



Autumn 2011

Biodiversity News

Newsletter of the North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership

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Welcome to the first edition of the North East LBAP Newsletter, an e-newsletter providing updates on what's happening within the North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership, news on community projects and events and biodiversity related articles. If you have any items of interest, please contact me at rose.toney@hutton.ac.uk Feedback on the newsletter would also be very much appreciated. I wish you all a biodiversity filled autumn!

Rose Toney, LBAP Co-ordinator

Butterfly On The Move



Photo by Butterfly Conservation

give early indications of habitat or climate change and they are keen to track the Comma's spread to the North East.

With its distinctive orange and brown colouring, ragged wing edges and a white marking on its underwings, it is easy to identify. It can be found in gardens and woods from April, through to September, as it hibernates over the winter as an adult butterfly and has two broods per year. It has been spotted as far north as Aberdeenshire to date and it seems to be spreading fast. ***Read more...***

Ecosystem Groups update

The partnership has recently completed a restructuring process from habitats and species groups into the more encompassing Ecosystem Groups. This new structure seeks to examine and address the larger biodiversity issues that the environment is facing and apply them at our local level. The groups are:

- ***Freshwater and Wetlands***
- ***Lowland and Farmland***
- ***Woodlands***
- ***Urban and Communities***
- ***Marine and Coastal***

We are also undertaking a review of action plans and hope to be able to unveil some exciting new plans soon. For more information see www.nesbiodiversity.org.uk

Wetland Restoration Project



Photo by RSPB Scotland

Wetlands are an invaluable habitat for a host of species, both resident and migratory. These include several UK Biodiversity Action Plan species such as otter and water vole, as well as wildfowl and a plethora of plants and invertebrates. Although, climatically, the North-East is considered a dry region, it has suffered dramatic loss of wetland habitats such as fen, reedbed, swamp, wet woodland, bog,

forest wetland and wet grassland over the last fifty years. With this has come a marked reduction in biodiversity.

In a bid to help save our vanishing wetlands, the North East LBAP launched the first phase of a restoration initiative at the beginning of this year. The pilot phase, involving Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Aberdeenshire Council, the James Hutton Institute and RSPB, in conjunction with Landcare NorthEast, sought to identify potential locations suitable for working with landowners to create/restore wetlands and areas where communities could help create and sustainably manage smaller wetland areas. [Read more...](#)

If you go down to the woods today...



Photo by Gabor Pozsgai (www.photogabor.com)

2011 marks the International Year of Forests, which celebrates the role of people in sustainably managing forests throughout the world.

Undoubtedly, there is much to celebrate; forests provide food, shelter and medicine, help mitigate against climate change and provide areas for enhancing our physical and mental well-being.

Forests also provide habitat for an incredible range of biodiversity, from mammals to birds and insects to fungi, many of which are rarely seen during a woodland foray.

Hayley Wiswell, BTCV Natural Talent Apprentice for Caledonian Pinewood Invertebrates, shines the spotlight on the wonderful world of the Wood Ant. [Read more...](#)

A Wood Ant Symposium is being held at the James Hutton Institute on the 18th and 19th October. For more details see <http://www.hutton.ac.uk/events/wood-ant-symposium>

Helping Hand for Biodiversity

2011 is The European Year of Volunteering and the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers.

Over the coming issues, we will highlight some of the excellent projects supported by Volunteers within the North East, and look at ways in which you can get involved in helping protect biodiversity within your community.

This issue takes a look at the Sunnybank Park Project, a community project to transform a disused outdoor sports area into an urban greenspace for local residents and wildlife. [Read more...](#)



If you would like to join in the celebrations marking International Year of Forests, there is still time to come along to one of these events.



[Forest Events 2011 - Forestry Commission Scotland](#)

[Fir Forests, Beautiful Birches and Amazing Aspens](#)

Red Squirrel Week

1-9 October marks Red Squirrel Week across the UK. Find out how Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels have been working to help save one of our favourite native mammals. [Read more...](#)



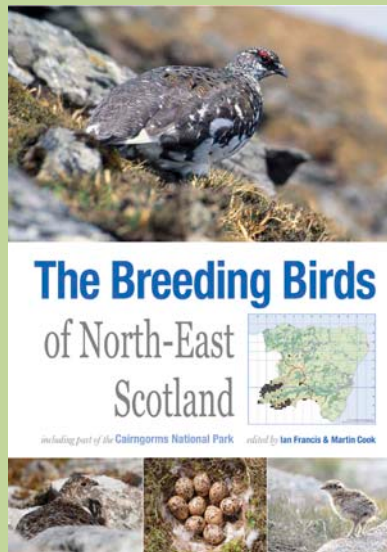
Nature on your doorstep

While there are many widely recognised, and frequently visited, sites in the North East with statutory conservation designations (such as National Nature Reserve, Local Nature Reserve and Site of Special Scientific Interest), there are a host of other sites with local conservation value right on our doorsteps.

Many of these sites have just undergone a review by local councils, in line with guidance from the Scottish Government. Aberdeen City Council have recently published information on the process of selecting Local Nature Conservation Sites. [Read more...](#)



New Breeding Bird Atlas for North East Scotland



The eagerly awaited Breeding Bird Atlas of North-East Scotland has just been published. The atlas maps the distribution of breeding birds throughout the species rich Grampian region.

It includes photographic and species accounts from more than sixty contributors and highlights many of the conservation issues currently affecting our breeding birds. [Read more...](#)

Lifeline for local songbirds?

Local farmers could hold the key to saving endangered songbirds, according to some recent research. A key study by RSPB Scotland has shown that Corn Buntings, a once thriving species throughout the North East, could receive a much-needed lifeline from farmers involved in targeted agri-environment schemes.



Photo by Hywel Maggs

Changes in farming practices have led to reduced food availability and safe nesting sites, leading to a serious decline in Corn Bunting numbers in recent years. However, funding available to farmers through wildlife schemes could help reverse this decline. [Read more...](#)



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Brownfield sites are buzzing!



In 2007, brownfield sites, or Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land (OMH), were added to the UK BAP Priority Habitats and Species list in recognition of their considerable biodiversity value. Brownfield sites are areas which have previously been subject to alteration through human activity and are not currently in use; quarries, disused airfields, derelict land etc. This unique type of



habitat can attract a surprisingly diverse range of species. Suzanne Bairner, BTCV Natural Talent Brownfield Site Ecology Apprentice, tells us a bit more about this unlikely “green” habitat. [Read more...](#)

Photos by Suzanne Bairner

Biodiversity Research at the James Hutton Institute

Sharp-eyed readers may have noticed a change in the LBAP's contact details. Thankfully, we have not moved and still occupy the same office as before. However in April our former host (the Macaulay Institute) joined forces with Dundee's Scottish Crop Research Institute to form the James Hutton Institute.

Named after a leading figure in Scotland's enlightenment, the new Institute combines existing strengths in crops, soils and land use and environmental research. The Aberdeen site has long been known as a centre for biodiversity research in Scotland. Earlier this year this was showcased in three publications that provide highly readable summaries of some of the key work undertaken on Scotland's habitats;

[Biodiversity and Farming](#)

[Sustainable Upland Management](#)

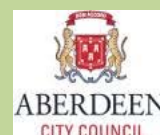
[Woodland Biodiversity](#)

And finally....

Many people assume government bodies or big conservation organisations already have everything "sorted" for wildlife in North East Scotland - but nothing could be further from the truth. We hope this newsletter will encourage you, your school, your workplace or your community to do something positive and practical.

You don't need to be an expert and the smallest contribution makes a difference. Whether you pass on sightings of wildlife or encourage others in your street to “garden for wildlife”, it all helps. If you would like some suggestions - get in touch. If you're already doing something- let us know. But please don't wait for someone else to do it – that could be too late!

The North East Scotland LBAP is funded by;



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