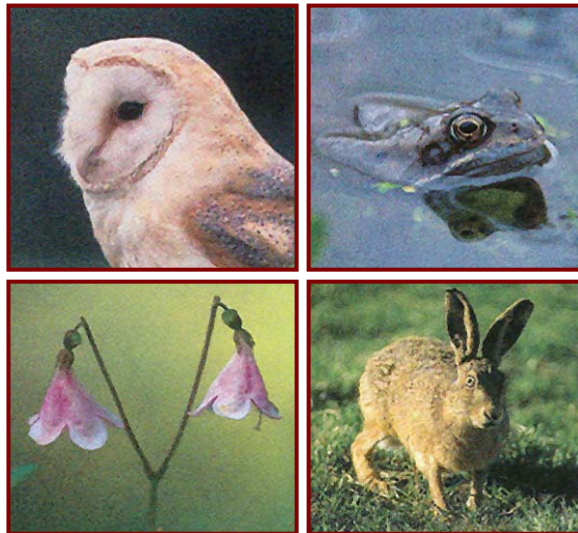




Tayside Biodiversity Partnership



ANNUAL REPORT April 2004 – to March 2005





WHAT IS BIODIVERSITY?

Biodiversity means the variety of life on earth. It includes all species of plants and animals and the habitats where they live. It also includes us.

Tayside has a very rich biodiversity resource that is vital to its economy: tourism relies on our beautiful landscape, insects pollinate our crops, and the land provides raw materials for our clothing, food, drink, buildings and roads.

The Broad Aims of the Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan

- To co-ordinate existing actions, as well as initiating and co-ordinating new actions;
- To conserve and enhance the region's biodiversity, taking into account both local and national priorities.

TAYSIDE BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS





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CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

As the new chair of the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership, I would like to thank Merrill Smith for her commitment to the Partnership over the past two years.

Tayside is one of the most biologically rich areas of Scotland (and the UK) and very many people and organisations are committed to working together to conserve and foster our biodiversity. Such partnerships are essential and, since 2004, even more vital following the passage of the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act. All government bodies now have a duty to further the conservation of biodiversity; and we have to find the best ways to do this - and also to contribute to other policies and initiatives, such as Community Planning.

Equally, we need to look outside our own boundaries, and consider how activities within Tayside can contribute also to Scottish, UK and even international targets. All of this requires efficient coordination, and makes it clear how fortunate we are to have such a dedicated biodiversity coordinator, Catherine Lloyd. I look forward to working with her and all of you over the next two years.

Dr. Martin Price
Chairman
Tayside Biodiversity Partnership

THE BACKGROUND TO THE BIODIVERSITY PROCESS - FROM RIO TO TAYSIDE

In 1992 the UK Government signed the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity at the Rio Earth Summit. There are now UK Biodiversity Action Plans in place for the conservation and promotion of 391 of the rarest species and 45 of the most threatened habitats in Britain.

The Scottish Biodiversity Forum oversees those habitats and species that occur in Scotland. The Tayside Biodiversity Partnership was established in 1998. Covering the local authority areas of Angus, Dundee City, and Perth & Kinross, it co-ordinated the publication of the Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan in 2002 and is now implementing over 400 actions, together with the preparation of further Habitat and Species Action Plans.

Conservation and protection of biodiversity is not just the task of government, nor wholly the task of the public sector - it concerns everyone. We are all responsible for our actions and the impacts we have on our local surroundings. Equally we can all contribute something - as this Report shows.

As the local biodiversity process matures, the Partnership's membership is naturally changing to accommodate it. There is still much 'behind the scenes work' to prepare the next tranche of Habitat and Species Action Plans and to put funding in place to take projects forward - but real action by a very wide variety of organisations, volunteer groups and individuals is now very much underway.

Partnership Progress

To review progress during 2004, however, a Steering Group Workshop was held in October so that all members could assess what the Partnership is doing well and to discuss improvements. It was agreed the plus points include:



- Good networking opportunities and a good understanding of the broad aims;
- Successful involvement of a wider partnership;
- Identification of projects and delivery where the project brief is clear;
- Proactive awareness-raising (external/public; internal, particularly local authorities; good quality seminars)
- TBP recognition through publications/events;
- Linking new sectors and identification of key movers;
- Accessing funding;
- Reacting to pressures and solving problems (but not everywhere).

Areas in which improvements could be made include:

- A need to address why some partners are no longer fully engaged (particularly, to discover the reason behind the falling off of some Non-Government Organisations [NGOs]);
- Identification of where local/national priorities and processes cause dysfunction;
- Data sharing and the improvement of baseline information;
- Recognition of new opportunities, such as Community Planning;
- A proactive demonstration and promotion of Partnership successes;
- Additional awareness-raising and further engagement of communities and partners, including NGOs and the Ranger Services;
- Common strategic issues at Tayside Level (geographic and partner);
- The potential role of TBP in SSSI management (statutory function could assist liaison/co-operation).

Improvements will be made over the coming year and links made with reviewing the 1st Tranche actions to the proposed UK BAP Review.

Biodiversity in a Scottish Context

The year 2004 proved an important one for the Scottish biodiversity process. The passing of the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 now places a duty on all public bodies to further the conservation of biodiversity in the course of their work, to consider the impact their activities have on biodiversity and, if possible, to act to benefit wildlife. The Act is the first concerted basis for an integrated approach to the long-term conservation and management of Scotland's biodiversity. It will provide a more robust system for safeguarding Sites of Special Scientific Interest and addresses the need for improved protection of vulnerable wildlife.

In May 2004 the *Scottish Biodiversity Strategy: "It's in your Hands"* was introduced at a prestigious launch in Edinburgh. The Tayside Biodiversity Partnership's Barn Owl Project was featured as part of the Local Biodiversity Partnerships' display. The Strategy's vision and objectives will support Scotland's biodiversity over the next 25 years. With the enactment of the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, the Strategy has full formal effect and will support implementation of the new duty.

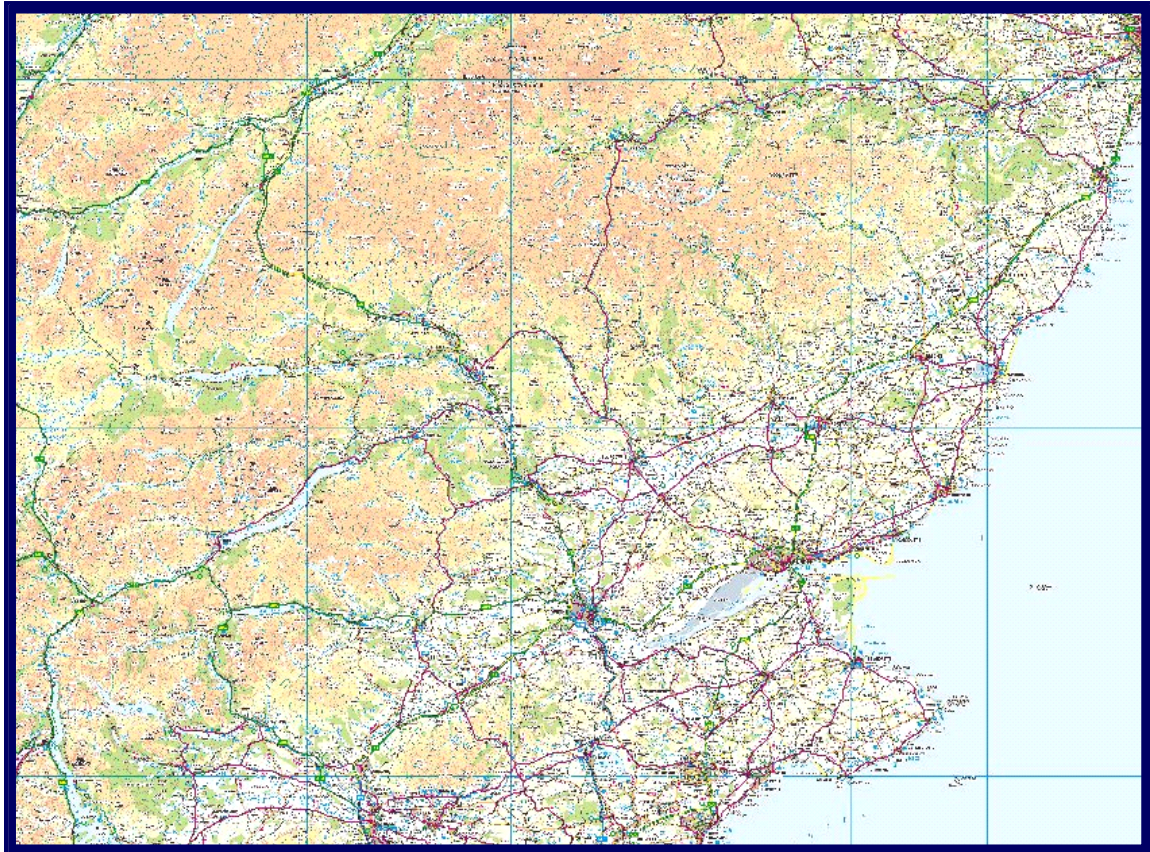


Funding has always been a major restraint in encouraging implement of actions. However, the Scottish Executive made the first step in 2004 with the new Biodiversity Action Grant Scheme. For the next three years, an annual sum of approximately £200,000 is being made available to support both local and national biodiversity projects. The Broughty Ferry



Environmental Project was one of the first beneficiaries to receive funding for its innovative Hourglass Project - a community-led project working towards specific targets in Tayside's Sand Dune Habitat Action Plan.

AREA COVERED BY THE TAYSIDE BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP



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MONITORING AND REPORTING

In the Spring, letters were sent to all 38 Lead Partners, but only 12 updates were returned. Angus Council was the only local authority to report back in this instance. It therefore proved impossible to prepare a statistical report resulting from the replies. However, with the imminent Biodiversity Action Recording Scheme (BARS) being introduced by the UK BAP Group, an autumn monitoring round was not held and future monitoring will take place via BARS.

List of Lead Partners Undertaking Actions in the 1st Tranche Biodiversity Action Plan of the Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan

Angling Groups (via SEPA)
Angus Council (inc Ranger Service)
Angus Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG)
Angus and Dundee Tourist Board
Barn Owl Interest Group
Breadalbane Deer Management Group (DMG) – formerly the West Rannoch DMG and East Glen Lyon DMG
Broughty Ferry Environment Project (BFEP)
Cairngorms National Park (Biodiversity Partnership)
Deer Commission for Scotland
District Salmon Fisheries Board
Dry Stone Walling Association
Dundee City Council (inc Ranger Service)
East Grampian DMG
Farm Business Development Scheme (via SEERAD)
Forestry Commission (inc Forestry Industry Cluster Group)
Ministry of Defence
NFU Scotland
National Trust for Scotland (NTS)
Perth and Kinross Council (inc Ranger Service)
Perthshire FWAG
Perthshire Tourist Board
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
Scottish Agricultural College (SAC)
Scottish and Southern Energy
Scottish Enterprise Tayside
Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)
Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department (SEERAD)
Scottish Golf Environment Group
Scottish Native Woods
Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)
Scottish Rural Property and Business Association
Scottish Water
Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT)
Tay Estuary Forum
Tayside Biodiversity Partnership
West Grampian DMG
Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust



TAKING ACTION FOR BIODIVERSITY - HABITAT REVIEW

Since 2002 the Partnership has been working towards achieving targets in the 18 published Habitat Action Plans (HAPs), as well as linking in to UKBAP targets where appropriate.

Six Habitat sub-groups are still overseeing the actions and discussing projects. They are meeting less often and, in some cases, smaller working groups are set up to take a particular subject forward. The Education sub-group meets regularly and has proved to be a useful networking group. The Barn Owl Interest Group continues to put its pilot projects into place, and the Swift Interest Group now includes a diverse membership of local authority staff, individual naturalists and professionals such as architects and planners.

Progress during 2004-05 is highlighted below under each of the habitat sections, together with a brief forward look to projects being proposed in 2005/06. Further updates are given under the individual Partners' reports.

Coasts and Estuaries

- Estuaries
- Maritime Cliffs and Slopes
- Sand Dunes

Several key members of the sub-group departed during the year, so no meetings were held. However, two conservation projects are under way at Barry Buddon, one of Tayside's most important coastal sites. On Barry Links a small herd or "fold" of highland cattle is helping maintain and enhance the site's botanical interest by breaking up coarse grass and scrub.



The Barry Buddon Conservation Group, together with the Ministry of Defence, SNH, RSPB and the Angus Ranger Service, are promoting responsible public access to the site as well as environmental management planning.

Efforts are continuing to attract breeding terns back to Barry. Few if any terns now breed in Tayside and success at Barry would be a real conservation coup. Other tern colonies that may be re-established are at Montrose Basin and Dun's Dish.



The Dundee Conservation Volunteers have continued their positive management work on the greater yellow rattle colony at Easthaven.

The Angus Ranger Service produced a number of site-specific leaflets and raised awareness of biodiversity and access issues at sites such as Seaton Cliffs, the Elliot Trail and St. Vigean's Nature Trail, Arbroath.

Action for 2005

The Firth of Tay holds the largest reedbed in Britain and this supports some rare and distinctive bird species such as marsh harrier and the UK's largest colony of bearded tit. The RSPB has recently acquired control over part of the reedbeds and is preparing plans for their positive conservation management.





Farmland

- Calcareous and Base-Rich Grassland
- Farm Buildings
- Hedgerows and Treelines
- Stone Dykes
- Wet Grassland

The Angus Ranger Service continued searching for the Small Blue Butterfly on the Friockheim disused railway line. This survey will ascertain if the species is still present at inland sites; survey work with Butterfly Conservation will continue into 2005.



In the meantime, both Crombie and Monikie Country Parks run their own butterfly surveys, reporting their findings back to Butterfly Conservation. At Monikie, moth recording to study habitat decline and climate change also takes place in association with the Plant and Invertebrate Ecology Division of the Rothampsted Research Centre.



Farmland Bird Lifeline - FWAG and the SAC have worked with the RSPB in Angus to involve three farmers in the project. This will continue into 2005.

The Biodiversity Co-ordinator attended a workshop on "Local Action for Grasslands in the UK" held by the UK Lowland Grassland Habitat Action Plan Group. The main aim of the workshop was to promote links between local and national groups. Innovative methods of knowledge transfer and project implementation were discussed, as well as studying how best to integrate local and UK action in order to achieve grassland HAP targets at the landscape scale. Excellent contacts were made and Tayside will begin awareness-raising with a number of "Field Days" events in 2005.



A well-attended hedge course was held in December by Perthshire FWAG which offered training to farmers and landowners about the best methods for planting and managing hedgerows.

Tayside Barn Owl Project

Until recently, Angus had not been thought of as a particular stronghold for Barn Owls. However, findings from the Tayside Barn Owl Survey are challenging this assumption - there have been thirteen reports passed to FWAG from the Brechin/Airlie area, eight in the Montrose/ Lunan Bay area and a number of scattered records from the middle of the county, several from the Forfar area (including a second winter male killed on the A90 at the top end of Forfar Loch). As is the case elsewhere, several of the birds were discovered dead by the side of the road, but there are reports of them living in barns up into the Angus Glens, as well as in the more lowland areas. Sightings in Perthshire still seem to centre around the Tay corridor, supporting the decision to concentrate the Perthshire part on the Barn Owl project in that area.



Cont... P7



Funding for a Tayside-wide project from Scottish Natural Heritage has enabled advice to be given in pilot areas such as north of the River Tay and in Angus. The project is helping deliver actions in Tayside's "Farm Buildings" Action Plan.

In Perthshire, SAC carried out ten visits along the River Tay corridor and provided the farmers/landowners with Barn Owl Management reports and also gave Barn owl boxes, purchased through the project, to the farms to erect. As well as the SNH support for this part of the project, there was a donation from C R Smith towards the manufacture of boxes.

In Angus, the Cairngorms National Park Authority also granted funds to the Angus Glens Barn Owl Project which SNH and Angus Council are supporting. The funding allowed Angus FWAG to undertake ten farm visits, each followed by a Barn Owl Management Report, and followed by the provision of a nestbox, some of which are still being made. Farmers and landowners involved in the project are helping site the nest boxes. The bird is legally protected so if a box comes into use, licensed ringers from the Tay Ringing Group will inspect the boxes and ring any chicks.

Kinnordy Sawmill donated timber for nestboxes, and volunteers have come forward to help make them. Rossie Secure Accommodation, the Crombie Country Park NATS and WATCH Groups, RSPB volunteers at Kinnordy Loch, 2nd Montrose Scouts and Kirriemuir Boys Brigade have all offered their help in making boxes, whilst the Dundee Bird Group offered help in siting them. Mr and Mrs Finlay of Kirriemuir, who have previously been involved with the Forfar Eco Team, have collected some of the wood and have undertaken to make a number of boxes. Delivery to the rest of the volunteers will be arranged in April. Nestboxes have gone up at Glamis and Glen Lethnot so far. The Angus FWAG Adviser also got many of the 27 farmers she helped to complete Rural Stewardship Scheme (RSS) applications to put up at least one Barn Owl box through the RSS, as did the Fife & Kinross FWAG Adviser in her part of Tayside.

Posters about the project were on display at the high-profile launch of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy in Edinburgh. Additional publicity was achieved with an article in UK Biodiversity News. A display about the project was included on the FWAG stands at the Angus and Kirriemuir Agricultural Shows, as well as at the Scottish Countryside Festival. Barn Owls were also the subject of an interview of the Angus FWAG Adviser for the BBC's "Castle in the Country Series" shown on BBC in the Spring.

Action for 2005

New Sub-Group members are revitalising projects and ensuring completion of further action Plans. During 2005, work will progress on the Arable Weeds Species Action Plan, the Cropped Areas Habitat Action Plan and the Cereal Field Margins Habitat Action Plan, all of which have been drafted. Several projects are being discussed as part of the Action Schedules.

As part of the summer 'Tayside Field Days' events, a Wildflower Meadow Creation event at Scotia Seeds, Brechin, is planned by Angus FWAG, and there will be a Perthshire Field Discussion Day, with a tour being undertaken of a number of species-rich grasslands.

Angus FWAG has drafted a Farmland Priority Species Advice Note which gives brief details about the 15 species included in the RSS "List of 30" used to gain points for LBAP species and habitats. The list is specific to each LBAP region so that both UKBAP and LBAP species will benefit from the proposed management being undertaken through RSS applications. The Advice Note will be available for Partners to use from mid-2005.



Upland

- Montane
- Upland Heath

In September, Upland sub-group members met with Cairngorms National Park and Biodiversity Partners. A morning meeting was followed by a tour of the demonstration moorland site at Glen Prosen which included discussion on recreational access and the control of grazing for increased biodiversity.

During the autumn the Upland sub-group leader, Dr Martin Price, became Chair of the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership. Although the Director of Kindrogan Field Centre indicated an interest in taking on the Upland sub-group leader's role, he moved on from the Field Centre and the post has remained vacant for part of the year.

Operation Country Watch - the RSPB's project in Perthshire is encouraging a partnership between gamekeepers, schools and the RSPB to study moorland ecology within the curriculum (both the Upland sub-group and Education sub-group members are likely to get involved in 2005).

The Forest of Clunie is now in a Natural Care scheme, the first in Scotland. Nine agreements are in place and a further 11 are being developed. Ultimately these twenty agreements would cover 85% of the area. Actions underway include muirburn, stock reduction, bracken control, deer management, and vermin control.

In the Angus Glens at Caenlochan, the Angus Ranger Service continued to ring birds and survey raptors, ravens and dippers.

As reported in last year's Annual Report, many of the issues listed within the Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan are Scotland-wide ones, so national links are being made with the Scottish Biodiversity Forum's Rural Land Use Working Group and Scotland's Moorland Forum.

Action for 2005

A Cairngorms Water Vole Project is proposed for 2005 which will take in the Angus Glens. Currently being developed by Aberdeen University and the Game Conservancy Trust with many other interested parties, the project would involve the removal of non-native American Mink from the uplands, which in turn may help secure the future of water vole populations (the UK's fastest declining mammal).



Grampian FWAG is proposing a Black Grouse Project which will include Highland Perthshire and Angus.

A violet oil beetle (which parasitizes solitary bees) was found in upland Angus. Nationally, Bug Life is considering a project on oil beetles in which Tayside now may be able to have some input.



An Awareness Day for upland managers, perhaps led by the Scottish Montane Scrub Action Group, is being discussed jointly between the Tayside and Cairngorms Biodiversity Partnership.



Urban and Built Environment

- Built and Developed Environment
- Businesses with Land
- Golf Courses

The Dundee Red Squirrel Project - the consultation stage of the draft strategy was completed and approved in November. Sustain Dundee agreed to source £56,000 funds for project. A CD Rom for school use was prepared and surveys continued.



The Dundee Red Squirrel Group is working with the Council's Planning and Transportation Department and the developer of Liff Hospital Grounds (through a Section 75 Agreement) to ensure that the wooded nature of the development is retained and the Red Squirrel population protected and enhanced. A number of other local partners (including Downfield Golf Course and Ninewells Hospital) are now controlling grey squirrels to protect the population of Red Squirrels in the west of the city. The Project is also working with Dundee University and the Botanic Gardens to further the understanding of the squirrel populations.

The Angus FWAG Adviser had an opportunity to be involved in a feature on Red Squirrels for BBC2's Castle in the Country series - although much of the relevant information on disease and control of grey squirrels was omitted in the final cut.

Swift Survey - The Dundee Ranger Service involved twenty local people in swift surveys. Further details are on page 25. The Angus Ranger Service's Swift Nesting Project is aiming to locate all current swift nesting buildings so that the Council's Planning, Property and Housing Departments know of the birds' presence with regard to future structural works.

During the year, the Angus Ranger Service worked with SNH, the Bat Conservation Trust and the local Dundee and Angus Bat Group to map feeding areas of Daubentons and Pipistrelles at key sites throughout the area. Events were also held to raise awareness about bats and habitat loss.

Invasive Species Project - during the summer a survey along the Dighty Burn was carried out by the Angus Ranger Service and a volunteer from Broughty Ferry Environmental Project. The comprehensive survey - the first of its kind to be done for over a decade - included maps and photographs. The information was incorporated into the BFEP's ZOOM display see page 16. A literature search is still ongoing. Meetings with the relevant partner organisations are planned to gauge costs and a Management Strategy will now be drafted.

Further details about Perth Museum's Wild and Wonderful Exhibition are included on page 28. Projects and training workshops regarding Tayside's golf courses are mentioned on pages 21 and 29.

Sheltered Housing Biodiversity Project

Angus Council's pilot project - the three-year project was started when the "Hospitals, Sheltered Housing & Residential Complexes" Action Plan was still in draft form for the Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan. Over the past two years, the Angus Ranger Service has been

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instrumental in siting bird tables and bird feeders in eleven sheltered housing complexes in Arbroath, Montrose, Brechin, Forfar, Letham, Monifieth and Kirriemuir. This action was supported by introductory talks, advice on plants to attract wildlife, and the provision of bird identification charts, bird tables, birdseed and three pairs of binoculars per site, all of which was generously funded by Scottish Natural Heritage.

The project has been very positively received and has featured in one of the residents' internal newsletters. As well as having benefits to wildlife, the project encouraged a partnership approach that included involvement from the Scouts and Guides. It has enhanced the quality of service to a specific age group, stimulating the residents of these sheltered housing and residential complexes.



During 2004 the venture was featured in the Scottish Executive's publication: "Best Value and Biodiversity in Scotland - a Handbook of Good Practice for Public Bodies". It will also be included as a case study in Tayside's 'Hospitals, Sheltered Housing & Residential Complexes Action Plan'. In the coming year, another five sheltered housing complexes will receive a similar package. It is hoped more nursing homes and sheltered housing complexes throughout Tayside will be encouraged to get involved in similar projects.

Action for 2005

Digby Invasive Species Project - it is proposed that a joint Management Plan is drawn up between Angus Council and Dundee City Council in partnership with a number of local groups, SEPA and Scottish Natural Heritage.

Osprey Platform - subject to funding, it is planned to erect an osprey platform at Forfar Loch.

Orchar Park - plans are afoot to create a wildlife/community orchard in Orchar Park. The John Muir Award's 'Young Explorers' group have already surveyed the local area for local varieties of fruit tree, drawn up plans for the design of an entrance to the park on Panmure Street and spoken about the project to local people. The Nature Nutters session in October coincided with Apple Day so apple bobbing, apple prints and longest peel competitions were held. The children also studied a map of star constellations to see if it would be possible to plant the trees in the shape of the constellation Hercules (the carrier of the golden apples).

There is also a possibility of working with local artists. It is hoped that, in addition to working with young people who have learning difficulties, this project will appeal to a wider range of young people attending the school.

Biodiver-city - the Dundee Partnership for the Environment is currently implementing a project which will interpret the rich biodiversity of the Tay to city residents and visitors. Several locations have been chosen where wildlife is easily seen, for example, Seals at the Rail Bridge. Innovative interpretation installations will be commissioned along the Tay to Broughty Ferry; a number of funding bids have already been successful.

Green Graveyard Initiative - A project which builds on survey work carried out by Angus Countryside Rangers will be implemented across Tayside (see Page 26 for details).



Water and Wetlands

- Mesotrophic Lochs
- Rivers and Burns
- Standing Open Water

Salmon in the Classroom - from a successful initiative set up in Dumfries and Galloway during the 1990s - the 'Salmon in the Classroom Project' - a pilot project was launched in Angus during 2004. The Angus Ranger Service visited three primary schools: Stracathro, Glenisla and South Esk. The original project centred on the salmon, concentrating on its life cycle and economic importance and involving three visits to each participating school. With the Angus project, the remit was broadened to encompass the river as a whole - topics included geology, river forms, water cycle, pollution and predation. The social and economic benefits to the local communities were also stressed. This increased the number of visits to each school to six.



Each of the schools involved was given a tank containing salmon eggs which they monitored until they hatched and were ready to return to a river system. The eggs were kindly supplied by the Esk District Salmon Fisheries Board. Trips were also arranged for the children involved to return the eggs to a river and to watch electro-fishing take place. Undoubtedly the highlight of the project was the schools' visits to the Tay Salmon Fisheries and the Fisheries Research Facilities at Almondbank.

The Lunan Lochs Project

The five lochs of Craighush, Lowes, Butterstone, Clunie and Marlee in north east Perthshire are collectively known as The Lunan Lochs. This important area is home to habitats of international importance: shallow clearwater lochs and quaking bog, plus UKBAP species such as Otter and the aquatic plant Slender naiad.



The lochs are Sites of Special Scientific Interest and have been identified as being of European importance, forming one of 239 sites in Scotland put forward as a candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC). The species and habitats of the lochs are, however, under threat from nutrient enrichment in the form of phosphate (from soil erosion, animal and human waste); the alkalinity of the water changes when algal blooms block out sunlight.

Following farm pollution audits within the catchment by Scottish Natural Heritage in 2003, a range of opportunities was highlighted to reduce soil erosion and nutrient enrichment through changes to stock management, fertiliser application and cropping patterns. A partnership was formed consisting of SNH, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Macaulay Institute and Scottish Agricultural College. During 2004 the partners collected and reviewed data on phosphorus inputs to the Lunan Lochs, and computer models were used to assess the diffuse phosphorus inputs from the surrounding catchment.

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Several sources of phosphorus were identified - land-use/diffuse inputs, domestic septic tanks, fish cages, hotels and caravan sites. The largest source was found to be diffuse inputs resulting from the surrounding land-use, so SNH put into place a Natural Care Scheme to help improve the water quality of the Lunan Lochs. The scheme is now working with local land managers to promote 'best management practices' and provide money and advice for good management.



To raise awareness of conservation and to provide additional nesting sites, a sand martin barrel was constructed at Monikie Country Park; there are now several of these barrels in Angus, including a new one at Aggregate Industry's Edzell quarry.



Action for 2005

At Forfar Loch, a public awareness campaign - the "Watersense Project" - will get underway in 2005. The scheme links domestic phosphate usage to biodiversity and is being led by WWF Scotland (funded by HSBC), SEPA, the Scottish Executive and Scottish Water. The Angus Ranger Service will be involved with the education side of the campaign.

The Salmon in the Classroom Project will be expanded within Tayside. As part of a larger project in Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage has appointed a project officer to oversee and co-ordinate events, as well as providing funding for the school trips. The project officer will be involved with schools in Angus and Perthshire. Eggs for some of the schools have been obtained from the Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board, which will have a substantial input to the Almondbank hatchery visit. Three primary schools in Angus will again take part, namely Lethnot, Tarfside and Muirfield Schools.

Pitlochry Lade - working with a local community group, species and habitat surveys are planned on mill ponds and the historic lade that runs from the village of Moulin through Pitlochry to the Tay with a view to enhancing the area's biodiversity.

Invasive Species - the SEPA guidance leaflet 'Managing Aquatic and Waterside Plants' is planned for publication in 2005 and will provide general guidance on the factors which should be considered by anyone contemplating any form of plant control. It will provide options for consideration; detail whom to consult under various circumstances and where to obtain more detailed information and guidance; and describe the legal responsibilities of different control options. Pilot projects across Tayside are currently being considered - the first on the Dighty Burn (Dundee and Angus) is already in hand - see the Urban section for an update - page 10.



Riparian Engineering Seminar - planned for the autumn, the seminar will be for anyone undertaking river works, particularly local authority Planning and Roads Departments, as well as Fisheries Groups. Case Studies from fisheries and councils will be highlighted, together with information on the incoming legislation and licensing changes.



Woodland

- Native Pinewoods
- Upland Oakwoods

In June, a Small Cow-Wheat Training session was held by the SWT at the Birks of Aberfeldy. A number of Partnership members attended.

During July, twenty members of the sub-group and guests met at Glen Lednock (Comrie). The focus of the day was the restoration of Plantations on Ancient Woodland sites under the umbrella of the LIFE - funded Core Forest Sites project. Three key areas were explored:

- The Comrie Millennium Footpath
- The restoration of Ancient Woodland Sites by removal of conifer
- Management of mixed broadleaf woodland and recreation on Ancient Woodland Sites.

This event was perhaps unique in that all the land managers were actively carrying out works on their land. This allowed for discussions on what had been achieved and what the next stages were, rather than using the sites to discuss what could be done if the landowners were willing. One of the key elements linking the sites was public involvement. All three areas have well - used footpaths which might have caused problems if both planning and implementation had not been handled correctly. Publicity and meetings informed the public, and opinions and perceptions taken on board. No frustrations or confrontations were therefore encountered.

A number of TBP Partners have acted as consultee on the Beauly to Denny replacement powerline. Advice on the impact on woodland throughout this area continues and, through active involvement, the direct loss of woodland habitat resulting from the new corridor has been significantly reduced. Proposals for the management of the redundant corridor will give rise to a net gain in woodland cover. Consultation documents for the powerline will be available from April 2005.

In addition, windpower continues to be an issue and many Partners are being consulted over numerous schemes in Tayside.

Progress with the woodlands in Tayside covered by LIFE funding continues, and significant changes are now apparent. In particular, Craighall Gorge has been opened up from the A93 across the river, mainly by removal of exotics, giving the native regeneration more light to grow; the results so far are very good. The LIFE funding continues until 2006, by which time over £250,000 of grant aid will have been spent on the Core Forest Sites in Tayside (Craighall Gorge; Keltneyburn; Shingle Islands; Comrie and Crieff Oakwoods - involving 17 different ownerships).

Work was completed on a spruce plantation in Glen Clova to remove trees from the banks of the Esk to help improve water quality in an important area for salmon spawning.

Much woodland work has additionally been carried out by Dundee City and Perth and Kinross Councils - their update is on pages 25 and 28.

The Forestry Commission's wood chip trial for bedding lambs has been completed and a report produced.

Tensions between the Rural Stewardship Scheme and the Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme continue, but a healthy debate on the way forward to resolve these is ongoing. The key issue is that SEERAD policy does not allow other grant aid to take place in woodlands where they



are paying for Livestock exclusion. This therefore means that essential woodland management is not taking place.

Further work to refine Forest Habitat Networks is taking place. There may be links with the draft Red Squirrel Action Plan as landscape-wide issues need to be discussed for the species' future in the area. In the meantime, the Perth and Kinross Squirrel Group has been revived and members are now undertaking a number of transects to update their survey records. In Glen Doll forest and Crombie Country Park, the Angus Ranger Service is collecting Red Squirrel records. All information is passed on to the Scottish Red Squirrel Co-ordinator. The successful Dundee Red Squirrel Project is reported on under the "Urban" section on page 9. In addition, to update records, the Highland Red Squirrel Group launched a Great Red Squirrel Hunt in the Cairngorms. There is interest in widening this into Highland Perthshire and discussions are underway as to how best limit the expansion of grey squirrels north of Dunkeld.



Black Grouse habitat improvement continues and some areas have shown tremendous success whilst others are still in decline. Declining quality of habitat within enclosed woodland is resulting in less holding capacity for birds. Changes to the SFGS have recognised this and will be implemented.

Strathmartine Park Community Wood - with an Angus Council forester, eleven volunteers from SNAG (Strathmartine Nature Action Group), the local Community Council, and Strathmartine Primary School were all involved in planting the first 126 Alder and Willow trees with vole guards in March 2005. Strathmartine Park used to be a near treeless public park with only a football pitch and small play area, and very little of wildlife value. SNAG contacted Angus Council three years ago and together designed a 0.5ha Red Squirrel friendly Community Woodland park, retaining all the original park features intact. The 30% Scots pine woodland will have its planting of 1250 trees and shrubs completed in April by Angus Council Leisure Services staff. Further wild flower planting and wetland area creation is planned once the trees are established.

Capercaillie Workshop

A workshop was held at Birnam in August 2004 to discuss capercaillie conservation in the Angus, Perth and Loch Lomond National Park area.

A national survey in winter of 2003/04 found only three birds in 157 2km transects in Angus, Perth and Loch Lomond National Park (LLNP) area. Particular emphasis was given to the current low numbers and dispersed nature of the Angus, Perth and LLNP metapopulation, which is likely to present special problems in any recovery effort. Remaining core populations are confined to parts of northern, upland Perthshire and the LLNP islands. The situation in Strathearn seems to be especially critical at the moment, with very few birds left, at widely scattered sites. Habitat fragmentation appears to be a major factor, although there is a connected woodland network with a variety of forest structures and species types.

It was agreed that a Capercaillie Conservation Plan would be completed in 2004, followed by a distribution survey and audit of key sites by spring of 2006. Forest plans for FCS's own forests to include measures for capercaillie started in 2004 with Errochty and Craigvinean. A Newsletter will be distributed to highlight the various actions being taken to enhance capercaillie status and woodland management workshops held in the area. **Cont on P15...**



The remnant Perthshire population is significant in genetic terms as the Scottish population has less genetic diversity than populations in mainland Europe. It is important that the six sub-populations in Scotland are linked in order that gene flow is increased and maintained.



Since there is some suggestion that the ecology of capercaillie broods in Perthshire may differ from the accepted norm of blaeberry-rich woodland, an attempt should be made to identify the precise areas used by broods in Perthshire. It appears that bogs and flushes may be more important than the classic carpet of blaeberry in many woods here.

Action for 2005

For the foreseeable future, a reactive approach to HAPs will have to continue until other staff resources can be made available.

Juniper wood restoration plans have been drawn up for a key Juniper wood SSSI. A "Juniper Day" is planned during the summer of 2005 to bring together Woodland sub-group members, woodland owners and guests to discuss the various management options for a number of woods in Highland Perthshire and the current research available to support these. There are plans to contribute to Plantlife International's general juniper survey. Moreover, the Scottish Executive has included Tayside Juniper woods in their 2005 calendar.



Forest Research is conducting a long-term trial on the suitability and timing of various grazing regimes within Juniper woodlands to encourage regeneration. Perthshire is the only area in the UK to support this trial, and with the support of SNH and FC(S) the long-term viability of these important habitats will be secured.

Three new grants for Woodland Management on Farms, announced in early 2005, will include Livestock Grazing in Woods; Capital Investment in Small-scale Processing and Finishing of Timber; and Capital Investment in the Wood Fuel Supply Chain. Related to this are changes regarding funds available to farmers taking land out of agricultural production.

There is to be a Tayside Red Squirrel Newsletter - due for publication in the summer - which will bring together all those working together for the species and will highlight projects and surveys in which local communities can contribute.

There are proposals to launch a Veteran Tree Initiative in Highland Perthshire and then extend it Tayside-wide once resource implications are fully realised. The intention would be to target key areas such as rural schools and town trees.

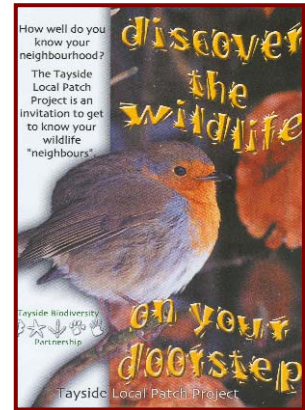
The Big Tree Country Project has been awarded a grant of £526,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (which represents a 31.6% HLF contribution towards the costs). Project planning started late 2004 with work being implemented on the majority of the key sites by Autumn 2005.



LEARNING ABOUT BIODIVERSITY

Membership of the Education sub-group continues to increase and now includes representatives from all the local authorities, Angus and Perth & Kinross Countryside Initiatives, the RSPB, Grounds for Learning, the Dundee Botanic Gardens, Broughty Ferry Environmental Project, the John Muir Trust and the Forestry Commission's Forest Education Initiative.

Once again, the Partnership played a major part in the National Backyard Biodiversity Day over Midsummer. PKC Ranger Service joined NTS, SWT and Atholl Ranger Services in a 2nd School Biodiversity event with 300 children from Perth and Kinross taking part in a one-day event at Battleby. Angus Ranger Service also publicised the Day and encouraged use of the Local Patch survey forms.



Harris Moore Award (PKC) - the Biodiversity Co-ordinator was again part of the judging panel which led to closer contact with some schools and specific projects being discussed amongst Partners. Using Perth & Kinross' Environmental Award for Schools as an example, the possibility of setting up a similar scheme in Angus and Dundee from 2006 is currently being explored.

BFEP continued its Swift & Swallow Survey, as did the Dundee Ranger Service. It also launched its "Zoom Project - Taking a Closer Look at Nature". This was a community project focussed on Douglas, Whitfield and Broughty Ferry. It encouraged a closer look at the natural world. SNH funding enabled a number of innovative Survey Packs to be given away. Together with a themed survey recording sheet, different packs contained free magnifying glasses to look at lichens, a bee identification chart with a jar of honey, or bird feeders and seed. The Dundee Ranger Service will be widening the project in 2005.



The Tayside Local Patch Project (Wildlife on your Doorstep) completed its third year and will be available on the new Biodiversity website. Although fewer survey forms were returned in 2004, there is still wide interest in the idea and it certainly engages the public in urban biodiversity recording. Once the results have been analysed further project possibilities will be considered.

Angus Trees for Wildlife (National Tree Week 2004 Project) - during the winter at least 240 Angus school pupils from 15 schools - aged between 7 and 15 including 'special needs' pupils - worked with the Woodland Officer and Angus Ranger Service to plant their share of 660 rowan, hawthorn, birch, whitebeam and hazel trees in their school grounds (15 schools were involved). Funding was provided by the Forestry Commission and the Angus Millennium Forest which provided spades and planting bags. Two schools planted juniper in their grounds and were encouraged to take part in the new Plantlife Juniper





Survey to learn how important the species is in Scotland. All pupils had the opportunity of exploring the important interaction between trees and species dependent on them.

In Angus, the Ranger Service held 52 events attracting 500 participants; themes included 'Creatures of the Night', 'Bats', 'Dragonflies and Damselflies' and 'Butterflies'. Environmental field work visits involved 133 school groups who took part in pond dipping, minibeast hunts, etc. and as a result of the field work, 123 visits to schools were made. A number of school grounds projects also got underway with bird feeders and bird tables being made and erected.

The Partnership's display boards and biodiversity information were featured in the box office of the Angus Glens Walking Festival. The Angus and Dundee Tourist Board, Scottish Enterprise Tayside, Angus Rural Partnership and the Countryside Rangers were all involved - twenty two walks were made available over four days and once again the event proved highly successful. The events promoted biodiversity, responsible access and healthy lifestyles.



RHET Angus Countryside Initiative

Since its inception nearly four years ago, RHET Angus Countryside Initiative (RHET ACI) has welcomed some 1,500 schoolchildren onto local farms. Many of these visits form part of "food and farming" study projects, but once onto the farms pupils also learn about biodiversity, weather, soils, biology, geography, safety, and local history.

RHET ACI is one of ten Countryside Initiatives in Scotland. They are all registered companies and charities. All of the farmer visits (both into schools and onto farms) are done on a voluntary basis. There are twelve risk-assessed farms in Angus which take classes in a safe and well-informed environment; over half of these farms are also involved in the Scottish Executive's agri-environment schemes.

To many youngsters, the rural environment is often strange and sometimes frightening. Some of the farmer hosts are teachers themselves, but all are developing skills in communicating what is happening on farms and in the countryside. RHET ACI works in partnership with a number of organisations at local agricultural shows, school science and environment festivals and also SafeTaysiders. The Angus Council Ranger Service is RHET ACI's partner organisation at SafeTaysiders and farmers, together with the Rangers, highlight to P6/7 pupils some of the problems they might encounter in the countryside and how to react to them.

The Outdoor Access Code also stresses 'responsible access' and the Scottish Executive includes 'responsible citizenship' amongst its ideals. By giving children the opportunity to understand rural life and the wonderful diversity of such a county as Angus, RHET ACI is helping fulfil these aims.



Action for 2005

An Angus-wide schools and trees project will be discussed amongst the Partnership.

Pupils taking part in the Angus Trees for Wildlife Project will be encouraged to join in the 2005 Backyard Biodiversity Day celebrations focussing on their new trees.

Members of the Education sub-group will be contributing towards a Tayside Schools Calendar planned for publication at the beginning of the next school year.



Lichen identification courses - Linking to the Green Graveyard Initiative (Urban sub-group) and the BFEP Zoom Project, at least one training course will be held in Tayside to raise awareness of churchyard lichens.

The draft Schools, Colleges and Universities Ground Action Plan will be finalised - Perth College has been leading on this.

A Town Swift Survey will be carried out in the summer in as many Tayside towns as possible so as to plot colonies of swifts. The information will be used to help planners and developers know where swifts are most vulnerable.

Swallows, Swifts and House Martin Nest Survey

Weaver reports suggest that swallows, swifts and house martins are declining from their historic wintering grounds in over-flowering meadows.

As part of the Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan, you help to identify 'new' or 'old' sites where these birds are nesting in certain areas of Perthshire. This information will provide baseline information for future surveys. (swallows.org.uk) (house.martin.org.uk) and will help guide plans to help in the protection of their nesting and breeding sites.

Please complete the form as fully as possible, writing any general comments you wish on a separate sheet of paper. Return to Catherine Lloyd, Tayside Biodiversity Partnership, c/o Environment Services, Perth & Kinross Council, Millar House, 35 Kingsmill Street, Perth, PH1 5GD. For more information please phone 01746 476621. Email - lloyd@kinc.org.uk

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has a series of excellent information leaflets on each of these species. Telephone: 021 257 3136 or check out www.rspb.org.uk.

Concern for Swifts (Scotland) also has a new website www.concernforswifts.com or contact Claire Dunbar at E-mail: swifts@concernforswifts.com. Advice leaflets and a checklist for identifying their sites, or call for the Advice Note on 'Swifts in Historic Buildings' available free of charge from either Concern for Swifts Scotland or the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership.

DATE	LOCATION—please be as accurate as possible	SIGHTINGS (approx. how many?)			NESTS (either tick the box or give exact numbers if possible)	
		Swallow	Swift	House Martin	Swallow	Swift



WINNING A WIDER AUDIENCE

The Media

The Partnership's achievements have been highlighted in articles and press releases throughout the year, particularly in the Perthshire Advertiser, Dundee Courier and the Green Diary. Strathearn's Family Newsletter "KnockKnock" ran a biodiversity feature, as did the Perthshire Tourism Matters Newsletter, The Primary Times and 'Tree Life', the newsletter of Perth & Kinross Tree Wardens. Following the orchard biodiversity conference (see below), an article was written for the European organisation Eurosite for its White Carpathians Nature Reserve magazine (to be translated into Czech).

Angus FWAG appeared on the BBC Scotland's "Castle in the Country" series - Tayside's Red Squirrel and Barn Owl Projects were featured. Assistance was also given to articles being written for the John Muir Trust's national newsletter, and the Eco-Congregation website.

Articles featuring the Partnership's work were included in the UK Biodiversity News and Scottish Biodiversity Forum's LBAP Newsletter. The article in the UK Biodiversity News on the Tayside Barn Owl Project proved popular, with many enquiries received from all over the UK.

During the year, the international magazine 'Resurgence' used a large visual image of the BFEP's Biodiversity Mosaic to head their letters page.



The Partnership's long-held ambition to have its own website slowly came to pass during 2004. Having secured a domain site, the Biodiversity Action Plan was the first section of the website to be completed. Even at its "under construction" stage the website was being well used. It will be officially launched during 2005 and further sections gradually added when they become available.

Presentations

A number of presentations were given during the year, one of the most successful being to the Dundee Naturalists' Society. As mentioned elsewhere, Green Graveyard Initiative presentations were given at the Perth Green Kirk Day and the national Eco-Congregation celebration in Dunblane. In September, the Biodiversity Co-ordinator attended a Eurosite biodiversity conference in the Czech Republic. Financed by the Co-ordinator, but representing the Partnership, two presentations were given, including "Promoting New Orchards within the Public and Private Sector via Biodiversity Action Plans" in which examples of community orchards in Angus, the Perthshire Housing Association's residents' orchard in Perth and the proposed orchard in Broughty Ferry were highlighted.

Display Boards

One set of display boards toured the Dundee libraries, the McManus Galleries, the Dundee Spring Flower Show and the Dundee Food and Flower Festival, the Angus Glens Walking Festival booking office and the Sea Shore Festival. The second set was used in Perth and Kinross, including a number of libraries, the Perth Wood Fair and Perth Show. The 'banner' display proved extremely useful for many events. They were used widely, including the East

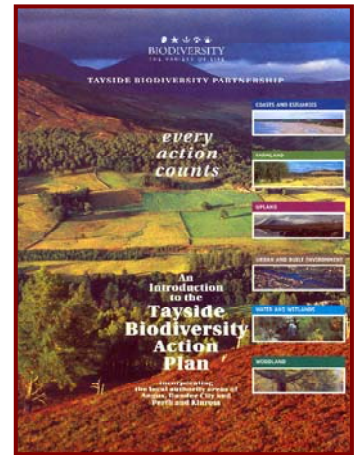


Perthshire Walking Festival, the John Muir Wild Land Conference, Perth's Green Kirk Day and the Eco-Congregation event in Dunblane. They were also used at the Scottish Biodiversity Forum Lead Partners' conference and at SNH East Area Board Open Evenings, as well as at various exhibitions in Arbroath and Montrose.

The RHET Angus Countryside Initiative and Angus FWAG donated exhibition space in their Angus Show marquee and at the Glamis Scottish Countryside Festival. The Biodiversity Co-ordinator also joined FWAG Scotland on their stand at the Scone Game Fair. Dundee City Council donated space for the Partnership to be present at the Dundee Spring Flower Show. The stand's theme "Plants to Encourage Bugs and Butterflies" (with plants kindly supplied by Glendoick Garden Centre) proved particularly popular with adults and many contacts were made.

Publications

The first print run of 7,500 summary booklets was exhausted after 2.5 years of concerted effort to distribute as many as possible. The booklets have proved to be popular with a wide audience: members of local environmental groups, schools and colleges, businesses, consultants, and all Partner organisations. Angus FWAG is including the booklet in their New Member's Pack.



"Building Better Biodiversity" Lunch-time Seminars

Although these short events are aimed primarily at local authority staff, anyone with an interest in the subject is welcome to attend. The audience, totalling nearly 120 people over the year, has therefore been very mixed: staff from many different Council departments, housing associations, private business people, consultants, and naturalists.

Perth & Kinross Council, Dundee City Council and SEPA hosted a number of seminars over the year:

In Perth three lunch-time seminars were held:

- April 2004 - Grassland Management in Green Graveyards and Urban Spaces (led by Fife Ranger Service) - an additional afternoon visit to Kinnoull Graveyard was well attended.
- May 2004 - Managing Watercourses for Water Vole, Otter and Other Priority Mammals (led by SNH Aberdeen).
- March 2005 - Butterflies on Brownfield Sites: Options for Management (led by Butterfly Conservation Scotland).

In addition, an extremely successful afternoon event took place in October 2004 on the subject of 'Living Roofs'. The Partnership welcomed Mr Dusty Gedge of the London Biodiversity Partnership as the main speaker. A leading expert on the subject of "Living Roofs", he was the main enthusiast behind London's Canary Wharf project which directly contributed towards targets in the UK Black Redstart Species Action Plan. A representative accompanied him from Alumasc Exterior, a company that has worked on major building projects in Scotland. Thirty people from four local authorities and several organisations, including the Perthshire Housing Association, the





Dundee Sustainable Construction Group and Dundee University, attended. From this introduction of the subject to Scotland, other LBAP Partnerships have since invited Mr Gedge back to head conferences in Glasgow & East Dunbartonshire

In July SEPA hosted and led a lunch time seminar on their Habitat Enhancement Initiative (led by SEPA Stirling) - an additional afternoon visit to a wet grassland site west of Perth was well attended.

In Dundee, two events were held in October:

- Best Value, Community Planning and Biodiversity (led by the Scottish Biodiversity Forum);
- Greening the Golf Course: Managing the Golf Course with Biodiversity in Mind.

Biodiversity Training Workshops

The Tayside Biodiversity Partnership's "*Golf Course Habitat Action Plan*" was the first to be published in Scotland, although other LBAP areas have now followed Tayside's lead. One of the targets in the Action Plan was to arrange informal training workshops for greenkeepers and colleagues. Thanks to the Scottish Golf Environment Group, funding from both Angus and Perth & Kinross Councils, and the generous support of Carnoustie and Blairgowrie Golf Clubs, the Partnership was able to run two workshops during 2004.

The events enabled a total of 49 delegates, many of them greenkeepers and Golf Club committee members, to network and learn about the biodiversity process in Tayside. In all, 26 golf clubs and organisations from across Tayside and Fife attended the courses. The two days highlighted the importance of golf courses for local biodiversity by identifying key species. An opportunity to tour the two host golf courses gave time to discuss specific habitat needs. Over the two days, habitats such as woodland, heath, wetland and grassland were discussed, as well as best management practice for ponds, hedgerows and ditches. Two case studies were also considered: the Downfield Golf Course near Dundee and Gleneagles, Perthshire.



In all nearly 170 people have attended the second year of training courses and seminars and there has been excellent feedback with requests for further events. A third Programme has already been introduced for 2005.



WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

The wider Partnership includes:

Aggregate Industries	Heather Trust
Alyth Environment Group	Highland Perthshire Communities Land Trust
Angus Association of Voluntary Organisations	Ministry of Defence
Angus and Dundee Bat Group	Murton Trust
Angus College	John Muir Trust Awards
Angus Countryside Initiative	National Health Service
Angus Rural Partnership	Perth Bat Group
Angus Squirrel Management Group	Perth College (including Centre for Mountain Studies)
Atholl Estates	Perth Countryside Initiative
Barry Buddon Conservation Group	Perthshire Housing Association
Bat Conservation Trust	Perth and Kinross Community Planning Environment Partnership
Botanical Society of the British Isles	Perth and Kinross Red Squirrel Group
British Association of Shooting and Conservation	Perth & Kinross Tree Wardens
British Deer Society	Perthshire Tourist Board
Broughty Ferry Environmental Project	Plantlife International
British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (Scotland)	Scottish and Southern Energy
British Trust for Ornithology	Scottish Badger Group
Butterfly Conservation (Scotland)	Scottish Gamekeepers Association
Cairngorms National Park Authority	Scottish Golf Environment Group
Cliffburn Association of Residents	Scottish Native Woodlands
Concern for Swifts (Scotland)	Scottish Nature
Community Woodlands Association	Scottish Water
Deer Commission for Scotland	Stracathro and Carriston Estates
Dundee Botanic Gardens	Strathmartine Nature Action Group
Dundee City Sustainable Construction Working Group	Strathmore Farming Company
Dundee Conservation Volunteers	Strathmore & The Glens Rural Partnership
Dundee Naturalists' Society	Tay Estuary Forum
Dundee Partnership for the Environment	Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board
Dundee Red Squirrel Group	Tay Reed Company
Eco-Congregation Scotland	Tay Ringing Group
Fisheries Research Services	Tayside Badger Group
Froglife	Tayside Raptor Study Group
Game Conservancy Trust	TRACKS, Kinross-shire
Grounds for Learning	Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust
Guildtown Community Association	Woodland Trust



Many Partners from the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership work with the sub-groups to take forward specific projects and actions. In addition to this, however, they are all contributing to the biodiversity process in their own way:

Angus Council

The Angus Community Plan Progress Report 2004-5 will feature a 4-page introduction to local biodiversity and included a photograph of the Alpine Catchfly, the new Angus County Flower.

Progress achieved on woodland management is included under the Woodland Habitat section on page 14.

The Angus Ranger Service continued to undertake surveys for the Butterfly Monitoring Scheme, Common Plants Census, the Nestbox Record Scheme and the Red Squirrel Survey. 'Local Patch' Identification Training Days for teachers were held in 2004, together with a variety of events for Scottish Biodiversity Week (May) and Backyard Biodiversity Day (midsummer). The highly successful Sheltered Housing biodiversity project continued (further details on page 9) as did ongoing advice regarding school grounds enhancement.

Action for 2005

A newly formed community-run management committee has been set up on the Rosemount Estate, by Hillside, Montrose. The committee will be working with Angus Council Leisure Services to improve access to the 17.2ha Estate and enhance its wildlife habitat. The first practical workday has been arranged in April to clear some Rhododendron from a pond bank and clear rubbish.





Broughty Ferry Environmental Project

To link with the Local Patch Project, Broughty Ferry Environmental Project (BFEP) launched its "Zoom" biodiversity survey in early 2004 with funding of £10,000 from Communities Scotland. Based around the Dighty Burn, communities were involved in surveying their local patch. A display was created in the library to encourage local people to put forward ideas for biodiversity projects and three post-project meetings were held in the locality to ensure the project was discussed within the communities. Communities Scotland were so pleased with the project that they are planning to use it as a case study in their report. Further details are given on page 16.

During the winter, the 'Nature Nutters' worked with a willow weaver to make more fish for the railings at Eastern Primary School. They also made wildflower seed paper to distribute to library visitors and nesting boxes to put up in their own gardens.

Broughty Ferry Beach - the new sand martin wall was a resounding success with over 100 birds using it in its first year. The Nature Nutters March session involved the group in again transplanting marram grass to stabilise the dunes near the sand martin wall. The group sowed wildflower seeds and painted shapes on the banks to identify the nesting holes to assist with monitoring during the breeding season.



The winter months involved considerable work for the Hourglass Project, one of the few projects funded by the Scottish Executive's new Biodiversity Action Grant Scheme. The Sand Martin Team worked with the Scottish Wildlife Trust to plan, design and build the second sand martin nesting bank. This is now complete and awaits the return of the birds in April. The group also worked closely with the coastal protection engineers to ensure the area behind the coastal protection structure was ready for the planting of wildflowers as soon as it was completed. There was excellent collaboration with the coastal protection engineers, and feedback from local people about the nesting bank was overwhelmingly positive and supportive.

To tie in with the wildflower theme, simple tiles have been prepared and put on the wall to test for frost resistance. It is planned to make up to a hundred of the tiles, each of which will feature a name of a wild flower found in the area.

Butterfly Conservation (Scotland)

Butterfly Conservation approached the Partnership's Education sub-group to ask its wide membership to assess the need for an Education Pack. The overall positive feedback may result in funding being sought for a national Education Pack. Additionally, after much behind-the-scenes preparation, three Butterfly Conservation training events were held in Angus and Perthshire over the summer; these proved popular and further Partnership working has ensued with discussions on potential Butterfly Trails and links with the tourist industry.

Community Woodlands Association

The CWA are a Scotland-wide organisation and as such are planning a series of woodland biodiversity training days. The Biodiversity Co-ordinator met the local Development Officer



to advise on how the Association could best work with LBAPs throughout Scotland so that community woodland members could contribute towards both UKBAP and LBAP targets.

Action for 2005

Pending funding, the first of the series of training courses will be held in Tayside and a template worked up so that community woodland groups can use the event as the first of many local biodiversity-based projects.

Dundee City Council

Biodiversity is now a subject heading in Dundee's Partnership for the Environment (DPE) proposed strategy and action plan. Biodiversity is recognised as a vital strand of the community planning process. Both the Dundee Red Squirrel Project and Biodiver-city ('Reconnecting the Tay') are projects which have their roots in community planning. The partners of the DPE have taken the spirit of the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 on board and anticipate that the Biodiversity section of the Environmental Strategy will form the city's response to the nature conservation duty.

Since 2001, the Dundee Swift Project has monitored and recorded the Swift nesting population in Dundee and Broughty Ferry. From May onwards, volunteers monitor signs of nesting. At the end of the season, the results are sent to the Countryside Ranger Service which coordinates the scheme. To date nineteen volunteers are involved in the project.

The next stage is to plot on a map the hot spots of Swift nesting activity in the city. This will allow Dundee City Council to focus on any developments that may interfere with the Swifts or their habitat and will highlight where populations are declining. Areas showing little or no Swift activity will also merit closer scrutiny to ensure there are no Swifts present rather than being areas with no records. Later, a more in-depth study is anticipated to identify possible causes for any decline, and/or suggest where more nesting sites are needed.

Various nest-box designs are now available and the Countryside Ranger Service is working with the Council's Planning and Transportation Department to encourage incorporation of nestboxes into the building programme. Installation of nest-boxes can be at nominal cost to the developer, yet it ensures they are at the cutting edge of wildlife conservation, meeting goals set under the Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan. It also raises awareness of the subject which may help prevent inadvertent obstruction or destruction of existing nest sites.

The Countryside Rangers are working with Discovery Homes to include nest boxes at a new development adjacent to Trottick Ponds Local Nature Reserve. Another project about to get under way is the renovation of the old pavilion in Baxter Park.

The City Council planted 2.5 ha of new community woodland at three sites in the city at Longhaugh, Baldovie and Middleton woods with the help of the Dighty Environment Group and Middleton Community Team. In addition, over 2,000 individual specimen trees (50% of them native species) have been planted throughout the city in streets, parks, schools and open spaces. The Friends of Balgay were involved in planting Oak, Birch and Monkey-puzzle trees at Victoria Park. To enhance the biodiversity of Dundee woodlands, more standing dead trees have also been left in situ where applicable and safe to do so.



Fifteen new Tree Preservation Orders were put in place, protecting over 250 trees. One successful replacement order was issued for illegal tree felling in a Conservation Area.

Dundee's Red Squirrel Project is reported on in the Urban Habitat section on page 9.

Veteran and heritage trees - The old whitebeam trees in Balgay have been measured and a very rare elm tree in Baxter Park has been identified. Also in Baxter park, the old Cotoneaster and original Exeter Elms have been measured as some of the largest in the country. Fifty of the Camperdown elms have been propagated from the original tree. Two hundred trees have Dutch Elm Disease, but there are still 3,300 elm trees left in the city.

A new Art Trail is being made through the woods at Camperdown Country Park - the Dundee Ranger Service and community artists have been working together on this. A dying giant redwood tree was made into a sculpture of a brown bear at Camperdown; other wood has been similarly recycled into pieces of sculpture for many other projects. Timber has also been used for fencing and other outdoor timber uses, and woodchips made into mulch.

Action for 2005

The City's Tree and Woodland Strategy is at its Third Draft stage. Following consultation it may be published during 2005.

The Council plans to continue with good arboricultural and silvicultural management where budgets permit and in keeping with the Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan.

Local Authorities

The 'Guide to Incorporating Biodiversity within Local Services', published by the Partnership in 2003, continues to be used in local authority departments. Such is the need for specific guidance, however, that Scottish Executive funding was secured to produce a Planning Manual and series of Biodiversity Advice Notes. Because of the interest in the subject by other LBAP Partnerships, the publication of the Manual and Advice Notes has been delayed so that wider LBAP liaison can take place. It is likely that Tayside's work will be looked upon as a template for the other LBAP Partnerships to use throughout Scotland.

Green Graveyard Initiative

Plans are afoot across Tayside to make way for wildlife in and around churches, graveyards and crematoria. The "Green Graveyard Initiative" arises directly from the Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan. The pilot areas chosen include Aberlemno churchyard, Dunnichen churchyard and Forfar's Newmount Hill cemetery in Angus, and Kinnoull and Greyfriars graveyards in Perth and the Kirkgate in Kinross.



Angus Council Ranger Service has carried out a Phase One survey of the wildlife currently in its three pilot project graveyards. Areas where sympathetic wildlife-friendly changes can take place have been noted and it is hoped volunteers can help with planting of wildflower plugs, regular tidying up sessions and helping carry out future Phase Two surveys.

Cont on P27..



Following a presentation given at the successful Perth Kirk Day event held last September, the Biodiversity Co-ordinator was invited to run two workshops at the national Eco-Congregation day of celebration at Dunblane Cathedral. Twenty-five people from across Central and Southern Scotland attended the workshops, including a small number from Tayside.

John Muir Award

Better Partnership working occurred during 2004 between those taking up projects for the Award or JMT staff running educational training courses. Close liaison with the staff at Ardeonaig Field Centre on the Perthshire/Stirling county border resulted in an improved biodiversity experience for the many groups taking part in John Muir 'Discovery' Award events. Advice from the Biodiversity Co-ordinator on suitable woodland ecosystems and surveys, planning a biodiversity trail and pond management have led to hundreds of youngsters, including the Fife Air Cadets, being involved in practical conservation tasks and learning survey techniques.

The Murton Trust

Once again the Trust succeeded in securing generous Aggregate Levy funding (after following the advice of the Partnership), enabling the conversion of the farm steading at Fledmyre, east of Forfar, into a staff office, workshop and volunteer activities room. A full-time ranger has also been funded. European funding, through the Leader Plus programme, has aided the steading conversion and part funded a full-time Development Officer.

Over the summer, Dundee and Angus Bird Club monitored the Little Plover trying to breed on the site; after several attempts, two young are thought to have fledged. This record makes Murton the most northerly known breeding location for this species in the UK.

The sand martin barrels were also successful in attracting half a dozen pairs - almost all holes in the barrels were excavated and the adjoining sand bank was well occupied, indicating room for expansion under the right conditions.

A regular volunteering programme has been launched, with many projects in the pipeline, including the construction of a sand martin wall and bathing pond to complement the sand martin barrels, extension of the wildflower meadows, new hedgerow planting and management of existing hedges, a programme of regular scientific monitoring, and development of the nature reserve as both an educational facility and as a sanctuary for biodiversity.

Action for 2005

A pond-dipping platform is planned, together with an open air 'lab', otter holts and further path and dyke work.



National Health Service

Ahead of the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 under which all public bodies have a duty to consider biodiversity, the NHS has been proactive in considering a number of pilot projects. The staff at Blairgowrie and Crieff Hospitals are enhancing the grounds in a myriad of ways to benefit biodiversity.

Action for 2005

It is hoped the Blairgowrie and Crieff Hospital Grounds Projects will feature as case studies in the forthcoming "Hospitals, Sheltered Housing and Nursing Homes" HAP. Similar projects are planned in Montrose, Brechin and Dundee.

Perthshire Housing Association

The PHA is working with the Partnership to ensure biodiversity issues are taken into consideration in their new build operations.

Perth and Kinross Council

Forty copies of last year's Annual Report was circulated to the Council's Environment Committee and the Biodiversity Co-ordinator was subsequently asked to give a presentation at the Council Chamber.

WWF Scotland Director, Simon Pepper, officially launched Perth Museum's Wild and Wonderful Biodiversity Exhibition at the Partnership's private view; over 70 people attended the evening at the start of Scottish Biodiversity Week. The exhibition proved popular with an estimated 22,000 visitors passing through the museum's doors between the months of May and December.

Perth & Kinross Council has now included biodiversity as one of the key objectives in their Parks Assessment Procedure. Over the year a number of actions have been achieved: native hedge planting between the M90 and town of Kinross to extend the existing hedge and to create a valuable wildlife corridor; coppicing of willow and poplar at Bridge of Earn's Balmanno Park to create a diverse habitat adjoining the burn within public open space; native tree planting at Kirkmichael Primary School. Funding was approved for the St Magdalene's Hill Community Woodland Project, which includes protection and management of a 12ha, area of native birch woodland. A training course was also held for Tree Wardens and officers from Planning & Transportation, which included a section on the importance of roadside trees for biodiversity.



Liaison also took place with the Council's Area-Based Initiative Development Officer on potential community projects being set up on the Muirton, Fairfield and Letham housing



estates in Perth. This followed discussions with the architects for the new Muirton housing development. A meeting also took place with the Economic Development Department on a potential green tourism project. An opportunity arose to contribute towards the Perthshire.com website and input was given to the Council's plans for their proposed "Wildflower Banks" project.

The Council is forging ahead with its Eco Schools Programme - its aim being that all schools in the area are soon registered as Eco Schools. Together with Grounds for Learning, integrated working is planned, with more schools being funded to improve school grounds.

Perth and Kinross Community Planning Environment Partnership has produced a Joint Environmental Strategy and Action Plan; biodiversity is one of four priority areas within this and a series of biodiversity actions is planned between 2004 and 2008. Details are available on www.perthshire.com.

Action for 2005

A survey of the Perth Lade will be undertaken which could lead to a Lade Improvement Project in the future. Scone, MacRosty and Kirkgate Parks will all have biodiversity areas; plans are underway to improve the pond in Scone Park too.

Plantlife International

Plantlife's 'County Flowers Project' resulted in the Alpine Catchfly being chosen as the County Flower for Angus, the Alpine Gentian for Perthshire, and Holygrass for Kinross-shire. Overall, the flower chosen to represent Britain was the Bluebell, a plant well-known throughout Tayside.

Scottish Golf Environment Group

The two Golf Course Biodiversity Workshops held at the end of 2004 successfully raised awareness of the important habitats on golf courses within Tayside. A flurry of interest from those who attended followed the events, and discussions are under way to begin improving some habitats and interpreting others for golf club members. Further details about the workshops are given on page 21.



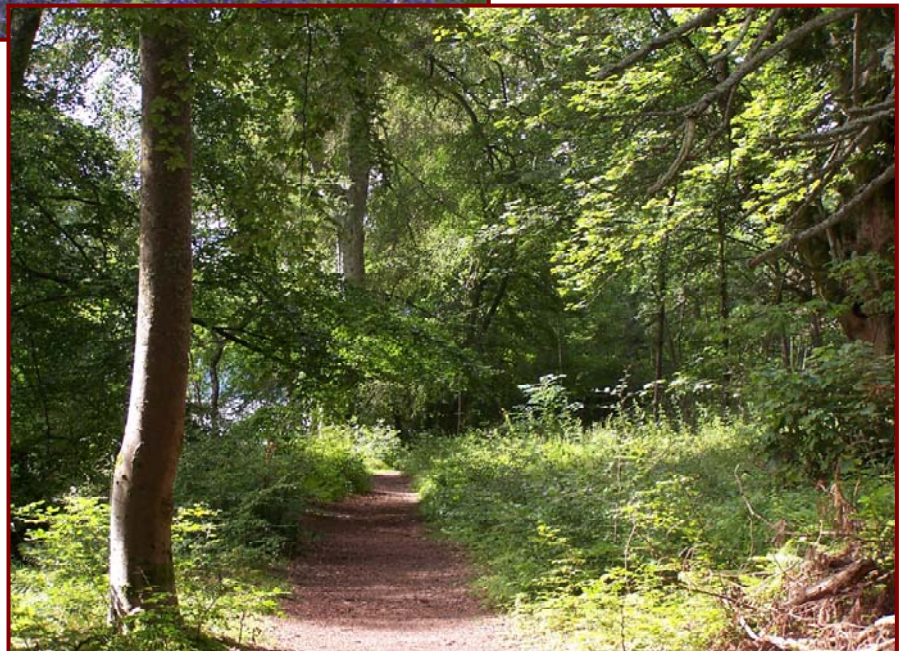
Action for 2005

Plans are being made for pilot projects to raise awareness of specific habitats. Funding is being sought for an Angus Dragonfly Pond Project, plant surveys, and an Interpretation Project to take place on a number of links courses. Local naturalists are already working in partnership with the SGEG, Golf Course committees and greenkeepers under the aegis of the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership.



Scottish Wildlife Trust

A new hide at Loch of the Lowes is proving extremely popular. Volunteer members are undertaking an A9 otter survey following a large number of roadkills in the Pitlochry area. Species-rich road verge projects and juniper surveys are amongst the subjects on the 'to consider' list for the future.



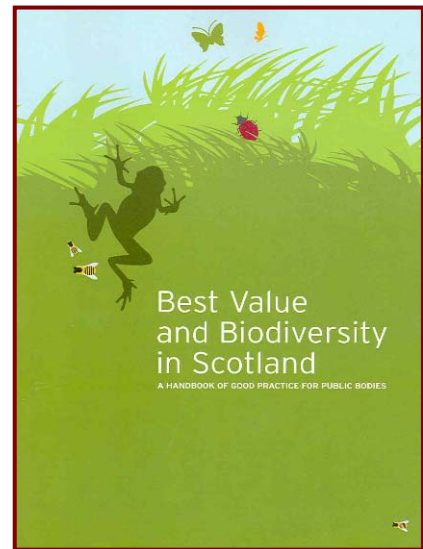


INTER-LBAP AND WORKING WITH THE SCOTTISH BIODIVERSITY FORUM

Twice-yearly meetings are held throughout Scotland by the LBAP Officers' Network; Tayside hosted the group during the autumn of 2004. Cross-border meetings were also held with the Cairngorms Biodiversity Officer, and the Clackmannanshire Biodiversity Officer.

Funding was secured from the Scottish Executive for a Tayside Planning Manual and leaflets giving biodiversity guidance to householders and developers. The draft Planning Manual proved to be of great interest to a number of other Biodiversity Partnerships elsewhere in Scotland, and a Scottish LBAP Planning Implementation Group was therefore set up for any Biodiversity Officers keen to use the Manual as a template for their own work. Although the Manual's publication was delayed, the draft document has been widely circulated and used.

The Tayside Biodiversity Partnership's work featured heavily in the Scottish Biodiversity Forum's "Best Value and Biodiversity Advertiser" which publicised the Handbook on "Best Value and Biodiversity in Scotland". Published during 2004, the guide is designed to help public bodies further the conservation of biodiversity whilst pursuing best value. A non-prescriptive document, it demonstrates several Tayside-based case studies, including the Broughty Ferry Environmental Projects' biodiversity mosaic, the Angus Ranger Service's Sheltered Housing Biodiversity Project, the Partnership's Building Better Biodiversity programme of seminars and its Guide to Incorporating Biodiversity into Local Services.



The Forum held a seminar at Battleby in September to officially launch the document. The Local Biodiversity Co-ordinator assisted planning the site visits for delegates during the afternoon. Split into different interest groups, the Water Group, led by Perth & Kinross Council, looked at two sites in Perth - soft engineering options at the Craigie Burn Project and a missed opportunity for good practice at the Scouring Burn. The Buildings Group, led by Historic Scotland, included a visit to Stanley Mills which features in the Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan as a good practice site for swift nest conservation. The Education Group, led by SNH, looked at outdoor educational opportunities for the local community at the Bankfoot woodlands. Time was also spent studying the SNH interpretation display in Battleby's grounds to gain ideas for roadside verge interpretation.



Treasurer's Statement

TAYSIDE BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2005

<u>Income</u>	£	£
SNH Grant Funding		19,522
Angus Council		6,750
Dundee City Council		6,750
Perth & Kinross Council		6,750
Forestry Commission		250
Total Income		<u>40,022</u>
<u>Expenditure</u>		
<u>Non-Project Expenditure</u>		
Staff Costs	27,812	
Accommodation	3,028	
Hospitality	189	
Computer Hardware	1,210	
Telephone Calls	18	
Travel Expenses	1,082	
Professional & Admin Support	<u>3,400</u>	36,739
<u>Project Expenditure</u>		
Woodland Sub-Groups	40	
TBAP Chairman Expenses (Perth College)	500	
Website	1,889	
Planning/Developer Guide	<u>240</u>	2,669
Total Expenditure		<u>39,408</u>
Net Expenditure/(Surplus) To 31st March 2005		<u>(614)</u>
<u>Funds Analysis:</u>		
(Surplus)/Deficit brought forward from 2003/04		(9,710)
(Surplus)/Deficit on activities during 2004/05		<u>(614)</u>
Balance carried forward to 2005/06		<u>(10,324)</u>



Current Steering Group

Alex Anderson
Pam Coutts
Stewart Roberts
Alison Anderson
Lesley Duncan
Bryan Harris
Merrill Smith

Syd House
Mike Strachan
Carol Littlewood
Richard Lockett
John Miskelly
Ben Notley
Martin Price

Douglas Flint
Mark Simmons
Bruce Anderson
Christine Hall
Alan Hendry
Jo Long
Andrew Williams
Gordon Jubb
Paul Ramsay
Liz Garson
David Mitchell
Carolyn Warwick
Uwe Stoneman
Karen van Eeden

Catherine Lloyd

Angus Council
Angus Council
Angus Council
Dundee City Council
Dundee City Council
Dundee City Council
Dundee City Council
(Chairman, TBP, until October 2004)
Forestry Commission
Forestry Commission
Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (Angus)
Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (Perth)
National Farmers' Union Scotland
National Trust for Scotland
Perth College (Centre for Mountain Studies)
(Chairman, TBP, from October 2004)
Perth and Kinross Council
Perth and Kinross Council
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Scottish Agricultural College
Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Dept.
Scottish Environment Protection Agency
Scottish Field Studies Association
Scottish Rural Property and Business Association
Scottish Rural Property and Business Association
Scottish Natural Heritage
Scottish Natural Heritage
Scottish Natural Heritage
Scottish Wildlife Trust
Scottish Wildlife Trust

Tayside Biodiversity Co-ordinator

Supporting the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership

Funding for the year 2004-05 came from Scottish Natural Heritage and the three local authorities. Much in-kind help came from many other quarters: Angus FWAG and FWAG Scotland donated exhibition space for the Partnership's display banners. Fife Council kindly loaned their PowerPoint projector on a number of occasions, including the Urban Trees conference, the Grasslands seminar, the Golf Course training days and the Dundee Naturalists' Society. Many Partners have been able to host sub-group meetings and the Building Better Biodiversity seminars and to provide refreshments and sandwich lunches.



Thanks and Acknowledgements

This Report has been compiled by Catherine Lloyd, Biodiversity Co-ordinator, on behalf of the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership.

Thanks are extended to the funders and all members of the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership for their ongoing support and assistance throughout the past year. Thanks also to the sub-group leaders and members, as well as the wider partnership of organisations, businesses and individuals. Special thanks are due to Lynda Ronald for her design expertise and to Wendy Walker-Duncan and Lorraine Smith for administrative assistance.

Photo Credits

Barn Owl - Lorne Gill - SNH
Capercaillie - Forestry Commission
Golf Course Biodiversity - Jim Blair
Common Terns - Eric Van Poppel
Green Graveyard - Louis Flood, Perth
Loch of the Lowes - Lorne Gill - SNH
Moth - Angus Ranger Service
Oil Beetle - Carol Littlewood, FWAG
Otter - RSPB
Red Squirrel - Dundee Ranger Service
Reed Beds - Andrew Barrie
Sculpture Red Squirrel - Angus Ranger Service
Sheltered Housing - Angus Ranger Service
Twin Flower - Lorne Gill - SNH
Wildlife Garden - Lorne Gill - SNH
Butterfly - David Williamson - PKC
Bluebell Wood - Lynda Ronald - PKC
Woodland Walk - Lynda Ronald - PKC

The odds of hitting a target go up dramatically when you aim at it.

- Mal Pancoast -



EVERY ACTION COUNTS



Further information

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