

KINGHORN BIODIVERSITY MONTHLY REPORT – MAY 2024 by Robert Mill



Pearly Green Lacewing (*Chrysopa perla*), clinging upside-down on a stem on 10 May 2024. New Loch record and the second lacewing species to be recorded at the Loch. See text, p. 6. Photo Robert Mill.

May 2024 was the warmest over the whole of the UK since records began in 1884, with Scotland in particular experiencing temperatures well above the 1991-2020 average both by day and especially at night (Met Office, 2024a, b). Daily maximum temperatures in our area were above average on all days except 1st, 4th, 6th-7th and 23rd, while night-time minima were well above-average on all days except 21st and 28th (Met Office, 2024b). A short-lived high-pressure system brought a spell of clear, settled weather from the 9th; this coincided with a major solar flare that allowed the *Aurora Borealis* to be seen all across the UK (including Kinghorn) but unsettled cloudier weather soon returned. The weather was particularly unsettled in the last week to ten days of May; a thundery low-pressure system moved north from the Continent and brought exceptionally heavy rain (and flooding) to eastern Scotland on 22nd and 23rd. Many weather stations in eastern Scotland and northern England reported their wettest Spring days on record, including the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh just across the Forth from Kinghorn (Met Office, 2024c). Soon after this, another weather system brought more rain to Kinghorn from 25th to 29th. The result was that the Kinghorn Ecology Centre rain gauge recorded even more rain in May (115.2 mm, 260% of the long-term average of 44.2 mm) than in April (103.4 mm) (SEPA, 2024). Of this 115.2 mm, 41.6 mm fell on a single day (23rd), and 98.2 mm (85%) in the week of 22nd-29th. Despite many days being completely dry (16 of 31) or with less than 1 mm of rain (another five days), it was a dull month, with sunshine below average.

I made 12 visits to the Loch in May and Paul Williams (PW) made five, four of them being on the same days as some of mine although not at the same times. There were also a few observations by other people. In terms of new records for the Loch, May was very productive, with a total of 29 additions: one bird, 1 butterfly, 1 moth, 2 hoverflies, 6 other flies, 3 beetles, 1 bug, 2 sawflies, 1 bee, 2 other insects, 2 gall-forming mites, 1 fungus and 6 flowering plants. These brought the cumulative total up from 1,685 (30 April) to **1,714** on 31 May.

AROUND THE LOCH Birds: 54 bird species were recorded on and around Kinghorn Loch during May, four fewer than in April. Nevertheless, they included yet another addition to the Loch's bird list: a **Red-legged Partridge (*Alectoris rufa*)** on the big lawn just south of The Ecology Centre, seen by Paul Williams on 3rd. Unfortunately, it saw Paul coming down the steps from the rain gauge, and scuttled across the path and into scrub at the loch-side before he could take a photograph. Therefore, I have included a photo of one of two Red-legged Partridges that Paul saw on 25 April in a field opposite the Alcan Whinnyhall site; in an email to me, Paul thought that the Loch bird might have come from there, where he has seen them quite often over



Red-legged Partridge (*Alectoris rufa*), a new Loch record on 3rd May (see text, page 1). This bird was photographed nearby, in a field opposite the Whinnyhall Alcan site on 25 April. Photo Paul Williams.

the past few years. This species brings the Loch bird list up to 127. Summer migrants continued to arrive, with **Common Whitethroats** present all month in various places (from 3rd), while **Sedge Warbler** was recorded on 11th by Elaine O'Rourke (Kinghorn District Wildlife Group Facebook page – KDWG) and on 17th by James Moreland (eBird). As well as these, **Chiffchaffs, Willow Warblers, Blackcaps, Swallows** and **Sand Martins** all remained but there were no sightings at the Loch in May of either **House Martins** (recorded there in April) or **Swifts**. A pair of **Mute Swans** hatched five cygnets on 20th, and at least one pair of **Greylag Geese** tried to raise goslings. However, one by one these were successively killed by the swans, with my stepson and grandson both witnessing the death by drowning (by a swan) of the last one of the brood on 5th, after having been delighted by seeing it alive less than 15 minutes earlier. A **Shelduck** coming

from the direction of Grangehill overflew the Loch on 20th (PW) and three **Tufted Ducks** were present on 17th (James Moreland). Last month's drake **Red-breasted Merganser** was seen again by myself on 5th. At least one pair of both **Coot** and **Moorhen** hatched chicks during May, and the nesting pair of **Great Crested Grebes** at the west end of the Loch also hatched one chick ('humbug') on 21st, with the possibility of another to come as the female remained on the nest. **Little Grebes (Dabchicks)** were absent from, or at least unrecorded by anyone at, the Loch in May. The month's only **wader** record was an overflying **Oystercatcher** on 20th. A single **Cormorant** was present for much of the month, often on a raft near the jetty, while May's only sighting of **Grey Heron** was on 20th. Both **Sparrowhawk** and **Buzzard** were seen during the first week of May, with two of the latter seen on 3rd by PW. **Kestrel** was seen on four occasions from 10th onwards, including by myself on 28th. Following on from Hawk Gula's high count of 15 **House Sparrows** on 28th April, these were recorded no fewer than three times at the Loch during May, by PW on 10th, myself the next day and by James Moreland who saw five on 17th. **Tree Sparrows**, the species more commonly seen at Kinghorn Loch, were sighted on nine occasions by various observers. **Grey Wagtails** were seen on three dates, with three including a fledgling reported by James Moreland on 17th; **Pied Wagtail** was also recorded on several dates. **Yellowhammer** was also reported on three occasions. The full list of birds recorded at the Loch during May 2024, in the systematic order of the *British List* (BOU, 2022) rather than alphabetical order as in previous reports, is: *Greylag Goose, Farmyard geese hybrids, Mute Swan, Shelduck, Mallard, Tufted Duck, Red-breasted Merganser, Pheasant, Red-legged Partridge, Feral Pigeon, Wood Pigeon, Moorhen, Coot, Great Crested Grebe, Oystercatcher, Herring Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Cormorant, Grey Heron, Sparrowhawk, Buzzard, Kestrel, Magpie, Jackdaw, Rook, Carrion Crow, Coal Tit, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Skylark, Sand Martin, Swallow, Long-tailed Tit, Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff, Sedge Warbler, Blackcap, Common Whitethroat, Wren, Starling, Song Thrush, Blackbird, Robin, Tree Sparrow, House Sparrow, Dunnock, Grey Wagtail, Pied Wagtail, Chaffinch, Bullfinch, Greenfinch, Linnet, Goldfinch, Yellowhammer.*

Mammals, amphibians and fish: Paul Williams saw **Roe Deer** and **Grey Squirrel** on 3rd while Elaine O'Rourke (KDWG) saw, and photographed, a **Rabbit** on 11th. No amphibians or fish were reported.

Invertebrates ('minibeasts'): No fewer than 83 invertebrate species were recorded during May, 19 of them (23%) being new Loch records (NLRs). Six **butterfly** species were recorded in May, including the Loch's first two records of the beautiful **Holly Blue**. One of these was seen by myself on both 11th and 15th flying high over the woodland beside the track into the



Holly Blue (*Celastrina argiolus*), 11th & 15th, NLR. Photo (15th) Robert Mill.

Loch near the sluice from the B923; on the second occasion it settled high in a sycamore long enough for me to get a 'record shot' photograph (shown at left). **Orange Tips** were numerous until at least 20th and **Small Whites** were also recorded all month. **Speckled Woods** were seen on at least three occasions by myself or PW,

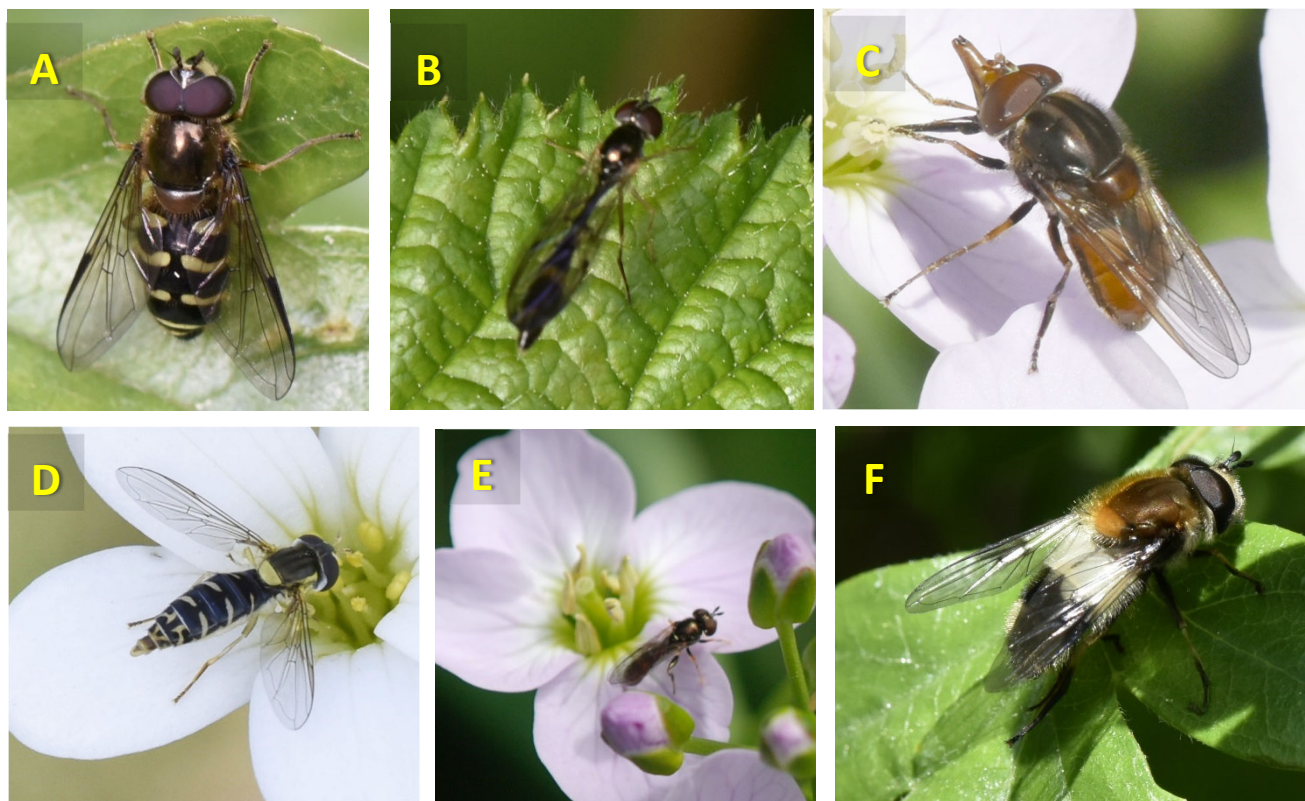
Peacock on four, and **Small Tortoiseshell** once (11th, PW). Four **day-flying moths** were also seen during May. One of these was a NLR: numerous small brown moths flying around and settling briefly on Tansy leaves (20th, 25th) mostly turned out to be **Dingy Drill**, also known as **Tansy Moth** since tansy is the larval food plant. The other three moths seen were a tiny (c. 8 mm long) **Common Roller** on a Ribwort Plantain stem (25th; last recorded in 2021 by George Guthrie), **Cocksfoot Moth** (15th; otherwise known only from lists of moths recorded at the Loch by Nigel Voaden) and **Silverground Carpet** which was, as always, seen regularly in grassy habitats from mid-May onwards.



New or notable moths and sawflies, Kinghorn Loch, May 2024. **A**, Tansy Moth or Dingy Drill (*Dichrorampha sedatana*), 25th, NLR. **B**, Common Roller (*Ancylis badiana*), last recorded 2021. **C**, Cocksfoot Moth (*Glyphipterix simpliciella*), 15th. **D**, Bugle Sawfly (*Athalia cordata*) on larval foodplant, 10th, NLR. **E**, Solomon's-seal Sawfly (*Phymatocera aterrima*) on larval foodplant, 11th, NLR. **F**, *Nomada panzeri*, 25th, NLR; note orange marks on abdomen. **G**, *Nomada marshamella*, 2nd, first Loch record since 2007 and one of numerous sightings during May. **H**, an as yet unidentified species of ichneumon wasp, 11th. Photos Robert Mill.

No fewer than 13 members of Hymenoptera were identified, with a striking brightly coloured ichneumon wasp (shown in photo **H** above) still not identified. Three were NLRs: the wasp-like nomad bee ***Nomada panzeri*** (25th), with orange marks on the abdomen, and two sawflies: **Bugle Sawfly (*Athalia cordata*)** from 10th onwards, and **Solomon's-seal Sawfly (*Phymatocera aterrima*)** on 11th. Both were found as adults on their larval food-plants (Bugle *Ajuga reptans* and Solomon's-seal *Polygonatum* sp. respectively). Another nomad bee, ***Nomada marshamella***, was also very abundant at the Loch this year; it lacks the orange

abdominal markings of *N. panzeri*. I had not previously seen it myself at the Loch, with the only previous record dating from as long ago as 2007 (an observation by Brian Little on 7 April that year, at the same 6-figure OS grid reference as one of my 10 records on seven different dates from 2nd onwards). Other notable records were **Chocolate Mining-bee** on several dates, and **Gwynne's Mining-bee** on 2nd. The first **wasps** were seen at the Loch this year from 10th, and the first **Large Red-tailed Bumblebee** of 2024 on 11th.



Kinghorn Loch hoverflies, May 2024. **A**, Broad-barred Fleckwing (*Dasysyrphus venustus*), 15th, NLR. **B**, Gossamer Hoverfly (*Baccha elongata*), 15th, NLR. **C**, Common Snout (*Rhingia campestris*), 10th. **D**, male Long Hoverfly (*Sphaerophoria scripta*), 10th. **E**, Smudge-veined Clubtail (*Neoascia podarica*). 8th. **F**, Blotch-winged Hoverfly (*Leucozona lucorum*). 11th. Photos Robert Mill.

It was a fantastic month for **hoverflies**. Thirteen different species were recorded. Two of them, **Gossamer Hoverfly** (*Baccha elongata*) and **Broad-barred Fleckwing** (*Dasysyrphus venustus*) were NLRs; both were found on 15th, when **Early Epistrophe** (*Epistrophe eligans*), previously known from the Loch only from a list of hoverflies seen there by Andy Pay, was also photographed along with with the year's first **Marmalade Hoverfly**. It was a particularly good year for the **Common Snout** hoverfly (*Rhingia campestris*), which was seen on four different dates from 10th onwards. Other hoverfly highlights were a **Smudge-veined Clubtail** (*Neoascia podagrica*) on 8th, which was last seen at the Loch in 2020 by Nigel Voaden; a **male Long Hoverfly** (*Sphaerophoria scripta*) on 10th; a **Blotch-winged Hoverfly** (*Leucozona lucorum*) on 11th; and a **Pied Hoverfly** (*Scaeva pyrastris*) on 20th. Many of these dates were several weeks earlier than records of the same species in recent years.

Twenty-one other **flies** were also recorded, six of them being NLRs: *Coenosia tigrina* (25th), *Dioxyna bidentis* (10th), *Empis tessellata* (15th and 25th), *Gnophomyia viridipennis* or a similar crane fly species (3rd), *Hilara cf. quadrifasciata* on 25th and *Minettia cf. longipennis* (28th). Photographs of all these are on the next page.



More **Greater Bee-flies** (*Bombylius major*) were seen on 3rd and 8th while the year's first **St Mark's Flies** were seen on 10th (as well as 11th and 13th). A **soldier-fly**, the **Iridescent Centurion** (*Sargus iridatus*), was recorded on 25th (see photo, bottom left on this page), almost six years since the last Loch record of this species (on 9 June 2018 by Ali Shuttleworth: NBN Atlas, 2024). Apart from the possible *Gnophomyia* species, five different **crane fly** species were noted: *Limonia phragmitidis* on several occasions and four *Tipula* species, namely *T. fascipennis*, *T. lateralis*, *T. oleracea* and *T. vernalis*.



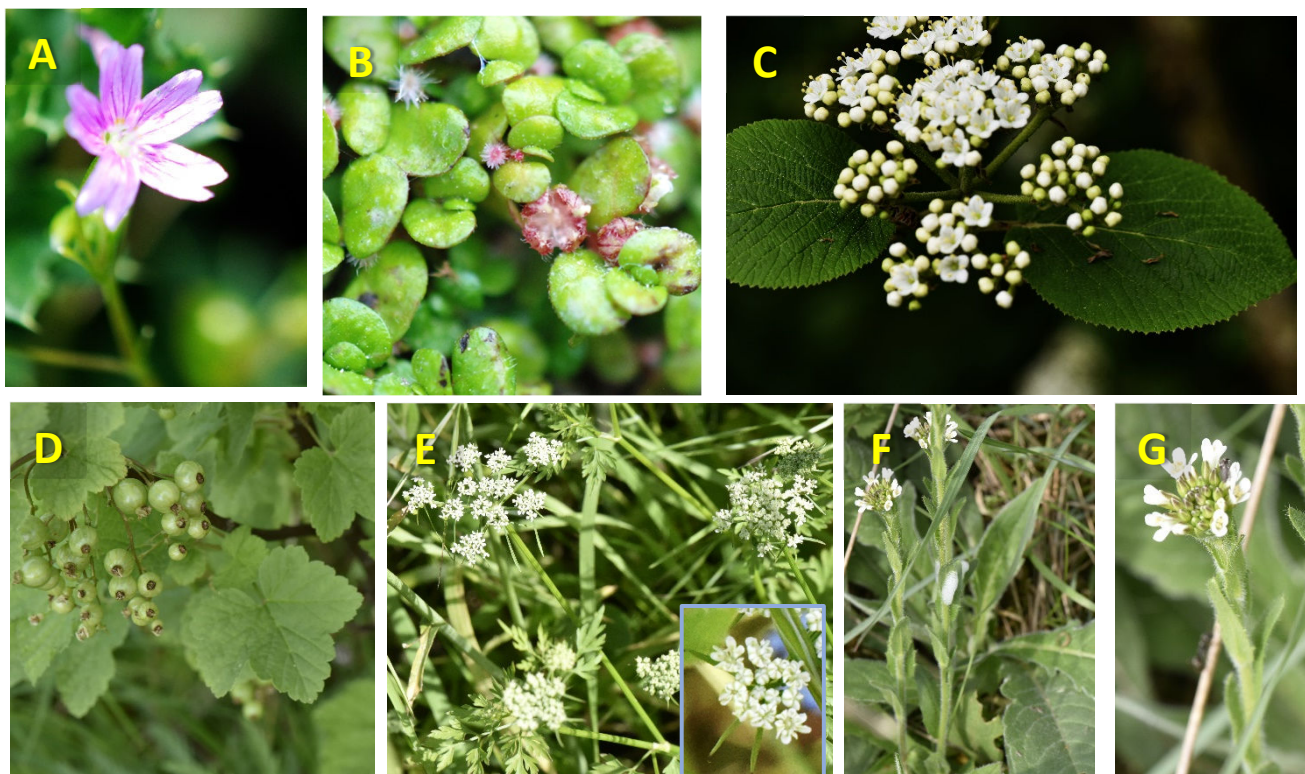
Kinghorn Loch flies (other than hoverflies) and other invertebrates, May 2024; all new Loch records. A-F, flies: A, *Dioxya bidentis*, 10th. B, *Empis tessellata*, 15th (also 25th). C, *Gnophomyia* cf. *viridipennis*, 3rd. D, *Coenosia tigrina*, 25th. E, *Hilara* cf. *quadrifasciata*, 25th. F, *Minettia* cf. *longipennis*, 28th. G, Fig Gall caused on elm leaf by Elm grass-root aphid (*Tetraneura ulmi*), 15th. H-K, beetles: H, Livid Soldier Beetle (*Cantharis livida*), 25th. J, Hairy Spider Weevil (*Exomias pellucidus*), 10th (and 11th). K, Common Click Beetle (*Athous haemorrhoidalis*), 25th. L, Lake Olive mayfly (*Cloeon simile*), 10th. M-N, gall mites: galls of (M), *Aceria macrorhyncha* on Sycamore, 28th; (N) *Eriophyes exilis* on Small-leaved Lime, 28th (and 30th). All photos Robert Mill.

A Fig Gall caused by the **Elm-grass root Aphid (*Tetraneura ulmi*)** was another of May's many NLRs and **Common Froghopper** 'spittle' was first noticed on 13th, almost a fortnight earlier than last year, and became more and more abundant as the month wore on. Seven **beetles** were recorded in May; three of them were

NLRs. These were the tiny (3-4 mm long) **Hairy Spider Weevil** (*Exomias pellucidus*) on Spring Beauty (*Claytonia perfoliata*) on 10th and 11th, and both **Common Click Beetle** (*Athous haemorrhoidalis*) and a **soldier beetle**, *Cantharis livida*, on 25th. **Nettle Weevils** (*Phyllobius pomaceus*) were seen on 10th, 11th and 20th. **Common Blue Damselflies** began to emerge from about 15th (again, a fortnight earlier than last year) and a **Large Red Damselfly** was seen on 25th. A **Pearly Green Lacewing** (*Chrysopa perla*) and a **Lake Olive mayfly** (*Cloeon simile*), both NLRs, were photographed a few feet from each other five minutes apart on 10th. The lacewing (see photo at top of page 1) was only the second species of that insect group to be recorded at the Loch. As well as these NLRs, there were more records of **Common Alder-flies** (*Sialis lutaria*) on 8th (three seen) and 11th, and three records of **German Scorpion-fly** (*Panorpa germanica*) on 11th, 15th and 25th.

Seven **arachnids** (spiders, mites etc.) were found during May, of which the gall mites *Aceria macrorhyncha* on Sycamore and *Eriophyes exilis* (formerly known as *E. leiosoma*: see Soika & Kozak, 2013) on Small-leaved Lime (28th) were NLRs; both were found on 28th. Two other gall mites were recorded: *Aceria cephalonea* on Sycamore (11th) and *Eriophyes sorbi* on Rowan (8th onwards). **Spotted Wolf-spiders** (*Pardosa amentata*) were recorded on 10th by the dipping pond and 20th on the jetty car park wall. **Common Stretch-spider** (*Tetragnatha extensa*) and **Summer Orbweaver** (*Metellina mendei*) were both seen on 11th. A **Hairy Snail** was found on 20th and a **Brown-lipped Snail** on 30th. Finally, Paul Williams photographed an unidentified small leech species on 10th.

Flowering plants and ferns:



Kinghorn Loch flowering plants, May 2024; all new Loch records. **A**, Pink Purslane (*Claytonia sibirica*), 8th. **B**, Mind-your-own-Business (*Soleirolia soleirolii*), 8th. **C**, Wayfaring-tree (*Viburnum lantana*), 11th. **D**, Red Currant (*Ribes rubrum*), first record in 'wild' situation, 15th. **E**, Fool's Parsley (*Aethusa cynapium*), 30th (inset: single small umbel showing long, reflexed outer bracts). **F & G**, Hairy Rock-cress (*Arabis hirsuta*), 13th (G, single stem enlarged). Photos taken at another location on Kissing Trees Lane as the Loch plants are not publicly accessible. All photos Robert Mill.

Exactly 200 wild or naturalised plant species were recorded around the Loch during May, of which 163 were in flower at some time during the month and the other 37 in bud, with young or ripe fruits, or in a vegetative state. Six of the 163 in flower were NLRs, four of which I had never previously found around the Loch: **Fool's Parsley** (*Aethusa cynapium*) along a field margin on 30th, **Hairy Rock-cress** (*Arabis hirsuta*) on a limestone outcrop on 13th (and on another outcrop by Kissing Trees Lane the same day: see p. 9), **Pink Purslane** (*Claytonia sibirica*) on 8th, and **Wayfaring-Tree** (*Viburnum lantana*) in flower in woodland on 11th. The other

two were plants I had been aware of for some time: **Mind-your-own-Business** (*Soleirolia soleirolii*) on 8th, whose mats of minute leaves and occasional tiny flowers on a wall and the ground below I had first noticed in 2021 but never been able to identify until this year, and **Red Currant** (*Ribes rubrum*) which has been on my list as a cultivated plant since 2022 but was found for the first time this year growing apparently wild, probably as a self-sown plant from a bird-dispersed fruit. As well as these NLRs, I also found new locations for **Common Rock-rose** (13th and 30th; now known from 4 sites around the Loch), **Three-veined Sandwort** (15th; now known from NT2687 as well as the original location in NT2587) and a second location for wild plants of **Meadow Saxifrage** (11th). Forty-nine cultivated plants were also noted, 46 of them in bloom.

First-flowering dates at the Loch noted for selected flowering-plant species in May 2024, with 2023 dates in parentheses, were: **Horse Chestnut**, 3rd (7th); **Wild Garlic**, 3rd (9th); **Lady's Smock**, 3rd (17 April); **Herb Bennet**, 3rd (9th); **Sweet Cicely**, 3rd (18th); **Rowan**, 8th (21st); **Germander Speedwell**, 8th (9th); **Hawthorn**, 10th (9th); **Yellow Iris**, 10th (18th); **White Champion**, 11th (21st); **Common Nettle**, 11th (June 1st); **Common Bird's-foot Trefoil**, 13th (9th); **Meadow Buttercup** and **Cock's-foot**, 15th (18th); **Hedge Mustard**, 15th (1st); **Silverweed**, 20th (18th); **Northern Marsh-orchid**, 20th (June 1st); **Ox-eye Daisy**, 20th (22nd); **Ground Elder**, 25th (26th); **Foxglove**, 25th (29th); **Goosegrass**, 25th (June 2nd); **Long-headed Poppy**, 28th (June 2nd); **Yellow Rattle**, 28th (26th) and **White Clover**, 30th (29th). In the early part of the month these dates were often noticeably earlier than last year but in the latter part the 2023 and 2024 dates were very similar, particularly when differences in the dates of my recording trips in the two years are taken into account



Cryptogams

Entyloma ficariae
on Lesser Celandine
(*Ficaria verna*)
leaves, 3rd, new
Loch record. Photo
Robert Mill.

As is usual in the late spring and early summer months when there is so much else of interest to record at the Loch, I paid little attention to these during May, especially as it was too early for many mildews and other pathogens to have developed. Nevertheless, of seven fungi recorded, one was a NLR. This was *Entyloma ficariae*, a smut which was causing

pale yellow blotching on the leaves of Lesser Celandine over quite a large area in the vicinity of the bird hide, Pond and neighbouring footpaths. Seven lichens, six bryophytes and two terrestrial algae were also noted.

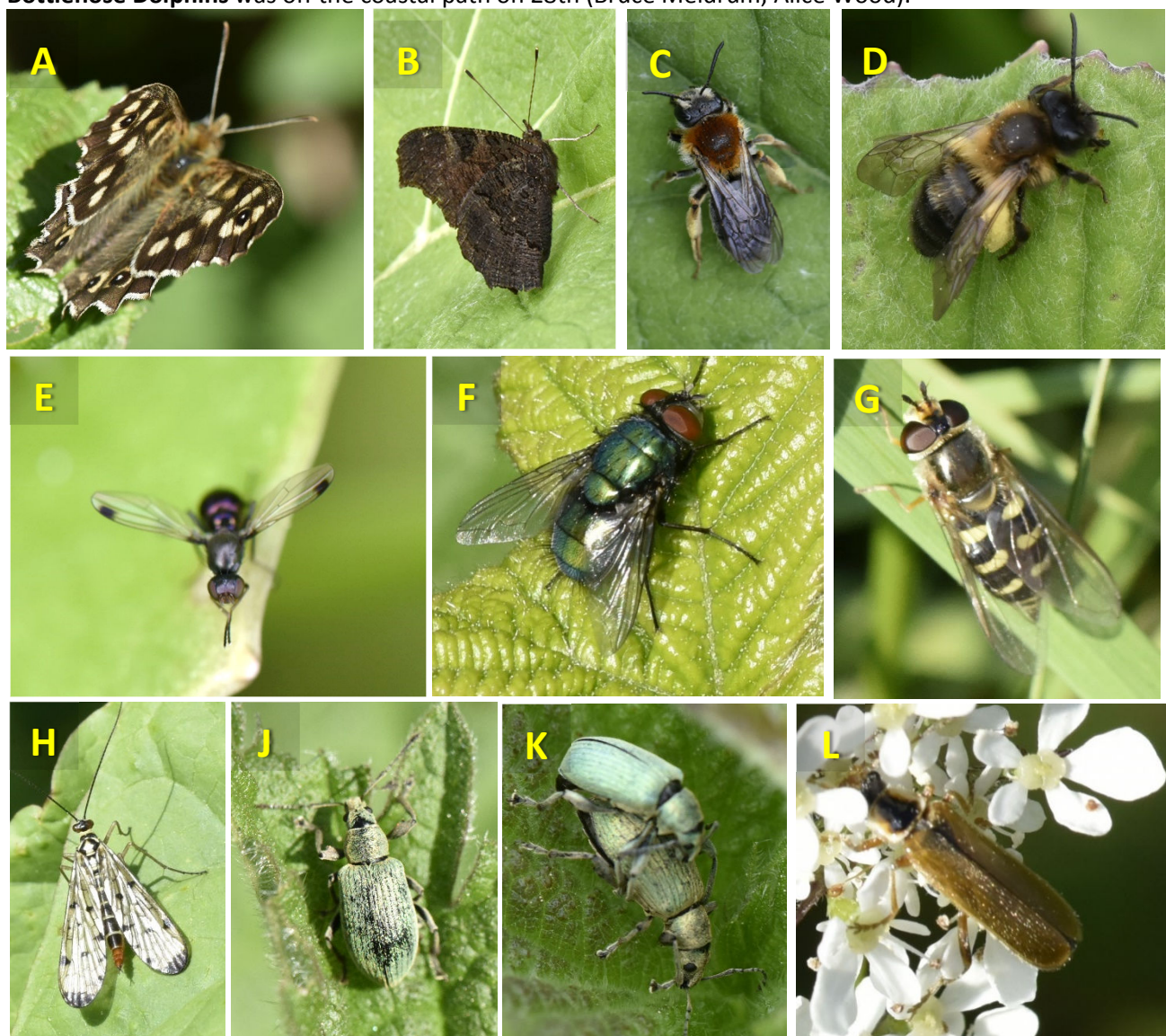
VILLAGE, BEACHES AND COASTAL PATH

Bird and mammal sightings around Kinghorn during May were mainly by Paul Williams (PW), with additional ones by Jim Hain (eBird), Bruce Meldrum, Stewart Munn (KDWG), Dariusz Ociepka (eBird), Graham Sparshott (GS; with John Nadin on 12th), and myself.

Hard on the heels of last month's Marsh Harrier, Kinghorn had another unexpected bird visitor in May – a **Spoonbill** that flew over the village on 9th and was seen by Craig Mackie (KDWG). Other unusual visitors to our area were a **Hooded Crow** flying over East Braes on 10th (Graham Sparshott) and a **Red Kite** there two days later (GS and John Nadin). A **Shelduck** flying over the Grangehill area on 20th also overflowed the Loch as already mentioned. Two **Tufted Ducks** went past Pettycur on 17th (GS). Small numbers of **Common Scoters** remained offshore and both **Red-breasted Merganser** (on 5th) and **Goosander** (on 20th) were seen by GS at East Braes. I surprised a couple of **Grey Partridges** in woodland by the Mire Path and they flew into the big Mid Mire field (30th). Although not seen at the Loch, **Swifts** arrived in the village on 9th (Ronnie Mackie) and John Nadin and GS also saw a couple over East Braes (12th). **Wader** sightings included one or two **Ringed Plover** at Seafield as well as **Turnstone**, **Knot**, **Purple Sandpiper** (over 20, 1st) and a single **Dunlin** (8th), all seen by PW in the first half of May. **Kittiwakes** were off East Braes (3rd, 8th and 11th, PW) and Pettycur (21 there on 17th, GS; also seen by Jim Hain, 19th). The only **Black-headed Gull** record was a solitary bird off Pettycur on 17th (GS), no doubt a non-breeder as most are still away at breeding grounds. **Sandwich Terns** were often seen off the coastal path, and on 12th GS saw 50 **Common Terns** at East Braes in the same period as 6 **Arctic Terns** also flew over. **Guillemots** and **Razorbills** were occasionally seen, as well as **Red-throated Divers**. Four **Fulmars** were off the coastal path on 10th (Dariusz Ociepka) and on 20th (PW). **Gannets** were frequently seen all along the coast. **Sedge Warblers** were recorded along the coastal path, Burnside Path and

North Mire from 3rd onwards by various observers, while **Grasshopper Warblers** were recorded by PW at Seafield (1st and 3rd) and North Mire (3rd). **Lesser Whitethroats** were at Seafield and East Braes on many dates, usually single birds but two were recorded by PW at East Braes on 11th. A **Wheatear** was again seen at Grangehill by PW (2nd) and 40 **Linnets** were also there that day. Two **Siskins** flew over East Braes on 10th (GS). **Yellowhammers** were at Seafield (1st, PW) and by the Mire Path where I saw one on 30th.

Land mammal records in the Kinghorn area in May included a **Rabbit** by the Burnside Path (2nd, PW), and a **Roe Deer** there (16th, Stuart Munn, KDWG). Offshore, a **Humpback Whale** paid a two-day visit to Kinghorn and Inchkeith on 11th and 12th (Bruce Meldrum, Graham Sparshott and John Nadin) while a pod of **Bottlenose Dolphins** was off the coastal path on 28th (Bruce Meldrum, Alice Wood).



Kinghorn area insects, May 2024. **A**, Speckled Wood, Burnside Path, 16th. **B**, Peacock, North Mire, 13th. **C**, Early Mining-bee, North Mire, 13th. **D**, Chocolate Mining-bee, North Mire, 13th. **E**, *Sepsis cf. fulgens*, Kissing Trees Lane, 13th. **F**, Common Greenbottle, Burnside Path, 16th. **G**, Common Spotted Field Syrph, coastal path, 17th. **H**, German Scorpion-fly, Burnside Path, 16th. **J & K**, Nettle Weevil: **J**, pair mating, North Mire, 13th; **K**, Burnside Path, 16th. **L**, soldier beetle *Cantharis decipiens*, Burnside Path, 16th. All photos Robert Mill.

Eight different **butterfly** species were recorded around Kinghorn during May. The main highlight was the spread and possible establishment of the **Holly Blue** in our area for the first time. First seen on 27 April near Kinghorn caravan park by Paul Williams (see my April 2024 report), one was seen along the Burnside Path on 11th May by myself, two along the coast path near Kinghorn on the same day by PW and three there plus one near Seafield Tower all on 15th (also PW). Paul thinks that they could become established where there is plenty of ivy. **Wall Butterflies** were also near Seafield Tower on 15th and 20th (PW). **Speckled Woods** were

seen along the coast path (8th and 20th, PW), the Donkey Field Path (16th, myself) and at North Mire (30th, myself). **Orange-tips**, **Small Whites**, a **Red Admiral** (11th, PW), **Small Tortoiseshells** (2nd and 20th) and a **Peacock** at North Mire (13th, myself) completed the month's butterfly sightings. A **Silverground Carpet** and an **Angle Shades**, both seen by me by the Mire Path on 30th, were May's only moth records other than at the Loch. Among May's five bee species, **Chocolate Mining-bees** at Mire Path (13th) and Burnside Path (16th) and **Early Mining-bee** (North Mire, 13th) were the most notable. The day after I saw my first **Marmalade Hoverfly** of 2024 at the Loch, I saw another one by the Burnside Path (16th), while on 17th I photographed **Common Spotted Field Syrph (*Eupeodes luniger*)** along the coastal path. **St Mark's Flies** were seen along the Mire Path (13th) and Donkey Field Path (16th). An unusual small black fly found beside Kissing Trees Lane on 13th turned out to be ***Sepsis fulgens*** or a similar species in that genus. In a good year for **scorpion-flies**, one belonging to the the commonest species in our area, **German Scorpion-fly (*Panorpa germanica*)**, was in scrub by the Burnside Path on 16th. **Beetle** records included a **7-spot Ladybird** and a pair of mating **Nettle Weevils** along the Mire Path and North Mire on 13th as well as a **soldier beetle, *Cantharis decipiens*** and another **Nettle Weevil** by the Burnside Path on 16th. Lastly, a **Black Slug** was at North Mire on 13th.



Kinghorn area flowering plants, May 2024. **A**, Common Star-of-Bethlehem, North Mire, 13th. **B**, Part of a large mass of Common Winter-cress by Mid Mire field, 13th. **C**, Common Rock-rose, Kissing Trees Lane, 30th. **D**, Kidney Vetch, Kissing Trees Lane, 30th. **E**, Snow-in-Summer, by Donkey Field Path, 16th. **F**, Bloody Crane's-bill, coastal path, 17th. **G**, Buckshorn Plantain, boulder by coastal path, 17th. **H**, Wild Clary, coastal path, 17th. **J**, Common Stork's-bill, coastal path, 17th. **K**, Thrift, coastal path, 17th. All photos Robert Mill.

During May I paid two visits to a calcareous outcrop beside Kissing Trees Lane. On the first (13th) I found several plants of an unfamiliar small member of the cabbage family with leaves closely pressed to the stem and neat heads of small white flowers (see p. 6, photos F & G). This turned out to be **Hairy Rock-cress (*Arabis***

hirsuta). I found it at just the right time for on my second visit on 30th the plants had seeded and were much more difficult to find. I also found **Pignut (*Conopodium majus*)** on the first visit, when **Common Rock-rose** was just beginning to flower. The latter was in full bloom on my later visit (30th), when I also found **Kidney Vetch (*Anthyllis vulneraria*)**, **Cut-leaved Crane's-bill (*Geranium dissectum*)** and **Early Forget-me-not (*Myosotis ramosissima*)**. On the same day I found **Fool's Parsley (*Aethusa cynapium*)** and **Field Pansy (*Viola arvensis*)** along the edge of a nearby field (as well as by another field within the Kinghorn Loch recording area).

Several patches of **Star-of-Bethlehem (*Ornithogalum umbellatum*)** were flowering at various spots by the Mire Path and in North Mire on 13th, while well-naturalised clumps of **Snow-in-Summer (*Cerastium tomentosum*)** and **Garden Solomon's-seal (*Polygonatum × hybridum*)** were in full bloom by the steep Donkey Field Path on 16th.

A coastal path walk on 17th yielded quite a few interesting records, including the first flowers of **Thrift (*Armeria maritima*)**, **Red Valerian (*Centranthus ruber*)** and **Bloody Crane's-bill (*Geranium sanguineum*)** that I had noticed this year. **Common Stork's-bill (*Erodium cicutarium*)** was in both flower and fruit, and **Buckshorn Plantain (*Plantago coronopus*)** was flowering on coastal rocks. Over a hundred stems of **Wild Clary (*Salvia verbenaca*)** were in flower on an inaccessible cliff and another 24 or so near the coastal path, while **Alexanders (*Smyrniololus atrum*)** and **Cornsalad (*Valerianella locusta*)** were now mostly in fruit with a few flowers.



Cryptogams, North and Mid Mire, May 2024. **A**, Yellow Fieldcap (*Bolbitius titubans*), Mire Path, 13th. **B**, The dog lichen *Peltigera hymenina* amongst moss, North Mire, 13th. **C**, Trumpet Cup Lichen (*Cladonia fimbriata*), North Mire, 13th. **D**, Rose Rust (*Phragmidium mucronatum*), Mid Mire, 13th. All photos Robert Mill.

Among the few cryptogams I recorded in May beyond the limits of my 'Kinghorn Loch' recording area were two fungi on woodchips manured with horse dung by the Mire Path on 13th, one of which was easily identified as **Yellow Fieldcap (*Bolbitius titubans*)**. Lichens found at North Mire on the same day included the **Trumpet Cup Lichen (*Cladonia fimbriata*)** and a **dog lichen, *Peltigera hymenina***. Further up the Mire Path towards Kissing Trees Lane, a dog-rose bush was infected with **Rose Rust (*Phragmidium mucronatum*)**.

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