

## WHAT IS AN ACTION PLAN?

### FORMAT

A Local Biodiversity Action Plan is an ongoing process rather than a Plan in the conventional sense. It allows us to ensure that nationally and locally important species and habitats are conserved and enhanced through focused local action.

This document contains the First Tranche of Habitat Action Plans. Further Habitat and Species Action Plans will be published in due course. Although there are, by necessity, variations within each of the Plans, most Plans will have the following information in a consistent format:

**INTRODUCTION/ DEFINITION** – the biological and physical features.

**CURRENT STATUS AND EXTENT OF HABITAT** – a description of the habitat within its national and local context, together with current and past distribution and extent in Tayside

**KEY SITES** – where applicable, the distribution and designated status (i.e. Site of Special Scientific Interest).

**NATURE CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE** – brief details of the species inter-dependant on the habitat.

**KEY SPECIES** – a list of associated species of UK Priority or a UK Species of Conservation Concern.

**NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY CONTEXT** - where appropriate UK objectives are listed when there is a UK Habitat Action Plan or Statement.

**ECOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT** – information about the ecology of the habitat.

**CURRENT FACTORS CAUSING LOSS OR DECLINE** – factors adversely affecting the habitat in a local, national and global context.

**MAIN THREATS TO KEY SPECIES** – brief information on some of the key species.

**OPPORTUNITIES AND CURRENT ACTION** – the action already underway to safeguard the habitat, together with potential actions that would benefit the habitat.

**OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS** – the goals and targets to be achieved.

**STAKEHOLDERS** – the audience to whom the Action Plan is relevant.

**ACTION FOR BIODIVERSITY (Actions Schedule)** – each Action has a Lead Partner and other Partners who have agreed to take the Action forward within the agreed timescale. Each of the separate Actions has been assigned a reference number which should be quoted in any correspondence.

A **Glossary** of all the technical terms and a list of **Acronyms** are given in the Appendices. The **References and Further Information** section includes a bibliography and a list of known web sites. Separate lists are given for the **Priority Species** and **Species of Conservation Concern** within Tayside.

A **Who's Who** listing for those involved in Tayside biodiversity is also included. By its very nature such a list will rapidly become out of date, but a revised list will be available from the Biodiversity Co-ordinator on request.

### HABITAT AND SPECIES PLAN PRODUCTION

Although the UK government signed the 'Convention on Biological Diversity' in 1992 and produced its UK Biodiversity Action Plan two years later, the local biodiversity process is a largely voluntary one.

The Action Plans have been written by members of the six Habitat Sub-Groups, namely Coasts and Estuaries, Farmland, Urban and Built Environment, Upland, Water and Wetland, and Woodland. The Sub-Groups include representatives from all the statutory bodies, local authorities, conservation organisations and stakeholders interested in a particular habitat. Membership of the Sub-Groups is flexible and new members are always most welcome.

The selection of which Habitat Action Plans to prepare was considered by each of the Sub-Groups. A Species Sub-Group was also set up to consider which Species Action Plans should be prepared. Several Species Interest Groups are being set up to prepare Plans and take specific actions forward. A Barn Owl Interest Group and a Hirundine Interest Group have been formed already and a Plants Group is currently being considered. Wildlife groups already active in the area such as the Tayside Badger Group, the county Bat Groups and the Squirrel Management Groups are all working with the LBAP to ensure Species Action Plans are prepared and existing projects and initiatives are linked with the Plans.

The scale of the task, together with the voluntary nature of the Sub-Groups, has shown that it is not possible to publish all Tayside's planned Plans in one Tranche. A list of those to follow in a second Tranche is given in Section Three.

Within Tayside it was agreed that the First Tranche of the LBAP would feature a set of Habitat Action Plans, with further HAPs and Species Action Plans following in a Second Tranche. The UK Priority habitats were used as a starting point and will be a common thread through the various Tranches that are ultimately produced. It is, however, the opportunity for each LBAP area to be innovative that is creating a fascinating matrix of different HAPs throughout Scotland.

The first 18 Habitat Action Plans produced for the Tayside LBAP include a mixture of Priority habitats outlined in the UK Action Plan, together with several that have yet to be introduced elsewhere.

## MONITORING AND REVIEW

### A Local Commitment to Biodiversity:Tayside

The Plans will be implemented by the Lead Partners and Partners listed against each of the Actions. The Sub-Groups will continue to monitor their effectiveness, review current projects and encourage new initiatives. As before, they will oversee the preparation of future Habitat and Species Action Plans and identify new Plans to be written.

It is intended that the relevant Sub-Group will review each Plan annually and that a regular report on the progress achieved by individual Action Plans will also be prepared by the Partnership. It is hoped that all aspects of the Plans will be reviewed in five years' time.

### Our National and International Commitment: UK and World-wide

One of the crucial aspects about the biodiversity process is that it sets measurable biological targets. By regularly assessing progress, we can use such targets to test the effectiveness of our actions for species and habitats. If the action we are taking is not working, we can re-assess it and perhaps try a different approach to the problem.

Regular reporting on all priority species and habitats enables the individual Country Biodiversity Groups, including the Scottish Biodiversity Forum, to assess which issues are affecting a wide range of Plans and where action at a policy level would be most effective.

A three-year reporting cycle for local biodiversity back to national level:

- allows continued assessment of the success of actions being taken for wildlife. Until now there has been no co-ordinated reporting for LBAPs. Nor have some UK priority species and habitats whose plans were published in 1999 yet been subject to any formal assessment.
- identifies any problems with implementing plans. Regular reporting with hard evidence will improve the chance of achieving our goals for wildlife.
- helps all those involved in the process, locally and nationally, to see what they are contributing to the conservation of UK biodiversity.
- gives each UK country the opportunity to report in a fully devolved way, looks at successes and challenges at a country level and develops solutions to problems that are appropriate for that country.
- improves communication and dissemination of information throughout the entire UK Biodiversity Partnership.
- gives us the opportunity to report to our international partners and to celebrate the contribution the UK is making to the Convention on Biological Diversity.
- enables us to report against the Government's 'Quality of Life' biodiversity indicator. If the extent of priority habitats expands and the decline of threatened species reduces, the 'biodiversity indicator' will be positive. If we fail in our biological targets the 'indicator' will be negative indicator and will highlight the need for improvement.

17

The information collected in the 2002 reporting round will be used to produce a concise UK report. All information will be made freely available on the UK Biodiversity Website.

In 2005 a more extensive reporting exercise is planned which will reflect the greater length of time since Plan publication, the greater likelihood of detecting biological change and the desire to assess, and where necessary, reset biological targets.