



Tayside Recorders' Bulletin

April

2014



Tayside Biodiversity Partnership



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Contents

Welcome to the Seventh Tayside Recorders' Day.....	2
Recorders' Forum Website	34
Tayside Geodiversity.....	34
Perth Museum News	34
Dundee Museums and Art Galleries.....	45
Angus Museums	45
Scottish Wild Beaver Group Educational Awareness	56
Small Blue Butterfly and Kidney Vetch Survey	56
East Scotland Butterfly Conservation	67
Tay Landscape Partnership	78
The Tayside Amphibian and Reptile Group (TayARG)	89
MarineLife Angus.....	89
Tayside Biodiversity Partnership Update.....	910
Project Funding in Tayside	910
Partnership Surveys.....	1011
RSPB Tayside Wader Survey.....	1011
BioBlitz at Loch Leven NNR	1112
Swift Survey and new Carse of Gowrie Project.....	1112
Dragonfly News	1213
DightyConnect Citizen Science	1213

Tayside Biodiversity Partnership

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Tayside Biodiversity Partnership Chairman - Dennis Dick; Chairman-Elect - Andrew Barbour; Co-ordinator: Catherine Lloyd



Tayside Beaver Study Group1314

Useful websites:1415

Welcome to the Seventh Tayside Recorders' Day

Perth Museum and Art Gallery hosted this event in 2008, 2011 and 2013; at other times the Forum has visited both Dundee and Forfar. This year the event will be taking place in Forfar once again, hosted by the Angus Council Ranger Service.

Last year's meeting was very busy for the Recorders'. We welcomed everyone to the Perth Museum and Art Gallery and heard from Karen Cunningham (RSPB) about the Tayside wader Survey and updates from East of Scotland Corn Bunting Survey, from Daniele Muir on the Amphibians in Drains Project's success and the launch of the new Tayside Amphibian and Reptile Group (TayARG). The Small Blue Butterfly & Kidney Vetch Survey celebrated the end of its first year and two members of the East of Scotland branch of Butterfly Conservation gave a talk reflecting the events of 2012 and the plans for 2013.



Common Swift (Apus apus) © Wikimedia

Alexa Tweddle from Fife Nature spoke about the importance of monitoring and the value of long term data sets in relation to practical management, Rose Toney from North East Local Biodiversity Action Plan Partnership (NESLBAP) talked about Biological recording projects and links with Tayside and Helen Taylor talked about the Juniper Survey in Perth and Kinross. Graham Esson from Perth and Kinross Council gave an introduction to the Carse of Gowrie Mapping Project. Christine Johnson, Scottish Biodiversity Information Forum (SBIF) Co-ordinator, provided an introduction and update on the SBIF and a spokesperson from the Forestry Commission gave an update on Ash Dieback. As ever, the event was very well received and brought people together from not just Tayside, but much further afield.

This year's Recorders' Day will, we hope, again bring people together to discuss local interests and to keep in touch with one another. This year's event will include updates on Biological Recording in Scotland, the Dragonfly recording and conservation in Scotland, a NESBReC projects update as well as an update on what is happening at Butterfly Conservation Scotland.

The Amphibians in Drains Project drew much attention at last year's UK Herpetological Workers' Conference in Edinburgh and Daniele Muir will be updating us on her project in Perth & Kinross.

Lorna Oldershaw, Adrian Sumner and Mike Nicol will be talking about the "What's Up" project, Slugs and Snails in Scotland and Ringing Dippers Surveying in Tayside respectively. The Tayside Recorders' will also be visited by the Scottish Wild Beaver Group, Gordon Corbet will talk about recording on a single site and Catherine Lloyd will bring to everyone's attention the new UK Heritage Pear Survey and how that will fit in with the Tayside Orchards projects.



Recorders' Forum Website

The Tayside Recorders' Forum continues to have a section on the Partnership's website: www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk and the list of Recorders and associated organisations are very well used. Please check if your details, or your organisation's details, are correct (or worse, if we have inadvertently omitted you!), and please let us know as soon as possible via Andrew Law, the Biodiversity Intern - anlaw@pkc.gov.uk.

The Partnership's Facebook page publicises as many biological recording events and training days as possible, so if you have any news, let us know and we will pass it on through this media – it is becoming a useful 'selling tool' to highlight events, not just in Tayside, but right across Scotland. Please click "like" on "Tayside Biodiversity" to join. There is also Facebook pages on Tayside Swifts and the Tayside Amphibians & Reptiles Group.

Tayside Geodiversity

This small group is going from strength to strength and has already published four geology Trail leaflets for areas near Perth, Dundee Law, Arbroath and Strathardle, by Pitlochry. The group is currently focused on increasing the number of local Geodiversity Sites in Tayside. It has now been a member of the Scottish Geodiversity Forum for over a year.

There is now a new section on the geodiversity website - a "Who's Who of Famous Local Geologists". This was prepared by Dundee University intern, Naomi Harper, and includes names such as James Hutton, the developer of current Deep Time Geology and Plutonism, who came from Edinburgh; Sir Charles Lyell, the first to describe the Highland Boundary Fault, harkened from Kinnordy; and Peter McNair, whose writings cover the geology of the Grampian mountains - in his free time he studied at the Museum and Library of the Perthshire Society for Natural History. The geodiversity Who's Who section of the website is an interesting resource – do please check it out -

www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk/Geodiversity/TaysideGeodiversity_WhosWho, or contact Carol Pudsey for more information. New members are welcome; again contact Carol at carol_pudsey@btinternet.com.

Perth Museum News

Perth Museum and Art Gallery reopened in March after a period of maintenance and refurbishment. There are no major changes to the natural history gallery but it is hoped that this will be dismantled for refurbishment in a year or so. The museum displays for 2014 feature new exhibits of glass and silver. Currently on show is a new photographic exhibition, The Golden Age of Photojournalism featuring the work of local press photographers over the last century.

In 2013 the Perth Mummy hit the headlines when an exciting opportunity arose to uncover some of her secrets. In June the Mummy travelled to the Royal Manchester Children's hospital to be scanned and x-rayed for the first time. This confirmed that the mummy is female and the hieroglyphics on her coffin reveal that her name was Ta-kr-hb (Takerheb). You can find out more about ancient Egypt in a new exhibition that has just opened. *Secret Egypt, unravelling the truth from myth* investigates the truth behind the popular myths about ancient Egypt. The exhibition is open until 25th May.

Behind the scenes the natural history volunteer team has been working hard on the cataloguing of the natural history collections. We would like to thank our volunteers for their hard work during the past 12 months. Adam Garside has continued to catalogue and curate the beetle collections and take care of the wider insect

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collections. Bertie Robinson is cataloguing the student herbaria and botanical teaching herbaria from the University of Edinburgh that were donated to Perth in the 1880s. A new volunteer joining the team in 2013 was Barbara Hogarth who has taken on the cataloguing of the remaining large botanical collection, known as the non-Perthshire herbarium. The herbarium contains 6,000 specimens from Britain and Europe and includes the type specimen of *Pteridium aquilinum ssp atlanticum*. Our congratulations go to former volunteer, Mike Sedakat, who now works as a natural history curator with Dundee Museums.

For more information please contact: Mark Simmons, Principal Officer Natural History
Perth Museum & Art Gallery - Tel. 01738 632488/ mjsimmons@pkc.gov.uk.

Dundee Museums and Art Galleries

We have appointed a new Curator of botany and Zoology, Mike Sedakat. Mike is responsible for managing the vertebrate zoology and herbarium collections. We continue to work on the improving collection accessibility, with small projects concentrating on a particular collection. Last year's activity for the Dundee Science Festival was a guided walk investigating the origins of Dundee Law.

We are continuing to make the Collections unit in Barrack Street a building where we can run workshops and activities. The laboratory can house small groups which can make use of equipment, reference books and access to the collections. We have successfully hosted a trial workshop on the analysis of bat droppings.

Biological records

We continue to accept local biological records in a variety of formats. We are concentrating on local surveys and in particular helping local environment groups improve their skills. There are approximately 160,000 records dating between 1830 and 2002, collected mostly from Dundee and Angus. We continue to provide record searches of the historical 'Naturebase' dataset held by the museum which covers Dundee and Angus. Additions to this dataset will be made where the data available reflects or complements the museum's natural science collections.

The taxon group breakdown of the dataset is as follows: Higher plants - 30% / Birds - 26% / Insects - 26% / Other - 18%. Although the data is outdated there is evidence that this information is still all that exists for some sites. Requests for information indicate there is a requirement for biological data within the region.

For more information contact David Lampard; Tel. 01382 432364 or 432392 /
david.lampard@leisureandculturedundee.com ; Website: <http://www.mcmanus.co.uk>

Angus Museums

Angus Council runs a number of museums within the county including: Arbroath, Brechin, Forfar, Kirriemuir and Montrose. Each has a distinct character, reflecting the history and environment of the Burghs of Angus. Kirriemuir Gateway to the Glens Museum offers exhibitions on the wildlife, geology, history and archaeology of Glen Prosen, Glen Isla, Glen Clova and Glen Doll. A diorama brings visitors face to face with some of the wildlife of the Glens. In addition, the recently refurbished Tourist Information area (in partnership with the Cairngorms National Park) provides a wide range of free publications.

The Montrose Natural History Collection reflects the natural history of Montrose and of Angus in the large and extensive natural history collection displayed in the museum. Almost all of the creatures which live around Angus are displayed here in settings that reflect habitats from the coastal rocky and sandy shores,

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through farms and woodland to the glens. Along with an extensive collection of invertebrates and plants the natural history collection contains many fine specimens of birds and mammals. The museum also features the fossil fish *Mesacanthus mitchelli*, found locally and named after the Reverend Hugh Mitchell and the extensive Lord Gray agate collection. The collection also contains herbarium specimens collected by George Don. The museums also provide an enquiries/identification service on request.

Visit www.angus.gov.uk/museums for further details of all Angus Council's museums.

Scottish Wild Beaver Group Educational Awareness

In 2013 the Scottish Wild Beaver Group (SWBG) embarked upon an educational programme to highlight the benefits of the beaver to Tayside children; this also gave the children an insight into the solutions available to the negative impacts the beaver may cause. Over 700 school children in nine schools were involved! Presentations were also given to a couple of community events and Perth guides, and information stalls were manned at Blairgowrie Highland Games and the Blairgowrie Big Weekend. To say these presentations were a great success would be a mild understatement, as all were intrigued to learn about this incredible creature - having children really interested in nature is a wonderful achievement. More schools will be involved this year.

In addition to the education programme, over 100 people took part in 30 tours last year, with a sighting of a local beaver family being 95% successful. Other wildlife spotted on these tours included Otters, Water voles, Kingfishers and Osprey. People came from far and wide - 30% local interest (within 10 miles), 36% from the rest of Scotland, 27% from England, and visitors from Italy and Belgium as well. From an eco-tourism point, 87% of these people had spent money within the community prior to joining the tour; accommodation providers are also interested. The interest continues with five previous parties from England planning another visit – all to see the Wild Beavers of Scotland.
Bob Scott, SWBG



Small Blue Butterfly and Kidney Vetch Survey

Britain's smallest butterfly, the charismatic Small Blue, remains the focus of a project which started in Angus back in 2012. This UK BAP priority species has suffered a significant contraction in range over recent decades and is now present at only a few sites on the east coast of Scotland. Check the maps at http://www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk/PageFlip/Get_Involved_Project_SmallBlue2.html.

Working with the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership is the Butterfly Conservation East Scotland branch, Angus Council Ranger Service and the Scottish Wildlife Trust. Through Butterfly Conservation we also have an MSP who is the 'Species Champion' for this butterfly – Dr Richard Simpson. Find out more about the Species Champions initiative here <http://www.scotlink.org/work-areas/species-champions/>.



The summer of 2012 was not conducive to butterfly recording and although many areas were surveyed it was not clear if the lack of Small Blue sightings was down to the weather or real absence. It was decided, therefore, that 2013 was to be largely a repeat of the monitoring stage to try to establish more fully the extent or otherwise of existing colonies and other suitable sites.

The Seaton Cliffs sites north of Arbroath were well covered in 2013 and one volunteer reported his best ever counts (high teens) in the area, with butterflies being seen all the way down to Victoria Park itself. The Barry Buddon and Carnoustie communities were also re-confirmed. Elsewhere, the picture was not so encouraging without any reports of the butterfly from inland sites, apart from the recently discovered one at Glamis, and much of the Kidney Vetch at Boddin having been strimmed away by local residents “tidying up”.

In 2014, the survey will continue and, as in 2013, there will be parallel work done in N E Scotland, including St Cyrus and along the Moray coast. We need as much help as possible, so if you are willing to survey for either the food plant, kidney vetch, or the butterfly itself, please check the website details and join the Small Blue Interest Group. Publicity posters are now available so if you can help distribute them, please let us know. As in 2012, a survey postcard is now also available for people to submit their sightings. A training day will be held on Sunday, 1st June in Arbroath – check the What’s On section of www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk for booking details.

East Scotland Butterfly Conservation

The East Scotland branch of Butterfly Conservation is looking for a volunteer or volunteers to take on the role of Butterfly Recorder from the end of 2014.



The main activities of the Butterfly Recorder are to:

- Receive butterfly records for East Scotland from BC members and others
- Acknowledge receipt, digitise the records where necessary and collate into an overall dataset
- Verify records:
 - o check grid reference matches site name
 - o check date is sensible for species
 - o check site is known or sensible for species
 - o query uncertain records as required
- Submit verified records to BC Head Office to deadlines as required
- Liaise with local records centres:
 - o Verify existing databases where necessary
 - o Share data so that BC and local databases are common
- Provide appropriate access to data for others, in line with BC policy
- From time to time prepare reports and summaries of progress for newsletters, meetings, etc.
- Help guide the branch in future survey and recording priorities

The area of the East Scotland branch extends from the Borders to the Moray Firth and while the present and previous Butterfly Recorders have covered the full branch, we are considering splitting the job into smaller parts. However, there will still be a need for overall co-ordination of the activity.

If you’re interested in finding out more, or think you could help, more please contact Barry Prater barry@prater.myzen.co.uk or 018907 52037.



Tay Landscape Partnership

History, Environment, Conservation, Heritage and Craft

The Tay Landscape Partnership (TLP) is an exciting new 4 year project celebrating the landscapes of where the Rivers Tay and Earn meet. The TLP project area extends 250km² stretching from Newburgh to Forteviot, Perth to Dundee and it is hoped that residents and visitors alike will reconnect with the natural, built and cultural heritage of the area.



Delivery of 29 individual projects by 5 new members of staff will:

- Conserve, restore and improve access to a range of natural and built features
- Encourage and support a greater diversity and quantity of people to learn about and more actively participate in their landscape and its heritage
- Provide training opportunities for people in local, traditional skills
- Link with broader public and private investment in Dundee, Perth and Fife, to support sustainable economic development.

The TLP is a £2.6 million project funded by Heritage Lottery Fund, Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust, Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust, Perth and Kinross Council, The Gannochy Trust, The Robertson Trust, The Cross Trust and Esmee Fairbairn. Projects will include the erection of 800 boxes for bats, barn owls, tree sparrows and swifts. A wildlife and water vole survey undertaken in the Carse of Gowrie will help identify suitable locations for the creation of 5-10km new wildlife corridors through planting 2km of new hedgerows and 300 trees. Thirteen historic orchards in the Carse of Gowrie will be managed and restored further including their celebration via 4 orchard festivals. One new community orchard will be established.

All the projects will invite people to come along to organised events and learn about their local environment. Substantial training will be available for volunteers and communities to develop rural skills such as hedge laying, coppicing, bee keeping, orchard pruning, salmon coble boat construction, archaeological digs and building skills. Resources will also be created for teachers as well as outdoor learning opportunities for up to 5,000 school students. Finally, TLP will fund 7 bursaries for young people and one local apprentice.

Further information can be found on the website www.taylp.org, Facebook or Twitter. Alternatively, contact Shirley Paterson on 01738 447083.



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The Tayside Amphibian and Reptile Group (TayARG)

Last year, with the success of the Amphibians in Drains Projects, the Tayside Amphibian and Reptile Group (or TayARG) was set up. The aim of TayARG is to co-ordinate volunteers working on a variety of projects across Angus, Perth and Kinross. These include the Amphibians in Drains Surveys, identifying migration and road crossing hotspots (Amphibian Priority Zones), Toads on Roads, Toadsize Surveys and Pooling our Ponds Surveys.

The success of the Amphibians in Drains pilot in Blairgowrie last year was such that Perth and Kinross Council have agreed to fit wildlife kerbs where they are needed once they know where the Amphibian Priority Zones are. These sites, found by local surveyors and volunteers, are currently being compiled and mapped by the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership's Intern, Andrew Law, who will be submitting his findings to Perth and Kinross Council.

In addition, work is now underway to trial Amphibian Ladders – small ladders which allow amphibians and other creatures to escape from drains – these have just been successfully trialled in the Netherlands; this will be the first time they are used in the UK. Angus Council has agreed that the Friends of Angus Herpetofauna can trial two areas: one north of Dundee, which will include 37 custom-built ladders, and the other in Carnoustie which will include 25 ladders. UHI student Claire McInroy is part of the study, as are Karis and Jared from Dundee University, and Andrew Law who has been learning how to make the ladders to bring that knowledge back to TayARG and, specifically, Perth & Kinross Council where we hope a second tranche of ladders can be trialled in further Amphibians in Drains projects.

TayARG runs amphibian and reptile identification training days and survey training. Membership is free and open to anyone though there may be restrictions for under-16s for safety reasons. If you are interested in helping with survey work or just being part of the group, please contact either Daniele Muir – Taysideamphibians@yahoo.co.uk or Catherine Lloyd – caglloyd@pkc.gov.uk.

MarineLife Angus

Spot Marine Life around Angus's Fantastic Coastline.

The website www.marinelifeangus.co.uk and the Angus Cetacean Awareness Project (ACAP), an Angus based project recording cetaceans in Angus waters, continues to reach out to a wider audience. The website which offers the chance to report whale and dolphin sightings is now on the Visitscotland Angus

and Dundee and coasts sections reaching UK and international audiences. Angus Council are also to have it added to the new Angus Ahead website. The website hosts a wealth of information on local coastal sites, great for land based viewing and also aims to publicise other local recording schemes which record local butterflies, maritime plants and marine non native species.



Since recording began in 2011 sightings of Bottlenose Dolphins, Minke Whale, Harbour Porpoise, Common Dolphin and even Humpback Whales have occurred at many locations along the coastline of Angus. A second print run of small business card size cards in 2013 which went to a wide range of visitor attractions etc along the Angus and Aberdeenshire coasts; this will be distributed again in 2014. If you would like to receive some please email info@marinelifeangus.co.uk

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Tayside Biodiversity Partnership Update

This year sees the 2nd Edition of the Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan being researched and re-written. Although much of the information given in the 2002 Action Plan is still relevant and will continue to be used, there is much good practice going on in the region which needs to be highlighted, as well as policies and legislation updated.

The Working Groups are currently meeting to discuss new actions, case studies and species vignettes; if you would like to be involved in any way, please contact the Co-ordinator direct at caglloyd@pkc.gov.uk.

The Working Groups are also reviewing the 70+ projects taking place across Tayside. Some have been completed, others have not got off the ground (mostly owing to lack of funds or staff/volunteer time). Many more are underway, and invariably these create new opportunities or can be expanded beyond pilot projects.

The Groups meet regularly across Tayside and new members are very welcome. If you would like more information, or would like to be added as a member ('consultee' members are welcome too, if you are unable to attend meetings), please contact the Working Group Leader direct:

Working Groups:	Leader:	Contact:
Coast and Estuaries	Kelly Ann Dempsey	DempseyK@angus.gov.uk
Farmland and Upland (including Barn Owl Interest Group)	Carol Littlewood	carol@littlewoodlandcare.co.uk
Urban and Built Environment	Esther Roger Nicolls and Craig Borland	EMRogersNicoll@pkc.gov.uk or forfarloch@angus.gov.uk
Woodland	Mike Strachan	Mike.strachan@forestry.gsi.gov.uk
Water and Wetland	Ian Lorimer / Kelly Ann Dempsey (temporary)	Ian.Lorimer@sepa.org.uk / DempseyK@angus.gov.uk
People & Communications	Vacancy	caglloyd@pkc.gov.uk
Species Interest Groups:	Leader:	Contact:
Tayside Swifts	Daniele Muir and Craig Borland	DMuir@taysideswifts.co.uk or forfarloch@angus.gov.uk
Sand Martin	Ian Ford	ianford0705@btinternet.com
Small Blue Butterfly	Barry Prater	barry@prater.myzen.co.uk
Tayside Amphibian & Reptile Group (TayARG)	Daniele Muir and Catherine Lloyd	taysideamphibians@yahoo.co.uk or caglloyd@pkc.gov.uk

Project Funding in Tayside

There is still no news on how, in 2015, the Landfill Tax Communities Fund will be subsumed into the Scottish Government and how much will be available for local biodiversity projects. In the meantime, the SITA Tayside Biodiversity Action Fund has now come to an end, with just a handful of projects being completed by midsummer. This source of biodiversity funding will be sorely missed, but since its inception in September 2005, some £750,000 in funds has been shared with organisations throughout Tayside (with the leverage to such projects being just under £2m).

Where projects in Angus are concerned, there are funds still available via the Angus Environment Trust and everyone is encouraged to apply as soon as possible. Survey work is ineligible, unfortunately, but any practical habitat or species work will be considered. Contact Roy Madden at AET via MaddenR@angus.gov.uk



to ask for guidelines and an application form. All funding applications must be submitted by Christmas 2014, but projects can run until March 2017. There are quarterly deadlines until Christmas.

ZoomIn2 Project

Such was the success of the previous ZOOM In2 time lapse photography project, the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership launched an updated version last year. Instead of using recyclable cameras as before you can use anything – a phone, a digital camera: anything! We asked anyone in Tayside to choose a space which is special to them. Anything that is natural goes: from a tree in your local park or a school pond, to a view along the glen or your favourite beach. It doesn't have to be in the countryside – it could be a street tree or a river near where you live – something that will show the changing seasons. It could be in your back garden, at work, in a community orchard, a corner of an allotment or a school wildlife garden.

The website allows the accumulation of beautiful photographs of natural spaces, which mean something to you, from every month of the year, showing the changes the landscape goes through right before your eyes but don't normally notice and letting other people share your experience. It's also a chance to get people you know into photography starting with basics and places they know well.

From the same position every time, once a month take your photograph and then continue every month for a year or more. We are aiming to get a collection of 12 pictures, but it doesn't matter if you miss one or two months. Look out for the website where you can upload your photographs – www.zoomin2.co.uk.

Partnership Surveys

Training opportunities are listed on both the home page of www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk and the Partnership's Facebook page. If your organisation would like details of local events or specific training opportunities publicised, please forward information to caglloyd@pkc.gov.uk.

RSPB Tayside Wader Survey

In 2012, 77 lowland farmland sites in Tayside last surveyed in 1992 were resurveyed for five breeding wader species (curlew, lapwing, oystercatcher, redshank and snipe). Additionally, habitat and land management data were collected for these sites.

Analysis of the results has shown overall the number of wader pairs across the survey area declined by 35% between the surveys. The density of waders per site declined more than the number of sites occupied by waders. Within the overall decline in abundance, there was considerable variation between species: there were declines in lapwing (-66%), oystercatcher (-8%) and redshank (-78%), and increases in curlew (+70%) and snipe (+31%). These trends in Tayside lowland farmland waders mirror national trends except for curlew, which declined nationally over the survey period. 2012 was a very wet year, and it is possible that apparent increases in curlew and snipe in the lowlands involved non-breeding birds redistributing from their upland breeding areas due to the poor weather.

There were major changes in farmland habitat and land management between the surveys. In arable farmland, there was a shift from spring-sown crops to autumn-sown crops. In grassland, the area grazed by cattle decreased while the area of short grass later in the season increased. Rough grassland increased in area while managed grassland decreased. The number of farms with both arable and grassland decreased. Further analysis is required to establish the relationship between habitat and wader numbers.



In 2013, 18 sites identified from an information gathering exercise were surveyed. The data collected on these 'new' sites will contribute to providing a clearer picture of existing wader populations across the area. This information will assist with conservation work on the ground, including providing advice to farmers and land managers on habitat management in important areas and help with the targeting of agri-environment schemes.

More information can be found at www.rspb.org.uk/taysidewaders

BioBlitz at Loch Leven NNR

"Bio" means 'life' and "Blitz" means 'to do something quickly and intensively'. A 'BioBlitz' is a great, outdoor, family event where members of the public, with help from local experts – many of them members of the Tayside Recorders Forum - work together to do a fast and intensive survey of all forms of life in a natural space. It's a race to see or find as many different species of plants, birds, insects, fungi, mammals, fish etc. in 24 hours. All the 'species records' are shared with the organisations/groups taking place and fed into national databases.

Loch Leven NNR celebrates its 50th Anniversary this year and what better way to celebrate than to come along and join in – or lead one of the events. The event will start at 12 noon on Saturday 5 July 2014 and go on until 12 noon on Sunday 6 July 2014. If you would like to learn more about the day, please email Sandra.Penman@snh.gov.uk.

Swift Survey and new Carse of Gowrie Project

As ever, we urgently need Local Survey Co-ordinators to encourage others to join in the Tayside Swift survey. This can be just the simple task of putting up posters and distributing survey forms in your local community, or to host an evening swift walk (we can even supply an expert if you prefer!). Sightings can be added to the online survey: www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk. If you can help, please contact DMuir@taysideswifts.co.uk.



We are gradually creating a useful Priority Zone Map via the local authority planning departments' GIS; this is being done in the same format as the aforementioned TayARG zones.

Last year Tayside Swifts worked very successfully with the Carse of Gowrie Sustainability Group and the local community to discover where swifts are nesting on the Carse. The extension to this SITA TBAF-funded project is enabling churches, schools and businesses to also be part of the project.

This February saw the visit of Edward Mayer, founder of London-based Swift Conservation, who gave several talks over a three day visit to Tayside. This included an Evening Reception at the Inchtute Hotel on the global approach to swift conservation, as well as the history and study of the Swift – by engineers, not ornithologists. John Miles also attended, travelling all the way from Cumbria, to sign his new book "Screamer the Swift" for the School Swift Twinning Project linking schools in the Carse of Gowrie with schools in Uganda, South Africa and Malawi.



Other workshops took place: “Conservation of Swifts Within Development” (Perth) for planners, developers and contractors, and a day-long workshop “Swifts and Bats in the Kirriemuir Conservation Area” which officially launched the latest Swift Conservation Project. This project focuses on providing external and internal nestboxes for swifts during the HLF Kirriemuir Conservation Area Restoration Scheme, funded by Historic Scotland and Angus Council. We believe this will be the first time a local Swift group will be working with different partners to safeguard existing swift nest sites in town centre properties, as well as proactively providing advice and new nestboxes during the building restoration work. We hope the project will be acknowledged as a Best Practice study to encourage similar partnership projects across Scotland (and the UK).

Dragonfly News

I was lucky to start as Scotland Officer with the British Dragonfly Society in October, just as I had finished much of the work on a Swift Conservation Project in Perthshire. Growing up in rural Angus, I was always fascinated by nature and wildlife which led to me studying Environmental Science at Aberdeen University, followed by training as an ecological surveyor with the Scottish Wildlife Trust. I have worked for the last fifteen years as a wildlife guide in France and countryside ranger in Tayside, with the last eleven years in Perth and Kinross.



I first became interested in dragonflies when working as a Seasonal Ranger at Crombie Country Park, in Angus. Crombie is a fantastic spot to easily see dragonflies and damselflies at a number of ponds, and we’re running a couple of training courses there in early August. I would hope that we will be able to observe at least seven species.

My role as Scotland Officer is to raise the profile of dragonflies in Scotland through engaging with local communities and volunteers to promote dragonfly recording and conservation. We have lots of events coming up across Scotland over the summer: see the Dragonfly Events in Scotland webpage for full details. We are holding our first ever Scottish Dragonfly Conference at Perth Museum on the 12th of April, where we will be focusing on volunteering and recording. Check the BDS website for up to date details, and to book your place please contact me on Scotland@british-dragonflies.org.uk or 07749 768 117. I currently work 1 day a week for the BDS (usually a Friday), rising to two days from April. I look forward to working closely with both dragonflies and dragonfly volunteers and hope to see you soon!

Daniele Muir, Scotland Officer
British Dragonfly Society

DightyConnect Citizen Science

DightyConnect is a very active volunteering project working along the Dighty Burn in eastern Dundee. The burn runs very close to where people live and we have been working with a wide variety of people on projects linked to the area’s natural and cultural heritage - further information is available via www.dightyconnect.org or our Facebook page.



We have encouraged a wide range of citizen science/biological recording events and activities, including asking local dog walkers to record phenology changes in trees for the Woodland Trust,



undertaking bird and butterfly transects for national organisations and Red squirrel surveys to guide our tree planting activities.

We have also regularly undertaken biotic index surveys on the burn to monitor changes linked to local industry on the water course. In recent months we have been working with these businesses to address issues, such as possible pollution incidents, associated with surface water drains on their premises. We have used a SEPA initiative called the Yellow Fish Campaign, which encourages businesses and communities to mark drains that flow into water courses. We have been collaborating with Michelin to use new robust markers, donated by Drain Master, to prevent effluent entering these drains by mistake. We are building good relationships with businesses to address further issues such as flooding, invasive species and amphibians in drains.

For more information on DightyConnect
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Tayside Beaver Study Group

The Tayside Beaver Study Group (TBSG) was formed in 2012 by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) following the Scottish Government decision to tolerate the wild-living, unlicensed beaver population in the Tayside area. Monitoring will continue until early 2015, when a decision is expected to be made by Scottish Government as to the future of wild beavers in Scotland.



The TBSG has a neutral, objective stance on the presence of beavers in Tayside and is made up of a range of interested organisations including National Farmers Union Scotland, Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, Scottish Government, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Land and Estates, Scottish Wild Beaver Group, Scottish Wildlife Trust and Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board. The TBSG aims to study and monitor the beavers of Tayside and their impacts including:

- A trap and re-release (at point of capture) veterinary health screening and DNA sampling programme
- Monitoring impacts on land uses such as farming, forestry and fishing
- Investigating potential measures to reduce and resolve beaver-land use conflicts
- Gathering information from landowners who know of, or suspect beaver activity on their land via a questionnaire, with the aim of documenting the full range of experiences of landowners and land managers and the current needs in terms of advice

The information gathered over the monitoring period (2013-15) will be provided to the Minister of Environment to aid in the decision making process regarding the future of beavers in Scotland. We would like to encourage any landowners with beaver activity on their land to get in touch. For further information please see the TBSG website www.taysidebeaverstudygroup.org.uk



Useful websites:

- www.biodiversityscotland.gov.uk - includes details about the Biodiversity Duty for Public Bodies (Nature Conservation Scotland Act 2004) and the Scottish Biodiversity List
- www.cbd.int/2011-2020 - United Nations Decade on Biodiversity
- www.brisc.org.uk - Biological Recording in Scotland
- www.scottishgeology.com - Scottish Geology Forum

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Tayside Beaver Study Group
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www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk

Facebook pages: Tayside Biodiversity / Tayside Swifts / Tayside Amphibians & Reptiles