



TAYSIDE RECORDERS' BULLETIN March 2012

Welcome to the Fifth Tayside Recorders' Day

It is hard to believe that we are celebrating our 5th Recorders' Day in 2012. Perth Museum and Art Gallery hosted the event in 2008 and 2011 and in between the Forum visited both Dundee and Forfar. This year we are back in Dundee, this time at the McManus Galleries now run by Leisure & Culture Dundee. Many thanks to the Galleries for hosting the event.

Last year we welcomed over 40 participants who heard about the RSPB's Volunteer & Alliance Scheme's Farmland Bird Surveys and were brought up to date on the BTO Bird Atlas. Keith Ringland showed how he goes about photographing Perthshire's elusive mammals and then during lunch there was an opportunity to view the Hide & Seek exhibition featuring seven Perthshire photographers.

After lunch we focussed in on the 'small things of life', learning more about spiders and harvestmen in Tayside and the Orchard Lichen survey in the Carse of Gowrie. We were pleased to welcome one of the BTCV's Natural Talent apprentices who reported on her findings amongst Falkirk's brownfields. We then finished with an outline of Francis Buchanan White and the Perthshire Hemiptera. An additional get-together after tea and cakes enabled a very useful discussion on biological records and the planning system.

The annual Recorders' Day in 2012 will, we hope, again bring people together to discuss local interests and to keep in touch with one another. This year's meeting will include an update from SNH on Non-native species, the changes to legislation and the importance of biological recording, Dr Alison Blackwell's talk on Scottish Midges and an update on the invertebrate surveys undertaken last year from David Pryce of Perth Museum. Jonathan Willet from BRISC will introduce 'The National Dragonfly Survey: The Final Push' and the Small Blue Butterfly Survey will be formally launched at the event. There will be an update from the North East Biological Record Centre and a talk on Riverfly recording and the Anglers' Monitoring Initiative by Louis Kitchen of the Riverfly Partnership. McManus Galleries remains open until 5pm so there will be plenty of time to view the collections and network over a cup of tea and lunch.

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 is well used. All lists get out of date very quickly, so please check if your details, or your organisation's details, are correct (or worse, if we have inadvertently omitted you!), and please let us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 via caglloyd@pkc.gov.uk.

The Partnership also has a Facebook page - click "like" on "Tayside Biodiversity" to join.



Scottish Biodiversity Week: 19th to 27th May 2012



As before, events from across Scotland will be featured on a specific website:

<http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/biodiversity-scotland/biodiversity-week>.

Organisers of wildlife events can download and personalise posters and check communication guides to help promote and publicise events. Events forms can be downloaded from the website and resources such as PVC banners and bookmarks can be ordered. Further information is available from bit@snh.gov.uk.

International Day for Biological Diversity always takes place on 22nd May. This year's theme is "Marine Biodiversity" which we hope to publicise within Tayside. If you have any ideas on how we can do this, please contact Kelly Ann Dempsey, the Tayside Coast and Estuaries Working Group Leader on dempseyk@angus.gov.uk. Further details of the International Day can be downloaded from <http://www.cbd.int/idb/2012>. A Marine Biodiversity booklet will be available from this website in due course.

2012 Perth Museum News

The major project to curate and document the Francis Buchanan White Hemiptera (true bug) Collection is nearing completion. A total of 9,337 insects (4,209 British and 5,128 foreign) have been catalogued and curated; there are 933 identified species in total (443 from Britain and 547 from abroad). Just over 2,500 specimens have been identified for the first time and over 150 species added during the course of the research. The most important find was probably the two lost syntypes of *Chinacapsus wollastoni* from Madeira. Alfred Russell Wallace collected material for the collection in the Malay Archipelago (403 specimens) and J.W.H. Trail contributed 390 specimens from the Amazon. The collection still contains many unidentified species.

The foreign material is available to view on www.flickr.com/photos/perth_museum_and_art_gallery. A key project partner was the Natural History Museum in London. In the 1930s and 1950s about a third of the collection was presented to the NHM including the majority of the type specimens. Francis Buchanan White described 139 new species, 115 of which are in the collections at London and Perth - these are currently being imaged and will shortly be uploaded to the FLICKR site.

David provided a big boost to the museum fieldwork programme last year with his Bug Vac, a leaf blower modified to collect insects. The main fieldwork project was at Balnaguard Glen, a Scottish Wildlife Trust reserve with an extensive area of Juniper. Malaise and pitfall traps were in place from March to October and we would like to thank local resident, Peter Barr, who assisted with the regular sample collecting. So far over 500 species have been found, but this total will grow significantly as we receive species lists from specialists who are working the samples. An interesting find was the scarce northern lacewing *Hemerobius perelegans* (Notable A). Other field visits were made to orchard sites in the Carse of Gowrie, a lochan and forestry at Grandtully, and



we assisted in a community biodiversity audit with the Alyth Hill Users Group. Sadly, David Pryce, Entomology Officer, completes his contract at the end of March. The project was funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.



In other news, Museum volunteer Mike Sedakat has been assisting with a trial to rehydrate a spider collection from the 1890s. The specimens were dried out in old cork stoppered tubes and they had labels with dates & places of collections, mostly around Perth. The rehydration technique soaks the spiders overnight in sodium orthophosphate. The results have been excellent and spider specialist, Mike Davidson has been identifying and documenting the spiders.

We are currently working towards making our collections data available online on our website - this is expected to go live shortly.

Dinosaurs Unleashed is our latest exhibition at Perth Museum and features life-size dinosaurs and replica fossils. It is here until 5th May and admission is free. Also look out for the Carpow logboat. This 3,000 year old, nine metre long logboat was excavated from the Tay near Carpow and was carved from an oak trunk. It is on display from 19th March.

Mark Simmons, Principal Officer Natural History
Perth Museum & Art Gallery
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Dundee Museums and Art Galleries 2012 update

In June 2011 the Museum service became part of a new Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation: Leisure and Culture Dundee. We now report to a board of Trustees whose members are drawn from the council and local people. We have recently set up a stakeholders group from local individuals and organisations

We have instituted a programme of replacing old worn out specimens with new ones and have commissioned a number of new specimens including a Common seal and an Otter. We hope to finish our landscape and lives display with newly commissioned models this year.

We currently run a varied events programme including lunchtime gallery talks, behind the scenes tours of our Collections Unit, and themed weekend events and talks which include natural science topics. We have also organised events for teachers CPD. We hope to be involved again this year in partnership initiatives such as the Dundee Bioblitz and Dundee Science Festival. Last year we ran a



biodiversity roadshow, with the Hutton Institute and Dundee College, a science in Store tour and a Fantastic Fossils event.

We have two volunteers, one working on transferring information from the natural science day-books onto our collections database, improving collections documentation, the other is helping catalogue a shell collection. We are currently over-subscribed with potential volunteers. We are also embracing social media with a curators' post on the museum's Facebook page with stories and updates.

Currently we are working on several collections-based projects. We are completing high quality photographs of objects on display to enhance our on-line database. We have also completed a project on our mammal mounts and analysed the content of the collection (227 specimens). The project will allow us to plan for the development and management of the collection. One outcome of the project is to commission the mounting of new study skins, including squirrels. We have recently had an older specimen of a Walrus repaired and conserved.

We have started a new project on the conservation of the spirit collection. This will enable us to plan future conservation measures. Current priority is to acquire some more specialist storage cupboards.

The Collections Unit on Barrack Street houses the natural science collections, and interested parties are welcome to view or study the collections by appointment. We run regular behind the scenes tours and can arrange tours for special interest groups. As part of our improvements for public access we have also recently purchased a stereo microscope with a built in digital camera. We are also currently fitting out the public areas with study spaces and are re-organising the Natural Science Laboratory area, including replacing obsolete fume cupboards.

Biological records

Dundee Art Galleries and Museums Biological Records Collection - we continue to provide record searches for interested parties of the historical 'Naturebase' dataset held by the museum and covering Dundee and Angus and hope to offer new products and services in the future. Additions to this dataset will be made where the data available reflects or complements the museum's natural science collections.

The dataset consists of approximately 160,000 records collected between 1830 and 2002, collected mostly from Dundee and Angus. The data mainly reflects the institutional priorities and academic interests of past museum staff, with staff recording over half of the records collected. Other records originate from external surveys and ad-hoc record submissions from volunteer recorders.

The taxon group breakdown of the dataset is as follows: Higher plants - 30% / Birds - 26% / Insects - 26% / Other - 18%. We now have a standard response for data requests and although the data is outdated there is evidence that this information is still all that exists for some sites.

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Angus Museums

Angus Museums' Cultural Services maintains seven museums in Arbroath, Brechin, Forfar, Kirriemuir and Montrose. Each has a unique flavour, reflecting the different characters of the burgh towns 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. The Montrose Natural History Collection reflects the natural history of Montrose and of Angus and this is shown in the large and extensive natural history collection displayed in the museum.

Almost all of the creatures which live around Angus, some encouraged, some discouraged are displayed here in several displays each of which reflects a habitat from the coastal rocky and sandy shores, through arable and woodland habitats to the very different highland areas. Along with many examples of invertebrates and plants the natural history collection displays many fine specimens of birds and mammals including the Skylark, Grey Partridge, Stoat, Weasel, Kestrel, Brown Hare, Rook, and the Carrion Crow.

Check www.angus.gov.uk for opening times and details of Ranger events throughout Angus.

Small Blue Butterfly and Kidney Vetch Survey

The feisty and charismatic Small Blue butterfly is the focus of a project beginning this year in Angus. This is a priority species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan which has suffered a significant contraction in range over recent decades, primarily in England. Looking further back in time it once had colonies in many places on the Scottish coast; all of those on the west have been lost, together with some on the east coast. A project to reintroduce the Small Blue is currently underway at Gales Marsh in Ayrshire.

There is still a scattering of colonies along the Angus coast and the project is initially aimed at getting accurate pictures of the current distribution of the butterfly and of its sole caterpillar foodplant, Kidney Vetch.

Steps will be taken to ensure that the right people are informed of the presence of the butterfly and its importance at a national level - landowners, coastal path and other site managers, planning authorities - and guidance will then be provided on good habitat management. Hopefully there will be opportunities to encourage the spread of the species by extending areas of suitable habitat and ensuring that these can be accessed from existing colonies.

Working with the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership will be Butterfly Conservation East Scotland branch, Angus Council Ranger Service and the Scottish Wildlife Trust, but it is most important that we recruit enough volunteers to carry out the survey work during the period May to July, starting *this year*. You don't need to be an expert to help as guidance will be provided from the team running the project. Kidney Vetch is easy to identify when it's in flower and the Small Blues are not an ID problem, but locating them often is!

The project launch will be at the Recorders' Forum Day. A survey postcard will be available and everyone will be encouraged to submit records. Further details of the project will be available via



www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk and on the BC East Scotland branch website www.eastscotland-butterflies.org.uk. To find out more and to get involved with the projects you can contact either Craig Borland, Angus Council Ranger Service: [BorlandC@angus.gov.uk](mailto:borlandc@angus.gov.uk) or Catherine Lloyd, Tayside Biodiversity Co-ordinator: caglloyd@pkc.gov.uk.



© Iain Cowe

This butterfly is a key species in the Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan and it also captures some important aspects of what Butterfly Conservation is all about. It lives in wild, uncultivated places, is often reluctant to stray far from its origin, can easily be overlooked, doesn't come into gardens (so people just don't see it much) and so it is threatened by changes to the countryside which may unwittingly destroy the habitats it needs. At the same time, there are real opportunities to raise awareness of this beautiful little butterfly and to reverse its decline through projects such as this.

Barry Prater barry@prater.myzen.co.uk
Butterfly Conservation East Scotland

Tayside Biodiversity Partnership Update

The Partnership has been busy in the past year with its revamp of membership. With funding for the Co-ordinator now only coming from Angus and Perth & Kinross Councils, changes have taken place on the Management Team to reflect this. A new Forum was set up last autumn and will meet just twice a year from now on - everyone is welcome to be part of the new Forum and we are happy to add you to our mailing list.

The next meeting of the Forum will be in Forfar on 28th March when we will be welcoming Roddy Farley from SNH Dumfries to discuss the updating of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and how best Local Biodiversity Partnerships can link in to the national strategy. Mike Strachan of the Forestry Commission will also be outlining the proposed Ecosystem Focus Areas.

The Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan will be reviewed during 2013 once the revised Scottish Biodiversity Strategy is published. This will enable local targets to take into consideration national targets. If you would like to attend the Forum meeting at the end of March please contact the Co-ordinator direct at caglloyd@pkc.gov.uk.

There will be a Forum seminar at Battleby (still t.b.c.) on 24th November 2012; further details will be given on www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk in due course, but the seminar will focus on



“biodiversity and community action”. In addition, to highlight the continuing success of the SITA Tayside Biodiversity Action Fund, there will be a Reception and presentations given in May on the many projects that have gone ahead with this landfill tax funding.

The most important change to the Partnership is the fact that the sub-groups are now re-named “Working Groups” as they are taking forward the 60+ projects across Tayside. They meet regularly across Tayside and new members are very welcome. If you would like more information about the Working Groups, or to be added as a member (‘consultee’ members 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	Craig Borland	BorlandC@angus.gov.uk
Woodland	Mike Strachan	Mike.strachan@forestry.gsi.gov.uk
Water and Wetland	Ian Lorimer	Ian.Lorimer@sepa.org.uk
People & Communications	Martyn Jamieson	Martyn.jamieson.kd@field-studies-council.org
Species Interest Groups	Leader	Contact:
Swift	Daniele Muir and Craig Borland	DMuir@pkc.gov.uk ; BorlandC@angus.gov.uk
Sand Martin	Ian Ford	ianford0705@btinternet.com
Small Blue Butterfly	Barry Prater	barry@prater.myzen.co.uk

SITA Tayside Biodiversity Action Fund

It is likely the SITA TBAF will come to an end in March 2013 when landfill tax monies are subsumed into the Scottish Government budget. We are hoping there will be a delay in agreeing this and that monies will be available beyond 2013. In the meantime, grants (from £500 to several thousand pounds) are still available for the remaining period.

Application guidelines can be downloaded from the funding menu on www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk and further advice is available from the Co-ordinator or Perth & Kinross Grants Direct. Applications are welcome from organisations wishing to carry out projects within the Angus and Perth & Kinross Council areas; survey work is not, unfortunately, funded per se, but if it leads to practical habitat projects, it can be included.

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 included of local events or specific training opportunities, please forward information to cagllloyd@pkc.gov.uk.



Help Needed!

As local authorities, housing associations and private care homes start to change their grassland management in public parks, graveyards and private grounds to favour cost-savings, there is an urgent need for surveyors to check the ongoing changes. Without baseline information on what there is before the changes take place there is a worry that a waxcap lawn may be converted to a wildflower meadow, or the timing of a “hay cut” will wipe out orchids or late-flowering species. The Ranger Services can continue to help in a small way, but with ever-tightening budgets (and more projects being discussed) there is an urgent need to draw up a list of potential surveyors who can ‘adopt’ a local area and report back their findings.

If anyone can help, please contact cagloyd@pkc.gov.uk or in Angus: borlandc@angus.gov.uk, in Dundee: david.lampard@leisureandculturedundee.com or in Perth & Kinross: MJSimmons@pkc.gov.uk.

Braes of Gowrie Lichen Survey

As part of the Tayside Green Graveyard Initiative, Perth & Kinross Council (with match funding from the SITA Tayside Biodiversity Action Fund) undertook a churchyard lichen survey in 2011. Over seven sites, 176 lichen species were recorded, plus 15 lichenicolous fungi. These include two Nationally rare and 27 Nationally scarce, one Near Threatened species and 2 new British records (including *Sclerococcum Tephromelarum*).

Each churchyard provided some species not found in any of the others. Only Kinnaird Churchyard broke the 100 barrier with 115 lichen species recorded, plus 7 lichenicolous fungi. This includes 17 Nationally scarce species and 2 new British records for lichenicolous species.



Both photos © John Douglass (L) lichenologist Paul Harrold photographing a headstone at Abernyte Churchyard during the Scottish Churchyard Lichen Group's field visit, summer 2011; (R) *Tephromela atra* on a sandstone headstone, Kinnaird Churchyard.

The resulting lichen survey report included recommendations on the future management of the churchyard lichens. A second phase of the project is being led by the Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust which is undertaking a large-scale HLF project throughout Perthshire. Additional funding from the SITA TBAF is again enabling lichen and bryophyte surveys to be undertaken, this time in North-East Perthshire.



A Living Churches Seminar is planned on 7th September (in Perth) which will highlight both the cultural and biodiversity aspects of the projects. A full-day lichen identification workshop will follow on 8th September at Kirkton of Collace, Perthshire.

For further details of the workshop or to see a copy of the Braes of Gowrie Lichen Report, please contact caglloyd@pkc.gov.uk.

Barn Owls in Tayside

Carol Littlewood continues to collect and collate Barn Owl sightings for Tayside and maintains the map showing the range of Barn Owls in the area. Recent hard winters have taken their toll on the population, but confirmation that the nestboxes are being used throughout the project area is heartening. We are hopeful of a large-scale Nestbox project being launched later this year, focussing on key areas in Angus.

Supplies of the “Have you Seen a Barn Owl?” postcard are available from the biodiversity office: these would be useful to leave in rural libraries, post offices, pubs or local shops. If you can help distribute these, please contact Carol direct at carol@littlewoodlandcare.co.uk. There is an online survey form at www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk.

Swift Survey

Can you spare just one hour during a July evening to look to the skies? If so, please join in the Tayside Swift Survey. If you can act as a Local Survey Co-ordinator to encourage others to join in the swift survey - even better! Please contact the Swift Interest Group leaders as soon as possible - Craig Borland: borladc@angus.gov.uk or Daniele Muir: DMuir@pkc.gov.uk. Posters, survey forms and further information are available on request. Sightings can be added to the online survey at www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk.

The swift survey information is being added to the local authority planning departments’ GIS. Tayside’s Manual for Planners and Developers includes a Biodiversity Advice Note on how to mitigate for swifts in building renovation projects (the Manual and Advice Notes can be downloaded from www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk). The “dots on map” idea is now proving to be helpful in knowing where to focus surveys: we still need to find if the gaps on the map are due to a lack of survey work or a lack of swifts. The 2012 focus will be on Upland Tayside, particularly in the Angus Glens, and on the Carse of Gowrie. If you can help with either of these areas, please let us know as soon as possible.

Sand Martin Survey

Smaller scale than the swift survey, we would still appreciate knowing where you first see sand martins or their nesting sites. Again, there is an online survey form to complete on www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk.

Catherine Lloyd
Tayside Biodiversity Co-ordinator
Tayside Biodiversity Partnership
Tel. 01738 475373
www.tayside.biodiversity.co.uk



The Scottish Biodiversity Information Forum (SBIF)

Scottish Natural Heritage is currently in the process of facilitating the set up of a Scottish Biodiversity Information Forum (SBIF). This opportunity arose in response to a Government e-Petition lodged by Biological Recording in Scotland (BRISC). The SBIF is based on the successful Welsh Environmental Information Forum which has been running since 2008.

The SBIF will be a community led forum which brings together stakeholders from organisations actively involved in the collection, management, sharing or use of species or habitat data both in the terrestrial and marine environment.

The primary aim of SBIF will be to collectively identify and tackle challenges that could inhibit a comprehensive and readily accessible supply of quality-assured biodiversity data in Scotland. SNH will invite organisations from all relevant sectors to join, and help establish, the forum. This will include academia, Government, local authorities, local and national schemes and societies, local record centres, museums and collections, national parks, research institutes and private consultancies.

A questionnaire will be available in March, with a deadline for returns of 18 April. This will allow six weeks to consult with colleagues and complete the questionnaire. Results will be distributed, to all those who responded, on 30 April. The new Forum will meet towards the end of May to take things further. It will then actively pursue challenges relating specifically to species and habitat data and will ensure that the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) is fully involved.

Further details are available from Claire Seymour, Policy & Advice Officer/Data Manager at SNH - Tel. 01463 725311; e-mail: SBIF@snh.gov.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.brisec.org.uk Biological Recording in Scotland

www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk Tayside Biodiversity Partnership

www.scottishgeology.com Scottish Geology

