

Welcome to our autumn newsletter. It has been a busy season with lots happening in and around the area. New to our team is Anna Lound our Seasonal Ranger who worked with us in 2009.

Events **Na tha a dol**

Our Summer has been quite variable with regards to the weather however, that hasn't stopped the ranger team from getting out and about. We have had a number of exciting events to encourage members of the public outdoors.



Oh no, it's the Gruffalo!

The Gruffalo walks at Culloden Avenue and Cannich were great successes with over 350 people meeting the Gruffalo.

This year the Rangers were at the Belladrum Tartan Heart Festival again. Despite the weather warnings the marquee went up with the main focal point being a large birch tree.

Everything went well until the downpour on Saturday night which left our tent in ankle deep water – not so much fun to take it down. Still, all went well throughout the festival and our woodland floor was covered with hand made woodland creatures.



At the Bioblitz at Abriachan Forest on Friday 27 May and Saturday 28 May, we ran 24 hours of biodiversity workshops led by experts and enthusiasts. The aim was to find out what was living in the forest at Abriachan and get people outdoors enjoying the biodiversity. So after pond dipping, minibeast hunting, worm charming, newt hunting, tree surveying, squirrel & bird spotting during the daylight hours we switched to bat watching, small mammal and moth trapping during the hours of darkness. It was great fun and about 50 people joined us for the workshops.

Cairngorms National Park **Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh**



Saranne and Duncan both live and work within the Cairngorms National Park and they have had an enjoyable summer.

Top Dogs Day Out was a resounding success again this year! Over 250 folk turned up to watch our daft hairy pals strut their stuff.

Over 30 dogs tried to win the top amateur or professional agility prize which this year was dedicated to Jim Gillies, the former Recreational Manager at Glenmore Forest for many years until his retirement last year. Unfortunately Jim died rather suddenly earlier this year which shocked and stunned all those who knew him. The prize was in memory of this wonderful man who loved his dogs, was hugely creative and had a fabulous sense of humour.

This fun event is a real partnership – lead by Saranne Bish and local Forestry Commission Scotland Recreational Ranger Miranda Whitcomb. This year the event got financial assistance from the CNP Access team.



Alvie Primary School pupils tickling trout

Schools **Sgoiltean**

We work very closely with many of our local schools, delivering environmental education to children of all ages.

Anna's particular highlight of the summer term was a day spent working with Duncan and students from Alvie Primary School. The children paid a visit to the local trout farm on Alvie estate. Duncan and Anna spent the day with the youngsters guddling for brown trout in the local burn.

Communities Coimhearsnachdan

This year the team have worked closely with staff from the Highland Print Studio on the Mental Health Printmaking Project. The project revolves around teaching printmaking to people who are affected by poor mental health, and aims to enable participants to learn new creative skills and develop a level of comfort within the studio environment.

The project also has a strong environmental theme to it, as it has been shown that time spent outdoors can have a very positive affect on people's wellbeing. So the Ranger team has led Print Studio participants on a series of outdoor excursions. These visits have acted as a catalyst for creative projects which have been developed further in the Print Studio.



John and the JAPES team (Junior Ardersier & Petty Environmental Society) have been busy working on an information panel all about the birds that can be seen on the Moray Firth. The children took their drawings and bird facts to the Highland Print Studio in Inverness and produced prints which were then filled with colour. The finished panel, funded by Lifescan & The Highland Council Planning & Development Service, can be seen at the small picnic site just past Toll Cottage as you come into Ardersier on Stewart Street.

Wildlife Fiadh-bheatha

Giant wood ant alert! Huge wood ants have invaded the woods at Carrbridge.



Giant wood ants

The ants are rather sociable and can be found scurrying around Ellan Wood. Keep an eye out for ant themed ranger events in Ellan Woods next year.

Highlights Prìomh Chùisean



Duncan

I've enjoyed the abundance of fungi this year; had the closest encounter with a Golden Eagle I have ever had and I've moved office to share with Saranne.



John

Waking up in my tent at Belladrum in 3 inches of water -completely soaked! I really enjoyed the Dragon Walk at Tradespark and so will definitely be organising another one next year.



Katy

The Gaelic stories event at Abriachan with Roddy MacLean in July was my highlight. Everybody learned so much about Gaelic in the landscape and it was great fun too! Fungi have also been fruiting well this year. So I've been on plenty of fungal forays.



Saranne

The arrival of the new ranger dog- Crackerjack. I got him from the SSPCA at Christmas and many of the local kids have already gotten to know him and his daft bounciness! Look out for Crackerjack over the coming months and see if you can spot him out and about in Badenoch and Strathspey.



Corinne

Walking round Craigellachie NNR in early spring being serenaded by frogs and toads who were emerging from their winter hidey holes. Chirps, croaks and purrs filled the air as we struggled to find room on the path for our feet between basking amphibians soaking up the first warm rays of the new season.



Anna

Returning to working with the ranger team and looking for Wild Things in Tom Baraidh Woods.

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