



LOCH ERICHT

SIMON BRICAO



HIGHLAND BURN

GEORGE LOGAN/SNH



WATER VOLE

ALAN ROSS



OTTER

RUPB



FRESHWATER PEARLMUSSEL

SUE SCOTT/SNH

Tayside has a very rich heritage of water and wetlands and their associated species due, in part, to its complex geology and varied landscape. The division of the area by the Highland Boundary Fault gives rise to some of the most valuable habitats in Tayside, including the Lowes chain of lochs - a resource of international significance. Tayside's wealth of standing waters - from very large, deep highland lochs, small ponds and lochans to wet woodlands, marshes, flood meadows and reedbeds contribute immensely to the area's habitat mosaics.

The region is, however, dominated (and largely defined) by the catchment of the River Tay. The Tay system drains the largest area of any river in Scotland and its flow is the largest in Britain. Other large river systems, including the North and South Esks, rise in the mountains and drain the northeast of the region, whilst smaller systems of a very different nature, such as the Angus coastal burns, rise in the lowlands. These waterways are surrounded by a huge variety of different habitats - from upland heath, woodland and estuarine to urban and farmland. Thousands of kilometres of burns provide linking wildlife corridors between all these terrestrial habitats which heightens their overall biodiversity value.

Many of our well-known species are associated with water and wetlands. The otter appears to be making a successful comeback to the area, but the water vole is faring badly and its numbers are dwindling towards extinction. Tayside is one of the most important regions in the UK for Atlantic Salmon and we hold one site for the inconspicuous aquatic plant, Slender naiad, now only found exclusively in Scotland. Add to that the region's significant populations of Freshwater pearl mussel (a species in serious decline across Europe) and the Tay as only one of three estuary strongholds in Scotland for Sparling, Tayside may rightly be proud of its water heritage.

LOCAL ACTION (extract from the Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan)

- Review current water quality data to determine current status of the Lowes chain of lochs - SEPA
- Seek to develop and promote policies to control alien species and favour establishment of appropriate native species - SEPA with SNH, PKC, DCC, AC, angling groups, landowners and District Salmon Fishery Boards
- Promote adoption of SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems) principles such as swales, infiltration basins, detention/ retention ponds, wetlands, reedbeds) in new developments - PKC, DCC, AC and Scottish Water
- Establish whether there are self-maintaining populations of Allis/Twaite shad in Tayside - SNH with Fisheries Research Services Freshwater Laboratory
- Encourage better management and protection of standing open water on farmland and forestry, such as buffer strips, etc. - FWAG and SAC with SEPA and FC
- Encourage and support local community projects and involvement - TBP with SEPA, SNH, PKC, DCC and AC