

WINTER PROGRAMME SPEAKERS 2014-15

Thursday 4th September 2014

“Geodiversity: Protecting and promoting Scotland’s geological heritage and iconic landscapes”

by Simon Cuthbert

We welcome the return of Dr Simon Cuthbert as our first speaker of the coming winter programme. Simon is a lecturer in *Earth Sciences* at the University of the West of Scotland. He is involved with the Scottish Geodiversity Forum and is a member of the Geological Society of Glasgow. His talk is titled *“Geodiversity: Protecting and promoting Scotland’s geological heritage and iconic landscapes”* in which Simon will take us on a journey through Scotland’s geological foundations and explore its significance for natural history, culture and society. He will show us how Scotland’s new Geodiversity Charter and the Scottish Geodiversity Forum are promoting and protecting geodiversity and establishing its status alongside biodiversity. Simon is well-known to many older society members because he was Chairman between 1993-95.

Thursday 2nd October 2014

“Windows on Wildlife Project”

by Hayley Douglas

Before becoming the Windows on Wildlife Development Officer at Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park, Hayley Douglas was known to many society members as one of the Seasonal Rangers at Castle Semple. Her remit for the Semple Trail Heritage Project is to monitor wildlife in the general area using video cameras sited along animal trails. Her skill in locating the inconspicuous field signs is amazing and her dedication to the project is remarkable. This is definitely not a 9 till 5 job. The small camera units are attached to trees and fence posts and have infra-red lights attached so permitting images to be captured after dark. The cameras also have to be checked regularly and batteries replaced. Some amazing and humorous footage has been recorded. Watch out for the Otter trying to reach a dead fish suspended above the ground on a low branch!

Thursday 6th November 2014

“Scottish Wildcats”

by Adrian Davies

Adrian is a leading authority on Scottish Wildcats and has developed an extensive knowledge of this iconic and elusive mammal. He previously managed the Wildcat Haven Project based at Lochaber which aimed to conserve and protect the Scottish Wildcat population by controlling the number of feral and domestic cats through large scale neutering. They can easily hybridise and so dilute the pure Wildcat gene pool. Adrian will tell us about his methods of observing the few remaining pure-bred Wildcats populations. Some authors estimate that there may only be around 400 left in Scotland. The Wildcat Steering Group set up by SNH now continues Adrian’s work.

Thursday 4th December 2014

CHRISTMAS SOCIAL Come and join our Christmas Social and do bring a friend with you. This is an informal evening packed with quirky quizzes and fun-filled frivolity. Will members please remember that a contribution to the festive fare is welcomed?

Thursday 8th January 2015

“Birds of Ayrshire”

by Angus Hogg

A wide range of influences on Ayrshire’s birdlife have brought about many changes in both numbers and distributions. Climate change, along with the additional pressures of a growing population, developing agriculture and the decline of some traditional industries have all had an impact, sometimes with a positive result. Angus’ talk will focus on some of these changes to Ayrshire’s birds and outline some possibilities for the future. Angus has written extensively about the birds of Ayrshire and he is actively involved with the Ayrshire branch of the Scottish Ornithologist Club.

Thursday 5th February 2015

“Water Beetleling: the oldest recording scheme in the World – and very Scottish”

by Garth Foster

Garth Foster has been the moving force behind water beetle conservation in Britain for over thirty years and he has set up a number of local water beetle recording schemes. One of the first ‘water beetlers’ was Charles Darwin closely followed by some Scottish coleopterists. Records date back to 1904 and currently run to 400,000 but with less than 700 records from Renfrewshire. We need more local recording. How many have you seen?

Thursday 5th March 2015

“Reserved for Wildlife?”

by David Shenton

The Scottish Wildlife Trust manages 120 wildlife sites throughout Scotland. One such reserve is Loch Ardinning near Milngavie which was gifted to the Trust in 1988. SWT reserves are run by a Management Committee consisting of local volunteers and David has been involved since the beginning with Loch Ardinning and the SWT Clyde Members’ Group. In his talk David will look at the SWT reserves around Scotland and answer the question “What are reserves for?” Reserve management issues and how management is carried out will also be discussed relating to Loch Ardinning.

Thursday 2nd April 2015

AGM and Members' Night

The business of the society will be discussed followed by

"Fair Isle"

by Ewan Douglas

Ewan is well-known to members of the society as an avid birdwatcher. For many years he has visited the birdwatchers' mecca - Fair Isle. A small island, situated half way between Orkney and Shetland, Fair Isle is the most remote inhabited island in Scotland. During stormy weather, migrating birds often make a land-fall on the island, often in large numbers, and many national rarities have been seen over the decades. In 1948 George Waterson founded a bird observatory and the island was bought by the National Trust in 1954. This put Fair Isle 'on the map' and the crofters on the island have benefited greatly ever since from the regular throughput of visitors. However, Fair Isle has more to offer than just the birdlife. Come along and find out more.

Friday 13th March 2015

The joint meeting with the Hamilton and Glasgow Natural History Societies will be hosted by Hamilton Natural History Society in the HAMILTON OLD PARISH CHURCH HALLS at 7.30pm.

Rory Crawford

(Senior Policy Officer, Birdlife International Global Seabird Programme with the RSPB)

will give a talk titled "Global Seabird Programme".