



# BIG Ideas



Common Blue butterfly

The Biodiversity in Glasgow (BIG) project was a collaboration between BTO Scotland and Butterfly Conservation Scotland, to carry out the largest survey ever of the birds, butterflies and their habitats within the green spaces of the city. Although some of the BIG volunteers were highly experienced, many people who took part in the project had never carried out a survey before. Free training in species identification and survey techniques was therefore offered to all participants and the uptake was very impressive with 108 and 88 people being trained for birds and butterflies respectively. Volunteers had often previously felt that they lacked the skills or the confidence to get involved so training really was key to the success of the project.

Green spaces which were included in the project were mostly Glasgow City Council owned sites and, wherever possible, were chosen by volunteers themselves. Over 20% of Glasgow is made up of green space, including 74 parks and 95 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) so there was no shortage of available sites. Volunteers on numerous occasions described their joy in getting to know a site intimately as birds became more apparent through singing and displaying, butterflies started appearing and the vegetation flourished. The first-time surveyors also



Robin

reported taking great satisfaction in developing their identification skills, really reinforcing the message that the only way to learn is to get out there and practise!

Over the two years of the project, a total of 91 species of bird was recorded in the city of Glasgow. As expected, many birds were relatively widespread but what was surprising was the number of high conservation value. In total, there were 15 UK biodiversity priority species recorded along with 47 species of Birds of Conservation Concern. Butterflies (17 species) were recorded by volunteers despite the relatively wet and cold conditions. Exciting records for butterflies included Comma, which was thought to be the first record for the city.

The BIG results showed that ponds, lakes and rivers along with wetland and marsh areas are important for birds along with wild areas such as patches of unmown grass and wild/weedy habitats. Long grass was shown to be important as to whether butterflies were likely to be recorded at a site or not. The overall size of the green space was the most influential factor in determining species richness for birds however.

*The BIG Project was funded by Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Government, Glasgow City Council and the Robertson Trust.*

# Wildlife Heritage Day, Provan Hall

Provan Hall is one of Glasgow's oldest buildings dating back to at least the 1460s. It was at the heart of a huge hunting estate and is said to have been visited by Mary, Queen of Scots. The land around Provan Hall would have supplied all the natural resources needed for life. An event was held on 30<sup>th</sup> May this year to celebrate the place's history and give people the chance to step back in time and try their hand at traditional crafts.



Having a go at wood turning

But what wildlife remains here today?

Today Provan Hall is in Auchinlea Park in Easterhouse and is at the centre of Bishop's Estate. Bishop's Estate stretches from Hogganfield Park Local Nature Reserve (LNR) in the west to the outskirts of Glasgow at Commonhead Moss LNR. It is still rich in wildlife with a network of wildlife sites, including four Local Nature Reserves and a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

A **Wildlife Quest** (or bioblitz) was held on the same day to visit wildlife sites and LNRs as part of **LNR celebrations** (funded by Glasgow City Council and Scottish Natural Heritage). Minibeast hunts, guided walks and tours were available to members of the public.

A whole host of people helped to record species and lead guided expeditions. A big thanks goes out to everyone that participated and helped generate more records for Glasgow's LNRs. This included experts from Butterfly Conservation, Glasgow City Council, CultureSport Glasgow, Glasgow Natural History Society, Forestry Commission Scotland, Natural Talent and BTCV Scotland.



Countryside Rangers recording species at Commonhead Moss LNR

For more information about Glasgow's LNRs contact Dave Garner, Land and Environmental Services, Glasgow City Council, 37 High Street, Glasgow, G1 1LX [david.garner@glasgow.gov.uk](mailto:david.garner@glasgow.gov.uk)  
0141 287 7960 Mobile: 07825780173

## Metamorphosis of Froglife and HCT

With the Living Water Project now underway working on sites throughout Glasgow there is further exciting news connected to the project. Froglife, who started the project, have now merged with the Herpetological Conservation Trust to form Amphibian and Reptile Conservation.

Project officer Eilidh Spence said "This is a very exciting time to be starting this project as the merger to form Amphibian and Reptile Conservation will ensure a united front to preserve these creatures and their habitats whilst educating the public about the importance of these amazing animals. Glasgow has some wonderful habitats and it is great that this project will help enhance areas and encourage more wildlife into the city."

The project will work on several sites located throughout

the city to create or enhance ponds and the aim is to involve local communities to increase awareness of these vulnerable habitats. Funding has been secured through Heritage Lottery Funding and Biffaward and work will be in partnership with Glasgow City Council.

If you would like more information on the project please contact Eilidh at [eilidh.spence@arc-trust.org](mailto:eilidh.spence@arc-trust.org) or visit the new ARC website [www.arc-trust.org](http://www.arc-trust.org)



Common Frog

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# Biodiversity Rich Grasslands Get Richer

The long term vision of creating a green network of colourful, wildlife rich meadows extending from the Cathkin Braes in the east, across Windlaw, Pedmyre and Carnbooth to Mid Netherton in the west, has been brought closer by a new award from the Scottish Government Rural Priorities Fund.



Colourful species rich grass with winter bird feed crop field to rear

Over the last five years various farming improvement works have been carried out at Windlaw Farm, and other local farms in Glasgow, through former agri-environment schemes and also the Glasgow Farmland Birds Project. These initiatives have seen real, positive management of hedgerows, ponds created, winter feeding of farmland birds and increased wildflower diversity at grasslands.

The new award, which lasts five years, will allow the farmer at Windlaw to continue to manage the council-owned sites for the benefit of biodiversity. Under the grant the farmer has created over nine hectares of species-rich grassland and a further four hectares of

existing diverse grassland will receive sympathetic management such as no fertiliser application and a later season hay cut. The important skylark population will also gain from the 'Mown Grassland for Birds' option, whereby the farmer will be careful not to negatively impact on breeding bird territories over a substantial part of the farm. The award will also fund the continuation of a two hectare plot of unharvested crops which has proved very important for supporting overwintering birds; populations of linnets have been recorded along with yellowhammers and reed buntings. Additionally four new ponds have been created extending wetland features away from the main marsh.



New pond dug in newly sown species rich grassland field

A key aspect of the project has been the development of a series of interconnected species- rich grasslands across the agricultural landscape separating Carmunnock and Castlemilk. This green network will hopefully conserve and enhance farmland biodiversity for years to come.

## Tufted Duck Takeover



In the previous issue of the Newsletter, we reported on the naturalisation of Auchinlea Park pond. This involved creating shallows and planting native water plants in and

around the pond.

Since the naturalisation, tufted ducks have had a great breeding season with seventy ducklings being born overall! One female tufted duck raised a brood of nineteen ducklings all by herself with seventeen surviving to fledge in spite of the presence of a large pike in the water and gulls overhead. Gulls are the main predator of tufted ducks in the city.

At Bingham's Pond in the west end (which was naturalised a few years ago), sixty seven tufted duck ducklings were counted. The development of all this biodiversity is very satisfying when compared to the lack of wildlife around the old, concrete-edged versions of these ponds.

# Wildlife Counts in your Community

Not sure what that mushroom is growing half way up a tree? Not sure if that flying insect is a harmless hoverfly or a stinging wasp? And what on earth is that strange beastie in your pond? If you want to know the answers to these and other questions, why not come along to some FREE workshops?

For those of you interested in learning how to identify, record and conserve your local wildlife, BTCV Scotland is running a series of FREE workshops in Glasgow over the next two years. Thanks to a grant from Scottish Natural Heritage, the *Wildlife Counts in your Community* workshops will provide additional support and training to keen wildlife enthusiasts who want to learn more about recording and protecting their local wildlife. The workshops will range from a general wildlife walk to aquatic invertebrates and groups such as fungi, bryophytes and lichens, with a chance to learn the use

of current wildlife recording software.

Details of the workshops will be released soon via the BTCV and GCC websites. With the help of our partner organisations, BTCV will create a real buzz about recording wildlife in your community.



For more information please contact John McFarlane  
j.mcfarlane@btcv.org.uk [www.btcv.org/scotland](http://www.btcv.org/scotland)  
Tel: 01786 479697 or mobile: 07739447943

## Blooming Marvellous

Cardowan Moss Local Nature Reserve is set to benefit from new woodland flower planting this autumn by the Council in an area where trees were planted twenty years ago. Council ecologist, Dave Garner, explains "there's more to woodlands than just trees. The idea is to create a more natural looking woodland by thinning the trees and creating glades and paths through it. These open areas will then be planted with woodland flowers which will make Cardowan very colourful in spring and summer. We hope local people will enjoy walking in the Local Nature Reserve and make use of these new attractive areas."



A leaflet about Cardowan Moss LNR is available contact Dave on 0141 287 7960.

The LBAP is supported by the following organisations



## NEWS, VIEWS, OPINIONS - Write to the Biodiversity Officers

The Biodiversity Officers, Carol MacLean, Keith Watson and Cath Scott can be contacted at:  
**Land and Environmental Services**  
**Glasgow City Council**  
**37 High Street**  
**Glasgow G1 1LX**

Email:  
carol.macleaen@glasgow.gov.uk  
keith.watson@glasgow.gov.uk  
catherine.scott@glasgow.gov.uk

Phone:  
0141 287 5665/7026

Further information is available on the Council's website:  
**[www.glasgow.gov.uk/biodiversity](http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/biodiversity)**

