

December 2017

BIODIVERSITY

1. Introductory Information

National Museums Scotland is a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB).

Our principal functions are set out in our governing legislation – National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985, Section 2(1). They are to:

- Add and care for our collections.
- Ensure that they are accessible to the public, through exhibitions, learning resources and by other means.
- Ensure that research on the collections is undertaken and communicated, and to create and share knowledge about them.

We have a Sustainable Development Group to facilitate an integrated approach to sustainable development in support of strategic objectives.

2. Mainstreaming

Our Natural Sciences collections offer opportunities for research, display and education in current concerns regarding biodiversity, climate change and endangered species in Scotland and the world. Our suite of Natural World galleries at the National Museum of Scotland contribute to the promotion of biodiversity, seeking to ensure that the natural environment is understood, respected and enjoyed.

We run programmes to develop young people's knowledge and understanding of environmental matters.

3. Actions Taken to Improve Biodiversity Conservation

National Activity

We are the national repository for natural history collections and make the collections available for other groups monitoring Scotland's and the world's biodiversity.

On a very general level we undertake monitoring studies of biodiversity, often on fragile areas and habitats (such as saline lagoons in Uist), or monitoring of changing distributions of montane insect species.

Other specific national projects where we play lead roles include such diverse areas as the Scottish Wildcat Conservation Action Plan, the Scottish Marine Animals Stranding Scheme and Aspen and Pine Hoverfly conservation studies.

4. Partnership Working and Biodiversity Communications

Biodiversity-Related Learning Programmes

Get Energised

Get Energised is a programme encouraging primary and secondary school pupils to explore, discover and understand renewable energy in Scotland and includes:

- Challenge Days for National Qualification Physics pupils
- Science Investigation Days for S1 to 3 pupils
- Magic Carpet session about weather for Nursery for P1 pupils
- Interactive STEM workshop for P5 to P7 pupils
- Training and support for teachers.

1,174 pupils and 270 teachers took part in the programme between April 2016 and March 2017.

Get Energised is funded by the Scottish Power Foundation which allows us to offer the sessions free of charge at National Museum of Scotland and National Museum of Rural Life. During 2017/2018 we will be extending this programme to include a series of outreach and engagement activities.

Animal Adaptations

The National Museum of Scotland offers ‘Animal Adaptations’ workshops for primary and secondary classes as part of our core schools programme. This is popular with pupils studying wider biodiversity topics, and involves them handling a range of animal specimens to determine which environment the animal has adapted to survive within. Pupils therefore study objects such as a sawfish snout, arctic fox fur and an elephant tooth to understand how animals have evolved and developed to suit their habitat. During the period 9 December 2016 to 23 April 2017, classes taking part in this workshop were also offered free entry to our exhibition Monkey Business.

Monkey Business

Monkey Business was an exhibition about primates that ran from December 2016 to April 2017. As well as presenting the wide diversity of primate species, it had a strong conservation message, including an opportunity for visitors to make pledges for action that they could take for the benefit of wild primates and global biodiversity generally.

As part of the Monkey Business exhibition, there was a family event that included a number of activities themed on issues relating to biodiversity, species and habitat evolution and loss, and relationships with primates and their environment/interaction with humans. These included:

- Three new object handling resources (run regularly over the period) focussing on Primate anatomy and adaptation, food and feeding, and animal conservation
- Two Edinburgh International Science Festival workshops (My Monkey and Me, Primate Playground) were held over 6 days, where activities focussed on different primate species across the world and how they interact with their family/group and habitat to develop and survive.

A total of 9,293 people took part in the whole Monkey Business family event programme.

National Museums of Rural Life (NMRL)

Willow Harvest: Every February volunteers and local basket makers help us collect our willow harvest. The materials are then used for several basket making workshops throughout the year.

Bee Hive: We have developed a new partnership with Plan Bee Ltd and we now have a bee hive on site to the rear of the museum. This has encouraged a range of add on informal activities such as seed bombing, honey tasting etc. to encourage our visitors to learn more about bees and their habitat. We also worked with the local beekeepers and handed out information about bee friendly gardening.

Biodiversity features as a theme in several of our schools programmes at NMRL:

- Geography Fieldwork pack – a teacher led activity pack exploring the various habitats; ‘Field to Fork’ primary workshop – exploring where our food comes from and the history of land use/agriculture
- ‘Go Wild’ holiday activities for families include a range of outdoor sessions: bug hunting; bird watching; environmental art; and nature photography.

Large events for families and adults (e.g. Country Fair, Heavy Horse Show) include activities which focus on biodiversity: wildlife talks; traditional farming skills; and wild food experts.

5. Biodiversity Highlights and Challenges

Refer to sections 3 and 4 above.

6. Monitoring

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