

Scottish Biodiversity Forum update

Changes within the Scottish Biodiversity Forum

We bid a fond farewell to Sarah Hocknell who left her post as SBF Project Officer in January. Sarah has made an enormous and invaluable contribution to both the SBF and the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy over the last 2 years and will be greatly missed. We wish her the best of luck in her new job. Any Forum queries should now be directed to the new SBF Project Officer, Kathrina Mannion.

Contact: Kathrina Mannion, Project Officer, Scottish Biodiversity Forum on 0131 244 6328
kathrina.mannion@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Best Value and Biodiversity – guidance for local authorities

Please note the new working title for the publication (formerly Best Value, Community Planning and Biodiversity). In early January, it came to light that the proposed document did not fit the framework outlined in a guidance strategy produced by the Scottish Executive Best Value unit. This has now been resolved, with most of the original document still being relevant. Many thanks to everyone who commented on the original version; these will not go to waste. The 'new' publication offers best practice guidance to local authorities and other public bodies in Scotland to help mainstream the duty to "*further the conservation of biodiversity*" through the statutory framework for Best Value. The publication will nest neatly into, and will fully cross-reference with, separate "Best Value and Sustainable Development" guidance, being developed by the Scottish Executive. Circulation of a consultative draft of "Best Value and Biodiversity" will now be the end of March, with comments welcomed for the end of April. The final version will go to the printers by the end of May. A launch date of 9 September 2004, at Battleby, has been agreed.

Contact: Jo Lenthall, Scotland LBAP Project Officer, Scottish Biodiversity Forum, 0131 311 6512
joanna.lenthall@rspb.org.uk

Scottish Biodiversity Strategy

As the launch draws closer, the Strategy document is now approaching completion. Nautilus consultants have worked up the draft text of the Strategy, which is being presented to the Strategy Steering Group on 25 February. The Implementation Plans are also nearing final draft stage. These plans will be published in draft form at the SBS launch with a true launch in early Autumn 2004 to ensure everyone can comment and to secure full support from all key players.

Contact: Kathrina Mannion, Project Officer, Scottish Biodiversity Forum on 0131 244 6328
kathrina.mannion@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Forum Conference 2004 – 25 May

Murrayfield Stadium, Edinburgh

The programme for the launch is currently being developed and is shaping up to be both an exciting and useful conference for all involved or with an interest in biodiversity. An initial flyer has been sent to all members of the SBF, with booking forms and further details to follow. So, book this date in your diaries!!

To register your interest, e-mail biodiversity@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Local Biodiversity Updates

Argyll & Bute

Contact: Marina Curran-Colthart, Local Biodiversity Officer on 01631 562125 marina.curran-colthart@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Ayrshire

Contact: Morven Templeton, Environment Officer, East Ayrshire Council, 01563 554041 morven.templeton@east-ayrshire.gov.uk; Ken Gibb, Sustainable Development Manager, South Ayrshire Council, 01292 616288 ken.gibb@south-ayrshire.gov.uk; Tonia Sobieraj, Policy Officer, North Ayrshire Council, 01294 324131 tsobieraj@north-ayrshire.gov.uk

Cairngorms

- Stephen Corcoran will be rejoining the Network (again!) on 4 March 2004.

Contact: Stephen Corcoran, LBAP Officer, 01479 870520, stephencorcoran@cairngorms.co.uk

Clackmannanshire

- Are in the process of drafting the 3rd and final tranche of the Clackmannanshire Biodiversity Action Plan, just awaiting some latecomers; drafts should be on the web next month.

What's New?:

- Check out www.clacksweb.org.uk/biodiversity for new news and ways to get involved, including a brand new volunteer record sheet. The record sheet will be included in the 'Biodiversity Trails' leaflet, which highlights six areas for trail use in Clackmannanshire.
- Loads of exciting projects are underway in the wee county. From a pond survey of the whole area to squirrel surveys and 'Schools Save Salmon' studies, the 2003 and 2004 BAP actions are getting underway.
- I will be presenting a poster at a Species At Risk conference in Victoria, British Columbia in March on the progress of LBAPs, specifically our patch. Hopefully I will learn some other national approaches towards achieving the UN Convention's objectives before our LBAP Network Meeting.

Monitoring:

- Our first year of reporting is coming to a close and with it the reporting from our lead partners using a local monitoring system. We plan to use BARS (the UK system) once it is up and running.
- Within the next month, we will have a GIS system, which will be used to manage basic species records and will play an important part in reviewing planning applications.
- 22-24 March – there are a couple of spots left on the Lichen Workshops, £5, Alloa.

Contact: Lynn Campbell, Biodiversity Co-ordinator, 01259 452639, lynncampbell@clacks.gov.uk
www.clacksweb.org.uk/biodiversity

Comhairle non Eilean Siar

- Consultants carried out a public consultation exercise on the draft HAPs and SAPs in December 2003. Workshops were held in Barra, Benbecula and Lewis and were attended by nearly 40 people. The consultants also took the opportunity to speak to primary and secondary pupils in Barra and found the children to be very responsive and aware of their own environment. All the feedback and comments from these sessions and the workshops are included in the consultant's independent report which is available on the Western Isles Biodiversity website at <http://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/biodiversity/planning.htm>
- As part of the consultation exercise, three colourful A1 posters were produced (one for each action plan) to capture the imagination of those attending the workshops and to stimulate

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discussion. There has been a lot of interest in the posters and it is hoped to re-produce the posters and make them available to schools and countryside rangers etc.

- The Western Isles Woodland Strategy was launched in Stornoway on 26 January 2004. Dr Bob MacIntosh, Director of the Forestry Commission Scotland, presented a statement on behalf of Allan Wilson MSP, as the Minister was unavailable to attend. Representatives of the LBAP Steering Group and the Forestry Commission Scotland drew up the strategy.
- The Western Isles LBAP Steering Group is being broadened to include a number of organisations and agencies that are not currently involved locally in the LBAP process eg Forestry Commission Scotland, Deer Commission Scotland, and Scottish Water. The first phase of HAPS and SAPs identify potential roles for these organisations and it was agreed that this would be a good opportunity to engage these organisations and broaden representation on the steering group.

Contact: Anne MacLellan, 01870 602425, amaclellan@cne-siar.gov.uk

Dumfries & Galloway

Contact: Peter Norman, Biodiversity Officer, 01387 260172, peter.norman@dumgal.gov.uk
www.dumgal.gov.uk/biodiversity

East Dunbartonshire

Contact: Paul Baker, Biodiversity Officer, 0141 578 8642, paul.baker@eastdunbarton.gov.uk

East Lothian

Contact: Stuart Macpherson, Biodiversity Officer, 01620 827242,
smacpherson@eastlothian.gov.uk

Edinburgh

- Work is progressing on updating the Edinburgh BAP. New habitat drafts are mostly in place, and we are now concentrating on monitoring and moving on to drafting the species plans. We are aiming to launch in October this year.
- Implementation work is ongoing, with BTCV Scotland, CEC rangers and the Green Team carrying out habitat management and planting works part funded by EBAP. A new pond for great crested newts has been created at Dundas estate; joint funded by EBAP and SNH; work carried out by Lothians Amphibians and Reptiles Group. We are in the process of securing extra money through the partnership to extend our juniper regeneration project in the Pentlands.
- Forthcoming events include the Family Biodiversity Day, Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh, as part of the Science Festival, 14 April and Treefest, Inverleith Park, 12 and 13 June. We are also investigating other local events to broaden our awareness raising work.

Contact: Susan Steel or Caroline Peacock, Biodiversity Officers 0131 469 3920
susan.steel@edinburgh.gov.uk caroline.peacock@edinburgh.gov.uk

Falkirk

- Ten new action plans are being printed: boundary features; standing open water; fenmarch and swamp; bean goose; sand martin; common tern; grey partridge; song thrush; round leaved sundew; aquatic invertebrates
- There will be a Biodiversity Exhibition in Callander Museum from 20 March to 16 May exploring the biodiversity of Falkirk with a static display, school visits, and daytime walks.

Contact: Martin Nunn, Biodiversity Officer on 01324 504863 martin.nunn@falkirk.gov.uk

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Fife

Contact: Rachel Sherman, LBAP Co-ordinator on 01592 413437 rachel.sherman@fife.gov.uk

Glasgow

- Winter bird feeding project is continuing successfully in the north of the City and extending to farms in the south. Additionally large amounts of barley are being distributed along hedgerows on two farms feeding winter flocks of finches.
- Discussions are taking place to develop further RSS applications for Glasgow farms.
- A grassland grazing review is being carried out with reference to Council-owned stock.
- Ponds have been created at Early Braes open space to benefit water voles and amphibians found on the site.
- The Biodiversity Officer has been contributing to a major project focused on the White Cart Water.
- The Biodiversity Officer continues to contribute to a large scale Parks Review being carried out by the Council's Land Services.
- University of Glasgow is developing an LBAP for its grounds, with guidance and help from the Biodiversity Officer.
- Plans are being drawn up for a Reptile survey (presence/absence) of Glasgow for this summer. There are no recent records of reptiles within the City boundary so this promises to be an exciting project.

Contact: Keith Watson or Carol MacLean, Biodiversity Officers on 0141 287 5665
keith.watson@land.glasgow.gov.uk carol.maclean@land.glasgow.gov.uk
<http://wildlife.glasgow.gov.uk>

Highland

- Contract extended to March 2005

Contact: Janet Bromham, Biodiversity Officer, 01463 702274 janet.bromham@highland.gov.uk

Midlothian

Contact: Helen Dunlop, Biodiversity Officer, Midlothian Council, 0131 271 3462
helen.dunlop@midlothian.gov.uk

North East Scotland

Contact: Maria Hardy, LBAP Co-ordinator, 01224 711120 maria.hardy@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

North Lanarkshire

- Urban and Brownfield BAP out for consultation. Overview document focussing on planning, development and land management. Annex has specific information on habitats and target actions. Looking to launch in May/June.
- ZIBs, a whole new TLA – Zones of Importance for Biodiversity. These identify key areas for biodiversity in NL, representing the largest areas of semi-natural or high quality habitat found locally. ZIBs will not be a restrictive "designation" but rather a way of highlighting the importance, on a landscape rather than individual site scale, of the identified areas with the emphasis on maintaining or improving their quality and connectivity being key to maintaining their great biodiversity interest. Aside from the six key sites, all watercourses are identified as of being of great importance for connecting isolated habitats. It's a bit like a two-tier habitat network (large discrete areas then linear links). With limited resources, choices about where your key areas are need to be made. It is possible that this concept could be included in the

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new Local Plan that is being compiled or if not as part of the NLBAP which would be referred to in the Local Plan anyway.

- BARS – is loaded on my computer but not accessible.....
- 3 trial greenspace areas going ahead in Cumbernauld. Meeting the Community Council in March to talk about it.
- Joint North/South Lanarkshire Local Record Centre (LRC) bid did not get off the ground.
- North Lanarkshire LRC bid to Sustainable Scotland Grant Fund.
- Scottish Biodiversity Strategy – Interpretation, Communication, Education meeting, paper strategy will soon be emerging.
- Town Parks project. Education and Awareness Group have created a display about urban park biodiversity for the forthcoming community consultations about the future management of the 6 major parks in NL. We are looking to get biodiversity high on everyone's agenda.

Contact: Jonathan Willet, Biodiversity Officer, 01236 780636 willetj@northlan.gov.uk

Orkney

- Business plan is being written covering the next 3 years of the project (to December 2007). It will include timescales for completion of the 30 SAPs, review of the HAPs, review of the biodiversity audit and the monitoring and implementation of projects for the 21 Area Action Plans (AAPs). The AAPs are being reformatted to fit the HAPs.
- There are plans for a Community Garden Pilot Project, the bid is currently undergoing restructuring and will be resubmitted to Transforming Your Space for the April round. A Green Gym Project has been initiated and are seeking funding from various sources; aim to have it up and running in the next year.
- Two Business and Biodiversity Action Plans are being written and relationships forged with agencies and businesses (a large quarry, Orkney Aggregates; a dairy, ice cream factory and candy company, Crantit Dairy).
- An Environmental Education Forum has been formed and is producing a directory of environmental education providers and resources. This forum will also be producing a calendar of events that will be published twice a year.
- Viking Heaths, a £1.6m HLF bid has been submitted. This will be a partnership project (with English Nature, and SNH) focussing on maritime heathland restoration, creation, and management with access playing a large role in the bid. The results of the bid will be heard in June.

Contact: Nadine Russell, Orkney Biodiversity Officer, 01856 888760
nadine.russell@orkney.gov.uk

Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire, Inverclyde

- LBAP launched on 28 January 2004

Contact: Jenny Gough (temporary contact), jenny.gough@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Scottish Borders

Contact: Andy Tharme, Natural Heritage Officer, 01835 826514 atharme@scotborders.gov.uk

Living Shetland

- Contract extended to end May 2004
- Interreg application has gone in; have applied for this to implement the AgriBAP
- Forthcoming AgriBAP meeting to finish off the HAPs/SAPs. Slow progress, possibly due to CAP reform. Work targets will be set for individuals.
- Strandline Action Plan is being worked up with SNH and other organisations eg Amenity Trust, Biological Records, who appear to be very supportive.

Contact: Nicky Davies, Biodiversity Officer, 01595 690832, livingshetland@fwag.org.uk

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South Lanarkshire

Contact: Scott Riddell, 01355 806858, scott.riddell@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Stirling

Contact: Chris Waddell, 01786 442875 waddellc@stirling.gov.uk

Tayside

- Salmon in the Classroom Project – pilot project has now started with four schools in Angus taking possession of a fish tank to grow on fry to release into their local burn. There is already a waiting list for schools throughout Tayside to join the project in future years.
- Care and Management of Urban Trees – a morning seminar, followed by a site visit, will take place at the end of March in Perth. Directed at an audience of local authority officers, planners and developers, a variety of speakers will explore the different ways mature trees can be managed in an urban setting.
- "Where to See Wildlife in Perthshire" – The Perthshire Tourist Board has funded 23,000 posters for inclusion in bedroom folders in the Tayside, Grampian, Central and Lothians area.
- The 'Building Better Biodiversity' series of lunchtime seminars organised by the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership continues. At the end of 2003, Ian Langford of SNH gave an excellent talk on "Planning for Barn Owls". It was well received by a wide audience with a comprehensive Information Pack circulated, including a free copy of the recently republished 'Barn Owls on Site' booklet (English Nature). In January, Craig Borland, Angus Ranger Service, led an equally interesting talk on "Bats in Bridges and Buildings". Information packs given out at these meetings are welcomed, with some local authority departments now amassing a series of files on the management of specific species and habitats.

Contact: Catherine Lloyd, Biodiversity Officer, 01738 476481 tayside.biodiversity@ukf.net

West Dunbartonshire

Contact: Rob McCreath (temporary contact) rod.mccreath@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

West Lothian

- National winner of the 2003 SEPA Award for the White Burn environmental improvement project.
- Commissioned biodiversity assessment of proposed Local Plan housing sites undertaken by the Lothian Wildlife Information Centre completed. It pioneered an analytical approach, which used existing data as well as projecting likely species presence by the assessment of habitat types where no species records existed.
- Soil Sustainability Plan completed for policy and guidance development.
- West Lothian Environmental Projects Support Grant re-launched for 2004/05
- West Lothian Environment Fair to be repeated 5/6 September 2004

Contact: John Sheldon, Co-ordinating Officer, 01506 775278 John.Sheldon@westlothian.gov.uk

Continued overleaf ...

Events

BCS Recorders' Gathering - 28 February

10am-4pm, Cowane Centre, Stirling. This will be of interest to staff or volunteers involved in butterfly recording in Scotland. Presentations will show results from butterfly transects and the Butterflies for the New Millennium Project (BC's general recording scheme). There will be presentations on the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and the use of butterflies as indicator species, as well examples of survey and monitoring work currently being carried out in Scotland. There will be a small charge to cover costs and booking is required - contact Butterfly Conservation (Scotland) 01786 447753 or email scotland@butterfly-conservation.org for further information and a booking form.

BRISC Annual Conference - 6 March

Biological Recording In Scotland (BRISC) will hold their Annual Conference on Saturday 6 March in Edinburgh on 'Secret wildlife: recording the urban environment'. Speakers will be Dr Scott Ferguson (SNH) 'Greenspaces - where the wild things are'; Matt Shardlow (Buglife) 'Urban gems'; Andy Wilson (BTO Scotland) 'Garden Birdwatch'; Bob Saville (Lothian Wildlife Information Centre) 'Discovering some of Edinburgh's less well-known wildlife'; Jonathan Willet (North Lanarkshire LBAP officer) 'Vacant and derelict land and biodiversity: a North Lanarkshire perspective'; Craig Macadem (National recorder for Mayflies) 'Urban water - a neglected freshwater habitat'; Anne Youngman (Bat Conservation Trust) 'Going Batty'
Cost: £15 (£10 for BRISC members); £5 for students; buffet lunch £4 (optional)
Bookings through Alan Cameron, BRISC, Tel 01786 474061 email brisc@btcv.org.uk, full programme and booking form available at <http://www.brisec.org.uk/>

Planning for Scotland's Success - 16 March

Contribution to debate and consultation on National Planning Framework, Third Party Right of Appeal, and Community Involvement. Please contact Nicola Harris (Holyrood Conferences and Events) on nicola@holyrood.com for booking details.

Priority Moth Surveys for Volunteers In Scotland, 2004

BCS is looking for volunteers to help with surveys for four key moth species. The surveys are important to give a better picture of their current distribution and status in Scotland. This will allow us to undertake detailed surveys and research at occupied sites and aim to encourage sympathetic land management.

Square-spotted Clay: Join Dr Robin Field for evening searches of larvae during the last week of March at Tainish (Argyll), Kyle of Lochalsh, Kingussie area, Fort Augustus area and Strathardle, Perthshire. Conduct larval searches at other sites with older records (Barcaldine, Corran Ferry and Arisaig; Ayrshire, Peebleshire, Dumfries-shire, Kircudbrightshire) or light-trap for adults at these sites from late July to end August.

Barred Tooth-striped: Search or light trap for adults at sites with post-1981 records (Skye, Loch Creran and Thornhill, Dumfries) or other sites with older records (Canna, Fort Augustus, Ardnamurchan, Killiecrankie and Glen Trool) in April and May.

Netted Mountain Moth: Join our Netted Mountain Moth day in Newtonmore in early May to learn more about this species so you can get involved in a co-ordinated survey in the Cairngorms, Moray, Easter Ross, around Loch Rannoch and northern Perthshire.

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Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth: In Scotland there are colonies in the Cairngorms, Moray and Easter Ross and in the west from Argyll north to Wester Ross. They can sometimes be attracted to flowering sprigs of lilac taken into the field.

Want to get involved? Please let us know if you are interested in taking part in any of these surveys to allow us to co-ordinate them more effectively. No skills or previous experience is necessary and everyone is welcome. We can also provide more information on old records, survey forms and further advice on survey techniques. For further information contact: Tom Prescott, Conservation Advisor, Butterfly Conservation Scotland, Mill House, Mill Road, Kingussie, Inverness-shire, PH21 1LF. Tel 0870 77061539. Email tprescott@butterfly-conservation.org

Introducing the NBN Gateway - 31 March and 1 April

Manor House Hall, University of Birmingham. All meals and accommodation will be provided free to delegates. The seminar will introduce the NBN Gateway to LBAPs, engage LBAPs in informing the Gateway's development and provide an opportunity to explore LBAPs' data needs and relationships with Local Record Centres and the NBN. Please contact Charlotte Gault, England LBAP Facilitator (cgault@wildlife-trusts.cix.co.uk) urgently.

Celebrating Scotland's Biodiversity - 14 and 15 April

The Scottish Biodiversity Forum's Action Plan and Science Group are running a research seminar at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh on 14 and 15 April 2004 – reduced rates to LBAP Officers so get booked up!

National Moth Night 2004; Saturday 22 May

2004 heralds a break with tradition for National Moth Night being the first time the event is encouraging the recording of day-flying moths. This bending of the rules allows us to target two magnificent UKBAP priority day-flying moths in Scotland, the Netted Mountain Moth and the Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth. To help further we are planning to provide colour information notes on both species with the aim of trying to encourage their recording throughout the season, not just on National Moth Night. For further information contact: Tom Prescott, 0870 77061539. tprescott@butterfly-conservation.org

Policies and Strategies

Deer Commission Scotland

Deer damage to the natural heritage arises when natural and semi-natural habitats are prevented from regenerating to sustain their ground cover and the diversity of plant species; or where local populations of important species (animal or plant) are in decline; or where important earth science features are being eroded by deer. Damage is more likely to be considered serious by the Deer Commission for Scotland (DCS) when a nationally or internationally important feature is being changed, or is likely to be affected. DCS recognises the impact that deer have on the natural heritage and supports the reduction of deer numbers in problem areas. In areas where the deer population prevents legitimate objectives being achieved, deer control should be carried out with a view to reducing the numbers of deer to the carrying capacity of the habitat.

When determining when 'damage' or 'serious damage' to a habitat is occurring, DCS will take into account the nature and extent of the impact of deer and other herbivores on the habitat, the importance assigned to those features by owners, national and international legislation, government policy and the wider interests of society. In the context of Natural Heritage it is important to distinguish between deer impacts and damage. Impact can be measured and when taken collectively can be evaluated against the natural heritage importance of the features being impacted, in order to assess whether damage is occurring. Damage involves a judgement, based on clear scientific evidence, that the impacts are causing a detrimental change in a particular habitat.

DCS recommends that LBAPs use [Best Practice Guidance](#) recommended by Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS), Association of Deer Management Group (ADMG), Scottish Gamekeepers Association (SGA), British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC), British Deer Society (BDS), LANTRA and DCS as the deer industry benchmark against which activities can be measured.

Local contacts: South Scotland – [John Craig](#) (01786 446282); West Scotland – [Peter Kirk](#) (01546 606200); North East Scotland – [Iain Hope](#) (01463 258919); North West Scotland – [Robbie Kemahan](#) (01463 258918)

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Background

EU Directive on Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment (SEA Directive) was agreed in 2001 and for implementation in Member States by 21 July 2004. SEA will become a part of government decision-making processes. Although the Regulations will implement the Directive requirements by July 2004, the Scottish Executive will introduce legislation 'in early course' to widen the scope of SEA in Scotland to include all strategies.

What is SEA?

SEA is a systematic process for evaluating environmental consequences of policies, plans and programmes. A similar tool to project environmental impact assessment (EIA), widely accepted as a valuable means of integrating environmental information into decision-making. The purpose of the SEA is to ensure environmental consequences of plans and programmes are identified and assessed during their preparation and before adoption. It is essential in delivering sustainable development, and in integration of environmental thinking across all Government policies and operations.

Aims and benefits of SEA

To help achieve sustainable development by promoting:

- Integrated environment and development decision-making
- Design of environmentally sustainable policies and plans

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- Consideration of best practicable environmental options and alternatives.
- To strengthen and streamline project Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) by:
- Early identification of potential impacts and cumulative effects
 - Addressing strategic issues related to the justification and location of proposals
 - Reducing the time and effort necessary to assess individual schemes.

SEA key principles

To ensure that SEA is effective, there are some key principles that should be followed:

- decision-makers must see the SEA as important, otherwise it will not influence their decisions;
- SEA must happen from the start of policy/plan/programme preparation in order to influence the decision;
- SEA must involve participation and transparency to inform, explain and/or legitimise decisions;
- must be a reporting mechanism to monitor and report on the implementation of the policy/plan/programme (including performance measurements and evaluation criteria – indicators and targets).

For further information, please contact: Anne McCall, Planning and Development Manager
anne.mccall@rspb.org.uk

Wind farms and birds – RSPB Scotland

RSPB Scotland supports the development of renewable energy, provided the location is suitable, to help combat climate change effects on wild bird populations and people. However, wind farms are generally sited in exposed areas ensuring high average wind speeds maximising energy capture. Such locations often comprise important and sensitive habitats, so there is a need to ensure that potentially damaging effects are avoided, minimised or mitigated. The potential hazards to birds from wind farms can be identified as:

- Disturbance – wind farms can lead to displacement and exclusion of birds from areas of suitable habitat through increased human activity and presence/noise of turbines in the area.
- Turbine collisions – although studies have shown relatively low collision mortality rates from wind farms there is a potential problem of poorly sited wind farms in areas where large concentrations of birds (especially migrating species, large raptors or soaring species) are present. For some species, relatively small increases in mortality rates can be significant.
- Habitat loss – this can be caused through turbine base and road construction. Further damage can also occur through associated impacts (eg changes to local hydrology, increased grazing due to increased accessibility).

Emerging Problems

Environmental Impact Assessments

Increasing numbers of wind farm applications brings concerns. All developers should be encouraged to produce quality Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) so decision makers have the best available information during the planning process. EIAs must quantify and interpret potential effects and impacts on nature conservation; they need a comprehensive EIA for individual projects, and an impact assessment that considers the cumulative impacts of all proposals and developments in a given area (could use territorial boundaries).

Locational Guidelines

National Planning Policy Guideline 6 on Renewable Energy Developments provides a useful guidance on locational considerations, but is not specific enough which has created uncertainty for developers, planning authorities and local communities. SNH has produced 'Strategic Locational Guidance' for onshore wind farms in respect of the natural heritage, useful to local authorities in identifying areas for wind farm developments. A strategic approach will guide wind farm development to areas minimising effects on birds and the natural heritage. National Planning Framework (NPF) proposals will seek to address energy issues.

Recommendations

- All developers should avoid development in internationally designated sites;
- Scottish Executive ensure the NPF identifies specific constraints to renewable energy;

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- Encouragement should be given to local authorities to translate the NPF in structure plans and local plans via amendments or revisions as soon as possible; and
- Encouragement should be given to developers to produce good quality EIAs and early consultation with environmental bodies.

For more information, please contact Catherine Quigley, Conservation Planning Officer, RSPB Scotland catherine.quigley@rspb.org.uk

For the latest on the future of the renewable energy sector in Scotland, check:
<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/enterprise/inquiries/rei/renewable.htm>

Scottish Golf Environment Group

Scottish Golf Environment Group (SGEG) is a golf-led partnership, supported by the environmental and golfing sectors, promoting and encouraging good environmental management of Scottish golf courses. As well as being funded by the Scottish Golf Union, the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews and SNH, SGEG receive project funding from Scottish Executive's Sustainable Development Unit. SGEG offer a free service to Golf Clubs, where advice can cover a range of subjects, including public access, waste management and minimisation of pesticide use. However, most advice is related to habitat and species management. SGEG are keen to promote biodiversity to Golf Clubs and see the value of forging strong links between the work and management practices of Golf Clubs with the aims and targets of LBAPs. SGEG have begun this process with some LBAP Officers (Scottish Borders, North Lanarkshire, Clackmannanshire, Ayrshire), and have been in contact with others. The 540 golf courses in Scotland cover approximately 30,000ha – there is huge potential to implement many biodiversity aims and actions!

For more information about SGEG, or to encourage golf courses to get involved in your LBAP, please contact: Fiona McIntyre tel: 0131 660 9480 scotgolf@wildlife36.freemove.co.uk

If you would like to contribute to this newsletter, please do get articles to [Jo Lenthall](#), Scotland LBAP Project Officer, Scottish Biodiversity Forum, by 23 April 2004.