



Falkirk Area Biodiversity Action Plan

Monitoring Report 2002

The Falkirk Area Biodiversity Partnership launched its first set of 23 individual habitat and species action plans in 2002.

These plans set targets for the conservation of key plants, animals and habitats, and identified the actions required to meet those targets. For each action a lead organisation or individual responsible for implementing it and a timescale for completion was set. Many of these actions were to be carried out in 2002.

Monitoring how well we are doing at implementing the actions in the given timescale is crucial. It will tell us whether the action plans are being effectively put into practice and whether we need to make changes to the process to make it work better.

This first monitoring round looks at how effectively the Biodiversity Partnership has implemented the actions due to be undertaken in 2002 and the main constraints they have faced.

The monitoring was done via a simple questionnaire sent to all those signed up to take action during 2002. It asked how each action was progressing (completed, ongoing, not started etc.), what constraints there had been to completing the action and, in some cases, how much funding had been secured to implement the action.

This report summarises the results of the monitoring process and some of the many successes of 2002.

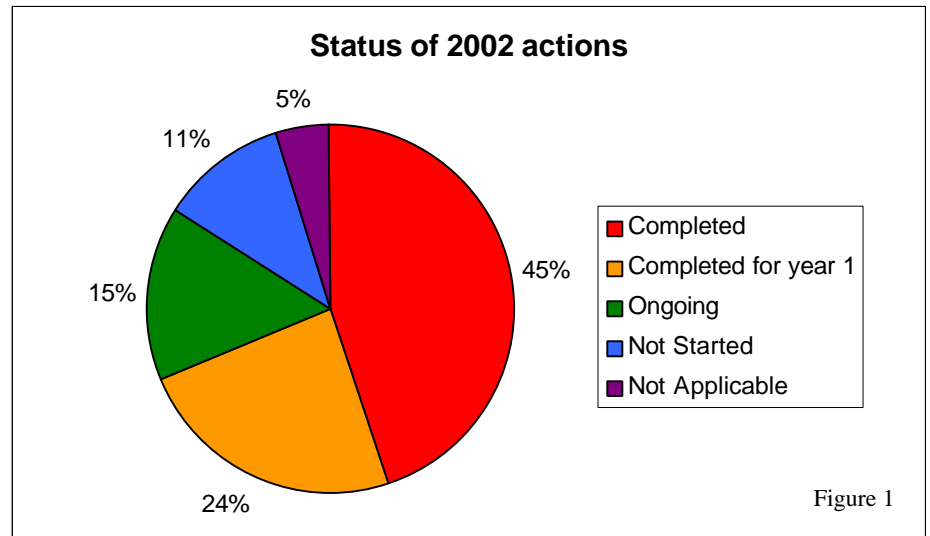


Figure 1

In 2002 37 partners were responsible for leading on the implementation of 262 actions. At least a further 23 individuals or organisations assisted with these actions.

The above chart illustrates the percentage of 2002 actions that were:

- Completed
- Completed for year 1 (i.e. satisfactorily completed for 2002 although the action has to be undertaken on an ongoing, annual basis.)
- Ongoing (i.e. started but not yet completed.)
- Not started
- Not applicable (i.e. action only required under certain circumstances that did not arise in 2002.)

Despite a late start on action implementation (the plans were launched in June), 84% (220) of the actions scheduled for 2002 were at least started and 69% were satisfactorily completed. There's room for improvement but overall this is a very positive start.

The 2002 actions range from policy formulation to publicity, habitat management to data gathering. An indication of the variety of different types of action is given below.

This data is a useful indication of the type and variety of work that the Biodiversity Partnership is undertaking and can be used to assess whether some types of action are being more effectively implemented than others.

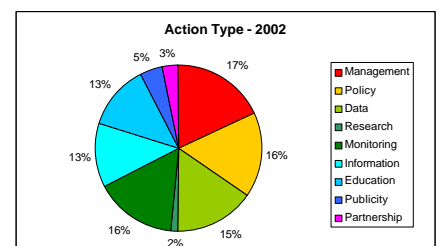


Fig. 2

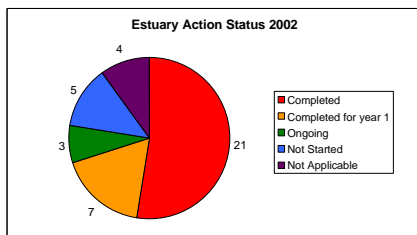
- Key:
- Management – Habitat/species management
 - Policy - Policy & Strategy development
 - Data - Survey and data collection
 - Research - Securing / undertaking research
 - Monitoring - Monitoring habitats, species and plan implementation
 - Information - Information provision / advice / training
 - Education – Education provision / support
 - Publicity - Publicity / awareness raising / encouraging participation
 - Partnership - Partnership development, liaison and assistance

Each of seven action groups has been busy during 2002 overseeing implementation of the action plans they have responsibility for. This has included carrying out actions themselves and encouraging others to take action.

Not all the actions for 2002 have been completed but many have. Below is a summary of how each of the action groups have done and some of the key successes they have been involved with.

(Note: the charts for each group indicate the number of actions scheduled for 2002 that are completed, started etc. as in fig.1)

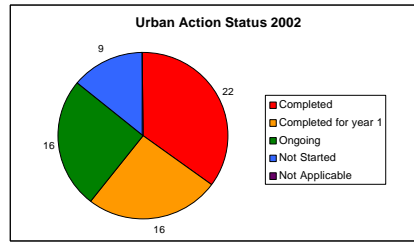
Estuary Action Group



Action in 2002 focused on the protection and ongoing monitoring of the estuarine habitats. Key actions included:

- The first set of results from the Forth Estuary Environmental Assessment Programme monitoring scheme was produced.
- Investigation of a potential managed realignment project on the estuary near Skinflats is ongoing, led by a partnership of various key agencies.
- Protection of the important estuarine habitats and bird populations is ongoing based on the area's European and national designations as a Special Protection Area and SSSI.

Urban Action Group



The urban group undertook a diverse range of actions in 2002 from monitoring orchid and bat populations to promoting changes in park maintenance regimes and encouraging gardening for wildlife. Key actions included:

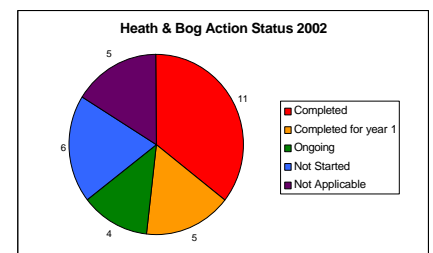
- The Helleborine orchids were monitored and a healthy population recorded. Further work is underway to establish a Flora Guardians monitoring programme at the orchid site.
- The Bats and The Millennium Link project monitored bats along the canals, while other work was done to check existing roost sites and plot this data on species distribution maps. Several bat events were held to raise awareness of these nocturnal creatures.



Hugh Clark/BCT

- The '10 steps for Garden Biodiversity' were promoted to encourage everyone to garden for wildlife.
- Areas of long grass were retained in the area's three Biodiversity Parks to encourage wildlife and work undertaken to identify a further 5 parks where areas of long grass could be left.

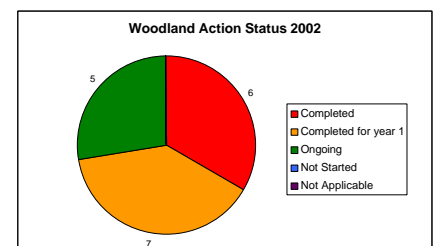
Heath & Bog Action Group



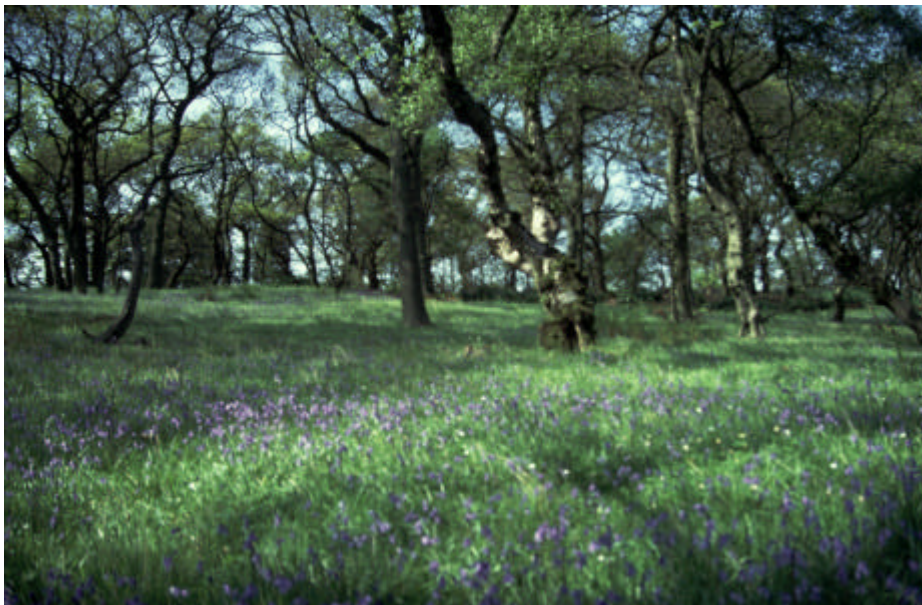
While the heath and bog action group was constrained in 2002 by limited membership several key actions were continued:

- The Council continued its work to phase out peat use in council nurseries and landscaping work.
- Most raised bog sites protected via their designation as Wildlife Sites or Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation.

Woodland Action Group



Woodland group actions in 2002 focused on pulling together the data currently held for local woodlands and

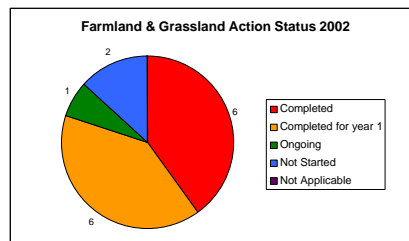


Angus Smith

encouraging the appropriate management of existing broad-leaved and mixed woods. Key actions included:

- Collating data regarding the current status and management of woodland wildlife sites and Sites of importance for nature conservation.
- A range of educational and awareness raising events were held by group members and by others such as the Callendar Woods Group.
- Encouraging the inclusion of biodiversity objectives in Forest Plans, Forest Design Plans and Conservation Plans.
- Promoting and supporting the management of important woodlands, especially ancient woodlands, and the restoration of planted ancient woodland sites.
- Ensuring that where appropriate woodland Sites of Special Scientific Interest have suitable management plans and that these are being implemented.

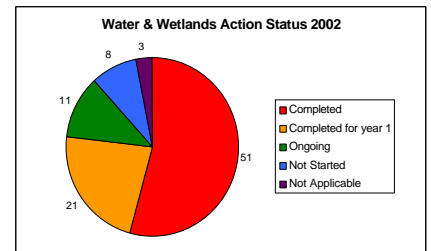
Farmland & Grassland Action Group



Much of the work of the farmland group focuses on the provision of information and support to help farmers take advantage of agri-environment schemes and encourage the adoption of farming methods and initiatives to benefit wildlife. In 2002:

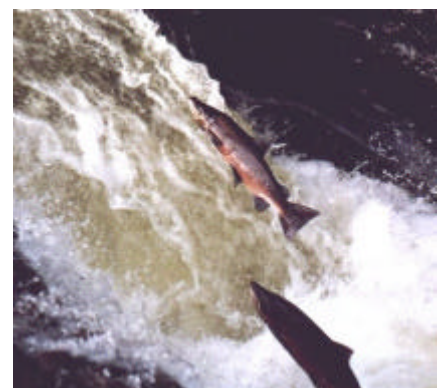
- 21 farms were visited by FWAG to advise on measures they could take to benefit wildlife. Further visits were undertaken by the Scottish Agricultural College.
- Assistance given by group members to farmers applying to the RSS agri-environment fund.
- Several technical notes produced by SAC about 'Grass Margins and Beetle Banks' and 'Management of Wetland for Wildlife'.

Water & Wetlands Action Group

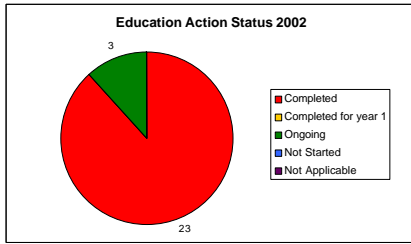


The water & wetland action group implemented numerous actions in 2002 including:

- Application of the British Waterways Code of Practice to ensure that the needs of canal wildlife are fully considered during maintenance and development work.
- Anglers encouraged to submit records of water vole and mink sightings. Existing water vole data collated to give an indication of their extent.
- Monitoring and appropriate management for the canal plants Bennett's pondweed and tufted loosestrife.
- Surveys of several pond and river sites for the mayfly *Ameletus inopinatus*.
- Monitoring of fish in the Rivers Carron and Avon by the Forth Fisheries Foundation. Healthy populations of Sea trout and Salmon were found in both rivers.



Education & Awareness Raising Action Group



The education and awareness raising action group in 2002 promoted the inclusion of biodiversity in many ongoing education and awareness raising activities and events as well as developing several initiatives designed to promote the biodiversity action plan and encourage greater understanding and involvement. Their actions included:

- Continued promotion of the Green Schools Guide and input to the process of allocating Green Schools Grants, with SNH and the Council, to promote environmental projects in schools.
- Promotion of the '10 steps for garden biodiversity'
- Promotion of a variety of events during biodiversity week 2002.



Constraints to Action

While the majority of 2002 actions were successfully implemented, 15% were not completed and a further 11% were not started. The monitoring process attempts to establish the main reasons for actions not being completed, in the hope that some of the difficulties can be resolved.

The following are the main constraints to successful implementation of actions given by respondents with the number of times each was mentioned in brackets.

- Lack of staff time/availability (31)
- Lack of data required to complete the action (15)
- Lack of external funds (14)
- Unrealistic timescale for completion of action (8)
- Lack of partner involvement/support (7)
- Training required (5)
- Lack of internal funding (5)
- Lack of guidance / best practice information (3)
- Action not included in organisations internal workplans/objectives (2)
- Lack of appropriate technologies (2)
- Low in organisations strategic priorities (2)
- Lack of support/guidance from LBAP group (2)
- Lack of policy support/ inappropriate policies (1)
- Awaiting guidance from other body (1)

The Way Ahead

The Biodiversity Action Plan process has delivered significant action for local biodiversity in just one year of implementation. Well done to everyone involved!

However, there are things to be learnt and improvements to be

made that could further improve upon this performance.

The constraints listed suggest various things that could. The Biodiversity partnership may be able to play a greater role in providing support, disseminating best practice guidance and even providing additional training to partners.



Partners may be able to improve how biodiversity actions and priorities are integrated into their organisations' own priorities and communicated to other colleagues.

The resource of people to implement the LBAP is vital. Care must be taken not to overburden those already involved. This suggests a need to encourage a greater range and number of people and organisations to get involved and help conserve our local biodiversity. The more the merrier!

Let's make 2003 even better for biodiversity!

For more information about the Falkirk Area Biodiversity Action Plan process or details of the 2002 monitoring results or to get involved contact:

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