



Biodiversity Projects on the Scottish Wildlife Trust's Tayside Reserves

Rab Potter









20 for international Vear of Electiversity

Brerachan Meadows Wildlife Reserve

Small 0.4 hectare reserve

10-10-02

Northern hay meadow (only 100Ha in Scotland)

SSSI

118 species recorded

17 UKBAP species

3 Tayside LBAP species

Management

Cut late July/ early August Regrowth cut end September All cuttings removed from site

Issues

Reserve not large enough to graze Previously cut by neighbouring farmer, by tractor, but reserve very small for large machinery Often wet around cutting time Small rank corner inaccessible by large machinery

Solutions – funded by SITA

LIT

Reserve cut using sit on mower which is lighter and more manoeuvrable than tractor



August

Additional Outcomes

Both 1st and 2nd year of projects ground too wet to cut in September In consultation with SNH decided to cut very end of March

2 years of monitoring suggest this approach is working well and management likely to be changed permanently to accommodate this Able to monitor priority species such as spignel over whole reserve

Balnaguard Glen Wildlife Reserve

70 hectare reserve

Mainly juniper and birch woodland

SSSI

54 UKBAP species 8 Tayside LBAP species

Management

Volunteer pulling of bracken !

<u>Issues</u>

Bracken overshadowing any potential juniper regeneration

Volunteers being outcompeted!

Solutions - SITA funded

Mechanical cutting of bracken in June and September

(Volunteers pulling inaccessible areas for machines)



Additional Outcomes

Found badger sett

Improvements to site have encouraged SNH to consent to limited grazing of approximately 20 cows in July and again in September in an attempt to reduce sward and provide open areas for juniper regeneration Liaison with neighbouring landowner who is now rolling prioritised areas of bracken adjacent to our project

Keltneyburn Wildlife Reserve

16.2 hectares of which 7.7ha is species rich meadow SSSI and SAC

Over 200 plant species recorded

Includes 8 species of orchids

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Small white orchid



Management

Meadow grazed with around 50 ewes from Jan - March and around 10 cows from Sept – Oct

Volunteer pulling of bracken

Issues

Bracken was outcompeting everything (including our voluteers!)

Blackthorn had overtaken large areas of the reserve

Solutions - SITA funded

Mechanical cutting of bracken in June and September Mechanical cutting of blackthorn between October and March Volunteers still pulling bracken in areas inaccessible to machines!

dditional Outcomes

SSSI reassessed as Unfavourable - Recovering from Unfavourable condition

Bracken regrowth after 1st yearly cut appears to be less vigorous on this site than at Balnaguard We are trying to determine reasons for this

Able to carry out butterfly monitoring which helps give us an indication as to the health of certain plant species

Montrose Basin Wildlife Reserve

1000 hectare site of which Wet Grassland Grazing project is approx 8 ha



Area shown was originally saltpans in 12th / 13th centaury

Succession has ensured saltpan pools had disappeared

In 2009 SWT carefully scrapped vegetation from the original pools to encourage more wildfowl and waders to use the site.

To ensure vegetation did not once again dry out the pools we have fenced off the area and will be grazing the site with our own *Flying Flock*

SWT has had its own flock of sheep since 2001 which are used exclusively to graze conservation areas mainly in Fife but now expanding into Angus. We are now able to supply wool and lamb to members of the public helping to fund the project and more importantly "make the connection" between the sheep seen on reserves and the final product

Pools are fed by to small ditches draining off surrounding land but occasionally area is flooded by salt water

On very rare occasions (this winter) a combination of high tides and excessive ground water means area is very flooded!



Repairs required!

MART

This project is working well with increased usage by wildfowl in panicular. To ensure further increase in the usage by waders we may have to graze with a combination of sheep and cattle to ensure the cattle puddle the edges of the pools and provide feeding areas for waders

Loch of the Lowes Osprey Species Protection Project





Ospreys have been breeding since 1969 at this site

Financial cutbacks meant we were relying on volunteers to provide 24 hour protection

This meant staff were working huge amounts of extra hours

SITA funded 2 Species Protection Officers

Only one nest?



Interest in osprey nests concentrated on this one site

Live footage goes out on website

Staff able to concentrate on other projects – 160hrs plus volunteers





























