

Meeting report – Findhorn

Fourteen of us had another very enjoyable afternoon with beautiful weather exploring the dunes and the village of Findhorn. We had four target species to look for, found three of them (*Vulpia fasciculata* (Dune Fescue), *Trifolium suffocatum* (Suffocated Clover) and *Trifolium ornithopodioides* (Bird's-foot Clover), but couldn't find the *Phleum arenarium* (Sand Cat's-tail) but this grass has only ever been recorded twice before from the dunes.



Above: *Ophioglossum azoricum* Small Adder's-tongue.

We started by searching for *Botrychium lunaria* (Moonwort) and *Ophioglossum azoricum* (Small Adder's-tongue). We soon found one plant of the Moonwort, but it took us a while to find the Small Adder's-tongue, but to start with we could only find very small non-fruiting plants, but we did in the end find a few fruiting plants. Also, in this area we had *Astragalus danicus* (Purple Milk-vetch) and *Hypochaeris glabra* (Smooth Cat's-ear).

We then went and looked at the Dune Fescue at its most northern site in the UK and is also a very rare grass in Scotland which we found in several places on the dunes, the most I have ever seen there, thousands of plants, in previous years I have generally had a job to find any plants. Nearby we also saw *Catapodium marinum* (Sea Fern-grass) and the naturalised *Clematis tangutica* (Orange-peel Clematis).



Above: *Vulpia fasciculata* (Dune Fescue). Below: some of the group looking at the grass.



Below: *Catapodium marinum* (Sea Fern-grass).



We then started to head over to the area where the two clovers were found but before we got there, we saw several interesting species on the dunes including *Cerastium arvense* (Field Mouse-ear) and *Carduus tenuiflorus* (Slender Thistle). While on the seawall we found *Malva neglecta* (Dwarf Mallow) and *Geranium pusillum* (Small-flowered Crane's-bill).



Above: *Geranium pusillum* (Small-flowered Crane's-bill).

Once we got to the first of the two small stone piers, we soon found both the clovers. The **Bird's-foot Clover** had a few plants still flowering, while the **Suffocated Clover** probably was flowering but it is always hard to tell. There was a good number of each of the two clovers. This is the only site for the **Suffocated Clover** in Scotland.



Above: *Trifolium ornithopodioides* (Bird's-foot Clover) Below: *Trifolium suffocatum* (Suffocated Clover)



Below: some of the group looking at the two clovers.



While walking back through the village we found a few plants of *Myosotis ramosissima* (Early Forget-me-not) by the base of a wall still flowering, which was surprising as all the plants we saw on the dunes were dried up and dead!



Above: *Myosotis ramosissima* (Early Forget-me-not).

Photos by Richard Somers Cocks and Anne Burgess.

