

Bluebell



Scientific Name:
Hyacinthoides non-scripta

Current factors causing loss or decline

The Bluebell can be regarded as locally common within the City at the older woodland sites. Loss of the semi-natural woodland habitat through urban spread, has presumably been the main reason for decline. In agricultural areas decline can be associated with heavy grazing pressure. Other factors such as the planting of heavy shading exotics, especially conifers, can further impact on populations. Inappropriate land use, including heavy recreational pressure, can result in local population damage or loss. Collecting of bulbs on a commercial scale is not known to occur locally, and there is little evidence to suggest that local, small scale collecting is of concern.

Current action

Many of the remnant populations occur within the semi-natural woodlands or habitat mosaics identified as City-wide Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) or Important Wildlife Corridors along water courses.

Forestry Commission's Guidelines and the Forestry Standard precludes against under-planting or replacement of deciduous trees by conifers. This measure helps to promote semi-natural broadleaved woodlands. The Bluebell is now given legal protection in Schedule 13 (Schedule 8) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

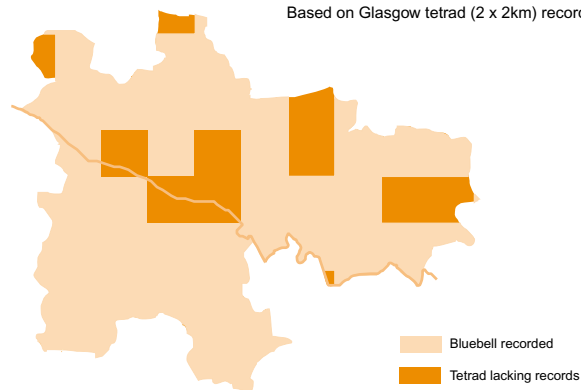
Current status

The **Bluebell** is a well known and much admired feature of woodlands throughout much of Britain. However on an international or even European scale, the Bluebell has a restricted distribution, so at this larger scale, the populations in Britain are of high importance. Bluebells are typically a feature of native oak woodlands, occurring on neutral or mildly acidic soils, capable of forming extensive carpets over ground of varying topography. They become less frequent on acidic, peaty soils, such as to the northeast of the City, or along river valleys where soils are more basic, shallow or alluvial influenced. Significant populations can also occur under Bracken, in the open or with patchy trees, such as at Garscadden Wood and notably on the Cathkin Braes; such populations may represent relic woodland populations, afforded some protection by the Bracken cover. More local populations occur, or persist, in open grasslands (where subject to appropriate management – e.g. lack of heavy cutting or grazing regimes) and hedgerows.

Bluebell is well represented in the local Glasgow area. Surveys for the Flora of Glasgow (slightly larger than the City area) have recorded it from 77 out of 90 tetrads (2 x 2 km. squares). Good populations are found in virtually all of the substantial areas of semi-natural woodland, but can also occur in plantations. The distribution and frequency in urban areas can be somewhat clouded by the presence of planted or garden outcast Spanish Bluebells (*H. hispanica*) or hybrids. Natural hybridisation or backcrossing may then occur, blurring the species distinction, and leading to an impact on the gene pool of the native species.

Distribution of Bluebells in Glasgow

Based on Glasgow tetrad (2 x 2km) records



Objectives and targets

It is important that the remnant, healthy woodland populations are protected and retained. Survey work should help to identify key sites, and also suitable plantations, including recently created ones, where the introduction of Bluebells may be appropriate. Increasing the awareness among landowners, managers and users about presence and habitat preferences will help to encourage effective management.

Objective 1: Establish an accurate picture of distribution and population viability and identify key sites.
Target 1: Survey main woodland and suitable open sites to assess populations by 2005.

Objective 2: Maintain the current distribution and population sizes.
Target 2: Ensure no further loss or damage to the surviving, especially key populations.

Objective 3: Maintain or promote sympathetic management at key sites with important populations.
Target 3: Establish existing management regimes and retain or improve.

Objective 4: Increase the distribution of Bluebell where appropriate.
Target 4: Introduce (from local sources) to suitable old or new plantations currently lacking Bluebells.

Proposed Action with Lead Authorities

Action	Lead	Delivery	Objective
Policy and Legislation			
Ensure protection of known sites in any developments subject to Planning Applications.	FC	FC, GCC-DRS, SNH	2
Ensure woodland populations are recognised during any woodland grant applications or operations.	FC	FC, GCC-LS(CG), SNH	2, 3, 4
Discourage deliberate removal of bulbs from woodland sites.	FC	FC, GCC-LS, SNH	2
Site Safeguard and Management			
Encourage landowners, managers and users to implement sympathetic habitat management.	FC	FC, FWAG, GCC-LS, SNH, SWT	2, 3
Take care to avoid damage to Bluebell populations during woodland management operations.	FC	FC, GCC-LS, SNH, TWISE	2, 3
Ensure woodland canopy management recognises the value of Bluebell, and associate, ground flora.	FC	FC, FWAG, GCC-LS, SNH, SWT, TWISE	2, 3
Species Management and Protection			
Introduce populations, from local stock, to new plantations of suitable age on appropriate soils.	FC	GCC-LS, GfC, SWT, TWISE	4
Advisory			
Ensure information and guidance on sympathetic conservation management is available.	FC	FWAG, GCC-LS(CG), SNH	2, 3
Future Research and Monitoring			
Survey populations at suitable woodland and open sites to assess general viability.	FC	GCC-LS, SWT	1
Monitor distribution of Spanish Bluebell (and hybrid) and assess proximity and threat to native populations.	FC	GCC-LS(CG), SNH	1, 3
Sample populations for monitoring and management assessment work.	FC	GCC-LS(CG), SNH	1, 3
Establish suitable sites for potential reintroduction.	FC	GCC-LS(CG), GfC, SNH, SWT	4
Communication and Publicity			
Utilise widespread recognition of Bluebell as indicator of good woodland management.	FC	FC, GCC-LS, SNH	3
Co-ordinate with management for woodlands action plan.	FC	FC	1, 2, 3, 4
Review the progress of this Action Plan by 2006.	FC	FC	1, 2, 3, 4

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Glasgow City Council: Development and Regeneration Services(**GCC-DRS**), Glasgow City Council: Land Services(Conservation Group) (**GCC-LS(CG)**),

Glasgow City Council: Culture and Leisure Services (**GCC-CLS**), Glasgow City Council: Education Services (**GCC-ES**), Glasgow City Council: Land Services Countryside Ranger Service (**GCC-LS(CRS)**),

Scottish Ornithologists' Club (**SOC**), Greenspace for Communities(**GfC**), British Waterways (**BW**), Forestry Commission (**FC**), Farming Wildlife Advisory Group (**FWAG**), The WISE Group (**TWISE**)

Glasgow Natural History Society (**GNHS**), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (**RSPB**), Scottish Environment Protection Agency (**SEPA**), Scottish Natural Heritage (**SNH**), Scottish Wildlife Trust (**SWT**).

Clyde Amphibian and Reptile Group (**CARG**), Butterfly Conservation (**BC**), Concern for Swifts (**CfS**)