

## KINGHORN BIODIVERSITY MONTHLY REPORT - NOVEMBER 2021



Moonlight at and reflected in the Loch by the fishermen's path, 13 November 2021. Photos Robert Mill.

November 2021 once again started off mild. However, on the night of Friday/Saturday 26th/27th Storm Arwen hit, with severe winds from whose effects which people in many parts of Scotland and the rest of the UK are still suffering. Hard on its heels was some very cold weather and we woke up on morning of Sunday 28th to a light snowfall. The final week remained cold except at the very end when it turned mild again.

Because of rather poor weather in much of November, as well as being away from Kinghorn for a few days in the second week, I haven't been out and about in the local area as much this month. Nevertheless, another seven species were added to the Loch list. They comprised 1 beetle, 1 caddis fly, 1 gnat, 3 fungi and even 1 flowering plant! An error, however, was found in my master spreadsheet; adjusting for this gave a net increase in the Loch's total biodiversity of six, from 1,248 on 31 October to **1,254** on 30 November. As usual, 'new Loch record(s)' is abbreviated NLR.

**AROUND THE LOCH Birds** At least 44 bird species were recorded by myself and others around the Loch in November. There was, for the Loch, a large flock of between 26 and 29 **Goldeneye** present on 8th (Paul Williams and Andy Pay, photo on Kinghorn Loch Wildlife Group Facebook page, afterwards abbreviated KLWG). I myself saw eight Goldeneye at the Loch on 13th, and Matt Findlay saw one on 17th (KLWG). Paul Williams also saw a few **Tufted Duck** on the Loch on 8th. The month's other 'star attraction' at the Loch was **Water Rail**, of which two were seen by Paul Williams (KLWG) on 10th and one or more by 'Tim Nic' from 24th onwards (KLWG). **Little Grebes (Dabchicks)** remained on the Loch all month but the **Great Crested Grebes** were not seen and have presumably now dispersed to the coast where the species tends to spend the winter. **Pink-footed Geese** flew over on several days. I saw a **Great Black-backed Gull** loafing on one of the buoys on 21st while Eleanor O'Rourke spotted a **Cormorant** on 9th (KLWG). A **Kestrel** was present on 17th (Matt Findlay, KLWG) and there were records of **Sparrowhawk** on 5th and 10th. I heard a **Curlew** flying over on 21st while Pauline Bell photographed at least four feeding in the horses' field on 26th (KLWG). Records of smaller birds included **Goldcrest**, **Lesser Redpoll** and **Long-tailed Tit** (all 9th, Eleanor O'Rourke, KLWG), and **Treecreeper** (three records on 9th, 10th and 26th). The full list of birds recorded at the Loch during November 2021 is: *Blackbird, Black-headed Gull, Blue Tit, Bullfinch, Carrion Crow, Chaffinch, Coal Tit, Common Gull, Coot, Cormorant, Curlew, Dunnock, Farmyard geese hybrids, Feral Pigeon, Goldcrest, Goldeneye, Goldfinch, Great Black-backed Gull, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Great Tit, Greenfinch, Grey Heron, Greylag Goose, Herring Gull, Jackdaw, Kestrel, Lesser Redpoll, Little Grebe or Dabchick, Long-tailed Tit, Magpie, Mallard, Moorhen, Mute Swan, Pheasant, Pied Wagtail, Pink-footed Goose, Robin, Sparrowhawk, Treecreeper, Tree Sparrow, Tufted Duck, Water Rail, Wood Pigeon, Wren.*

**Mammals and amphibians:** Eleanor O'Rourke (KLWG) photographed a **Stoat** and a **Grey Squirrel** at the bird hide on 9th. **Mole hills** were again evident, not only just outside the fishermen's gate but also at the edge of the woodland fishermen's path and near the sluice in the southeast corner of the Loch.

## Invertebrates ('minibeasts')



**New invertebrate Loch records, November 2021. Left:** Winter Gnat (*Trichocera annulata*), 13th. Photo Robert Mill. **Right:** a caddisfly, most probably *Limnephilus lunatus*, 11th. Photo Paul Williams (cropped by R. Mill).

Unsurprisingly, fewer insects and other invertebrates were seen during November as plants continued to die back. Paul Williams saw a **Red Admiral** on 3rd; this was the only **butterfly** record of the month of which I'm aware. The only adult **moth** spotted in November was a **Silver Y** (*Autographa gamma*) found by Lee Brown in the polytunnel on 4th. On 23rd I spotted leaf mines on bramble caused by the **Golden Pigmy moth** (*Stigmella aurella*). Paul Williams spotted a caddisfly on the side of one of the mill buildings on 11th; his photo (above, cropped considerably to enlarge the insect) allowed me to identify it as probably *Limnephilus lunatus* (NLR). No **bees**, **wasps** or **bugs** were seen during November. On 13th I noticed a leaf mine on hazel caused by the grub of a **beetle**, *Orchestes avellanae* (NLR).

Two **hoverfly** species was seen by me, on different flowers of the same plant of Smooth Sow-thistle near the jetty on 23rd: **Banded Hoverfly** (*Syrphus sp.*, probably *S. ribesii*) and **Spotted Meliscaeva** (*Meliscaeva auricollis*). The **bluebottle** *Calliphora vicina* was basking on tree trunks on the same day, as well as another as yet unidentified fly, while earlier in the month I saw some **Winter Gnats** near the outflow of the stream at the water mill (13th); one settled at the tip of a fir tree branch and I was able to photograph it and identify it as *Trichocera annulata* (NLR). I also recorded the leaf mines of four different leaf-mining flies: *Agromyza pseudoreptans* on nettle, *Amauromyza flavifrons* on Red Campion, *Amauromyza labiatarum* on Hedge Woundwort, and *Phytomyza obscurella* on Ground Elder. All had been previously found in earlier months but I have provided photos of three of them in this report below.



**Leaf mines of fly larvae, November 2021. Left:** *Agromyza pseudoreptans*, 13th. **Centre:** *Amauromyza flavifrons*, 23rd. **Right:** *Phytomyza obscurella*, 13th. All photos Robert Mill.

## Flowering plants and ferns



**Plants in flower at the Loch, November 2021. TOP ROW. Left:** Sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*), going over, 23rd (also seen on 6th, NLR; see text). **Centre:** Long-headed Poppy (*Papaver dubium*), 23rd. **Right:** Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*), 13th. **BOTTOM ROW. Left:** Viper's Bugloss (*Echium vulgare*), 23rd. **Centre:** Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*), 23rd. **Far right:** Water Avens (*Geum rivale*), 23rd.

The only new flowering plant record made at the Loch during November was a **Sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*)** plant that came into flower (or at least was first noticed) near the beginning of the month on the earth between the jetty and the track up to Craigencaft Farm, when it was photographed in glorious full bloom on 6th by Pauline Bell (her beautiful photo is on the KLWG Facebook page). Unfortunately I failed to spot it myself around that time and I only noticed it on 23rd when the flower was fading and drooping. Bird seed is sometimes scattered in that area so that is the most likely source of the plant.

Quite a number of other wildflower species continued to flower although mostly in very small numbers and the variety lessened as the month went on. They included **Shepherd's Purse, Charlock, Long-headed Poppy, White Clover, Bramble, Water Avens, Wild Carrot, Hogweed, Herb Robert, Red Campion, Borage, Viper's Bugloss, White and Red Dead-nettles, Yarrow, Common Daisy, Ox-eye Daisy, Pineapple-weed, Corn Marigold, Nipplewort, both Prickly and Smooth Sow-thistles, Common Ragwort and Italian Rye-grass.** A selection of photographs of some of them is above. Also noticed were some developing **Hazel** catkins that will flower next spring (photo below).



Next year's Hazel catkins (*Corylus avellana*) beginning to develop by the fishermen's path, 13 November 2021. Photo Robert Mill.

## Fungi, lichens and bryophytes



**New fungi records, November 2021. TOP ROW: Left and right:** Snowy Waxcap (*Cuphophyllus virgineus*), 3rd (right-hand photo is of fungus upside-down showing the gills). **BOTTOM ROW: Left:** *Phyllosticta cotoneastri*, 23rd. **Right:** Brown spots of *Septoria convolvuli*, 23rd. All photos Robert Mill.

Twelve species of **fungi** were recorded in November, three of which were NLRs. These were **Snowy Waxcap (*Cuphophyllus virgineus*)** on the grassy area south of the Ecology Centre buildings (3rd), and two leaf spots both found on 23rd: ***Phyllosticta cotoneastri*** on a Cotoneaster species, and ***Septoria convolvuli*** on the leaves of Hedge Bindweed (*Calystegia sepium*). Four lichens were also found as well as the orange terrestrial alga ***Trentepohlia aurea*** although I had previously recorded all of them at the Loch in earlier months.

### VILLAGE, BEACH AND COASTAL PATH



Tree-like patterns caused by water on the black 'coaly' beach at Pettycur, 12 November 2021.  
Photo Robert Mill.

My only excursion along the coastal path in November was from Seafield beach towards Seafield Tower on 15th, when I saw the 'usual suspects' including **Cormorant, Great Black-backed Gull, Redshank, Oystercatcher, Curlew** and the common **gull** species, as well as a **Common Guillemot** and at least 18 **Eiders**. Two short visits to Pettycur Bay on 2nd and 12th also yielded only common species. Other people were more fortunate. Paul Williams (KLWG) saw (and photographed) **Grey Wagtail** and displaying drake **Eiders** in the Seafield area on 7th, while he photographed **Sanderling** and **Knot** at Seafield on 15th, commenting that both are uncommon in our area. 'Tim Nic' saw around 15 **Long-tailed Duck** off Kinghorn Harbour on 12th while a few **Goldeneye** were off there on 8th (Ronnie Mackie, KLWG).