

## Excursion to Cathkin Marsh and Cathkin Braes, Sunday 19th July 2015

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On Sunday 19th July, 8 of us enjoyed surprisingly good weather at Cathkin Marsh SWT reserve and the meadows of Cathkin Country Park. The only rain coincided with a lunch break where excellent hospitality was offered by Marie Watt whose house was located conveniently between the 2 sites.

The Marsh is largely a mixture of fen, swamp and marshy grassland and includes a large pond with an island. Access is on paths and a wooden walkway, but those with wellies could take a closer look. A bird hide allowed us to watch reed buntings foraging and moorhens on the island. Other species were keeping a low profile as were most insects. Ringlets were the only butterflies observed. However, Richard Weddle and his net were busy and compiled (with contributions from others) a very respectable list including some unusual species - see list below.

Of the 107 plant species on record for the site, we probably observed about 80% of these. Marsh and water horsetail, meadow sweet and tufted hair grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*) dominated large areas, but celery leaved buttercup (*Ranunculus sceleratus*) was a bit of a surprise and orchids were represented by Northern marsh orchid (*Dactylorhiza purpurella*) and common spotted orchids (*D. fuchsii*). I do have full species lists for all animals and plants kindly emailed by Sven Rasmussen of SWT if anyone wishes more information.

The Cathkin Braes meadows close to the main car park were a joy to behold. The yellow rattle grew and flowered quite early this year and its abundance suppressed the lush grass growth in many areas allowing a huge variety and abundance of wild flowers. There was a mix of lush areas with vetches, clovers and orchids (*D. fuchsii* and Greater butterfly (*Platanthera chlorantha*) and more moorland type vegetation with Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*) and wild violas and bird's foot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*) to name but a few. This made a really interesting species rich patchwork. Meadow Browns (at Cathkin Meadows) and Ringlets were the only butterflies seen that day. However, this was simply a weather problem and I would strongly recommend a visit to these meadows.

### Beetles:

Crepidodera aurea (a flea beetle)  
Oedemera virescens  
Rhagonycha fulva (Red Soldier-beetle)  
Rhagonycha testacea  
Nicrophorus vespilloides (burying-beetle)

### Butterflies/Moths:

Ringlet  
Meadow Brown  
Common Wave  
Pammene aurana

### True Flies:

Sepsis cynipsea  
Scatophagidae (dung-flies)  
Cheilosia illustrata (hoverfly)

### Bees etc:

Buff-tailed Bumblebee  
Common Carder Bee  
Pteromalidae (a very small Chalcid wasp - probably parasitic)

### Other:

Taphrinaalni (alder catkin gall – a fungus)  
Molehills

### Also at 'Tickle Trout':

Ringlet  
Syrphus ribesii (hoverfly)  
Chlorops sp. (a frit fly)  
Pteromalid wasp (a different one from above)  
and a Kestrel hovering in the adjacent field