

Paisley Natural History Society Evening Talks 2016/17

Thursday 1st September 2016

The changing fortunes of eiders in the Clyde by Chris Waltho

In little over a hundred years, the eider has colonised the Clyde, developing into the largest population in the British Isles, only for the numbers to then decline by more than two-thirds over the last 20 years. Chris has been monitoring eider numbers in the Clyde for more than 40 years. Past President of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club, and current member of the Duck Specialist Group for Wetlands International/International Union for the Conservation of Nature, he has presented the results of this work at conferences around the world, from Russia to Alaska, and Iceland to France.

Thursday 6th October 2016

The Forestry Commission in Scotland by Derek Shannan, Ranger (Scottish Lowlands Forest District, Forestry Commission Scotland)

Forestry Commission Scotland manages the National Forest Estate, some of Scotland's greatest natural assets. They are responsible for harvesting trees, planting new ones and play a fundamental role in wildlife, environment and heritage conservation.

Forests form part of the unique character of our countryside and Forestry Commission Scotland undertakes research to ensure sustainable forest management, supporting a wealth of biodiversity as well as providing places for people to work and visit.

Come along to find out more.

Thursday 3rd November 2016

All about Badgers by Jackie Clark (Scottish Badgers)

The badger is one of the UK's most recognisable, interesting and protected of mammals. Distributed throughout the UK, badgers are found in a wide variety of habitats from woodlands, to fields and even urban gardens, but their nocturnal and elusive habits mean that they are rarely seen.

This talk aims to give an insight into the ecology, threats, legislation and poo of this shy but fascinating animal.

Thursday 1st December 2016

Strawberry Fields Forever: Birding in New York's Central Park by Tom Byars

Covering 843 acres and two and a half miles long by half a mile wide, Central Park is an oasis for migrating birds travelling the east coast during spring and autumn. Central Park is considered one of the best birding spots in the United States, attracting birders from all over the world. More than 280 species have been recorded here in iconic birdwatching sites, such as the Ramble, Cherry Hill, Azalea Pond and Strawberry Fields. Followed by some Festive Fare.

Thursday 12th January 2017

Entomological Adventures on Mingulay by Jeanne Robinson, Curator of Entomology (The Hunterian, University of Glasgow)

Explore the uninhabited Hebridean island of Mingulay through the eyes of a naturalist. Find out more about the most extensive survey of its invertebrates since records began and what makes the place so special.

Thursday 2nd February 2017

Blood, sweat and deer(s): using animal DNA evidence to aid wildlife crime investigation by Dr Lucy Webster (Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture)

Crimes against wildlife cover a broad range of criminal activity, from illegal trade in endangered species to the cruel treatment of more common species, such as badgers.

As with human crime, forensic analysis of items recovered in trade or from crime scenes can provide investigators with the crucial evidence they require to solve cases and prosecute those responsible. The Wildlife DNA Forensic unit at Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture (SASA) was established in 2011 to analyse non-human DNA evidence recovered during wildlife crime investigations.

This presentation will outline the techniques that are being applied in the unit, along with examples from real casework to illustrate the answers to investigative conundrums that can be found from fur and feathers....

Thursday 2nd March 2017

Scotland's Dinosaur Isle by Dr Neil Clark, Curator of Paleontology (The Hunterian, University of Glasgow)

Fragments of fossil dinosaurs from Scotland are rare. The first dinosaur footprint was found in 1982 from the Middle Jurassic sediments of the Isle of Skye. Since then, many hundreds of footprints, some bones and teeth of dinosaurs of various sorts have been unearthed in Scotland. All the dinosaur remains are Jurassic in age and mostly from the Middle Jurassic (about 170 million years old). Associated with the dinosaurs are also some remains of other reptiles such as plesiosaurs, ichthyosaurs, crocodiles, turtles and lizards along with fish, sharks and a whole host of animal life. Scotland is fast becoming a centre for Middle Jurassic research with a strong team of researchers being established here (called PalAlba). The Isle of Skye is producing new and exciting discoveries nearly every year and has one of the most diverse Middle Jurassic dinosaur faunas worldwide. Sadly, there are not enough diagnostic remains of the dinosaur to name them, but an ichthyosaur has recently been given the first Gaelic name for a marine reptile: Dearthara. It is hoped that collaboration between amateur collectors and research scientists will continue to provide exciting new discoveries from Scotland's 'Dinosaur Isle'. This meeting is the annual joint meeting with members of both the Hamilton and Glasgow Natural History Societies.

Thursday 6th April 2017

Annual General Meeting followed by

The factors affecting the status of Bearded Reedling in the Tay reed beds by Iain Malzer

The Bearded Reedling is a rare passerine so dependent on reed bed habitats that individuals may spend their entire life within a single reed bed stand. Despite being widespread throughout Europe, only 600 individuals inhabit the UK making it a specially protected species.

The Tay reed beds are the most extensive *phragmites* reed bed habitat in the UK thought to hold the largest population of Bearded Reedling as well as being home to a number of other interesting bird species including Marsh Harrier, Reed Warbler and large populations of Water Rail, Sedge Warbler and Reed Bunting.

Iain, a PhD student at Glasgow University, is researching the status of the Tay reed bed population to investigate how this species reacts to climate change and management in order to provide a better understanding of how to help conserve it.