



North Lanarkshire Biodiversity Action Plan

2015-2020

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Foreword

The North Lanarkshire Biodiversity Action Plan (NLBAP) sets out a partnership approach to guide the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in North Lanarkshire to 2020. It details the actions needed to safeguard vulnerable species in North Lanarkshire, and to protect and enhance key habitats at an ecosystem scale.

In 1999, North Lanarkshire was one of the first Local Authorities to publish a Biodiversity Action Plan. This is now the fourth edition of the plan and it aims to continue to build on past achievements such as providing nesting sites for Barn Owls, restoring some of our nationally important peat bogs and creating freshwater habitat.

A landscape scale approach is necessary to conserve our biodiversity and ecosystem services and the new landscape introductions have been included to highlight the links between species and habitats. The original species and habitat plans have been updated to reflect upon progress and current key conservation issues, as well as changes in national and local legislation and policy. The new plans which include invasive non-native species, Pine martin and geodiversity have been added out of increasing recognition of the need to take action for these species and habitats at a local level.

This edition of the LBAP sets out a new programme of actions that will bring more benefits to North Lanarkshire by providing a sustainable, attractive and healthy environment for both wildlife and people.



James McCabe

Council Leader

North Lanarkshire Council

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James McCabe". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Objectives of the North Lanarkshire Biodiversity Action Plan



To maintain and where practicable, to enhance:

- The populations and natural ranges of native species and the quality and range of wildlife habitats and ecosystems
- Internationally and nationally important and threatened species, habitats and ecosystems
- Species, habitats and managed ecosystems that are characteristic of North Lanarkshire or are of local importance
- The biodiversity of natural and semi-natural habitats where this has diminished over the recent decades



To increase public awareness of, and involvement in, conserving biodiversity



To identify priorities for habitat and species conservation in North Lanarkshire and set realistic targets and timescales for these



Introduction

This fourth edition of the North Lanarkshire Biodiversity Action Plan has been developed to further conserve and enhance the habitats and species that contribute to the unique character and heritage of North Lanarkshire. The North Lanarkshire Biodiversity Partnership looks to build on the conservation work that has taken place over the past sixteen years and to take forward positive actions for our priority species and habitats to 2020 and beyond.

1. Biodiversity

Biodiversity refers to the variety of all living things on Earth.

Scotland supports a vast array of habitats and species, with an estimated 90,000 species occurring over Scotland's land and sea¹.

The Convention on Biological Diversity defines biodiversity as:

"The variability among living organisms from all sources including inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are a part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems"².

Biodiversity includes the variety of ecosystems such as those that occur in forests, wetlands, mountains, lochs, rivers and urban and agricultural landscapes.

2. Ecosystems

Ecosystems are dynamic complexes composed of plants, animals and micro-organism communities and the abiotic environment interacting together as one². Ecosystems are not static, but dynamic systems which continuously evolve spatially and temporally. In each ecosystem living creatures, including humans, form a community, interacting with one another and with the air, water and soil around them. It is the combination of life forms and their interactions with each other and the rest of the environment that has made Earth a uniquely habitable place for humans.

Ecosystems incorporate ecological processes and the resources they provide are known as 'Ecosystem Services'.

1 Scottish Government, 2011. Scotland's Biodiversity Strategy Report to Parliament 2011-2013

2 Convention on Biological Diversity <http://www.cbd.int/convention/articles/default.shtml?a=cbd-02>

3. Ecosystem Approach

The phrase 'Ecosystem Approach' was first coined in the early 80s, but found formal acceptance at the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 where it became an underpinning concept of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and was later described as:

“a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way”³

Action must be taken not just in protected areas such as nature reserves but also in the wider landscape – at the ecosystem scale. This does not necessarily mean abandoning traditional methods of conservation such as designating and managing protected areas or protecting priority species and habitats. The ecosystem-scale approach looks at measures spread across all levels of conservation from micro-scale measures such as planting a wildflower meadow to spatial planning at a national or regional scale.

As the Ecosystem Approach is a framework that can be adapted, the approach fits well with Local Biodiversity Action Plans as they are continuously evolving documents. The North Lanarkshire Biodiversity Partnership is working to promote ecosystem-scale conservation through new projects and existing programmes. The actions in the individual species and habitat action plans that form the North Lanarkshire Biodiversity Action Plan take into consideration, and are designed to contribute to, ecosystem scale conservation.



4. Ecosystem Services

Living things have a right to exist, even the midges that make our countryside so renowned. However, biodiversity is also vital for us to survive, providing many services we depend on such as oxygen, clean water and food. These are known as 'Ecosystem Services'.

Ecosystem services can be split into 4 groups: Supporting, Provisioning, Cultural and Regulating.

Provisioning services – These are the products obtained from ecosystems including food, freshwater and fuels.

Regulating services – These are the benefits obtained from the regulation of ecosystem services - including climate and air quality regulation.

Cultural Services – These are the nonmaterial benefits people obtain from ecosystems including aesthetic values and recreation

Supporting services – These are the services that are necessary for the production of all other ecosystem services such as soil formation and photosynthesis⁴.

We have a considerable understanding of how species interact with other species and their relationship to different habitats. Nevertheless, we really do not know the threshold at which the loss of biodiversity would cause a breakdown in the ecological system that supports everything from the food we eat to the air we breathe. The supply and resilience of ecosystem services may be affected by even the smallest changes in biodiversity, and we must protect our species and habitats in order to maintain these ecosystem services that we depend on.

Biodiversity also provides indirect economic benefits. Hillside woods prevent erosion; wetlands play a role in flood defence, act as water treatment plants and help to regulate water flow – all functions which we would otherwise have to pay for. In many cases, taking action for biodiversity may reduce direct costs. Sustainable urban drainage systems provide significant benefits for wildlife, yet may also reduce long-term revenue costs of drainage management. Reducing the frequency of grass cutting for gardens and parts of public open space and roadside verges may enhance such areas for insects and small mammals, but at the same time will decrease annual upkeep costs.

3 Convention on Biological Diversity, <http://www.cbd.int/ecosystem/>

4 Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005. Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Synthesis.

The UK National Ecosystem Assessment⁵ provided the first objective analysis of the environment for nature, society and economic prosperity. It showed that over the past 60 years Scotland's natural heritage, and the way people benefit from it, has changed. Whilst agricultural output has increased, many other ecosystem services that are fundamental for life, such as those relating to native species diversity, air, water and soil quality have declined or remain in a reduced state¹.

Humans depend on Earth's ecosystems and the services they provide, ranging from wood and water to aesthetic and cultural enjoyment, and regulation of the climate. However, the world population now exceeds 7 billion, increasing pressure on ecosystem services.

Whilst many of these services are impossible to value, such as the oxygen provided by plants, those that can be given a value have been estimated to be worth £23 billion a year to Scotland¹. The value of living near greenspace has been valued at £300 per person per year, however 43.7% of Scottish ecosystem services indicators are degrading. One fifth of all industries rely significantly on the environment and outputs from activities that depend on the natural environment have been estimated to amount to around £17.2 billion a year in Scotland⁶.

The '2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity' includes strategic outcome 3 which aims for:

"Improved health and quality of life for the people of Scotland, through investment in the care of green space, nature and landscapes".⁷

Today the accessibility, diversity and quality of much of Scotland's natural environment is recognised as an important resource for promoting physical and mental health, improving educational outcomes, and supporting community development and regeneration. Stronger integration of environmental and social objectives will undoubtedly secure long-term benefits for people and nature.

5. Green Infrastructure and Green Networks

Green infrastructure includes the 'green' and 'blue' (water environment) features of the natural and built environments that can provide benefits without being connected. This includes trees, parks, allotments, hedges, verges, ponds and sustainable urban drainage systems.

Green networks refer to the connected areas of green infrastructure and open space which together form an integrated and multi-functional habitat network. Green networks help define the landscape, providing links with the countryside and allowing the movement of people and wildlife, creating opportunities for physical activity and access to the outdoors. Green infrastructure can deliver multiple environmental benefits, whilst playing a key role in mitigating against climate change. Developing and strengthening green infrastructure will underpin ecosystem services and contribute to healthy and resilient ecosystems.

5 UK National Ecosystem Assessment (2011) The UK National Ecosystem Assessment: Synthesis of the Key Findings. UNEP-WCMC, Cambridge.

6 Marris SJ, et al. (eds.) (2011) The Changing Nature of Scotland. TSO Scotland, Edinburgh

7 Scottish Government, 2013. 2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity – A Strategy for the Conservation and Enhancement of Biodiversity in Scotland



6. Landscape Scale Conservation

Landscape scale conservation takes into account that the drivers of loss often operate at a landscape scale level. Scotland is one of the most heavily deforested countries in Europe, with attempts to regain our woodlands in the 20th century resulting in commercial non-native conifer plantations, causing further environmental damage and the loss and fragmentation of peatland habitats⁸. Landscape scale conservation seeks to understand the flow of ecosystem services, and consider other land uses such as forestry and housing, in order to deliver benefits for biodiversity and a range of benefits for people⁹.

This Plan aims to consider the landscape scale which our priority species and habitats exist at, and deliver actions and targets that contribute to wider conservation efforts.

“There are a lot of spaces in North Lanarkshire which are home to many animals that would surprise many locals” **Local resident**

7. Convention on Biological Diversity

At the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, world leaders agreed on a comprehensive strategy for “sustainable development” – meeting our needs while ensuring that we leave a healthy and viable world for future generations. One of the key agreements adopted at Rio was the Convention on Biological Diversity. This pact among the vast majority of the world’s governments sets out commitments for maintaining the world’s ecological underpinnings as we go about the business of economic development. The Convention established three main goals: the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from the use of genetic resources.

As part of its response to signing up to the Rio Biodiversity Convention, in 1994 the Government produced Biodiversity: The UK Action Plan (in accordance with article 6a of the convention) . This committed the UK Government to the strategic objective of conserving, and where possible enhancing, biodiversity within the UK (subsequently enshrined within the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004). Since then, various reports and guidance have been produced which identify key habitats and species throughout the UK as well as approaches which may be taken in order to drive biodiversity conservation forward. Because biodiversity is ultimately lost or conserved at the local level, Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) provide an

appropriate mechanism for identifying habitats and species which are not only important in a national context, but valued by the local community as well. Also, because an LBAP is both a product and a process, it provides a medium for creating and sustaining partnerships to achieve biodiversity objectives.

In 2010, in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture in Japan, an updated and revised Strategic plan for Biodiversity was adopted, including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets for the 2011-2020 period¹¹.

The vision for the new plan is: “Living in Harmony with Nature” which states “By 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people”. The mission of the plan is to take effective and urgent action to halt the loss of biodiversity in order to ensure that by 2020 ecosystems are resilient and continue to provide essential services, thereby securing the planet’s variety of life, and contributing to human well-being, and poverty eradication.

The UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework was published on 17 July 2012 and was developed in response to the Convention on Biological Diversity’s Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its 5 strategic goal and 20 “Aichi Biodiversity targets”, published in October 2010 and the EU Biodiversity Strategy released in May 2011. The development of the Framework reflects a revised direction for nature conservation, towards an approach which aims to consider the management of the environment as a whole, and to acknowledge and take into account the value of nature in decision-making. The Framework sets out the common purpose and shared priorities of the UK and the four countries, and, as such, is a hugely important document, which is to be owned, governed, and implemented by the four countries.¹².

The North Lanarkshire Biodiversity Action Plan is contributing to the overall programme to sustain and enhance biodiversity through Scotland and the UK, and indeed, the world. It is in effect, a direct example of the often-quoted phrase “think global, act local”.

8 Burns et al, 2013. State of Nature Report. The State of Nature Partnership

9 RSPB, 2014. Scotland Futurescapes. Summary Guide

10 Biodiversity: the UK Action Plan, 1994. (Cm 2428) London: HMSO.

11 Convention on Biological Diversity, <http://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/>

12 JNCC and Defra (on behalf of the Four Countries’ Biodiversity Group). 2012. UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework. July 2012. Available from: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-6189>.

8. Biodiversity... What does it mean for North Lanarkshire?

North Lanarkshire sits at the heart of Scotland's central belt, in what was once a powerhouse of heavy industry and transport: mines and quarries, railways and canals, steelworks and today's open-cast.

Where does wildlife fit in?

In North Lanarkshire, there are:

9	Local Nature Reserves
3	Country Parks
380	Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation
4	Special Areas for Conservation
1	Special Protected Area
13	Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)
5	Scottish Wildlife Trust reserves
1	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Reserve

Many habitats remain...

Riverside glens of ancient woodland with their carpets of bluebells reach into the built-up areas of Motherwell and Cumbernauld. On the windswept peat moorlands east of Airdrie, the lowland raised bogs are considered to be of European importance.

Scotland's only flock of bean geese overwinter on the upland grazing fields south east of Cumbernauld.

And new habitats have been created...

The Forth and Clyde Canal and the remnants of the Monkland Canal are rich in wildlife.

Ambitious land reclamation at Strathclyde Country Park created a habitat for wintering waterfowl, as well as visitor recreation. Former mining areas have been converted into the wildlife-rich Drumpellier Country Park, Greenhead Moss and Dumbreck Marsh.



Conversion of exposed upland farmland to woodland has created a habitat for badgers and roe deer at Palacerigg Country Park, Kingshill Community Woodland, and Arns plantation, as part of the development of the Central Scotland Green Network.

Red squirrels have colonised the Carron Forest plantation in the Kilsyth hills.

Pine martens have arrived in Cumbernauld.

Some habitats have arisen by accident

"I'm amazed every day at the wildlife that lives around me and my family since we moved to Gartcosh" **Local resident**

Gartcosh Local Nature Reserve is home to one of Scotland's largest known populations of Great crested newt, a European Protected Species.

Against the odds, North Lanarkshire is rich in wildlife. But we cannot take any of it for granted. The demand for new housing, jobs and transport infrastructure must somehow be accommodated without destroying the key habitats on which our wildlife depends. This is one of the principles of sustainable development.

The nature of North Lanarkshire depends on us all.

9. Biodiversity - Sorting Out a Plan

Local biodiversity action plans are fundamental documents to deliver conservation at a local scale. The Biodiversity Action Plan is a partnership effort to target actions for key habitats and species in North Lanarkshire. Available resources are thereby focussed. This can only be achieved by cooperation between conservation bodies, development agencies, developers, local authorities and local people.

Integral to the success of the LBAP as a working document, is the collaboration of interested parties, sharing knowledge, expertise and resources to deliver action for nature.



Developing Partnerships

The BAP process has allowed existing local partnerships to be further developed, new partnerships to be formed, and priorities for local conservation to be identified.

The successful implementation of Biodiversity Action Planning within North Lanarkshire requires involvement from various sectors and the establishment of partnerships between all those who have an interest, or who have an impact on, land use within the area. Having a partnership approach means that workloads can be shared and a wide range of skills and resources utilised. It also ensures that there is a shared commitment to and ownership of the plan process, and subsequent implementation of the plan.

There is an increased focus on taking action at an ecosystem-scale and working in partnerships to coordinate joint action, creating a more supportive environment for biodiversity.

This fourth edition of the plan seeks to build on the successful work taken forward in previous plans for our priority species and habitats by identifying key targets and actions for our local biodiversity. By maintaining a flexible and dynamic approach, new projects can be continuously taken forward to benefit biodiversity and the ecosystem services they provide.

Projects taken forward for one key species or habitat will likely benefit many more and have the potential to restore and enhance ecosystems at various scales.



Sectors involved with North Lanarkshire's Biodiversity Action Plan:

- Voluntary conservation organisations
- Statutory agencies
- Local conservation groups
- Industry and commercial organisations (incl. Farmers and land managers)
- Schools, colleges and other educational bodies
- Adjacent local authorities

The North Lanarkshire Biodiversity Action Plan is coordinated by a wide ranging partnership. This comprises a small Core Group which oversees the process together with Habitat Working Groups. The Habitat Working groups oversee the completion of actions from the species and habitat action plans, maintaining an ecosystem perspective on the work being carried out.

Partnerships are not only external but also internal. Within North Lanarkshire Council for example, whose service delivery has a significant effect on biodiversity, there is a huge potential for cross directorate awareness raising and sharing of knowledge to have positive effects on North Lanarkshire's biodiversity resource. Such an approach is also fundamental to delivery of a Best Value service by the Council.

Partnership List

Some of the many organisations involved in biodiversity actions contributing to the NLBAP over the last 7 years.

- Buglife
- Central Scotland Green Network Trust
- Clyde Bat Group
- Concern for Swifts Scotland
- Countryside Ranger Service
- Forestry Commission Scotland
- Friends of Brownsburn Community Nature Park
- Friends of Cumbernauld Glen
- Friends of Kelvin Valley
- Froglife
- Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Network
- North Lanarkshire Council
- Royal Society for Protection of Birds
- Scottish Biodiversity Forum
- Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- Scottish Wildlife Trust
- Seven Lochs Partnership

Countryside Ranger Service

The Ranger Service is based within North Lanarkshire's three Country Parks; Drumpellier, Palacerigg and Strathclyde. In addition, we are involved with Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), including Brownsburn, Dumbreck Marsh and Kingshill, and the historic sites of Colzium-Lennox Estate and Dalzell Estate. We also have an input towards fifteen other greenspace managed sites such as Riccard Johnston and more than 350 SINCS (Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation).

We contribute to local and national Biodiversity Action Plans, with a range of projects including biological monitoring and recording, habitat improvement, and tackling invasive non-native species. Recent projects have included creation of den boxes for Pine marten, and nesting boxes for many bird species including Barn owls, Peregrine and Sand martin. We are involved with many local conservation groups and contribute to regional and national initiatives through these.

We work closely with North Lanarkshire schools to compliment outdoor learning and the Curriculum for Excellence. We offer formal and informal learning opportunities across the Council area to deliver environmental education at no charge. We work with colleges, universities, churches, youth and special interest groups.

The Ranger Service is active within local communities. We assist groups to develop and enhance access, biodiversity and facilities of their own parks and greenspaces through consultation and public participation.

We promote responsible access in line with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, and together with our natural partners we facilitate initiatives such as the John Muir Trust Award, Duke of Edinburgh Award and, more recently, Branching Out and Forest School programmes.



10. Small Actions Make Big Differences

In recent years, there has been a large shift in how we view nature. This starts in schools, with Eco Schools and Forest Schools helping to enthuse children about the outdoors and the biodiversity that lives there. This enthusiasm then develops into a lifelong passion for nature and conserving it.

Many nature conservation charities such as RSPB Scotland, The Scottish Wildlife Trust and Buglife rely on volunteers and are essential to their successful operation. For example, members of the public can assist at regular practical conservation works days at RSPB Baron's Haugh, or help Buglife undertake invertebrate surveys.

There is a wealth of community groups in North Lanarkshire that are making a contribution to biodiversity. Groups such as the Friends of Brownsburn Community Park and Friends of Cumbernauld House Park take forward beneficial conservation action at local sites, taking steps to help improve them for biodiversity and encouraging community involvement and engagement. Groups such as these are beneficial as they further biodiversity action at a local level and help publicise these sites to local people.

There is plenty that you can do, and is already being done, to protect and enhance our local biodiversity.

11. Biodiversity Under Threat

The key challenges to biodiversity over the coming years are¹:

- Applying an ecosystem approach
- Mainstreaming biodiversity delivery – involving many more people
- Focusing on the drivers of biodiversity loss
 - Invasive non-native species
 - Habitat fragmentation
 - Changes in land and freshwater and management
 - Diffuse pollution
 - Climate change

Habitat Fragmentation

Fragmentation of North Lanarkshire's habitats presents a real threat to local biodiversity. Species need large enough areas of habitat for their populations to be viable. "Corridors" and "stepping stones" between isolated areas of suitable habitat can allow plants and animals to move and adapt, which is increasingly important given the pressures of climate change. Creating and sustaining a mosaic of habitats will also provide opportunities for biodiversity to adapt and change, for example wooded areas interspersed with scrub, heath and grassland and other habitats.

"North Lanarkshire has an admirable range of natural habitats and these must be preserved to prevent the loss of biodiversity, particularly endangered and protected species" **Local resident**



Climate Change

A large fraction of species are vulnerable to an increased extinction risk due to past, present and future climate change, especially as climate change interacts with other stressors¹³. The combined effects of habitat fragmentation and climate change are two of the biggest problems facing wildlife. The main trend over time has been for areas of habitat to become even smaller and more isolated, causing local extinction, disrupting natural processes and making it ever more difficult for species to move around the landscape. This will intensify the effects of climate change on species, as populations need to move to stay within climate ranges or face extinction and many of Scotland's species are highly adapted to specific conditions. The central belt has been identified as a potential barrier to species movement so it is particularly important that we develop effective habitat networks.

Many of the actions within the habitat and species actions plan are designed with this in mind. For example, the development of habitat networks in the woodland plan aims to allow many species to move and habitats to adjust in response to climate change.

Some habitats in North Lanarkshire are effective carbon stores, bogs being the most significant. Collectively, UK peat bogs hold more carbon than the forests of the UK and France put together. However, increasing temperatures and potentially reduced summer rainfall could turn these carbon stores into carbon sources; as when this habitat becomes degraded the carbon is released.

Through the protection and enhancement of woodland and bog habitat, we are protecting and enhancing the capacity of habitats and soils to act as carbon sinks.



Invasive Non-Native Species

An invasive non-native species is any species outside its natural distribution that has been introduced by human activity that has the ability to spread causing damage to the environment, the economy, our health and the way we live¹⁴. These species can out-compete native species, disrupt ecosystem services and change our landscapes.

The European Union Biodiversity Strategy¹⁵ notes that invasive non-native species pose a significant threat to biodiversity in the EU, unless robust action is taken at all levels to control the introduction and establishment of these species. Together, these species inflict €12.5 billion worth of damage per year in the EU. Target 5 of the strategy states:

“By 2020, Invasive alien [non-native] species and their pathways are identified and prioritised, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and pathways are managed to prevent the introduction and establishment of new invasive alien species”.

A new Invasive Non-Native Species action plan has been included in this edition of the NLBAP to set out targets to tackle this issue at a local level.

13 IPCC, 2014. Climate Change 2014, Synthesis Report

14 Non Native Species Secretariat, 2015. Definition of Terms. <http://www.nonnativespecies.org/index.cfm?pageid=64>

15 Communication From The Commission To The European Parliament, The Council, The Economic and Social Committee and The Committee Of The Regions Our Life Insurance, Our Natural Capital: An EU Biodiversity Strategy To 2020 Communication From The Commission To The European

12. Monitoring and Reporting on Action

The NLBAP 2015-2020 takes into account the national framework which includes the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and Scotland's Biodiversity Indicators, developed by SNH and other government agencies (SEPA, Marine Scotland, and Forestry Commission Scotland) to chart changes in Scotland's biodiversity. The indicators are split into two groups. The first group are 'State indicators', which measure changes in biodiversity at the species, habitat and ecosystem level. The second group are 'Engagement indicators' which monitor how people interact with biodiversity through awareness, engagement or activity. In line with these, the NLBAP will be continuously revised and developed on a five year basis. The actions are designed so they can be monitored and reported on through the UK Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARs).



13. The Local Development Plan

North Lanarkshire's Local Development Plan (LDP), a vital public document which will shape the future of our area, is being prepared. It is due to be adopted in 2017, replacing the North Lanarkshire Local Plan. It will set out policies and proposals for the use, development and protection of land in our area. It will state what type of development will take place where, and which areas should not be developed. It will identify the best locations for new homes and businesses whilst protecting places of value to people and wildlife.

Parliament, The Council, The Economic and Social Committee and The Committee Of The Regions Our Life Insurance, Our Natural Capital: An EU Biodiversity Strategy To 2020

16 Scottish Government, 2004. Scotland's Biodiversity: It's in your Hands - A strategy for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in Scotland

14. Biodiversity Action Planning - The National Context

Scottish Biodiversity Strategy

The Scottish Biodiversity Group (SBG), established in 1996 to progress the UK Biodiversity Action Plan in Scotland, has evolved to become the Scottish Biodiversity Forum (SBF), a group chaired by the Scottish Government. The SBF includes representatives from statutory conservation agencies, non-governmental organisations, landowners and land managers, fisheries interests, commerce and industry, academics and recreational interests.

In May 2004 "Scotland's Biodiversity: it's In Your Hands" was published by the Scottish Executive following the work of several working groups convened under the Scottish Biodiversity Forum¹⁶. It draws together Scotland's obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity and the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.



2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity

The '2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity' is the Scottish Government's response to the Aichi Targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the European Union Biodiversity Strategy (Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020). The 2020 Challenge sets out three key aims, which are to:

- (i) Protect and restore ecosystems on land and in our seas, and to support healthier ecosystems
- (ii) Connect people with the natural world, for their health and well-being and to involve them more in decision making about their environment
- (iii) Maximise the benefits for Scotland of a diverse natural environment and the services it provides, contributing to sustainable economic growth.

With the addition of the 2020 Challenge, Scotland's Biodiversity Strategy now moves beyond halting the loss of biodiversity and aims to restore habitats and species to a resilient state.

It supports the Scottish Government's purpose of "creating a more successful country with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish through increasing sustainable economic growth".

Scottish Biodiversity Governance

The Scottish Biodiversity Committee, chaired by the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, provides the overall direction of activity for the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy. The Delivery and Monitoring Group report to the committee and drive forward the biodiversity agenda. There are seven groups tasked with specific activities, each reporting to the Delivery and Monitoring Group.

- Habitats and Species Group
- Protected Areas Group
- Natural Capital group
- Invasive Non-Native Species Group
- Strategic Marine issues Group
- Science and technical group
- Biodiversity and Land Use Communications Group

Changes to Environmental Legislation and Policy

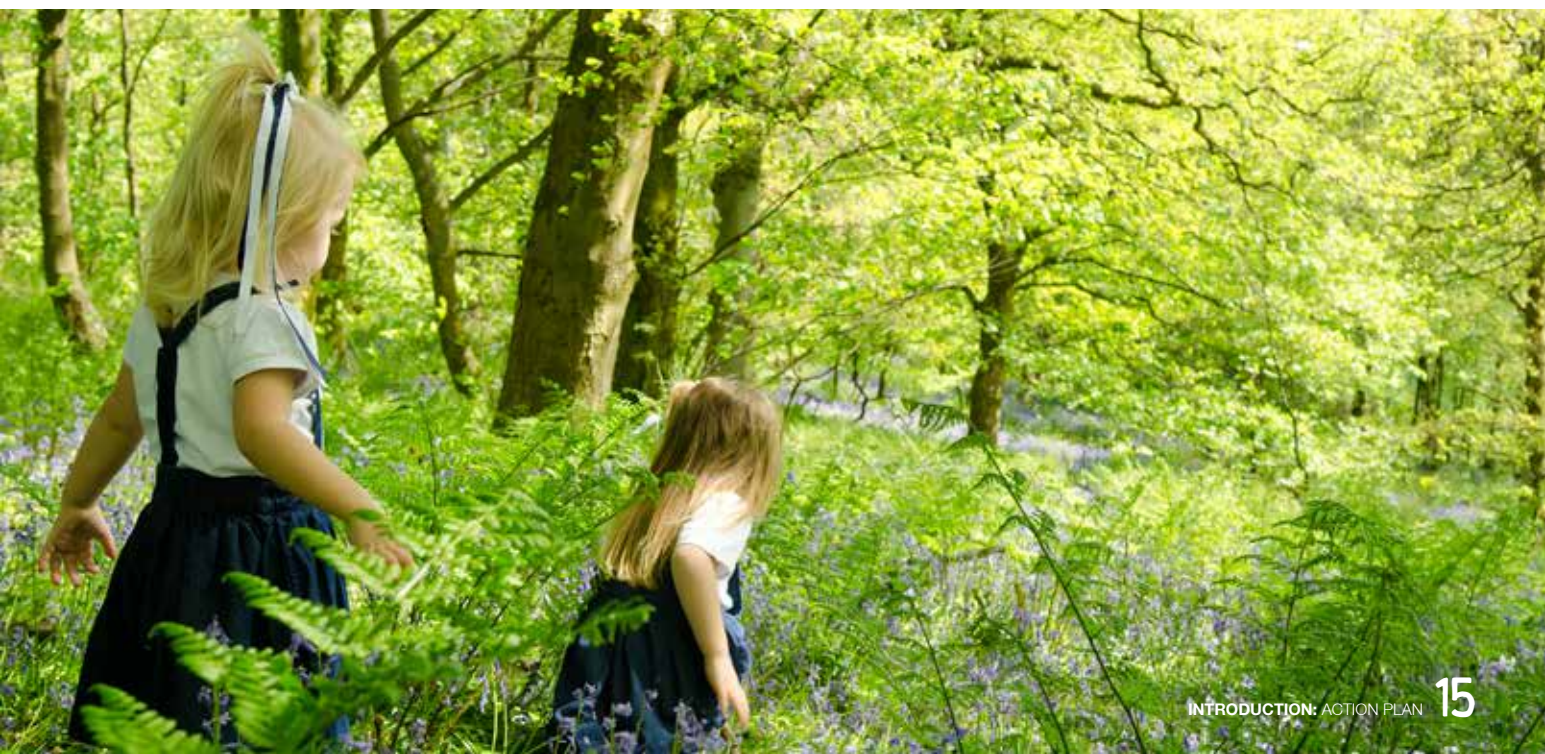
A few of the most important changes to Scottish environmental legislation since the last edition of the LBAP are detailed below.

Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 set ambitious targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 42% by 2020 and by 80% by 2050¹⁷. Part 4 of the Act places duties on public bodies relating to climate change, requiring that a public body must, in exercising its functions, act:

- In the way best calculated to contribute to delivery of the Act's emissions reductions targets;
- In the way best calculated to deliver any statutory adaptation programme; and
- in a way that it considers most sustainable.

¹⁷ Scottish Government, 2009. Climate Change (Scotland) Act



Scotland's Land Use Strategy

"Getting the best from our land: A land use strategy for Scotland" was laid out in Parliament in 2011 and forms a key commitment of section 57 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.

The vision of the strategy is:

"A Scotland where we fully recognise, understand and appreciate the importance of our land resources, and where our plans and decisions about land use deliver improved and ensuring benefits, enhancing the wellbeing of our nation"¹⁸.

It sets out three objectives:

- Land based businesses working with nature to contribute more to Scotland's prosperity
- Responsible stewardship of Scotland's natural resources delivering more benefits to Scotland's people
- Urban and rural communities better connected to the land, with more people enjoying the land and positively influencing land use

The Strategy also lays out Principles for Sustainable Land Use, including:

- Land use decisions should be informed by an understanding of the functioning of ecosystems which they affect in order to maintain the benefits of the ecosystem services which they provide
- Landscape change should be managed positively and sympathetically, considering the implications of change at a scale appropriate to the landscape in question, given that all of Scotland's landscapes are important to our sense of identity and our individual wellbeing and social wellbeing
- Land-use decisions should be informed by an understanding of the opportunities and threats brought about by the changing climate. Greenhouse gas emissions associated with land use should be reduced and land should continue to contribute to delivering climate change adaptation and mitigation objectives

As required by the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, the Strategy must be reviewed within five years; the second Strategy will be published by March 2016.



¹⁸ Scottish Government, 2011. Getting the best from our land – A land use strategy for Scotland

The Water Framework Directive

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) is a wide-ranging piece of European legislation which became law in Scotland through the Water Environment and Water Services (Scotland) Act (WEWS) 2003. The Act was supplemented by the Water Environment (River Basin Management planning: Further Provision) (Scotland) Regulations 2013 and the Cross-Border River Basins Districts (Scotland) Directions 2014. The Act created a new River Basin Management Planning (RBMP) process to achieve environmental improvements to protect and enhance our water environment in a sustainable way; The Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 are in place to manage activities which may impact on the water environment.¹⁹

The WFD established a legal framework for the protection, improvement and sustainable use of surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater across Europe. It represents a significant shift in attitude to water resource management, taking a more holistic approach to protection of the water environment, both in terms of the assessment of water status and the scale at which resources are managed.

Under the Directive, water status is determined not only by its chemical condition, but by the health of the animals and plants that live in it. It recognises that there is a need to look more broadly at water use, considering all activities that could pose a risk to water life, including alterations to banks, beds or shores, or to the amount of water in the water body. For the first time controls have been put in place for any activity that abstracts to or impounds water, and engineering or construction works that alter the shape of a water body, as well as discharges into watercourses.

The WFD looks at the water environment on a larger, river basin scale, rather than at rivers or lochs individually. This means consideration of not only local risks posed by activities in one watercourse but also their impacts on the water environment downstream and in water bodies elsewhere in the River Basin District.



The WFD also requires all designated authorities to have specific regard to sustainable flood management in the exercise of their functions.

The first river basin management plan (RBMP) for the Scotland river basin district was published in 2009 and covered the period 2009-2015. It set out targets for the protection and improvement of the water environment in the district and outlined plans to achieve these targets through implementing action to prevent deterioration and to tackle the impacts of existing pressures²⁰. The second River Basin Management Plans are currently under development. The second plans will:

- be informed by what has been learnt through delivering the first cycle of objectives; and
- target improvements to where we have confidence of environmental impact; and also where most benefits will be achieved.

Conservation Legislation

Legislation which reflects the importance of conserving biodiversity in Scotland includes the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and the European Birds and Habitats Directive.

Nationally and internationally important national heritage sites are protected through their designation as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation. The introduction of the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 now provides the principal legislative components of a new, integrated, system for nature conservation within Scotland. The Act sets out a series of measures which are designed to conserve biodiversity and to protect and enhance the biological and geological natural heritage of Scotland. In doing so, it locates the conservation of biodiversity and of Scotland's natural environment within a wider British, European and global context. In relation to biodiversity in particular, it requires public bodies and office-holders to consider the effect of their actions at a local, regional, national and international level.

The most significant change to conservation legislation in Scotland to occur between this edition of the LBAP and the previous document has been the introduction of the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011.

¹⁹ Scottish Government, 2009. The River Basin Management Plan for the Scotland River Basin District 2009-2015, Summary.

²⁰ Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA), 2013. Delivering the programme of measures in the first River Basin Management Plan: A progress report for the Scotland River Basin District 2012

Wildlife and Natural Environment (WANE) Act 2011

The WANE Act 2011 made significant changes to legislation protecting wildlife and regulating natural resources and amended the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981²¹. As a result of the Act, Scotland now leads the way in Europe on non-native species law and has brought focus to the need for enhanced biosecurity. The amendments enable Scotland to adopt the internationally recognised 3-stage approach to dealing with invasive non-native species and aim to:

- Prevent the release and spread of non-native animal and plant species into areas where they can cause damage to native species and habitats and to economic interests;
- Ensure a rapid response to new populations can be undertaken; and
- Ensure effective control and eradication measures can be carried out when problem situations arise.

It also led to the publication of the “Code of Practice on Non-Native Species”²². The code sets out how individuals can play their part in preventing non-native species from being released and how to act responsibly to ensure non-native species under ownership do not cause harm to the environment.

Biodiversity and the Local Authority Planning Process

Greenspace Development act as internal consultees to North Lanarkshire Council Planning Authority. They provide detailed comments, ensuring that developments comply with all relevant wildlife legislation. Impacts to nationally and locally important species and habitats are considered and, where appropriate, mitigation requested to minimise any ecological impacts.



The Biodiversity Duty

Under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 all public bodies in Scotland have a duty to “further the conservation of biodiversity” as they carry out their work, reporting their actions at least every three years. The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011, further requires public bodies in Scotland to provide a publicly available report, every three years, on the actions which they have taken to meet this biodiversity duty.

This means that all public bodies have a duty to think about their impact on the natural world. Public bodies must reduce any negative effects for biodiversity, and look for ways of benefitting biodiversity in the way they go about their business.

This duty is not just beneficial to biodiversity; it can also help meet other public service aspirations and, in the process, provide significant cost savings and efficiencies. This legislation gives the public sector in Scotland a unique leadership role in recognising the impact and dependence on biodiversity, and working to protect our biological inheritance. This duty applied to public bodies’ activities and operations, to their plans and policies. The actions that public bodies can take to comply with this duty may be directly practical ones, such as cutting grass less often to provide more shelter and food for wildlife. Some public bodies may decide to carry out more complex actions like auditing the source of all products they use to ensure they are produced as sustainable as possible. This ties in very closely with the duty that public bodies have to act sustainably as part of their duty to achieve Best Value, and safeguarding biodiversity is a key part of that. There is more to do to ensure decision makers across the public sector can understand these added benefits if we are to realise the aspirations for both biodiversity and people in Scotland¹.



21 Scottish Government, 2011. Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011

22 Scottish Government, Code of Practice on Non-Native Species

The Scottish Biodiversity List

The Scottish Biodiversity List is a list of flora, fauna and habitats considered by Scottish Ministers to be of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity.

The list will also be an important information resource for everyone with an interest in Scotland's rich biodiversity.

The list identifies species and habitats that should be taken account of in our decision making, particularly in delivery by public bodies of their biodiversity duty.

The development of the list was a collaborative effort involving a great many stakeholders, overseen by scientists from the Scottish Biodiversity Forum. Completion of the list is an exciting development in our knowledge of biodiversity in Scotland as it is the first time such a stock-take has been done in Scotland.

Full details of the Scottish Biodiversity List can be found on the Biodiversity Scotland website (www.biodiversityscotland.gov.uk). You can also search the list by species group, habitat type and location and access additional information about the species and habitats from the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) gateway, the UK's biodiversity information network.



Scottish Rural Development Programme

The SRPD 2007-2013 was a £1.6 billion programme of economic, environmental and social measures designed to develop rural Scotland over the next seven years. It addressed economic and social goals and supported environmental measures. It was outcome-focussed and primarily aimed at delivering a Greener Scotland that is wealthier and fairer whilst strengthening rural communities.

It brought together a wide range of support schemes including those covering farming, forestry and primary processing sections, rural enterprise and business development, diversification and rural tourism. It supported and encouraged rural communities and delivered the LEADER initiative for local innovation in rural areas.

The Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP) 2014-2020 delivers Pillar II of the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

The key purpose of the SRDP 2014-2020 is to help achieve sustainable economic growth in Scotland's rural areas and the priorities are similar to the previous programme. The priorities of the programme are:

- Enhancing the rural economy
- Supporting agricultural businesses
- Protecting and improving the natural environment
- Addressing the impact of climate change
- Supporting rural communities

15. Species Audit

To inform the updated LBAP, an audit of key species in North Lanarkshire was undertaken to assess their current status. A similar exercise completed in 1999 was used as a baseline and partner organisations were consulted to discuss emerging priorities and to share records. The audit process produced:

- An updated list of the key sites local priority species are known from
- An updated audit list of key local priority species
- An indication of the status of key species over the past 15 years
- An indication of gaps in local recording and improvements that can be made to internal recording systems

The full species audit is available at www.northlan.gov.uk/biodiversity

Contact

The LBAP is designed to be an evolving, working document with future updates and material to be published on the biodiversity web pages: www.northlan.gov.uk/biodiversity. If you would like to receive updates to the plan please visit the biodiversity web pages or contact the Biodiversity Officer with your name and address.

The Biodiversity Officer
Greenspace Development
Palacerigg House
Palacerigg Country Park
Cumbernauld
G67 3HU
Email: greenspace@northlan.gov.uk
Telephone: 01236 780636

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"Our biodiversity is something to be preserved and proud of" **Local resident**



Glossary of Terms

Blanket bog – area of peat (mainly of bog-moss Sphagnum), spreading over sloping ground

Bryophytes – mosses and liverworts

Eutrophic – nutrient-rich water, often subject to algal 'blooms' in summer

Indicator species – usually plants or invertebrates confined to particular ecological conditions prevailing in long established habitats. They may be unable to survive damage (eg. Regular burning) or disturbance to the habitat where they are found and are thus vulnerable.

Local Nature Reserve (LNR) – Local nature reserves are areas of at least locally important natural heritage, designated and managed by local authorities to give people better opportunities to learn about and enjoy nature close to where they live.

Odonata – dragonflies and damselflies

Raised bog – area of peat on level ground, rising gradually to a central dome

Red Data Book – list of species of conservation concern based on known rate of decline

Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) – local designation covering sites that have a local biodiversity value or notable biodiversity features

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs) – used as an alternative to conventional urban drainage systems and are designed to reduce pollution and flood risk in watercourse and water bodies. they are man-made structures and receive water run-off.