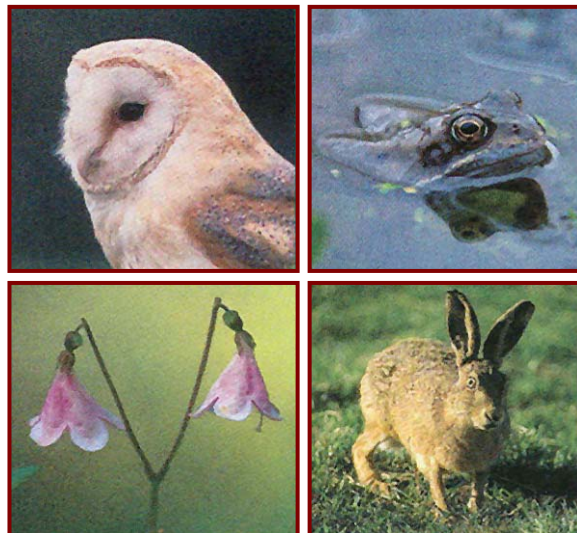




# Tayside Biodiversity Partnership



## ANNUAL REPORT April 2005 – to March 2006





## 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

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, for all government bodies, a legal duty under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act. Working together, we have to find the best ways to do this - and also to contribute to other policies and initiatives, such as Community Planning.

In 2005, the most exciting opportunity for biodiversity in Tayside was the announcement that SITA Trust would give £100,000 a year for three years to biodiversity projects in our region. This funding is very welcome, and has been a critical factor in allowing a number of projects to go ahead. With two years of this funding yet to come, I look forward to many more exciting proposals. In ensuring the success of the Tayside Biodiversity Action Fund, the assistance of the Perth Quality of Life Trust, as fund manager, is essential. And in this and our other activities, we continue to rely on the great enthusiasm and dedication of our biodiversity coordinator, Catherine Lloyd. I look forward to our continued work within our diverse Partnership.

Prof. Martin Price  
Chairman  
Tayside Biodiversity Partnership



### PARTNERSHIP PROGRESS

The Tayside Biodiversity Partnership was established in 1998 and a Co-ordinator appointed in 2000. Covering the three local authority areas of Angus, Dundee City, and Perth & Kinross, it published the Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan in 2002 and has since been implementing its 400 actions. In 2005-06, the Partnership widened its area of influence within the local community and facilitated a wide range of projects and training events. A number of authors also prepared a second tranche of Habitat and Species Action Plans to draft stage.

The passing of the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 gave new emphasis on local biodiversity issues to public bodies, and throughout 2005 there was a greater call on the Co-ordinator to assist with identifying training needs and to raise awareness about specific subjects of interest within the local authorities.

Greater emphasis was also placed on making links with the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy which, with the enactment of the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, has full formal effect and supports the implementation of the new duty.

This year's Annual Report focuses on the work of the Co-ordinator rather than being a full Partnership report. It is proposed that an annual Newsletter is introduced this autumn to acknowledge the wide-ranging achievements of the Partners.



## PROMOTING COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN BIODIVERSITY ISSUES

### Funding

Since the establishment of the Partnership, a lack of funding has been the major restraint in taking forward actions. A continuing good relationship with SITA Environmental Trust (which funded the Co-ordinator's post for the first three years) led, in 2005, to £100,000 a year being pledged to the Partnership for three years to facilitate physical works on the ground.

A preliminary inventory highlighted over 50 projects awaiting funding. Meetings with SITA and Perth Quality of Life Trust (as administrators), followed by the preparation of a suite of documents drawn up by the Co-ordinator and PQLT Administrator, equipped the Partnership with a formal Management Agreement, appropriate Guidance Notes, Assessment Criteria, application forms, Sustainability Checklist, End of Project and Progress reports.

### **The Tayside Biodiversity Action Fund**

After much behind-the-scenes preparation, the Fund was formally launched in Perth on 12 September 2005. The first round in October brought 12 applications, of which five were granted funding:

- £1,200 to the Scottish Crop Research Institute for its Living Field Study Centre project;
- £5,100 to the Broughty Ferry Environmental Project for its FLOW Project ('Following the Life of Water');
- £6,314 to Forest Research for its Juniper Natural Regeneration Management Trials;
- £10,029 to the Angus Ranger Service for an artificial Sand Martin Wall at Crombie Country Park;
- £11,200 to Forest Research for its Small Cow-Wheat Species Recovery Project.

The second round in January 2006 brought 9 applications, of which four were granted funding:

- £1,065 to the Tayside Ringing Group for its 'Save Tayside's Ring Ouzels' radio tag tracking project;
- A further £1,890 to the Tayside Ringing Group for its Tay Reedbed Management bird ringing project;
- £6,000 to Angus Council's Lilybank Resource Centre for a 'Bio-diverse Garden, Pond and Orchard';
- £26,000 to the RSPB for its Tay Reedbeds Biodiversity Enhancement Project.

Grants totalling £68,798 were distributed in the first six months of the Fund, allowing £31,202 to be forwarded to the 2006-07 allocation of a further £100,000.

### Funding Newsletter

Two further issues of the Tayside Biodiversity Funding Newsletter were compiled and 250 copies of each issue were widely circulated to community and environmental groups, as well as all Partners. Paper copies were kept to a minimum as the Newsletters were put on the website as quickly as possible. All back copies of the Newsletter are stored on the website, as much of the information remains valid.

### Scottish Executive Biodiversity Action Grant Scheme (BAGS)

Tayside Partners were particularly successful in the Scottish Executive's national Biodiversity Action Grant Scheme. Although there were 106 Scotland-wide applications, only 31 bids were successful, including five for projects wholly or partially in Tayside. All received letters of support for their project from the Partnership:

- *Forest Research* (on behalf of the *Melampyrum sylvaticum* UK SAP National Steering Group) - Small Cow-Wheat Species Recovery Project: the creation and monitoring of five new populations of Small Cow-Wheat in Perthshire.
- *Sustain Dundee* - Dundee Red Squirrel Project: A red squirrel protection and enhancement project in the city of Dundee.
- *Community Woodlands Association* - Community Woodland Biodiversity Training: the provision of local training about woodland biodiversity. Scotland-wide, but the Co-ordinator helped plan the training programme and the first event was therefore held in Kinross-shire.
- *Murton Wildlife Trust for Environmental Education (Forfar)* - Project Sandcastle: the building of a sand martin wall, together with an adjacent pond.
- *Scottish Crop Research Institute, Invergowrie* - The Living Field Study Centre (Flora and Fauna of Scotland's Arable Farmland): a project aimed to increase public knowledge, and to reintroduce rare arable plants to the Scottish Crop Research Institute farm.

### Community Development Work

The Co-ordinator continued to advise a very wide variety of organisations and individuals on funding issues and helped to facilitate individual projects in their planning and management stages.

In connection with the SITA Tayside Biodiversity Action Fund, project and funding advice was given to:

Butterfly Conservation (Scotland), Auchterarder Golf Club, Scottish Crop Research Institute, the Woodland Trust, Angus Council, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Comrie in Colour, Big Tree Country, Lilybank Resource Centre (Forfar), Forest Research, Community Woodland Association, Perth & Kinross Red Squirrel Group, Broughty Ferry Environmental Project, Angus Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, Highland Perthshire Communities Land Trust, Scottish Golf Environment Group, Concern for Swifts (Scotland).

Some projects did not need specific funding advice, but guidance on biodiversity issues, suggestions on which other organisations/individuals to approach, and general

information. The following organisations approached the Partnership for assistance during 2005-06:

- BFEP (graveyard, green roof and orchard projects);
- Friends of Kirkgate, Kinross (park enhancement project);
- TRACKS (Loch Leven project, Kinross);
- Dunning Community Group (woodland project);
- Guildtown Community Group (community hedge project);
- Pitlochry in Bloom (Moulin Burn and Mill Ponds);
- Plant Collectors' Garden (potential bat garden project);
- Brougham Residential Home, Dundee (swift project);
- National Health Service (biodiversity garden project);
- Strathmore & The Glens Rural Partnership (wildlife roadkills and survey);
- VisitPerthshire and Kinross Tourism Group (potential biodiversity PayBack Scheme);
- Scottish Crop Research Institute (community wildlife garden);
- Local Patch Project for Local Groups (discussed with Ms Darnell, Montrose);
- Verge management/invasive species (discussed with Ian Ford, Dundee);
- Meigle Community Garden Group (biodiversity issues/funding);
- SWT Members' Group (potential Otter A9 survey/project);
- Kettins Community Group (wetland project);
- Scottish Badger Group (Angus woodland project);
- Eco Congregation (Church Towers Swift Box project);
- TayPack, Coupar Angus (barn owl project);
- John Muir Trust Awards (biodiversity projects throughout Tayside, including Ardonia Outdoor Centre)
- Alyth Environmental Group (school hedge);
- Friends of the Forest (species survey and management);
- Portmoak Community Council (barn owls, bats and red squirrel management);
- British Trust for Ornithology (Nestbox Week publicity and potential Tay Wildfowl and Wader Audit);
- Scottish Allotments & Gardens Society and Federation of City Farms (potential allotment project and publication);
- Numerous local community queries (including various planning issues, Oudenard orchids, steading conversion - barn owl ledges, and tree management issues at Blairgowrie, Moulin, St Magdalene's Hill (Perth) and Kinfauns Interchange);
- Perth & Kinross Red Squirrel Group (Alyth Golf Course - tree felling; Muirton Wood, Auchterarder; Aberfeldy golf course - scrub and tree clearance; West Moulin Park, Pitlochry).

The Co-ordinator also ensured that local wildflower nurseries were alerted about Flora Locale's national list of suppliers; several were subsequently included in the list on the organisation's website.

The Co-ordinator kept in touch with the Perth and Kinross Eco Schools Committee and gave advice to the following educational projects:

- Longforgan School (Village Trail project and school grounds);
- Balhousie Primary School Outdoor Group (conservation tasks and John Muir Award);
- Monifieth Primary School (playground project);
- Menzieshill High School, Dundee (school grounds);

- Craigie High School, Dundee (Red Squirrel project);
- Pandora's Butterfly Garden project (Crieff schools project);
- Perth Academy Environmental Group (school orchard);
- Murton Environment Trust (educational, sand martin and pond projects).



### PROMOTING BIODIVERSITY IN LOCAL AUTHORITIES

All government bodies now have a legal biodiversity duty under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) 2004 Act. In the past year, especially, the Partnership had the opportunity to work closely with the three local authorities in Tayside, contributing to policies and initiatives and making links with Community Planning.

Over Tayside as a whole, the Co-ordinator worked with the Clackmannanshire Biodiversity Officer to give a presentation and lead workshops for the Tayside/Clackmannanshire Rangers' Networking Day. This gave a very useful focus to various projects in which the different ranger services assisted the Partnership during the past year.

#### **Angus Council**

Within Leisure Services, there was dialogue regarding the Council's proposed Biodiversity Action Plan for greenspaces, which included verge management. Input was given regarding a number of potential pond projects, especially Keptie Pond, Arbroath; the Brechin Flood Defence Scheme and Brechin Business Park were also discussed. A major Millennium Forest ground flora project was researched, together with a Wildlife Tree Project for local schools. Discussions also resulted in a major biodiversity input into the Abbotsford Playpark enhancement project in Arbroath.

Liaison continued with the Ranger Service at their five Ranger bases, on topics including the Tern Project at Montrose, plans for the Local Patch Project, a Small Blue Butterfly Survey, bat projects, and surveys of the Tayside Green Graveyard Initiative pilot sites. There was also close liaison regarding links for projects being undertaken at both the Lilybank (Forfar) and Lunan (Friockheim) Resource Centres.

The Sheltered Housing Biodiversity Project continued in Angus. The lunch-time seminar held in March 2006 highlighted the project and has now influenced both the Perth and Kinross Ranger Service and the Loch Lomond and Trossachs Ranger Service to research a similar programme of biodiversity enhancement projects.

Potential hands-on projects were also discussed with the Planning Department's "Voluntary Eco Teams"; these exist in each Angus town, plus Glamis, Friockheim, Muirhead, Kirriemuir and Monifieth. A number of Partners suggested specific projects to involve the teams.

The Co-ordinator's Angus Community Planning Progress Report (Biodiversity) 2004-05 was given a page on the community planning website.

#### **Dundee City Council**



The Engineer's Department called on the Partnership to discuss the Sustainable Urban Drainage System and school grounds project at Forthill Primary School, Broughty Ferry. One meeting of the Eco House Sun City meeting was also attended to ensure biodiversity issues were incorporated. A potential 'allotment and biodiversity' project was mooted.

Meetings with the Greenspace Officer, Woodland Officer and the Urban Rangers took place and there was an opportunity for the Partnership to comment on the Dundee Environmental Strategy Consultative Draft.

### **Perth & Kinross Council**

The Co-ordinator was invited to comment on the local authority's Community Planning paper. Regular liaison with The Environment Service ensured that biodiversity issues were taken into consideration in the "Fit for Purpose" Open Spaces Assessment (1,800 urban grassland sites, including potential demonstration sites). There was also input into a number of projects, including Scone Park Pond, Larchan Park (Coupar Angus) Enhancement, Perthshire Biodiversity Banks, and the Perth Lade. Training events for staff were arranged on hedge management and urban grassland management. A pilot Community Hedge Project commenced at Vane Farm, Kinross-shire. A Swifts in Schools Project was discussed, as was a Tree Warden's Wildlife Tree Project to encourage the planting of berry-bearing small trees. Advice was also given on legislation regarding Ragwort and Japanese Knotweed.

Following liaison with the Area Based Initiative Development Officer in Performance, Planning and Management, the Perth Community Programme took cognisance of biodiversity; a John Muir Award project at Muirton may result. Take a Pride in Perth is hosting the Britain in Bloom conference in 2006 and assistance was offered at the planning stage on potential biodiversity-themed publicity.

The Partnership gave advice to the Planning Department regarding the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 and responded to the Housing in Countryside Policy consultation. Regular liaison occurred with the department regarding public queries concerning a number of planning applications (generated by both internal enquiries and public ones).

Additionally, regular liaison with the Ranger Service ensured additional biodiversity input on site management proposals (including Crieff, Kingoodie Ponds, and the geodiversity-biodiversity interpretation project at Kinnoull), plus links to national publicity, species management (especially Barn owls and Swifts), grassland management and projects regarding Red squirrels and Swifts.



### **PARTNERSHIP WORKING**

Since 2002 the Partnership has been working towards achieving targets in the 18 published Habitat Action Plans (HAPs), as well as contributing to UKBAP targets where appropriate. Links to the wider Partnership during 2005-06 include:

- Aggregate Industries
- Alyth Environment Group

- Angus Countryside Initiative
- Angus Rural Partnership
- Atholl Estates
- Bat Conservation Trust
- British Deer Society
- British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (Scotland)
- British Trust for Ornithology
- Butterfly Conservation (Scotland)
- Concern for Swifts (Scotland)
- Community Woodlands Association
- Deer Commission for Scotland
- Dundee Botanic Gardens
- Dundee Naturalists' Society
- Dundee Partnership for the Environment
- Eco-Congregation Scotland
- Froglife
- Perth & Kinross Tree Wardens
- Plantlife International
- Pond Conservation
- Scottish Native Woodlands
- Scottish Sustainable Construction Forum
- Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust
- VisitScotland

The Partnership's six Habitat sub-groups meet as required and keep in touch regularly via e-mail. The Education sub-group continues to meet and has proved to be a very useful networking group. Both the Barn Owl and Swift Interest Groups focus on specific issues and, in doing so, widen the Partnership's membership to different local authority staff, professionals such as architects and planners, and individual naturalists.

In 2005-06, each of the habitat sub-groups held meetings to review the 1<sup>st</sup> Tranche of the Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan. Results from this review were supplied to a separate Local Authorities working group which also reviewed their actions.

Progress for each of the sub-groups during 2005-06 is highlighted below:

### Coasts and Estuaries

A meeting, hosted by Dundee City Council, was held in May. Members able to attend included SNH, the British Association for Shooting and Conservation, RSPB, Angus Council, Dundee City Council and the Tay Ringing Group. Apologies were received from the Tay Estuary Forum, Broughty Ferry Environment Project, Scottish Wildlife Trust and Perth and Kinross Council.

Environmental enhancement of the Angus coastal footpath was discussed - including a puffin viewpoint at Auchmithie, plus the potential expansion of the initiative to re-establish breeding tern colonies at Barry Buddon and Montrose.

The departure of the sub-group leader caused a hiatus for much of the year, although the Co-ordinator continued to research the possibility of setting up a wader & wildfowl "audit" of the Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary with the British Trust for Ornithology's Wetland and Coastal Ecology Unit. Discussions were also undertaken with the RSPB as regards their

new reedbed reserve; this resulted in a successful application being submitted to the Tayside Biodiversity Action Fund.

The Partnership is a member of the UK Common Scoter BAP Steering Group. A member of the sub-group attended the 5<sup>th</sup> annual meeting in December in Edinburgh.

In the New Year, the Tay Estuary Forum's Project Officer was seconded to be leader of the sub-group. Unfortunately, a job change coincided with the decision, so a further delay has been experienced.

### Farmland

A Summer Field Meeting was organised by Angus FWAG in June in place of a formal sub-group meeting. While the turn out was disappointing, staff from SEERAD, Angus Rural Partnership, and the Field Studies Council attended. The owners of the farm, near Newbigging, Angus, showed the sub-group their work on grass margins and conservation headland management, species-rich grassland and pond creation, as well as unharvested crops, water margins, new hedge creation and dyke repair.

Also in June, the Biodiversity Co-ordinator attended the Landscape-Scale Conservation Conference in Bangor, held by FACT/GAP (Forum for the Application of Conservation Techniques, and the Grazing Animals Project). The conference, attended by 200 professionals from across the UK, provided an update on environmental, economic and social land management in the wider rural landscape. A local meeting followed to discuss potential Grazing Animal Projects across Scotland. Although there is mention of such a project in the LBAP, on the Angus coast, this initiative has not yet been expanded in Tayside.

Angus FWAG drafted a 'Farmland Priority Habitat and Species' Information Sheet outlining details of the 15 species and 15 habitats included in the RSS "List of 30" used to gain points for LBAP species and habitats. As there were no funds to publish the leaflet, it was made available via the Partnership's website.

During 2005, the Tayside Barn Owl pilot projects drew to a close and discussions were held as to the way forward. The setting up of the Scottish Lowlands Barn Owl Forum (described later) has given new impetus to future projects in the area.

The idea for "Field Days" arose when the Co-ordinator attended the UK Lowland Grassland Steering Group meeting in 2004; Tayside has since led the way in Scotland with three awareness-raising 'Field Days' events:

- In Kinross-shire - Fife & Kinross FWAG and the RSPB ran a 'Field Identification and Management of Farmland Birds' event for 25 people - species preferences were highlighted as regards nesting, habitat, migration and food.
- In Perthshire - 13 members of staff attended a 'Field Discussion Day' from Fife Council, SNH, Perth and Kinross Council, and Murton Wildlife Trust. Four very different grassland sites were visited and their long-term management discussed.
- In Angus - Scotia Seeds, Brechin hosted the 'Angus FWAG Wildflower Day'. The topic was Species-rich Grassland Creation and Management. An afternoon was given to discussing the biodiversity benefits from such creation or management and included a bumblebee identification session with a tour of the Scotia Seeds site. Thirty people from Tayside, Central Scotland and Aberdeenshire attended.

The Co-ordinator also attended a planning meeting at the Scottish Crop Research Institute to discuss the Living Field Study Centre, the Partners to include in a future steering committee and potential improvements to the new Community Garden.

### Upland

For much of the year, the sub-group did not have a leader, but the Head of Kindrogan Field Centre agreed to undertake the task and a full sub-group meeting was held in March 2006, hosted by Perth College. Members attended from the Centre of Mountain Studies, Deer Commission for Scotland, RSPB, and the Highland Perthshire Communities Land Trust. Apologies were received from the British Deer Society, SEERAD, Angus FWAG, National Trust for Scotland and SNH. The Cairngorms Moorland Project managers gave a presentation about their demonstration site at the meeting.

### Urban and Built Environment

The sub-group, including the three local authorities, Broughty Ferry Environmental Project, SEPA and SNH, met regularly throughout the year. Angus Council, Jamesfield Organic Centre (Abernethy) and Dundee City Council each hosted a meeting.

The Town Swift Survey was enthusiastically taken forward by a number of volunteers throughout Tayside and a great deal of help was obtained from the various Ranger Services. A meeting in September plotted the survey findings on a map to obtain hot spots of Swift nesting activity in Tayside. This will ultimately allow the three planning departments to access information via GIS and focus on developments that may interfere with the Swifts or their ecology. Identification of areas showing little or no Swift activity will also allow the Partnership to plan specific surveys to fill in the gaps of knowledge. Good practice case studies were discussed - developers in Dundee and Perth are now considering the inclusion of integral swift nestboxes in new-build developments.

The Green Graveyard Initiative pilot projects continued and the grassland-cutting regime at Greyfriars Graveyard, Perth was reviewed. The first community project within the Initiative - St. Serf's Wildflower Meadow, Comrie - received advice on its proposed management regime, together with advice to improve the treeline and hedgerow surrounding it. A community Wildflower Planting Day is now planned, together with a Bumblebee Project to involve local schoolchildren. Throughout the year, the Biodiversity Co-ordinator worked with the national organisation Eco-Congregation to build on previous events attended at Dunblane Cathedral and Perth, and to raise awareness of the subject. A Swift Church Tower Project in Perth will link with the Initiative.

The Co-ordinator continued meeting with National Health Service staff and Friends of Crieff Hospital to help enhance the grounds for biodiversity. Links were continued with the Perthshire Housing Association to help incorporate biodiversity features into some of their properties. Meetings were also held with the Broughty Ferry Environmental Project to make links to LBAP targets and help plan projects such as the sand martin wall extension, the adjacent wildflower meadow and the Orchar Park wildlife/community orchard. Angus Council's Sheltered Housing Biodiversity Project is highlighted elsewhere in the Report.

### Water and Wetlands

Although no sub-group meetings were held during the year, there were several seminar working group meetings held with the sub-group leader, Co-ordinator and the Scottish-Southern Power representative, to take forward the River Engineering seminar (highlighted elsewhere in this Report). The Review of the 1<sup>st</sup> Tranche Action Plans was also discussed.

The Co-ordinator liaised with the new educational pilot scheme, WaterSense, led by WWF Scotland, SEPA and the Angus Ranger Service. A number of pond projects were also discussed over the year, most of them on land managed by the local authorities, but also by Golf Clubs. The Scottish Golf Environment Group continued to liaise with the Partnership on a number of local Angus-based projects.

Queries continued about invasive plant species, especially Ragwort, Japanese Knotweed, and Giant Hogweed.

With Perth Museum, a new ecological survey of the Perth Lade was encouraged and achieved during the year. The survey demonstrated that this important waterway is in far better condition than it was a decade ago. There is potential to initiate a "Water of Leith" type project to highlight one of Perth's key green corridors. The Co-ordinator continues liaison with Perth and Kinross Council to ensure biodiversity is taken into consideration with the various community projects already planned.

## **Woodland**

The sub-group met in January 2006, attended by the three local authorities, the Forestry Commission, SEERAD, SNH, RSPB, the Scottish Rural Property and Business Association, Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust, and Forest Enterprise. The three Tayside Red Squirrel Groups were also represented. Apologies were received from the Deer Commission for Scotland, Scottish Nature and Angus FWAG. The Forestry Commission hosted the meeting.

The two successful funding applications for the Small Cow-Wheat Recovery Project and Juniper Regeneration Trials were discussed. The first project will take place in four Perthshire sites; the second will be at Fungarth and Balloukan, Perthshire.

Numerous projects are underway throughout Tayside, including a Wetland Tree Project in Dundee, creation of a Red Squirrel-friendly public park in Dundee, and a guidance note for Black Grouse Management.

The Partnership had commented on the Forestry Strategy for Perth and Kinross, and its Five Year Tree & Woodland Strategy.

Throughout 2005 there was a large increase in both public and professional queries concerning Red Squirrel management. This coincided with the revival of the Perth and Kinross Squirrel Group which undertook to survey its original transects and update its records. In Angus, the Ranger Service collected records in Glen Doll forest and Crombie Country Park, and a small Group was established to look at Red Squirrel issues in the county. The most successful of the groups, Dundee, gave a presentation at the sub-group meeting and circulated its Red Squirrel Householders' Pack. The work in Tayside links with the Scottish Red Squirrel Group, as well as the Great Red Squirrel Hunt project in the Cairngorms. There is a possibility of widening this project into Highland Perthshire and discussions are underway as to how best to limit the expansion of Grey squirrels north of Dunkeld.

During 2005, the Co-ordinator obtained funding for a print run of 5,000 copies of the Tayside Red Squirrel Newsletter, and acted as its compiler and editor. There was a very positive response to the publication and, together with local survey forms, it has now been added to the website to increase its readership.

### Education

The sub-group has proved to be a good networking forum for a number of diverse organisations and individuals. Its summer meeting included visits to Longforgan School and the nearby Scottish Crop Research Institute where a tour of the new Living Field Community Garden was undertaken.

The Tayside RIGS (Regionally Important Geological Sites) Group was revived during the year and now links geodiversity and biodiversity issues. A series of trails leaflets, together with on-site interpretation, was discussed, as well as a specific pilot project in Kinnoull.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> School Backyard Biodiversity event was held at Battleby in June with another 300+ children from Perth and Kinross taking part in the one-day event. The National Trust for Scotland, Scottish Wildlife Trust and Atholl Ranger Services joined the Perth and Kinross Ranger Service in running this major event.



## PROMOTING AWARENESS AND ENHANCEMENT OF BIODIVERSITY

### The Media

The Partnership's achievements have been highlighted in articles and press releases throughout the year, particularly in the Dundee Courier, the Angus newspapers and the Perthshire Advertiser. By working with a local journalist, the Partnership achieved a double-page article in the Perthshire Advertiser during Scottish Biodiversity Week. Assistance was also given to Hillcrest Housing Association on its press release on its Swift Project and to Perth and Kinross Council for a number of its press releases.

Articles featuring the Partnership's work were prepared for the "Tayside Field Days" and items included in the Scottish Biodiversity Forum's LBAP Newsletter. An article in the UK RIBA journal on conservation of swift sites proved popular.

To coincide with the opening of the new Scottish Headquarters for the World Wildlife Fund in Dunkeld, the Co-ordinator contributed a biodiversity section to their national website.

### Website

Much background work was undertaken to prepare the website for launch in May 2005. An official photocall involved the Chairman, Professor Price, and the Co-ordinator. Since then quarterly meetings with the website designer have led to the addition of many more documents, news items, 'Fun Page' games and survey forms.

Statistics have been analysed on a weekly basis since the beginning of June 2005. For the ten months to the end of March 2006, there were 90,127 "hits", with the average increasingly almost immediately to 1,000 a week in the summer and levelling off in late winter (February/March 2006) to between 3,500 and 5,000 a week.

Via [www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk](http://www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk), enquirers can instantly access the Tayside list of UKBAP Priority Species and UKBAP Species of Conservation Concern via the Home Page, as well as the document 'Guide to Incorporating Biodiversity into Local Services'. This is in addition to easy access to all the Habitat Action Plans, the list of Partnership members, and ongoing surveys (such as the Barn Owl, Town Swift and Red Squirrel surveys). The bi-annual Tayside Biodiversity Funding Newsletter received regular "hits", as did past Annual Reports and the on-line Newsletter.

### **Presentations and Exhibitions**

Presentations were given to Eco-Congregation, Scottish Community Woodlands and Take a Pride in Perth, in addition to the "Working with Different Generations" lunch-time seminar and the Angus Wildflower Training Day. As mentioned previously, the Tayside and Clackmannanshire Co-ordinators attended the Ranger Workshop in Angus and gave a joint presentation, as well as each leading a workshop.

The Co-ordinator attended the Loch Leven Communities Open Day and took part in the wildflower-planting event arranged jointly between SNH and Perth and Kinross Council at Kirkgate, Kinross. The rain did not dampen the enthusiasm with which local people helped to plant up an area of wildflower grassland as part of a larger landscaping scheme adjoining Loch Leven.

Presentations continued to be given to local authority departments. The Co-ordinator also arranged for two specialist speakers to give short talks to Perth and Kinross Council's Environment Service (Perthshire FWAG on the subject of hedges, and Fife Ranger Service on the subject of urban grassland management).

During the spring, an exhibition stand was taken at both the Dundee Spring Flower Show and the Scottish Archaeology Fair in Perth. The displays of "historical plants good for wildlife" proved to be popular and generated a lot of general enquiries on wildlife gardening.

### **Publications**

The summary booklet was reprinted (and slightly updated), its first print run of 7,500 having been used within 2.5 years of its publication. The second print run of 5,000 is being distributed just as widely and has been incorporated into Partners' conference packs and circulated to local environmental groups, schools and colleges, businesses, consultants, and all Partner organisations. Angus FWAG includes the booklet in its New Member's Pack.

There is a national need for planning guidance, and the Partnership has been part of the Scottish LBAP Planning Implementation Group which has been discussing the best way forward. The Partnership's own biodiversity planning leaflets (Householders' Guide to Biodiversity and Biodiversity Guidance to Developers) required re-writing during 2005 and case studies were researched for the Planning Manual. Biodiversity Action Notes were also drafted in association with a wide range of Partner organisations. The documents will be published during 2006-07.

A full-colour Tayside Red Squirrel Newsletter was compiled with input from a wide number of Partners across the region. Five thousand full-colour copies were published and circulated via libraries, schools, the Ranger Service, environment groups and the three Red Squirrel Groups in Tayside.

Two hundred and fifty copies of the Tayside Biodiversity Funding Newsletter were circulated twice during the year to a similar diverse audience. Many more people across both Tayside and the rest of Scotland have been able to access the information it provides, as past issues, as well as the current issue, are also featured on the website.

A general Tayside Biodiversity On-Line Newsletter was prepared for the launch of the website; copies have been regularly downloaded throughout the year.

A new Tayside Town Swift Survey poster was prepared and the survey forms updated. These proved extremely popular and Concern for Swifts (Scotland) asked permission to make them available to other Biodiversity Partnerships in Scotland to adapt for their own use.

### **Display Boards**

One set of display boards was made available to the Dundee Spring Flower Show, the Dundee Food and Flower Festival, the Angus Glens Walking Festival and the Sea Shore Festival. It was also displayed long-term in both Crombie Country Park Centre and the SWT Montrose Visitor Centre. The Perth and Kinross Ranger Service used the second set of boards at numerous events (including the Perth Wood Fair and Perth Show) before the display was loaned long-term to the WoodBus which is now touring schools and local communities throughout Perth and Kinross.

Once again, the banner display set proved extremely useful for many one-day events. They were regularly borrowed by Angus Council for their conferences, and displayed at the Angus Show (hosted by Angus FWAG). The Scottish Rural Property & Business Association hosted them on their stand at the 3-day Scone Game Fair. They were also used at the Scottish Biodiversity Forum Lead Partners' conference and the East Perthshire Walking Festival, and widely used by the Perth and Kinross Ranger Service at one-day events.

### **"Building Better Biodiversity" Lunch-time Seminars and Workshops**

The popularity of these events has increased, and attendees from neighbouring LBAP Partnerships are now drawn to them. In turn, this has encouraged other LBAPs to offer similar events.

In the past year, nearly 240 people have attended the events and the audience continues to be very mixed: staff from statutory bodies, many different Council departments, housing associations, private business people, consultants, and naturalists.

Perth & Kinross Council hosted three lunch-time seminars:

- April 2005 - Swift Nest Site Conservation (led by Concern for Swifts);
- December 2005 - Bats in Buildings and Bridges (led by Angus Ranger Service);
- March 2006 - Working with Different Generations (led by Angus Ranger Service and the Partnership).

In September, Dundee Botanical Gardens hosted a lunch-time seminar: Greenspace Design.



Tayside Field Days were held to raise awareness of grassland management:

- In early June, Fife & Kinross FWAG, together with RSPB, held a guided walk for 25 people in Kinross-shire to identify farmland birds and to discuss farm wildlife.
- In mid-June, the Partnership led a Field Discussion Day in the Aberfeldy area. In association with SNH and the Fife Ranger Service, different types of species-rich grassland were explored and their management options discussed.
- At the end of July, Angus FWAG held a Wildflower Training Day to explore the creation and management of species-rich grassland. Hosted by Scotia Seeds near Brechin, the afternoon also included a Butterfly and Bumblebee Identification Workshop.

The Water and Wetland sub-group masterminded the main seminar of the year with a major input from Alastair Stephen of Scottish & Southern Power. On 9 November 2005, a hundred delegates from all over Scotland attended the "River Engineering - Solutions for Roads and Fish" seminar at the Birnam Institute. A follow-up seminar has been agreed for June 2007. Presentations at Birnam included:

- An introduction to Controlled Activities Regulations; Risk Assessment Approach (both by SEPA);
- Case studies and discussion on Fisheries Improvements (Kyle of Sutherland District Salmon Fishery Board); Pitlochry Flood Event (Perth and Kinross Council); Tweed Fishery Restoration - multi-agency collaboration (Tweed Foundation); Brechin Flood Alleviation Scheme - a partnership approach (Angus Council).

There was excellent feedback to the 2005-06 programme, with requests for further events; a fourth programme has been prepared for 2006-07. A full analysis report for the third programme is available separately.



#### INTER-LBAP AND WORKING WITH THE SCOTTISH BIODIVERSITY FORUM

Twice-yearly meetings are held throughout Scotland by the LBAP Officers' Network; in 2005, these were held in Strathclyde and on the Isle of Lewis. Regional meetings were also held with Biodiversity Officers from the Cairngorms, Clackmannanshire, and Fife.

Re-organisation of the Scottish Biodiversity Forum led to the redundancy of the Scottish LBAP Co-ordinator's post and, after some months' delay, the introduction of the Biodiversity Implementation Team. For much of 2005, there was therefore little contact with the Forum and subsequently little opportunity to link with national initiatives. However, the Partnership played a part in the Scottish Biodiversity Week celebrations in May and commented on the first of the Implementation Plans from the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy.

Two initiatives arising from the Partnership's species work gained recognition by the Scottish Biodiversity Forum's Rural Working Group: the introduction of the Scottish Lowlands Barn Owl Forum and the Tayside & Fife Red Squirrel Forum.

#### **Scottish Lowlands Barn Owl Forum**

Tayside's Barn Owl Survey and pilot projects led the way to a meeting with neighbouring LBAP Partnerships to share good practice. The result was the inauguration of the Scottish Lowlands Barn Owl Forum, initially covering the LBAP areas of Tayside, Fife, Clackmannanshire, and Stirling. The RSPB's Education Officer will be working across this area and will link with the new Forum. An application to the Biodiversity Action Grant Scheme is seeking to set up a habitat management project across the Forum area, and share survey postcards and posters across the whole region. A generic Barn Owl Management Report will be agreed and a 'pool' of licensed ringers informed of all the projects so that accurate monitoring can be undertaken.

### **Tayside Red Squirrel Forum**

In the same spirit of partnership working, the Forestry Commission brought together the Fife Red Squirrel Group and the three Red Squirrel Groups across Tayside with the Partnership and the Scottish Red Squirrel Group to discuss wider issues. The Tayside Red Squirrel Forum will, in turn, link to a Mid-Scotland Red Squirrel Group, so that even wider habitat issues from Argyllshire to Aberdeenshire can be considered.



### **SUPPORTING THE TAYSIDE BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP**

Funding for the year 2005-06 came from Scottish Natural Heritage and the three local authorities. Much in-kind help came from many other quarters: a number of Partners hosted the Steering Group, Management Team and sub-group meetings, as well as the Building Better Biodiversity seminars. Much of the work of the sub-groups and Steering Group is undertaken voluntarily. Angus FWAG, Dundee City Council and the Scottish Rural Property and Business Association donated exhibition space for the Partnership's display banners.

### **CURRENT STEERING GROUP**

Alex Anderson	Angus Council
Pam Coutts	Angus Council
Stewart Roberts	Angus Council
Merrill Smith	Dundee City Council
Alison Anderson	Dundee City Council
Bryan Harris	Dundee City Council
Syd House	Forestry Commission Scotland
Mike Strachan	Forestry Commission Scotland
Carol Littlewood	Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (Angus)
Richard Lockett	Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (Perth)
John Miskelly	National Farmers' Union Scotland
Ben Notley	National Trust for Scotland
Martin Price	Perth College (Centre for Mountain Studies) (Chairman, TBP, from October 2004)
Douglas Flint	Perth and Kinross Council

Mark Simmons  
Bruce Anderson  
Christine Hall  
Alan Hendry

Jo Long  
Martyn Jamieson  
Ruth Harland  
Paul Ramsay  
Carolyn Warwick  
David Mitchell  
Janice Hendry  
Uwe Stoneman

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 Wildlife Trust  
Scottish Wildlife Trust

Catherine Lloyd

Tayside Biodiversity Co-ordinator

### **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, the Partnership's Chairman, and all members of the 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 ongoing design expertise and to Lesley Campbell and Lorraine Smith for their administrative assistance.

### **Further information**

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**EVERY ACTION COUNTS**

