



South West Ross Field Club

NEWSLETTER 79 – FEBRUARY 2013

THE WEATHER AT RERAIG IN 2012

The general consensus regarding the weather in 2012 was that it was one of the best years ever in Lochalsh in contrast to the heavy rain and flooding experienced in most parts of the British Isles including eastern Scotland. Once again the weather statistics from Reraig do not appear to confirm this impression. The total rainfall recorded for the year was 1785mm. Since records commenced at Reraig in 1985 less than this amount was recorded in no less than 10 out of the 27 years. Rainfall exceeded the 27 year average in May, September, November and December. However the May statistic is due to a precipitation of 50mm on the 13th out of a total of 116mm. From 18th May until 15th June just 1mm of rain was recorded. During July half of the month's total rainfall of 84mm fell on just two days. Such heavy precipitation on one or two days can clearly give a false impression when viewed by monthly totals.

The wettest day of the year was 11th October with 51mm, followed by the 50mm on 13th May and 44mm on 22nd November.

	Rainfall		Temp (Celsius)	
	mm	1985 to 2012 averages	ave. max	ave min.
Jan	216	231	8.13 (7.85)	0.87 (1.80)
Feb	182	183	9.38 (8.49)	3.03 (1.51)
Mar	97	188	12.80 (10.03)	4.90 (2.44)
Apr	62	110	12.10 (12.56)	1.77 (3.65)
May	116	104	16.50 (15.77)	6.63 (6.13)
Jun	58	96	18.90 (17.55)	7.77 (8.05)
Jul	84	106	18.74 (18.84)	9.48 (9.90)
Aug	102	138	20.53 (18.58)	10.35 (9.72)
Sep	174	167	15.40 (16.66)	7.85 (8.20)
Oct	199	210	11.87 (13.53)	3.71 (6.08)
Nov	256	215	9.73 (10.26)	2.87 (3.54)
Dec	239	213	6.68 (7.91)	0.71 (1.61)

Totals 1785 (70.28 ins) 1962 (77.24 ins)

The figures in brackets under the temp.columns indicate the 1985 to 2012 average max. and min. temperatures for each month.

The hottest day of the year was 26th May with an exceptional temperature for May of 29 degrees. Then 27 degrees was recorded on both the 12th and 15th August. I drove to Edinburgh 28th May and noted that the car registered a temperature of 29 degrees on that date in Glen Shiel. On the news that evening a temperature of 29 degrees in Glen Shiel was said to be the highest May temperature ever recorded in Scotland! Hardly a location where one would expect such a record to be achieved. The lowest temperature recorded at Reraig was -5 degrees on 6th and 16th January while -4 degrees was recorded

on two days in February and three days in December. In none of the winter months did the average minimum temperature fall below zero. Thanks as always to Duncan Glen-Riddell for sharing his weather records with us.

WILDLIFE REPORTS

Following the report of low numbers of Peacock butterflies during the autumn of 2012 in the last newsletter it was good to hear that Hubert Hunton had these butterflies present in his garden near Balmacara Square between 15th August and 10th October. However only single butterflies were seen except on 26th August when six Peacocks were present.

Good numbers of moths were still on the wing during November and I recorded eight species in our garden on Carr Brae including December Moth, Feathered Thorn and Scarce Umber. However only Winter Moth and Mottled Umber were seen during December and Red-green Carpet, Winter Moth and Pale Brindled Beauty during January.

Moth numbers will begin to increase by the end of February. I have recorded 12 species during February and 29 species during March although it is unlikely that all of these would be seen in any one year.



December Moth



Pale Brindled Beauty

A few Waxwings lingered into December. Alistair Earnshaw had one in his garden at Avernish on 16th and birds were seen feeding on apples by Donald MacIntosh at Inverinate and by Roger Knight over the Christmas period at Dornie.

There were still 6 Whooper Swans on Loch Shiel plus the family of four on Loch nan Corr on 28th December and James Merryweather found 13 on Loch Shiel on 3rd January. Rule Anderson found a flock of about 20 Snow Buntings in the Bealach an Sgarne, Kintail on 5th December and there was an unseasonal flock of 25 Twite at Ardelve on 7th December along with an interesting mix of 3 Reed Buntings, 3 Yellowhammers, 20 Rock Pipits, 3 Goldfinches and 2 late Meadow Pipits in the same area. A Bar-tailed Godwit at Ardelve on the 11th December was unusual, this species being much scarcer in Lochalsh than in Broadford Bay. Ardelve was also the site of an immature White-tailed Eagle heading down Loch Alsh towards Avernish on 7th January.

Kirkton Bay had large numbers of duck present on 8th January when I estimated 110 Wigeon, 70 Teal and 50 Mallard. There were also two Pink-footed Geese amongst the Greylag Geese and an exceptional flock of about 40 Cormorants feeding in the bay. However I could not find the Slavonian Grebe that Stephen Bentall had seen in the Bay during December.

