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Rainy days whet appetite of public enemy number one

Midges: Conditions ripe for invasion of little blood-suckers next spring

BY SUE RESTAN

The world's leading expert on the dreaded Highland biting midge is warning that dreich weather this summer could result in a population explosion in the spring.

Dr Alison Blackwell, director of Advanced Pest Solutions of Edinburgh, said that the cool, damp, overcast summer weather had provided perfect conditions for midges resulting in increased numbers this year.

This means there will be more midge larvae overwintering in the soil ready to emerge in the spring.

Dr Blackwell, who runs an online midge forecast to help people planning out-

"It's an ideal environment for the midges to thrive in"

door activities, records data from midge traps throughout Scotland.

This year's overall catch was almost four times higher than last year, with more than 30,000,000 midges trapped, compared with almost 8,000,000 in 2011.

And in Argyll, which topped the table this year, midge catches were up from just over 2,000,000 in 2011 to more than 6,000,000 this year – an increase of around 200%.

Only the Western Isles appears to have had fewer midges this year thanks to their unusually dry summer. No figures are available as Dr Blackwell does not have any traps there,



HIGHLAND HAZARD: A woman walker and a cyclist protect themselves from biting insects with midge nets

but she said she has had fewer reports of people being bitten.

She said the number of midges can be calculated by weighing the catches.

Dr Blackwell said: "Catches are up this year because we haven't experienced any prolonged spells of hot dry weather, which would have reduced the numbers. The relatively cool weather, with frequent showers, has helped provide

an ideal environment for the midges to thrive in.

"If we get warm, wet weather in early May, we could see a particularly big emergence next spring."

She said that midge larvae over-wintered in the soil, with the first midges of the season hatching out at the end of May or early June. A second hatch occurs in the middle of July or early August.

Dr Blackwell added that

midges usually disappeared by about the end of September, but could persist into October if favourable weather conditions resulted in a third hatch.

She said there had been a third generation of midges this year, but they were not expected to last long as recent colder weather would kill them off.

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Scotland's least wanted inhabitant – the midge

Injured Moray worker 'stable'

Continued from Page 1

to free him, or even to treat him or see how much he was bleeding.

"I have done a lot of difficult jobs in my time as a doctor but this was definitely the most difficult. I was working in a very confined space and working blind so I really needed the teams to work together.

"Ultimately, his arm was very badly trapped and we had to do everything we could to get him free. I understand he is now in a stable condition in hospital, but in a high-dependency ward."

The Inverness-based air ambulance helicopter was on the scene for about an hour as fire crews from Fochabers and Keith helped in the rescue operation.

Grampian Police were made aware of the incident but did not attend. The accident is be-

"We were notified of the incident in Keith and are investigating"

ing investigated by the Health and Safety Executive.

An HSE spokesman said: "We can confirm that we were notified of the incident in Keith and are now investigating."

Dr Hardy said the incident on Wednesday morning underlined the importance of training new doctors in pre-hospital care and the treatment of serious injuries.

She added: "I have been working as a consultant at Dr Gray's for almost a year, but I was also part of the helicopter emergency medical service team based at East Midlands Airport.

"The British Association for Immediate Care is keen to develop the skills in doctors to allow them to assist crews with situations like this.

"At present there are very few doctors who are trained to deal with a situation like catastrophic bleeding and so I also help to lead courses on this."

No one from W.N. Lindsay was available to comment on the incident.



STANDING FIRM: Auchnarrow residents, from left, Sue Crombie and Graham Taylor want to keep their hamlet's road sign as it is. Photograph: David Whittaker-Smith

Residents brace themselves for battle over renaming bid

Identity crisis: Should hamlet stay as Auchnarrow or become Knockhandhu?

BY JESSICA MURPHY AND JAMIE BUCHAN

Angry residents claimed yesterday that plans to rename their hamlet would rob them of their identity.

Householders at Auchnarrow in Glenlivet have been left aghast by the proposal made by people who live outside the small neighbourhood.

A group of non-residents want to change the name of the area to Knockandhu and have asked for a special

meeting of the Glenlivet and Inveravon Community Association to be called.

In a letter written to the community association, the group cite their reason for requesting the meeting as a wish to decide whether the existing signs at The Knockandhu should be "left the same, removed or replaced before the name The Knockandhu is lost forever".

The letter was submitted with a petition of 12 signatures. The move would in-

volve changing the road sign at the entrance to the village.

The notice was installed for safety reasons nearly a decade ago.

The name Auchnarrow has been attached to the area for more than 200 years. Locals say it was first referred to as Knockandhu around the turn of the 20th century.

Rita Marks, secretary of the community association, said: "We are obliged to hold a special meeting if

12 or more members of the community request it.

"The issue of this name change has been rearing its head every three or four years. It is a matter for the people that live in the area."

Residents of the small hamlet at Ballindalloch are concerned about the possible outcome of the talks, and fear they do not have enough residents to ensure a fair vote. One local said: "We have only a handful of full-time residents, as we have quite a few holiday homes plus we will have people on holiday and working abroad. We have very little chance of winning any vote as proxy votes are not allowed."

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Pearl Paul, councillor for

Speyside Glenlivet, said: "This is quite a delicate subject for the area. When it came up in the past the community did not agree to the change. The people that actually live in the area, it is their point of view that matters."

Residents of the Glenlivet and Inveravon area are invited to attend the special meeting of the Glenlivet and Inveravon Community Association at the Braes of Glenlivet Hall on Wednesday at 7.30pm.

Man insists he married for love, not a visa

COURT

A Nigerian man who is accused of paying a north-east woman to marry him for a visa has told a court he bought her gifts and flowers to try to win her over.

Kizito Nwajeri denies giving Kirsty Birmie £5,000 in return for her agreeing to a wedding in Lagos in 2010. It is alleged that his

UK student visa was then running out.

The 31-year-old has told a jury at the High Court in Aberdeen that he fell for Miss Birmie at first sight and married her for love.

He said their relationship was "not all rosy" after the wedding, as his new bride felt she had betrayed her friend, and his ex-girlfriend, Morven Hutchison. Advocate depute Ashley

Edwards, prosecuting, asked why he had not been living with her just months after the wedding.

"We never made up," he said. "I didn't want to fall out. This is someone I love, someone where my heart is. I didn't want to lose this woman." He said he had taken her away on trips and bought her flowers and a laptop to try to repair the relationship.

Nwajeri denies a separate charge of supplying cocaine in Aberdeen between September 2010 and May 2011. He is accused of supplying the class A drug to Kelly Watt, Mark Mickowski and Kerry Ann Davidson. He told the jury that he had never met any of the people named in the charge against him. "I didn't give anyone drugs ever in my life," he said.

Nwajeri replied: "It's not

the jury has heard that he was arrested during a drugs search at an address in Aberdeen's Justice Mill Brae in May last year. A quantity of crack cocaine was discovered at the property, the jury was told.

Ms Edwards said: "They were your drugs – that was the business you were running from Justice Mill Brae."

Nwajeri, of 5 Mount Pleasant Road, Bolton, said that he had been teaching fellow students how to use some mathematics computer software at the flat.

The jury is expected to hear closing speeches from Ms Edwards and Nwajeri's counsel, advocate Louis Moll, on Monday.

The Press and Journal

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