

Local Biodiversity Action Plan Newsletter

Issue 3: October 2002

*Thank you to all of you who sent in updates for our third newsletter, I hope this means you found the first ones useful! We hope to get this one circulated more widely so are continuing to build a distribution list to include all LBAP officers, members of the Scottish Biodiversity Forum and its subgroups, and Scottish Lead Partners. If you have any suggestions for additions to the distribution list please do keep sending them in. Over the last two months, the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy was developed through a series of workshops. Four or five LAP Officers attended each of these workshops, and fed back their notes and thoughts at a very productive network meeting at the beginning of September. These comments have all been passed to the Scottish Biodiversity Forum. Thank you to all those who have made time to attend yet more meetings! Deadline for the next newsletter is **Wednesday 4 December**. Any comments or suggestions for the newsletter are very welcome, please e-mail [Vicky Abernethy](mailto:vicky.abernethy@rspb.org.uk) (vicky.abernethy@rspb.org.uk) or [Jo Lenthall](mailto:joanna.lenthall@rspb.org.uk) (joanna.lenthall@rspb.org.uk).*

Local Updates

Argyll & Bute Local Biodiversity Partnership.

New Strategy: A&B Local Biodiversity Partnership has agreed a new Strategic Plan, which identifies the following priorities for delivery in 2002-2005. The three key themes are: Implementation [promote and support LBAP objectives, aid development of community level biodiversity action groups, with a view to putting more localised plans in place; plan to engage more with business community by demonstrating benefits of association, and their capacity to influence through specific habitats and species; partnership will be supporting the development of Land Management Contracts], Awareness-raising [aimed at raising the profile and public perception of the importance of biodiversity, through regular press releases, annual events, and website; plan to develop an annual awards scheme that will reward groups and individuals who have contributed to biodiversity; also be making provision for environmental workshops for those involved in land management, catchment management and agri-environment schemes], Developing capacity [fundamental to delivery of strategy and the LBAP, through an integrated effort by partners in identifying and pursuing opportunities for fund raising; will conduct a review of Marine Capacity and develop a proposal for implementation of recording biological data.

Scottish Biodiversity Week: SWT held a Fungi Forage on Seil Island (25 attended), Woods for All hosted a day at Crinan Woods - 100 people from the Garden Project @ Argyll & Bute Hospital, Ashfield and Whitegates Primary Schools, the Link Club, Lochgilphead Resource Centre and Baraline Lodge. The day was designed to be accessible and inclusive. Woodland Trust Scotland led the planting of Oak Trees, which had begun life in Crinan Woods and had been collected and nurtured by the Garden Project at Argyll & Bute Hospital. Forest Enterprise (Lorne District) hosted a Fungi forage at Duror (20 attended).

Black Grouse Seminar: first A&B Black Grouse Seminar, held at Tarbert, 17 September 2002 with 40 representatives from the public and private forestry sectors, land managers, and conservation organisations. Presentations included the management, research and grants available to support this threatened species. The Black Grouse Recovery Project has come about as a direct result of the LBAP and the Black Grouse Species Action Plan. A Steering group made up of the Forestry Commission, RSPB, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Power, Scottish Agricultural College and the Argyll & Bute Local Biodiversity Partnership's Biodiversity Officer secured funding for the Project for an initial 22 months with further funding in hand to extend to 46 months. Sandra McLean started work as the Black Grouse Project in April of this year. To date Sandra has been involved in Lek counts in Kintyre, a training day for forest rangers, developing prescriptions for a site south of Tarbert and collating information from other regions in Argyll. Sandra will run another seminar aimed at farmers and estate owners. She will also be advising on agri-environment applications in association with the Scottish Agricultural College and continue to build on the baseline data she has collected so far.

Red Squirrel - North Lorne Group: The Group was formed because of a public meeting held in November 2001. The group has developed recording skills through the efforts of Abbie Patterson (NTS) and John Little (Tilhill Forestry). Membership is open to all interested in ensuring that this important species remains in Argyll. The contact for this group is Marina Curran-Colthart (Local Biodiversity Officer). Abbie Patterson has lead this group through the early stages and is a representative on the Scottish Red Squirrel Group, unfortunately he has been moved to Edinburgh as the NTS Oban Office closed. There has been interest from

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residents in Mid-Argyll and Cowal areas to set up similar groups. Marina is planning public meetings to raise awareness and as a result set up two groups.

Corncrake Update: The UK Biodiversity Action Plan Steering Group for Corncrake met on North Uist to give an update on how this annual visitor from Africa is doing in Scotland and most notably on the islands off the West Coast and Orkney. The Local Biodiversity Officers for Argyll & Bute, Western Isles, Orkney and Highland region have been co-opted onto the group. Argyll & Bute and Orkney have local species action plans for corncrake, the others are in the process of writing them. This move is significant and values the work happening locally. According to the 2001 survey, the Argyll islands, of Coll, Tiree, Mull, Iona, Colonsay, Oronsay and Islay appear to be doing well. Although, in some areas there has been a small decline, whereas in others an increase. However, the good news is that there is an overall increase in numbers for the inner and the Outer Hebrides and Orkney. The RSPB, SNH and SEERAD (Agri-environment Schemes) are working in partnership with crofters and farmers to secure the future of the corncrake. The steering group visited a number of sites to discuss the management of the corncrake. Fenced off areas of early cover is the key to providing an essential habitat for the corncrake on arrival from Africa. An example of a good mix of tall herbage is Cow Parsley, Nettles, Docken, and various grass species, which has been excluded from grazing and lightly fertilised (initially) earlier in the growing season. The management of these areas continues once the corncrake has flown back to its winter home with some light grazing preferably by cattle. This type of proactive management by the crofter and farmer for corncrake is brought about through various schemes and measures such as Environmentally Sensitive Area Scheme, Special Area of Conservation, Special Protected Area and Bird Friendly mowing, all are important contributing factors to maintaining this species. The Steering group is concerned that the ESA (non-competitive scheme) is running out in some corncrake areas in the next two years without any non-competitive follow up. Members of the group will be actively lobbying for a continuation with an appropriate non-competitive scheme. A full national survey of corncrake is to be carried out in 2003-2008 subject to funding. English Nature is currently carrying out a re-introduction programme with some success. The aim of this project is to rear 300 birds over the next two years. This project was recently featured on the BBC's Country File programme. The lessons learned from this will be useful in other re-introduction programmes. The next meeting of the steering group is due to be held on Colonsay next year. Lets hope that the efforts of the agencies and the farming and crofting communities pay off and are rewarded with an increase in numbers and perhaps encourage the corncrake onto the mainland where in the 1930's it was abundant through out Scotland.

FWAG News: FWAG have appointed Lucy Sumsion as their new officer (part-time) covering from North Argyll to South Kintyre. The initial contract is for 1 year with a view to continuing this post once funding has been put in place. Lucy's work with farmers will help to achieve some of the biodiversity objectives.

Contact: For further information on any of the above contact Marina Curran-Colthart, Biodiversity Officer on 01631 562125 or marina.curran-colthart@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Ayrshire

Contact: Morven Buchanan, Environment Officer, East Ayrshire Council 01563 554041 morven.buchanan@east-ayrshire.gov.uk; Ken Gibb, LA21 Co-ordinator, South Ayrshire Council 01292 616288 ken.gibb@gw.south-ayrshire.gov.uk; Tonia Sobieraj, Policy/Administration 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

Consultation Period Extended! Clackmannanshire Biodiversity Partnership has extended its deadline for Consultation Draft comments. So, if you are itching to get your word in, it's not too late. We've had a good response from partner organisations, however we are trying to encourage local community groups and individuals to voice their opinions. Fifty additional copies of the Draft have been produced to be circulated in and around the area.

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Other news: Biodiversity Seminar held on 30 August was well attended (c.55 people), who valiantly participated in the afternoon walks despite the torrential rain! Informative talks given by Sir Robert Stewart (chair of LBAP Steering Group) and Russell Young (Water and Wetland working group) were well received and the numerous poster displays provided great lunchtime entertainment. Scottish Biodiversity Week events ranged from bat and angler's evenings to woodland and fungal forays. Most of the events were well attended and all who took part enjoyed themselves thanks to the enthusiasm of the volunteer leaders.

Next on the agenda...: We are now working on the second tranche of the Clackmannanshire BAP. This tranche will contain a few plans that will go out for Consultation, partly in hardcopy and partly by email, in time to be included with the first tranche plans in the final document. The final BAP will be launched spring/summer 2003 and will be followed by a third tranche later.

Contact: For further information on any of the above contact Lynn Campbell, Biodiversity Co-ordinator on 01259 452639 or lynncampbell@clacks.gov.uk

Comhairle non Eilean Siar

Audit: The Western Isles biodiversity audit was produced in June 2002. The next stage is to prioritise the species and habitats within the audit and we aim to have an agreed list by December 2002 to commence the development of action plans in 2003.

Biodiversity Roadshow: During July and August 2002, the Western Isles LBAP and the Western Quality of Life Initiative (LA21) went 'on the road' attending five agricultural shows throughout the islands. Agricultural shows were considered an ideal venue to raise awareness of each initiative as over 1000 people attend each show.

Scottish Biodiversity Week: 14 events were organised throughout the islands, and over 50 people attended these, nine of which were children. Feedback from those holding events was that September was too late in the year for breeding birds and flowering plants, so not a lot for people to see. It was felt that future events should be held earlier in the summer, during the school holidays, as more children and families would attend and there are more tourists around. Feedback from participants was that they enjoyed the events and thought they were a good idea.

Collection of Wildflower Seeds: During September the Biodiversity Officer and primary schools in the Uists have been involved in the collection of wildflower seeds for use by the Council on new road side verges on the islands. It is hoped that a seed bank will be established for use by contractors on new road projects in the future.

Western Isles Biodiversity Website: The Western Isles Biodiversity website was launched during Scottish Biodiversity week and can be viewed at www.cne-siar.gov.uk/biodiversity. This provides background information, an update of progress with the LBAP, a 'What's on' section and contact details for those wishing to get involved in the LBAP process. *Any comments on the website would be welcomed.*

Aggregate Industries BAP: Aggregate Industries UK Ltd have a commitment to the introduction of BAP's at all of their sites and are to produce a BAP for a quarry site on the Isle of Lewis. They are keen to involve local people in the preparation of the BAP and have contacted the Biodiversity Officer for details of people locally who could be approached regarding the preparation of a BAP.

Funding of Biodiversity Officer post: Funding for the post ends in March 2003 and the Council is currently reviewing the post, which is part-time biodiversity and part-time crofting development. SNH have indicated that they would continue to fund the post for another year.

Contact: For further information on any of the above contact Anne MacLellan, Crofting & Biodiversity Development Officer, 01870 603428 or amaclellan@cne-siar.gov.uk.

Dumfries & Galloway

The first 3-year phase of the Dumfries & Galloway LBAP implementation is now ending. Much has been achieved but much remains to be done, and there has been a great deal of discussion on funding for a further 3-year implementation phase.

A large **Heritage Lottery Fund** application is being prepared in Dumfries and Galloway, and a number of biodiversity projects have been put forward for inclusion. However, a decision on funding is still some way off.

The **LBAP is increasingly being used** in the planning system, with recent consultations involving opencast mining, a caravan park, a landfill site, forestry, road and housing

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developments. It is usually possible to modify the plans to incorporate a number of biodiversity benefits with minimal cost to the developers, although this often requires considerable negotiation. Yet, there have been no significant negative biodiversity impacts from these schemes, but some current and future proposals are likely to test commitment to the LBAP. Negotiations are also nearing completion with a private company, to provide grant funding for developing biodiversity areas within local communities. Biodiversity is still not a household word to the majority of the population, but a number of communities have enthusiastically embraced LBAP principles, and some funding to carry out work on the ground would be very welcome. A student project on biodiversity on local golf courses has recently been completed and has opened the door to biodiversity discussions with green keepers and other managers of sports and recreation areas. Another student project, with the support of SEPA, is about to start on the biodiversity benefits of sustainable urban drainage schemes (SUDS).

Contact: For further information on any of the above contact Peter Norman, Biodiversity Officer, 01387 260172 or peter.norman@dumgal.gov.uk.

East Dunbartonshire

Biodiversity Partnership has now met twice this year, and most action plans are signed up to. So far we have final draft SAPs for Bog Rosemary, Juniper, and the Mud Snail, first drafts for Tufted Loosetrife, and Bennet's Pondweed. The Biodiversity Officer just had website design training - aim is to put the plan on the web, with limited number of hard copies, and CD-ROM circulation.

Approximately 100 people attended **Scottish Biodiversity Week** events - local press release attracted virtually all of these. Best Successes with bat evenings, canal walks, and wildlife gardening. Flier requesting volunteers circulated at same locations. Some success.

Promotion: Stands at two country fairs, in B&Q for two weeks, and Biodiversity related leaflets in three council offices, two public libraries, leisure centre, and at all events. Talks given at two RSPB Wildlife Explorer groups. Biodiversity questionnaire mailout in Lennoxton.

Producing a Biodiversity section for a **mailout** on a calendar to 44,000 households. Volunteer working on a school-oriented newsletter to promote Biodiversity.

School **contest to design logo** for the Biodiversity Plan underway.

Projects: Mud Snail and Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary populations confirmed; approximately 100 nest boxes for Tree Sparrows being made; winter feeding of farmland passerines due to begin on at least 5 farms; approximately 300 Bog Rosemary cuttings taken and potted on; one new pond created; 7km of farmland and two rivers surveyed for birds during spring; working on production of a land registry.

Lenzie Moss has been purchased by East Dunbartonshire Council as the first Local Nature Reserve in East Dunbartonshire (designation not yet complete). Negotiations are underway to secure the future of Low Moss complete with 5-year funded conservation management package - only four more bogs to go!

Small grants/donations in from 10 organisations.

Local Plan review commented on, and SINC/Wildlife Corridor system reviewed with the addition of/changes to around 40 sites. Wildlife Corridors emphasis increased to equal value with SINC.

Request: has anyone produced best practice guidelines for developers, building renovators, tree surgeons, planning depts, council parks and maintenance etc.?

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

East Lothian Biodiversity update

Website launched during Scottish Biodiversity Week - www.eastlothianbiodiversity.org.uk. Are having some teething troubles with it regarding quality of text and some of the links. Also launched at SBW was an education pack linking farming and conservation measures. The biodiversity link was the number and types of priority species that live in different farm habitats. The Royal Highland Education Trust is producing the teachers' notes for this pack. There will be an in-service day for teachers to tell them about the pack and encourage them to use it and the biodiversity cards produced earlier.

Grey Partridge Project is progressing this autumn with a further 30 acres of wildbird cover to be sown by the end of October. A Rivers and Wetlands Group will be set up this month. One of the main topics I want the group to take forward is an initiative to protect water voles.

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Business and biodiversity - a student employed through the summer by the STEP programme contacted all businesses in East Lothian with a questionnaire. Those that responded and requested more information will be contacted again. About 40 businesses asked for more information (about 2.5% of the total).

Contact: For further information on any of the above contact Stuart MacPherson, Biodiversity Officer 01620 827242 or smacpherson@eastlothian.gov.uk.

Edinburgh

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

Falkirk

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

Fife

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

Glasgow

Tranche 2 species and habitat action plans were launched on 5th September 2002 at Pollok Country Park. The event was very successful at generating press coverage and raising awareness of the process with articles published in *The Herald* and local newspapers and Radio coverage on BBC Radio Scotland. Species Action Plans for Bog-rosemary, Sheep's-bit, Toothwort, Common Frog, Common Toad, Atlantic salmon, Skylark and Tree Sparrow are now all available on the Internet and are being posted out. A Habitat Action Plan for Rivers & Streams, and a Statement for Built Up Areas and Gardens, is now available.

The third issue of Glasgow's **Biodiversity News** (LBAP Newsletter) is currently available.

Biodiversity Week offered guided walks from GCC Countryside Ranger Service and the Castlemilk Environment Trust, and a talk from the RSPB.

"**Wild in the City**" events on the theme of biodiversity were held by the GCC Countryside Ranger Service at four parks throughout the city during the school holidays to raise the profile of biodiversity. Over 1,200 people attended the events.

For **Backyard Biodiversity Day** on 21st June two events were held: Community Wildlife Gardening at the Coach House Trust and Ecotrek at the Glasgow Science Centre.

The **winter feeding of farmland birds**, which was piloted at two sites last year, is due to start up again. Hopefully, the scheme is helping to sustain local populations of key species, such as Grey Partridge, Skylark, Linnet, House Sparrow, Tree Sparrow, Yellowhammer and Reed Bunting, all of which are declining nationally and 'red-listed'.

Surveys of Toothwort have enabled us to identify five new populations, which we will continue to monitor. Population counts were continued for Burnet-saxifrage and seedlings have been propagated ready for planting out. Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary counts were disappointing this year presumably due to the long period of overcast conditions, but Marsh Violets were identified at three of the potential sites. Surveys were also carried out of key woodland sites with emphasis on Bluebell populations. Preliminary surveys of **Tree Sparrow** have failed to find extant populations within two of the three areas in Glasgow formerly known to hold the species.

Habitat management is ongoing with monitoring of grasslands and heaths with some scrub and bracken control work. Further habitat management, including wetland and woodland, is happening at various sites throughout the City, including the SWT Wildlife Heritage of Glasgow Project (part-funded by the GCC Landfill Tax Credits Scheme).

Contact: For further information on any of the above contact Keith Watson or Catherine Scott, Biodiversity Officers on 0141 287 5665 or keith.watson@land.glasgow.gov.uk or Catherine.scott@land.glasgow.gov.uk.

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Highland

Inverness & Nairn BAP: Draft community biodiversity action plan was launched on 7 September. It's a small booklet that aims to raise awareness as much as provide a plan of action, but there are some actions at the back. We hope to hold a Heritage training day early in November on South Loch Ness, and are currently seeking funding to employ a part-time biodiversity officer to help communities share information & ideas.

Caithness BAP: Caithness Biodiversity Group has met once, and elected Barbara Bremner (Caithness & Sutherland Environmental Group) as their Chairman. Their next meeting is on Thursday 3 October, where we will agree a draft plan for consultation. We have appointed a part-time officer to help consult on the draft plan and run awareness-raising projects, and hope to consult on the draft during November and December. We also plan to hold a meeting with partners early next year to discuss delivery, targets and timescales. On practical biodiversity projects, we have funded improvements to a trout spawning burn at Reay and the initiation of a tree nursery at Dunnet, and hope to support interpretative projects at Sarclat and Lybster, as well as a whales & dolphins leaflet covering north Highland.

Sutherland BAP: The Sutherland Biodiversity Group has also met once, and elected Graeme Sinclair (Scottish Landowners Federation) as chairman. Their next meeting will be in early November, where practical projects and awareness-raising projects will be agreed. 3 biodiversity officers will be appointed to help consult on the draft plan and run the awareness-raising projects (covering north, east & west Sutherland) and we hope to finalise the Caithness and Sutherland plans by early next year.

Skye & Lochalsh BAP: An initial workshop has been held in Portree, and a biodiversity group initiated. It has not yet met, but it is hoped that funding can be found to draft and consult on the plan, as well as run the awareness-raising events.

Marine Innovation Award: A pilot project to raise awareness of projects that use the marine environment in a sustainable manner will be launched on 1 October. There will be three Awards of £2,500 each, covering the fishing, aquaculture and general marine environment sectors. The Award Scheme will run as a pilot this autumn and next.

Caithness Interpretation Project: 2 photographers have been appointed to produce a years worth of images of the biodiversity of Caithness, and this will be used to interpret the county in various projects. The images will be made available free of charge to locals communities and businesses on a not-for-profit basis.

Contact: For further information on any of the above contact Janet Bromham, Biodiversity Officer on 01463 702274 or janet.bromham@highland.gov.uk.

Midlothian

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

NE Scotland LBAP

Review of Priorities and Three-year Plan: NE Scotland is about to start a review of progress against all UK and North East priorities for species and habitats, to underpin a Three-year Plan, the framework for addressing action from April 2003 to March 2006. The review will involve two main concurrent actions:

- I. **A review of the information base for the 44 priority habitats and 195 priority species identified in the original NE Scotland Biodiversity Audit (1997-1998).** The original priority list of UK and locally important habitats and species was selected through consultation with a range of partners and local people. However, this selection was influenced by the available information, and since then there have been some substantial changes in status of some species, new information on habitats may have become available, and there have been some changes to the UK BAP priority lists and classifications. The review, in consultation with the new NE Scotland Biological Records Centre (NESBReC), will update our knowledge of the priority species and habitats in the North East where possible and appropriate.
- II. **Undertake a project to assess current action on the LBAP priorities and propose priorities for the next three years.** This will include reference to *all* species and habitats in the NE LBAP, producing a 'position statement' on our approach to each.

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The report will provide the detail for the LBAP aim “*To ensure that national targets for species and habitats as specified in the UK action plan are translated into effective local action*”. There will also be clear reference to all those species or habitats that the NE LBAP will *not* deal with, and a short statement as to why this is. The aim is to complete the review by January 2003.

Launch of Six New Species and Habitat Action Plans: The second group of NE species and habitat action plans, Water Vole; Red Squirrel; Farmland; Wet and Riparian Woodland; Species-rich Grassland; and Urban Areas HAPs, were launched through a series of awareness raising public events, as follows. Around 185 local people attended the events. **29 April: Water Vole Training Day** held at Haddo, Aberdeenshire, in partnership with experts from the University of Aberdeen. **29 May: Farm Wildlife Walk** at Easter Bauds Farm, Moray, led by the farmer and SAC Advisors. **6 June: Rescuing Reds** Red Squirrel SAP launched by the Lord Provost of Aberdeen at a talk and forest walk at Hazelhead Park, led by the Forestry Commission. **18 June: Riverside Woods and Wildlife Walk** from Spey Bay to Culreach in conjunction with Forest Enterprise and SWT. **19 June: Wild About the Garden** Talk and urban garden visit with local wildlife expert, in conjunction with Aberdeen Countryside Project. **4 August: Wildflower Wander** at Haddo grassland led by a local wildflower expert.

Main Actions and Involvement

Water Vole Targeted intensive surveys of Little Water and Deveron catchments by University of Aberdeen now complete and report available. Pilot mink control project proposed in the Ythan catchment. **Daubenton's Bat** Lunchtime seminar on bat conservation measures held with SEPA Aberdeen staff in April, in conjunction with Aberdeen Bat Group. **Ellon Wildlife Gardening Project** included a week of wildlife gardening events (e.g. Wildlife Gardening Talk and Gardeners' Question Time, featuring local Beechgrove Garden celebrity Carol Baxter, Free Trees at Ellon Farmer's Market, and Bat and Bird Box Building), in March attended by over 60 people. Following from the success of the events, Ellon Community Council have now integrated a “Wildlife Gardening” category into their annual gardening competition. Awards were presented in September. **Business and Biodiversity in North East Scotland Booklet Launched** at the Grampian Environmental Forum April breakfast seminar in Aberdeen attended by 25 business people. Many more companies requested copies of the booklet because of associated publicity, and follow-up visits have been made to 20 companies, 12 of which are currently considering their actions to help local biodiversity. **The Habitats and Species Sub-group** have assisted in progress monitoring of the actions for Lowland Raised Bogs, Wych Elm and Aspen Hoverfly. Review of these plans, developed in 1998, is now in progress.

Development of new HAPs

Coastal Sand Dunes and Shingles working group set up and developing the first draft of the HAP. **Rivers, Burns and Lochs** working group set up and developing the first draft of the HAP. **Wetland** survey work being collated by ecologist volunteer working at RSPB, as the foundation for the HAP. **Coastal Intertidal Habitats** first draft of the HAP in progress.

Contact: For further information on any of the above contact Maria Hardy, LBAP Co-ordinator on 01224 711120 or maria.hardy@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.

North Lanarkshire

Contact: Brian Thomson, Conservation and Greening Manager on 01236 780636 or thomsonb@northlan.gov.uk.

Orkney

Contact: A new postholder will be announced soon.

Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire, and Inverclyde

Contact: Frank MacCullaich, Biodiversity Officer on 0141 842 5235 or frank.maccullaich@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Scottish Borders

Andy Tharme is now in post as **Natural Heritage Officer**. He's met most of the LBAP partners already as an induction and to say hello. The next LBAP partnership meeting is the end of

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October where a vision can be set out and to get the ball rolling with a number of developments (e.g. Habitats working groups, HAP production) and initiatives. He's also set up a meeting of some partners for early November to begin development of a farmland bird project...more details to follow.

In-house with SBC, he is developing ways of **integrating biodiversity issues into the planning process**. He will be consulted on Local plans and is giving a demonstration with the Biological Records Centre to Development Control in November on the potential applications of the BRC datasets and his advisory role to the planning department on biodiversity issues.

Also attended SBF workshops on Land Use, People and Business & Development.

Contact: For further information on any of the above contact Andy Tharme, Natural Heritage Officer on 01835 825063 or atharme@scotborders.gov.uk.

Living Shetland

AgriBAP: Only 40 out of 1000 questionnaires were returned!! It seems that having the MP or MSP as "Slaves for a Day" on a croft was not incentive enough for some. However, the information gained from questionnaires was interesting, highlighting various issues and valued habitats. MSP Tavish Scott's slave task was "rooing" Shetland rams (that's plucking the wool of by hand) at Sony Williamson's croft. Alistair Carmichael MP helped with the shearing of organic sheep on Keldabister Farm. There was considerable local media coverage. The AgriBAP is now being drafted and will soon go to consultation. Also gave a presentation at the Shetland Organic Producers Seminar about LBAPs and the AgriBAP.

Community Representatives: The first community plan is in the process of being developed by South Mainland and Fair Isle representative Glen Tyler, following a public meeting in Bigton. Only four people turned out for the meeting (we were in competition with a bridge night and a school meeting!!). However, it was still productive and people have since voiced their interest in helping develop the plan. We are in the process of recruiting the next two community reps for the North Isles and Central areas.

Schools Environment Week: Over 600 children enjoyed various activities at three venues across Shetland, over 9 days. Various organisations led activities such as beach art, Whose beak is it anyway? (a jigsaw type game looking at how birds have adapted to live in Shetland's habitats), rock-pooling and whale games.

Marine sector BAP: This is in the very early stages. We will be forming a marine working group to draft a marine BAP, to go to public consultation in the New Year. The BAP will cover coastal and marine habitats and be aimed at user groups - mainly the aquaculture and fisheries sectors.

Living Shetland Loving Shetland: Our arts competition/exhibition will be launched imminently! The idea is to get local people to enter photographs, paintings, poems, music etc influenced by biodiversity into our competition then exhibit the best in the summer. We may produce postcards and such like later.

Contact: For further information on any of the above contact Helen Moncrieff, Living Shetland Project on 01595 690832 or helen.moncrieff@fwag.org.uk.

South Lanarkshire Biodiversity Partnership

The **Sub-group structure** of the Partnership has been re-activated over the last 6 months with meetings of the Agriculture, Freshwater, Peatland and Urban groups to push forward the LBAP process. These groups have all assisted the project officer in finalising the HAPs and SAPs for South Lanarkshire. It is hoped to publish an action plan in December or January that will contain action plans for 8 habitats, 16 species and 2 grouped species (lowland waders and amphibians). Funding will have a big part to play in format of the final plan.

A project titled "**Biodiversity Banks**" was established to target the creation of urban wildflower meadow sites in six communities around South Lanarkshire on roadside verges, parks or local greenspace. Local communities are to be provided with training and materials to plant wildflowers and care for their seedlings over the winter and spring. Come early summer next year these seedlings will be planted out in the prepared sites by the communities involved (along with some bought in plugs). Those involved will also be encouraged to plant some of the seeds in their own gardens. For those without gardens, we have a poly tunnel in a local Secondary school to grow the seeds on. A one off grant of £8949 from Powergen's Environment

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Fund supports this project. The majority of this funding is going to the costs of running the workshops (by Nancy McIntyre of Jupiter) and providing wildflower plugs.

A project to target the **River Avon Catchment** was recently set up with interested partners. Proposal is to work towards bringing salmon back into the river and enhancing the biodiversity of the whole catchment area.

South Lanarkshire Council is considering **trialing the use of peat-free** bedding plants in 10% of its beds and peat-free bulb bags for its school bulbs competition as the first stage in phasing out peat use in its operations.

The consultants **Langton Vaughan Associates** have completed Phase I of the HLF bid for the Clyde Valley Woodlands and a project summary and business plan was submitted recently. This proposal is aimed at extending and restoring woodland in the Middle Clyde Valley based on the concept of a Forest Habitat Network. The long target is to achieve a 30% minimum woodland cover (from 13-14% cover at the moment) within a matrix of semi-natural habitats over the next 30 years. The project would initially be over a 3-year period with expenditure in the region of £4 million, creating 563ha of new woodland.

Contact: For further information on any of the above contact Stephen Corcoran, Biodiversity Officer on 01355 806858 or stephen.corcoran@southlanarkshire.gov.uk.

Stirling

Contact: Jonathon Willet, Biodiversity Officer on 01786 442768 or willetj@stirling.gov.uk (in the New Year).

Tayside

First Tranche of Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan launched on 30 August at a seminar held at Battleby, Perth. Robin Harper MSP gave the keynote speech at the launch before leaving for the Earth Summit. Tayside's LBAP consists of 18 HAPs, many of them based on the UKBAPs - such as Calcareous Grassland, Estuaries, Rivers and Burns. Innovative HAPs include a Golf Course HAP (*Vicky - first in Scotland/UK?*) and a Business with Land HAP. To accompany the ringbinder and CD version of the full LBAP a 20-page introductory booklet will be widely available. All three local authorities will have ringbinder versions in each of their departments, as will all libraries and museums in the region. All 150+ schools and colleges in Tayside will have a CD version of the LBAP.

At same time as launch, **second Tranche of consultative draft** HAPs and SAPs were published. Closing date for comments is 30 November. One of the draft HAPs is "Hospitals, Sheltered Housing Complexes and Nursing Homes" which will engage the Health Authority as well as private developers and businesses. Two projects are already being set up to link in with this HAP.

Many projects are being discussed or are already underway to meet the targets of the first Tranche. They include a Barn Owl Project, which will involve a number of partners in both survey work and practical management on the ground as well as the supply of A-frame nestboxes. A "Barn Owl Interest Group" has been set up as an offshoot to the Farmland sub-group to take the project forward, as well as preparing a draft SAP. A similar Hirundine Interest Group will take forward urban-based projects for swallows, house martins and swifts. Other projects include the Barry Buddon Tern Project (siting decoy clay terns on a site once famed for its tern breeding population), and practical work carried out on an area of sand dunes in Angus by volunteers to safeguard Scotland's only site for Greater Yellow Rattle.

A positive outcome of a member of the public seeing the new LBAP at the **Scottish & Wildlife Countryside Fair** may be the setting up of a biodiversity and heritage trail around a Perthshire village. The whole community would be involved - from the schoolchildren growing wildflowers to plant out in a new meadow area to the community helping conservation volunteers plant hedges, trees and making footpaths.

Events such as the **Scottish Biodiversity Week** have helped focus attention on the biodiversity process. Over 20 events were planned for 2002 and many of them were very successful.

Included in the programme was a canoe trip, practical woodland work, various walks and talks, making a 'biodiverse' wall mosaic to brighten up an outside corner of a library, and taking part in a Time Lapse Project to tie in with the Tayside Local Patch Project - using disposable cameras to take photographs of a favourite site to make into a time lapse video".

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Contact: For further information on any of the above contact Catherine Lloyd, Biodiversity Officer on 01738 476481 or tayside.biodiversity@ukf.net.

West Dunbartonshire

Where are we now?: West Dunbartonshire Council does not have an official LBAP in place. However, we suspect that there may be examples, which already contribute to good biodiversity practice in our area. What is lacking is a system to identify these practices and build on them. This could be achieved through the production of an LBAP.

What are we doing just now?: Lesley Rogerson was appointed as a part-time Environment Officer in June of this year. Her role includes reviewing and updating the Council's Environment Charter, developing Sustainability Indicators and facilitating an LBAP.

Progress now is focussed on gathering information on the various options available and looking at progress in other areas to determine the most effective way forward for West Dunbartonshire. Meetings are in progress with SNH and the Local Biological Records Centre. Discussion is ongoing within the Council to determine commitment levels, departmental involvement and who will be taking a lead on this.

Where are we going?: We are still unsure what specific direction will be taken. However, we hope to begin the process of implementing at least a basic LBAP soon. Any decisions will be influenced by budgetary and time constraints, however it is hoped that many of these will be overcome by working within current systems and between departments and partner agencies.

Contact: For further information on any of the above contact Lesley Rogerson, Environment Officer on 01389 738254 or lesley.rogerson@west-dunbarton.gov.uk.

West Lothian

Contact: John Sheldon on 01506 775278 or John.Sheldon@westlothian.gov.uk.