



TAYSIDE RECORDERS' BULLETIN

March 2011

Welcome to the Fourth Tayside Recorders' Day

Perth Museum and Art Gallery hosted the very first of these events in 2008 and since then the Forum has visited both Dundee and Forfar. This year we are back in Perth, with thanks again to the Museum for hosting the event.

Last year over 40 participants heard an update from the North East of Scotland Biological Recorders Centre and caught up on national survey news from the British Trust for Ornithology, Cairngorms Water Vole Conservation Project and the national moth counts. We also heard about fungi and plant recording in Tayside, plus Buglife's invertebrate recording projects.

The annual Recorders' Day in 2011 will, we hope, again bring people together to discuss local interests and to keep in touch with one another. This year's meeting will coincide with the Museum's Hide & Seek photographic exhibition so we are very pleased to welcome Keith Ringland, the well-known natural history photographer. He will be speaking about the trials and tribulations of photographing Perthshire's elusive mammals. There will also be plenty of time, during the day, to explore the exhibition which features seven Perthshire photographers, including Keith.

John Douglass undertook a Carse of Gowrie Orchard lichen survey last year and discovered some scarce species. This will lead on to another survey in the Carse, this time checking the lichens of seven rural churchyards. Together, these surveys will give us a very good picture as to what this area of Perthshire can offer by way of lichens and this, in turn, will help focus specific management on both traditional orchards and graveyards. The Tayside Biodiversity Partners are taking forward two key projects to safeguard the old orchards across the region, and at the same time working with local authorities and local people in setting up Green Graveyards.

We are pleased to welcome Suzanne Baimer, one of the BTCV's Natural Talent Apprentices, to the 2011 Forum. She will talk on her findings on brownfield biodiversity, again something of particular importance in Tayside. This is especially pertinent with talk of managing "stalled spaces". These will need careful management with biodiversity in mind, otherwise there is potential for more harm than good being done. There will also be talks by the British Arachnological Society, an update on the Bird Atlas by the British Trust for Ornithology and David Pryce will introduce Francis Buchanan White and the Perthshire Hemiptera.

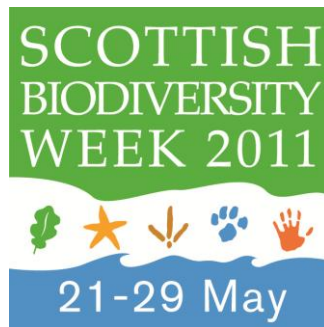
Recorders' Forum Website

The Tayside Recorders' Forum continues to have a section on the Partnership's website: www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk and the list of Recorders and associated organisations is well used.



However, all lists get out of date very quickly, so please check if your details are currently correct, or if we have inadvertently omitted you, please let us know - via Tayside.biodiversity@ukf.net. We are hoping to secure funds later in the year to update the Partnership's Priority Species Listing and to incorporate the Scottish List into this. The Listing is an important resource for planners and developers, as well as community groups seeking funding to restore or enhance their local environment. Information about the update will be put on the website.

SCOTTISH BIODIVERSITY WEEK: 19th to 29th May 2011



This year, in a break with tradition, the Scottish Biodiversity Week will have a theme - "Biodiversity is Life. Biodiversity is our Life". Such a theme shows how important our relationship is with nature: that we depend on it for most, if not all areas of our lives.

Events, as in the past, will be featured on a specific website, this year at www.snh.gov.uk/biodiversityweek. Organisers of wildlife events can download and personalise posters and check communication guides to help promote and publicise events. Events forms can be downloaded from the website and resources such as PVC banners and bookmarks can be ordered. Further information is available from bit@snh.gov.uk.

There will not be a Tayside Biodiversity Festival in 2011 but the Partnership is hoping to run one in the future. Last year's month-long Festival included over 140 events across Perth and Kinross, Dundee City and Angus and was very well received from organisers and participants alike.

This year's programme does not give sufficient time for the three local authority museum curators to give an update on their work, so we have taken to paper and this Bulletin will give the updates in this format instead.

2011 Perth Museum News

A major curation and documentation project began in September 2010 for the hemiptera (true bug) collection. The museum was awarded funding of £56,000 from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. David Pryce has been appointed as entomology officer to carry out the project which will finish in spring 2012.



The osprey exhibit in the Wild & Wonderful Perthshire gallery is currently being refurbished with funding from Museums Galleries Scotland. It will re-open in April 2011 and once again will include live webcam pictures from the Loch of the Lowes, thanks to the Scottish Wildlife Trust.

Funding of £40,000 from the Scottish Government Recognition Fund has enabled improvements to collections storage. Natural history staff and volunteers were kept busy in autumn as collections were moved whilst the works took place.

A new museum volunteer is Adam Garside who was formerly a curator at Dundee Museum and the National Museums of Scotland. He is a beetle specialist and has started improving the Perth beetle collection.

Currently on show is *Hide & Seek*, a nature photography exhibition that showcases the talents of seven local nature photographers - Gavin Anderson, Jo Cound, Fergus Gill, Lorne Gill, George Logan, Eric McCabe and Keith Ringland. Also on show are historic photographs of nesting birds by Ian Thompson (1895-1964). You can join in by submitting a photograph for inclusion in a digital slideshow within the exhibition. Images should be emailed to museum@pkc.gov.uk. *Hide & Seek* is open until 30th April.

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Dundee Museums and Art Galleries 2011 update

The McManus: Dundee's Art Gallery and Museum has welcomed over 200,000 visitors since it reopened last February. Both the 'Landscapes and Lives' and 'The Making of Modern Dundee' galleries feature natural history specimens in thematic multidisciplinary displays.

There is a varied events programme including lunchtime gallery talks, behind the scenes tours of our Collections Unit, and themed weekend events and talks which include natural science topics. We also hope to be involved again this year in partnership initiatives such as the Dundee Science Festival.

The Collections Unit on Barrack Street houses the natural science specimens, and interested parties are welcome to view or study the collections by appointment. There are regular behind the scenes tours and tours for special interest groups can also be arranged. A Leica stereo microscope with a built in digital camera has been purchased recently which can be connected directly to a computer or digital projector. This was obtained as part of improvements being made to collections access and engagement at the Collections Unit.

Currently work is ongoing over several projects:

- Expanding information held on in-gallery information terminals about objects on display, and enhancing database records and specimen photographs to populate the collections on-line database.
- Rationalising decades-old handling and school loans collection, absorbing useful specimens back into the main collection.



- Work is starting on new six-month projects to improve the care, documentation and access to individual collections. The first natural science collections to be tackled will be the Mammal mounts and the spirit collection.
- A volunteer is transferring information from the natural science daybooks onto the collections database, improving collections documentation.

The Dundee Art Galleries and Museums Biological Records Collection will continue to provide record searches for interested parties of the historical 'Naturebase' dataset held by the museum and covering Dundee and Angus. Additions to the dataset will be made where the data available reflects or complements the museum's natural science collections.

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Angus Museums

Angus Museums' Cultural Services maintains seven museums in Arbroath, Brechin, Forfar, Kirriemuir and Montrose. Each has a unique flavour, reflecting the different characters of the burgh towns of Angus. All the museums collect objects and photographs relating to any aspect of life or work in Angus. Behind the scenes there is a wealth of local history, archaeology, natural history and geology and art resources.

Kirriemuir Gateway to the Glens Museum opened in 2001 after the building was carefully restored and conserved. Visitors experience a vivid introduction to the history, culture and natural environment of 'Kirrie' and the western Angus glens. Upstairs the wildlife, geology, history and archaeology of Glen Prosen, Glen Isla, Glen Clova and Glen Doll are explored. A diorama brings visitors face to face with some of the wildlife of the Glens - an eagle glares imperiously from a crag whilst two hares in winter fur leap onto their hind legs to box each other.

The Montrose Natural History Collection has a long history of reflecting the natural history of Montrose and of Angus and this is shown in the large and extensive natural history collection displayed in the museum.

Almost all of the creatures which live around Angus, some encouraged, some discouraged are displayed here in several displays each of which reflects a habitat from the coastal rocky and sandy shores, through arable and woodland habitats to the very different highland areas. Along with many examples of invertebrates and plants the natural history collection displays many fine specimens of birds and mammals including the Skylark, Grey Partridge, Stoat, Weasel, Kestrel, Brown Hare, Rook, and the Carrion Crow.



Butterflies and Day-Flying Moths of Tayside & Fife Identification Guide

A new full-colour leaflet is about to be launched by Butterfly Conservation (Scotland) with funding from SNH, Perth & Kinross Council and the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership's SITA Promotions Fund. Look out for copies in museums and visitor centres across the region. A pdf will be made available on www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk or check www.butterfly-conservation.org/scotland.

Identification postcards will also be made available from Butterfly Conservation Scotland to plot the northwards progress of the distinctive Comma butterfly. Online sightings can be given via www.butterfly-conservation.org/scotland and clicking on the link to "Scottish Comma Survey".

Tayside Biodiversity Partnership Update

The new "From Summit to Sand" Newsletter will cover many of the projects that have been undertaken in the past year. A pdf version will be featured on the website. Paper copies will be available on request from Catherine Lloyd (contact details below). If any organisation is planning an event during 2011 and would like to distribute copies of the newsletter, Catherine can post small batches - or you can arrange collection of larger amounts from the biodiversity office in Perth.

The Partnership is taking forward over 60 projects and will be reviewing these for its Business Plan 2011-14. In addition, over 20 new projects were given SITA Tayside Biodiversity Action Funding in the past year. Grants (from £500 to several thousand pounds) are still available for 2011 and 2012. Application guidelines can be downloaded from the funding menu on www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk and further advice is available from Catherine or Perth & Kinross Grants Direct. Survey work is not funded, per se, but if it leads to practical habitat projects, it can be included.

Report on the 2010 BioBlitz at Dundee's Trottick Ponds

The grand finale to the Tayside Biodiversity Festival was the Dundee BioBlitz. With vital funding from Hillcrest Housing Association and the BBC Breathing Spaces' 'Wild days Out' a fun 24 hours was spent recording as many species as possible. In the evening frogs, toads and newts were found, as well as pike and eels. The event included an expert from the National Amphibian and Reptile Recording Society and local Moth Recorder, David Lampard. There was also a lot of bat activity, with Daubenton's and Soprano Pipistrelles noted - detectors started picking them up from the second they were switched on!

Sunday saw over fifty people join the activities at Trottick. They had the opportunity to meet invertebrate and grassland experts from McManus Galleries, Buglife Scotland and the Fife Ranger Service. The records were collated by Dundee Ranger Alison Cairnie, with over 230 species found on-site. Along with the biological recording various children's activities took place, including pond dipping, badge making and nature trails. Wild flower seeds were planted and some Butterbur bashing helped deter its encroachment on to the wildflower meadow.

The event was a great success and will help the Ranger Service manage the site correctly in future. Local people learned there was more to the ponds than just the swans they love to feed and hopefully they will be inspired to become local recorders. Many of the guest experts also said they



had not realised this lovely site existed in the city and would visit again. Dundee Ranger Service plans to hold another BioBlitz in 2011, possibly at the Broughty Ferry Nature Reserve.

Partnership Surveys

Barn Owls in Tayside

Carol Littlewood continues to collect and collate Barn Owl sightings for Tayside and maintains the map showing the range of Barn Owls in the area. It is suspected that the recent hard winters will have taken their toll on the population, but confirmation that the nestboxes are being used throughout the project area is heartening.

Supplies of the “Have you Seen a Barn Owl?” postcard are available from the biodiversity office: these would be useful to leave in rural libraries, post offices, pubs or local shops. If you can help distribute these, please contact Tayside.biodiversity@ukf.net or contact Carol direct at carol@littlewoodlandcare.co.uk. There is an online survey form at www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk.

Swift Survey

The swift survey continues and the information received in past years is listed on the three local authority planning departments’ GIS. Tayside’s Manual for Planners and Developers includes a Biodiversity Advice Note on how to mitigate for swifts in building renovation projects (the Manual and Advice Notes can be downloaded from www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk). The “dots on map” idea is now proving to be helpful in knowing where to focus surveys: we still need to find if the gaps on the map are due to a lack of survey work or a lack of swifts.

So - if you can spare just one hour during a July evening to look to the skies, we would be very grateful. If you can act as a Local Survey Co-ordinator to encourage others to join in the swift survey, please let the Swift Interest Group leaders know as soon as possible - Craig Borland: [BorladC@angus.gov.uk](mailto:borladc@angus.gov.uk) or Daniele Muir: DMuir@pkc.gov.uk. Posters, survey forms and further information are available on request. Sightings can be added to the online survey at www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk.

Sand Martin Survey

Smaller scale than the swift survey, we would still appreciate knowing where you first see sand martins or their nesting sites. Again, there is an online survey form to complete on www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk.

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