






Sustainability & Communities Partnership

SNH submission under Agenda topic 'Biodiversity' – 29 April 2016

Biodiversity – *the variety of life*

Biodiversity – global context and background

1.0 Global biodiversity policy is shaped by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. This conference was held in Rio de Janeiro, in 1992 and is often referred to as either the "Rio Conference" or the [Earth Summit](#) . The Earth Summit resulted in the signing of the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) . The United Kingdom and Northern Ireland embraced the recommendations of the Earth Summit by publishing its [United Kingdom Biodiversity Action Plan](#)  in 1994.



1.1 The Conference of the Parties in 2010 (CoP 10) took place in Nagoya, Japan at which the [Strategic Plan for biodiversity for the period 2011-2020](#)  was adopted, including twenty [Aichi Biodiversity Targets](#) .

1.2 In 2004 Scotland published the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, *Scotland's Biodiversity - It's in your hands*. This was updated in 2013 by the 2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity. This is now supported by '**A Route map to 2020**' to help deliver the strategy. These reflect both global and European biodiversity policy and targets.

Biodiversity – a duty on all public sector bodies

2.0 A duty to further the conservation of biodiversity was placed on all public sector bodies in Scotland in 2004. This biodiversity duty is about connecting people with the environment and managing biodiversity in the wider environment all around us, not just in specific protected sites. Since 2011 there has also been a duty on public bodies to publish an annual report showing how they meet this requirement.

Biodiversity – 2020 Challenge and Route Map

3.0 The 2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity sets out the major steps needed to improve the state of nature in Scotland. The work needed to deliver this is however complex and challenging. [Scotland's Biodiversity a Route Map to 2020](#)  has been developed to help direct priorities for action. It is not a catalogue of current and planned action but sets out six **Big Steps for Nature** and a number of **priority projects** associated with them. The Big Steps and priority projects are summarised in [Table 1](#)  supporting the Route Map.

3.1 The six **Big Steps for Nature** are:

1. Ecosystem Restoration
2. Investment in Natural Capital
3. Quality Greenspace (for health and education benefits)
4. Conserving wildlife in Scotland
5. Sustainable management of land and freshwater
6. Marine and Coastal ecosystems restored

What are the benefits?

4.0 Moray is renowned for its natural environment and biodiversity is an integral part of that. Just a few examples:

- Agriculture – the financial benefit to farmers nationally from pollinating insects is estimated at over £400 million.

- Moray is renowned for its food and drink – both rely on clean and healthy ecosystems.
- Salmon angling on the River Spey is worth in excess of £10M to the local economy annually, and supports 350 full-time equivalent jobs.

What can I do to help?

5.0 Biodiversity isn't restricted to protected areas like nature reserves, or to wilderness areas – it is all around us, even in the urban environment. To help biodiversity flourish we can:

- Think about biodiversity in all the decisions we make about new developments: that might be the extent of greenspace provided, allotments, tree planting or innovative ideas like green roofs.
- Remember that species and ecosystems are inextricably linked – a seemingly small change to a habitat might result in the loss of a species locally.
- Manage gardens or public greenspaces for nature – a wildflower area is cheaper to maintain than a mown lawn, is better for wildlife and looks nicer too.
- Plant urban trees – they will benefit both people and wildlife.
- Be aware of some of the threats to biodiversity, like climate change or invasive non-native species, and take action on those whenever we can.

Good examples from Moray:

6.0

- Moray Council Local Development Plan includes policies relating to the natural environment, aiming to protect habitats and species and develop new greenspaces. Planning permission for new developments can include conditions such as the use of locally native tree and shrub species in landscaping plans as these species will support a great variety of associated species such as birds and butterflies
- WDCS Scottish Dolphin Centre at Spey Bay - dolphins are the main draw but the centre also helps visitors to understand more about the wider marine environment and its importance to many other species:
http://www.wdcs.org/connect/wildlife_centre/spey_bay.php#.VxdKOU1RHcs
- Glenlivet Estate is managed for a range of activities - farming, forestry, tourism - across a variety of habitats such as heather moorland, rivers and streams and woodlands. The Estate actively seeks to support Biodiversity Action Plan species and habitats: <http://www.glenlivetestate.co.uk/about-us/estate-management/biodiversity-and-conservation/>
- The environmental education charity Wild Things! runs a Blue Gym programme to tackle the removal of invasive non-native species in Moray, benefitting biodiversity but also improving the health and wellbeing of local people and boosting tourism: <http://wild-things.org.uk/wild-things-launch-blue-gym-remove-invasive-plants/>
- The Forres Community Woodlands Trusts organises parties of volunteers to manage local woodlands to benefit wildlife, for example clearing brash and removing rhododendron: <http://www.forrescommunitywoodlands.org/>

And finally

7.0 For further information about how the natural heritage can play a part in supporting the outcomes from Community Planning Partnerships, SNH has produced this easy-to-read publication

<http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/publications/heritagemanagement/natural%20benefits.pdf>