



South Lanarkshire
BIODIVERSITY
PARTNERSHIP

Biodiversity NEWS

Issue 1
Dec. 2012

Welcome to the first South Lanarkshire Biodiversity Partnership newsletter! We hope to bring you regular updates on projects that are helping conserve biodiversity across South Lanarkshire. If you want to submit an article, please contact the partnership at CAG@Southlanarkshire.gov.uk.

International Year of the Bat

International Year of the Bat (2011) was celebrated by CSFT with a biodiversity campaign involving awareness raising and educational activities, survey work and research, and practical conservation work.

Over the course of the project, 150 school packs were given away, which included educational resources, factsheets and activities on Year of the Bat and a wooden bat box kit for the school to put together.



In total, 27 events – walks, talks, corporate and community events were attended, with information, event materials, bat box kits and give-aways were also provided to 10 other groups or organisations for use during their own events or activity programmes. Over the course of the campaign, 10,000 packets of wildflower seeds, 300 posters, 6,000 pencils, 5,000 stickers and 8,000 bat 'bugs' were given away in addition to the resources downloaded from the website.

Regular surveys were also undertaken in a CSFT owned woodland to provide volunteers with a chance to get more involved in bat surveys, and to gain valuable information on the distribution and use of woodlands by bats.

This campaign was only possible through working closely with all of CSFT's partner agencies, and their kind provision of time and resources. Funding for the project came from Forestry Commission Scotland and SNH. Invaluable support, advice, information and resources came from the Bat Conservation Trust, in particular Anne Youngman, without whom this project would not have succeeded. Thanks also go to Historic Scotland, National Trust for Scotland and British Waterways for allowing us to use their land for surveys and training events.



Volunteer Puts Frogs on the Map

As part of ongoing research in to the population size and spread of the European Common frog (*Rana temporaria*) in East Kilbride, Erik Paterson from the Clyde and Amphibian and Reptile Group carried out a survey of their breeding sites throughout the town.

30 ponds, ranging from temporary puddles in ditches through to well maintained garden ponds were surveyed, with results indicating that over 670 female frogs bred in 2012. Common toads (*Bufo bufo*) and Palmate newts (*Lissotriton helveticus*) were found to be present in some ponds but barriers to movement and other environmental conditions may be restricting their distribution.

Future surveys will help ascertain trends in the sizes of the populations present and also the species present. The data collected can also be used to help understand breeding trends with a view to possible habitat management, connection and improvement in the future.

The full detailed report can be found online at:
www.caledonianconservation.co.uk/publications.html

Coalburn Moss Update



Further to the ditch blocking with plastic piling dams that was completed early this year, Forestry Commission Scotland have undertaken site condition monitoring surveys on the bog to monitor its condition after removal of prior grazing. The monitoring shows that the bog is still in favourable condition but Greater Sundew was not found. The hope is to re-establish grazing across the bog in the future and to work with surrounding grazing tenants to achieve this. Work to remove regenerating conifers across the core bog will take place this winter in order to prevent it spreading further.

For more information contact Emma Stewart on 01555 665262.



South Lanarkshire Biodiversity Strategy Update

The Biodiversity Strategy has successfully completed its first year!

Although it's too early to assess long term impacts, a number of partnership projects have already been delivered including a scheme to map peatland across the region, the preparation of an invasive species position statement, a Natural Flood Management scoping study and an RSPB led project to conserve waders in the Clyde catchment.



The People and Communication sub-group delivered a hugely successful conference in September, which looked at the opportunities provided by windfarms for people and wildlife in the region. The group has also launched a set of habitat assessment cards for the general public and the new Biodiversity Partnership website was launched in the summer (www.southlanarkshirebiodiversity.co.uk). If you have anything that you'd like to see on the website please contact Siân Williams on 01698543419.

Priorities for 2013 include a scheme to map invasive species in the Clyde catchment, providing training to volunteers and working closely with the Clyde and Avon Valleys Landscape Partnership to deliver landscape conservation in the project area.

If you have a project taking place in 2013, why not let the Partnership know about it. Contact CAG@southlanarkshire.gov.uk.

South Lanarkshire Council

There's been a lot of environmental activity in the past year within the Council. In June 2012, Jennifer Murphy was appointed as the new Planning Officer for Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Council, following Colin Gillespie's move to SEPA.

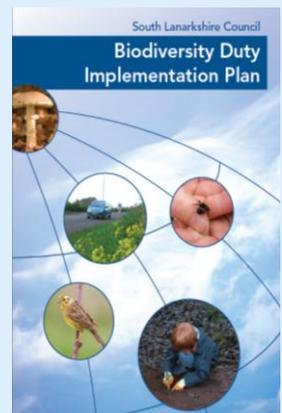
The Council completed SEA for a wide range of policies, strategies and plans, including the Council Plan, 'Connect' and the Local Housing Strategy. We are making good progress in the SEA for the updated Sustainable Development Strategy, the Local Development Plan and the Local Transport Strategy. We have recently begun assessing the Council's new Air Quality Strategy and the Contaminated Land Strategy to ensure positive benefits are enhanced and negative effects minimised.

The Scottish Government has been working closely with Historic Scotland, SEPA, SNH and local authorities to revise national guidance on SEA. This is to make the SEA process more streamlined and to make it more accessible for the public. We expect that the revised guidance will be published early in the New Year.

There is a national database of all policies, strategies and plans which have undergone SEA. You can review these assessments on the Scottish Government's website www.scotland.gov.uk.

The Council has also recently launched its Biodiversity Duty Implementation Plan which sets out how the Authority will meet its obligations under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act.

If you have any queries about SEA within the Council, please contact Jennifer on 01698 455742. If you have any queries regarding biodiversity, please contact Siân Williams on 01698 543419.



Tree Sparrow Rescue



In recent years, CSFT has run several successful biodiversity campaigns and in 2012, we decided to focus on Tree Sparrows.

This relative of the House Sparrow is generally found on lowland farmland with arable or mixed farming systems. It can be told apart from the House Sparrow by its fully brown head and the black patch on its cheek.

The UK population of the tree sparrow declined by 94% between 1970 and 2001, probably due to fewer seed and insect food sources are now available to them on farmland.

Historically, they used to do well in the farming areas of South Lanarkshire, so CSFT have been concentrating its efforts here. So far, 30 primary schools have received an information pack with educational resources, activities packs and a birds feeder with suet balls and plenty of advice on how to feed the birds in their school grounds. Tree Sparrow friendly bird boxes are also being put up around the area in suitable habitat to provide nesting opportunities lost when hedgerow trees were removed or felled due to old age.

CSFT has been attending events to raise awareness of the birds, giving away information leaflets, posters and identification postcards. We are asking people to send in records of tree sparrows they see, along with a photo if they are unsure if it is a house sparrow or not, so we can see how they are faring now.

More information on the campaign, on the birds themselves and how to submit your sightings can be found on CSFT's website: <http://www.csft.org.uk/out-a-about/treesparrows>

Pylon Pond



Since August this year, the South Lanarkshire Ranger Service has been working in partnership with Phoenix Futures to train a number of volunteers as are being trained to undertake and supervise other peer volunteers with practical conservation work. The training has covered a range of tasks, including beginning restoration of Pylon Pond at Chatelherault Country Park.

The pond hadn't been cleared for the last few years and was in danger of being completely lost. Reeds and other aquatic plants were taking over and encroaching trees threatened to dry it out. A third of the pond has been cleared of vegetation, opening it up and creating a better space for its inhabitants, including frogs and newts. The other two thirds will be cleared over the next two years so as to minimise disturbance to wildlife as much as possible.

This has been a good experience for the team to take forward to future similar tasks and has proved beneficial for Pylon pond and its continued existence.



Wildflower Rich Grassland Project

Facilities, Fleet and Ground Services within South Lanarkshire Council has been piloting new ways of managing amenity grasslands and open greenspace. Ten sites across the county have been selected to test different approaches to creating wildflower rich grassland.

The creation of new grassland from sterile soil is being trialled at:

- Bothwell Road central reservation, Hamilton
- Springbank Cemetery, Lanark
- - At 8 other sites the grass is being left to grow for a season, to assess which species appear naturally:
Neilsland Park, Hamilton
● Greenhills Road, East Kilbride
● Longdales, Forth village entrance
● Cambuslang Park
 - Biggar Burns Braes Park
Bothwell Nature Trail
Stonehouse bypass
Glenlee Woods, Burnbank

Surveys of these sites with local community groups took place in 2012. In 2013 the sites will be improved by adding various seeds including yellow rattle, oxeye daisy, common knapweed, ragged robin, red campion, poppy, corn marigold and cornflower. The sites will be mown at the end of each year as this helps keep the fertility of the site down, which encourages wildflowers to grow.

- As well as enhancing the quality of the local environment, creating wildflower rich grassland can:
 - help add aesthetic value
 - help essential pollinators (bees, butterflies and hoverflies)
 - enhance biodiversity
 - lower the carbon footprint
 - reduce disruption due to less maintenance
 - reduce risk to maintenance operators and users



If you have any questions about the project please contact:

Phone: 0303 123 1020 Email: ffgs@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Udston & Glenlee Woods tree planting

The Friends of Udston & Glenlee Woods have had a busy year as usual. In Autumn 2012 the Woodland Trust provided a free community tree pack as part of the Jubilee Woods Project consisting of wildlife friendly species – rowan, birch, hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel and oak. The trees were added to this urban woodland wherever there was space for them. Those who managed to brave the November weather had fun digging in the mud to plant the trees. Nursery pupils from Glenlee Primary School also planted some of the trees as part of their woodland art project.

For more information visit: <http://www.udstonandglenleewoods.co.uk/>





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