



## NEW LOCAL PRIORITY LIST



The new UK species and habitat priority lists were approved in August last year. The addition and removal of species from the UK list may result in changes to local lists. Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) must include UK priority species on their own priority lists if they are present in the area. The local priority list is considered when making planning decisions and a selected proportion of the species on the list are included in the rural priorities part of the Scottish Rural Development Programme funding. Proposals that benefit these species gain extra points

Aberdeenshire Council and the North East Scotland Biological Records Centre are working in partnership with specialists to review the new national species lists and identify which species are found in north east Scotland and which should be priorities for conservation in North East Scotland. The LBAP would like to thank all the people who have volunteered to review those lists.

## MONITORING PROGRESS ON HABITAT AND SPECIES ACTION PLANS



<http://www.ukbap-reporting.org.uk/>

## WHAT IS BARS?

The Biodiversity Action Reporting System or 'BARS' is a UK wide internet based system for reporting action on UK BAP targets. People involved with UKBAPs and LBAPs enter information about what they have been doing to meet biodiversity and conservation objectives.

## HOW DOES THE SYSTEM WORK IN NORTH EAST SCOTLAND LBAP?

Partners were sent an excel spreadsheet with the actions that were attributed to them and asked to write down action that has been taken over the last three years. Some progress that was reported on contributes to the achievement of the UK wide biodiversity action plans (other actions meet local, but not national targets).

## WHAT INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND ON THE BARS SITE?

You can find data on trends in species or habitats and produce summary reports of this information. You can find out who is working on what - this is especially useful if you need guidance on a new project or if you are writing a new plan. Most of the information is accessible to everyone, without a password.

**Biodiversity** is *the variety of life*. It includes all living things and their environments. It is everything from the tiniest bacteria to the biggest tree. Following the UN Earth Summit in 1992 in Rio, over 150 nations signed up to protect biodiversity. As part of the UK response, Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) have been set up throughout the country. The North East Scotland LBAP is a partnership that co-ordinates action by local people and organisations to conserve the precious wild species and habitats of this region. LBAP focuses action on both national and local biodiversity priorities. Maintaining and enhancing biodiversity is central to achieving **sustainable development** - to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

## LBAP AT THE HIGHLAND GAMES

The LBAP had a stand at the Aberdeen Highland Games on June 15th. The games were attended by over 10000 people and the LBAP stand was busy for most of the day. The theme was wildlife friendly gardening and local provenance wildflower plants were distributed.



Photo: Simon Whitworth

## FARMLAND BIODIVERSITY

The Scottish Rural Development Programme (or SRDP) is up and running. The SRDP covers 8 different funding schemes with a combined applications process. The three schemes of particular interest in meeting biodiversity objectives are: Forestry Commission Challenge Funds, which provides funding for tree planting and woodland management that will have social benefits; the LEADER initiative, which is for building skills and knowledge in rural communities and can be accessed for projects that involve training and voluntary work and the Rural Development Contracts (rural priorities), which include landscape and biodiversity priorities.

Under the rural priorities scheme landowners gain more points for proposals that benefit LBAP priority species and habitats. So by promoting this scheme LBAP has an opportunity to secure money for habitat and species work. The LBAP partners plan to run workshops for farmers and agents to promote and advise on rural priorities biodiversity options early next year.

## NEW WEBSITE FORTHCOMING

The LBAP officer and Awareness Group will be working together to re-design the NE Scotland LBAP website. If you have any comments or suggestions on the existing

website, found at: <http://www.nesbiodiversity.org.uk/>, please let me know. The website will now be hosted at The Macaulay Institute rather than at Aberdeen University. The LBAP officer would like to thank David Green at Aberdeen University, on behalf of the LBAP partnership, for all his work on the website over the years.

## NEW MARINE ACTION PLAN

Marine action plan is complete, pending approval by the habitats and species working group. This is one of the first marine LBAPs in the UK. The marine action plan launch was combined with a seminar about marine biodiversity. The day was co-ordinated by EGCP and supported by LBAP. Around 40 people attended the launch and many offered useful contributions and feedback that have been incorporated in the final plan.

## WETLAND ACTION PLAN AND WETLAND RESTORATION

LBAP hosted a wetland seminar on 15th of July this year at The Macaulay Institute. The purpose of the seminar was to produce a set of realistic actions for the draft wetland action plan and the day was successful in doing so.



The North East Scotland Wetland Inventory, produced in 2005, detailed sites which had a potential for restoration and expansion. A key aim of the plan is to restore wetland habitat by re-wetting drained land adjacent to an existing wetland or wetlands

## WATER VOLE

The water vole project has had a very successful year. The group have continued their programme of awareness raising, mink trapping, water vole survey, mink survey and research. The vast majority of the River Ythan catchment now appears to be mink free, with water voles re-colonising the areas where mink have been removed.

Photo: Leigh Stevens



The project has begun expansion into the Lower Dee, Don and the Stonehaven areas and continues to recruit volunteers.

If you feel you can help or would like more information please do not hesitate to get in touch with the water vole conservation officer Jamie Urquhart on [jamie.urquhart@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:jamie.urquhart@abdn.ac.uk) or 0786 0846 999

## ELM TREES

The increasing numbers of Dutch elm disease cases in the area are a cause for concern. North East Scotland



is one of the last places in the UK where there are considerable numbers of mature elm trees remain; mainly because the cooler summers in the region that prevent the disease vectors spreading the pathogenic fungus. If the disease incidents increase, then the elms of Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray could be wiped-out as they have been elsewhere. The elm group are reviewing the Wych elm Plan, to consider turning it into a general plan for all elm trees and to discuss disease control methods that could be used. It is hoped that, at the very least, mature trees in urban areas could be retained using disease control methods. These trees are very important as urban habitats for many other species and for human quality of life.

## RED SQUIRREL

Earlier this year the red squirrel officer, Stephen Willis, successfully set up and trained a network of volunteers to survey for red squirrels. He has now started a new 6 month post with funding from Scottish Natural Heritage, LBAP, Forestry Commission, Aberdeenshire council and Aberdeen University. The new work program will focus on co-ordination of grey squirrel control and closer working with landowners, as well as supporting the existing network of survey volunteers.



## GOLF COURSE HAP

With good design and management, golf courses can be havens for wildlife. A Golf Course LBAP is planned for North East Scotland led by the Scottish Golf and Environment Group. The plan aims to increase the biodiversity value of the golf courses in North East Scotland by working with course owners and managers.



To get involved, or for more information North East Biodiversity, please contact:-

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North East Scotland LBAP Steering Group Members are Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, NFU Scotland, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate, Scottish Rural Business and Property Association, Scottish Natural Heritage, The Macaulay Institute, Forestry Commission for Scotland, The Moray Council, The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, The University of Aberdeen, an independent Education Consultant.

ADDITIONAL ORGANISATIONS CONTRIBUTING TO ACTION PLANS AND WORKING GROUPS INCLUDE:

Aberdeen Greenspace, Aberdeen Environmental Forum, Aberdeenshire Environmental Forum, Deveron District Salmon Fisheries Board, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, Forestry Commission Scotland, Forvie Tree Nursery, Crown Estates, Grampian Squirrel Group, Malloch Society, National Trust for Scotland, Scottish Native woods, North East Scotland Biological Records Centre, East Grampian Coastal Partnership, Dee Catchment Management Plan, Scottish Agricultural College, Ythan District Salmon Fisheries Board, Fisheries Research Service, Mammals Trust UK, Marine Conservation Society, Seasearch, Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society and many individual people.