



Minister for Environment and Climate Change learns of endangered species in the South Esk catchment

Leading Scottish conservation charity, the Scottish Wildlife Trust has welcomed a visit by the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Paul Wheelhouse MSP, to Southesk Estate in Angus to see the vital work undertaken by Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels – one of the Trust's flagship projects.

Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels is a project to stop the decline of Scotland's core red squirrel populations, to contain or slow the progress of squirrelpox spread in South Scotland and to improve conditions for viable red squirrel populations across Scotland. It is a partnership project between the Scottish Wildlife Trust, Scottish Natural Heritage, Forestry Commission Scotland, Scottish Land and Estates and Red Squirrel Survival Trust. The protection of red squirrels depends on a targeted network of project works and landowners delivering grey squirrel population control.

An important part of the project is the collection data to show whether this is achieving its goals. Minister for Environment and Climate Change Paul Wheelhouse said: "Red squirrels are one of Scotland's most recognisable and loved animals and Scottish Natural Heritage have recognised public affection by listing the red squirrel as one of Scotland's 'Big 5' species. The work of SSRS in raising awareness of their plight in north-east Scotland is extremely important to preserving their future here and across Scotland. Since SSRS was formed we have seen some positive results as we work to halt the decline of the red squirrel numbers. A lot of this is due to the excellent cooperation between landowners, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's), Forestry Commission Scotland, and Scottish Natural Heritage, which is taking place throughout many parts of Scotland. It was good to see these partnerships in action at Kinnaird Castle and I am grateful to

Graeme Dey MSP and the local partners for inviting me here to learn more about SSRS' vital work". Chief Executive of the Scottish Wildlife Trust, Simon Milne, said: "Savings Scotland's Red Squirrels is an excellent example of how conservation bodies and landowners can, and indeed must, work together to safeguard our wildlife".

The Earl of Southesk and over 200 other landowners and their teams are putting a huge amount of effort



into ensuring that one of our most popular animals has a future in Scotland.

Lord Southesk said "It was very good to see the Minister taking the time to visit the project in action and hoped that he would remain supportive of the programme to protect Scotland's wonderful red squirrel population."

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Balsam bashing a great success!

Balsam Control at Montrose basin

There are now large stands of Himalayan Balsam in Montrose Basin LNR and 2013 saw a huge push to control the plant on the reserve near the Bridge of Dun – see the map and images below. The voluntary team have already made a huge impact in spite of heavy rainfall and thunder storms shortening planned days of pulling the invasive species. Thanks to the commitment of the impressive team of volunteers, over 100 hours were spent on the task and a huge improvement was seen in the treated area. Hopefully the team are well on the way to having the balsam under control on the north side of the river.

If you'd like to volunteer for a few hours and help out with this really worthwhile task, please contact Anna Cheshier at Montrose Basin Wildlife Centre on 01674 676 336 or at acheshier@swt.org.uk

*Note

Himalayan balsam is a tall growing annual, 2-3m (6-10ft) in height. Between June and October it produces clusters of purplish pink (or rarely white) helmet-shaped flowers

Aggressive seed dispersal, coupled with high nectar production which attracts pollinators, often allows the Himalayan Balsam to outcompete native plants.

Each plant can produce up to 800 seeds. These are dispersed widely as the ripe seedpods shoot their seeds up to 7m (22ft) away.

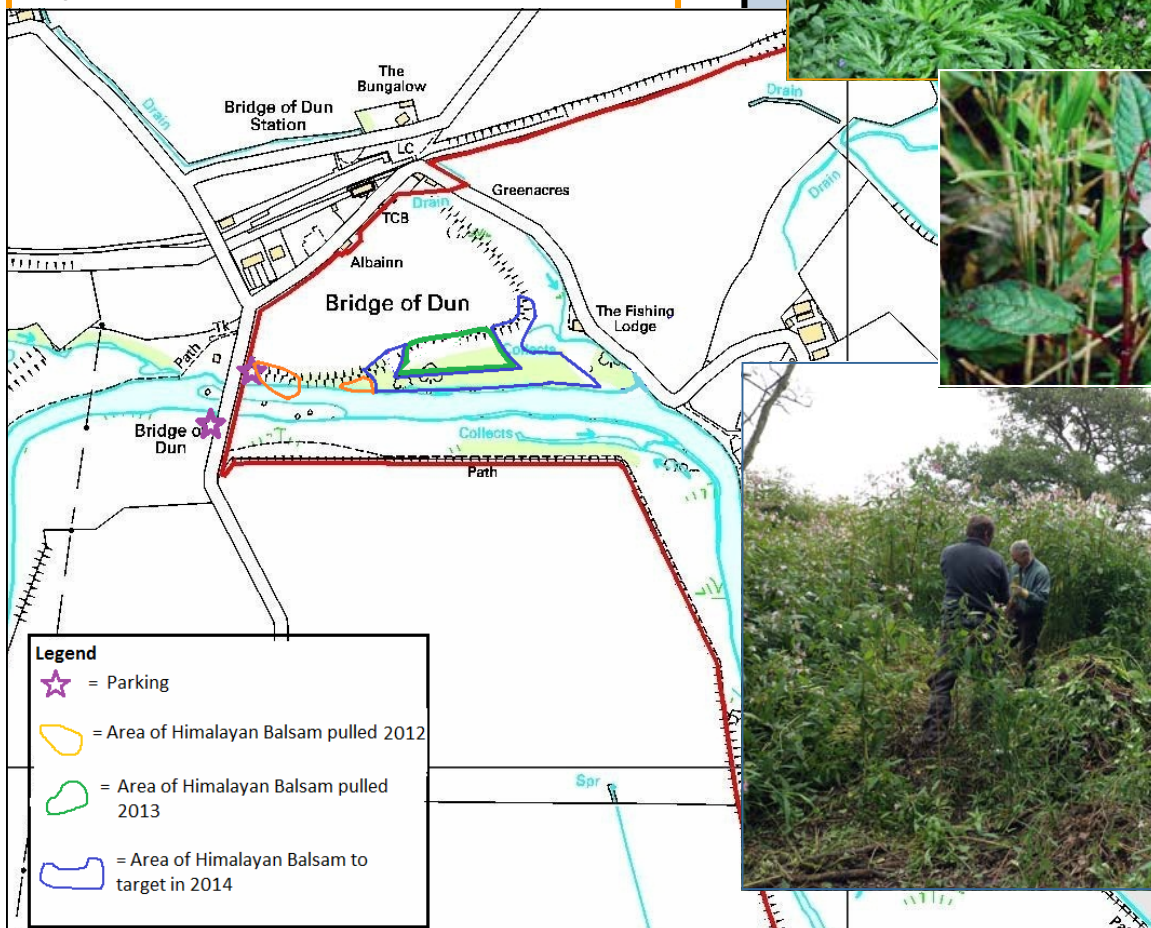
South Esk Invasives control Update

Esk Rivers & Fisheries Trust

Since 2010, the number of man-days has reduced from 220 to 110 and the amount of pesticide reduced from 1020 litres to 120 litres.

Japanese Knotweed treatment has been very successful in largely eliminating the plant from the river banks. The greatest risk of re-infestation arises from repairs to flood banks involving the movement of earth contaminated with the weed.

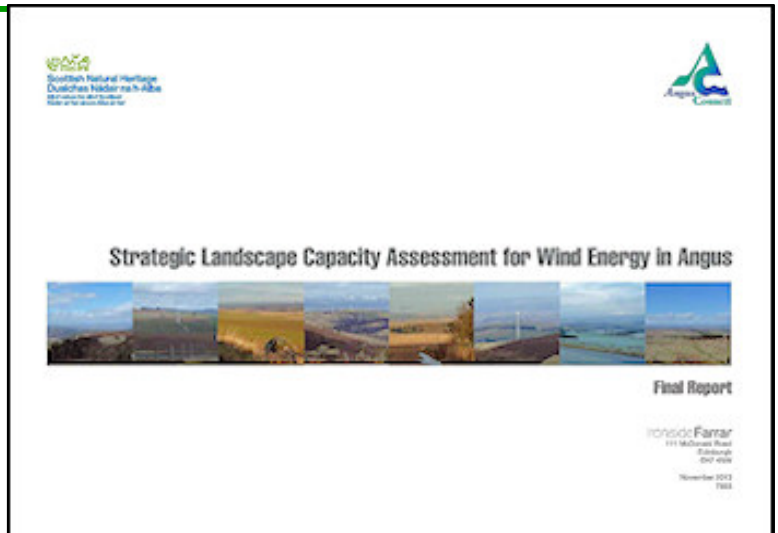
Giant Hogweed while very easy to kill through spraying, there are large reservoirs of seed banks which are mobilised during spates. These tend to be deposited in areas subject to flooding. Hence while control has been successful in areas not subject to flooding the flood plain remains an important area of



Strategic Landscape Capacity Assessment for Wind Energy in Angus

In September 2012 Scottish Natural Heritage in conjunction with Angus and Aberdeenshire Councils commissioned Ironside Farrar to review current landscape sensitivity and capacity guidance in relation to wind energy development. The Strategic Landscape Capacity Assessment for Wind Energy in Angus is a technical report providing updated information on landscape capacity for wind energy development and the potential cumulative impact of proposals in the context of operational and consented developments. It will be a material consideration in the development management process for the assessment of wind energy development proposals and planning applications.

The report will inform the preparation of a locational framework for wind turbines as part of a review of renewable energy policy and associated supplementary guidance in the emerging Local Development Plan. Consideration will also be given to the report's findings on the Implementation Guide for Renewable Energy Developments. Elements of Section 4 of the Implementation Guide which looks at the capacity of the landscape to accommodate additional wind turbines will require revision to ensure a consistent approach to proposals for wind energy development and a report on this and associated consultation will be submitted to the relevant committee in due course. The Landscape Capacity Assessment for Angus is available to view as a finalised draft version at <http://www.angus.gov.uk/wind/StrategicLandscapeCapacityAssessmentofWindEnergyinAngusOCR.pdf>



Changes at the Scottish Mink Initiative

As of 1 September 2013, the fisheries trusts across the Scottish Mink Initiative (SMI) work area have taken on the mink management work throughout the project area. Ann-Marie MacMaster is now Scottish Mink Initiative Coordinator whilst she continues to be the point of contact for all-things-mink in the northern half of the Tay catchment (the southerly boundary of the Initiative area remains Lunan Bay – Forfar – Cougar Angus – Dunkeld – Aberfeldy – Loch Rannoch). The Esk Rivers Fisheries Trust has taken on the mink management for Lunan Water, River South Esk, River North Esk and Bervie Water – previously these areas were covered by Ann-Marie. Thanks to SNH, funding is secure for this set up until March 2014, hopefully continuing after that. RAFTS also aim to source funds for a large multi-invasive species project which could begin in 2015.



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Things were very quiet across the entire SMI area during the dispersal period (Aug – Oct) with a total of 16 captures, 4 of which were from north Tay catchment and 5 from Esk Rivers Fisheries Trust area.

Ann-Marie added "We will always be pleased to welcome new volunteers and at the moment we are trying to encourage existing volunteers to use the 'minkapp' to submit their raft check data." Volunteers who are currently registered with SMI can log their raft check details here: <http://www.dotrural.ac.uk/smi/index.php?r=user/login>. If you have a raft but are not sure how to log in please contact Ann-Marie direct on ann-marie@rafts.org.uk

Kinnaird Weir small scale run-of-river hydropower scheme approved

The proposed development of a small scale run-of-river hydropower scheme on the River Southesk at Kinnaird Weir, 3km east of Brechin in Angus was approved in January by Angus Council. The proposed scheme comprises of an Archimedes Screw turbine and associated infrastructure, integrated into the existing weir structure.

A scoping consultation process was carried out in order to establish which environmental aspects were most relevant to the South Esk scheme. This consultation was undertaken through discussion with the relevant statutory bodies and other interested parties. Baseline conditions were established for each of the environmental topics. This was achieved through site surveys, sourcing existing information on the site, scientific knowledge, and local knowledge of the estate and surrounding area.

No effects of 'major' or 'extreme' adverse significance were identified in the EIA following appropriate mitigation. Beneficial impacts can be expected due to minor improvement to the existing fish pass hydraulics at the weir, the energy generation from a renewable source (enough to power 37 homes), overall reduction in CO2 emissions associated with the operation of the scheme and from inputs to the local and wider economy as a result of the construction process and suppliers used.

* The photo montage below shows what the scheme may look like.

SEPA targets flooding with new 'milestone' maps

On 15th January 2014 the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) published the most comprehensive national source of data on flood hazard and risk for Scotland. The new flood maps are an important step in increasing understanding of the sources and impacts of flooding and will be a key tool in producing Scotland's first ever co-ordinated plans to tackle flood risk.



The maps, which have been developed in partnership with local authorities and Scottish Water, share more information on flooding than ever before with members of the public. The maps show different types of flooding, the likelihood of this happening and the impact of flooding when it does happen.

The new national map, which builds on the information available in the previous Indicative River and Coastal Flood Map, features areas at risk from surface water flooding and includes information on depth and velocity where available. One of the other new flood maps developed by the Agency identifies areas where there is an opportunity for natural flood management. This is part of a more sustainable approach to tackling flooding in Scotland, and uses the natural processes and shape of the land to help to reduce flood risk. You can access SEPA's live flood warning information for all of Scotland 24/7 every day of the year at www.sepa.org.uk/floodupdates or by calling Floodline on 0845 988 1188. The new flood maps, which can be viewed at: <http://>



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Cairngorm National Park Authority - joint catchments approach

The River South Esk, Dee and Spey partnerships share many common goals and encounter very similar issues. All have head waters in the Cairngorm National Park Authority area (CNPA) and all three have been invited by the CNPA to consider joint catchment approaches to issues such as diffuse pollution, woodland planting, river restoration, peatland restoration, Invasive Non Native Species, biodiversity protection and awareness raising and PR. All three partnerships aim to share good practice, materials e.g. septic tank brochure and coordinate the future reviews and amendments to their catchment management plans.



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New Tayside Biodiversity Partnership Action Plan - Water, wetlands & marine and coasts input wanted

The Project coordinator is leading on the restructuring of two sections of the new 10 year Local Biodiversity Action Plan. The plan aims to formulate a wide range of new collaborative short and long terms visions and actions that contribute to enhancing and protecting Tayside's aquatic environments and species. Do you have ongoing projects that may be the inspiration for new actions? Or new actions you would like to have considered? Please contact



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info@theriversouthesk.org with any suggestions.

About The River South Esk Catchment Partnership

To address the many issues which affect the South Esk catchment, representatives of some organisations have been meeting regularly since 2004 with the development of an integrated Catchment Management Plan at the forefront of their aims. Gradually an informal Steering Group was formed*. The process of developing a Catchment Management Plan began in earnest in 2008 with the employment of a part-time Project Officer to oversee an intensive two year consultation phase which would capture people's views on what they considered the key environmental, social and economic issues to be within the catchment. These views were used to form the basis of the plan's strategic aims, catchment objectives and actions. Phase one of the plans implementation is now complete and development of the next phase of implementation is at the forefront of the Partnership's mind.

The River South Esk Catchment Partnership would like to thank all its funders and supporters.

Without them it would be impossible to carry out the work we are undertaking. The logos on display denote the funders of the 2011/12 phase.

Their funding will allow us to work towards enhancing and promoting many facets of the catchment .



*The Esk District Salmon Fishery Board, Angus Council, Scottish Natural Heritage, Esk Rivers and Fisheries Trust, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Atlantic Salmon Trust, Scottish Agricultural College, Forestry Commission Scotland, Littlewood Land Care, Cairngorms National Park Authority, Macaulay Institute, Scottish Water, National Farmers

For any comments or to join our mailing list, please contact:

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