Red Kites
Dumfries & Galloway


David Morris

Bulletin No.18 Autumn 2011

a reintroduction project

RSPB Scotland is part of the RSPB, which speaks out for birds and wildlife, tackling the problems that threaten our environment.
Nature is amazing - help us keep it that way.

RSPB Scotland's work in the Dumfries & Galloway area is supported by SNH. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is a registered charity: England and Wales no. 207076, Scotland no. SC037654

Bulletin Design by Ben Vogelsang.

Contents

Table 13. 2010 cohort, Galloway bred 92 (continued)

Kite	*Sex*	*Origin*	*Status Summer 2011*
GB 75	*F*	*Galloway*	*Last recorded 30/12/2010*
GB A	*F*	*Galloway*	*Last recorded 12/10/2010*
GB B	*F*	*Galloway*	*Present core area*
GB C	*M*	*Galloway*	*Last recorded 24/02/2011*
GB E	*F*	*Galloway*	*Present core area*
GB F	*M*	*Galloway*	*Present core area*
GB G	*M*	*Galloway*	*Present core area*
GB H	*M*	*Galloway*	*Present core area*
GB J	*M*	*Galloway*	*Present core area*
GB K	*M*	*Galloway*	*Last recorded 24/06/2010*
GB L	*M*	*Galloway*	*Present core area*
GB M	*M*	*Galloway*	*Present core area*
GB N	*M*	*Galloway*	*Present core area*
GB O	*F*	*Galloway*	*Present core area*
GB P	*M*	*Galloway*	*Present core area*
GB Q	*M*	*Galloway*	*Last recorded 30/06/2010*
GB R	*F*	*Galloway*	*Present core area*

David Henderson

Site 62. Male: Green/Pink ?. Female: ?.
A very late nest typical of new pair of young kites, the nest in a birch tree contained two young, too small for tagging on 28 June; one was even too small for ringing.

Table 2: Summary of breeding, Galloway 2003-2011.

Year	Pairs located	Pairs laying eggs	Pairs hatching eggs	Pairs fledging young	% pairs laying that young	Total young/fledged fledged pair	Productivity young/laying
2003	4	4	1	1	25	1	0.25
2004	7	3	2	2	66	3	1
2005	14	12	10	10	83	18	1.5
2006	19	17	14	14	82	27	1.59
2007	22	21	19	19	90	38	1.81
2008	32	30	26	25	83	53	1.77
2009	41	40	33	31	77.5	58	1.45
2010	52	51	49	47	92	98	1.92
2011	65	58	53	53	91	100	1.72
total	256	236	207	202	85.6	96	1. 68

Mortality

As usual, my thanks to the landowners, gamekeepers, and employees of estates and members of the public who have alerted us on finding trapped or debilitated kites. Some, particularly young inexperienced kites, have no fear of entering crow traps, pheasant pens etc in their quest for carrion and hence will be inadvertently trapped. Other notable hazards are wet weather, power lines and kites looking to feed on road kills. We have already had a near miss with one of this year's young kites, green/white 23 from site 1 with regard to the inherent hazard of kites feeding on road kills. A member of the public took the kite to the Dunsmuir Veterinary Practice in Castle Douglas after it was found by the side of the road. The kite was then transferred to the Barony Wildlife Hospital for a period of rehabilitation, in case of possible concussion, before being successfully released back into the wild. This kite was very fortunate, as about a third of juveniles don't survive their first winter due to these and other hazards to their wellbeing. Therefore, I am very grateful for these calls and for the opportunity to identify, treat and release these kites.

As mentioned in the breeding section above, monitoring nesting attempts gives us the opportunity to check on adult survival, as any changes in personnel may be detected at this time. Changes were perceived at sites 7.-new female; 9,-new male; and 16,-new female. The change at site 16 was to be expected following the recovery of the dead adult female green/yellow T beneath a power line in the previous late winter. All the other previous year's pairings appeared to be intact and present on their territories, so adult survival continues to be very good.

2. The proportions of immature/juvenile and adult kites attending the feeding station (and if time allows, a breakdown of the sex of those immature/juvenile kites).

Chart 2a: Eleanor illustrates the percentage breakdown of all adult and immature/juvenile kites attending the feeding station during the period of investigation, just under two thirds shown to be immature/juvenile kites.

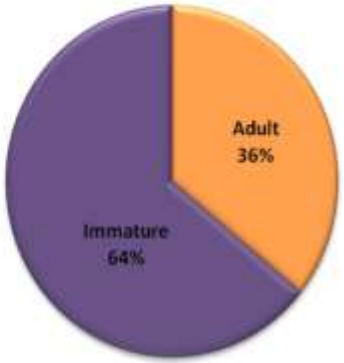
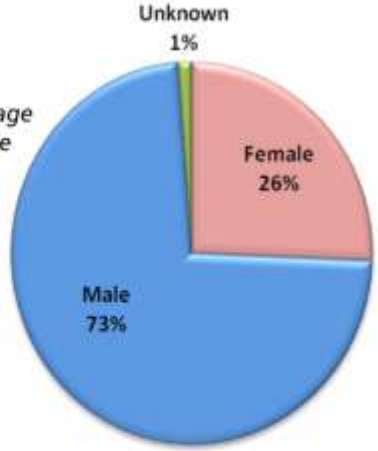


Chart 2b: Eleanor illustrates the percentage breakdown of all immature/juvenile male and female kites attending the feeding station in the period of investigation, over two thirds shown to be males.



Site 32. Male: Green/Purple 8. Female: Green/Purple S.
Moved about 100 metres to an old buzzard nest in a Norway spruce where they fledged a brood of two, tagged green/white 45 and 46.

Site 33. Male: Green/Purple T. Female: Green/Purple C.
Re-used last year's nest and produced another cracking brood of three, tagged green/white 20, 21 and 22.

Site 34. Male: Green/Purple P. Female: Green/Green 1.
Surprisingly, re-used last year's nest as it is a wee bit exposed, and definitely looked it during May's gale! One young was produced, tagged green/white 65.

Site 35. Male: Green/Red 2. Female: Green/Red F.
Re-used last year's nest and fledged a brood of two, tagged green/white 16 and 17.

Site 36.
Male: Green/Purple M.
Female: Green/Green P.
Moved approximately 600metres, which is quite a substantial move from a previous successful nest. Used the base of an old buzzard nest in a prominent Scots pine and produced a brood of two, tagged green/white 72 and 73.

Site 37. Male: Green/Green S. Female: Green/Purple 7.
Re-used last year's nest and fledged a brood of two, tagged green/white 57 and 58.

Site 38. Male: Green/Purple F. Female: Green/Purple 6.
Re-used last year's nest and fledged one young, tagged green/white 39.

Site 39. Male: Green/Green ?. Female: Green/Green R.
Moved only about 30 metres to another prominent oak and produced another cracking brood of three, tagged green/white 34, 35 and 36. Judging by biometrics all three appeared to be likely females, which did not leave much elbow-room in the nest!

Site 40. Male: Green/Green ?. Female: Green/Green ?.
Re-used last year's nest and produced a brood of two, tagged green/white 76 and 77.

I will not be surprised to find this kite breeding in Nithsdale next year. Our prevailing south-westerly winds may enable kites to cover distances like 30 kilometres quickly utilising wind drift, which may account for the increased activity to the north east of the core area.

Kites elsewhere

The 2011 breeding summary figures for Scotland show that in total there were approximately 198 territorial pairs, 186 breeding pairs, of which 155 bred successfully, fledging 314 young. In addition to our D&G figures, North Scotland had 55 pairs, of which 47 nested successfully and fledged 106 young; Central Scotland had 61 pairs of which 40 nested successfully and reared 76 young. Aberdeen's project continued their very successful progress, when this year 17 territorial pairs were located; 16 pairs laid clutches, of which 15 pairs were successful, fledging 32 young. It should be noted above that Central Scotland suffered more than most from the terrible storm, which raged in early May.

It is pleasing to see both Irish breeding populations going from strength to strength, building on the previous year's efforts. Northern Ireland had five successful nests, which fledged eight young, whereas the Republic of Ireland had eleven successful nests, fledging 17 young. Tremendous support was received from the Welsh Kite Trust in supplying 52 young Welsh kites for release at two locations in the Republic. Thirteen were released in Co Wicklow and 39 North of Wicklow at the Fingal area, in an effort to bridge and consolidate the two Irish populations.

The 'friends of red kites' volunteer group continues to monitor breeding kites in Northeast England. The population experienced a slight contraction this year, which may have been weather related. Twelve successful nests fledged 24 young, for further details go to their website at www.friendsofredkites.co.uk The reintroduction project, based at Grizedale, Cumbria released 30 kites in this their second year of a three year release phase. Forestry Commission manages the project and information can be found on their website, click on Grizedale Red Kite Project. They plan to release a further 30 kites next year, as well as hopefully having their first breeding pair.

There are approximately 1,800-2,000 breeding pairs in the UK and this equates to 7-8% of the global population. Most UK populations continue to show growth in numbers of breeding pairs, although at some local levels there is still the threat of disturbance, secondary rodenticide and illegal poisoning issues that can limit population growth.

Site 49. Male: Untagged. Female: Green/Purple Q.
Unintentional disturbance owing to forestry operations forced this pair to move from last year's successful nest site on the west bank over to the east bank of Loch Ken where they fledged two young, tagged green/white 70 and 71. Although quite a late nest, both young were recorded at the feeding station on the first week of August.

Site 50. Male: Untagged. Female: Untagged.
Re-used last year's nest, at our loftiest elevation, 190 metres above sea level, and fledged two young, tagged green/white 74 and 75.

Site 51. Male: Untagged. Female: Untagged.
Re-used last year's nest and produced one young, tagged green/white 38.

Site 52. Male: Green/Purple ?. Female: Untagged.
Another to be filed under 'no active nest found' however they were observed building on last year's nest which is not the best of locations, being prone to disturbance. So hopefully they just went somewhere else and bred in peace, in peace even from me!

Site 53. Male: Green/ ?. Female: ?
Re-used last year's nest and fledged three young, tagged green/white 80, 81 and 82

Site 54. Male: Green/ ?.
Female: Untagged.
Re-used last year's nest and produced a cracking brood of three young, tagged green/white 40, 41 and 42.

Site 55. Male: Green/Pink 29.
Female: Untagged.
A hugely significant nest; being our furthest outlying nest, lying to the northeast of Thornhill, 37 km from the core area and our first nest in Nithsdale. It was no surprise to find this nest as the general area had shown a huge rise in its use by dispersed kites from the core area. The male had dispersed 34 kilometres from his natal nest, and so is a great example of both post fledging juvenile dispersal and range expansion of our breeding kites. They fledged two young, tagged green/white 66 and 67. On the day of ringing, a third young was found dead below the nest, it was thought to have fallen out about a week previously.

Additional points of interest (2)

Secondary poisoning of red kites through consuming rodents controlled by modern second generation rodenticides is an increasing cause of death in kites in all areas of the UK. Given the hard work by all parties in returning the red kite to the countryside, I would like to make a plea to all landowners, land managers and their employees. If you are intending to, or are already engaged in the control of rodents on your property, please read the product instructions pertaining to the safe use of rodenticides, in particular to the searching for and safe disposal of dead rodents. Following these product instructions will help to ensure the poisoning of non-target species like scavenging kites, barn owls, cats and dogs will be minimised.

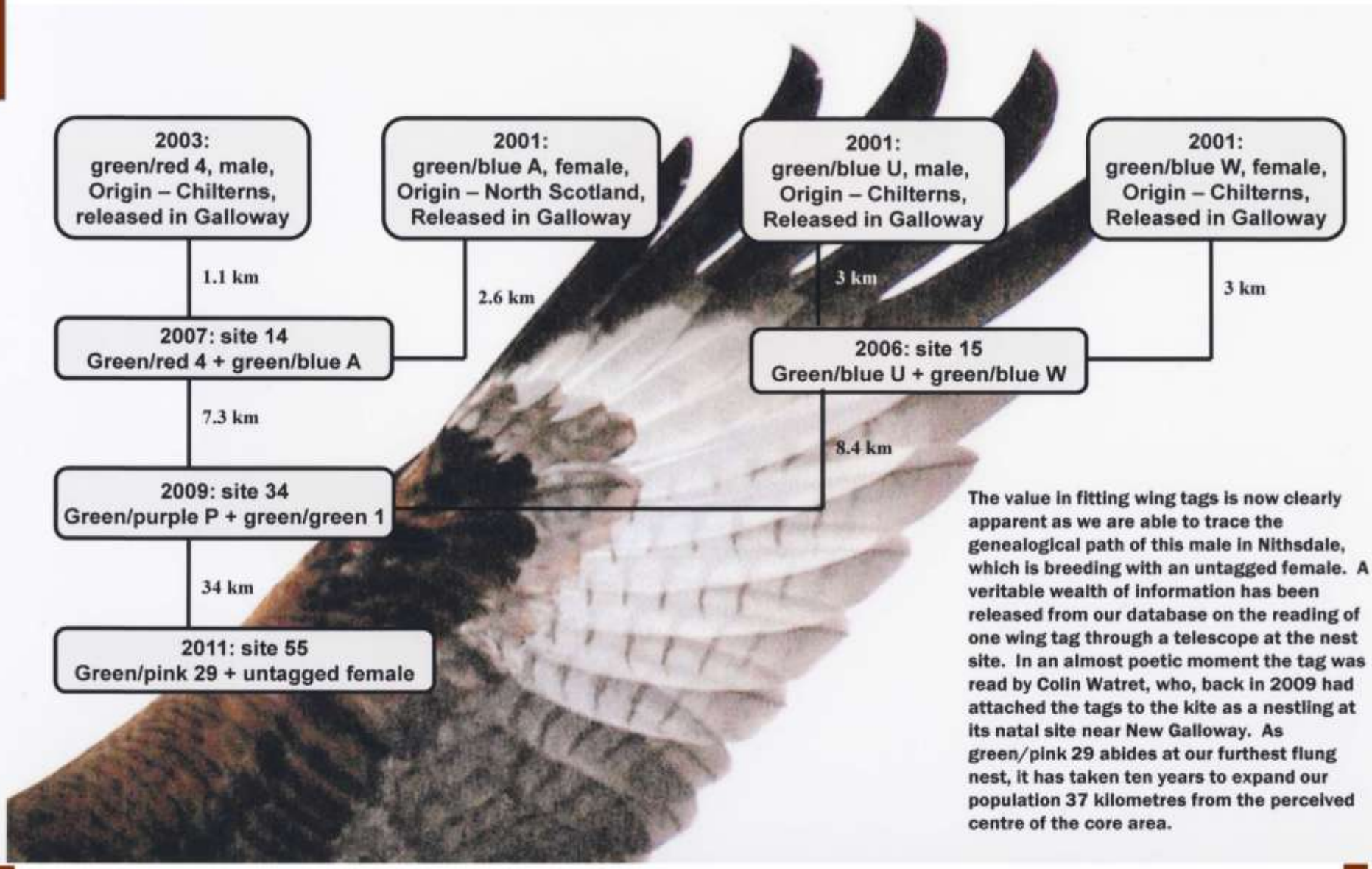
Other kites in Galloway

Numbers of dispersed juvenile kites from elsewhere in the UK were above normal last winter, with ten recorded at or near Bellymack Hill Farm feeding station. Incredibly we recorded four kites from English regions (hitherto we had only recorded one), although two were from the recently started Grizedale project south of the Solway, 96 kilometres away. The first to appear was an English Midlands kite white/? 91 on 20 October 2010, quickly followed by purple/pink A3 (Aberdeen) on 21 October 2010; his is a repeat visit, as he was with us in the previous winter

A remarkable sighting in the third week of November2010 was a Chilterns adult kite (yellow/pink ?) perched next to a North Scotland juvenile (blue/blue 10), captured in a photograph by David Hunt.
The vinyl individual identification number/letter had peeled from the Chiltern kite's wing tag, which was a shame, however it was still a historical meeting of progeny from the two original reintroduction sites meeting in Galloway!

The first week in December 2010 brought in our first Grizedale project kite (orange/blue 4) and red/blue 42 from central

Green/Pink 29's Genealogical Route to Expansion in Nithsdale



The value in fitting wing tags is now clearly apparent as we are able to trace the genealogical path of this male in Nithsdale, which is breeding with an untagged female. A veritable wealth of information has been released from our database on the reading of one wing tag through a telescope at the nest site. In an almost poetic moment the tag was read by Colin Watret, who, back in 2009 had attached the tags to the kite as a nestling at its natal site near New Galloway. As green/pink 29 abides at our furthest flung nest, it has taken ten years to expand our population 37 kilometres from the perceived centre of the core area.

As highlighted in the sites' section there are various nests where young kites are found dead or their remains were found close to the nest tree. Reasons for or causes of these deaths can only be guessed at; rain, cold wind, excess heat, predation and falling from the nest while defecating being some of the possible answers.

Additional points of interest (1)

In July and August this year, we had Eleanor Burns, a sixth year student from Wallace Hall Academy carrying out a summer holiday project at the feeding station at Bellymack Hill Farm. The Nuffield Bursary Foundation Project funded this project, whilst Eleanor's period of investigation at the feeding station was managed by the RSPB Scotland's Crossmichael office. The title of her project was 'Demographics of red kites Milvus milvus attending Bellymack Hill Farm feeding station' and the project's aim was to answer three demography questions during the period July 2010 to July 2011:

1. The sex ratios of red kites attending the feeding station throughout the period of investigation.

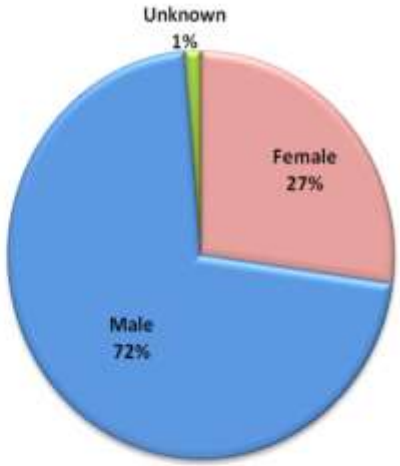


Chart 1: Eleanor illustrates the percentage breakdown of all male and female kites visiting the feeding station throughout the period of investigation, over two thirds of visiting kites shown to be males. The unknown one per cent comprised the untagged kites recorded.

Since the printing of the 2010 bulletin, to date twelve kites have been found dead in our region, ten of the twelve being Galloway kites. I begin with the one unacceptable, illegal poisoning of green/blue D, found in the Durisdeer/Dalveen area around 12 July 2011. This wilful, illegal act of using banned pesticides to kill our indigenous birds is sickening and unacceptable in the 21st century. It is sad that persecution continues to be a blight on the natural dispersal of juvenile kites and hence a blight on the natural expansion of our breeding population. All other records of dead kites are thought to be of accidental or natural causes or simply unknown causes of death. Green/blue 2 road traffic accident; green/blue 47 electrocution; green/yellow T collision with power lines; green/purple W starvation, due to an injured foot; green/red V starvation, due to ball of matter in its stomach, and blue/blue 88 (North Scotland origin) neck tumour. Cause of death for green/pink V, green/pink B, green/blue 46 and brown/blue 27 (Northern Ireland origin) are unknown. Brown/blue 27 was found in the tide line at Dally Bay, near Stranraer, we could not say if it had placed a foot in D&G, as, if it did, it would have been the first confirmed Irish kite in D&G.

The last kite to found dead in time to be included in this report is green/white 10, a kite found trapped in the lower layer of a Rylock fence, jammed in the square of Rylock by a combination of its body width and its wing tags. This is of personal sadness to me as I am instrumental in fitting wing tags to kites, however, this is the only recorded incident of wing tags being partly responsible for the death of a kite in the eleven years the project has ran. Over the last eleven years, there have been two near misses, which were both averted by the timely actions of local gamekeepers. The red kite reintroduction project is a science-based project and the fitting of wing tags to kites is a fundamental tool in delivering the feedback of the health or otherwise of the kite population, which in turn underpins the success of the project. The continued success of the project should allow us to reduce the use of wing tagging in the future, allowing us to target our efforts on the periphery of the population. (continues on page 18)

3. *The distance travelled from nest sites and the numbers of those visits by breeding adults attending the feeding station in the period of investigation Eleanor found that - the general trend for all seasons of the year is that the closer the nest was to the feeding station, more frequent visiting took place; numbers of visits ranged from a maximum of 12 visits by one male and eight visits by one female. At a distance of eight kilometres from the feeding station, highs for both sexes were six visits and then only by eight individual kites. Eleanor's frequency of visits graph showed quite clearly the spike of activity by females in the summer, as they are freed from the restraints of breeding by the independence of their young, but males outnumber females in every season.*

Eleanor is to be congratulated on delivering a great piece of investigative study on the demography of red kites visiting the feeding station and the lack of room in the bulletin does not do justice to the wealth of information she so ably collated.
We wish her well in her future studies.

(Eleanor reading wing tags at the feeding station)

Site 56. Male: Green/Pink 8. Female: Untagged.
I do not know how this nest managed to survive the gale we witnessed in May, as it was perched on a (fungal?) growth deformity out on a branch, high up in a Douglas fir. Survive it did and one young was fledged, tagged green/white 53.

Site 57. Male: Untagged. Female: ?.
A welcome new pair to the northwest of the core area, the male had travelled only 1.95 km from his natal area to breed, the female resisted our efforts to identify her, so that will be a job for next year. Literature suggests that of a breeding pair, males will have travelled the least to their chosen nest site and this is what we are finding generally. The nest was in a larch tree and one young was fledged, tagged green/white 83.

Site 58. Male: Green/Pink 4.
Female: Untagged.
Another new pair, this time to infill in and around existing pairs, and again the male has travelled a short distance from his natal area, in this case 1.6 km. Amazingly, on our ringing date (14 June) two juveniles were flying short distances from the nest, which is quite an exceptional fledging date for first time breeders.

Site 59. Male: Untagged. Female: Green/pink 30.
Last year the male advertised his intentions at this site as he was easily seen from the roadside, perched in his favourite tree, so it was not a surprise to find an active nest in a nearby oak tree this year. Two young were produced, tagged green/white 86 and 87.

Site 60. Male: Green/Pink ?. Female: ?.
A welcome new pair doubling our breeding population in the Fleet valley, with the pair nesting in an area where our existing pair roosted in previous years. They refurbished an old crow's nest in a oak tree and fledged one young, tagged green/white 59.

Site 61. Male: Untagged. Female: Untagged.
This pair was on territory last year, although the female was thought to be immature then. I never thought I would ever find a kite nest in a crab apple tree, mind you it is quite a mature crab apple tree in a commanding position on the west flank of a small knoll. Two young were produced, tagged green/white 84 and 85.

Scotland. Red/blue 42 was picked up by the SSPCA in Portpatrick, and following a period of convalescence; it was released back in central Scotland at the Argaty feeding station, Doune, Stirling. Another from central Scotland (red/blue 79) appeared in the last week of January 2011, followed a week later by our second Grizedale kite, orange/blue 29. Our first and only record of blue/blue 88 (north Scotland) in our area was in January 2011, sadly when he was found dead by a member of the public. The last incomer to be recorded was another Aberdeen kite purple/pink A2 on 10 February 2011, coincidently, another kite that had been recorded the previous year. As usual, all had left our area by the end of April 2011, deemed to be heading back to their respective natal areas.

Movements of Dumfries & Galloway kites

Green/white 5 and green/orange 117 remain and breed in Central Scotland; green/white 5 failed due to predation at the large chick stage, possibly by a pine marten, whilst green/orange 117 bred and fledged two young. Apart from dispersal to the Nithsdale area, recorded dispersal of Dumfries & Galloway kites to other areas continues to be of low numbers so far as we know. However, at least three kites have headed north to various degrees, green/blue O was photographed at Glen Lethnot in the Grampian area on the second week of May 2011, 220 kilometres from her natal area. She was with a north Scotland male, so I thought that would be the last we see of her in Galloway - however, I was wrong as she turned up at the feeding station at Bellymack Hill Farm on 8 June. In April 2011, Green/blue C was recorded north of Peebles, 99 kilometres from his natal area. The third kite to head north was green/white 64, the first of this year's juveniles to disperse - he was photographed at the Argaty feeding station, 142 kilometres from his natal area, in the first week of September 2011. Three great records of post fledging juvenile and immature dispersal, gives us a snapshot of this dispersal behaviour; undoubtedly, many other kites will be undertaking such movements, but which go undetected. As mentioned above kite activity in Nithsdale has been increasing, so much so that we had our first nest in the area this year. Two recent kites to be recorded in Nithsdale are green/blue 42, who was recorded 30 kilometres from his natal site on 1 July 2011, foraging over a recently cut silage field only to be back in the core area on 9 July 2011. The other, green/blue 58 was recorded near Thornhill on the 30 July 2011, back in the core area on 3 August 2011 and is now back near Thornhill on 24 September 2011.

Site 41. Male: Green/Green ?. Female: Green/Green ?.
Re-used last year's nest and produced a brood of two, tagged green/white 78 and 79.

Site 42. Male: Green/Green ?. Female: Untagged.
One of this year's five failed nests, almost certainly due to the unseasonable gale the country experienced in May.

Site 43. Male: Untagged. Female:?.
Following last year's failure, the male attracted a new female and moved nearly a kilometre to nest in a larch. However, even although the nest was under our proverbial noses it was not found until 9 July, by which time one young was already in flight.

Site 44. Male: Untagged. Female: ?
Usurped from last year's successful nest by common buzzards possibly forced this move. They built an nest in another beech 150 metres away and produced a brood of three. Although one was too wee for tagging, the other two were tagged green/white 63 and 64. Green/white 64 has provided us with this year's first example of juvenile dispersal by turning up at the Argaty feeding station outside Doune in Stirlingshire on 4 September 2011.

Site 45. Male: Green/Purple K. Female: ?
Re-used last year's towering nest in a Scots pine and produced a brood of three, of which two were tagged green/white 68 and 69.

Site 46. Male: Untagged. Female: Untagged.
One of a few sites to be filed under the heading 'no active nest found'-very surprising following watching a pair interact and appear to be nest building close to last year's successful nest. However, it appears that there may be a change of personnel, which would help to understand the lack of an active nest, as one or other partner may be immature.

Site 47. Male: Green/Green ?. Female: Untagged.
Re-used last year's nest and produced a brood of two, tagged green/white 51 and 52.

Site 48. Male: Green/Purple A. Female: Untagged.
Following last year's drama with this pair it was great to find them 500 metres away in a birch tree, where they produced a cracking brood of three, tagged green/white 30, 31 and 32; a good result following last year's failure (when the single large chick fell to its death from nest).

Galloway Kite Trail

The Galloway Kite Trail continues to be a popular destination for visitors to our region. Visitor numbers to the feeding station at Bellymack Hill Farm were up, continuing to be a most popular attraction, even in the most inclement days. Visitor numbers to the feeding station, Clatteringshaws and other venues are useful indicators that even in the current financial climate people are coming to see these spectacular birds of prey and other attractions that our beautiful region has to offer.

Improvements to the Trail mentioned in the last couple of editions of this bulletin, funded by Sulwath Connections Landscape Partnership (part funded by Heritage Lottery Fund and SNH) are now complete. Calum Murray, our community liaison officer (a post now financed by RSPB, The Scottish Government and the European Community, Dumfries and Galloway LEADER 2007-2013 Programme) is now working on a new set of outputs. These include the undertaking of a feasibility study, looking at the potential for live tv viewing of a red kite nest, which could eventually result in opportunities to view breeding red kites via CCTV from one or more business outlets on the trail. He is also busy putting together information for a forthcoming wildlife-watching manual, which will be distributed to various businesses around the trail. These will draw visitors' attentions to some of the best sites in this region for seeing wildlife, from special flora such as perennial flax to several birds of prey and even our largest fish! This of course will help to improve people's chances of seeing what this region has to offer, in terms of its nature. Calum and his volunteers are present on most days at the feeding station at Bellymack Hill Farm, interpreting kites and promoting the local area and GKT to a growing numbers of visitors. He continues to work in the community, liaising with local schools, businesses and groups, with guided walks, talks and visits.

With over 12,000 visitors attended the feeding station in 2010 and over 8,000 visitors in the summer of 2011, the trail has become a must do venue now on most visitors' itineraries. In addition to the kites, visitors are experiencing a wealth of wildlife on and around the trail. As with the kites, ospreys are doing increasingly well, with four pairs fledging 8 chicks in the region this year, along with at least three other immature pairs present during the summer. Many visitors are pleased to find good places to view these birds but also enjoy seeing the red squirrels, wintering geese and varied landscapes, from Clatteringshaws and the Glenkens in the north to Barstobrick and Threave in the south. With so much to see and excellent hospitality provided around the trail, it will come as no surprise that visitors return again and again. With improved interpretation, a new trail leaflet, an audio guide and enthusiastic people like Calum and his volunteers to promote it all to visitors, the GKT and Galloway provides a great destination for nature based tourism.

Our excellent, recently revised website, kindly constructed and maintained by Angus McKay of www.gpxweb.com attracts on average over 1500 visits per month. The website offers a downloadable copy of this bulletin and news updates. Through the latest funding, the website will be further upgraded by early 2012, so check it out. Find us @ www.gallowaykitetrail.com

Site 22. Male: Green/Orange 110. Female: Green/Orange 112.
I have mentioned in the past this pair's obvious fertility problem. I have to report it is now five years at five different nest sites that they have bred unsuccessfully, the female incubating for the full term each time only for the eggs not to hatch.

Site 23. Male: Green/Yellow O. Female: Green/Green U.
After four years of using different nests each year, this pair re-used last year's nest and fledged two young, tagged green/white 47 and 48.

Site 24. Male: Green/Orange 101. Female: Green/Blue 4.
Re-used last year's nest, two large young close to fledging were confirmed but were not ringed or wing tagged.

Site 25. Male: Green/Orange 102. Female: Green/Green 5.
Still using our highest nest, 33 metres up in a Douglas fir, and another brood of two was produced, tagged green/white 18 and 19.

Site 26. Male: Green/Green X. Female: Green/Green V.
Fourth year of use for this nest tree, from which the pair produced another brood of two, tagged green/white 09 and 10.

Site 27. Male: Green/Green Y. Female: Green/Green H.
Re-used last year's nest and fledged a cracking brood of three young, tagged green/white 11, 12 and 13.

Site 28. Male: Green/Orange 120. Female: Red/Green 2J.
No sightings of this pair since 2009, and the site will now be recorded as vacant.

Site 29. Vacant
Although see site 48.

Site 30. Male: Green/Green B. Female: Green/Green J.
Now four different nest trees in four years, all successful, this year one large young was in flight on our ringing date.

Site 31. Male: Green/Green ? Female: Green/Purple 9.
Our most southern and western nest produced a cracking brood of three tagged green/white 60, 61 and 62.

Acknowledgements.

Throughout the year Ray Hawley, Chris Rollie, Ian Saunders, Angus Hogg, David Hunt, Calum Murray and his many volunteers, including Michael Cole, Sally Falconer and Eleanor Burns provided valuable wing-tag readings. Thanks to long distance tag readers Kevin Duffy and Duncan Cameron and Micheal McDonnell (Central Scotland), Ken Sanderson (Gateshead), Doug Simpson (Yorkshire) and Tony Cross (Wales). Thanks for the many sightings from RSPB Local Group members. Thanks to Bard Veterinary Group, Dunmuir Veterinary Group and the Barony Wildlife Hospital. Thanks to Angus McKay of gpxweb.com for his continued support of the Galloway Kite Trail (recently upgraded) website.

Many thanks are due to Brian Etheridge for his tagging guidance, instruction etc, Colin Watret (ringing/wing-tags/monitoring) and Ciril Ostroznik (tree climbing and nest observations). Thanks are due to our colleagues at the RSPB Glasgow office, whose continued support of the project and the Galloway Kite Trail is much appreciated. Thanks to our project partners, SNH, FCS, D&GRSG, for their continued support, and to Sulwath Connections, Dumfries & Galloway Council, SNH and Heritage Lottery Fund in relation to GKT. Dumfries & Galloway, LEADER Local Action Group are now helping to fund work on the GKT, and grateful thanks to them.

Many thanks to Anne Johnstone and Pam Ryman at Bellymack Hill Farm Feeding Station for their hard work in providing the wonderful spectacle, in hosting Calum and in supporting the project in so many other ways. Thanks to the staff at FCS Clatteringshaws visitor centre and to all businesses on the Galloway Kite Trail for their positive feedback and assistance with pin badges, leaflets etc. Visit Scotland Dumfries & Galloway assists RSPB with leaflet distribution and promotion of the Trail.

Special acknowledgement must as ever be made of the assistance, access and patience granted to the project from the ever-growing group of landowners, farmers, gamekeepers and members of the public within Dumfries & Galloway. Many thanks to everyone in these groups, particularly those with breeding kites, hosting our release cages on their land and monitoring kites in any way.

Site 5. Male: Green/Red L. Female: Green/Yellow R.
The fifth time of re-use of this nest produced a brood of two to add to the previous nine young. At last, I found one of these nine carrying on the dynasty at site 59. This year's young were tagged green/white 26 and 27.

Site 6. Male: Green/Red Spot. Female: Green/White C.
Re-used last year's nest in a huge mature beech tree, it was a high climb only to tag one young, green/white 56.

Site 7. Male: Green/White 9. Female: Green/White 7.
Possible change of female here, which I hope to confirm next year, but regardless of who the female was, last year's nest was re-used and two young were produced, tagged, green/white 49 and 50.

Site 8. Male: Green/Red X. Female: Green/Red H.
Re-used the last year's nest in a mature oak and produced another cracking brood of three, tagged green/white 05, 06 and 07.

Site 9. Male: Green/Pink O. Female: Green/Red U.
A change of male at this site, last year's male green/red D was not recorded after 05/09/2010 and surely must have perished. The female was seen to be incubating, with the new male in attendance, however the nesting attempt was deemed to have failed at the egg stage.

Site 10. Male: Green/White X. Female: Green/White 3.
Considering last year's nest was very successful in fledging three young, it was very surprising to find that this pair moved back to a wood where they last bred in 2008. However, another pleasing outcome as they produced a brood of two, tagged green/white 28 and 29.

Site 11. Male: Green/Red 3. Female: Green/Red 5.
Once again, re-used last year's nest and fledged three young, one had branched on the ringing date, the remaining two were tagged green/white 02, and 03.

Site 12. Male: Green/Red Q. Female: Green/Red 7.
Re-used last year's nest and produced one young, tagged green/white 08.

Site 13. Male: Green/Red 1. Female: Green/Red Z.
Our first nest of the year to be processed, which we were still a wee bit late in processing, as one young had branched, the other of a brood of two was tagged green/white 01.

Table 8. 2005 cohort, released 4, Galloway bred 18.

Kite	Sex	Origin	Status Summer 2011
G/O 101	M	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/O 102	M	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/O 105	F	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/O 110	M	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/O 111	M	Galloway	Present core area
G/O 112	F	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/O 114	F	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/O 117	F	Galloway	Central Scotland, bred
G/O 118	M	Galloway	Last seen 09/01/2010
G/O 120	M	N. Scotland	Last seen 29/11/2009

Table 9. 2006 cohort, Galloway bred 27, incomer 2.

Kite	Sex	Origin	Status Summer 2011
G/G 1	F	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/G 2	M	Galloway	Present core area
G/G 3	M	Galloway	Present core area
G/G 4	M	Galloway	Newcastle area
G/G 5	F	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/G B	M	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/G C	M	Galloway	Present core area
G/G D	F	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/G E	F	Galloway	Present core area
G/G H	F	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/G J	F	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/G K	F	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/G M	M	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/G P	F	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/G R	F	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/G S	M	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/G U	F	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/G V	F	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/G W	F	Galloway	Present core area
G/G X	M	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/G Y	M	Galloway	Present core area, bred
R/G 2J	F	C. Scotland	Last seen 20/03/2009
B/G X	F	Wales	Last seen 27/02/2009

Table 10. 2007 cohort, Galloway bred 33.

Kite	Sex	Origin	Status Summer 2011
G/P 3	F	Galloway	Last seen 29/08/2008
G/P 6	F	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/P 7	F	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/P 8	M	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/P 9	F	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/P 10	M	Galloway	Newcastle area
G/P A	M	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/P C	F	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/P D	M	Galloway	Last seen 18/08/2008
G/P E	M	Galloway	Present core area
G/P F	M	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/P H	M	Galloway	Last seen 09/12/2010
G/P J	F	Galloway	Present core area
G/P K	M	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/P L	M	Galloway	Last seen 07/07/2008
G/P M	M	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/P N	M	Galloway	Last seen 22/10/2009
G/P O	M	Galloway	Present core area
G/P P	M	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/P Q	F	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/P S	F	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/P T	M	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/P U	M	Galloway	Last seen 12.10.2010
G/P Z	M	Galloway	Last seen 13.02.2011

noble fir two ; Douglas fir three; birch two; Lawson's cypress and crab apple each having one nest. The addition of crab apple brings the list of tree species used in all years to 14 in total. The range of heights above ground to nests is similar to last year, heights ranging from six metres in the crab apple tree to 33 metres high in a Douglas fir. The only nest adornment of note this year was a knotted white angler's sock along side the usual atypical nest adornments of plastic bags, paper hand towels and coloured string. Of the 58 nests found, five ended in failure, all at the egg stage, with the remaining 53 nests being successful, fledging as many as 100 young. In all, 104 young were processed, 90 were fitted with BTO rings, of which 87 were fitted with wing tags, one was too wee for ringing, and 13 others had fledged before the planned ringing date. Brood sizes were 14 x 1yg, 27 x 2yg and 12 x 3yg. Over all breeding years our statistics show that just over 50% of all broods recorded are of two young, with broods of one and three young at just under 25% each.

This year's wing tags are coloured green (left)/white (right), numbered 01 - 87, with white numbers on green tags and black numbers on white tags. We continue with our study on the dispersal, movement and survival of red kites, and as such, some young had radio transmitters fitted, allowing them to be tracked and to provide important and interesting information following fledging. Early indications from young carrying radio transmitters this year is that more young are dispersing than in earlier years. Food availability, weather or population density could be the driving factors for this event, population density being my choice. I am selecting population density, not because there are too many kites in the core area, but on the contrary, there are now many more kites on the periphery of the core area that will attract these dispersing young kites outwards. An example being Nithsdale with its stunning habitat, over wintering kites and now breeding kites. Meanwhile, volunteers' sightings of this year's tagged young in and around the Bellymack Hill Farm feeding station area have been steadily rising with 60 identified to date.

Volunteers at the feeding station are just as likely to see untagged juveniles as this year 13 of our young had fledged before their date of tagging. There are now 21 (18%) known untagged kites in the breeding population. Many of these will be survivors of the 2008 untagged cohort with the rest being early fledglings from various breeding years or even incomers from other regions of the UK.

Table 13. 2010 cohort, Galloway bred 92.

Kite	Sex	Origin	Status Summer 2011
GrB 01	M	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 03	M	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 04	F	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 05	M	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 06	M	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 07	M	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 08	M	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 10	F	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 11	M	Galloway	Last recorded 26/11/2010
GrB 12	M	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 13	F	Galloway	Last recorded 09/03/2011
GrB 14	M	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 15	F	Galloway	Last recorded 13/03/2011
GrB 16	F	Galloway	Nithsdale 30/05/2011
GrB 17	M	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 18	M	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 19	M	Galloway	Last recorded 23/04/2011
GrB 20	M	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 21	F	Galloway	Last recorded 20/04/2011
GrB 22	F	Galloway	Last recorded 20/09/2010
GrB 23	M	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 24	M	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 25	M	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 27	F	Galloway	Last recorded 23/04/2011
GrB 28	M	Galloway	Last recorded 31/10/2010
GrB 29	M	Galloway	Last recorded 13/02/2011
GrB 30	F	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 31	F	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 32	M	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 33	F	Galloway	Last recorded 02/12/2010
GrB 34	F	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 35	M	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 36	F	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 37	F	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 38	F	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 40	M	Galloway	Last recorded 17/06/2010
GrB 41	M	Galloway	Last recorded 26/05/2011
GrB 42	F	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 43	M	Galloway	Last recorded 17/06/2010
GrB 44	M	Galloway	Last recorded 17/06/2010
GrB 45	M	Galloway	Last recorded 02/08/2010
GrB 48	F	Galloway	Last recorded 29/05/2011
GrB 49	F	Galloway	Last recorded 25/11/2010
GrB 50	F	Galloway	Last recorded 16/05/2011
GrB 51	F	Galloway	Last recorded 25/05/2011
GrB 52	M	Galloway	Last recorded 18/06/2010
GrB 53	M	Galloway	Last recorded 18/06/2010
GrB 54	F	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 55	M	Galloway	Last recorded 18/06/2010
GrB 56	F	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 57	F	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 58	F	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 59	M	Galloway	Last recorded 20/06/2010
GrB 60	F	Galloway	Last recorded 17/05/2011
GrB 61	F	Galloway	Last recorded 30/07/2011
GrB 62	M	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 63	F	Galloway	Last recorded 27/03/2011
GrB 64	M	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 65	M	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 66	M	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 67	F	Galloway	Last recorded 30/12/2010
GrB 68	F	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 69	M	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 70	M	Galloway	Last recorded 04/11/2010
GrB 71	M	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 72	M	Galloway	Last recorded 23/06/2010
GrB 73	M	Galloway	Present core area
GrB 74	M	Galloway	Present core area

Welcome

to our 2011 issue of the

Dumfries & Galloway Red Kite Reintroduction Bulletin.

With the reintroduction phase of the project ending in 2005, our bulletin is now an annual account of the breeding, movement, survival and mortality of red kites in Dumfries & Galloway. The bulletin also reports on the progress of other kite reintroduction projects throughout the UK and Ireland. An update on the Galloway Kite Trail and related website is also featured, highlighting the positive links between the kite project, local communities and the economy. We hope that the bulletin provides a comprehensive report on the red kite reintroduction project to inform and be enjoyed by all its readers.

Status of released kites

In total 104 young kites were released in Dumfries & Galloway between 2001 and 2005; of these, 42 survived to breeding age and 34 are considered to be alive in 2011. Table 1 shows clearly the improved survival of a long-lived species like the kite on reaching breeding age in their third year.

Table 1: Status of 104 released kites in Dumfries & Galloway from 2001 to 2005.

Year	Released	Survival to breeding age	known alive 2011
2001	33	6 (18%)	5 (15%)
2002	24	6 (25%)	5 (21%)
2003	33	21 (64%)	18 (55%)
2004	10	8 (80%)	6 (60%)
2005	4	1 (25%)	0
Total	104	42 (40%)	34 (33%)

Breeding in 2011

This year, the third harsh winter in a row, preceded equally poor late spring and early summer weather. Productivity figures reflected this fact with only two more young produced this year despite having seven more laying pairs than last year. However, it is very satisfying to observe over these last three years that the breeding population is robust and able to produce young irrespective of the vagaries of our Scottish weather. Another interesting fact is that poor weather (or for that matter, good weather) only affects productivity figures but does not affect the timing of breeding as our ringing/tagging dates remain virtually unaltered since 2003. Indeed, the only change to our ringing dates since 2003 has been to start processing nests earlier as three or four pairs are laying their first eggs on the last few days of March with the majority laying eggs during the first two weeks of April. As well as providing the raw breeding data, nest processing allows us to observe perceived personnel changes in the pairings. Whilst processing the young at the nest, the adults will venture quite close and just to see the expected wing tag colours on the adults is quite satisfying. However, we did observe a few personnel changes this year, which were to be expected, given the severity of the past winter. Overall, we are now witnessing a very sustainable kite population, able to replace winter losses and natural deaths, and at the same time deliver both geographical expansion and population growth.

Geographical expansion of the breeding population continued with kites now breeding in twelve - 10 kilometre squares, a rise of two on last year. The two new 10 kilometre squares each contained one new breeding pair, both of which were successful. I mentioned last year, Galloway kites foraging (and hence imprinting on the area) over to the east-northeast in Nithsdale, and as a result, we got our first breeding pair in Nithsdale this year. The pioneering Nithsdale male (green/pink 29) dispersed from a nest near New Galloway, 34 kilometres away, and bred with an untagged female. Green/pink 29's genealogy can be traced back to the initial release of kites in 2001, and so it has taken ten years to deliver our furthest flung nest. The term `expand in a slowly rolling front' described by Professor Ian Newton in 2008 of our red kite population is proving quite correct.

Within our slowly expanding and infilling breeding area this year there were 58 active nests, 53 km being the greatest distance between any two nests and 0.226 km being the shortest distance. Twelve species of tree were chosen for nest sites; Scots pine having nine nests; oak 15; Sitka spruce six; Norway spruce six; beech three; larch and sycamore five;

Table 11. 2008 cohort, Galloway bred 53

Status Summer 2011
Following the non-tagging of this cohort, we can only speculate at their survival based on survival of previouscohorts and more scientifically, extrapolation of the numbers of surviving kites of this cohort fitted with radio tags. Hence we would expect there tobe somewhere between 25 and 35 kites of the 2008 cohort surviving to breeding age. Four of the 2008 cohort are among the 21 untagged kites recorded at nesting sites this year, all are males, and all are breeding within 3.5 kilometres of their natal area.

Table 12. 2009 cohort, Galloway bred 57.

Kite	Sex	Origin	Status Summer 2011
G/P/ 2	M	Galloway	Present core area
G/P/ 3	F	Galloway	Last recorded 11/06/2010
G/P/ 4	M	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/P/ 5	F	Galloway	Last recorded 11/02/2011
G/P/ 6	F	Galloway	Present core area
G/P/ 8	M	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/P/ 9	M	Galloway	Last recorded 31/12/2010
G/P/ 10	M	Galloway	Present core area
G/P/ 11	M	Galloway	Present core area
G/P/ 12	F	Galloway	Last recorded 30/12/2010
G/P/ 13	F	Galloway	Present core area
G/P/ 14	M	Galloway	Last recorded 23/10/2010
G/P/ 15	F	Galloway	Present core area
G/P/ 16	F	Galloway	Last recorded 15/05/2010
G/P/ 17	F	Galloway	Last recorded 27/02/2011
G/P/ 18	M	Galloway	Last recorded 14/02/2011
G/P/ 19	F	Galloway	Last recorded 10/02/2011
G/P/ 20	M	Galloway	Present core area
G/P/ 21	F	Galloway	Present core area
G/P/ 22	M	Galloway	Present core area
G/P/ 23	M	Galloway	Present core area
G/P/ 24	M	Galloway	Present core area
G/P/ 25	F	Galloway	Present core area
G/P/ 26	F	Galloway	Present core area
G/P/ 27	M	Galloway	Last recorded 05/12/2010
G/P/ 28	F	Galloway	Last recorded 21/04/2010
G/P/ 29	M	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/P/ 30	F	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/P/ 31	M	Galloway	Present core area
G/P/ 32	M	Galloway	Present core area
G/P/ A	M	Galloway	Present core area
G/P/ C	F	Galloway	Last recorded 17/04/2010
G/P/ D	F	Galloway	Last recorded 07/06/2009
G/P/ E	M	Galloway	Present core area
G/P/ F	F	Galloway	Present core area
G/P/ G	M	Galloway	Present core area
G/P/ H	F	Galloway	Present core area
G/P/ J	F	Galloway	Last recorded 31/01/2011
G/P/ K	F	Galloway	Last recorded 02/12/2010
G/P/ L	F	Galloway	Last recorded 09/01/2010
G/P/ O	M	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/P/ P	F	Galloway	Present core area
G/P/ Q	M	Galloway	Present core area
G/P/ R	M	Galloway	Present core area
G/P/ S	F	Galloway	Last recorded 27/02/2011
G/P/ T	M	Galloway	Last recorded 12/04/2010
G/P/ U	F	Galloway	Last recorded 05/12/2010
G/P/ W	F	Galloway	Last recorded 03/03/2011
G/P/ X	M	Galloway	Present core area
G/P/ Y	M	Galloway	Present core area
G/P/ Z	M	Galloway	Present core area

Galloway Forest Park, managed by Forestry Commission Scotland, retained all last year's five nests, of which four were successful, fledging seven young.

It has been quite a few years since we had our last recruit to our breeding population from outside D&G, one of our last recruits being red/green 2J, a female from Central Scotland who joined us in 2007 and has not been recorded in the area since 2009. One of our most exciting recruits was black/green X, a female from Wales who has also not been recorded in the area since 2009. Once reaching maturity female kites are very sedentary and rarely seen away from their nest site/territory so it would not be a surprise that one or both of these kites are still part of our breeding population. Our only other known recruit, another female Blue/Yellow 53 from Inverness arrived in 2006, remains with us, and successfully bred this year.

As will be noted, all known recruits have been females and with 13 untagged females in the breeding population, it would be no surprise if a few of those came from other regions of the UK, but we'll never know.

Sites

Site 1. Male: Green/Red S. Female: Green/Blue J.
The site of Galloway's first successful breeding pair back in 2003, last year's nest was re-used and one young produced, tagged green/white 23.

Site 2. Male: Green/Green ?. Female: Green/Green K.
Assumed to have failed as one broken egg was found below last year's nest. However, they may have moved and relayed a replacement clutch but were not found.

Site 3. Male: Green/Red V. Female: Green/Orange 105.
Another failed nest, and on this occasion owing to the male being found dead below the nest during the incubation period. An obstruction in his stomach prevented him feeding properly and he was only two thirds of normal body weight when found. Females are dependent on males providing food especially during this period and so most breeding attempts fail when the male is lost during incubation or early brood.

Site 4. Male: Green/Red W. Female: Blue/Yellow 53.
Re-used last year's nest and fledged one young, tagged green/white 33.

Appendix

Surviving Red kites: released/bred/incomers in Dumfries & Galloway 2001 - 2011.

Table 4. 2001 cohort, released 33.

Kite	Sex	Origin	Status summer 2011
G/B 4	F	Chilterns	Present core area, bred
G/B A	F	N. Scotland	Present core area, bred
G/B J	F	N. Scotland	Present, core area, bred
G/B U	M	Chilterns	Present, core area, bred
G/B W	F	Chilterns	Present, core area, bred

Table 5. 2002 cohort, released 24.

Kite	Sex	Origin	Status summer 2011
G/W 3	F	N. Scotland	Present core area, bred
G/W 5	F	N. Scotland	Central Scotland, bred
G/W 9	M	N. Scotland	Present core area, bred
G/W C	F	N. Scotland	Present core area, bred
G/W X	M	Chilterns	Present core area, bred

Table 6. 2003 cohort, released 33, Galloway bred 1.

Kite	Sex	Origin	Status summer 2011
G/R 1	M	Chilterns	Present core area, bred
G/R 2	M	Chilterns	Present core area, bred
G/R 3	M	Chilterns	Present core area, bred
G/R 4	M	Chilterns	Present core area, bred
G/R 5	F	Chilterns	Present core area, bred
G/R 7	F	Chilterns	Present core area, bred
G/R E	M	N. Scotland	Present core area, bred
G/R F	F	N. Scotland	Present core area, bred
G/R H	F	N. Scotland	Present core area, bred
G/R J	M	N. Scotland	Present core area, bred
G/R L	M	N. Scotland	Present core area, bred
G/R Q	M	N. Scotland	Present core area, bred
G/R S	M	N. Scotland	Present core area, bred
G/R U	F	N. Scotland	Present core area, bred
G/R W	M	N. Scotland	Present core area, bred
G/R X	M	Chilterns	Present core area, bred
G/R Y	M	Chilterns	Present core area
G/R Spot	M	Chilterns	Present core area, bred
G/R Z	F	Galloway	Present core area, bred

Table 7. 2004 cohort, released 10, Galloway bred 3, incomer 1.

Kite	Sex	Origin	Status Summer 2011
G/Y J	M	Chilterns	Present core area, bred
G/Y R	F	Chilterns	Present core area, bred
G/Y P	F	Chilterns	Present core area, bred
G/Y Q	M	Chilterns	Present core area, bred
G/Y S	F	Chilterns	Present core area, bred
G/Y W	F	Chilterns	Present core area, bred
G/Y O	M	Galloway	Present core area, bred
G/Y Z	M	Galloway	Present core area, bred
B/Y 53	F	N. Scotland	Present core area, bred

Site 14. Male: Green/Red 4. Female: Green/Blue A.
Moved 50 metres to another oak tree and produced a brood of two, tagged green/white 54 and 55.

Site 15. Male: Green/Blue U. Female: Green/Blue W.
Re-used last year's nest and fledged two young, tagged green/white 14 and 15.

Site 16. Male: Green/Red E. Female: ?
Unfortunately, the resident female green/white T was recovered dead during the winter. Happily, the male acquired another female, so far unidentified, re-used last year's nest and produced two young, tagged green/white 24 and 25.

Site 17. Male: Green/Red J. Female: Green/Yellow S.
Following last year's failure, this pair moved about 200 metres further into commercial forestry and used a former buzzard nest in a larch tree. Two young fledged, one tagged green/white 04, the other remains untagged as it had left the nest by the date of tagging.

Site 18. Male: Green/Yellow Z.
Female: Green/Yellow P.
Re-used last year's nest in the leaning larch and produced one young, tagged green/white 37.

Site 19. Male: Green/Green M. Female: Untagged.
Surprisingly, this pair moved back to a nest last used by this male (unsuccessfully) with a sibling female in 2008. He got rid of his sibling mate in 2009 in favour of the present female. A cracking brood of three was produced, all remaining untagged as they had left the nest prior to our ringing date. The ousted sibling female (green/green P) has bred at site 36 since 2009.

Site 20. Male: Green/Yellow Q. Female: Green/Orange 114.
Following three successful years in the same oak tree, for reasons unknown, this pair moved 300 metres to another mature oak and fledged two young, tagged green/white 43 and 44.

Site 21. Male: Green/Yellow J. Female: Green/Yellow W.
I failed to find this pair's nest last year, however I did manage to find it this year, although a wee bit late as one juvenile was out of the nest on our ringing date and so remains untagged.

How can you help?

The red kite reintroduction project continues to be most grateful for sightings of kites, particularly away from the Loch Ken area. Sightings with identification of wing tags are particularly helpful to the project. Almost all kites have coloured wing tags, which either have a number, letter or a symbol as their individual identification.

Table 3. Wing-tag colours, origin/year code.

Year	Left tag (origin)	Right tag (year code).
2001	green - Galloway	blue
2002	green	white
2003	green	red
2004	green	yellow
2005	green	orange
2006	green	green
2007	green	purple
2008 (no tags fitted in Galloway this year)		black
2009	green	pink
2010	green	blue
2011	green	white

Since 2001, kites wing tagged in UK and Eire have used a standardised colour code, each release area having their own left wing tag colour and the right wing tag coloured as table 3. Most years we have had kites dispersing from the North Scotland, Central Scotland and more recently the Aberdeen project; they have blue, red and purple left wing tags respectively, and, as mentioned above, right wing tags are coloured according to the standardised year code in table 3. We have yet to record any kites from either Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland alive but feel it is overdue; their left wing tags are brown and pale blue respectively. As mentioned in Other kites in Galloway we had two dispersed kites from the most recent reintroduction project in Grizedale, Cumbria. Forestry Commission manages this project and their origin left tag colour is orange.

If you have any enquiries about kites, the Galloway Kite Trail, or wish to report any sightings or would like to offer help to the project in any way, you can call RSPB Scotland on 01556 670464.

George Christie,
RSPB Red Kite Officer, Dumfries & Galloway.