

Wet Woodland



Current factors causing loss or decline

The main threats come from drainage, heavy grazing pressure and infilling, often linked to urban developments. Poor water quality, caused by nutrient enrichment or pollution, is also an issue. Other factors include the lack of management at former coppiced sites and air pollution (affecting epiphytic lichens and bryophytes).

At some sites wetlands (e.g. species rich fens and raised bogs) the spread of scrub (a natural succession process) may be viewed as a problem; this emphasises the need to co-ordinate with action plans for open wetlands.

Current action

The carr woodlands at Bishop Loch and Possil Marsh occur in Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). Most of the remaining areas of wet woodland are associated with Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) or along Important Wildlife Corridors. The presumption against clearance of broad-leaved woodland for conversion to other land uses set out in the National Forestry Policy will give other areas some protection.

Current status

Wet woodland (often termed Carr) occurs on poorly drained or seasonally wet soils usually with willows, Birch or Alder as the main tree species. It frequently occurs as part of a habitat mosaic, with other drier, woodland types and on mixed fens where it can form a gradual boundary between dry woodlands and open wetlands. It can occur on a range of soil types and correspondingly supports a diverse associate ground flora including *Sphagnum* and other mosses, sedges or tussocky grasses and various wetland herbs. Carr woodlands represent a late successional stage of a wetland ecosystem, very much dependent on local hydrology and land use pressures, but typically derived from open fens or marshes, as they begin to dry out. Willow carr is most typically associated with less acidic fen habitats, whereas Birch is associated with more acidic mires or raised bog margins. Alder woodlands occur as a late successional stage of drying out wetlands, but also along river margins and flood plains, and flushed soils in woodlands.

Carr woodlands dominated by Alder were, in the past, commonly coppiced and this practice has ensured that Alder has remained as the dominant species and has prevented succession of the woodland to drier woodland types. Other carrs, typically willow carr, have generally avoided forestry management and have developed as part of the natural succession.

Carr woodlands occur throughout Britain although concentrations occur about lowland fen areas, and in upland areas of western Britain. During the late 1980s the Nature Conservancy Council estimated that there were at least 25,000 to 30,000 ha of ancient or semi-natural wet woodland within the UK, but there could be as least as much again if woodlands of more recent origin are included.

In Glasgow there is limited data on distribution and much is represented by local stands forming habitat mosaics, or along narrow burn margins, rather than large examples. Possil Marsh supports local large stands, although many other wetlands tend to be open or support scattered individuals.

Wet woodlands support a range of plant species, notably bryophytes, although many are also associated with open wetlands or drier woodland habitats. The habitat can be important, in association with open habitats, for other wildlife such as invertebrates and birds.

Main Locations of Wet Woodland in Glasgow



1. Garscadden Burn (3.0ha) - Alder
2. Possil Marsh (4.0ha) - Willow
3. Cardowan Moss (0.1ha) - New Planting
4. Frankfield Loch (0.2ha) - Willow
5. Craigend Moss (3.0ha) - Planted Birch
6. Commonhead Moss (5.0ha) - Invasive Moss
7. Garnkirk Moss South (3.0ha) - Invasive Birch
8. Garnkirk Moss Plantations (6.0ha) - Planted Birch and Pine
9. Bishop Loch (1.0ha) - Willow
10. White Cart, Linn Park (1.0ha) - Alder and Willow

TOTAL 26.3ha

Objectives and targets

The primary aim is to establish the distribution and assess the quality of areas of wet woodland and further to assess its ecological relationship with associate habitats.

Objective 1: *Ensure no net loss in area of wet woodland within the City.*

Target 1: *Retain all existing wet woodland.*

Objective 2: *Establish area and quality of all larger wet woodlands within the City.*

Target 2: *Survey all larger wet woodlands to assess quality and identify key sites.*

Objective 3: *Promote sympathetic management of wet woodlands.*

Target 3: *Establish existing management and investigate ideal regimes.*

Objective 4: *Increase total area of wet woodland within the City.*

Target 4: *Create new wet woodlands as part of wetland and other habitat creation schemes.*

Proposed Action with Lead Authorities

Action	Lead	Delivery	Objective
Policy and Legislation			
Ensure the importance of wet woodland is recognised in Local Plans and Policy Guidelines.	GCC-LS(CG)	GCC-DRS, SNH	1
Seek to ensure Policy Planning Guidelines include adequate protection policies for water levels and quality.	GCC-LS(CG)	FC, GCC-DRS, SEPA	1, 3
Site Safeguard and Management			
Oppose, or propose alternatives to, development applications for land use, which will damage or destroy key wet woodland sites.	GCC-LS(CG)	GCC-DRS, SNH, SEPA	1
Encourage landowners and farmers to implement sympathetic management of wet woodland	GCC-LS(CG)	FC, FWAG, GCC-LS, SNH, SWT	3
Encourage the creation of new wet woodland at urban or agricultural wetland creation schemes	GCC-LS(CG)	FC, FWAG, GCC-LS, GfC, SNH, SEPA, TWISE	4
Advisory			
Provide guidance and training on wet woodland conservation management	GCC-LS(CG)	FC, FWAG, SNH, TWISE	3
Future Research and Monitoring			
Survey main wet woodland sites to identify key sites and assess vegetation and condition	GCC-LS(CG)	GCC-LS(CG), SNH, SWT	2
Monitor illegal infill and dumping and take appropriate action	GCC-LS(CG)	GfC, GCC-LS	1
Communication and Publicity			
Encourage awareness and appreciation of wet woodlands habitat	GCC-LS(CG)	FC, GCC-LS(CRS), SEPA, SNH,	1, 3, 4
Review progress of plan and actions by 2006	GCC-LS(CG)	GCC-LS(CG)	1, 2, 3, 4

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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)