

# life

Falkirk Council **Biodiversity Newsletter**

Issue 18 Autumn 2016



## Wildflower Spectacle

This summer local people and visitors to Grangepans, Bo'ness enjoyed a stunning wildflower spectacle. They weren't the only ones enjoying the new wildflower meadow. A host of pollinating insects including butterflies, bees, moths and hoverflies also made the most of the expanse of perennial and annual wildflowers and meadow grasses.

The new meadow, created by Buglife and Falkirk Council, provides a vital area of habitat for local wildlife. It helps to create a large corridor of wildlife friendly habitat from Kinneil Foreshore along to Bridgeness - a fantastic resource for our pollinating insects.

The meadow has been so successful that the project partners will be extending it this

autumn, to provide even more wildlife habitat next year. Meanwhile, this year's meadow will be cut in autumn and the hay removed to help the wildflowers to establish and thrive.

Annual flowers like Poppies, Cornflower and Corncockle provided a blast of red, blue and yellow in this year's meadow. Next year beautiful perennial wildflowers like the purple Knapweed, electric blue Viper's Bugloss and nodding Oxeye Daisies should be more dominant, painting a different picture for us. Spectators can expect a colourful journey of discovery as, over time, the meadow matures into an established perennial meadow with all its associated wildlife.



## Glorious Green Roofs

A biodiverse green roof over 140m<sup>2</sup> in size and designed for pollinating insects has been installed on a flat roof owned by CalaChem in Grangemouth.

This is the first green roof to be installed in Grangemouth designed with biodiversity in mind. Calachem has been very supportive and our thanks go to them for being the first to host a brand new green roof on their site. The work has been carried out through the Inner Forth Landscape Initiative's Glorious Green Roofs project, managed by Buglife and funded by the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund and the EU LIFE programme.

Almost 60 species of native wildflowers and grasses have been planted on the roof. These include Common bird's foot trefoil, Kidney vetch (that the caterpillars of Common blue butterflies feed on) and Red clover (required by bumblebees for essential amino acids).

This green roof will act as a stepping stone for wildlife, allowing the movement and mixing of individuals and species across Grangemouth. Green roofs also provide a number of benefits to a building itself by improving insulation in the winter and providing cooling in the summer, as well as reducing noise pollution and increasing the lifespan of the roof. So everyone wins!

Buglife is working with local industry to create a network of green roofs at industrial sites, predominantly in Grangemouth. It aims to help people to understand the importance of green roofs for invertebrates and other wildlife, how green roofs can benefit the building, and how they can support local and rare species including Local Biodiversity Action Plan priority species.



## Wildlife Camera Project

In May Falkirk Council Ranger Service joined forces with Community Green Initiative (CGI) to record wildlife in the Denny and Dunipace area for one year, with the hope of discovering protected or endangered species.

With funding from Falkirk Environment Trust, CGI acquired wildlife cameras and squirrel feeders. The volunteers, with the help of the Ranger Service, placed the cameras and feeders in specially chosen areas hoping to

capture images of local wildlife and perhaps, as an added bonus, confirm sightings of red squirrel and pine marten.

The project has so far been a great success with animals such as badger, fox, tawny owls, jays, woodpecker and roe deer all recorded. Red squirrel has been confirmed in the Torwood area but so far have eluded camera capture. Given the success of the project the group has located a further 3 cameras at sites

in Denny and Dunipace.

The cameras have provided valuable information on the wildlife in this area as well as enabling us to discover new badger setts, possible pine marten scat, invasive species, wildlife corridors and beautiful, diverse woodlands.

The project has allowed the enthusiastic local volunteers to explore their local countryside and has sparked off a great interest in wildlife. It has also provided an opportunity to meet with landowners who have all been extremely keen to help and grant permission to put the cameras on their land. Despite a few issues with vandalised and stolen cameras, the project is proving a resounding success.

The cameras have allowed us a secret window into the woodlands and countryside to discover the wildlife that inhabits them without disturbing it. The big challenge and prize of course will be capturing images of the red squirrel and pine marten.

# Inner Forth Festival

The 2nd Inner Forth Festival came to a close at the end of September, bringing to an end the Inner Forth Landscape Initiative's (IFLI) month long celebration of the fantastic people and magnificent landscape that we have the privilege of living among.

It was a hectic few weeks for all those involved with organising the month's activities, but also immensely enjoyable, with a huge range of events showcasing what the area has to offer and just why it's so special. Starting with a launch event, The Forth From a New Perspective, cruising up the river on the Maid of the Forth, IFLI had an art exhibition, a conference, a specially written play, wildlife ID workshops, walks, talks, cycles and a host of other events.

The festival focused on the Inner Forth's wildlife, history, heritage and culture. There was something for every age group and every ability level, whether you were a budding naturalist out for a bug hunt, a walker or cyclist enjoying your first jaunt around a new area, or a seasoned expert discussing invasive non-native species or the best way to survey an archaeological site. Of course it's not a proper festival if you come home clean, so there were also plenty of chances for people to get their hands dirty with RSPB conservation volunteering, scrub bashing at Kinneil Lagoons, and a beach clean.



There were events in every local authority covered by the Initiative – Clackmannanshire, Stirling, Fife, and of course our own Falkirk area. Overall, hundreds of people attended the 33 events that made up the festival. IFLI says a big thank you is due to the many staff and volunteers of the 15 different organisations that organised and ran the activities, and of course to the people who supported the Initiative by attending the events and helping IFLI to celebrate our fantastic landscape.



## Forth nature is really counting!

Throughout 2016 the Inner Forth Landscape Initiative (IFLI) have been supporting people of all ages to learn more about the range of wildlife and outdoor spaces on their doorstep, thanks to IFLI's funding from the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund. Designed to help beginners and improvers of all ages to investigate local nature and develop their identification skills, IFLI's Forth Nature Counts project has run a range of wildlife ID workshops in all seasons. Attendees and the wider public have also been invited to share their ad-hoc wildlife sightings via an easy to use form on the iRecord website at [www.brc.ac.uk/irecord/enter-inner-forth-records](http://www.brc.ac.uk/irecord/enter-inner-forth-records). These wildlife records help to build a better picture of nature in the Inner Forth landscape and once verified by local expert recorders will become part of UK wide species datasets.

Building on the workshops IFLI held in 2015, sessions delivered in the Falkirk area this year have included an Introduction to Bryophytes led by ecologist Rory Whytock at RSPB Skinflats Nature Reserve near Airth, Grasses & Sedges with ecologist Ben Averis at SWT Bo'mains Meadows near Bo'ness and Dragonfly & Damselfly ID at FCS Larbert Woods led by Daniele Muir of the British Dragonfly Society. Since the project began in May 2014, over 50 free workshops have been held, attracting over 480 people to improve their wildlife awareness and take part in citizen science.

Although the series is coming to a close for this year, plans are already being made for 2017 so keep an eye on the IFLI events calendar for future listings. If you have a wildlife ID or species recording subject that you would like to see on our events calendar in the future, please share your suggestions with Kate Fuller, IFLI Community Engagement Officer on 01324 831 568 or [info@innerforthlandscape.co.uk](mailto:info@innerforthlandscape.co.uk)

Find out more about IFLI, our projects and how to get involved in volunteering, events and activities at [www.innerforthlandscape.co.uk](http://www.innerforthlandscape.co.uk) or find us on Facebook / [innerforthlandscapeinitiative](https://www.facebook.com/innerforthlandscapeinitiative) and Twitter @innerforth

## Volunteers get stuck in!

Buglife have been running habitat creation events for volunteers at a brownfield site in Bo'ness, known locally as Bridgeness Ship Breakers, for almost a year!

At least 36 different volunteers have given up 225 hours of their time to help with litter picks, scrub removal and invasive species control whilst having fun, meeting new people and learning new skills. In July we spent time surveying the site to see what wildlife we could find and were amazed by the number of butterflies (including Common blue and Meadow brown) as well as the bumblebees that we found and enjoyed identifying. Volunteers have also been amazed by the local Kestrel hunting at the site!

Through these events, we have made this wonderful site safer and more attractive for both the wildlife that call the area home and the people who regularly walk along the John Muir Trail that passes through the site.

Although these volunteer events only run once a month, it is amazing the difference that we have made so far. Events run the first Wednesday of the month from 10am-1pm, tea and coffee are provided and everyone is welcome to come along for as long or as little as they are able! This project is funded through Falkirk Environment Trust and European Life fund and will run till at least March 2018. For more information on these events please get in touch with Suzanne Burgess on [suzanne.burgess@buglife.org.uk](mailto:suzanne.burgess@buglife.org.uk) and 01786 447504.





## 20 years of action

2016 marks 20 years of Local Biodiversity Partnerships in Scotland. That's 20 years over which thousands of local projects have taken place across Scotland to conserve and enhance our precious biodiversity. Falkirk's Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) process started in 1999, hot on the heels of the four Scottish pilot LBAPs. Over that time numerous community groups, individuals and organisations have been involved in projects benefitting a vast array of important habitats and species: from peat bog to meadows; saline lagoons to woodlands; orchids to newts; and bats to Bean geese. A huge thank you goes to the many people and organisations who have worked together to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the Falkirk Council area over the past 17 years. Here's looking forward to many more years of local action for biodiversity!



## Asian Hornet alert!

On September 20th the presence of the Asian hornet was confirmed for the first time in the UK. This species arrived in France in 2004 and has spread rapidly in Europe. Asian hornet is one of the key invasive species that we do not want to establish in Britain. It poses a great risk to our native honey bees, as well as potentially to other native insects. Whilst this may be the only instance of Asian hornets in the UK they could be more widespread. It is vital that any Asian hornet sightings are reported quickly so they can be prevented from establishing in the UK. Major ports such as Grangemouth offer a potential route into Scotland for such species, travelling within cargo shipments.

Suspected sightings can be reported via an online reporting form [http://www.brc.ac.uk/risc/alert.php?species=asian\\_hornet](http://www.brc.ac.uk/risc/alert.php?species=asian_hornet). Identification guides are available at [www.nonnativespecies.org](http://www.nonnativespecies.org)

## Discover the area's fantastic wildlife

Check out the stunning images on Falkirk Council Ranger Service's Instagram.

[www.instagram.com/falkirkexplored](http://www.instagram.com/falkirkexplored)



## Wildlife Sites explained



Falkirk Council will shortly publish Supplementary Guidance on its Local Nature Conservation and Geodiversity Sites. The document provides information on the definition and conservation value of our locally designated Wildlife Sites, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation and Geodiversity Sites. It also outlines the assessment and designation process used. In addition the document includes site statements for 86 ecologically rich locally designated sites and identifies a further 14 potential sites. The document is available on the council website ([www.falkirk.gov.uk](http://www.falkirk.gov.uk)) by searching under "supplementary guidance".



Are you interested in learning more about the wildlife living in Falkirk, if so, why not come along to meet like-minded people as part of Falkirk Wildlife Conservation Group? We meet on the last Wednesday of every month in Grangemouth.

We are currently working on several projects including providing and maintaining nest boxes for barn owls, tree sparrows, tawny owls, and kestrels, and practical conservation work to conserve great crested newts. If you can spare a few hours each month and enjoy the outdoors why not contact the secretary Lesley Sweeney, Email: [lesley.sweeney@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:lesley.sweeney@falkirk.gov.uk) or Tel: 01324 504950

## Dorrator Woods

Dorrator Woods nestles on the low-lying flood plain next to the River Carron near Camelon. The Wildlife Site is a little haven for biodiversity with woodland, grassland and ponds. This year Central Scotland Green Network Trust, on behalf of Falkirk Council, have undertaken a range of management works at the site including woodland thinning, creation of glades and control of invasive non-native species like Japanese knotweed. This work will ensure the long term health of the woodland and encourage a healthy and more varied range of woodland and grassland wildflowers at the site.



## Get in Touch

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

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If you have any news, articles, events or ideas for the next issue please send them to the Biodiversity Officer by 30/4/17

Photographs courtesy of:  
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