



SCOTTISH LOWLANDS BARN OWL FORUM

c/o Tayside Biodiversity Partnership, Pullar House, 35 Kinnoull Street, Perth. PH1 5GD
Tel. 01738 475273 e-mail: tayside.biodiversity@ukf.net Website: www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk

*The Forum currently covers the LBAP areas of
Tayside (Perth & Kinross, Dundee, Angus), Stirling, Clacks, and Fife*

Notes of Meeting held on Wednesday, 20th September 2006 **Vane Farm Nature Reserve, By Kinross**

Present:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Catherine Lloyd (CL) | Tayside Biodiversity Partnership (TBP) |
| Carol Littlewood (CL-w) | Angus Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) |
| Christine Hall (CH) | Scottish Agricultural College (Perth) |
| Shirley Paterson (SP) | Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (Fife & Kinross) |
| Julie Horsburgh (JH) | Fife Biodiversity Partnership |
| Mark Oksien (MO) | Fife Barn Owl Monitor |
| Willie Irvine (WI) | Fife Barn Owl Monitor |
| Mike Steward (MS) | Central Scotland Barn Owl Monitor |
| Martin Dean (MD) | Clackmannanshire Ranger Service |
| Elsbeth Christie (EC) | Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (Vane Farm) |
| Chris Waddell (CW) | Stirling Biodiversity Partnership |

Apologies

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Richard Lockett | Perth FWAG |
| Scott Nisbet | Central Scotland FWAG |
| Keith Cohen | Barn Owl Conservation Network (Fife Local Adviser) |

Notes also circulated to: Norman Elkins, British Trust for Ornithology (Fife Representative); Richard Paul, BTO (Perthshire); Les Hatton, Tay Ringing Group; Scottish Ornithological Society (Edinburgh); Alan Leitch, RSPB; Mark Simmons, Perth Museum; Angus Ranger Service; Dundee Ranger Service; Perth & Kinross Ranger Service; Fife Ranger Service; SNH (Battleby and Airlie); Forestry Commission (Perth); National Trust for Scotland (Dunkeld office); Helen Dunlop, Business Environment Partnership (Dalkeith), Fiona McIntyre, Scottish Golf Environment Group (Dalkeith).

1. Notes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising

It was agreed there were no matters arising that would not be covered in the current Agenda.

2. Project Co-ordination

JH proposed that the group consider which tasks would be carried out by whom. She agreed to act as the project funding co-ordinator and suggested that CL continued as Chair/Secretary of the Forum. As the project splits into the four LBAP areas it was also agreed that local project co-ordinators would continue to be: JH – Fife; CL – Tayside; CW – Stirling. As Louise Bond has left, MD agreed to take over in Clackmannanshire. EC would be the overall Education co-ordinator.

3.1 Work Programme

JH reminded everyone that as the deadline for the next BAGS claim will be 1st February, all claims and in-kind claims need to be forwarded to her by mid-January 2007. In-kind claims can include volunteer time and development time.

Action – JH to circulate in-kind claim form by e-mail

JH confirmed that a species distribution map had been obtained from the Record Centre; she will circulate it to all those involved in the Fife project. MO confirmed that he has not passed on his own records to ensure confidentiality. MS said that he passes his records to the Raptor Study Group who log all barn owl information. Details are not forwarded to SNH, again because of Freedom of Information issues.

CH pointed out that it was useful to record barns for planning purposes as pre-knowledge of a barn used by barn owls can be helpful when planning applications are lodged. CL-w said that the Farm Building Development Scheme (FBDS) liaises with FWAG to ensure biodiversity is taken into account in new projects. A knowledge of which barns are already in use would enable a proactive response as regards potential barn owl ledges incorporated into renovation work or the erection of an alternative nestbox nearby.

Action: ALL - comments welcome as to the best way forward

CH said that increasing use of the Quality Assurance Schemes are likely to become an issue as one of the criteria is to make the barns bird-proof. WI said that the same situation arises in distillery grain stores. There is an opportunity for planners, new agricultural building suppliers and farmers to work towards a solution, perhaps to in-build a barn owl box which excludes access to the interior of the building. MS also pointed out that although recent statistics confirm 70% of barn owls choose indoor sites in preference to nestboxes on trees, alternative places for indoor boxes need to be researched (the nestboxes also last longer inside).

Action: ALL to look for opportunities to work with planners and developers on this issue

3.2 Progress Reports

Fife

Match-funding is being sought for extra farm visits and school projects. BAGS will fund 10 farm visits in the first year, plus a farm event. A potential camera project for the Kingdom Shopping Centre in Glenrothes is also being costed; JH and MO taking forward. WI suggested that as a follow up to the camera project, a pre-recorded video could be taken into schools to raise awareness.

Kinross

SP has 3 farm visits planned already. She is concentrating on known barn owl hotspots.

MO is giving advice. 44 barn owls have been ringed since 1997 – they can disperse quite widely: one ringed bird from Balloch turned up in Blackford. Other Central Scotland birds have found their way to Forfar and Dumfries & Galloway. MS confirmed that it was very obvious that 90-95% of barn owls are found in the “lowland” area, although climate change is increasing the heights the species is now found to 300m, instead of 200m.

Perthshire

There is a target of 20 visits, although only 10 were funded by BAGS. May apply to the Tayside Biodiversity Action Fund, or SNH. The Perthshire projects will concentrate on areas away from the A9 and other busy roads. The main pressure for the birds in this area is buildings renovation. Records of remnant populations are being collated.

Angus

The key areas for barn owls in Angus appear to be in the foothills of the glens, plus Montrose, Glamis and Forfar Loch.

The nestbox (paid for by the BBC) has a resident barn owl. The BAGS grant will fund 10 farm visits. The Cairngorms Biodiversity Partnership is funding an additional 16 visits. The company ‘Envisage’ has offered good quality barn owl boxes at £35 each, including delivery.

There has been some very good press coverage and survey input and Alan Leitch's (AL) records will now be added to the Angus population map. AL will continue monitoring birds in Angus and parts of Perthshire.

Clackmannanshire

MD confirmed that 6 farm visits are due over the next 2 years; meeting with Scott Nisbet next month. A ringing event at Thornhill is planned for 2007, together with an educational event with the RSPB post-Christmas. MS will liaise with MD regarding new sites.

Stirling

Currently completing the original Entrust project – 20 nestboxes built; 10 put up with the remaining 10 due soon. The BAGS grant will fund 5 farm visits in the first year. CW will liaise with EC regarding the 2007/08 educational project. There was a good article in the Stirling Biodiversity Newsletter.

3.3 Education

EC confirmed that in 2006/07 schools involved in the project will be from Kinross (the High School) and Clackmannanshire; she will visit the schools in January/February 2007. In 2007/08 Fife, Angus and Stirling schools will be covered. A maximum of 6 boxes per school will be made for use within the area. EC warned that match-funding has not been received yet.

CL-w asked if she could involve RHET (Royal Highland Education Trust), especially as they are already risk-assessed and are in touch with education-friendly farmers and landowners.

3.4 Box Orders

12 boxes for EC. EC to make them with the schools using WI's design. Will need 30 boxes across the area. Potential to source boxes from the Nestbox Company @ £60 per box, ready made.

MS suggested that a well-made A-frame box should last 15-20 years. He can supply them, made in exterior ply, for £75 each. They would need to be collected. WI's square box is expected to last 10 to 15 years; available at £25 each.

Stirling LBAP has extra funds to contribute towards volunteers' time in putting up nestboxes and monitoring them. CL-w said most of the farmers she deals with are willing to put the boxes up themselves. MO and MS confirmed they would be happy to advise on best sites for nestboxes and to be available to help with putting boxes up.

EC mentioned that Elmwood College might be able to make up some boxes; SP warned that in the past there were substantial delays in the students helping with this sort of project. CL also confirmed that the Fife Conservation Volunteers (via SP) would be happy to make up boxes next summer if materials are supplied.

3.5 Farm Barn Owl Management Plan Template

The logos were agreed. SP circulated the 2nd draft of the proposed management plan, together with the additional Hawk & Owl Trust information she proposed including. If anyone has any comments or feedback on the template, please contact SP direct as soon as possible.

Action – ALL (by 29 September)

3.6 Survey Cards, Proposed Newsletters and Nestbox Labelling

JH confirmed that £1,400 was available to spend on survey forms and posters. CL to action.

Action – CL to obtain quotes and circulate design ideas to group

CL-w said that funding from the Cairngorms Biodiversity Partnership had been secured to prepare a Tayside Barn Owl Newsletter this autumn. This would essentially report on the pilot projects and Tayside survey undertaken since 2002. Future plans and the wider work of the SLBOF would be covered.

The timing of this newsletter would allow the Forum Newsletter to be delayed until April 2007; CL to edit. CW agreed to edit the second Forum Newsletter in late 2007/early 2008.

Action – CL/CW

Keith Cohen (KC) had not got back to the Forum concerning the proposed labelling for the nestboxes. At the last meeting it was agreed that the Forum logo, contact details and a reminder that a licensed ringer is required to monitor the box, would all be put on a label on each nestbox.

Action: KC to report back re. suitable laminated labels

3.7 Funding/Budget Revision

JH reminded the other 3 LBAP areas that £500 from each LBAP had been included in the bid to BAGS. CL asked that the invoice to the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership be delayed as the budget was being reviewed in Tayside.

JH said she would update the draft claims form circulated at the meeting and circulate it to everyone.

Action - JH

| LBAP Area | Project Manager | RSPB School Visits | Farm Conservation Advice | No. of Farm Visits | No. of Boxes Year 1 | No. of Boxes Year 2 | Licence Holder |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Clacks | Martin Dean | Elspeth Christie (EC) | Scott Nisbet, FWAG | 6 | 3 | 8 | Mike Steward |
| Stirling | Chris Waddell | EC | Scot Nisbet, FWAG | 10 | 3 | 13 | Mike Steward |
| Fife | Julie Horsburgh | EC | Shirley Paterson, Fife & Kinross FWAG | 6 | 1 | 6 | Mark Oksien |
| Tayside (Kinross-shire) | Catherine Lloyd | EC | Shirley Paterson, Fife & Kinross FWAG | 6 | 1 | 6 | Mike Steward / Mark Oksien |
| Tayside (Perthshire) | Catherine Lloyd | EC | Richard Lockett, Perthshire FWAG | 5 | 1 | 5 | Alan Leitch / Mike Steward |
| Tayside (Perthshire) | Catherine Lloyd | EC | Christine Hall (SAC) | 5 | 0 | 5 | Alan Leitch / Mike Steward |
| Tayside (Angus) | Catherine Lloyd | EC | Carol Littlewood, Angus FWAG | 18 | 1 | 18 | Alan Leitch / Mike Steward |
| TOTAL | | | | 68 | 12 | 68 | |

4. Any Other Business

CL thanked the RSPB for providing the meeting room again at Vane Farm free of charge.

She confirmed that the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership would settle the bill for refreshments, although she hoped other LBAP areas would be in a position to contribute towards this in future.

5. Date of Next Meeting

10.30am, Wednesday, 13th December 2006. CL to check that the meeting room at Vane Farm will be available.

CONTACT DETAILS *(Please advise CL if there are additional names to add to this list)*

| | Name | Organisation | Contact Details |
|--|---------------------|--|--|
| | Tayside Area | | |
| | Catherine Lloyd | Tayside Biodiversity Partnership | tayside.biodiversity@ukf.net |
| | Elspeth Christie | RSPB | Elspeth.christie@rspb.org.uk |
| | Carol Littlewood | Angus FWAG | Angus@fwag.org.uk |
| | Richard Lockett | Perth FWAG | perth@fwag.org.uk |
| | Christine Hall | SAC | c.hall@ed.sac.ac.uk |
| | Shirley Paterson | Fife & Kinross FWAG | Shirley.paterson@fwag.org.uk |
| | Mike Steward | Licensed Worker | mike.stew@tiscali.co.uk |
| | | | |
| | Fife | | |
| | Julie Horsburgh | Fife Biodiversity Partnership | Julie.Horsburgh@fife.gov.uk |
| | Elspeth Christie | RSPB | Elspeth.christie@rspb.org.uk |
| | Shirley Paterson | Fife & Kinross FWAG | Shirley.paterson@fwag.org.uk |
| | Mark Oksien | Licensed Worker | markoksien@btinternet.com |
| | Willie Irvine | Licensed Worker | ? |
| | Keith Cohen | Barn Owl Conservation Network (Fife Local Adviser) | bats@keithcohen.co.uk |
| | | | |
| | Clacks | | |
| | Martin Dean | Clackmannanshire Ranger Service | ? |
| | Elspeth Christie | RSPB | Elspeth.christie@rspb.org.uk |

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| | Scott Nisbet | Central FWAG | scott.nisbet@fwag.org.uk |
| | Colin Nisbet | Clacks LBAP Volunteer | Lairdno1@hotmail.com |
| | Mike Steward | Licensed Worker | mike.stew@tiscali.co.uk |
| | | | |
| | Stirling Area | | |
| | Chris Waddell | Stirling Biodiversity Partnership | waddellc@stirling.gov.uk |
| | Elspeth Christie | RSPB | Elspeth.christie@rspb.org.uk |
| | Scott Nisbet | Central FWAG | scott.nisbet@fwag.org.uk |
| | Mike Steward | Licensed Worker | mike.stew@tiscali.co.uk |
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