITY MENTOR FOR SCOTLAND

By Murdo Macdonald

In June 2009 the Open University launched the iSpot website at www.ispot.org.uk. This is one of the projects funded from The National Lottery through OPAL (Open Air Laboratories), a partnership operating in England. The site allows anyone to upload photographs of wildlife of any type and obtain identification, encouragement and advice from over 6000 registered users, many of them highly experienced naturalists. In its first year of operation, iSpot has helped users identify 25000 observations of some 2500 species including everything from lichens to birds. Many people have heard of it through mentions on the BBC Radio 4 programme *Saving Species*.

The scope of the iSpot project has recently been extended with the appointment of Biodiversity Mentors in Scotland, Wales and Ireland, funded by the OU. Mentors will establish contacts with local groups interested in wildlife to encourage an interest in wildlife amongst the public, and to promote iSpot as a means of developing wildlife knowledge and skills. A superb example of the way it can work is at www.ispot.org.uk/node/86366.

This work will continue to July 2011. Meantime, why not try out iSpot with a picture of that unfamiliar wildlife you saw on holiday? Or just browse the site to harvest the many tips on identification that it contains.

The site also welcomes the expertise of naturalists who can provide identification of, or advice on, the items submitted. If you feel able to share your skills in this way, please register with the site and visit, identify and comment as often as you wish. There is a huge resource of wildlife experience within BRISC,

and contributing some of that to provide a Scottish perspective on the items submitted would be very rewarding for all concerned. Registered users may display (subject to permission of the committee) the logo of their organisation with a link to the relevant website. Examples may be seen on the iSpot site.

The associated 10 Credit OU course *Neighbourhood Nature* S159 is suitable for anyone who wants to improve their wildlife skills and have it formally recognised. The course can contribute to an OU degree. This course introduces basic scientific and observational skills, and teaches how to observe, identify and record wildlife. Details are on the iSpot website.

If you would like more information on iSpot, or advice on how to develop skills in wildlife observation and identification, please contact murdo.macdonald@open.ac.uk.

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Saving Species on Radio 4

BBC Radio 4's *Saving Species* highlights the challenges, successes and failures of conservation around the world. Join the [iSpot discussion forums](#) for more about each week's features.

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OPAL Biodiversity Survey

Take part in the **OPAL Biodiversity Survey** and uncover the diverse range of wildlife in our hedges. You'll contribute to valuable research and learn more about the importance of hedges and how you can improve them.

[read more...](#)

iSpot News

- iSpot fungus foray, 24 October, in the New Forest 14th Sep 10
- Neighbourhood Nature - register now for the next presentation of this course - 13th Aug 10
- How to use the "Changes" section in My Spot - new FAQ added 10th Aug 10
- iSpot is one year old! 1st Jul 10

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iSpot is an OPAL project

LOTTERY FUNDED

Watch the video to see how iSpot's friendly community helps you learn about wildlife.

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NBN news

10 Years – past, present and future

The NBN celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2010 and to coincide with this, published a document outlining its strategy for the next 10 years. Everyone involved in the NBN is a vital part of this strategy and has a role to play.

The Strategy Implementation Group (SIG), which comprises representatives from all sectors across the NBN, will help ensure that all organisations play their part in delivering this strategy. A SIG meeting took place on the 30 November. Unfortunately, because of the terrible weather conditions, a number of representatives were unable to attend and on this occasion only Highland Council was in attendance from Scotland. However, SEPA, Scottish Wildlife Trust and RSPB (Scotland) are on the panel for the future. The minutes and presentations from that meeting are available to download from the NBN website <http://www.nbn.org.uk/News-and-Events/NBN-news/NBN-Strategy-Implementation-Group-meets.aspx> as is the strategy itself <http://www.nbn.org.uk/Useful-things/Publications.aspx>

NBN Conference

A fitting theme for the 10th NBN Conference was "Opening opportunities for biodiversity: working with the NBN". It was a day of celebrations from the offset; from the 10 year anniversary, the award of a certificate for the upload of the 50 millionth record to the Gateway, the Sir John Burnett Memorial lecture and the latest uses of NBN resources, which provided the basis for the talks throughout the day.

All of the presentations can be downloaded from <http://www.nbn.org.uk/News-and-Events/Biodiversity-news/Conference-review.aspx>

Gateway News

See the NBN Gateway in action on YouTube

We have posted two short demonstration videos on YouTube, using Google Earth satellite imagery to give a guided tour of data on the Gateway and to illustrate how the data can be used to visualise and explore changes in species distribution. We plan to add more examples in future, so watch this space:

www.youtube.com/user/nbngatewaydev

New data from NESBREC

North East Scotland Biological Records Centre (NESBREC) recently brought the Gateway up to date with records for North East Scotland. They uploaded 12 datasets in November which included the latest 2010 records for groups such as mammals, amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates. NESBREC now has a total of 184,444 species records on the Gateway covering Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Moray and the Cairngorms LBAP area.

www.nesbrec.org.uk

Species designations on the Gateway

The Gateway now displays information on species' conservation designations as well as their taxonomic information. From a tab on the home page you can browse designations such as the Wildlife and Countryside Act and the Scottish Biodiversity List and produce a list of species assigned to each designation. <http://data.nbn.org.uk/>

In Practice

iPhone app – powered by the NBN

Bird Guides Ltd's new iPhone app, *Moths and Butterflies of Britain & Ireland*, allows you to access the fantastic resources of UKMoths.org.uk alongside live distribution maps from the NBN Gateway courtesy of the National Moth Recording Scheme. The app covers over 2,000 species, with beautiful photographs of moths, butterflies, eggs, larvae and pupae. This is the first ever iPhone app to use Gateway web services, but there are likely to be more on the way. See the Bird Guides website for further information and a link to download the app from iTunes:

www.birdguides.com/products/appbimoths/

Funding for training workshops in Scotland

The NBN Trust is providing funding to help Local Records Centres deliver five 1-day species identification and data mobilisation workshops for recorders in Scotland. The aim of these workshops is to train recorders in taxonomic groups that are unfamiliar to them and to target regions where these groups are under-recorded due to lack of local expertise. Coordinated by The Wildlife Information Centre in collaboration with four other LRCs, the workshops will run in January and February 2011, and will cover bryophytes, dragonflies, lichens, molluscs and harvestmen. For further details see advert in this issue or check out BRISC website training page at www.brisec.org.uk/training

Gateway data help tackle invasive species in Scotland

The Invasive Species Scotland website uses NBN Gateway data to provide information on the distribution of non-native species which pose a risk to native plants, animals and habitats in Scotland. As well as providing information on the identification, distribution, legislation and management of invasive species, the site enables members of the public to report their sightings. The website is part of the Rivers and Fisheries Trusts of Scotland (RAFTS) Biosecurity and Invasive Species Programme, which is supported by the Scottish Government, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Environment Protection Agency and the Esmeé Fairbairn Foundation

www.invasivespeciesscotland.org.uk

Did you know...?

We are seeking records for 10 invasive non native species?

The NBN Trust, along with the Biological Records Centre at the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, is managing a Defra funded project to encourage people to look out for a number of invasive species and to submit their records online.

RISC (Recording Invasive Species Counts) launched in March 2010, but will re-launch in spring 2011 with more species to be monitored.

Find out more and record your sightings at

www.nonnativespecies.org/recording

You can support the NBN's work by becoming a member of the NBN Trust?

Membership of the NBN Trust has been rising steadily as a result of a membership drive throughout 2010. Recent new members include the Open University, the National Trust, the Royal Horticultural Society, the Mammal Society, the British Trust for Ornithology and three Record Centres – Thames Valley ERC, Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes ERC and Wiltshire & Swindon BRC. Cost of membership ranges from free with the submission and maintenance of datasets, as a Supporter Member, and £5,000 as a gold member. Find out more on the website at <http://www.nbn.org.uk/About/The-NBN-Trust/Membership.aspx> where you can also sign up.

Raise Money to “Save the Albatross” with Stamps

Like probably many other readers I used to collect stamps back in the olden days, but stamp collecting has completely gone out of fashion for a number of reasons. Now I often regret throwing out really pretty and well-designed stamps, so here is a way of giving stamps some real value again, devised by charities such as the RSPB. I repeat the details of the RSPB’s project to Save the Albatross, as it seems such a good idea. However, other environmental charities may operate similar projects, which readers might wish to support in a similar way..

The RSPB’s “Save the Albatross Stamp Appeal” works as follows:

- All stamps should be removed from envelopes or post cards. Just cut or tear them off, leaving only enough paper to avoid damaging the stamps

For loose stamps, the RSPB works with a stamp dealer who operates with various charities, receiving stamps, selling them on and paying charities a proportion of the proceeds. The RSPB raise up to £3.50 per kg for UK stamps and £12.50 per kg for foreign stamps. For loose stamps, they ask that these are sent directly to the dealer, and pre-sorted into UK and foreign please.

- **Send loose stamps** to: RSPB Stamps, PO Box 6198, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire LU7 9XT. To be sent preferably in 2 kilo quantities or above – as otherwise the postage will outweigh the revenue of the stamps. Please note, this is the address of the dealer, not an RSPB office, so please do not send any correspondence - or donations - to this address.
- **If you have first day covers, or stamp albums**, please send them to: Save the Albatross Stamp Appeal (Special Stamps and Albums), RSPB, The Lodge, Sandy, Beds, SG19 2DL. Please do not send loose stamps here.
- **If you have a large number of stamps**, you might like to consider combining delivering them with a visit to one of the RSPB’s nature reserves. Combine fabulous wildlife, a visit to the countryside and help albatrosses all in one go. People are also welcome to drop them off at one of the RSPB’s offices.

As a post script, I have now been collecting stamps for several weeks but only got a small handful, so it might be a good idea to go into company with friends and relations to make a joint collection, or it will take years to amass the 2kg required!

A-M Smout

Obituary

Barbara Ballinger 1941-2010

Barbara Ballinger, who died on 27 October 2010 at the age of 69, had been a member of BRISC for many years. She was born in Middlesbrough, where she excelled at school and was greatly encouraged by a biology teacher to go on to higher education. Initially she considered studying to be a

vet but this was deemed unsuitable because she was small, and instead she went on to read medicine and gained a prize for being top of her year at Sheffield University. After having qualified in Sheffield as a doctor, she took jobs in General Medicine and rapidly got the Membership of the Royal College of Physicians.



Barbara in her element in Garrick Wood, by Tain

While at Sheffield she met Brian, also a medical doctor, and they married in 1967. In 1969 they moved to Dundee, where their two sons were born. After some initial part-time work Barbara was appointed Lecturer and then promoted to Senior Lecturer in Psychiatry in the University of Dundee, later transferring to the National Health Service as a consultant. She made many contributions to the field of clinical work in psychiatry, in teaching, research and management, and she was a very popular teacher – her lectures were always packed. She was awarded an OBE in 1998 for services to women with mental illness. After retirement she also worked in several voluntary organisations, especially in counseling.



Photographing the scarce *Carex maritima* (Curved Sedge) rediscovered at Tarbatness after a gap of 100 years.

Barbara was always attracted by Natural History and had a great love of plants, both in the garden and in the wild, and her knowledge and skill in their identification was remarkable.

After retirement she and Brian acquired woodlands in Fife, Easter Ross and Caithness as well as a pond in Angus, and

Barbara made a particular point of identifying all the different kinds of wildlife in these places. In 2008 I asked her to contribute to the “What’s special about” feature in *BRISC Recorder News*, which resulted in the delightful article on “What’s special about Three Woods and a Pond” (see July 2008 issue No 70). The wildlife was the main management priority in these properties and in pursuit of this Barbara became very skilled in the use of a chainsaw. To give a base for these activities a flat was acquired in a railway station building at Fearn near Tain in Easter Ross.

Barbara and Brian became joint Botanical Recorder for Easter Ross (VC106) for the Botanical Society of the British Isles (BSBI), a post that Brian continues to occupy, and together they went on to develop a deep knowledge of the botany of the area, which includes some very remote countryside and twenty-five Munros. Barbara did a lot of survey work, wrote articles, led outings for various societies and became co-author of the Plant Checklist and also the Rare Plants Register for Easter Ross. She was vice-chairman of the Scottish Committee of the BSBI.

One year Brian got her a moth trap for her birthday and this fired her imagination. She joined our very informal Fife Moth Group in 2006, then as now led by Duncan Davidson. After the flat at Fearn was acquired, however, more time was spent in Ross-shire and Barbara became joint moth recorder for Butterfly Conservation for VC106, where she and Brian set about mapping the moths of this large and under-recorded area. They recently published a Checklist of the larger moths of this area, and Duncan has fond night-time memories of blizzards in Strathconon when Barbara was keen to find new species for her vice-county, and also how Barbara and Brian’s attitude of inclusiveness was tremendous, especially with regard to accessing their woods.



Checking a moth trap in Garrick Wood
all photographs © Brian Ballinger

Barbara was immensely supportive of BRISC and even took out a second personal membership to show her support. She was also a long-standing member of the Dundee Naturalists Society and deeply involved in the work of the Highland Biological Recording Group, being a member of the executive committee. Barbara had many other natural history interests, such as recording birds and mosses. Her

too early death is a real blow to biological recording in general but especially in Easter Ross, and she will be greatly missed by all who knew her and loved her generosity and quiet humour.

Anne-Marie Smout

BOOK REVIEWS

Maclean, Norman (ed.). (2010) *Silent Summer. The State of Wildlife in Britain and Ireland. With a foreword by Sir David Attenborough. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. 765 pages. ISBN 978-0-521-51966-3. Hbk £27.99.*

When I first heard of this book, I suffered from two misconceptions. The first came from its title, harking back as it does to Rachel Carson, which suggested to me that it would be an emotive and alarming work of advocacy. There is, after all, plenty of scope for that. The second came from its price. Surely, coming from Cambridge University Press, that must indicate a slim volume? I was totally wrong on both scores. The book is a multi-author one, with 36 chapters by experts in their fields, all gathering together and carefully weighing up evidence on the state of our wildlife. At nearly 800 pages it is a bargain: presumably CUP expect it to sell well. I hope they are right. It deserves to be read, or at least dipped into, by anyone concerned about wildlife in Britain today. The “dipping in” option is eased by summaries in every chapter and conclusions in most, as well as a good scattering of maps and diagrams. There are colour plates, all gathered together in one section with, rather oddly, also a black and white version of each at the appropriate position in the text.

Topped and tailed by an introduction and a conclusion by the editor, the main body of the book consists of 34 chapters split into three sections. The first of these contains ten chapters rather loosely centred on the reasons why populations are changing, the main ones dealt with being climate change, urbanisation and habitat loss, pollution and introductions. Though the impact, set to continue, of rising human population, is touched on here, and identified as the key issue in the editor’s conclusion, it gets rather little attention as such. I would also have liked to have seen a more detailed treatment of how habitats have changed over the years and the effects of these changes on different groups of animals. Two chapters concern “field sports” (and, oddly, but connected with this focus, the only single species to merit a chapter of its own later in the book is the grey partridge): these make the case that this activity has a positive effect on conservation through management of natural environments such as moors and rivers. That may be so, though it seems a sad indictment of human behaviour in the 21st century that care for the natural world may sometimes depend on those whose main enjoyment is in killing some of its inhabitants.

A second short section of three chapters deals with more general conservation issues, in these islands, on the

international stage, and in the so-called “overseas territories”. This last was an eye-opener to me: I had not appreciated how poorly our government took its responsibilities for these scattered locations, many of them oceanic islands with unique flora and fauna of much greater international significance than anything our own islands can boast.

The rest of the book deals with a series of case histories, mostly centred on particular taxonomic groups. Of these 21 chapters, seven are on vertebrates and only one specifically on plants; most of the rest are on insects. This may seem unbalanced but reflects where many of the problems lie. While the decline of the red squirrel or the reintroduction of the sea eagle may grab the headlines and be there for all to see, in the long run loss of insect biodiversity may turn out to be the issue of most critical importance. Many animals feed on insects and many plants, including our own crops, rely on them for pollination. Slowly, insidiously and often unnoticed, the loss of insect biodiversity may be doing more damage to the ecosystems on which we rely than any other factor.

Many of these case histories pick up on the issues raised in the first section of the book. Did you know, for example, that Britain now has more introduced species of amphibian than native ones? Did you know that some of the nastiest pollutants in waterways can mimic hormones so that, at minute concentrations, they can disrupt the reproduction, or even change the sex, of some animals? Did you know that some salt-tolerant plants, previously confined to the coast, have spread inland along roadside verges since winter salt treatment of roads was introduced in the 1960s? The effects of climate change on distributions crop up repeatedly, with many species that need higher temperatures actually becoming commoner in Scotland than before as their ranges extend northwards. On the other hand, species that need a cool climate may be withdrawing from the south so that Scotland becomes their main stronghold: the great yellow bumblebee is a case in point.

Most chapters talk of loss and it is easy to become gloomy, as much of the change described is ultimately attributable to the influence of our own species and its short-sighted exploitation of the natural world. But this book itself provides a beacon of hope. Thanks to the activities of a large number of people, amateur and professional, we now know a tremendous amount about the distribution and abundance of the animals and plants that surround us and on which we depend, and also the factors that influence them. Smaller, less colourful and charismatic species deserve and must receive more attention, but our knowledge has certainly improved immeasurably in the past few decades. Thoughtlessly moving animals between continents or slaughtering them to extinction are now hopefully a thing of the past. In many cases we know what we have to do to correct the problems that have arisen. The major task is then not so much to identify the problems and their solutions but to persuade our fellow human beings that it is in their own best interests, as well as that of the rest of the living world,

to act. The task is a daunting one, but this book is an excellent start in identifying the issues.

Peter Slater

Mabey, Richard (2010) *Weeds*. Profile Books, London. ISBN 978-1-84668-076-2 Hbk £14.00

Richard Mabey’s “Weeds” is a well chosen title not just simply because that is what the book is about but it is a word which means different things to different people.

So, the opening chapter addresses just that: “it all depends what you mean by a weed”. He points out that what is ornamental or useful in one place becomes a malign invader in another. The commonest definition is “a plant out of place”. He then makes an important point - it is more the place than the plant that is crucial in the definition. Going back in history he explores the place of unwelcome plants in the agricultural arena, many of the plants we now consider weeds were not then. There are many examples and Mabey shows a great knowledge of, not just the botanical history, but also the cultural history of plants. It is this cultural aspect that makes this book stand out; an aspect not much considered previously but which is really the key to understanding the nature of weeds.

The book is littered with anecdotes and examples from arable fields to domestic gardens and urban environments throughout the ages. He states, “these plants sabotage human plans”, this perhaps being the most succinct definition of all (it will cost £70 million to clear Japanese knotweed from the Olympic site!). We all have our own weeds to confront; those in the herbaceous border are not the same as the weeds in the farmers’ fields or in the towns and cities. Ragwort brightens up the urban wastes but is a menace in the pastures. Ground elder a garden menace but not so in the countryside. Many are medicinal, some symbolic (poppies for remembrance).

There are twelve chapters in the book, each a complete piece, which makes it the type of book you can dip into now and again. Having said that, once I started I read it right to the end; it is superbly written, and Mabey’s undoubted passion for plants and the landscape shines through.

Of course one looks out for weeds we know and they are all there. How they spread is dealt with almost as by a detective on the trail of someone who has run away and turned bad. Wonderful examples from escape from monasteries to travels by train and even in tyre treads and trouser turn-ups. Darwin’s experiments on seeds in seawater, seeds in mud balls, and his famous weed patch are all there. Again, the cultural history of the plants is a vital part of their transformation into weeds. But, this is another of the great aspects of the book, you end up with an understanding and appreciation of the whiles and cunning of weeds, and they are no longer the bad guys. Even the worst of our foreign invaders are not as terrible as they may seem. Yes, in local areas they are destructive; but precise mapping distributions shows that they are not going to take over the world; this is dealt with in the chapter on aliens entitled amusingly

“Triffid”. Certainly Japanese knotweed, rhododendron and Indian balsam are written about seriously as they destroy areas where we should be able to enjoy a variety of flora.

The medicinal side is extensively covered, Culpeper and Robinson and others. Beauty is also important; and Mabey is obviously a devotee of the poet John Clare, but brings in other bits of poetry and a delightful analysis of Shakespeare’s “bank where wild thyme grows”. As someone who takes a delight in weeds on wasteland and field edges I liked it that this book helps bring us around to appreciating weeds as wild flowers in all their splendour and as an addition to the environment; we should learn to live with them more. There is a bit to say about the obsession with the authorities to “tidy up” the urban landscape, to savage verges and spray the waste ground. But Mabey also points out that more fields have the edges now left, resulting in what I like to think of as a natural herbaceous border. Perhaps here a mention that the greater the variety of plants, the less the occurrence of pathogens and pests; an important point for agriculture. More hedges and edges means more insects, birds, and the fact that many plants act as protectors for others.

The glossary of plant names (282) is valuable and fascinating, especially as he uses some of the wonderful folk names for the plants. The reference list perhaps could be referred to in the text or put at the bottom of the relevant page rather than standing alone.

I could go on for pages extolling the virtues of this book. It is packed with fascinating and wonderful stories and descriptions, not a dull page and written in a fine prose. Read this book and love weeds!

Sandy Edwards.

O’Connor, T. & Sykes, N. (Eds) (2010). *Extinctions and Invasions: A social history of British Fauna*. Windgather Press and the individual authors. Oxford. 245 pp, 43 figs., mainly photos of fossils. ISBN 978-1-905119-31-8. Softbk, A4 in size. £26.60

This book is a collection of 22 scientific papers, mainly by archaeologists, describing the history in Britain of native or imported fauna from glacial or post-glacial times to the present. The publishers claim that it is written in a style accessible to the general reader, whilst providing the depth of research needed by academic researchers. Is it successful in these aims? Yes, overall and with minor qualifications, I think it is. In places it is over-referenced and contains jargon irritating for the general reader, but it also contains clear accounts of much new information which the general reader cannot readily find elsewhere. The evidence is mostly based on fossils, but interpreting these is supplemented by other techniques which together lead to fascinating reading. In his Introduction, editor Terry O’Connor, from the Department of Archaeology in the University of York, defines what he means by Social History – “reconstructions of past vegetation associations and distribution underpin our knowledge of changes in Holocene environments, and hence

of the extent and ways in which those environments were changed deliberately or inadvertently by human activities. These activities and their consequences contributed to the extinction of some species, and allowed the introduction of others. Ultimately, these introductions and extinctions were the outcome of a subtle interplay between human deliberation and the ecological demands of the landscape.” To make best use of our knowledge of the effects of previous impacts, “we need a thorough understanding of the past”. This is not much different from historical ecology but the emphasis is sometimes more on history than it is on ecology. Provision of an archaeological timescale would have been useful for those of us who are not historians.

Much of each chapter is taken up with archaeological evidence. Of the 22 chapters, one is Introduction and another Conclusions. Fifteen chapters discuss mammals, two birds, and one each freshwater fish, molluscs and insects. This range is largely dictated by the extent of archaeological evidence but partly by the expertise of the authors. The text is well indexed and there are 34 pages of references, many difficult to access for anybody not working in this field. These are perhaps more than adequate for the general reader but are not comprehensive considering the book’s title and omit, for example, Charles Elton’s 1958 *The Ecology of Invasions by Animals and Plants* (though Elton gets a mention in the text in relation to his experiments on cats as predators). I liked the Conclusions by Derek Yalden, a well-known and much-quoted mammalogist, who emphasises the importance of genetic evidence and who was impressed by the comprehensive and up-to-date nature of the accounts of species with which he is familiar.

Of the chapters on mammals, seven concern grazers (two on the horse family, one cattle, three deer, one wild boar), four carnivores (wolf, lynx, cats and brown bear) and four rodents (European beaver, rabbit, house mouse and black rat). The two bird chapters are more general and discuss Extinctions and Introductions. The fish chapter contains, inter alia, interesting essays on salmon and carp, the account of molluscs is surprisingly detailed, and the insect chapter is fascinatingly ecological. It also contains a new word for me “synanthrope”, which I can’t find in my Oxford English Dictionary.

Selected examples may illustrate some conclusions from individual chapters. **Horses** have been very important for people and are obvious candidates for a social history. Fossil remains suggest widespread use by the Middle Bronze Age, following re-introduction into Britain after early extinction. Horse remains are more frequent in the Iron Age, and this could reflect their being eaten more regularly! Evidence for their use derives, however, not only from fossils but also from artefacts, including “chapes” in the first millennium BC. There is a wealth of information and interpretation from the fossil evidence, and this is paralleled throughout the book. Remains of domesticated **cattle** were found at all Neolithic habitation sites throughout Europe but it is not known whether they were domesticated locally or, like sheep, goats and cereals, dispersed from southwest Asia.

Genetic evidence is limited but suggests little influence in western cattle from genes of local aurochs.

Climate change was formerly thought to have caused extinction of **elk** in Britain, but cultural and ecological conjecture together with unspecified radiocarbon data suggest an association with beavers and that elk may have survived in Scotland until historic times when both were exterminated by people. Archaeological evidence shows that European **fallow deer** are not of European origin. Their dispersal from Anatolia was almost entirely due to human transportation, with their distribution in Britain remarkably similar to a plot of mediaeval parks. Antlers from the Iron Age and from Romano-British deposits are held to have been transported north for ceremonial or medicinal reasons. Despite substantial collections of earlier bones derived from unsuccessful earlier transportation by Romans, British fallow deer are thought not to have been widespread in the Saxon period and to originate from new introductions, probably from Sicily, by Normans in the 11th century.

The **wild boar** was widespread in Britain in early post-glacial times and, though small, was a favourite prey of Mesolithic hunters. Subsequently, it became rare, presumably due to hunting, and it became extinct by the end of the 13th century. Subsequent re-introductions failed until a series of escapes from wild boar farms in modern times. **Wolves** persisted for about another 300 years but were eventually exterminated due to “the extraordinary success (compared e.g. to Norway – DJ) of persistent hunting episodes funded by the Crown” “driven by an institutionalised desire to preserve deer” for hunting. Britain lost its **lynx** early, before the wolf, with evidence from carbon-dating and linguistics, and more rarely from fossils. This extinction was possibly related to a shortage of mixed woodland and also to declines of roe deer which themselves almost became extinct. The return of the lynx to Britain depends on developing a new set of relations with people, including value being placed on a predator of deer and foxes, wildlife tourism icons, and perhaps managed game resources.

Cats are obvious candidates for inclusion in a social history. People and cats were closely associated in the eastern Mediterranean in the Holocene. Recent research in molecular genetics shows that modern **domestic cats** are derived from Middle Eastern wildcats found today in Iraq, and this is consistent with archaeological evidence. Cats were domesticated in the same part of the world and in the same millennia as sheep, goats, cattle and crop plants, but domestic cats moved west largely as camp-followers. These cats acquired an important behavioural adaptation that helped distinguish them from wildcats, namely intraspecific social tolerance associated with the clumped distribution of their food and mates around people. This contrasts with stricter territorial intolerance in **wildcats**. Wildcats with strictly defined colour and tails differ greatly from domestic cats whose origins and colour patterns have been examined genetically; they have been in Britain since at least the Iron Age and are thought to have been ecologically distinct from

wildcats through most of this period. Most interestingly, the villain in this piece is said to be the introduced rabbit, which in Scotland forms a significant food source for both kinds of cat, thereby bringing them together closely if not in active competition. This contrasts with the situation in mainland Europe where wildcats are thought to feed exclusively on voles and mice, just like buzzards which in Britain feed largely on rabbits but on the Continent on small mammals. Partly as a result of inter-breeding between the two cats, purebred wildcats are now greatly decreasing and are in danger of extinction.

The four rodents are much in the public eye. **Beavers** feature prominently, with the archaeological record “perhaps more varied than for any other mammal species apart from *Homo sapiens*”. This record stems from bones, gnawed wood, beaver structures, beaver fur, place names and much writing. Briefly, there is evidence of *Castor fiber* from the late Pliocene to 1789. **Rabbits** evolved in southern Spain and their bones and teeth were recovered in Britain in the Hoxnian Interglacial. They then became extinct and the species may not have been re-introduced until doubtful records in the Saxon and Norman periods. Doubtful because some evidence suggests “intrusive” presence, i.e. animals introduced and eaten. Better evidence suggests the 12th century as a reasonable date for the successful creation of warrens, which were established with difficulty. **House mice** are again significant socially though the species is not native to northern Europe. The earliest credible records from Britain date from the Iron Age, when they established themselves through southern England, extending to a single record in Shetland, as part of a rapid, trade-borne spread across western Europe. They are one of the most adaptable mammal species and their extinction is not in sight! By contrast, **black rats**, once more widespread, have become scarce and confined in Britain to specific localities. Accumulated evidence suggests that they arrived shortly after AD 43 and that at first they became widely distributed. Their population collapsed and was not re-established until the late Saxon or early mediaeval period. The dataset is extensive and possible confusion is reduced by the much later arrival of the brown rat which was not introduced into Britain until the late 18th century. Confusion was more likely with the water vole because specimens of brown rats used for dating have been carefully selected. The story is comprehensive and demonstrates a dearth of rats following the collapse of the Roman empire, possibly related to climate change.

These examples are sufficient to demonstrate the diverse and thorough approach of the authors of this book. Perhaps it lacks ecology (e.g. in explaining effects of historical climate change) but it is authoritative and informative and on the whole well-written. It will greatly interest most naturalists, especially those knowledgeable about or concerned with trends in numbers of British wildlife. I agree with Terry O'Connor that we need a thorough understanding of the past. You should read his synthesis.

David Jenkins

EVENTS AND TAXONOMIC TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES IN 2011



The Wildlife Information Centre

Winter ID and Data Mobilisation Workshops - January and February 2011

The Wildlife Information Centre has teamed up with four other Local Records Centres/Centres for Biological Recording in Scotland and the NBN Trust to provide 1-day identification and data mobilisation workshops. The aim of these workshops is to train Recorders in taxonomic groups that are unfamiliar to them and target regions where there is a lack of expert recorders in a particular taxon, thereby encouraging more recording.

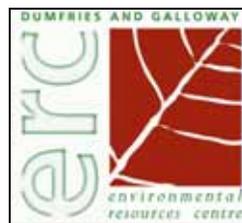
Date	Course	Leader	Location
15th January	Bryophytes	Liz Kungu	Dumfries and Galloway
22nd January	Dragonflies	Jonathan Willet	Edinburgh
5th February	Lichens	Katie Grundle	Aberdeen
19th February	Molluscs	Adrian Sumner	Glasgow
26th February	Harvestmen	Mike Davidson	Inverness

Each workshop will cover:

- Introduction to the taxon group including its ecology and niches
- Identification techniques
- Recording techniques
- Identification of common and key species
- Recording schemes relevant to the taxon group
- Data and recording techniques
- Submitting data to records centres, recording schemes and the NBN

Lunch, tea and coffee provided. Booking is essential.

For more information and to book, visit www.wildlifeinformation.co.uk



COURSES AT THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDEN EDINBURGH

Day or evening courses

- **Recognising Plant Families**, (ILA*) RBGE Staff. Wed: 27 April – 29 June 2011 7.00 – 9.00pm. £80
- **Moss Walks**, David Chamberlain and Liz Kungu. Wed: 4 - 25 May 2011 6.30 – 8.30 pm £50
- **Fern Identification**, Heather McHaffie, Sat: 18 June 10.00 am - 4.00pm £45
- **Scottish Enthobotany**, Greg Kenicer, Sat: 18 10.00 am - 4.00pm £40
- **Wildflower Identification**, Phil Lusby, Sat: 25 June 10.00 am - 4.00pm £45
- **Fossil Plants**, Greg Kenicer, Sun: 26 June 10.00 am - 4.00pm £40

There is a wide range of courses throughout the year that also include horticulture, botanical art, crafts and herbal medicine. Full programme www.rbge.org.uk/education
Contact Education Department Tel: 0131 248 2937 or education@rbge.org.uk

RBGE Certificate in Practical Field Botany (ILA*) Heather McHaffie

Eight modules: Plant identification, Preparation for field work, Information recording, Pressing and mounting, Habitat surveying, Applied Fieldwork 1, 2 & 3.

- Option 1. Fri. – Mon. 3 – 6 June & 17 - 20 June 2011 at RBGE and sites in the Lothians. £450
- Option 2. Sat – Sat 16 -23 July 2011 Residential course at Kindrogan Field Centre. Including all course materials field trips, assessment and one week's accommodation. £530

Website www.rbge.org.uk/certpfb or contact Education De

(ILA*) These courses are eligible for support for people on lower incomes who have an Individual Learning Account info@ilascotland.org.uk

BRISC AGM and joint event with Glasgow Zoological Society at the University of Glasgow on 10th March 2011.

The AGM will start at 6pm, followed by a talk on the new iSPOT initiative (see page 6) by our Scottish Mentor Murdo Macdonald, who is well known to many members. There will be cheese and wine afterwards.

BRISC's Annual Conference will now be held in the autumn. The Venue for the above event is *Lecture Theatre 1, Graham Kerr Building, University of Glasgow, University Avenue G12 8QQ.*

Parking will be available on campus.

A reminder and details of how to get there will be circulated in February together with BRISC's Annual Report for 2010



Kindrogan Course list for 2011

Prices based on Sole Occupancy. Discounts are available for shared accommodation and Non Residents.
Full course details available on the website or contact Kindrogan office.



FSC Kindrogan Field Centre, Enochdhu, Blairgowrie, Perthshire, PH10 7PG
01250 870150 Tel. 01250 881433 Fax.
Email: enquiries.kd@field-studies-council.org
Web Site: www.field-studies-council.org/kindrogan

Field Studies Council is a limited company (No.412621) and a charity (No.313364) registered in England and Wales and a charity registered in Scotland (SCO39870)

Date	Course title	Tutors	Price
5 th March	GPS Training 1 Day non Residential	Jim Butcher	£55
7 th March	GPS Training 1 Day non Residential	Jim Butcher	£55
8 th March	GPS Training 1 Day non Residential	Jim Butcher	£55
4 th – 8 th April	Identifying Aquatic Insects and other Small Freshwater Animals	Brian Morrison	£205
4 th – 9 th April	Special Spring Moths	David Brown	£340
8 th – 15 th April	Lichen Identification	Rebecca Yahr	£475
15 th – 22 nd April	Scottish Spring Birds	Russell Nisbet	£475
26 th – 30 th April	Sphagnum Moss	Martha Newton	£275
29 th – 1 st May	Big Tree Country (1) Introduction to Tree Identification	Jerry Dicker	£160
29 th April – 2 nd May	Wildlife Sound Recording	Roger Broughton	£220
30 th April – 7 th May	Mosses and Liverworts	Martha Newton	£475
1 st – 5 th May	Big Tree Country (2) Tree Identification for Improvers	Jerry Dicker	£205
13 th – 16 th May	NVC Woodlands	Ben Averis	£189

Date	Course title	Tutors	Price
3 rd – 10 th June	Freshwater Algae.	Dr Eileen Cox Prof Elliot Shubert Dr Laurence Carvalho	£475
3 rd – 6 th June	Birds by Character 'Beginners'	Jeff Clarke	£189
6 th – 10 th June	Birds by Character 'Improvers'	Jeff Clarke	£250
10 th – 13 th June	Flora and Fauna for Hillwalkers	Russell Nisbet	£189
17 th – 21 st June	Orchids of Scotland	Martin Robinson	£205
17 th – 24 th June	Identification of Highland Plants	Bob Callow	£475
21 st – 25 th June	Discovering and Identifying Wild Flowers	Martin Robinson	£205
24 th June – 1 st July	Plant Communities of the Scottish Highlands	Robert Callow	£475
24 th June – 1 st July	Aquatic Plants	Nick Stewart	£475
27 th – 30 th June	Mountain Flowers and: How to use a Flower Key	Heather McHaffie	£189
4 th – 8 th July	Fern Identification	Heather McHaffie	£205
8 th - 11 th July	Spiders (1) An Introduction to their Identification	Alastair Lavery	£189
8 th – 15 th July	Grasses Identification	Judith Allinson	£475
11 th – 14 th July	Introduction to NVC	Ben Averis	£189
18 th – 22 nd July	Dragonflies and Damselflies	Jeff Clarke Paul Hill	£205
29 th July – 5 th Aug	Wildlife Explorers	Kindrogan Staff	£320
1 st – 6 th August	Identifying Sedges and Rushes	Fred Rumsey	£340
8 th – 12 th August	Invertebrate Surveying Techniques	Jeff Clarke	£205
12 th – 15 th August	NVC Heathlands	Ben Averis	£189
20 th – 27 th August	Highland Butterflies & Moths	David Brown	£475
20 th – 27 th August	Spiders (2) Identification and Ecology	Mike Davidson	£475
26 th – 29 th August	Scottish Mammals	John Haddow	£189
9 th – 16 th Sept	Identifying Fungi	Liz Holden	£475
30 th Sept- 3 rd Oct	Harvestmen Spiders Identification and Ecology	Mike Davidson	£189
7 th – 11 th October	Small Mammals	Jeff Clarke	£205
7 th – 14 th October	Autumn Birds	Russell Nisbet	£475

Want to Study Wildlife?

BRISC (Biological Recording in Scotland) & GNHS (Glasgow Natural History Society) are together offering 4 Bursaries towards attending a training course in natural history field studies skills. The bursaries will be for up to £200 or 75% of the cost of the course, whatever is the lower. Courses must be chosen from the Field Studies Council's taxonomic courses listed under FSC's Professional Development Programmes, or similar professional development courses run by universities. For the full application form, see BRISC's website at www.brisec.org.uk/bursaries or GNHS's website at www.gnhs.org.uk/bursaries

The Bursaries are open to anyone living in Scotland. The Field Studies Council Scottish centre is at Kindrogan, Perthshire, but courses run at any other of the FSC's sites are eligible. Full details must be supplied for any selected course organised by a university.

For details of the Field Studies Council's courses see above or www.field-studies-council.org/professional/2010/index.asp (for all FCS centres).

- Courses should be completed before 30 October 2011.
- The successful candidates are required to write a short article (300-400 words) on their course experience for *BRISC Recorder News* and/or the *GNHS Newsletter*. £15 of each bursary will be held back until receipt of the relevant article.
- All applications should be submitted **electronically** to BRISC at bursary@brisc.org.uk

by **Friday 11 February 2011** at the latest .