**Aberdeenshire Council Ranger Service - Events and Activities January to March**

Saturday 27th January 10.30am – 12noon

BIG GARDEN BIRDWATCH IN THE PARK

Take part in the RSPB’s national winter garden bird survey by helping to record birds as we walk (approx. 1 mile/2km) around Bellfield & St. Ternan’s Parks. Find out how to attract more birds to your garden & why not do your own Big Garden Birdwatch when you get home? Children aged <16 must be accompanied. Free event. Bring warm and waterproof clothing, stout footwear and, if you have them, binoculars. Booking essential.

MEET: by guide hut, Bellfield Park, Banchory

CONTACT: the Marr Ranger on 07787 583976, marr.ranger@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Friday 16th February from 7.30pm

STAR GAZING

Come along and enjoy a star gazing evening guided by members of the Aberdeen Astronomical Society. In the event of cloud or bad weather we’ll have an indoor event, showing what you can see in the night sky, using planetarium software. Booking essential. Donations appreciated.

MEET: at the Bennachie Visitor Centre, Chapel of Garioch

CONTACT: the Garioch Ranger on 07786 021781, garioch.ranger@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Sunday 18th March 11am – 2pm

NEST QUEST

Join Buglife to learn more about wood ants who are architects, farmers, engineers and a lot more!

Slide show at the Bennachie Centre followed by a walk in the woods to learn how to survey and monitor for wood ants. Please bring a packed lunch, wear study footwear and bring waterproofs.

Aimed at Adults and 12 years and over. Booking essential as numbers limited.

Partnership event with Bailies of Bennachie and Scottish Natural Heritage

MEET: at the Bennachie Visitor Centre, Chapel of Garioch

CONTACT: gabrielle.flinn@buglife.org.uk

Tuesday 20th March 5.45am

SUNRISE AT THE REED WAAL

Join us as we celebrate the Spring Equinox just before sunrise at the Red Well, Whitehills. When the weather conditions are right, the sun should illuminate the well, as it rises over the point of Troup Head. Sunrise is at 6.15am, and for those who are interested, we will be cycling from the Spotty Bag Shop car park to the red well as part of the Climate Week activities – a great way to start your day!

Please wrap up warm, and bring a hot drink. Booking is essential, as this event is very weather dependent.

MEET: at Spotty Bag Shop car park at 5.45am (if cycling) or Red Well car park, Whitehills at 6.15am

CONTACT: the Banff and Buchan Ranger on 07788 688855, banffandbuchan.ranger@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Saturday 24th March 10am – 1pm

GET ON YOUR BIKE

As part of Climate Week families are welcome to get on their bike and discover parts of Bennachie, all attendees must be competent to ride unaided, the route which is approximately 6 km (3.7miles) in length follows gradual inclines and descents, all bikes must be suitable for uneven tracks.

Anyone under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult and wear a helmet.

We will be stopping along the way to find out more about Bennachie’s cultural and natural history and get the opportunity to do some geocaching.

Please wear suitable outdoor cycle clothing and also bring along a snack and a drink. Booking essential.

MEET: at the Bennachie Centre Visitor Car Park

CONTACT: the Garioch Ranger on 07786 021781, garioch.ranger@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

This event is being held in partnership with Sustrans and Aberdeenshire Council Ranger Service

Saturday 24th March 8.00 – 9.30pm

ILLUMINATED CYCLE

How about trying something a little different to celebrate Earth Hour this year? Join us as we take to pedal power for a 2½ mile cycle along the paths around Forglen. We’ll be stopping halfway round for a warming drink, where we’ll be able to enjoy seeing the stars if it’s a clear night, or hearing the owls and other wildlife as darkness falls. Cycle helmets and front and rear bike lights are compulsory. Numbers are limited, so booking is essential.

MEET: at Forglen Hall car park

CONTACT: the Banff and Buchan Ranger on 07788 688855,

banffandbuchan.ranger@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Sunday 25th March 11.00am start

A SPRING IN YOUR STEP

Remember to put your clocks forward by one hour and mark the start of British Summertime with a woodland walk. Head through Wrack Woodlands and down by the Deveron, and discover the natural and cultural history of the area. Please bring a packed lunch for our stop by the magnificent Bridge of Alvah. Booking is essential.

MEET: at Duff House car park

CONTACT: the Banff and Buchan Ranger on 07788 688855,

banffandbuchan.ranger@aberdeenshire.gov.uk