



All change at Sa'ty Dyke

Montrose Basin Reserve Work Team help improve area for waders and wildfowl

With the arrival of our new Ranger, Adam McClure, at the start of June, it was decided that here at Montrose we would set up a group of volunteers which would carry out various tasks throughout the reserve.

The group, which is known as the Montrose Basin Reserve Work Team, help with every day maintenance tasks like trimming hedges, grass cutting and painting, to projects such as the management of habitats.



One such area is the field which runs between the Bank of Scotland Hide and the Basin. Known as Sa'ty Dyke, these salt pans were once used to extract salt from sea water through the natural process of evaporation.

In more recent times, SWT has recognised the potential this area holds as an important site for birds on the reserve. Since the reinstatement of the pools in 2008, the site has become overgrown by grasses and rush which have resulted in the site being unsuitable for many species of wader and wildfowl.

It was therefore decided that one of the first RWT days should be held here on Thursday 29th June. The main tasks for the day were to help with the management of the Salt Pans

through the cutting and removal of the densest stands of vegetation, which in some places were over six feet tall!

The group also undertook some rush control around the ponds themselves and it is hoped that by exposing the muddy edges of these ponds and improving visibility, waders and wildfowl will be attracted into the area to feed and roost.

In order to control the vegetation, the area will be grazed by the SWT's own flock of sheep - more about that in the next issue.

The team did a fantastic job and hopefully our woolly friends will be able to maintain this area in good condition.

Regular visitors to the reserve will notice that the willow screening and handrail to the Bank of Scotland Hide have also recently been replaced, and we would like to thank the RWT for their help with this work.

Would you be interested in joining our team of volunteers? For further information on Montrose Basin RWT, please see overleaf.

Photo above: Members of RWT removing cut rush

Photo to right: Volunteer using power scythe to cut rush around pool.



Surveys & Monitoring Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS)

Once a month a dedicated team of volunteer surveyors meet on the Basin to conduct the Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS).

Run by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), WeBS monitors non-breeding waterbirds throughout the UK. These counts allow BTO to identify population sizes, determine trends in numbers and distribution and to identify important sites.

If you would like to help out with WeBS, improving your bird ID skills and knowledge at the same time, we would welcome any new volunteers to our team.

You don't have to know all the birds on the Basin, other counters are on hand to help and the most important duty in any bird survey is actually the scribe. Why not come along and give it a go?

Dates of future WeBS can be found overleaf under RWT days.

Most common species recorded during WeBS count on 25th July 2010:

Species	No. seen
Eider	1983
Redshank	1015
Oystercatcher	718
Black-headed gull	599
Curlew	548



Reserve Rarities

Montrose Basin is a very special place for birds and every so often, extra special birds turn up.

The species which attracted most attention during June and July has undoubtedly been the 9 ruddy shelduck (5 pictured) which were first sighted on the reserve on 30th July.

The birds have mostly been seen around the Shelduck Hide and Miss Erskine's Bank, so bird-watchers are getting fantastic views from the Lurgies walk near Old Montrose Pier.

Other notable sightings during June and July include a little tern on Rossie Spit (28/06), little egret in Maryton Bay (28/07) and 15 greenshank (25/07).

If you spot any interesting rarities while birdwatching on the Basin, or at any other SWT sites in Angus, please inform the Montrose Basin Visitor Centre on **01674 676336** or contact Adam McClure, Montrose Basin Ranger on **079 2046 8554**.



Upcoming events at Montrose Basin

August 2010

- Wed 4th @ 10.30am – 12.30 **Pollinator Patrol**
- Wed 11th @ 10.30am – 12.30pm **Clever Camouflage**
- Sat 14th @ 10.00am – 2.30pm **Journey to the centre of the mud**
- Sun 22nd @ 10.30am – 5pm **Family Fun – Tree-mendous Trees**
- Sun 29th @ 10am – 1.30pm **Wildfowl I.D.**

September 2010

- Sat 4th & Sunday 5th @ 10.30am – 5pm **Optical Fair**
- Fri 24th @ 7.30pm – 9.30pm - **Family Activity – Nighthunters**

October 2010

- Sun 3rd @ 6.30am - 9.15am **Goose Breakfast**
- Sun 17th @ 6.30am - 9.15am **Goose Breakfast**
- For more information or for a full listing, please pick up our events guide at the Visitor Centre.

Fancy getting down and dirty at Montrose Basin?!

Would you like to gain conservation knowledge, get practical hands on experience, or simply lend a hand at this fantastic reserve?

If so, why not come along to our Reserve Work Team days?

We are currently looking for volunteers to join our team where they will have the opportunity to help with the practical side of reserve management with a mixture of exercise, great fun, socialising and satisfaction at the end of the day.

There are jobs to suit everyone from very light to manual work and we would welcome people of all ages* who can spare an hour, or two, or even the whole day to help us out.

We provide gloves and any necessary tools. All you need to bring is a packed lunch, appropriate clothing, stout footwear and a friend if you can!

Volunteers are an extremely important part of the SWT and the effort and hard work put in by our volunteers is invaluable.

Upcoming Reserve Work Team Days:

Unless otherwise stated, meet at Montrose Basin Visitor Centre at 10.30am.

- ♦ Sunday 15 August - WeBS Count (6.00pm)
- ♦ Tuesday 31 August - Repairs to Shelduck Hide
- ♦ Sunday 19 September - WeBS Count (11.45am)
- ♦ Tuesday 28 September - Tayock Tidy-up
- ♦ Sunday 10 October - WeBS Count (2.45pm)
- ♦ Tuesday 26 October - Repairs to sand martin wall

There are other dates throughout the month when the RWT meets which are not included in the above list. If you would like to be kept informed of these, please contact Adam, Montrose Basin Ranger, amcclure@swt.org.uk or leave your details with the staff in the Visitor Centre.

*Under 16's must be accompanied by an adult.



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