

## Welcome to the Birnie and Gaddon Lochs Newsletter

The bird breeding season is coming to a close, so things are getting a little quieter. Fewer birds are singing and the wildfowl are keeping out of sight, but there were still things to see around the Lochs in July.

## Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) Counts 17/07/18

### Birnie Loch (1:15pm)

8 x Greylag Goose, 2 x Mute Swan, 4 x Mallard, 1 x Reed Bunting, 1 x Black Headed Gull

### Gaddon Loch (1:55pm)

2 x Mute Swan (4 cygnets), 8 x Mallard, 7 x Lapwing, 3 x Barn Swallow, 3 x Black Headed Gull, 1 x Coot, 1 x Reed Bunting, 1 x Sedge Warbler

## Insect of the Month

Ringlet (*Aphantopus hyperantus*).



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This brown butterfly is named after the yellowish rings on the under-wings. The rings are variable in their brightness and

extent – with some ringlets having barely any rings at all! – but the white trailing edge to the wings is another identifiable feature. These insects can be seen flying around grasslands for most of the summer, even on dull, rainy days.

## Grassland Habitats

You may notice a flurry of activity around the grassland to the east of Gaddon Loch during August. The end of summer means it is time to start cutting wildflower meadows. By cutting once a year the semi-natural grassland habitat is preserved, and the smaller, less competitive plant species are given a chance to thrive without the larger, more dominant species taking over. The annual cut also allows a greater diversity of plant species to survive alongside one another, which in turn provides habitat for a greater number of birds, mammals, invertebrates and amphibians.

## Feeding the Ducks

We all love feeding the ducks, however it is important that what we feed them is not bad for their health. There is at least one mallard around the lochs which is showing signs of “Angel wing”, a condition caused by a nutrient deficiency in its diet. It is very

tempting for birds to load up on chunks of bread because it seems like an attractive food source, but bread is actually very low in nutrients and can impact the development of young birds leading to them having difficulty flying in adulthood.

**Please, if you are going to feed the ducks at Birnie and Gaddon, bring a bag of bird seed, oats, or peas and corn (defrosted if frozen).**

## Accessing the Hides

Hide keys are available at a charge of £5.00, which goes towards the up-keep of the hides, for further information on obtaining keys please contact us on 01592 656080. Unfortunately, the Gaddon Hide was recently vandalised, this type of incident obviously costs money and takes time to put right, if anyone does come across vandalism please report it, either to us on the numbers provided or to Police Scotland 101

