

# friends of Lenzie Moss

Winter 2021/2022

*The Friends of Lenzie Moss is a voluntary association dedicated to conserving the Moss for the benefit of present and future generations by all possible means: through education, liaison with official bodies, and appropriate environmental management.*

## FOSSORIAL WATER VOLES



### Vole features

- **Body 14-22 cm long**
- **deep brown fur, can be black in Scotland**
- **brown furry tail, ½ length of body**
- **round, blunt face**
- **small hidden ears**
- **furry paws**

Photo courtesy of Cath Scott

## FOSSORIAL WATER VOLES

We were delighted to learn in our last newsletter of the presence of fossorial water voles on land at the top of Heather Drive, and we were keen to find out more. After all, water voles living in grassland away from water - unusual? Yes, it is. Most water voles are found in streams and ditches.

The term “fossorial” means “adapted for digging”. Fossorial voles have moved away from water and established their burrows in open grassland. They construct a network of tunnels where they breed and sleep and spend most of their time. They prefer territory that has long grass on the surface to give them cover from predators when they come out of their burrows to feed. Their main diet is grass roots, leaves and seeds. They don't hibernate, so can be seen throughout the year if you're lucky.

To add to local interest, we discovered that there is a large established population of these voles almost on our doorstep in the east end of Glasgow. They've been recorded in parks, gardens and derelict land, and along road verges, including the M8. This is unique in the UK, and the population is considered to be of national significance.

Glasgow City Council has been working with the University of Glasgow, Glasgow Natural History Society and Scottish Natural Heritage to find out more about the east end voles. Their research has indicated that these water voles have adapted well to living in an urban grassland environment. The grasslands that they inhabit can co-exist with urban developments, and can be conserved with good environmental management. Crucially, these grasslands are free of predatory mink.

The Council is also taking this research into account in future development decisions under the city's masterplan, balancing the protection of these voles alongside the regeneration of the east end.

Water vole populations generally have undergone

one of the fastest declines of all our native mammal species in recent years, dropping 88% UK-wide and up to 98% in some areas. Their decline started in the 1900's as changing land use resulted in the loss of wetland margins with the move towards intensive agriculture and urbanisation. However, the steepest decline has been since the 1950's, resulting from the accidental introduction of the predatory, non-native, semi-aquatic American mink. The mink were small enough to enter the water voles' burrows, leaving no safe place to hide for the voles.

As a result of the decline, voles are now protected in the UK and are a priority biodiversity species under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, with legal protection through the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

They are still scarce or absent over most of lowland Scotland, and this makes the east end fossorial vole project particularly relevant to the preservation of voles generally and to biodiversity conservation.

Hopefully our Lenzie voles will contribute to this and be given similar protection.

**Acknowledgements to: Glasgow City Council, Nature Scot (SNH), Natural History Museum, and The People's Trust for Endangered Species**



Photo copyright Glasgow City Council

## Fungus Amungus on Lenzie Moss, by Alan McBride, Countryside Ranger

For me, one of the joys of autumn is the profusion of mushrooms and toadstools that appear in our woodlands and grasslands as the days turn colder and damper. But where do they come from? They are actually the fruiting bodies of the organism known as Fungus.

Fungus is made of mycelium, which is a network of fungal threads found underground but also in other places such as on roots and rotting tree trunks. It is largely at this time of year that they start to produce their fruiting bodies, known as sporophores, to release spores. These are microscopic seeds that in turn produce more fungus. There are many weird and wonderful fruiting bodies of all shapes, sizes and colours. Lenzie Moss is home to quite a number, from Fly agaric (*Amanita muscaria*), the classic red toadstool with the white spots, to Tar-spot fungus (*Rhytisma acerinum*), a small fungus that grows on the leaves of Sycamore trees. The Tar-spot fungus is an indicator of clean air, as it is sensitive to sulphur dioxide, a common urban pollutant.

Despite the rather dry weather in the run up to the fungus event held on the Moss at the end of September, there was still a good selection to be discovered within the mixed birch woodland adjacent to the railway line. On the birch trees a few bracket fungi were found. This included the Birch Polypore (*Fomitopsis Betulina*) with its large tawny and white plates and Hoof Fungus (*Fomes Fomentarius*), also known as the Tinder Fungus, as during medieval times foresters would harvest the horses-hoof-like fungus and use the dry inner material to light fires.

On the woodland floor at the base of many birch trees was the Brown Birch Bolete (*Leccinum Scabrum*), a very common species on the Moss. On some rotting conifer stumps, the weird and wonderful Yellow Stags-horn or Jelly Antler Fungus (*Calocera Viscosa*) could be seen from some distance with its cheery luminous colour.

Other species found during the guided walk were Common Yellow Russula (*Russula Ochroleuca*), Common Bonnet Cap (*Mycena Inclinata*), Many-zoned Polypore (*Trametes Versicolor*), Chicken of the Woods (*Laetiporus Sulphureus*), Common Puffball (*Lycoperdon Perlatum*), Brown Roll-rim (*Paxillus Involutus*) and Sulphur Tuft (*Hypholoma Fasciculare*).



*Calocera Viscosa*

*Calocera viscosa*, commonly known as the Yellow Stagshorn, is a jelly fungus, a member of a group of fungi characterized by their unique finger-like spore-producing structures. The structures can be bright orange, yellow, or occasionally white, and are somewhat gelatinous in texture and slimy to the touch. It is relatively large for a jelly fungus, and can reach up to ten centimetres in height. It grows on decaying wood, typically stumps and roots. It is not poisonous, but its tough gelatinous texture and nondescript taste and odour make it unattractive as a food.

## Wood Wide Web

Research has shown that beneath every forest and wood there is a complex underground web of roots, fungi and bacteria helping to connect trees and plants to one another, sharing nutrients and water. This subterranean social network, nearly 500 million years old, has become known as the "wood wide web". These mycorrhizal networks play an important role in the health of the forests. In temperate forests such as our own, ectomycorrhizal fungi are adept at helping forests absorb CO<sub>2</sub>, playing their part in keeping global temperatures balanced. They also slow down decomposition in the soil, thereby slowing down the release of carbon from forest soils back into the atmosphere. However, they are susceptible to excessive global warming and without us tackling the sources of emissions these fungi will decline. There is also research indicating that trees communicating with each other through these networks, also send out distress signals about drought, disease and insect attacks. Other trees alter their behaviour when they receive these messages.

**Web search "Wood Wide Web"**

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Illegal Waste Dumping

We expect that many of you will have seen the article in the Kirkintilloch Herald on 23 November 2021 about the legal proceedings brought against a local resident for dumping garden rubbish on the Moss. The resident was fined and ordered to remove the rubbish. He failed to do this, and, facing a substantial quote from EDC to remove the rubbish for him, he eventually removed it himself. A timely reminder that it is an offence to dump garden waste on the LNR, and that it is always worth reporting to EDC's Customer Services on 0300 123 4510 any dumping you see on the Moss.

### Path and Boardwalk Upgrade

The tender for the north and south woods path upgrade and the upgrade of the boardwalk went out on the EDC portal just before Christmas. The Council anticipates the start of the upgrade works will begin in April 2022. The old boardwalk will be completely removed and a new wider boardwalk with seating areas installed.

### EDC's Active Travel Strategy

Overall, just short of 3000 people participated in the Active Travel Discussion across a variety of engagement methods. The next steps include reviewing the responses in detail to help the Council identify the most appropriate actions to be included within a draft Active Travel Strategy. We will review any proposal about the path through the south woods.

### Update on fossorial voles and tree felling

For those of you who do not have email contact with us, fossorial voles were found to be present on the land owned by the rugby club adjacent to Juniper Court and Lenzie Meadow Primary School, and these are at risk as a result of the tree felling by the rugby club on that land. As the voles are a protected species, along with their habitat, the matter was reported by FoLM members and by EDC to the wildlife officers at Police Scotland. The wildlife officers have liaised with the rugby club and we await an update.

On the question of the tree felling itself, Forestry Scotland have let us know that there will be no further felling without prior consultation with them.

### A reminder of some of the wild flowers on the Moss during the summer



### Clyde Peatland Action Project

Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership are working on the development of a Clyde Peatland Action project.

In developing materials for the project they hope to use Lenzie Moss as a case study, and have asked us to provide images for their brochure of the community working on the Moss, which we have done.

The project is part of a global response to the current concerns about climate change.

Their intention is to promote this to politicians and new councillors in the New Year, and it will include the community work being done on Lenzie Moss.

Visit [www.gcvgreenetwork.gov.uk](http://www.gcvgreenetwork.gov.uk)

### Membership

We are very grateful for your support, which is vital to us in our work of protecting this outstanding local greenspace; so please continue your membership, and persuade others to become Friends of Lenzie Moss too.

**Annual Membership fees are:**

- **Single, retired or unwaged £7**
- **Family £12**

Subscriptions cover the year 1st April until 31st March the following year. For this you will receive twice-yearly Newsletters, and will be notified of events and activities concerning the Moss. (A reduced fee applies for anyone joining mid-year.)

#### Committee Members

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Members wishing to join the committee are always welcome.