

## Dumfries and Galloway Council Biodiversity Duty Report 2018-2020

### Introduction

This is the third Biodiversity Duty Report published by Dumfries and Galloway Council and covers the period January 2018 to December 2020. It fulfils the statutory requirement of Dumfries and Galloway Council to report on work undertaken to further the conservation of biodiversity.

The report focuses on 6 key areas:

- Dumfries and Galloway Council, its purpose, including any particular environmental responsibilities
- Actions the Council has undertaken alone or as part of a partnership to benefit biodiversity directly or achieve wider outcomes for nature and people
- Mainstreaming Biodiversity – steps the Council has taken to incorporate biodiversity measures into its wider policies
- Nature based solutions and climate change – steps to support the contribution biodiversity can make to build resilience and mitigate and adapt to climate change
- Public engagement and workforce development – including education and engaging with communities, young people and the public
- Research and monitoring – actions to increase understanding of nature and biodiversity both internally and externally and to measure the impacts of our actions

### Background

Section 2 of the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, states:

*“It is the duty of every public body and office-holder, in exercising any functions, to further the conservation of biodiversity so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions.”*

Following an amendment in the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011, public bodies are also required, every three years, to publish and make available a report on the actions they have taken to meet their biodiversity duty.

Conservation and the enhancement of Biodiversity is a key priority for the Scottish Government, and they are committed to protecting and enhancing Scotland’s species and habitats. These ambitions are set out in the *Scottish Biodiversity Strategy* (‘Scotland’s Biodiversity: It’s in Your Hands’, 2004) and the *2020 Challenge for Scotland’s Biodiversity* (2013).

## **1.0 Dumfries and Galloway Council**

### **1.1 About Dumfries and Galloway**

Dumfries and Galloway is located in south-west Scotland. To the north, the region shares borders with South Ayrshire, East Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire; to the east with Scottish Borders; and to the south with the county of Cumbria. Lying to the north of the Solway Firth and to the east of the Irish Sea, Dumfries and Galloway occupies a land area of approximately 6,439 km<sup>2</sup>, making it the third largest of Scotland's 32 local authorities and has a coastline of 350km.

Dumfries and Galloway contains a wide variety of natural and semi-natural habitats from remote moorlands, through farmland to a diverse coastline and extensive intertidal estuaries. The quality and importance of these habitats is reflected in a range of national and international conservation designations, whereby large areas of the region are afforded statutory protection, as are a number of species found within them.

### **1.2 Decision Making Structure**

Dumfries and Galloway Council is run by 43 Councillors. These Councillors make decisions or recommendations at committees that affect the services of the Council. The Council's Biodiversity Officer retired in February 2018 and has not been replaced, however some additional services have been procured and delivered through the regional Environmental Records Centre (see 5.1 and Appendix 1). At the start of this report period the Biodiversity Officer was based in Economy, Environment & Infrastructure Service, however following the Council's Transformation Programme this duty now sits within the Policy & Resources Directorate. Any decisions requiring committee approval that relate to biodiversity are now principally made through the Policy & Resources Committee.

### **1.3 Dumfries and Galloway Council Priorities and Commitments**

Dumfries and Galloway Council Plan 2017-2022 sets out the approach taken to ensure services and activities deliver the Council's ambitions. The Council Priorities provide focus for the Council's work over the coming years – these are building the local economy, providing the best start for all children, protecting the most vulnerable people and being an inclusive Council. The local environment has been recognised as being integral to the development of the regions economy and communities. A midterm review of the Plan, undertaken September 2020, saw the addition of Climate Change as the fifth council priority. This new priority – to 'Urgently respond to climate change and transition to a carbon neutral region' involves the Council working with partners and stakeholders to achieve the target by the following means;

- Encourage understanding of how the way we live and work in the region impacts on climate change
- Changes to reduce emissions and adapt to a low carbon approach
- Lead on the transition to cleaner and greener technologies
- Promote and protect our region's natural environment
- Contribute to a greener economy, maximising the region's green energy potential

The Council as a result is identifying additional resources that may be required to facilitate the delivery of the new Strategic Priority and its objectives.

#### 1.4 Local Outcome Improvement Plan

The Region's Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2017- 2027 has as one of its five guiding principles 'Sustainability – ensuring long-term economic, social and environmental well-being'.

#### 1.5 Environment Policy Framework

In January 2019 the Council's Economy, Environment & Infrastructure Committee agreed the Environment Policy Framework 2018-2023 which ensures that the policy is embedded and adopted by all Council departments. The Framework outlines how the Council will achieve a Healthy and sustainable environment, Responsible consumption and Climate Action. It is acknowledged that the Council's environment commitments are relevant to all staff as everyone has a role in acting sustainably and protecting and enhancing our environment locally and globally.

### 2.0 Actions for Biodiversity

Actions undertaken by the Council, alone and in partnership, to benefit biodiversity directly or achieve wider outcomes for nature and people

#### 2.1 Galloway Glens Landscape Partnership

The Council is the lead partner in the Galloway Glens Landscape Partnership, connecting people living and working in the area with its heritage and landscape in the Water of Ken and River Dee catchment, from source to the sea. The Galloway Glens Landscape Partnership resulted from local interest in the area and a wish to better understand the heritage contained therein, making use of the unique natural and built heritage of the area to encourage sustainable communities now and into the future. The Partnership was awarded £2.7million of project funding over five years from 2018 and is now half way through their programme.

A programme of work which takes action on biodiversity includes a suite of projects that undertake practical improvement works as well as educating residents and visitors in the challenges facing the natural landscape. Projects include:

- Red Squirrel Conservation
- Peatland Connections
- Achieved: 1394 hectares of Galloway landscape under active management – through projects including Black Grouse & Greenland White Fronted Goose habitat creation, and projects on the Blackwater of Dee and Threave Estate.

#### 2.2 Countryside and Access Management

Countryside and Access staff, now based in the Environment and Strategic Projects Team, have directly secured significant external funding to support countryside and landscape projects that support the region's tourism offer utilising the abundant natural resources and designated landscapes. The team also works with and supports partners, stakeholders and local communities to secure funding through advice and guidance.

Staff provide advice and strategy for outdoor access and countryside asset management, paths (including the Core Path Plan), environmental education (Southern Upland Way only due to external funding), Local Nature Reserves (Wigtown Bay only) and council owned countryside sites and the regions National Scenic Areas (to a limited extent). The Team are involved in developing and

delivering projects linking urban and rural populations with the wider countryside particularly were projects will deliver multiple benefits, these include: the Southern Upland Way, The Rhins of Galloway Coast Path, and Criffel Path Improvements.

### **2.3 Schools for the Future Building Programme**

Over the period a programme of new schools have been built including at North West Campus Dumfries and Dalbeattie Learning Campus. External works have included the seeding of wildflower meadows, woodland planting and SUDS.

### **2.4 Strategic Woodland Project**

The Council has engaged with Scottish Forestry to identify a possible location of a pilot for a Regional Strategic Woodland Creation project. While the Council is supportive of this initiative and would be keen to take it forward current resource issues have meant the project is currently on hold.

### **2.5 Galloway and Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere Reserve**

Dumfries and Galloway Council entered into a 5-year Service Level Agreement with Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere Reserve (GSAB) in April 2017 to support the delivery of their Strategic Plan 2017-2022. Through this partnership the Region's unique natural assets are being developed and promoted providing additional value to local businesses and visitors to the area.

Projects include:

- SHAPE – Sustainable Heritage Areas: Partnerships for Ecotourism. A three year project completed in 2020 that enabled authorities, businesses and communities to develop innovative ecotourism initiatives which preserve local natural (and cultural) assets and generate economic value.
- PLACE in the Biosphere – communities in three contrasting landscape areas (two in D&G) engaged in gaining a greater understanding of the natural assets of their local landscape.
- Business Certification Scheme - the first UNESCO Biosphere Certification Scheme in the UK launched 2018. To date 25 businesses have achieved the trademark through demonstrating their delivery of high standards of environmental and sustainability principles. The scheme recently won the RSPB Nature of Scotland Business award 2020.

### **2.6 Dumfries and Galloway Biodiversity Partnership**

Secretariat responsibilities for the LBAP group were assumed by NatureScot (Scottish Natural Heritage) although limited engagement has taken place due to other priorities since the departure of the Biodiversity Officer.

### **2.7 Environmental Alliance for the South of Scotland**

Faced with a perceived lack of influence in policy making across the south of Scotland a number of environmental NGO's and individuals have come together to form EASoS. It is hoped this will provide a unified voice to represent the environmental interest in the South of Scotland leading to easier consultation engagement for Government, local authorities, South of Scotland Enterprise and industry.

### **2.8 Dumfries and Galloway LEADER 2014-2020 programme**

The Local Development Strategy includes a theme focussed on Land, Coast and Marine Environments. Environmental projects supported over the period include:

- Barrhill Community Woodland

- Increasing Knowledge for addressing acidification
- Restoring Annan’s Water – Community Engagement Project
- Solway Coastwise
- Galloway Glens Biosphere Experience

## 2.9 Dumfries and Galloway Invasive Non-native Species (INNS) Working Group.

The Working Group coordinates action around existing and future INNS threats and meet annually. The Group is involved with education and awareness raising, engagement with planning and other infrastructure delivery organisations to limit spread and new contamination and building awareness and links with Police Scotland to ensure appropriate enforcement where necessary.

2.10 Dumfries and Galloway Council elected members and staff are actively involved in the following partnerships, each of which has a significant biodiversity element:

- **Solway Firth Partnership**

Solway Firth Partnership [www.solwayfirthpartnership.co.uk](http://www.solwayfirthpartnership.co.uk) work on monitoring and raising awareness of marine INNS. This includes regular monitoring of marine INNS through settlement panels at Stranraer Marina and Portpatrick Harbour. (Kirkcudbright Marina was monitored in 2019 but was a less effective site for monitoring due to the fast freshwater flow past the marina.)

SFP recently completed the Solway Coast is Clear Project looking for innovative solutions to removing, recycling / repurposing litter from historic litter sinks (places where marine debris has built up over a number of years) on the Dumfries and Galloway Coast through research and fact-finding trips .

The SMILE (Solway Marine Information, Learning and Environment) Project offers a significant opportunity to develop the foundations for a cross-boundary ecosystem approach to support the future management of the Solway Firth through provision of high-quality data and local information.

- **Southern Uplands Partnership** [www.sup.org.uk](http://www.sup.org.uk)

Projects include the South of Scotland Golden Eagles Project and hosting the South West Scotland Environmental Information Centre.

## 3.0 Mainstreaming Biodiversity

### 3.1 Local Development Plan 2

The Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan 2, adopted in October 2019, provides the planning framework and guides the future use and development of land in towns, villages and the rural area. It also indicates where development should happen and where it should not. The 20 year vision for LDP2 includes a protected and enhanced natural and historic environment.

The Overarching Policy OP1 d) Biodiversity and Geodiversity is:

Development proposals should respect, protect and/or enhance the region's rich and distinct biodiversity, geodiversity and sites identified for their contribution to the natural environment at any level including ancient and semi-natural woodland. The guidance contained within the Local Biodiversity Action Plan, and any subsequent revised or amended document, will be a material consideration in the assessment of proposals.

Further policies relating to biodiversity and climate change are:

- Policy NE4: Sites of International Importance for Biodiversity
- Policy NE5: Species of International Importance
- Policy NE6: Sites of National Importance for Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Policy NE7: Forestry and Woodland
- Policy NE8: Trees and Development
- Policy NE9: Developed and Undeveloped Coast
- Policy NE10: Erosion and Coastal Protection
- Policy NE11: Supporting the Water Environment
- Policy NE12: protection of Water Margins
- Policy NE13: Agricultural Soil
- Policy NE14: Carbon Rich Soil
- Policy NE15: Protection and Restoration of Peat Deposits as Carbon Sinks

Supplementary Guidance which has been adopted as supporting LDP2 include:

- Trees and Development
- Open Space and New Development
- Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems

### **3.2 Local Nature Conservation Sites**

A Technical Paper on Local Nature Conservation Sites supports LDP2. It describes the process used to identify the locally important biodiversity and geodiversity sites protected by LDP policies.

### **3.3 Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA)**

As required under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs) have been carried out in order to determine the potential environmental effects of various plans, programmes and strategies proposed by the Council. Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna are included as topics requiring assessment through SEAs.

### **3.4 Habitat Regulations Appraisals (HRA)**

As required under the Conservation (Natural habitats, &c) Regulations 1994, Habitat Regulation Appraisals have been carried out for plans and projects which may have a potential effect on sites designated as Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Areas or Ramsar sites.

### **3.5 Protected Species Management**

As required under the Conservation (Natural habitats, &c) Regulations 1994, protected species surveys and assessments, involving bats, otters, great crested newts and fish, were carried out in relation to DGC projects relating to economic development, harbour development and flood management.

### 3.6 Carbon Management Plan

The current Carbon Management Plan has become obsolete now and is being replaced with the 'Strategic Plan- A Route map to net Zero' which will be going to committee in January 2021 for adoption.

### 3.7 INNS Recording system & Policy and Control

A GIS-based INNS recording system is operational and available to all Council staff to report and have access to records of invasive non-native species. This data is exchanged with external partners.

The Council has an established policy in place for tackling INNS. This provides guidance to enable the Council to target resources at the INNS which pose the greatest risk to biodiversity, as well as to human health, infrastructure and other environmental interests.

## 4.0 Nature based solutions and climate change

### 4.1 Climate Emergency Declaration

Dumfries and Galloway Council declared Climate Emergency in June 2019 and agreed a 12-point plan to pursue net zero carbon emissions in the region (by 2025), protecting our fragile biodiversity and our natural environment.

The Plan identifies the importance of *'our biodiversity and natural environment in our drive to reduce the impact of climate change and will encourage and support practices to enhance and sustain the farmed and natural world.'*

- The Council has appointed Councillor Dougie Campbell as the Council's Environment Champion
- A Climate Emergency Cross Party Working Group has been established to oversee the implementation of the plan, and a Climate Emergency Project Officer has been appointed. Members of the Group have recently undertaken training in Carbon Literacy.
- The creation of a new priority for Dumfries and Galloway Council (see 1.3) reflects the commitment to managing and reducing our carbon footprint, and the recognition of our corporate responsibility and dedication to become a carbon neutral region within the next five years.

### 4.2 Borderlands Growth Deal

Dumfries & Galloway is one of five cross-border local authorities working together to deliver transformative change across the region to maximise the benefits of growth. The Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal 'Heads of Terms' has a Natural Capital Innovation Zone theme within it. During 2020 consultation with Government and industry sectors has been undertaken to further develop the proposition across the south of Scotland. Working in partnership with the Scottish Borders Council a number of potential pilot projects have been identified. The proposition will be submitted to the Scottish and UK Governments by the end of the year.

## 5.0 Public engagement and workforce development

### 5.1 Outdoor Woodland Learning Group- Environment Fair

This active regional group is an informal mix of people with an interest in outdoor learning, including Countryside Rangers, teachers, Forest School leaders, organisations, charities and individuals, and is part of a national network promoting and supporting outdoor learning. The group works together to develop and run projects, hold events and training, share funding and resources, share good practice and network. The Council assists the OWL group with the co-ordination and delivery of the annual

Environment Fair which this year was held on line

<https://www.facebook.com/1405787273056659/videos/1195430720789870>

## 5.2 Museums Exhibitions & Events

Council museums in Dumfries, Annan, Sanquhar, Kirkcudbright and Stranraer include items of natural history interest in their collections and regularly host temporary exhibitions, and accompanying talks, related to biodiversity. This has included a 'Flow Country' exhibition exploring the history, wildlife and environmental importance of peatlands on a national scale, through local examples.

## 5.3 Community Environmental Action Group

This group was established by the Council to support the development of the new household recycling service and support local individuals or environmental groups in sustainability issues including:

- Facilitation community beach cleaning
- Sharing information on reducing packaging, promoting re-use and recycling
- Sharing ideas and accurate information on the new recycling service
- Supporting a group to produce a video on reducing litter

## 5.4 Our Heritage Small Grants Scheme

The Galloway Glens 'Our Heritage' Small Grants Scheme has awarded funding to not for profit organisations for projects that connect people to their heritage. Awards over the past 2 years have included: Moths at Home, Love our Fruit and Nuts, Mammals at Home and BioBlitz in Kirkcudbright Bay (deliver of latter two projects delayed due to COVID)

## 5.5 Council Grants for Communities

Over the report period Dumfries and Galloway Council has awarded grants to community organisations to undertake environmental projects. The Coastal Communities Fund has supported projects including Nith Smolt Training Project, Aldouran Wetland Garden, and Portpatrick School Garden. Projects receiving support from the Regional Community Fund include Moffat Community Woodlands and D&G Outdoor Access Trust's New Galloway Link Path. Dumfries and Galloway Council also awarded funding to Castle Douglas Development Forum for the treatment of blue green algae at Carlingwark Loch through dispersal of barley straw bales.

## 5.6 Youth Council's Climate Change and Environment sub-group

Youth Councillors are developing an action plan for what young people can do on a local level to combat climate change, this is in draft form just now, and all Youth Councillors have pledged to get their carbon footprints down to the UK National average (or lower if possible) by the end of 2021.

The group are also in the process of beginning to deliver workshops on Climate Activism for Beginners to other young people across the region, in order to have "Climate Champions" spreading the message of climate change to their peers and families.

## 5.7 Youth Work Service – Climate Change Work

Several in-school projects have been running on the subject of Climate Change with the aim of improving the Climate knowledge of young people to empower and enable them to make a positive impact on Climate Change on a local level. These have taken place in high schools across the region for themed days on Climate Change and Environment such as Earth Hour, Veganuary, Earth Day and the Great British Beach Clean.



### 5.8 Conservation Volunteers

The continuing community action, from groups such as the D&G Eco Warriors and ONUS South West Scotland, in clearing litter from our region's coastlines.

The Fleet Valley National Scenic Area volunteers undertake regular habitat management and improvement works on sites within the Fleet NSA. They work with the Council on Core Path management, with Forestry and Land Scotland at Cally Woods, and habitat improvement work with Galloway Fisheries Trust, NatureScot at Cairnsmore NNR and with Butterfly Conservation on the Borgue coast.

### 5.9 Solway Firth Partnership

Solway Firth Partnership raises awareness of the issue of marine and coastal litter through their website / social media and working with partners on projects. They have litter picking equipment that can be borrowed by community groups to carry out beach cleaning. They organise an annual event on World Oceans Day.

They have produced information on coastal biodiversity (birds, shells, wildlife, flowers) and Solway Coastwise publications [www.solwayfirthpartnership.co.uk/community/solway-coastwise/](http://www.solwayfirthpartnership.co.uk/community/solway-coastwise/) and the Galloway Glens Kirkcudbright Bay Views Project promoting access around Kirkcudbright Bay - [www.solwayfirthpartnership.co.uk/community/kirkcudbright-bay-views/](http://www.solwayfirthpartnership.co.uk/community/kirkcudbright-bay-views/)

### 5.10 Carbon Literacy

Dumfries and Galloway Council has achieved the Bronze Award for Carbon Literacy, the first non-metropolitan Local Authority in Scotland to do this.

Staff within the Youth Work Service have undertaken Climate Emergency Training for Youth Workers, and were accredited with a Carbon Literate Citizen certificates, equipping them to work with young people on Climate Change. All staff within the Youth Service have pledged to cut their Carbon Footprint by at least one ton per year or aim to get as close to the UK National average as possible.

## 6.0 Research and monitoring

### 6.1 South West Scotland Environmental Information Centre (SWSEIC)

The Centre aims to further the appreciation, understanding and protection of the natural environment of SW Scotland by collecting, collating, managing and safeguarding information about the natural environment and providing a focal point through which anyone may access the information. Information on the flora, fauna, geology and other aspects of Dumfries and Galloway's natural environment is disseminated to interested individuals, communities and organisations and promotes and SWSEIC encourages biological recording in the region. Dumfries and Galloway Council supports the centre financially through a Service Level Agreement. In return, The Council receives access to biodiversity data to enable it to better carry out its statutory and other functions. See Appendix 1 for SWSEIC Report 201-2020.

### 6.2 Galloway Glens Landscape Partnership

Research and Monitoring studies in the Galloway Glens area include:

- 5-Year Biosecurity Plan for the Kirkcudbrightshire Dee Catchment (2020-2024)
- Report on the distribution of INNS in the River Dee Catchment June 2019
- Report on the Distribution of Salmon in the Upper Dee
- Natural Flood Management Feasibility Study
- Loch Ken Fishery Study
- Arctic Charr Reintroduction Feasibility Study

### 6.3 Solway Firth Partnership

Studies undertaken as part of the SMILE project include:

- Socio-Economic Analysis of the Scottish Solway (SEASS)
- Socio-Economic Analysis of the English Solway (SEAES)

### 6.4 Galloway and Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere

Research and Learning is one of the four key themes of the Biosphere. During the period GSAB this has included:

- Natural Heritage Management Plan. Identifying High Focus Habitats and Species of the Biosphere (Core, Buffer and Transition Zones).
- Working with the James Hutton Institute on developing the Sense of Place approach in communities
- Hosting an international conference on Dark Skies
- A Changing Landscape Conference exploring and debating issues of land use in south west Scotland, the future challenges faced and how they can be addressed.

## 7.0 Highlights and Challenges

7.1 The highlights over the report period:

- The addition of the new Climate Change priority by the Council and the establishment of a Climate Emergency Cross Party Working Group. The Council are currently working in partnership with many organisations across the region and nationally to develop a regional baseline emissions inventory that will be the basis to inform the Strategic Plan guiding the region to net zero carbon. The recent achievement in becoming a Carbon Literate Council has given a clearer understanding of what causes climate change, what needs to be done to address and the immediate measures to be taken to counteract the effects of global warming. More information at <https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/21773/Climate-Emergency>
- Galloway Glens Landscape Partnership Project has enabled projects to be undertaken that are making a positive impact on biodiversity. More details on projects under the 'Natural Landscapes of the Galloway Glens', including the Black Water of Dee Restorations and raising awareness of Greenland White Fronted Geese, can be found at <https://gallowayglens.org/project/natural-landscape-of-the-galloway-glens/>
- Following the South of Scotland Enterprise Act 2019, which includes the protection and enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage and environmental quality of the South of Scotland, the new enterprise agency became operational in April 2020. They have recently committed to a five-year funding agreement with Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere worth £1.9M which will see the Biosphere growing its core team and activities across SW Scotland significantly. See <https://www.gsabiosphere.org.uk/1-9m-support-for-our-unesco-biosphere/>

## **7.2 Challenges**

The biodiversity work of Dumfries and Galloway Council, as with all other public bodies involved in biodiversity conservation, have been achieved in the face of an ever-tightening economic climate and reducing resources. This has been made more challenging with the loss of the Biodiversity Officer post. Nevertheless, the resources required for successful biodiversity results are not huge in comparison to the massive returns that biodiversity offers in terms of human health and wellbeing, sustainable land use, economic prosperity and cultural identity. The challenge for the future will be work together, to an even greater extent than in the past, with local communities and partner organisations in order to maximise such benefits.

## APPENDIX 1 South West Scotland Environmental Information Centre Report

# SWSEIC Update

April 2019 – March 2020



## Dumfries & Galloway Council

### Collation of biological records

As the local environmental records centre, a core part of the Centre's work is collating biological records to act as an evidence base for local decision-making. During 2019-20 SWSEIC collated approximately 130,000 records for SW Scotland. Of these, 74,700 records were for Dumfries and Galloway. These include recently collected records and historical records. The vast majority of these records are collated at a resolution of 1km square or better, meaning the information can be used for site assessment and local decision making.

The records collated covered a broad range of taxonomic groups. Across the whole SWSEIC area a total of 3,113 records were of species occurring on schedules 2, 4 and 5 of the Habitats and Species Directive, and a further 14,539 were records of non-native species.

**Table 1. Total number of records added by SWSEIC in 2019-20, by species group**

Species group	No. of records added
lichen	28659
flowering plant	26920
bird	25869
terrestrial mammal	19613
insect - butterfly	17362
insect - moth	4679
insect - beetle (Coleoptera)	4454
mollusc	3169
insect - dragonfly (Odonata)	2332
fungus	1757
insect - true fly (Diptera)	1737
insect - hymenopteran	1693
spider (Araneae)	1308
crustacean	1093
other	7133

### Local Wildlife Sites

SWSEIC manages the local wildlife site information for Dumfries and Galloway. In 2019, no new sites were surveyed or assessed. Information on local wildlife sites, including a site description, reason for designation, boundary and habitat maps are provided to enquirers (see below).

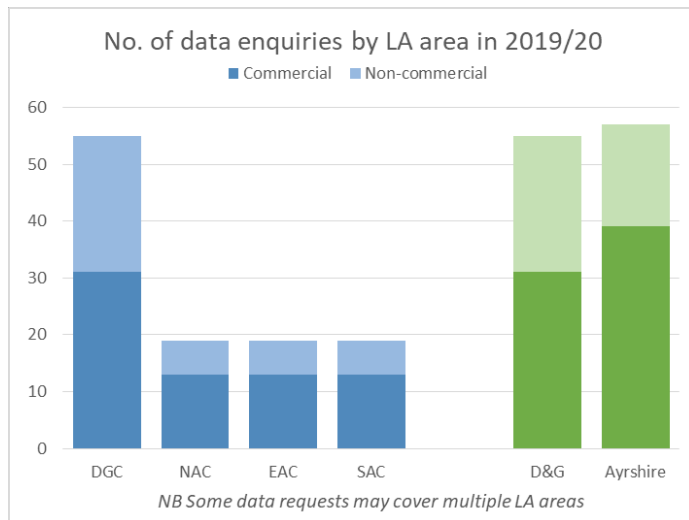
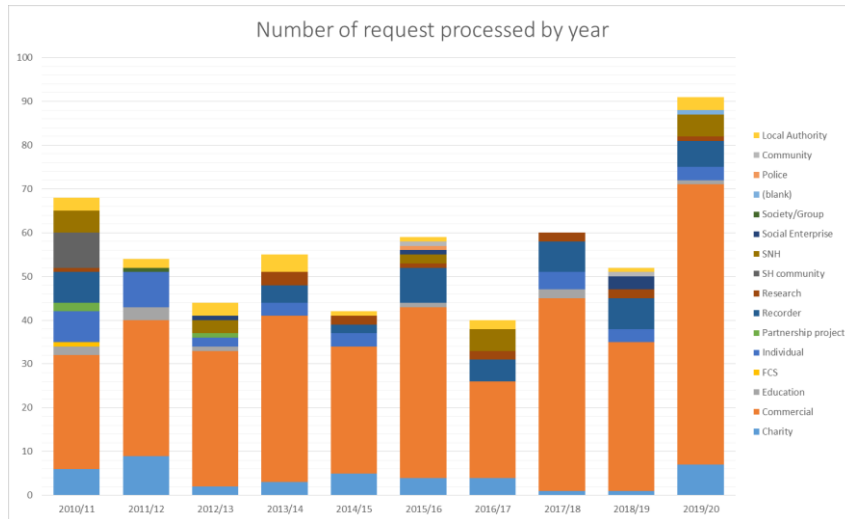
### Data sharing

A key function for the local environmental records centre is to make data easily available to those who need to use it. This might include consultants carrying out environmental assessments on behalf of developers, planners assessing the impact of developments, researchers carrying out scientific studies or local recorders wishing to carry out further studies. In supporting the operation of this key function our public sector partners contribute to their biodiversity duty by helping to ensure environmental data are utilised in the decision-making process.

For consultants carrying out ecological appraisals of development work, the information provided gives context as well as factual data about the species present in a particular area. This highlights designated species (e.g. those species which are covered by legislation protecting them or their habitats), rare or scarce species, species of conservation concern and species of local importance (priority species highlighted in Local Biodiversity Action Plans). Information may also be provided on statutory and non-statutory designated sites.

Data enquiries

During the 2019-20 financial year SWSEIC processed 91 data enquiries. The majority of enquiries are through environmental consultants seeking data in respect of assessments for planned developments. Charts showing the number of enquiries handled and a breakdown of these covering each local authority area is given below. Although the numbers of enquiries received for Ayrshire data is now higher than that for Dumfries and Galloway, requests for D&G data remain higher than for any of the three individual Ayrshire local authorities. The number of data enquiries handled this financial year was greater than any previous year.



Data sharing with recorders, partner organisations and national schemes and societies SWSEIC provided information and advice to the local authority regarding a range of local issues. SWSEIC provided comments on the Scottish Government’s forestry strategy consultation. Advice on the presence of birds of prey was provided in relation to a quarry proposal near Carsphairn. Information on the presence of Great Crested Newts was provided in relation to water supply changes for property near Glenluce. SWSEIC conducted a badger survey of a proposed footpath route on the Rhins of Galloway and SWSEIC provided information for use in interpretation and social media promotion of the Rhins of Galloway footpath (last two bridging financial year 2019-20 and 2020-21).

SWSEIC supported individuals carrying out studies on amphibians and reptiles, beetles, deer, Glow Worms and Speckled Wood butterfly. Site based wildlife information was provided for non-commercial studies carried out at many sites including Threave, New Luce, Lochwood Oaks and the Green House area.

A large amount of plant data curated by the Centre has been shared with The Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland for use in the forthcoming national plant atlas.

### Training and support of local wildlife recorders

Seven training events were run by SWSEIC at venues across SW Scotland. A list of all the training events is provided in the table below. A planned training event on 26<sup>th</sup> March was cancelled due to the coronavirus outbreak.

Date	Event	Location	County
<b>30 April</b>	Amphibian and Reptile ID day	Dundonald	North Ayrshire
<b>8 May</b>	National Plant Monitoring Scheme Training day	Kirroughtree	Dumfries & Galloway <sup>1</sup>
<b>26 June</b>	National Plant Monitoring Scheme Training day	Cairnmore of Fleet	Dumfries & Galloway <sup>1</sup>
<b>6 July</b>	National Plant Monitoring Scheme Training day	Straiton	South Ayrshire <sup>1</sup>
<b>13 July</b>	Dragonfly ID training	Barstobrick	Dumfries & Galloway
<b>29 July</b>	Biological recording/iRecord training	Barrmill	North Ayrshire
<b>10 August</b>	Dragonfly ID workshop	Caerlaverock	Dumfries & Galloway

### Public engagement events

SWSEIC work with partner organisations to promote wildlife and wildlife recording and foster greater involvement in citizen science. In addition to activities run by SWSEIC, the Centre actively promotes wildlife and wildlife recording events being run by local and national organisations through our monthly newsletter and social media channels.

On 7th March 2020, SWSEIC held our annual wildlife recorders' gathering at Maybole in South Ayrshire. The event was attended by approximately 50 people, though numbers were undoubtedly suppressed by the emerging threat of coronavirus.

Date	Event	Location	County
<b>13 April</b>	Bioblitz	Ardrossan	North Ayrshire <sup>2</sup>
<b>25 April</b>	Talk to British Myriapod and Isopod group	Newton Stewart	Dumfries & Galloway
<b>15-16 May</b>	Community moth recording event	Carsphairn	Dumfries & Galloway <sup>3</sup>
<b>19-20 April</b>	Community moth recording event	Kirkcudbright	Dumfries & Galloway <sup>3</sup>
<b>16-17 July</b>	Community moth recording event	New Galloway	Dumfries & Galloway <sup>3</sup>
<b>29 June</b>	Bioblitz	Millport	North Ayrshire
<b>19-20 July</b>	Community moth recording event	Kirkgunzeon	Dumfries & Galloway
<b>26-27 July</b>	Community moth recording event	St. John's Town of Dalry	Dumfries & Galloway <sup>3</sup>
<b>19-20 September</b>	Community moth recording event	Mossdale	Dumfries & Galloway <sup>3</sup>
<b>23-24 September</b>	Community moth recording event	Crossmichael	Dumfries & Galloway <sup>3</sup>
<b>19-20 August</b>	Community moth recording event	Kilmarnock	East Ayrshire
<b>8 November</b>	Talk to local wildlife club	Moffat	Dumfries & Galloway
<b>4 December</b>	Talk to local community on moths	St. John's Town of Dalry	Dumfries & Galloway <sup>3</sup>
<b>7 March</b>	SWSEIC annual conference	Maybole	South Ayrshire

### Acknowledgements

SWSEIC are grateful to our partner organisations, including all four local authorities in SW Scotland, and to Scottish Natural Heritage for their continued support for the Centre and its work.

<sup>1</sup> In partnership with the National Plant Monitoring Scheme

<sup>2</sup> Part of the Garnock Connections Landscape Partnership Project

<sup>3</sup> Part of the Galloway Glens funded 'Moths at Home' project

