



Biodiversity Newsletter

“ The nights are drawing in and the leaves are falling off the trees. It's time for us to review what's been going on this summer and to look forward to Christmas and the New Year! ”

BRISC Wildlife Counts Project

By the time you read this article we will most likely have completed the second year of the Wildlife Counts Project. For me, it has been both a rewarding and a frustrating experience. As I write this article, I am anxiously awaiting responses from the various funding organisations that have been approached to extend BRISC's commitment to biological recording through its wonderful Wildlife Counts Project. On a more positive note, we have reached out to over 550 people over the course of 2007, including over 350 participants during our BioBlitz event which was covered on BBC Landward on the 22nd July (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/scotland/player/?item=landward>).



Narrow-bordered
5-spot burnet moth

The workshop format of adopting a more general approach has proved very popular with volunteers and trainers alike. Volunteers included members of the 'friends of Cumbernauld Glen' group, an SWT reserve, who used the events to add to their knowledge and understanding of pollinating insects and the wildflowers they depend on. This additional tuition provided by BRISC is being used to good effect, with the implementation of their wildflower meadow plans for next year well under way.

BioBlitz will surely be an annual event? I see BioBlitz as a fantastic opportunity for the scientific community to engage with members of the public on an annual basis, facilitating the exchange of expertise and stimulating interest in more diverse and under-recorded

groups. There was tremendous support for the event from many organisations and experts and the added bonus of BBC LANDWARD coverage helped to raise awareness of the importance of biological recording. Hopefully we can raise the bar again for 2008, breaking the record achieved in 2007. To do this we need support from many more experts and organisations, particularly botanical expertise, which was lacking at BioBlitz 2007. More details on BioBlitz can be found at <http://www.brisc.org.uk/bioblitz07.php>.

The BRISC 'Wildlife Counts Project' came rollin' into Bonnybridge this summer with its 'Pollinators and Wildflowers' event. This event aimed to show participants from Bonnybridge and the surrounding communities just how diverse and truly amazing the wildlife is in their local nature park - and boy were

they amazed!! The 26 or so participants included Craig Macadam and Allie Graham from Falkirk Council, the expertise of Nick Cooke and Gordon Corbet and representation from Butterfly Conservation Trust's Tom Prescott. Between them they managed to uncover an astonishing haul of 109 species including invertebrates, wildflowers and birds, all contributing to a thoroughly enjoyable day.

Highlights of the day included the caterpillar of the 'Vapourer Moth' *Orgyia antiqua*, with its shaving-brush head tufts along its back and ominous looking red flashes to ward off potential predators. There were lots of Six-spot Burnet moths *Zygaena filipendulae* as well as the Garlic snail *Oxychilus alliarius* and the Gorse shield bug *Piezodorus lituratus*. More significantly was the discovery of a magnificent Narrow-bordered 5-spot

continued on back page...

BIODIVERSITY = THE VARIETY OF LIFE

What's On

All events should be booked in advance to avoid disappointment by calling the contact mentioned. If mobility is an issue for you please call to discuss access. Please take note of clothing suggestions and items to bring along to each event.

NOVEMBER

21st November to 2nd December - The Tree Council National Tree Week

Tree Tales
Date: Sunday 25th November.
Time: 11am to 12noon.
Venue: The Pineapple.
Meet at the Pineapple car park.
Find out fascinating folklore and facts about some of Scotland native trees. Wear stout footwear and warm waterproof clothing.
Contact: Fiona Wishart - 01324 501016 or Lesley Sweeney - 01324 501017.

26th November to 2nd December - Ramblers Association - Festival of Winter Walks

Get ready for winter!
Date: Saturday 10th November
Time: 1pm to 4pm
Venue: Jupiter Urban Wildlife Centre

As the nights are drawing in and the days are getting chillier, its time to think about what you can do to help wildlife in your garden over winter. Join the Jupiter Ranger for a fun short walk to find out what is going on in winter around the reserve. Then get stuck in to making bird feeders and insect hibernation homes to take away!

LIMITED PLACES: BOOK TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT!
Contact: Stephen Owen - 01324 486475

Geese, Peat and Malt Whisky
Date: Tuesday 20th November
Time: 7.30pm

Venue: Falkirk Christian Centre, Glebe Street, Falkirk.
Contact: Margaret Wotherspoon, Scottish Wildlife Trust - 01324 717031

DECEMBER

These routes are made for walking

Date: Sunday 2nd December.
Time: 10am to 2pm
Venue: Denny
Meet at Denny Town House car park.

Don your boots and woollies and join us on a brisk walk to explore the Chacefield loop, stomping down farm lanes and through conifer woodlands. Wear stout footwear and warm waterproof clothes.

Contact: Fiona Wishart - 01324 501016 or Lesley Sweeney - 01324 501017.

Mid-winter Lantern Parade

Date: Sunday 9th December
Time: 1pm to 5pm
Venue: Jupiter Urban Wildlife Centre

Come along and celebrate the depths of mid winter. Construct a willow lantern followed by a walk in the dark round the reserve, lit by your new creation, and with some chilly winter tales to listen to!

LIMITED PLACES: BOOK TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT!
Contact: Stephen Owen - 01324 486475

Butterflies and Moths

Date: Tuesday 11th December
Time: 7:30pm
Venue: Falkirk Christian Centre, Glebe Street, Falkirk.

Contact: Margaret Wotherspoon, Scottish Wildlife Trust - 01324 717031

Your Views...

A young Bo'ness resident recently contacted us about wildlife casualties on Grangemouth Road. He wrote:

"I am writing to inform you of incidents happening involving roe deer on Grangemouth Road near the BP gate 10 roundabout. I am asking if it would be possible to make drivers more aware of the wildlife on this road. I know of many times when deer, badgers and other wildlife have been killed as they were crossing this road. As I am only 10 years old, I would like to help the wildlife in this area. I know that wildlife such as deer are rare and hard to protect

but I have a lot of interest in the wildlife and I would like, with your help to do the best we can."

Comment:

Road traffic is often a danger for wildlife, especially for animals that live close to our built up areas. Drivers should take extra care near known black spots. It is also useful to get records of wildlife casualties such as deer or badgers so that we can build up a picture of where there are particular problems.

continued from front page...

Burnet moth *Zygaena lonicerae* subsp. *latomarginata*. This record is hugely significant in that it is the most northerly record for this particular species which is more commonly found farther south. In Scotland it is only known from the Borders and Dumfries and Galloway.



Vapourer moth
caterpillar

The event was deemed a huge success by everyone in attendance, including 'Sophie' the Dog, who enjoyed the biscuits.

The recording fora are now well on the way to providing recording activities for our more experienced recorders who are now in a position to expand their knowledge and skills outside of the project. We will be working closely with the Local Authorities and conservation organisations to provide our recorders with activities to carry out throughout the year. There has been interest from RSPB, SWT, Bumblebee conservation Trust, Butterfly Conservation, BSBI and FCS with lots of interesting activities such as mammal surveying at RSPB Barons Haugh and re-establishing the walking of a butterfly transect in Callendar Woods.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has supported me as the BRISC Wildlife Counts Project Officer. It has been an amazing journey and if we are successful with the funding applications I hope that the journey continues...

Get in touch

To find out more about biodiversity action in this area contact:

The Biodiversity Officer,
Abbotsford House,
David's Loan,
Falkirk, FK2 7YZ
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E-mail: anna.perks@falkirk.gov.uk

If you have any news, articles, events or ideas for the next Biodiversity Newsletter please send them to the Biodiversity Officer by 15th February 2008.

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Falkirk Council, Ian Kimber.

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Biodiversity News



First for Falkirk

Bonnyfield Nature Park could soon be the location of Falkirk's first Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and the fiftieth for Scotland. Scottish Natural Heritage have already indicated that Bonnyfield would be 'an ideal site' because of its habitat diversity, the current management arrangements between the local community and Falkirk Council as well as the accessibility to the site.

Tea Trees!

A selection of native trees were planted at Langlees Primary School as part of their environment week. The trees were bought using excess money in the Planning and Environment tea fund at Abbotsford House and a grant from Falkirk Environment Trust. Employees were all asked what they thought should be done with the surplus money, and despite being given the option to buy masses of chocolate biscuits, they agreed to plant trees locally. To some, they saw it as a way to compensate for the carbon emissions generated from their intense kettle use everyday!

Green boost for South Falkirk

Falkirk Council and its partner Callendar Estates have won £485,000 funding from the national Environmental Justice Fund for the South Falkirk Environment Action Plan. Thanks to the support of local landowners the plan will focus on four key former industrial sites – the Cleuch, Tamfourhill, Roughcastle and Drum Wood – stretching from south of the Falkirk Wheel in the west to the south side of the Union Canal in the east. It will bring a range of benefits including restored landscapes, regenerated woodlands and volunteering opportunities.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Developers in Falkirk now have guidance on how to protect and enhance biodiversity when preparing their plans. The Supplementary Planning Guidance covers all aspects of the development process and gives advice on the issues that have to be considered for everything from minor developments such as house extensions to windfarms and mineral workings.



CSFT's Year of the Bluebell

2008 has been designated as the Central Scotland Forest Trust's Year of the Bluebell. A celebration of one of Scotland's best loved and most iconic woodland plants is planned, with events and activities running throughout 2008.

The aim of the campaign is to raise the profile of the Bluebell and make more people aware of the threats to its survival, as well as to provide opportunities to get out and about to enjoy and plant the flowers.



The Bluebell, although growing in abundance in some localities, has disappeared from large parts of Scotland due to the destruction of mature woodland to make way for house and road developments. This, in turn, has led to many of the plant's populations becoming fragmented and dispersed throughout the country.

In addition, there is a significant threat from the non-native Spanish Bluebell which has been increasingly planted in domestic gardens as it requires less specific and stringent habitat conditions to the Scottish Bluebell. The Spanish variety has escaped from these gardens and colonised areas that were once suited to the Scottish Bluebell. They have also hybridised with the native variety, resulting in fewer purely Scottish Bluebells left in our woodlands.

CSFT will be asking for your help to find out where the native Bluebells still exist and will be distributing leaflets and postcards in the Spring for you to return with your sightings of Bluebell woods. It will also be running a wide range of events to give you a chance to get out and help plant some new Bluebell woodlands. Keep an eye on the CSFT website and local press in the New Year for more details.

For more information contact Emilie Wadsworth at emilie.wadsworth@csft.co.uk or 01501 824791.

Goodbye!

After nearly two years as biodiversity officer in Falkirk, Craig Macadam is leaving to take up a post with Buglife - The Invertebrate Conservation Trust in Stirling.

Buglife is the only organisation in Europe devoted to the conservation of all invertebrates. For more information visit www.buglife.org.uk or contact Craig at craig.macadam@buglife.org.uk or telephone 01786 447504

Every record counts!

You can find out more about the rich diversity of life in the Falkirk Council area – and record your findings – with the help of a series of wildlife leaflets published by the Falkirk Biodiversity Partnership. The latest leaflets include "Amphibians" – from the common frog to the Great Crested Newt, a European Protected species – and "Barn owls and sparrows".

Each leaflet includes a recording form for your wildlife sightings to help the Biodiversity Partnership protect them.

Pick up your wildlife leaflet at libraries, One Stop Shops and at Falkirk Council offices.

Plans laid for Carron Lade

The Carron lade was constructed in 1761 to provide water for the Carron Ironworks. Initially, water supplies for the ironworks came from the Stenhouse Mill lade adjacent to the site. The first blast furnace at the ironworks used bellows driven by a waterwheel, and to supply the increase in demand for water, the furnace leade or lade was constructed in 1761. The need for power increased as the ironworks grew leading to the development of the Carron Dams – a series of reservoirs to provide a constant source of water for the waterwheels.

The lade and dams continued to provide a reserve of water for the ironworks until 1975 when the intake from the river was sealed off in 1975 and the dams were drained for safety reasons. Since then, the lade has been blocked in several places and the damhead on the River Carron has been badly damaged by floods.



Nowadays the lade is full of swamp vegetation dominated by tall species such as bulrush and reed sweet grass. There are some areas of open water underneath overhanging trees and it still links to the Carron Dams, although water no longer flows through it.

The Larbert and Stenhousemuir Environmental Regeneration (LASER) group, together with Central Scotland Forest Trust and Falkirk Council are driving forward plans to develop the lade into a community resource for leisure, biodiversity, education and most of all, enjoyment by the whole community.

For more information visit www.carronlade.org.uk

Biodiversity News



Integrated Habitat Network

Falkirk Council, in partnership with CSFT, Scottish Natural Heritage and Forestry Commission is about to embark on a project that will identify linkages between woodland and other habitats in the Falkirk area. It will also look at areas where these habitats can be enhanced or enlarged.

Barn Owl Update

We now have 10 barn owl boxes installed around the Falkirk area. None have been used this year, but we'll be checking again next year and keeping our fingers crossed that barn owls take up residence in some of them.

We'd like to thank Callendar Estates for their contribution to this project, in particular their help in erecting these boxes.

Orchids in Falkirk

The annual monitoring of Young's Helleborine took place in August. A hardy band of volunteers counted and identified specimens of both Young's Helleborine and broad-leaved Helleborine. Seeds have now been collected from the site and members of the Hardy Orchid Society are trying to grow them.

Lesser Butterfly Orchid

While we knew that there are some populations of Greater Butterfly Orchid in the Falkirk area we were surprised to hear of records of the far rarer Lesser Butterfly Orchid near Slamannan. We hope to have a look for other specimens of this orchid next year.

Moths at Bonnyfield



Strange lights were seen near Bonnybridge but don't worry, aliens haven't landed; it was a Falkirk Council moth night! Eight dedicated recorders stayed at Bonnyfield Nature Park until 1 am to record the moths found in the park. A total of 22 species were recorded, including Large yellow underwings and a magnificent Burnished brass moth.