

December 2018

## Welcome to the Birnie & Gaddon Lochs Newsletter

The festive season is upon us, bringing the excitement of mince pies, presents and that big bloke in the red suit. However, none of that affects the animals around the lochs; they will carry on as normal, trying to find food and shelter during the coldest months of the year. Just stand still and you will see lots of activity in the trees.

## Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) Counts 11/11/2018

### Birnie Loch (8:05)

9 x black-headed gull, 7 x mallard, 4 x moorhen, 3 x mute swan, 2 x grey heron, 2 x tufted duck, 1 x goldeneye.

### Gaddon Loch (8:20)

28 x goosander, 2 x mallard, 2 x moorhen, 2 x tufted duck, 2 x mute swan, 1 x grey heron, 1 x goldeneye.

## Accessing the Hides

For further information and to obtain the new access codes please call 01592 656080.

## Bird of the Month

Wigeon (*Mareca penelope*)



Wigeon is one of the species of duck often found on the lochs during winter. They are smaller than mallards, with a stubby bill and shorter neck. The males in breeding plumage have a colourful, reddish-brown head with yellow forehead, whilst females, like in many other species, are predominantly brown and can be more difficult to identify. Their distinctive, high-pitched whistle can be heard around Birnie and Gaddon just now. Generally, wigeon live for around four or five years and can travel a long distance from their birth place in that time. Thanks to the local bird ringing community, we know that one wigeon, ringed at Birnie & Gaddon in 2003, was found five years later in Russia, almost 4200km away!

## Winter Migrants

If you spot any migratory birds coming in to Birnie and Gaddon for the winter, please let us know. There are notebooks in the bird hides for your records, you can also contact us via the details given or on [ask.us@fifecountryside.co.uk](mailto:ask.us@fifecountryside.co.uk). The Fife Nature Records Centre would also be happy to take details of any wildlife sightings you have from Birnie and Gaddon, contact them at [nature.info@fife.gov.uk](mailto:nature.info@fife.gov.uk), or use the online recording form by searching for them online.

## Feeding the Ducks

**Please, if you are going to feed the ducks at Birnie & Gaddon, do bring a small bag of bird seed, oats, or peas and corn (defrosted if frozen). DO NOT bring bread, as it pollutes the water and is bad for the birds' health. Thank you.**



**...and finally, with this being the last newsletter of 2018, we'd all like to wish you a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.**