

Undergrowth

Issue No 33 Autumn 2013

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Foxglove's Flora and Fauna

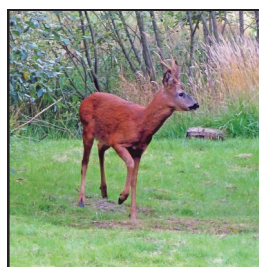
A walk around the reserve is always a delight and there is the unexpected surprise of what you might find hidden in the undergrowth, especially in the warmth and sun this summer.



Pebble Prominent Moth caterpillar

Close inspection of the galls on a willow leaf found a Pebble Prominent Moth caterpillar. At first glance more galls to be checked on willow turned out to be sawfly larvae droppings! The sawflies were not impressed when photographed and took up their defensive position. At quiet times, and if you are very lucky, Stoat, Weasel and Fox can be seen. Signs of Roe Deer, prints, droppings or rubbed sap-

lings are most usually seen; however on a quiet morning there may be a chance sighting. The presence of Otters is again usually recorded by their spraints left along Risedale Beck. Water Vole droppings also show that these secretive animals are thriving. Both have recently been seen – we wait with baited breath for photographs!



Roe Deer

Overall butterflies did not do well in last year's wet weather. What a difference this year. Hemp Agrimony and Buddleia provided nectar for many species of butterfly, particularly towards the end of the summer. Peacock, Red Admiral and Small Tor-

toiseshell were frequently seen in large numbers. Much work was done along Risedale Beck during the winter to open up sunny glades and the Orange Tip and Speckled Wood butterflies have really benefited from this.



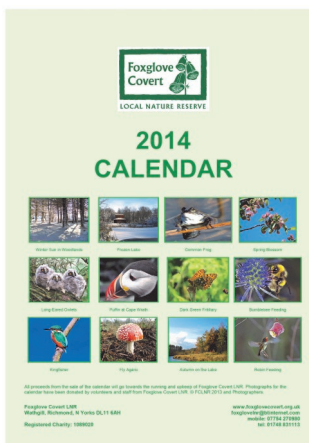
Speckled Wood Butterfly

Although the weather has been much improved on last year there have been very few recordings of shield bugs and ladybirds. However a Heather Ladybird was found on the heathland earlier this month. This tiny ladybird is yet another new sighting for the reserve. The species list now has over 2400 species recorded. There will be more new species when all the data from the

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Fund Raising

Anyone visiting the Field Centre recently may have noticed the addition of a new fund collection box. Called a MoneySpinner, it allows everyone to donate cash in a fun way, coins are placed in one of three slots at the top of the unit and then they spiral their way downwards eventually dropping into the collection box. The unit will take all coins from 1p to £2, the bigger the coin the more spectacular the spiral roll!



2014 Calendar

The Foxglove Covert 2014 Calendar is now available for purchase at the Field Centre. It features photographs taken and donated by the volunteers and staff. The calendar is priced at £6.00 and profit from the sale of the calendar goes towards the upkeep and maintenance of Foxglove Covert. The calendar makes an excellent gift for those hard-to-buy-for individuals or for someone who just enjoys nature.

Foxglove's Flora and Fauna (continued)



Peacock Butterfly

Bioblitz weekend is added to the list, including some fungi identified by its DNA. The area that was felled and replanted last year was covered in a beautiful display of very tall grasses with Foxgloves showing their pink heads amongst them.

In the spring and early summer, insects were out enjoying the pollen and nectar from the Mountain Ash, Hawthorn, fruit trees, and roses, and unlike last year, there is a very good

fruit and berry crop.

Many of our resident species will enjoy this and hopefully there will be enough left for the winter migrants. Bees ensured that there were plenty of Raspberries and Blackberries. There is at least one Roe Deer in the reserve who carefully chooses only the ripe Blackberries leaving the red and green ones untouched.

As autumn approaches plants produce seeds which will lie dormant, ready to

germinate in the spring. Many adult insects die, leaving eggs, larvae or pupa to overwinter. Amphibians seek out holes, hollows, log piles and the hibernaculum in which to hibernate. Mammals will leave their tracks and trails to be followed. Foxglove's flora and fauna will still provide many surprises over the next few months whatever the weather is like.

Elizabeth Dickinson

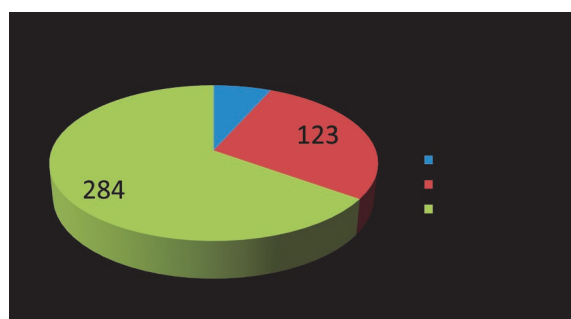
“Many new species to Foxglove Covered identified”

BioBlitz July 2013

The BioBlitz in July may now seem a distant memory but the analysis of sightings has been on-going since the day. Accurate identification of some of the

species could only be undertaken by taking samples and analysing under the microscope or DNA analysis. The day was a huge success with many new species to

Foxglove Covert identified. Elizabeth Dickinson has been busy entering all the information into the Species Database. This has involved being a detective since the Latin names used by our experts do not always correspond with the name used by the Natural History Museum (we use the NHM UK database of species as our definitive list of naming). Note - the chart does not yet include all the birds and trees sighted on the day so the overall number will be more.



Foxglove Covert Website

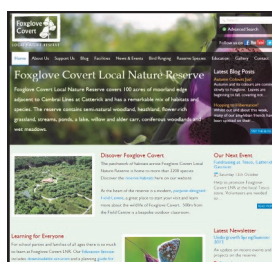
Anyone visiting the Foxglove Covert website cannot fail to be impressed with its design and content. A blog is completed most days informing the viewer of news on or around the Reserve. However, how successful is the website in reaching the intended audience?

Every month we receive a report from Google showing how often and for how long the website is accessed. For example, in September the website was visited over

2,200 times with each visit lasting on average 2½ minutes. By far the most popular page was the blog page. A quarter of the visits were made by mobile phone or tablet indicating how important these devices are becoming as a method of communication.

It is interesting to also note that the website is accessed globally with North America and Europe accounting for most of the overseas hits. Both India and Australia are

also on the list. Unfortunately this does not necessarily mean that we have a strong overseas following but it would be nice to think so! What we do know is that people are searching specifically for Foxglove Covert on the internet possibly in preparation for a visit to the Reserve or just to be updated on current and future events. Remember Foxglove Covert's website is found at: **www.foxglovecovert.org.uk**



Bird Ringing Round-Up

Ornithologically it has been a reasonable year and if the adults had been plentiful it would even have been 'good'! As it was the birds that survived the cold and wet conditions last year did their best, but they were not numerous and after the cold spring months inverts, too, were at a premium. The Foxglove residents, as you may have seen from the Adopt a Box report, had limited success, but there were many empty

boxes and clutch numbers were often small. Out on the Training Area breeding wader success was mixed with decent numbers on Bellerby Moor but very few on Barden or Preston Moors. Golden Plover were as scarce as they have ever been on the latter. Black Grouse did well, but most Peregrines nearby failed, with either added clutches or in two cases a single chick being reared. The heron nests we visited all perished.

On the brighter side Dippers were ringed for the first time in three years and a brood of Ring Ouzel, one of at least two pairs known locally, was successful. Meadow Pipits, the living food supply for many of our small raptors, were in decent numbers as they came through on migration in August and September. Tawny Owls and Kestrels did poorly and that seems to have been the situation country-wide.

Tony Crease



Meadow Pipit

UK Nature

An outstanding report by 25 UK Conservation Organisations, released in May entitled State of Nature 2013, highlights the plight of many of our UK species. It is a large document but can be emailed to anyone on request. It confirms what we see around us at Foxglove, that 60% of 3148 species examined have declined in the past

50 years, 31% of them seriously. It is not a rewarding read but factual, and it identifies the difficulties faced by many species which on the reserve we strive to protect. Our ringing results are included in the data, which makes the work done by volunteers on the habitat and the ringers on data collection, ever more important. Sadly, we can-

not combat the major concerns like climate change, degradation of habitat, and the perils of migration, but we are all clearly identified in it as unsung heroes for the work we do, and we must continue.

Our avian species are a valuable barometer and in 2013 they made a partial recovery - but sadly not much more!

Tony Crease

"Our avian species are a valuable barometer"

Foxglove Covert LNR Management Group

The management of Foxglove Covert is at two levels. The everyday management of the Reserve is the responsibility of the Reserve Managers. However; Foxglove Covert is a registered charity and overall management of this charity falls under the responsibility of the Management Group.

The Management Group meets officially every 3-4 months in accordance with

Foxglove Covert's Constitution. Once a year an Annual General Meeting is held and open to all interested parties to come along and meet the Management Group and to ask any questions they may have on the running of the Reserve.

The current membership of the Management Group is: Colonel Guy Deacon (Chairperson), Major (Retd) Tony Crease (Treasurer), Dr Richard Witham

(Secretary), Mr Graham Newcombe and Mr John Ginnever. Two new members have recently been co-opted onto the Team notably Mr Bob Boal and Mr Kevin Stewart.

Feel free to contact any of the Management Group via the Reserve Office if you have any questions or wish to know more on the management of Foxglove Covert.



Robin feeding at Field Centre



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Registered charity no 1089020

Events

Saturday 7th December
Winter Worky Day

Friday 13th December
Christmas Willow Weaving

Wednesday 18th December
Foxglove Christmas Party

Saturday 4th January 2014
Winter Worky Day

Saturday 1st February
Winter Worky Day

Tuesday 4th February
Annual General Meeting

Saturday 1st March
Winter Worky Day

Go to the Foxglove Covert
website for further details and
up-to-date list of events

Undergrowth

Opinions here are those of
individual authors and do not
necessarily reflect the views of
the Foxglove Covert Manage-
ment Group or the policy of
the Ministry of Defence.

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Your local nature reserve at Catterick Garrison

A Message from Sophie

Working at Foxglove is extremely varied and there is no such thing as a 'typical day'. For me the highlights have been working with so many volunteers and watching the habitats and facilities develop. The capital projects within the first year of the HLS scheme were incredible and it was fascinating to watch as a new hide and boardwalk appeared along with the outdoor classroom and dams. The re-profiling of the lake has left me with interesting memories of riding on a giant dumper truck through 'blancmange like' mud and rescuing frogs with a net from a digger bucket! The construction of the wetland was a great project to be involved with too and ringing a Redshank chick on the newly created habitat was an experience that I'll never forget. I feel very lucky and privileged to have been part of the Foxglove team and have had many fantastic opportunities and experiences. Five trips to Cape Wrath to ring seabirds, a tea party at Buckingham Palace, Gannet tagging at Bempton

Cliffs and taking Prince Charles for a guided walk are some of the most exciting memories. Only a few weeks ago Adam and I were lucky enough to catch a glimpse of two otters feeding on the lake and on the same day the Kingfisher was observed.

After five years working at Foxglove, leaving will be a wrench. However, I hope to stay involved with bird ringing and will definitely be back both as a volunteer and 'dressed as a visitor' on occasions so as not to be roped in to too many jobs!



You may still find Sophie hiding in the undergrowth if you look hard enough!

Foxglove Covert and Reserve Access

Visitors to the Reserve may have experienced recent changes to the controls in place at the barrier entry point to the Cambrai Barracks. It is important to remember that Foxglove Covert is situated on MOD land and that we are dependent on the Garrison Command for permission to access the Reserve via the current route. Security of the Garrison is a key priority especially during times of constant threat from individuals or groups determined to use terrorism to support their aims. It is important that we all remain vigilant when visiting the Reserve and comply with any instructions given by the guards posted at the entry barrier or by security once on the barracks.

Also remember when driving to the Foxglove Covert entry gate to observe the speed limit (15 mph) and not to stray from the designated route to the Reserve. Under no circumstance should the entry gate be left open or unsecure. Access to Foxglove Covert is currently under review and will be reported upon when further information is available.

AGM

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday 4th February starting 2.00pm at Foxglove Covert's Field Centre. Light refreshments will be available before the meeting commences.

Editor's Corner

We say a sad farewell to Sophie this month and all of us will want to wish her well for the future. It was Sophie's friendly welcome when I first visited Foxglove than told me that the Reserve was something special. So often we are confronted by rules and restrictions at nature reserves that can spoil the experience. Foxglove is different, the staff and volunteers along with the habitat makes it one of the most enjoyable and friendly places to visit in the area. On my first visit I was allowed to venture on to the Wetlands to take photos of dragonflies. I have just learnt that one of the photos has just been highly commended in a recent Wildlife Photo Competition. Without Sophie's permission I would not have got the image.