

Local Biodiversity Action Plan Newsletter

Issue 5: February 2003

*Thanks everyone for your patience over this last couple of months, as things have been quite frantic with Vicky's departure. As many of you will know I am now full time until June 2004, with my main task being to create and advocate guidance on how best to influence Best Value for Biodiversity within Local Authorities in Scotland. I will be coming to visit many of the LBAP Officers over the next couple of months for input and advice. Although I will continue to co-ordinate the LBAP Network, this project will take priority over other elements of my work plan. 'Towards a Scottish Biodiversity Strategy' was presented to Scottish Ministers on 25 February 2003, at the 2nd Scottish Biodiversity Forum, Heriot Watt University. Each LBAP area has been asked to respond individually to the consultation, with a summary response coming from myself. Please could I have contributions for the next newsletter by **Wednesday 9 April 2003**. Any comments or suggestions for the newsletter are very welcome, please e-mail [Jo Lenthall](mailto:Jo.Lenthal)*

Local Updates

Argyll & Bute

- News of funding: £142,000 for Argyll & Bute Council, Argyll & Isles Enterprise, Scottish Natural Heritage and ERDF (euro) funding to secure my post, employ a Community Biodiversity Officer p/t and a community grant scheme for Community Biodiversity projects. The fund was launched last week (25 March) by Allan Wilson Deputy Minister for Rural Affairs
- Business & Biodiversity Seminar - also opened by Allan Wilson.
- The Partnership have launched a Biodiversity Awards Scheme.
- The Community Action for Biodiversity grant scheme will be supported by a number of public meetings in various parts of Argyll in May and early June. Support will be from a number of agencies, including the Loch Lomond National Park Ranger Service.
- Butterfly Conservation and FWAG are running a Training Day at Glen Creran - 22 May 2003.
- All the schools have received a notice of National Moth Night -12 April 2003.
- Two Marine Natura Officers are now in post and are currently liaising with the LBAP process.
- Working up projects to address inactivity in the LBAP as a result of a GAP's meeting.
- Working with the Nadair Trust (Islands HLF money) re Atlantic Oakwoods.
- BBC - series with the Happy Gang about Woodland Habitats should be televised later this year.
- Supporting Wildlife Tourism Initiative - training in Oban on 29 April 2003.
- Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust - open week 10-17 May 2003- input.
- and lots and lots more!

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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@gw.south-ayrshire.gov.uk; Tonia Sobieraj, Policy Officer, North Ayrshire Council, 01294 324131 tsobieraj@north-ayrshire.gov.uk

Cairngorms

Contact: Peter Cosgrove, Biodiversity Officer 01479 873630 petercosgrove@cairngorms.prestel.co.uk

Clackmannanshire

- Plans, plans and more plans... We are in the midst of finalising the text of our 1st and 2nd tranche drafts and plan to submit the final draft version to the Enterprise and Environment

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Committee for formal Council approval this month. If all goes well, 18 HAPs and 20 SAPs will form the final BAP. A third and final tranche will be published in 2004.

- Biodiversity Co-ordinator two-year contract is ending in June, so a three-year grant application has been submitted to SNH.
- 2003 will be our first implementation year for the BAP. We are planning to conduct various species surveys, which will hopefully cover mountain hare, ring ouzel, water vole, otter, aquatic invertebrates, badger, common lizard and red squirrel. Work will be carried out through a combination of volunteers, CBP members and consultants. If the SNH grant is successful, a small project fund will be made available to fund some of this year's actions. The CBP also plans to implement HAP actions, including burial grounds surveys, horse logging and farmland demonstrations and various Council training workshops. We also hope to establish a central Scotland red squirrel group (with Stirling and Falkirk).
- The Muckhart Heritage Society (MHS), established by the local community, has been working to establish a biodiversity garden in part of the local primary school grounds. The MHS is currently applying for grants and has received some funding to begin work this year. The plans for the garden have been marked out with stakes and the Council's Land Services staff are liaising with the MHS and grounds maintenance staff to manage some areas for wildflowers. The school is growing wildflowers, which will be planted in the designated areas.
- SNH have announced a small pot of funds will be available this year to establish grants for our schools grounds. A Biodiversity Calendar for Clackmannanshire's Schools was produced in March and distributed to all the teachers in the area and local libraries. If anyone would like an electronic version, please contact Lynn Campbell.

Contact: Lynn Campbell, Biodiversity Co-ordinator on 01259 452639

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Comhairle non Eilean Siar

- The first news is that Anne has had a little girl called Bethan. All are doing very well.
- Anne's contract finishes at the end of March. However, the Comhairle has agreed to the establishment of a permanent part-time biodiversity post starting 1 April. SNH is continuing to support the post. Anne has been offered and has accepted the post, so we're looking forward to seeing her back in due course.
- On the work front, production of action plans for five of our locally important species and habitats was commissioned in January and are currently being finalised. These are: machair; blanket bog; saline lagoons; woodland; great yellow bumblebee (*Bombus distinguendus*). Consultants have been asked to identify the aims and targets and to suggest possible actions. Over the next months we'll carry out public consultation to agree and finalise the actions and to engage with those interested in implementing the actions.

Contact: Diane MacPherson, 01870 602425 dmacpherson@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

- **Completed SAPs:** black grouse; farmland birds I: waders; farmland birds II: non-waders; bog rosemary; round-leaved sundew; juniper; great crested newt; mud snail
- **Completed HAPs:** raised bog; rivers, burns and terrestrial margins; farms (general plan); farm habitats I: hedgerows; ponds, lochs and reservoirs; deciduous woodland; coniferous woodland
- Introductory text is also in draft form. Delays are due to other commitments by partner organisations, so last action plans won't be in until May.
- **Projects implemented. Black grouse:** negotiations are underway to manage suitable habitat for the species at one site. **Farmland Birds II:** winter-feeding programme attracted

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250+ yellowhammer, 4-5 tree sparrow, and a handful of grey partridge. Fifty nest boxes are up for tree sparrow, and 350 being made to be put up over the coming months. Summer feeding for tree sparrow will begin in April. **Mud Snail:** approx. 30 taken into captivity are doing well at Mugdock Country Park where they are on display to the public with interpretation. These are our preliminary breeding stock for a captive propagation programme. **Juniper:** approx. 60 branches layered in East Dunbartonshire and Stirling in partnership. Approximately 2000 seeds collected. **Bog Rosemary:** Liaison with Stirling, South Lanarkshire and Glasgow has started. We hope to help co-ordinate regional work with the species by getting cuttings from other areas and exchanging cuttings between sites in the Clyde area. **Great Crested Newt:** Pond surveys have begun in a 2km radius of the known colonies. Up to 10 new ponds may be created, along with suitable terrestrial habitat. **Rivers, Burns, and Terrestrial Margins/Hedgerows:** Grant aid has been secured to create approx. 800m of species-rich hedgerows/chain of habitat islands along river and walkway corridors.

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

East Lothian

- A further 20 acres of wildbird cover to be sown this spring as part of the Grey Partridge Project. This brings the total to about 150 acres. Farmers can now alternate between sites so that partridge habitat is sustained on participating farms, even when the project ends.
- Our BAP will be launched at a local conference in May.

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

Edinburgh

- November Workshop to Review EBAP. Steering Group members and others in the wider partnership were invited to attend a workshop to review the first phase of EBAP, and to give their views on the way forward (attended by 50+ people). The day started with four short presentations (EBAP–How it began; Progress so far; The National Perspective; and Good Practice elsewhere). This was followed by three workshops (Priorities – Species and Habitats; Engaging the wider community; and Ensuring Delivery – Ways to successful implementation). Discussion was recorded, summarised and reported back to an enlarged steering group in February. Overall, it was felt that the number of actions needing reducing and the process simplified to ensure a realistic assessment of what was achievable.
- The approach agreed was to :
 - set up a temporary Species and Habitat group to decide which of our 97 original species could be allocated into our revised HAPs and which required “stand alone” SAPs. The total number of HAPs was reduced from 12 to 8 (with Rock Faces and Semi-natural habitats kept as distinct but holding joint meetings).
 - set up a Strategic Guidance Group to provide guidance to those drafting the reviewed HAPs and SAPs to avoid unnecessary duplication of reporting and to try and ensure “SMART” actions. This group might have a longer term role advising the steering group on its broader strategic aims.
 - include a Raising Awareness remit in all HAPs, and not to separate this role from the mainstream habitat actions. The existing Biodiversity Awareness and Involvement Group would continue to meet, organise the calendar (see below) and organise attendance at public events eg Treefest, Gardening Scotland and at local community focused events eg Craigmillar Festival, Wester Hailes Canal Open Day.
- Biodiversity Calendar. This involves twelve themes (one for each month) focusing on one aspect of the work of the partnership. Each month a press release is faxed to all local and community based newspapers in the area highlighting one aspect of our work (eg January – feeding garden birds, February – coastal litter and the potential damage to wildlife, March – avoiding use of peat in gardening). The press releases contain a simple question with a prize for the first five correct entries drawn. Additionally, a simple poster is delivered to all local

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libraries and distributed by e-mail to all partners and circulated widely within the City Council to maximise our chances of reaching as many people as possible.

Contact: Susan Steel or Caroline Peacock, Biodiversity Officers 0131 469 3920

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Falkirk

- Review of locally designated sites of ecological importance (Wildlife sites, SINC's etc) commenced.
- Survey of water voles to be undertaken during 2003, focusing on recently reported sites and key areas for development.
- Viable breeding populations of salmon now present in the River Carron and River Avon.
- Working with the Ranger service and community council to enhance several large ponds in Bo'ness.
- Evening farm walk and biodiversity event planned for local farmers for early summer 2003.
- Funding bid in to produce Green Household Guides and Green Office Guides and update and improve the Green Schools Guide, including production of a school calendar. Work undertaken in co-operation with Falkirk Council Sustainable Development Officer and Environmental Education Teacher.
- 15 schools awarded green schools grants (totalling £16,000) to undertake sustainability projects during 2003-04
- Work with Falkirk Museum Service to produce a Biodiversity Exhibition for spring 2004, to feature in the main Falkirk museum and then travel to other venues.
- Biodiversity Parks Initiative ongoing, with 5 more parks to be added this year. A leaflet has recently been published promoting the project.
- Included a wildlife garden section in the Council's annual garden competition.
- A series of postcards have been produced to promote the "10 steps for garden biodiversity".
- Consideration / feasibility assessment of potential managed realignment along the estuary is ongoing.
- Contact with Plantlife to establish a local "flora guardians" project monitoring the Young's helleborine and Dune helleborine populations. Several local volunteers already identified.
- Monitoring of 2002 implementation of action plans underway, results to be analysed and published shortly.
- Approx. 10 more action plans in production, to go out for consultation soon.
- And lots of other "stuff".....

Contact: Anna Perks, Biodiversity Officer on 01324 504863 anna.perks@falkirk.gov.uk

Fife

- Practical implementation is ongoing on a number of projects:
 - Nestboxes being put up in Kirkcaldy's most popular urban park. Later, in June, wildflower planting will take place with school groups and members of the community.
 - Improved access and a new bird hide have been installed at Clatto Reservoir, one of Fife's most important wildfowl sites.
 - Planting of native aspen (propagated from the only known native stand in Fife) along with birch and oak has taken place on West Lomond Hill. The Pitcairn Society, with advice from Fife Council's archaeological unit, designed the planting pattern to minimise disturbance to the medieval field systems at the site.
 - ScottishPower were keen to develop biodiversity actions for their corporate BAP. Fife Ranger Service and the LBAP designed a biodiversity action plan for their largest substation site near Townhill, which are currently being implemented, and which ScottishPower hope to apply to all of their appropriate sites.
 - The final step has been taken in the development of Dalbeath Marsh as an LNR, with access improvements and a new car park making the area a valuable community resource.

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- Wood to Go Initiative has been immensely successful, and has so far supplied enough free wood for approx. 100 nestboxes to community groups across Fife. One of the major projects being undertaken by the LBAP Partnership is the Fife LBAP Rivers Project. First practical actions are targeted towards water vole protection, and a mink-trapping programme begins next month, based in and around Lochore Meadows Country Park. Lochore is one of the few strongholds for water voles in Fife. The project will include input from many partners, including the Fife Council Ranger Service and Estates Team, the local farming community, SNH, FWAG, the SSPCA and Police Wildlife Liaison Officers. Duloch Park, part of the Dunfermline Eastern Expansion site, is the premier Sustainable Urban Drainage System site in Scotland. The LBAP has written a habitat enhancement and community involvement plan, which will be implemented through SEPA's Diffuse Pollution Initiative.
- The report of the Fife Wetlands Initiative (2002) is to be published next month. This project was co-ordinated by the LBAP and FERN (formerly Fife Nature), and monitored the quantity and quality of wetland sites in Fife. Breeding wading birds were used as indicators of this habitat, and surveying took place thanks to the assistance of volunteer effort by local bird recorders.
- The LBAP's Annual Report will be launched next month.
- The SAP and HAP targets review has been completed, which highlighted current and potential major areas of work. From this the Partnership has agreed to focus on farmland, urban, rivers, coastal and business & biodiversity. Each of these will become a core project for the LBAP, with project plans and funding working to a three-year duration.
- A Monitoring Framework has been developed to take account of the monitoring requirements of the LBAP and the Community Plan.
- The Fife LBAP is now fully integrated with the Fife Environmental Strategy, which is developing the environmental aspect of Fife's Community Plan.
- And finally, the second edition of the LBAP is in production, with a launch and programme of events planned for June 2003.

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Glasgow

Contact: Keith Watson or Carol Maclean, Biodiversity Officers on 0141 287 5665

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<http://wildlife.glasgow.gov.uk>

Highland

- The Highland Biodiversity Project has a small budget to support community-led practical projects and awareness-raising events. Awards of around £1,000 have been allocated to projects in Caithness, Sutherland and Skye & Lochalsh, and the project is now looking for project ideas from Wester Ross, Ross & Cromarty East and Lochaber. Here are some examples of projects and events that have received or been allocated funding so far.

Practical Biodiversity Projects

- 10 farmers in Inverness & Nairn have each planted an acre of set-aside land with seed-bearing crops, to provide winter cover for birds under a small project co-ordinated by Highland FWAG (Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group). £750
- Members of Dunnet Forestry Trust have started a small tree nursery in the forest, with the help of the local Scout Group. £1,250
- Caithness & Sutherland Trout Angling Group carried out improvements to the banks of a spawning burn at Reay, including tree planting to help stabilise the stream banks. £600
- Lybster Community Council and the Caithness Ranger Service are working on a project to replace an old, derelict coastguard lookout hut with a flagstone shelter and interpretative panel, to help people wishing to watch marine wildlife (match funded by SNH). £2,000

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- Scourie Community Council and the Sutherland Ranger Service have erected an all-abilities hide to help people watch marine mammals and birds (part of a larger project funded by SNH and Scourie Estate). £1,000
- The Allt Beag Armadale Trust plans to plant a small field as a wild flower meadow, and plant native trees to improve the biodiversity of a small woodland on their community croft (part of a larger project involving SNH and the Highland Access Project). £1,500
- Pupils of Rogart Primary are undertaking a willow coppicing and wildlife hedge laying project in their school grounds, under the guidance of a local wood-working expert. £1,000
- The Kyle of Tongue Development Group have been awarded a small contribution towards the clean-up of the Glebe Woods, as a first step in a larger interpretation and improvement project based on ideas by local children. £500
- A number of Primary Schools throughout Skye & Lochalsh are installing nest box cameras to enable pupils to watch birds nesting from their classrooms in a project co-ordinated by RSPB and the local rangers. £2,000
- Two Primary Schools in Skye are undertaking wildlife gardening projects this Spring, with help from the National Trust for Scotland and Highland Council Ranger Services. £1,000
- The Broadford Environmental Group is undertaking a project to control Japanese knotweed around the village, as this is threatening the native biodiversity. £1,100

Awareness-Raising Events:

- Residents of Ulbster, in association with Yarrows Heritage Trust, are undertaking regular visits to the area around Loch Watanan, to observe how the plant, bird and invertebrate life changes through the seasons.
- The Friends of Newtonhill Group, in conjunction with the Caithness Ranger Service, is holding a number of Open Days in Newtonhill Forest, with the aim of finding out about the wildlife that live there.
- Skerray Historical Society is undertaking an 18 month intensive survey of the flora and fauna of their township, in association with local experts.
- Pupils of Stoer Primary School have started work on a big project to find out 'What lives in our loch?' involving the erection of a hide and the purchase of microscopes, binoculars and other equipment to look at the loch environment.
- The community of Ardgay were recently gifted the Gearrhoille Wood, and are holding a number of site visits, open days, training events and school projects to map the woodland habitats. It is hoped that this information will feed into future management and interpretation projects.
- The Skye & Lochalsh Biodiversity Group is also hoping to fund a Marine Awareness Day and a series of Wildlife Gardening events in the Summer. (all £1,000)

Plan-wise, we've completed and launched the Caithness BAP, and the Sutherland and Skye & Lochalsh BAPs are in draft format. Work is due to start on the Wester Ross process, with a workshop in Achnasheen on 16th April, and in Ross & Cromarty East on 28th May. Lochaber is the last area to embark on this process, and they will hold their workshop in June.

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

Midlothian

The advert for the Midlothian Biodiversity Project Officer post was in the Scotsman on Friday 28 March.

Contact: Geoff Mather, Senior Projects Officer, Midlothian Council, 0131 271 3462
geoff.mather@midlothian.gov.uk

NE Scotland LBAP

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

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North Lanarkshire

Contact: Vicky Abernethy, Conservation and Greening Manager, 01236 780636
abernethyv@northlan.gov.uk

Orkney

- The Manual of Habitat Action Plans and Audit is published, and is currently being distributed.
- The writing of our SAPs is being contracted out this year and should be published by the beginning of next year.
- We are in the process of an initial HLF bid for the Environment Trust which the LBAP officer post would be put under. The bid will fund the Biodiversity Record Centre and many other projects that are yet to be determined.
- The 21 Area Action Plans are undergoing review and will be updated to match the same format as the Manual and be plain text edited to suit the communities that they are for.
- There are many projects that have been highlighted for the next 12 months: creation of a Community Gardening Officer to take on urban biodiversity and working with schools; a colour summary of our Manual; the writing and publishing of the SAPs; an interactive website that will be launched in September and will be ongoing in development over the next 3 years; a series of workshops to produce a list of projects that range in size for each of the community council areas; initiating of a Green Gym Project; working closely with the Biodiversity Record Centre to bring up the reporting capabilities and roles to facilitate the work of the LBAP officer; an initiative to get £300 from businesses in Orkney to go into a pot to fund projects, and many more.

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

Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire, and Inverclyde

- I have been in post since the end of January and am currently in the process of editing the HAPs and SAPs with the aim of publishing the LBAP in the late summer.
- We have funding for a new part-time Recorders post based in the Museum at Paisley. We hope that this post will be filled in the near future.
- I am working on a brief with our Environmental Services Department to allow a biodiversity audit of four of the main parks in Renfrewshire (Barshaw, Robertson, Fountains and Gleniffer Braes) to be carried out. This will allow us to have a clear idea of the current resource and therefore what can be done to enhance these areas.
- We have put in a funding bid to allow us to work in partnership with the University of Paisley to look at various biodiversity issues in the area, including 'Ecological inter-relationships in the Clyde Estuary SPA'.

Contact: Nicki Dunn, Biodiversity Officer, 0141 842 5281 nicki.dunn@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Scottish Borders

- Set up Steering Group, with 6 sub-groups
- Hope to launch new LBAP document in July
- Tweed Forum Catchment Plan will be launched in July.
- Local Plan update happening (last in 1995)
- Set up a grey partridge and tree sparrow project with 44 farms signed up planting 46ha of wildbird cover (earns farmers an extra 2 points on the RSS).

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

Living Shetland

Helen Moncrieff left her job as the Living Shetland Biodiversity Officer to work for the RSPB at the end of March. I and her other joint manager at FWAG, as well as the whole Living Shetland

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Steering Group wish her all the very best in her new job and thank her for the effort she put in during her time in post. She achieved a considerable amount over the past 18 months and the profile of biodiversity has been well and truly raised among the general public as well as opinion formers as a result.

We have recruited a new Biodiversity Officer for the remaining 6 months of the project in Nicky Davies, but she is not able to start until June because of prior commitments. In the meantime, biodiversity queries about Shetland can be directed to me but don't expect quite such a quick response as you may have been used to!

AgriBAP: Discussions continue, with the first draft almost completed. Progress has been a bit slower than we would have liked but that is largely due to the scale of the task and the importance of getting the details right, in both biodiversity terms and to the crofters and farmers themselves.

Community Representatives: Glen Tyler finished as the first community representative in December and produced the first community BAP in the series planned as part of the present Living Shetland project. The next four community representatives started work in November and are Jane Mack in Fetlar, Hazel Gray (Yell), Paul Goddard (Bressay) and Vic Thomas in Sandwick. Their work is well in hand with leaflets having been distributed, public meetings held and other discussions having taken place over the winter and a couple of draft plans are now to hand.

Roadside BAP: The publicity leaflet/ survey form is at the printers now and will seek to publicise the importance of roadside biodiversity as well as gain further valuable data from the public about sites they care about by means of a form, which can be returned to the Shetland Biological Records Centre. The technical document is also nearing completion, following widespread consultation and discussion and promises to be a valuable working document for those responsible for Shetland's roadsides and their biodiversity.

There's a lot else going on because Helen had started or was involved in many projects and the summer show season will soon be upon us. Bringing all this work together with the habitat and species plans and the other sector plans is no small challenge and will be the main focus for the new Biodiversity Officer. In the meantime I've got to try and keep the show on the road till June as well as juggle all my other tasks – wish me luck!

Contact: Until 20 June 2003: Austin Taylor, Conservation Manager, 01595 7448332, austin.taylor@sic.shetland.gov.uk From 23 June 2003: Nicky Davies, Biodiversity Officer, 01595 690832, livingshetland@fwag.org.uk

South Lanarkshire Biodiversity Partnership

Stephen Corcoran has now moved on to Highland Birchwoods. An advert for the vacancy has been circulated. Malcolm Muir will be the LBAP contact until further notice.

Contact: Malcolm Muir, 01355 806544, malcolm.muir@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Stirling

- Working in conjunction with the Access Officer to produce an Access and Biodiversity Development Advice Note (DAN) for Stirling Council.
- Lots of discussion about Council management of greenspace and looking to try and link this in with the new funding sources for communities and greenspace, to get new initiatives going.
- New improved biodiversity web site to go back on line (we weren't told that it had been taken off line) in early April.
- A draft "Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park - Actions for Biodiversity" is currently with Park Officials.
- Major bid to HLF for biodiversity improvement in the Nat Park was rejected. Major goalpost shift suspected, as we were initially encouraged to apply on the grounds we were rejected on, ie large scale habitat improvement.

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Tayside

- Tayside LBAP published last autumn; working on 2nd Tranche now (both SAPs and HAPs)
- "Incorporating Biodiversity into Local Authority Services" - a document to specifically introduce biodiversity issues to all local authority departments. This will be circulated to all three local authorities within Tayside and will open the way to liaise with Community Partnerships.
- Local Patch Project - survey is being repackaged so that the Ranger Services can use it in schools to teach ID skills and to encourage surveys in school grounds. This will link with the Backyard Biodiversity Day celebrations.
- Logo Landscapes Project - integrating art and biodiversity by using the 'footprint' logos for a photographic project (to be launched on Backyard Biodiversity Day)
- Barn Owl the Tayside-wide survey was launched during National Nestbox Week. A number of pilot projects have been taken on by Partners - NTS in the Killiecrankie area; SAC on estates north of Perth; FWAG in the Angus Glens
- Swift Survey and Nestbox Project continuing; lunch-time seminar to Architects, Planning and Housing departments
- Various stands being taken at shows - including the Dundee Spring Flower Show: "Bats, Moths and Gardens" (to link with National Moth Night); Making Friends with the Environment (education event); Angus Show: Hedge Care; Dundee Flower Festival: launch of Red Squirrel Project.
- Salmon in the Classroom Project - a Tayside-wide project to be piloted in a number of schools throughout the three local authority areas
- In implementing the 1st Tranche LBAP liaison is now taking place with new Partners, such as the Police Wildlife Liaison Officer; Scotland's Garden Trust; Thrive; Scottish & Southern Energy; Perth College; University of the 3rd Age; Tay Estuary Forum; BTCV; Rural Partnerships; Tourist Boards; Countryside Initiatives, etc.
- A major Biodiversity Exhibition is to be held in Perth Museum April-September 2004; Tayside-wide events will raise awareness of the Partnership and the various projects being undertaken.

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West Dunbartonshire

Contact: Lesley Rogerson, Environment Officer, 01389 738254 lesley.rogerson@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

West Lothian

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Articles

Plantlife - Bluebells for Britain

On 17 March, Plantlife International and the Botanical Society of the British Isles (BSBI), launched our next single species survey. This time we're looking for bluebells (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) which are facing serious threats. One of the most serious is the spread of the introduced, and commonly planted species, the Spanish bluebell (*Hyacinthoides hispanica*), which cross breeds with the native bluebell. Both the Spanish bluebell and the hybrid are more dominant than the native, whose traits quickly disappear from the wild. The native bluebell is also suffering from the effects of nutrient pollution and habitat destruction but also from the illegal unsustainable collection of wild populations as well as climate change. This latest survey (supported by HLF) encourages participants to distinguish between the native, Spanish and hybrid bluebells and to collect additional site specific data. This information will be used to assess the health of our native bluebell populations and threats to them at a site level. The survey follows on from the announcement earlier in March that through the County Flowers initiative, the bluebell was voted the most popular flower across the UK. For this reason, it has been adopted as the UK's national favourite flower.

For more information on the bluebell survey, see www.plantlife.org.uk or ring the Bluebell hotline 0207 808 0118 for a survey pack. LBAP Officers should all receive a pack and poster directly from Plantlife. Contact details: Deborah Long on 0131 248 2859, or email deborah.long@plantlife.org.uk

Plantlife - County Flowers

Last year's County Flowers project, run by Plantlife International and sponsored by Laura Ashley, enthused thousands of people to vote for their favourite county flower. The first results to be announced from that voting is that the bluebell, coming top in almost 20 counties and coming second in a further seven, is the UK's favourite flower. Plantlife International has now published a list of the top two flowers for each county and is encouraging people to vote for one or the other to decide which should be the wild flower emblem for their county and others that they visit. The top contestants for each county are listed and illustrated at www.plantlife.org.uk or on the new County Flowers leaflet, available from Plantlife or Laura Ashley shops throughout the country. For further information, see the Plantlife website. For leaflets, contact Deborah Long on 0131 248 2859 or email deborah.long@plantlife.org.uk

Plantlife - The Common Plants Survey 2003

The Common Plants Survey is part of the People and Plants programme, a joint venture between Plantlife and the BSBI, which is funded by HLF. This is an annual survey, the aim being to look at the distribution of 65 common species throughout Britain. All the species are easy to identify, including eg cowslip and bluebell, and are indicative of a wide range of common habitats such as grassland and woodland. Survey packs include an identification guide to help beginners take part. The data collected will be used to help to interpret the impact of environmental change on the habitats of these plants over time. Volunteers are asked to survey a randomly chosen 1km square area close to where they live. Within this area, we ask them to estimate the percentage cover of these species in the centre of their area and along a linear feature such as a wall or path. The survey runs March-September each year, and the closing date for this year is 14 September. If you took part in the survey last year, you will automatically receive another survey pack through the post. If you would like to take part this year and receive a survey pack: log on to www.plantlife.org.uk email enquiries@plantlife.org.uk or ring the hotline on 0207808 0118. Help on the survey will be available from the Plantlife stand at Gardening Scotland 2003, 31 May-1 June 2003. Plantlife Scotland will also be running a Common Plants Survey workshop on 7 June in central Scotland to help people get started. Further details from Deborah Long at deborah.long@plantlife.org.uk

Local Biodiversity Action Plan Newsletter

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SEPA - Biodiversity Briefing: The Big Picture

<http://www.sepa.org.uk/publications/sepaview/html/14/biodiversity.htm>

BTCV

You can register with BTCV Handbooks for ten practical conservation handbooks that are now published online at <http://www.btcv.org/handbooks>. Hedging, The Urban Handbook, Toolcare, and Dry Stone Walling were published in October 2002. Titles to be published before May 2003 are Waterways and Wetlands, Footpaths, Tree Planting and Aftercare, Sand Dunes, Woodlands, and Fencing. From the BTCV website you could book a conservation holiday, take part in a Green Gym, buy seeds and tools from BTCV Tools and Trading, or find out what your local BTCV conservation group is doing and join them for a day of activities; <http://www.btcv.org/>

Request for Bat corpses

Dr Kirsty Park from Stirling University is looking for some fresh bat corpses early on in this year, to practice sampling methods before taking blood from live bats. All corpses would be sent on for rabies screening. If you can help, please contact her directly at k.j.park@stir.ac.uk

Conserving the brown hare

'A practical guide produced by the Game Conservancy Trust for farmers, landowners and LBAP groups' This booklet has now been published and is available from Irene Johnston, GCT, Couston, Newtyle, Perthshire, PH12 8UT ijohnston@gct.org.uk