

Orkney Field Club

Founded in 1959

Aim: To encourage the study and conservation of the natural and cultural heritage of the County



Scottish registered charity No 012459

OFC Spring and Summer Newsletter 2010

After the worst Orkney winter in many folks' memory, how has our wildlife fared? - perhaps for some, better than we had feared. Amazingly some insectivores, like chiffchaffs, goldcrests and wrens, seem to have survived in reasonable numbers, but stonechats probably less so. Frog spawning seems to be several days later than usual but is underway otherwise as usual at the time of writing. But what of the marine environment? The cold winter of 2008/09 apparently put sand-eel production back in "sync" with seabird breeding in 2009 so that it was much more successful than in the preceding disastrous summers, but the prolonged cold spell of 2009/10 might have some very different consequences in the natural world. So it is all the more important for amateur naturalists such as ourselves to observe the natural environment closely, to record our findings and pass on our records to the appropriate County Recorders.

OFC Spring and Summer Programme 2010

Our Club Nights are normally held at 7.30pm in the St Magnus Centre, Kirkwall (just uphill from the Cathedral). Everyone is welcome and entry charges are £1 for members and £2 for non-members while under-19s come free. These charges help towards the cost of room and equipment hire and advertising.

For those wishing to attend outdoor events please get in touch with the named contact a few days beforehand (and at least a week before, for events involving ferry journeys). On the day bring warm waterproof clothing and footwear and some refreshment. Binoculars, hand lenses and notebooks will be useful, and from late June onwards so will midge repellent! Last minute changes will, if possible, be notified, on Radio Orkney, and by phone or email to those who have registered with the contact (if we have their email address).

Youngsters are welcome but must be accompanied by a relative or close family friend.

April

Sunday 11th Durkadale Working Party

Joint event with the RSPB Local Group. Planting willow cuttings and carrying out routine maintenance at the RSPB native tree plantation and doing fence repairs at the OFC site. We will enjoy our usual picnic. Come any time from 10am and 2pm. Contact Jenny Taylor on 851322.

Friday 16th Club Night Spring Visit to Portugal

In an illustrated talk Sydney Gauld will describe the wildflowers he discovered on a visit to Portugal last spring.

Saturday 17th and Sunday 18th Bag the Bruck

Joint event with RSPB LG. Join the beach clean-up organised by Environmental Concern Orkney and help remove rope, netting, plastic and other debris which threaten our wildlife. The RSPB will tackle Waulkmill Bay on 17th and OFC Marwick Bay on 18th. Gloves and bags provided. Come any time between 10am and 2pm as you choose. Contact the RSPB office on 850176 or Brian Ribbands on 751439.

Saturday 24th Harrier Sky-dancing

Joint event with RSPB LG. A guided walk in the Birsay Moors to watch the thrilling courtship display of the hen harrier. Kestrels, merlins, short-eared owls and buzzards may also be on view. Meet at Rendall Community Centre at 9.30am. Contact Jim Williams on 761317.

May

Sunday 2nd Tree Lichens

Searching out and identifying lichen species which grow on trees in Orkney. Contact Roger Davies on 721395 or at roger@headweb.co.uk

Sunday 30th From Yesnaby to Black Craig

A walk along this spectacular coastline looking at the seabirds and spring flowers and examining how the grazing regimes are affecting the quality of the wildflower habitat. Contact Dick Matson on 751426.

June

Sunday 13th Getting to know Orkney's Wildflowers

Joint event with the BSBI. John Crossley will take us to areas of flower-rich habitat and give a teach-in on plant identification. Contact John on 831507.

Sunday 20th Plants at the Margin

Prof Robert Crawford will show us how plants have adapted to the marginal habitat of Berriedale and the North Hoy hills. Contact Dick Matson on 751426.

July

Saturday 3rd The Wildlife of Egilsay

Skylarks, waders, orchids, maybe even corncrakes, and much more. By ferry to explore the island's profuse wildlife. Contact Dick Matson on 751426.

Saturday 17th or Sunday 18th North Hoy Dragons

Searching the pools and burns of N Hoy for dragon- and damselflies and the heath-land habitat for butterflies and grasshoppers. We will choose the day with the better weather forecast. Contact Dick Matson on 751426.

Saturday 24th or Sunday 25th Dragonflies and Butterflies of Burray and S Ronaldsay

Exploring insect habitat and looking for previously unrecorded breeding sites for the Common Hawker dragonfly. Again we will choose the day with the better weather forecast. Contact Dick Matson on 751426.

August

Sunday 8th Families Moth Day

Joint event with RSPB LG. Moth traps will be set at various locations on the Saturday night. In the morning we will examine the night's catch with expert tuition. Contact Sydney Gauld on 872468.

Sunday 15th Bumblebees, Butterflies and Wildflowers

John Crossley will show us suitable habitat for bumblebees, butterflies and late summer wildflowers and help us with identification. Contact John on 831507.

September

Sunday 5th An Introduction to Mosses

We will meet at a location with a diversity of moss species and receive some expert tuition. Contact John Crossley on 831507.

Friday 17th Club Night Plants at the Margin

In an illustrated talk Prof Robert Crawford will give us a botanical view of climate change.

Sunday 19th Lichens of Sanday

We will take the ferry to Sanday and in conjunction with Rod Thorne, the Sanday Ranger, take a look at some of the island's lichens. Contact Roger Davies on 721395 or email roger@headweb.co.uk Sanday members please contact Rod on 01857600341.

Saturday 25th/Sunday 26th Spider Course

The Orkney Biodiversity Records Centre have organised a 2-day course on spiders by the County Spider Recorder, Edward Millner. Contact Sydney Gauld on 872468.

RSPB Local Group Programme (See above for joint events with OFC)

*Bookings for RSPB Local Group events will open on **Wednesday 7th April** and priority given to RSPB members until **Sunday 25th April** after which non-members may book..*

Thursday 29th April RSPB LG Spring Meeting Conserving Africa's Wetland Birds

An illustrated talk by African wildlife expert Tim Dodman. Kirkwall Community Centre at 7.30pm.

Saturday 22nd May (Reserve day Sunday 23rd) Aukerry

Challenging the elements once again to get to this lovely island. We should see breeding terns and other seabirds and, perhaps, some unusual migrants. Contact Anne Bignall via the OIC switchboard (873535).

Saturday 29th May (Reserve day Sunday 30th) Copinsay (week-end)

Our annual trip to explore the island's amazing seabird colonies.

Contact Pauline Wilson on 741382.

Wednesday 2nd June Copinsay (mid-week)

Because of popular demand we have arranged a second trip to the island. Contact Pauline Wilson on 741382.

Sunday 13th June Papa Westray

By ferry to Westray then on to Papay to view the island's breeding seabird colonies and other wildlife including, hopefully, *primula scotica*.

Contact Pauline Wilson on 741382.

Night of Sat 24th and Sun 25th July Storm Petrel Ringing

Night event with Alan Leitch to enjoy the experience of watching nocturnal storm petrels being caught and ringed. Contact the RSPB office for details and booking.

Saturday 14th August County Show

The RSPB will have a tent at the show as usual and members are requested to spare an hour of their time between 10am and 4pm to help with the activities. Volunteers please contact Pauline Wilson on 741382.

Sunday 12th September Stronsay Migrants

The island can be a great place for autumn migrants, particularly waders, warblers and flycatchers. Contact Jim Williams on 761317.

Sunday 26th September To Sanday for Autumn Migrants

As well as passerine migrants we hope to see recently arrived ducks, geese, swans and waders. There's always the chance of a real rarity. Contact Dick Matson on 751426.

Tuesday 16th November RSPB LG AGM & Meet the Wardens

Brief AGM business then the RSPB Orkney wardens will give an overview of the Orkney reserves and their wildlife, the projects currently being undertaken and other developments. St Magnus Centre at 7.30pm.

Bulletin Update. Thanks to all Bulletin contributors for being so prompt with their submissions. As a result of their co-operation the production programme is on schedule and provided there are no hitches members should receive their copies by mid- to late May.

Email Contact with Members Roger already has the email addresses of many of our members and this is proving extremely useful. We can inform those members rapidly of latest news, new events, developments and changes. So we are encouraging more members to do the same. We will treat your details with utmost discretion. Roger's email address is roger@headweb.co.uk

Wildlife Recording Spring is in the air and most of us will be itching to get out into the countryside to observe and study the wildlife. Please remember that your observations can be of value to the cause of conservation and to our knowledge of species when they are converted in to records and submitted either to the Orkney Biodiversity Centre or to the relevant County Recorder. The OBRC is run by Sydney Gauld and he can be contacted at the Kirkwall Library on 873166 or by email at biodiversity@orkneylibrary.org.uk Sydney can also let you have the Record Cards which are normally used by our records contributors and he also can give you an up-to-date list of County Recorders. This list and advice on recording is given at the back of the Field Club Bulletin._

Newsletter

Anyone willing to receive their Newsletter in future by e-mail (four A4 single-sided sheets), will you please send your e-mail address to dennis.paice@btinternet.com

