

The Dunbartonshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan

Version 1 (Draft) for HEED Committee, 8 April 2009

**Foreward by Convenor (East Dunbartonshire Council and West
Dunbartonshire Council) - tbc**

The Dunbartonshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan

Foreword

Welcome to the Dunbartonshire Biodiversity Action Plan! The plan, created through a formal agreement with East Dunbartonshire Council and West Dunbartonshire Council, and co-funded by Scottish Natural Heritage represents the final action plan required to deliver full support of biodiversity conservation by local authorities and biodiversity partnerships across Scotland.

Aimed at the general public, schools, conservation interest groups, businesses, non-government organisations and Council departments, the plan aims to give a very broad overview of the issues facing nature conservation in Dunbartonshire today. The plan, though complex in nature, will hopefully reflect the problems we face along with the potential of change we can achieve. Our natural resources are threatened from a variety of factors such as climate change, urban expansion, habitat degradation, poor management, lack of awareness and anti-social behaviour. It is extremely important that we stress the urgency with which we need to address such issues and encourage sustainable use of the landscape and protection of its species.

The Plan will be divided into 4 main parts. The first part will give an overview of biodiversity, the reasoning behind the drawing up of the Dunbartonshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan and finally the funding streams and mechanisms that could be used to implement the work. Exciting times lie ahead for Dunbartonshire – the collaborations formed through the Dunbartonshire Biodiversity Partnership will enable us to focus on projects that will help improve our species and habitats thought to be in decline, and address levels of landscape fragmentation.

Section 2 gives a summary description of the main landscape types found in both East and West Dunbartonshire, along with a general description of the sites that are known to be important to nature conservation.

Section 3 details the four main groups that will form the basis of the implementation work of the Dunbartonshire Biodiversity Partnership – focusing on Urban, Rural, Woodland and Wetland (including Coastal) areas. We would encourage local residents to actively take part in surveying and practical conservation projects with any of the organisations listed, and would stress that membership of the partnership is open to new organisations and/or individuals.

Finally, the last section is aimed at local residents and schools, and will give tips on how everyone can help biodiversity in their local area. More so now than ever, we need the support of landowners, developers and the general public to look after our wildlife so that we can pass on a healthy balance down to future generations.

On behalf of East Dunbartonshire Council and West Dunbartonshire Council we would like to thank all those involved in the Dunbartonshire Biodiversity Partnership. Finally, we would like to celebrate the work and life of Dr. Keith Futter, a dedicated local conservationist whose passion for life and nature conservation is sorely missed.

The potential for change is in the hands of those who hold a vested interest in nature conservation in Dunbartonshire. We hope that this LBAP inspires you to help play a part in looking after Dunbartonshire's wildlife, and we would like to thank you for your interest.

Gillian Telfer
Biodiversity Officer

The Dunbartonshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan

Contents	Page
SECTION 1	
Introduction	
What is “Biodiversity”?	1
Biodiversity Action	2
Scottish Biodiversity Strategy	3
Local Biodiversity Action Plans	4
The Local Biodiversity Action Plan process in Dunbartonshire	4
Aims and objectives of the Dunbartonshire Biodiversity LBAP	6
Policy context	7
Local Plans	8
Implementation	
Funding	
The Scottish Rural Development Programme	9
Potential of strategic work in Dunbartonshire	10
LNCS/Nature Conservation Strategy review	10
Glasgow & Clyde Valley Green Network	11
Clyde River Biodiversity Project	11
Integrated Habitat Network	12
Linking the LBAP to Council Departments	12
Biodiversity and Development	16
National Planning Policy Guidelines 14: Natural Heritage	17
Environmental Assessment	17
Non-protected species or habitats	18
Conditions and Agreements	19
Sustainable Drainage Systems	20
Invasive Species	20
Community issues	
Community Involvement	24
Wildlife records	25
Wildlife Crime	25
SECTION 2	
Habitat descriptions of East and West Dunbartonshire	
East Dunbartonshire	27
West Dunbartonshire	33
SECTION 3	
Habitat Action Plans	
Urban	38
Greenspace and Biodiversity	39
Businesses	49
Golf Courses	52
Rural	59
Lowland Farming	60
Semi-natural Grassland	61

Floodplain grazing marsh	62
Blanket Bog	62
Woodland	70
Woodland	71
Hedgerows	73
Wetland (including Coastal)	80
Rivers and Streams	83
Lochs, Pond and Reservoirs	84
Forth & Clyde Canal	85
Coastal	86
Priority species affected by the Action Plans	96
SECTION 4	
Biodiversity in your local area – do a little, change a lot	99
Appendix	106

Dunbartonshire Biodiversity Action Plan

Introduction

What is "Biodiversity"?

In simple terms, biodiversity can be defined as *the variety of life found on Earth*. More specifically, biodiversity is the variety and abundance of species, their genetic composition and the natural communities, ecosystems and landscapes in which they occur. Biodiversity has come into mainstream terminology in the last few decades, primarily with the reporting of increased threats to living systems and species on local, national and global scales. In the last 100 years, over 100 species have become extinct in the United Kingdom alone: if such figures are extrapolated globally, it may well be that over 50,000 species are lost every year.

Why conserve biodiversity?

It has been estimated that if everyone continued their current levels of consumption of natural resources, we would need 3 more Earths to sustain us! It is therefore crucial that we embrace sustainable use of our habitats and take responsibility for biodiversity. The reasons for why we need to do this are numerous and wide ranging:

- **Providing essential products and materials**
Biodiversity provides us with oxygen, food, medicine, clothing and the materials to build our homes. It is therefore vital that we protect biodiversity to sustain life.
- **Tacking climate change**
Woodlands and peat bogs act as "carbon sinks" that can help reduce the effects of climate change. Natural floodplains and coastal areas can lessen the severity of flooding, while wildlife corridors can facilitate the movement of species affected by changes in the local climate.
- **Health of the environment**
Biodiversity is inexorably linked to sustainable development, with rich biodiversity generally associated with healthy environments (that is, areas with a good variety of habitats free from man-made disturbance and excellent air, soil and water quality).
- **Helping to sustain local economies**
Biodiversity can support a number of jobs linked to conservation management, and can sustain a number of traditional rural skills currently in danger of disappearing. New business ventures such as agri-tourism and organic farming enable farmers and land managers to diversify market opportunities while preserving or enhancing biological integrity.
- **Contributing to our health and wellbeing**
Natural areas and urban greenspaces help enhance our physical and mental well being, allowing us to escape the "hustle and bustle" of

everyday life. The outdoor setting can be a superb educational resource for the young and old, and enables us to take part in outdoor recreation, exercise and wildlife appreciation.

- **Linking cultural heritage and identity**

Biodiversity defines local character, and represents how we manage our land today. Key features such as hills, prominent upland flanks or rivers define our local landscape and need to be cherished and protected.

- **Providing opportunities for community engagement and volunteering**

Practical conservation projects can be a fun and educational way for volunteers to help bring a local area back into a positive state of management. To help preserve the integrity of a site, it is also important that the community take pride in their local space, and help look after it.

- **Strengthening of environmental stewardship principles**

To ensure the survival of our habitats and species, and to pass down a healthy stock of natural assets to future generations, we must accept that we play a defining role in the sustainability and health of our planet. As a consequence, we must all afford respect and protection to wildlife, along with the natural landscapes in which we live.

Biodiversity Action

Since signing the *Convention of Biological Diversity* at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, the UK has committed itself at both the national and local level to halting the loss of biodiversity through the targeted action of species and habitats. In 1994 the UK Government produced the *UK Biodiversity Action Plan* (UK BAP) which identified our rarest and most threatened species and habitats. The action plan, which comprised of 391 UK Species Action Plans (SAPs) and 45 UK Habitat Action Plans (HAPs) outlined conservation targets and appropriate actions that could help counteract any decline and achieve the following objectives:

- Development of costed targets for the most threatened UK species and habitats
- Establishment of a practical system of handling biological data at both the local and national level
- Promotion of public awareness and understanding of biodiversity
- Creation and implementation of Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs)

The Scottish Biodiversity Group was established in 1996 to co-ordinate the implementation of UK Actions Plans in Scotland (this group is now known as the Scottish Biodiversity Forum). Comprising of members from both statutory and non-statutory organisations, the forum produces publications giving a strategic overview of the status of biodiversity in Scotland and acts as the main liaison point for all individuals and groups with an interest in conservation.

In 2003 the Scottish Biodiversity Forum published the document *Towards a Strategy for Scotland's Biodiversity: Biodiversity Matters* which covers the aims of the Scottish Government for conservation action up to the period of 2030. The Strategy presents a vision, an aim and 5 objectives:

Vision

It's 2030: Scotland is recognised as a world leader in biodiversity conservation. Everyone is involved; everyone benefits. The nation is enriched.

Aim

To conserve biodiversity for the health, enjoyment and wellbeing of the people of Scotland now and in the future.

Objectives

Species & Habitats: To halt the loss of biodiversity and continue to reverse previous losses through targeted action for species and habitats.

People: To increase awareness, understanding and enjoyment of biodiversity, and engage many more people in conservation and enhancement.

Landscapes & Ecosystems: To restore and enhance biodiversity in all our urban, rural and marine environments through better planning, design and practice.

Integration & Co-ordination: To develop an effective management framework that ensures biodiversity is taken into account in all decision making.

Knowledge: To ensure that the best new and existing knowledge on biodiversity is available to all policy makers and practitioners.

Scottish Biodiversity Strategy

In 2004, the Scottish Biodiversity Forum published the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy *Scotland's Biodiversity: It's in Your Hands* which drew together Scotland's obligations from the Rio Summit and the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. The Strategy is currently developing its second set of implementation plans. The plans are split into 5 categories: Rural, Urban, Marine, Interpretation Communication and Education, and Local Action with work focusing on the following:

Top level biodiversity pressures (climate change, habitat fragmentation and invasive species)
Priority areas for scientific activity (loss of genetic diversity, soil degradation and ecosystem process)
Mechanisms for delivery (ecosystem approach, biodiversity duty and data knowledge)

The website <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/environment/sbip58-00.asp> lists further information on the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy. For more

information on the Scottish Biodiversity Forum, please refer to the website:
<http://www.biodiversityscotland.gov.uk/>

Local Biodiversity Action Plans

On a local level, there has been a concerted effort by partnerships across Scotland to address the loss of biodiversity through the publication of Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs). These plans set out a series of actions for UK BAP flora and fauna known to be in decline, along with management prescriptions for local habitats.

The general structure of LBAPs are normally based on individual Habitat Action Plans (HAPs) and Species Action Plans (SAPs), that describe in some detail the following information:

- Known habitats or species thought to be threatened locally
- Their distribution (if known)
- A description of the threats they face and causes behind their decline
- A programme of positive management work

HAPs relate to broad conservation improvements that will generally favour a wide variety of species as well as the habitat itself, while SAPs target individual species deemed to be of particular importance, such as European or UK protected species.

To oversee the work of LBAPs in Scotland, Biodiversity Officers have been appointed to write and/or review plans, and to ensure the implementation of projects through the concerted action by lead partners, conservation NGO's (non-government organisations) and local volunteers.

The Local Biodiversity Action Plan process in Dunbartonshire

In 2005, East Dunbartonshire Council published its first Local Biodiversity Action Plan in which priority species and habitats in decline were identified through a clearly defined process:

1. The Biodiversity Partnership undertook a habitat and species audit of East Dunbartonshire
2. The UK BAP was analysed
3. The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy was analysed

From this work, a number of species and habitats were selected as local priorities for conservation. Twenty six Action Plans were written into the ED LBAP; 13 species and 13 habitat action plans plus 4 habitat statements (listed in Appendix 1). Within each action plan, information on the species or habitat, distribution in East Dunbartonshire, potential threats, and a series of environmental actions were shown.

In 2007, a joint Biodiversity Officer was appointed by East Dunbartonshire Council and West Dunbartonshire Council, with the support of funding from Scottish Natural Heritage. The main purpose of this appointment was to form the Dunbartonshire Biodiversity Partnership, write a Dunbartonshire Local

Biodiversity Action Plan encompassing both East and West Dunbartonshire, and to co-ordinate the implementation of the actions identified.

The Dunbartonshire Biodiversity Partnership was officially formed in December 2007. Table 1 lists the current list of members of the partnership, and represents a wide range of organisations and individuals interested in biodiversity in Dunbartonshire. Membership is dynamic and new members are very welcome.

Table 1: Members of the Dunbartonshire Biodiversity Partnership

<i>Key members</i>	<i>Abbrev.</i>
East Dunbartonshire Council	EDC
West Dunbartonshire Council	WDC
Central Scotland Forest Trust	CSFT
Forestry Commission Scotland	FCS
Mugdock Country Park Ranger Service	MCPRS
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds	RSPB
Scottish Environment Protection Agency	SEPA
Scottish Natural Heritage	SNH
West Dunbartonshire Countryside Ranger Service	WDCRS
West Dunbartonshire Greenspace	WDG

<i>Associate members</i>	
Botanical Society of the British Isles	BSBI
British Waterways	BW
British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (inc. BRISC)	BTCV
Business & Environment Partnership	BEP
Butterfly Conservation	BC
Cadder Church Eco-congregation Group	CCEG
Clyde Amphibian & Reptile Group	CARG
Clyde River Foundation	RCF
Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (Scotland)	FWAG
Friends of Lenzie Moss	FLM
Friends of the River Kelvin	FORK
Glasgow Museums	GM
Glasgow & Clyde Valley Green Network	GCVGN
Kelvin Clyde Greenspace (DRS, Glasgow City Council)	KCG
Lennoxton Initiative	LI
Lomond Bat Group	LBG
Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust	LLFT
Marine Conservation Society	MCS
Scottish Golf Environment Group	SGEG
Scottish Government Rural Payments Inspectorate Directorate	SGRPID
Scottish Ornithological Club	SOC
Scottish Water	SW
Scottish Wildlife Trust	SWT
Torrance Playpark and Greenspace Group	TCG
The Environment Trust	TET

plus a number of interested members of the public/schools

It is also important to stress that a separate Biodiversity Action Plan has been written for the Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park, for which part of West Dunbartonshire falls. For more information please refer to <http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org>.

Aims and objectives of the Dunbartonshire Biodiversity LBAP (DLBAP)

After some consideration at the first meeting of the Partnership in December 2007, the broad aims of the DLBAP were confirmed as being the following:

- To conserve species and habitats in Dunbartonshire that are considered vulnerable or threatened on a local or national basis, and in turn to contribute to conservation of our global biodiversity
- To promote awareness of our local natural resources
- To promote community engagement in, and ownership of, the practical conservation of our natural resources
- To promote sustainable and wise use of our natural resources

It was agreed that the most practical way to tackle declining habitat and species in Dunbartonshire would be to implement actions at the habitat or ecosystem level, with additional attention paid to indicator species of habitat type. In essence, this *habitat-based approach* should work to benefit species in combination, whereas actions targeted at one species can conflict with the conservation of others.

A list of priority action areas, including additional flagship species (that is, popular and attractive species that can easily be identified and promoted to schools and the general public) is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Dunbartonshire LBAP Habitat Groups and Flagship species

Priority Habitat Groups

Urban
Rural
Woodland
Wetland (including Coastal)

Flagship Species

Plants

Bog Rosemary	Round-leaved Sundew
Lesser Butterfly Orchid	Bluebell
Hairy Stonecrop	

Insects

Bumblebee	Green Hairstreak
Common Blue	Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary

Fish

Atlantic Salmon

Brown Trout

Mammals

Badger

Otter

Bat (all species present in the area)

Water Vole

Birds

Barn Owl

Redshank

Black Grouse

Reed Bunting

Curlew

Skylark

Kingfisher

Snipe

Lapwing

Tree Sparrow

Linnet

Yellowhammer

A more detailed list of associated species and habitats can be found in each of the separate Priority Habitat Groups in Section 3.

Policy Context

The key policy drivers offering opportunities for biodiversity in Dunbartonshire are implementation of:

- The *Scottish Biodiversity Strategy (2004)*, which guides and fosters community involvement and ownership in their natural environment in a sustainable manner.
- Council policies such as the *Local Plan, Corporate Plan* and *Sustainable Development Strategy* of both East Dunbartonshire Council and West Dunbartonshire Council in which the Councils state that they will protect landscape features and wildlife habitats that contribute to biodiversity. The *East Dunbartonshire Greenspace Strategy* recognises that Greenspace is an essential element of liveable towns and cities and serves to enhance and support the ecology and biodiversity of the built environment, while at the same time enabling healthy living and fostering local pride and community cohesion.
- *Scottish Rural Development Programme* which provides a framework and opportunities for funding to encourage landowners and land managers to carry out habitat enhancement activities.
- The *Scottish Forestry Strategy* which recognises the importance of protecting, managing and enhancing the rich and varied range of woodland habitats and species. Appendix 2 lists the main aims of the Strategy.
- The *Glasgow and Clyde Valley Structure Plan* which aims to protect the environmental inheritance of the area and promote major improvements in the quality of the natural environment.

- The *National Planning Policy Guidelines* (NPPG) written in order to give guidance on how the Government's policies for the conservation and enhancement of Scotland's natural heritage should be reflected in land use planning. NPPG 14 *Scottish National Planning Policy Guidelines – Natural Heritage* indicates how biodiversity can either be conserved or enhanced in the planning process.

Since 1949, the UK Government has developed a series of statutory measures to help protect our natural heritage, through planning and conservation legislation. The main elements of the framework are shown in Appendix 3. In one of the most recent pieces of legislation, *The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004*, there is provision for all public bodies to meet their new obligations to further the conservation of biodiversity. In this Act it is clearly stated that:

“it is the duty of every public body and office-holder, in exercising any functions, to further the conservation of biodiversity so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions.”

Local Plans

The Local Plans of East and West Dunbartonshire councils were adopted in February 2005 and finalised as a draft in August 2007, respectively. Both Councils have pledged to maintain and enhance the natural and built environment through the conservation of environmental resources, and the promotion and support of improvements to environmental quality is therefore one of the key drivers behind the success of this LBAP. Appendix 2 lists the Local Plan policies of relevance to biodiversity in East and West Dunbartonshire.

Clearly though this pledge has to be converted into direct action and delivery on the ground through the formation of a strong partnership between developers, Planning and members of the Dunbartonshire Biodiversity Partnership. Provision must be placed on protecting UK BAP habitats and species with ‘no net-loss’ of habitat targets achieved through development and building control.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

During the production of this Biodiversity Action Plan, a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was carried out. SEA is a statutory requirement under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. It is designed to ensure that any plans, programmes or strategies produced by a local authority (or similar body) are assessed to gauge their potential impact upon the environment – and to ensure mitigation measures are put in place to combat any negative environmental effects.

Implementation

Funding

Implementation of the LBAP projects will be prioritised by assessing the conservation 'need' of projects along with the funding sources available and availability of groups able to work on their implementation.

The Scottish Rural Development Programme

From 2008, the main stream of funding for environmental enhancements and management will be through Scottish Rural Development Contracts that form part of the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP). This scheme has adopted an integrated approach to fund environmental, social and economic actions in Scotland, and aims to delivery strategic objectives of the Scottish Government through Regional Priorities. Both East and West Dunbartonshire fall within the Clyde Valley SRDP region. The scheme is competitive and will be awarded to projects that fit most closely to the priorities outlined for each area. Larger, cross-boundary proposals are likely to be more successful, and so landowners and managers are being encouraged to form partnerships to develop mutual applications. Table 3 highlights the Clyde region priorities for biodiversity.

Table 3: Biodiversity priorities for the Clyde Valley region

Biodiversity priorities – Clyde Valley

"A halt in the loss of biodiversity and reverse previous losses through targeted action" (a Scottish Biodiversity Strategy objective) through management that restores, conserves or enhances Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species and habitats, with an initial emphasis on management which will deliver by 2010. For example: through maintenance and enhancement of ancient, long established and semi-natural woodlands, restoration of Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS), particularly where ancient plant communities are most at risk; organic conversion or organic maintenance; and, actions in Local Biodiversity Action Plans. Particularly proposals that:

- support implementation of actions arising from *National BAPs*
- manage grazing and browsing pressure from wild and domestic animals to allow the restoration of habitats and to maximise biodiversity benefits, e.g. for wood pasture and parkland

The special features on Scotland's nationally important nature sites (SSSIs, SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites) being in 'favourable condition' (95% by 2010). Particularly proposals that:

- bring the special features of designated sites into favourable condition or moving towards favourable condition
- ensure the protection and active management of designated sites
- Involve collaboration across areas of deer range to help maintain sustainable wild deer populations at a level compatible with natural heritage, landscape and access interests in order to ensure the special features of nature sites move towards 'favourable condition'

Viable populations of rare and/or endangered species, through improved conservation of the 32 species listed for priority action in the Species Action Framework for Scotland, and through targeted action identified in priority Species Action Plans. Particularly proposals that:

- support the conservation of the following key species in the Clyde Valley Region - Capercaillie, Black Grouse, Great Crested Newts, Red Squirrel, Water Vole, Otter, Woolly Willow, Lesser Butterfly Orchid, Pearl Bordered Fritillary, Willow Tit and Freshwater Pearl Mussel

Reduced threat from non-native species, through action to eradicate or control target species, e.g. Grey Squirrels, Rhododendron, and particularly those listed in the Non-Native Species Framework Strategy for GB. Particularly proposals that:

- remove and/or control the following invasive non-native species *Rhododendron ponticum*, Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed and Himalayan Balsam
- control Grey Squirrels through measures which support Red Squirrel recovery in line with the Scottish Red Squirrel Action Plan 2006-2011

Increase in the area of connected natural habitats and ecological features, through collaboration between land managers to adopt a landscape scale, whole ecosystem approach to helping biodiversity, particularly where the threat from climate change is most acute, or, offering desirable species the opportunity to increase their range by taking advantage of changing climatic factors. For example, by expanding the area of native woodland in preferred locations, organic conversion or organic maintenance. Particularly proposals that:

- create and/or enhance habitat networks to ensure ecological connectivity, particularly proposals that will deliver the Clyde Valley Integrated Habitat Network and forest habitat networks
- manage wetlands and wet grasslands, including floodplains, that support breeding waders
- contribute to woodland expansion and sustainable management consistent with the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Habitat Network, Glasgow & Clyde Valley Green Network, the GCV Forestry and Woodland Framework and the Central Scotland Forest Strategy
- improve management of habitats along transport corridors
- help deliver the Clyde River Management Plan via collaborative cross-unit management of priority riverine habitats
- proposals for the management of upland heather moorland and blanket bog which is important for nesting raptors and breeding waders

For further information on the regional priorities and their packages, along with eligibility and how to apply, visit www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Rural/SRDP. There will also be a limited amount of money available to members of the Dunbartonshire Biodiversity Partnership to help carry out LBAP projects in East Dunbartonshire. Appendix 5 describes this grant in more detail.

Potential of strategic work in Dunbartonshire

Local Nature Conservation Site review

Nationally designated sites such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) protect only a limited part of the area's biodiversity and there is a wide range of non-statutory local and regionally important sites, particularly Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and wildlife corridors that provide a variety of habitats and migratory routes.

East and West Dunbartonshire Councils, with the aid of Scottish Natural Heritage, have undertaken work to evaluate the above resources under the new definition of Local Nature Conservation sites (LNCS). As well as providing baseline information on the species found in Dunbartonshire, the survey data will enable the two Councils to explore the potential of enhancing the quality and quantity of their wildlife corridors to link up fragmented areas, particularly those of ecological value. Both Local Plans list a number of locations, including SINCs, wildlife corridors and potential LNR sites that are

being targeted for enhancement. The information derived from this review will be used as part of an Integrated Habitat Network project, described below.

Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership

Both East and West Dunbartonshire Councils are members of the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Network together with six other local authorities that comprise the Glasgow metropolitan region. The partnership also includes five major government agencies that promote and deliver on the environmental, social, health and economic agendas throughout the GCV area, namely Communities Scotland, Scottish Enterprise, Glasgow Centre for Population Health, Forestry Commission Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage.

The aim of the partnership is to create a step change in the scale and quality of the Green Network to improve the region's competitiveness for investment, increase quality of life, encourage healthy lifestyles, promote biodiversity and more sustainable use of natural resources. The GCV Green Network Partnership commissioned the Clyde Waterfront and Clyde Gateway Green Network Strategies to ensure the concept of the Green Network is embedded in future development planning and to identify opportunities for the enhancement of the Clyde's recreational, landscape and biodiversity value.

Two exciting projects for Dunbartonshire have resulted from the GCV Green partnership: **Clyde River Biodiversity project** and **Integrated Habitat Network project**.

Clyde River Biodiversity Project

Industrialisation of the River Clyde, and its subsequent decline, has resulted in a legacy of degraded and fragmented habitats along, and adjacent to the river. Recent regeneration of riverside land has sought to reverse the dereliction and return the river to being a valuable resource for those who live, work and visit West Dunbartonshire. Although new development has, to varying degrees, taken cognisance of the recreational and landscape potential of the Clyde corridor, and included provision for their enhancement, opportunities for the enhancement of biodiversity appears to have been given less consideration. The linear geographical scope of the study along the Clyde corridor includes the area from Clydebank to the Erskine Bridge in West Dunbartonshire.

A feasibility study was carried out in 2008 to identify opportunities to reverse fragmentation through the protection and enhancement of existing biodiversity sites and, where feasible, the creation of new habitat. From this study, the Duntocher Burn (including the wildlife corridor that extends into Auchentoshan Woods), and the dismantled railway line adjacent to the Burn were identified as requiring particular attention for habitat enhancement work. A major river restoration programme was recommended involving de-culverting, soft engineering works, riparian planting and eradication of invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam. Such recommendations will be incorporated into costed action plans and used to attract external funding in 2009/2010.

Integrated Habitat Networks

The concept of Integrated Habitat Networks has developed over recent years, providing an ecological basis for creating links between areas of habitat interest to conservation, reducing habitat fragmentation and allowing the movement of species through a highly modified landscape. The Glasgow & Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership commissioned a GCV-wide Integrated Habitat Network modelling project where habitats were assessed in terms of functional connectivity, relationship to designated sites, balancing priorities/resolving conflicts, planning issues and potential for targeting of agri-environmental incentives. As part of this project, key areas for semi-native woodland, grassland and wetland habitat restoration and expansion were identified in order to reduce habitat fragmentation.

The results of the Integrated Habitat Network project, along with information derived from the LNCS review in East and West Dunbartonshire will help both Councils to prioritise areas where biodiversity enhancements can be made through the Scottish Rural Development Programme.

Both provide exciting, focused ways in which targeted action on the ground can be achieved over a relatively large scale in a short period of time.

Linking the Local Biodiversity Action Plan to other Council departments

Biodiversity can easily be fitted within the work programmes of a variety of Council departments. Table 4 shows examples of how this can be achieved, at little/no-cost or savings to departmental budgets.

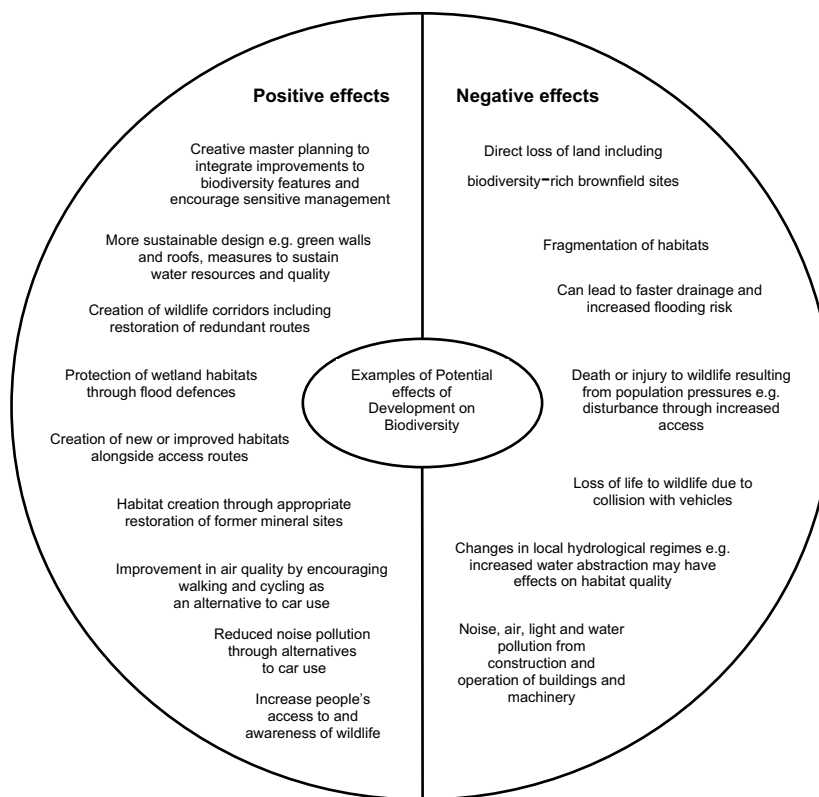
Table 4: How Council departments in East and West Dunbartonshire can potentially contribute to the Dunbartonshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan

ROLES	POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES
Chief Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • secure broad base support for the LBAP • ensure that the LBAP is placed at the core of Planning policy and enforcement • ensure that departments are “joined up” in terms of an integrated approach to Biodiversity/Greenspace Strategies
Partnership & Planning Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • incorporate the LBAP into Local and Structure Plans • help involve local people to become engaged in the management of urban woods, wildlife corridors and sites • promote woodland expansion and management through Development Advice Notes, site briefs and Standards • capture better habitat and infrastructure linkage through an informed networked-based planning approach (Integrated Habitat Networks, Glasgow & Clyde Valley Green Network). • Use planning requirements and conditions to enhance biodiversity through practices such as implementing environmentally sustainable drainage schemes such as ponds, swales and retention basins (rather than hard engineered underground solutions), de-culverting and naturalisation of watercourses and green roofs.
Greenspace Service (EDC)/Forward Planning & Regeneration (WDC, including WD Greenspace)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote the importance of conservation site resource to other departments • aim to use habitat restoration and woodland management to help meet LBAP targets • ensure linkage between the LBAP with other strategies relating to the environment • ensure resources for and then implementation of Management Plans for Council owned sites • use Rangers and Greenspace staff to help deliver wildlife awareness events • help identify key people in the community and the best ways to encourage community engagement and participation • link wildlife sites with development of core footpath network and complementary signage strategy • assist in the provision of Environmental Education through events, leaflets, public art and good practice examples • consider either tree/scrub cover or meadow-mowing as an alternative to amenity grass cutting
Development Control Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure conservation sites and protected species are fully taken into account in planning applications and conditions for new settlements, development and renewal areas, including protection and appropriate mitigation measures
Landscape Architects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aim to use native species to expand woodland wildlife corridors and link sites of interest to nature conservation; consider enhanced riparian planting in developments near watercourses • aim to use locally sourced timber and flowers/shrubs for landscaping contracts
Roads Network Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure sensitive management of verges and trees through adoption and implementation of appropriate survey and maintenance • incorporate new planting into existing and new roadside verges and hedges • reduce amount of hedgerow cutting (where it is safe to do so) • develop sustainable transport projects using urban woodland as part of footpath/cycle network
Education Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase tree and woodland cover in school grounds for educational purposes, along with wildlife gardens and wildflower meadows • involve schools in outdoor classroom projects e.g. Forest Schools

Biodiversity and development

With the need for increased housing, developmental pressures can have profound impacts on biodiversity, as well as presenting positive opportunities. It is therefore increasingly important to ensure that developers show environmental awareness when developing sites, for example by adhering to UK and EU legislation for protected species, and carrying out relevant wildlife surveys at the correct time of year. Employing appropriate mitigation when a development is found to impact on biodiversity can prove vital for a number of species. Figure 1 shows the potential positive and negative effects on biodiversity that can occur with development (taken and modified from the publication *Guidance for Public Authorities on Implementing the Biodiversity Duty*, published by DEFRA, 2007).

Figure 1: Potential effects of development on biodiversity



It is crucial that biodiversity and geological conservation are considered at every stage of the planning and building process, as careful practice and due diligence to wildlife and nature conservation will help sustain our species and natural landscapes. It is important to have close co-operation between public bodies, private enterprises, local communities and conservation groups. Development can often be compatible with conservation, and if carefully planned, potential for conflict can be reduced considerably. Although never substituting for an area of long-standing naturalness, opportunities such as land rehabilitation, landscaping and creation of new habitats, or linking up fragmented sites can be remarkably successful.

The following has been written to help anyone who is involved in the planning process: that is, planners, developers and local residents affected by a planning application or building development.

National Planning Policy Guidelines 14: Natural Heritage

Local Authorities and developers should adhere to and incorporate the guidance listed in the publication NPPG 14 *National Planning Policy Guidelines – Natural Heritage* in order to minimise disturbance to habitats and species throughout the planning process. The document can be downloaded from the website: www.scotland.gov.uk.

Essentially the NPPG 14 outlines the following as important in the urban and rural context:

- Consideration of national planning policy in relation to Scotland's natural heritage;
- Identification of key issues relating to the main statutory obligations in relation to the conservation of natural heritage;
- Assessment of how natural heritage objectives could be reflected in development plans;
- Explanation of how the planning system can be vital to safeguarding sites of national and international importance;
- Provision of guidance on the approach best adopted in relation to local and non-statutory designations; and
- Highlighting of the importance of enhancing species and sites that fall outside the confines of designated areas.

The commitments contained in the Biological Convention at the Rio Summit are reflected in the UK and Scottish programmes for sustainable development. On a more practical level, measures to safeguard biodiversity are found in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan delivered through local strategies such as Biodiversity Action Plans. Planning departments can help protect locally declining species and habitats as identified in LBAPs through adoption of the main policies (please refer to Appendices 3 and 4), and by disallowing planning applications that will increase habitat fragmentation, are detrimental to designated sites of nature conservation (SSSIs, SINCs, LNRs), or will result in the breaking up of vital wildlife corridors in the local area (such as felling of woodland, culverting of rivers, removal of hedgerows and semi-natural grasslands etc).

A key opportunity for Planning Officers would be to encourage biodiversity gain early in the pre-application process. In doing so, developers will be able to show good *green credentials*, ensure correct procedures as to UK and EU legislation requirements, reduce chances of delay/associated increased project costs as well as unnecessary disturbance to wildlife and habitats.

Environmental Assessment

When it is expected that the proposal will have significant effects on biodiversity, or if the site is located on or near to a locally important wildlife site, the developer should carry out appropriate ecological surveys to identify

any loss of diversity/habitats in order to incorporate appropriate mitigation or to write a management plan. It is important that surveys are carried out at the optimum times of year to gather the highest quality of information about species or their habitats. Advice should be sought from SNH or the Council's Biodiversity Officer if the Planning authority is in any doubt about the significance of the potential effects of the project on the natural environment.

Table 5 lists the species affected by a number of developments in Dunbartonshire, while Table 6 shows the best times of year to carry out relevant surveys. Surveys must be carried out by a competent contractor with several years' experience not only in actual species surveying but also in devising mitigation that is appropriate within the law. The Planning Authority should ensure the survey is satisfactory by contacting SNH or the Council's Biodiversity Officer.

It is extremely important that Planning authorities, developers and local residents take into account the effects of a development on UK and European protected species such as wild and nesting birds, Water Vole, Bat*, Otter* and Great Crested Newt* (*European protected species). If protected species are not taken into account and mitigation is not put in place, any actions resulting in the harm of those species (or their habitats, if protected) will contravene the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and/or European Directives. Under the Conservation (Natural Habitat) Regulations 1994 the ***onus is placed on builders and contractors to undertake a survey before any work is carried out (whether site preparation, demolition and/or construction).***

Non-protected species or habitats

It is extremely important that habitat fragmentation, which has resulted from many centuries of exploitation by man, is reversed as much as possible. The establishment of wildlife corridors (or enhancing the quality of existing strips of land or waterbodies) should be placed on the agenda as being of high priority in the planning process. It is imperative that no further fragmentation of the land should occur, unless measures are put in place that will help to compensate for any loss of land. Features of particular significance to habitat networks are:

Woodland

Individual trees of note (that is, mature trees that represent a historical or ecological interest to the local area), or groups of trees that have value to wildlife or serve as an attractive feature of the landscape should be conserved. New developments should take into account native species in their landscaping designs, and local residents should be encouraged to retain hedgerows or to plant native hedges, instead of using fences to delineate boundaries. Hedgerows, as well as man-made structures such as dykes, provide ideal shelter belts for species, and are linear features that allow the safe movement of species across the landscape. Under Section 159 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 Planning Authorities have a duty to ensure that, whenever appropriate, planning permissions make adequate provision for the preservation or planting of trees. Where

development involves the loss of trees, permission should normally be conditional on a replanting scheme with trees of appropriate species in appropriate numbers. Section 160 of the 1997 Act makes provision for authorities to safeguard trees or woodlands by means of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) where this appears expedient in the interests of amenity. TPOs can provide an effective means of protecting isolated trees, copses or groups of trees associated with buildings.

Watercourses

Lochs, ponds, burns and rivers are valuable landscape features and important wildlife habitats. Planning authorities should therefore seek to safeguard their natural heritage value within the context of a wider framework of water catchment management. Appropriate planting up of Sustainable Drainage Systems is an excellent way of enhancing biodiversity in any site. Developers should be encouraged to incorporate existing ponds, watercourses or wetlands as positive environmental features in development schemes, and to identify suitable opportunities for creating new water or wetland features. They should be encouraged to seek alternatives to extensive culverting or canalisation, as these greatly reduce the ecological and amenity value of watercourses, and can lead to an increased risk of flooding. Opportunities should be taken to restore the naturalness of existing culverted or canalised watercourses in re-development and land rehabilitation schemes through planning conditions.

Culverting of rivers and streams

What are culverts?

A culvert is generally an arched structure that encloses a stream, generally linked to building and roads development on areas through which watercourses flow. In the past, culverting of rivers and streams was a long-standing practice in urban expansion development, however such gain of land came at the expense of habitats and species. As rivers and streams are important routes for migration and dispersal of species such as Salmon, Otter, Water Vole and many plants and insects, culverting often stops free movement which can lead to isolation of populations and in some cases, decline and loss of groups, as well as increasing flood risk through the blocking of culverts by debris. This unnecessary loss of aquatic and riverbank habitat is therefore against the aims of sustainability and should be avoided as much as possible.

According to the NPPG 14, watercourses are “*valuable landscape features and wildlife habitats*” for which Local Authorities should “*seek to safeguard their natural heritage value*”. Discouraging the use of culverts in planning applications should therefore be made a priority, in addition to removing and restoring watercourses that have been culverted in the past.

Conditions and Agreements

In many cases, the Planning Authority will include planning conditions that will help to mitigate the impact of the development on the natural heritage, or to incorporate on/off-site mitigation that will bring positive, environmental

benefits. For instance, appropriate action such as erection of bird/bat boxes, improving the quality of remaining hedgerows/woodland, restricting construction to certain times of the year, installing appropriate lighting that will not disrupt nocturnal animals or migration of fish, planting of Sustainable Drainage Systems for biodiversity, removal of culverts and securing appropriate landscaping for biodiversity are placed as conditions. Planning agreements (section 75) can often secure funding that will help fund the preparation and implementation of management plans or site BAPs along with their long-term monitoring and restoration.

Sustainable Drainage Systems

Surface water drainage from developed areas is increasingly affecting our river/loch water quality. As development intensifies, with less permeable surfaces, faster surface water run-off and reduced natural soil filtration, sealing of the ground leads to localised flooding and pollution incidents. With implications of climate change we need to adopt the Sustainable Drainage System approach to drainage to retain, slow and store surface water and prevent pollution.

Sustainable Drainage Systems aim to mimic the natural movement of water from a development, reducing flood risk, improving water quality and often providing attractive features. They present a flexible set of options that allow a designer to choose the most suitable combination of techniques appropriate to a particular site, for example ponds, retention basins, swales, infiltration trenches, filter strips, constructed wetlands and green roofs. The design, construction and maintenance of such systems need to be considered on a site-by-site basis, taking account of best practice design, and involving relevant stakeholders – planners, developers, SEPA, Local Authority grounds maintenance teams and Scottish Water.

The implementation of the above environmentally friendly sustainable schemes in place of hard engineered underground solutions will therefore be made more of a priority in planning requirements and conditions.

Invasive Species

Non-native species, otherwise known as *invasive species*, have become an increasing feature of the landscape. Brought into the UK by man for a number of reasons, some non-natives have flourished and are now negatively impacting on local biodiversity, through out-competition in growth or foraging, disease or widespread predation.

Examples of non-native species in Dunbartonshire

Japanese Knotweed
Giant Hogweed
Himalayan Balsam
Skunk Cabbage

Rhododendron
American Mink
Grey Squirrel

Becoming an ever-increasing problem, both Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed are invasive species listed in the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981

(as amended). This means that it is an offence to cause the spread of these two species, often occurring for example, through inappropriate manual handling or use of tracked machinery on infested soil. As both species are classified as *controlled waste*, specific measures must be taken to eradicate stands and transfer any waste off-site. Eradication is never guaranteed, and often takes many years of spraying, if successful at all.

For Japanese Knotweed it is important that planners and developers follow and enforce the SEPA guidance note:

http://www.sepa.org.uk/pdf/guidance/waste/Japanese_Knotweed1.4.pdf

The publication *Giant Hogweed Management in the United Kingdom* (published by the RPS Group plc and Environment Agency, ISBN 978-0-906269-04-6) gives management advice for Giant Hogweed.

It is vital that developers and land managers adhere to the advice given in the aforementioned publications in order to ensure the species are dealt with in the most appropriate manner, and to avoid criminal prosecution. It should also be noted that any residents who are aware of any activities that may contravene the above legislation should immediately get in touch with the Local Authority's Biodiversity Officer, SNH, SEPA or Strathclyde Police's Wildlife Crime Unit.

Table 5: Development proposals and recommended surveys (adapted from *Validation of Planning Applications: Template for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation*, published by the Association of Local Government Ecologists, June 2007)

Proposals for development that should trigger a protected species survey	Species potentially affected and for which a survey will be required									
	Bat	Barn Owl	Breeding	Gt. Crest.	Otter	Water Vole	Badger	Reptiles	Amphibians	Plants
Proposed development which includes the modification, conversion, demolition or removal of buildings and structures (especially roof voids) involving the following: (i) All agricultural buildings (e.g. farmhouses and barns) particularly of traditional brick or stone construction and/or with exposed wooden beams greater than 20cm thick; (ii) All buildings with weather boarding and/or hanging tiles that are within 200m of woodland and/or water; (iii) Pre-1960 detached buildings and structures within 200m of woodland and/or water; (iv) Pre-1914 buildings within 400m of woodland and/or water; (v) Pre-1914 buildings with gable ends or slate roofs, regardless of location; (vi) All tunnels, mines, kilns, ice-houses, adits, military fortifications, air raid shelters, cellars and similar underground ducts and structures; (vii) All bridge structures, aqueducts and viaducts (especially over water and wet ground)	√	√	√							
Proposal involving lighting of churches and listed buildings or flood lighting of greenspace within 50m of woodland, water, field hedgerows or lines of trees with connectivity to woodland or water	√	√	√							
Proposals affecting woodland, or field hedgerows and/or lines of trees with obvious connectivity to woodland or water bodies	√		√				√			√
Proposed tree work (felling or lopping) and/or development affecting: (i) Old and veteran trees that are older than 100 years; (ii) Trees with obvious holes, cracks or cavities; (iii) Trees with a girth greater than 1m at chest height	√		√							
Proposals affecting gravel pits/quarries/cliff faces/rock outcrops with crevices, caves or swallets	√		√					√		
Major proposals within 500m of a pond or Minor proposals within 100m of a pond				√						
Proposals affecting or within 200m of rivers, streams, canals, lakes, or other aquatic habitats	√		√		√	√			√	√
Proposals affecting 'derelict' land (brownfield sites), allotments and railway land			√	√			√	√	√	
Proposed development affecting any buildings, structures, feature or locations where protected species are known to be present	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Table 6: Ecological Survey Seasons applicable to Dunbartonshire (adapted from *Validation of Planning Applications: Template for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation*, published by the Association of Local Government Ecologists, June 2007)

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Badger			Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Sub-optimal
Bat and bat roosts	Hibernation Roosts	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal								Optimal	Optimal
	Summer Roosts				Sub-optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Sub-optimal			
	Foraging/Commuting				Sub-optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Sub-optimal		
Birds	Breeding			Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal				
	Over wintering	Optimal	Optimal									Optimal	Optimal
Great Crested Newt	Terrestrial			Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal		
	Aquatic		Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal							
Invertebrates					Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal			
Otter		Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal
Reptiles					Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal			
Water Vole			Sub-optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Sub-optimal		
White-clawed Crayfish*								Optimal	Optimal	Optimal			
Habitat/Vegetation					Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal			



Optimal Survey Time



Sub-optimal Surveying Time – presence may be detected but results may be too ambiguous to allow mitigation to be devised

*As at February 2009 not recorded in Dunbartonshire

Community issues

Community involvement

Although the implementation of the main actions/projects listed in the Habitat Action Plans in Section 3 will be carried out in the main by landowners and land managers along with conservation stakeholder groups, the success of this LBAP will also rely on the support of local residents. At present there are a number of very supportive groups in Dunbartonshire, all working towards the conservation and enhancement of Dunbartonshire's habitats and wildlife. Such groups contribute many hours and much enthusiasm into preserving the integrity of our natural resources and their dedication is very much appreciated by East and West Dunbartonshire Councils and the other Partnership members.

Examples of Greenspace community groups or initiatives in Dunbartonshire

East Dunbartonshire

- Boghead Wood Group
- Cadder Church Eco-congregation
- Cairnhill Woods Group
- Friends of Lenzie Moss
- Kilmardinny PALS
- King George V Park Greenspace Group
- Kirkintilloch Skate Initiative
- Mains Estate Residents Association
- Merkland Local Nature Reserve Management Group
- Torrance Playpark and Greenspace Group
- Twechar Regeneration
- Whitefield Pond Group
- Woodhead Park Action Group
- Woodhill Residents Group

West Dunbartonshire

- Castlehill and Westcliff Action Group
- Choices Programme, Sky Point Centre
- Clydebank History Society
- Clydebank Housing Association
- Clydebank Re-built
- Clydebelt
- Community Links
- Dalmuir Park Housing Association
- Drumry Tenants and Residents Association
- Enviro Squad
- Faifley Knowes Residents Association
- Friends of Auchentoshan Wood
- Friends of The Saltings
- Greenlight Environmental
- Knowes Housing Association
- Knowetop Community Farm
- Paths for all Partnership
- Rosshad Tenants and Residents Association
- Tullochan Trust
- 50+ Club

plus local schools, council departments (various)
and local artists and craft artisans

Education and Schools

The involvement of schools is also essential for sustaining interest in wildlife issues, and the incorporation of biodiversity into the *5-14 Curriculum* encourages wildlife surveying and appreciation of nature from an early age. Progression to Eco-school status, working towards John Muir awards and delivering Forest School projects all help to integrate learning with recreational activity.

Wildlife recording

In order to be able to conserve the wildlife of Dunbartonshire, it is important to know what species we have, where they are, and how common or endangered they are. This information forms the basis of a biological audit for the area, and helps to direct limited effort and resources to where they are needed.

Although some popular groups, such as birds, butterflies and flowering plants are well-recorded, many others (especially invertebrates and lower plants) are extremely under-recorded for the area. Further records of all species are required to build up as complete a picture as possible of the fauna and flora of the local authority areas.

Biological records for Dunbartonshire are held by Glasgow Museums Biological Records Centre, based at Nitshill in Glasgow. Anyone holding their own records is encouraged to pass these on, so that they can be used for environmental decision-making, education, research, and other public benefit uses.

Records can be sent to:

Glasgow Museums Biological Records Centre
Culture and Sport Glasgow
Glasgow Museums Resource Centre
200 Woodhead Road
South Nitshill Industrial Estate
Glasgow
G53 7NN

Phone: 0141 276 9330

Fax: 0141 276 9305

E-mail: biological.records@csglasgow.org

www.glasgowmuseums.com

Wildlife Crime

Snaring

Although not illegal in Scotland, snaring can only take place on sites where there has been permission granted by the landowner. As this practice is strictly not condoned by East and West Dunbartonshire Councils, we would

recommend local residents immediately contact the Police if they observe snaring activities on Council owned property.

Other illegal activities that should be reported are: badger baiting, hare coursing, digging up of wildflowers/bulbs and inappropriate handling of non-native invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed.

If you are a witness to a crime against nature

Under no circumstances should you approach those committing offences directly – immediately phone the Wildlife Crime Unit at Strathclyde Police and give details of what you have seen along with a description of the exact location where the offence has taken place. To help in the prosecution of such individuals, please do not disturb any potential evidence found at the crime scene, and if possible supply photographic and/or video evidence.