



TAYSIDE BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

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Tayside Invertebrate Project Meeting

Notes of Meeting held on 1st July 2009

Perth Museum

Present:	Mark Simmons (MS)	Perth Museum
	Craig MacAdam (CM)	Buglife Scotland
	David Lampard (DL)	McManus Galleries, Dundee
	Skye Bancroft (SB)	University of Dundee (placement)
	Fergus Cook (FC)	Perth & Kinross Ranger Service
	David Williamson (DW)	Perth & Kinross Parks
	Trefor Woodford (TW)	SCRI (retired), moth recorder
	Catherine Lloyd (CL)	Tayside Biodiversity Partnership
	Iain Campbell (IC) - minute taker	Tayside Biodiversity Partnership

Apologies: Anne-Marie Smout, BRISC; Paul Kirkland, Butterfly Conservation Scotland

1. Setting the Scene

CM proposed that discussion should include what type, size and so on of project Tayside can hold and what the practicalities of this are. **CL** noted that there is a lot of information coming in, and that much work is already underway - the Green Graveyard Initiative is moving forward with all three local authorities, most extensively in Perth & Kinross. The Orchards project is most active in the Carse of Gowrie, but Fred Conacher is moving it forward in Angus with a large school orchard project, and there are moves to promote orchards elsewhere in Tayside. Both habitat-based projects have potential to include an invertebrate focus that could be Tayside wide. Funding information is not yet known, but Paul Kirkland at Butterfly Conservation (BC) is interested, as are SWT and Buglife, with potential to use Tayside as a pilot project for a wider network.

2. Round the Table Update on Existing National and Tayside Projects/Surveys

CM introduced the Strategy for Scottish Invertebrate Conservation, which moves towards pulling together the views of entomologists across Scotland in terms of species, habitat, and support mobilisation.

FC reported on Perth Academy pupils' work surveying graveyards.

DL reported on the network of recorders in place under BC's National Moth Survey, and discussed Dundee's Nature Base, a collection of insect records from the 1970s till 2000. He continues to receive casual recordings, but does not have the resources to computerise the data. **CM** asked if the Nature Base database was still available, **DL** replied that it was, but can only output a basic data list - no detailed analysis is available. **CM** noted that this information could be useful for targeting species for workshops and other events and projects. **DL** also reported on BC's Millennium Butterfly Atlas, which they are looking to update. Having looked at the sites surveyed they have noticed that many major sites have not been investigated.

DL discussed areas of focus, such as the Mountain Bumblebee, and also noted that as there are core targets in looking for moths, for example there are some species which may be present but have not been looked for. **DL** also opened the idea of raising the profile of McManus Galleries and its contact with the public, which has fallen during its redevelopment - this could take place through related activities and events.

SB reported on the revision of the Tayside Recorders contact list which will also include contact details for relevant organisations and so on. This will be featured on the TBP website in due course and be part of a "Tayside Recorders" page within the TBP website.

DW reported on the trialling of meadow areas in parks involving the creation of grassland habitat. The local authority is working with eco-schools and there are links with the Green Graveyard project.

MS noted that Perth Museum has a large insect collection, but it is underused, has not been involved in a lot of research, curation or study over the last 20 years, and is not catalogued or listed. **MS** also reported on ongoing invertebrate projects, noting that a funding application to the Esmee Fairburn Foundation had been made to employ an entomologist for 18 months to work with the *Hemiptera* collection, as put together by Francis Buchanan White in the 19th century. The project proposal involves working with experts at the Natural History Museum with a small public element involving bug hunts, a fun day at the museum, and a small exhibition, although the cataloguing aspect is given primacy.

ACTION: MS TO CONFIRM TIMING OF POSSIBLE PUBLIC EVENT

MS also noted that a Tayside wide project could help add clarity to ongoing field work projects, such as those involving aquatic invertebrates in North Inch ponds. Most current projects are very small and **MS** does not have the capacity to do a lot more himself, although some sites, such as Kingoodie Quarry, have council interest behind their study. **MS** hoped to move forward with looking for rare species that are known or thought to be present in certain areas - 5-Spot ladybirds, Slender Striped Rufous moths, and mud snails among them. **MS** also discussed the museum's work with SWT's scientific sub-committee botany recording sites in which field meetings involving the incorporation of invertebrate study were attempted, but problems were caused by there being no experts involved - the events were neither surveys nor training events. SWT restructuring ended this project.

TW reported on ongoing hymenoptera and diptera surveys at Seaton Cliffs. Additionally, **TW** noted that light trap insect surveys involving micromoths and other insects are taking place in the Carse of Gowrie. The Carse is also the site of surveys linked to its orchard history and revitalisation.

DL further noted that the RSPB are keen for surveys of their reserves, such as the Tay Reedbeds - **CM** noted that there was a survey here around 20 years ago, **MS** adding that there may have been a small update survey more recently.

3. Proposed Orchards Bug Poster (Buglife Scotland / TBP)

CM introduced a poster produced by Buglife in England - a leaflet opening out to a poster on one side with information on species and habitat, including importance and management, on the reverse. **CM** and **CL** had already discussed the potential for doing something similar for orchards, with a graveyard version also being a possibility. **CL** noted that traditional orchards are now included in the UKBAP. **CM** reported that costs would be around £5,000 including design, writing and printing. **CL** added that the design is good for educational purposes but also features enough information to be useful for orchard owners and professionals. **CM** noted, however, that as we don't know what is in our orchards - something that **TW** noted English orchards have the advantage of - a survey would be required first. **CL** suggested starting in England, and having a Scottish version as Phase II of the project. **CM** further added that the Brownfield poster is not restricted to invertebrates - there is the scope to include plants and other aspects while still focussing on insects. **CL** confirmed there was already an interest being shown in orchard lichens.

CL asked if there was any information on the 22-Spot ladybird; **MS** reported that nothing more has been seen, and considered there being a connection to orchards. **TW** further added that Scotland's biggest orchard in the 19th century was by Errol - **CM** noted that a number of beetles and other insects have been recorded and linked to fruit trees. **DL** reported on BC looking at links to historic varieties of fruit tree with potential for the Carse of Gowrie to be involved in projects other than the orchards project. **TW** noted that the Bumblebee Conservation Trust (BBCT) in Worcestershire has been looking at canopy pollination in tall trees - **CL** added that the TBP's Bumblebee survey is continuing, with all data going to the BBCT.

ACTION: CM TO LOOK INTO FUNDING FOR ORCHARD POSTER

4a. Invertebrate Surveys in Tayside: The Way Forward

MS reported that currently individuals are moving work forward, with little in the way of schemes. **CM** suggested targeting some species records, with there being, for example, interesting but little-investigated information on glow worms. **DL** noted that the boundary with Angus can be difficult to work over, with **MS** replying that a project presented as Tayside-wide could help with such issues. **TW** noted that Fife was well documented, and asked if anywhere else was - **CL** responded that Fife is ahead, and that as there is a Tayside & Fife group with the orchard project sharing information it could be possible to look into working with them. **DL** noted that NESBREc are running training days with only a little funding, and **CM** added that Buglife offered an introduction to invertebrates workshop, which was very successful. **TW** further noted that invertebrate study can be intimidating to beginners, with **CM** adding the problems involved with the 'Complete British Insects' guide listing 1,500 of 50,000 species.

CM put forward two levels of survey, with the first involving experts and the second bringing in members of the public - this will add to knowledge while bringing in new people. **TW** asked how members of the public are involved in surveying - **DW** replied that it in Perth parks studies it is generally through photographs. **TW** also asked about a proposed relaxation of graveyard management - **DW** replied that this is a recent decision, but no action has taken place yet, but that 24 sites, usually older sites not in general use, have been identified. **CL** hoped that this could be moved forward into a public invertebrate survey, **DL** adding that good work surveying lichens had been done in graveyards in England. **CL** said the Edinburgh Botanic Gardens lichenologists and Plantlife Scotland were keen to run a Tayside pilot project for lichens.

4b. Site-Specific Surveys

TW noted that there is very interesting habitat in Tayside with specialists to be found in unusual areas - but there are probably no records existing. SWT designated local nature conservation sites up to 2000, with plant surveys done and other information gathered, but this has stopped and Angus Planning does not recognise the SWT designations. It might be useful to look at these sites again to see if they would be of interest.

CM suggested a Phase I survey for certain areas of Tayside - **MS** recommended starting with very small areas. **DL** noted that there are some Angus Wildlife Site surveys through SWT which would be useful having digitised into a GIS layer.

MS noted that the lists are held by SWT so they may be able to provide assistance. Wildlife Sites do not appear to be on the agenda at present - **TW** added that no one is in post to deal with them. **CM** recommended looking particularly at high quality woodland, ponds, and upland sites. **MS** further noted that guidance on Wildlife Sites give local authorities a major role, with **CL** adding that the authorities are not viewing them as a priority - it is thought that they have recently been dropped from local plans. **DL** added that the Dundee Naturalists Society have reported that dens, such as the Den of Airlie (which, **TW** added, was previously an NNL but is no longer designated as such), are not kept to the same standards they were previously. **DL** reported SSSI designation of geodiverse sites, with lack of resources meaning that sites of equal importance to SSSIs are not being designated.

ACTION: TW AND DL TO FOLLOW UP SWT RE. WILDLIFE SITES

5. Proposed BioBlitz, Dundee (Tayside Biodiversity Festival - May 2010)

CL put forward that BioBlitz has to be split into two aspects - experts and public. **DL** brought up the issue of sites, suggesting an area like Caird Park which would be large enough for marquees etc, and could link in with Dundee Rangers who currently do much in the way of educational events but little recording. **DL** also suggested working with the Broughty Ferry Environmental Group - who have just appointed a Dighty Connect Project Officer. **CL** added that the new project will be both biodiversity and culture oriented; it already has funding. **CM** added that it would be useful to see what SEPA has done on the Dighty and try to infill gaps in survey. **CM** also reported on a BioBlitz in Motherwell in which over 500 species were recorded despite bad weather, and added that Historic Scotland have offered full use of Holyrood Park for a BioBlitz this year. **FC** asked what kind of people are involved in these events, **CM** replied that at the Motherwell event people had been asked to come along from SWT, BC, RSPB etc, but that advertising in future will be as public events.

CL suggesting looking into how this could publicise McManus Galleries, **DL** replied that if McManus is reopened for February or March of 2010 they would be able to dedicate time to it, and further suggested looking for assistance from Dundee Conservation Volunteers and John Whyman, the Greenspace Officer at DCC. **CL** recommended holding the BioBlitz in May, to coincide with Tayside Biodiversity Festival, with **DL** adding that the end of May would be best.

CM noted that 24 hours is the standard BioBlitz time, but there can also be mini-blitzes - **CL** suggested 12 hour blitzes from either 10am-10pm or from noon to midnight. The recent Scotia Seeds event was in the form of a mini-blitz, and had a good turnout despite bad weather. **FC** asked what the age group involved was, **CM** replied that there was a full range of people. It was agreed that preliminary organisational work should begin soon.

ACTION: DL TO LIAISE WITH DAVID HUGHES, DUNDEE URBAN RANGER AND DEBBIE LOCHHEAD, DIGHTY CONNECT

6a. Tayside Recorders' Forum

CL reported that the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership's website is being revised this summer which would enable geodiversity and recorders' forum pages to be highlighted. **SB** added that she has started getting in touch with recorders regarding having their contact details listed, in order to ensure a willingness to be contacted by the general public, with **DL** noting that efforts will be made to ensure that spam will not reach those listed. **TW** asked if there was a local spider expert; **DL** replied that Mike Davis is reforming the Grampian Spider Group.

CL added that once the forum page is set up there will be many opportunities to look into - it will help with filling gaps in the system, which NESBREc will also be able to assist with. **CM** added that the ISI strategy looks for gaps nationwide, and added that it would be useful to run a workshop in this area, and that Field Studies Council guides on endangered species would be useful here.

CL asked what Buglife would like Tayside to achieve - **CM** replied that Tayside as a partnership can get people interested, and help pass through stages of public involvement - having experts finding important sites, bringing people from general knowledge to a higher level, getting a spider recorder and so on. It would be good to have someone to unify records and be available to look into areas of interest. **CM** also added that here a Tayside Invertebrate Group would help move things forward - **DL** added that it is hoped that McManus will be able to work with this. **CL** suggested that initially running workshops, training days and so on could be a good step forward, with **CM** adding that the Bees, Wasps & Ants Recording Society had an event involving first a day at the museum in Edinburgh followed by work on sites around Fife using the knowledge gained at the museum. Similar events have taken place in Glasgow, and worked well.

MS noted that surveys often have 100-150 records and then tail off - it seems that these kind of projects are difficult to sustain - as such it may be better to have a relatively small and focused group that can work together in moving their expertise up to a higher level. **CM** noted that there is the problem of having no record centre and as such an Invertebrate Group would be useful in involving people who are now taking on apprenticeships, allowing them to mentor others etc. - it

would be good to have rangers with a wide base of knowledge.

DL asked how the Highland Recorders' Group works - **MS** replied that they have a records centre. They would make a good model, but are currently far ahead. **CM** added that despite this they still have just a few central figures. **MS** noted the trouble of working with groups and professionals, which allow a good starting point but create barriers later in the process.

MS suggested having invertebrates as the theme for the 2010 Recorders' Forum meeting.

ACTION: MB AND SB TO EXPLORE POTENTIAL SPEAKERS/SUBJECTS

DL noted that individuals are doing much of the work here but **CM** added that it would be easy to get some groups involved - such as gardeners and anglers. **DL** noted that the Suffolk Organic Gardening Society got involved in wildlife, and **CM** added that the Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society are interested. **DL** suggested putting together a list of interested participants.

ACTION: CL / IC / SB TO COMPILE LIST

CL noted that the first ZOOM project involved bumblebees and the ongoing ZOOM In2 project involves photography, and suggested the potential to link a future 2010 project to invertebrates.

CL suggested coordinating the survey across Tayside through rangers - with **MS** recommending using the TBP Education sub-group to aide communication.

CM noted that Scotia Seeds are now keen to use their site for events and training workshops, and **CL** added that they want to hold a similar Field Day event next year. **CM** noted that workshops on understudies groups at Kindrogan Field Study Centre are also being looked into.

DL also reported on the military camp at Barry Buddon, by Carnoustie, which once a year allows unrestricted access for natural historians - this is a site of particular interest due to, among other things, uncontrolled sand dunes and records of smooth newt.

6b. Group Membership and Public Interest

DL noted that the Dundee Naturalists Society are struggling to recruit members with **FC** noting a general problem of groups having an older membership base with few new recruits. **TW** added that people's interest tends to begin to fade after primary school and only re-emerges at retirement. **DL** added, however, that there has been more involvement from the middle-aged group in recent years.

CM asked if there was a university environment group; **CL** responded that there is, and **DL** reported on the bat walk around the campus and suggested a biodiversity survey of the campus - they have a large mailing list. There is also the SCRI mailout - but **TW** noted that SCRI has become so specialised that general interest people are falling away. They do, however, run their Living Field Studies Centre which is open to all ages.

CM noted that there is interest in the area, but it is generally a superficial one - people will take photos of invertebrates but then delve no deeper - and it would be good to try to capitalise on and expand this superficial interest. **CM** noted that the oil beetle recording scheme could be of use here.

ACTION: CM TO EXPLORE POTENTIAL FOR OIL BEETLE SURVEY

TW noted that Buglife is doing well, but is still far behind the RSPB. **DW** asked if people in schools are involved rather than just interested; **FC** said that they are generally not, and there is also the problem of bringing in young people when the majority of those involved are older. **MS** added that young people tend to be involved individually and are less interested in joining groups, and that it would be good to tap into this mentality. **FC** noted that at a recent site consultation few people were at the sessions, but there were many website hits - a greater focus on internet publicity may be wise - **DW** suggested blogs and forums. **MS** noted that there is a bug group on Flickr, but this is among sites that PKC blocks - this is a general problem for making use of the internet. **FC** suggested that council employees who cannot access such sites try to set aside time to work with a non-council computer. **DL** added that the Scottish Moths Yahoo group is mostly

specialists, but there are many blogs etc.

ACTION: ALL TO CONSIDER WAY FORWARD FOR BLOGS & FORUMS

TW discussed local community involvement and interest, with Abernhyte Heritage Group receiving a grant from the Springwatch fund for birdboxes as an example. **DL** suggested looking into the development of individual sites with community group involvement, and also tying work in to the rise of single interest groups. **TW** added that local authorities tend to be interested in empowering community groups. **DL** raised the question of whether community groups know what resources are available to them.

7. Funding

MS raised the point of SITA TBAF funding; **CL** reported that it is still £100,000 a year continuing next year, with a hope that it can continue beyond this. It rarely covers survey work, only site management etc. - habitat enhancement etc. must be made clear on the application. **DL** noted that SNH have provided funding in the past, with **CL** adding that SNH largely provides small sums - up to £250 - for community projects. **CL** noted that the Bat Survey had been funded as it was site specific, and **CM** suggested looking in to important sites for invertebrates. **DL** asked if local authorities were allowed to access lottery funding - **CM** believes that they are, and added that there is also European funding available through LEADER.

As applications have to relate to UKBAP listings, **CM** also suggested looking into UKBAP listed invertebrates in Tayside, with SNH records and old site records being potentially useful here. **DL** noted that orchards are now on the habitat list, with **CM** adding that brownfields are too - **CL** suggested that it would be worth looking at habitat, discussing with the landowner, and trying to move ahead - with small areas initially.

8. Next Steps / Action Summary

MS noted the necessity of starting small, and is to confirm timing of possible public event involving Perth Museum's insect collection.

CM is to look into funding for the orchard poster, and added that he will put together a list, look into sites that will cover a wide range of species etc, and highlight areas of particular interest. **TW** and **DL** to follow up SWT regarding wildlife sites

CL suggested keeping open the potential for mini-blitzes across Tayside, but to focus attention on a Dundee event towards the end of the 2010 Tayside Biodiversity Festival. **DL** recommended park rangers, BFEP etc. sharing a site, with **CM** noting that BC etc would be involved too - coming together for an open day on a site could be a good start. **DL** is to liaise with David Hughes, Dundee Urban Ranger, BC, and Debbie Lochhead, Dighty Connect.

DL noted that rangers begin to put events together in January. **CL** recommended concentrating on the Recorders' Forum - with **MS** and **SB** to explore potential speakers and subjects for the 2010 Recorders' Forum meeting - including offering workshops and publicising organisations' events.

DL further recommended working with Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board, **CM** adding that anglers could get involved through them. **CL**, **IC** and **SB** to work on compiling a list of potential participants.

CM noted that it is little things - beetles under stones and so on - that get people interested, and this is something that has to be capitalised on. **CM** is to explore the potential for an oil beetle survey.

CL added that a snappy project (survey) title would be useful, and **ALL** are to consider the way forward for blogs, forums and other internet ways of utilising the internet.