

BIODIVERSITY REPORT (2011-2014)

1. Strategy

We have a Sustainable Development Group to facilitate an integrated approach to sustainable development in support of strategic objectives. Short term sub-groups are formed for topic specific focus groups or projects and meet outside of the Sustainable Development Group meetings to take forward actions, reporting back to the Group on progress.

2. National Activity

We are the national repository for natural history collections and make the collections available for other groups monitoring Scotland'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 projects where we play lead roles include such diverse areas as the Scottish Wild Cat Conservation program, and Aspen and Pine Hoverfly conservation studies.

3. Biodiversity-Related Learning Programmes

'Get Energised'

Between March 2013 and November 2014, 737 secondary school Physics pupils took part in 'Get Energised' Challenge Days. These Challenge Days involved pupils solving real-life problems within the renewable energy industry at the National Museum of Scotland and the National Museum of Rural Life. Each Challenge Day also included a keynote speaker from the renewable energy industry and many of these have included details about the impact of renewable energy on biodiversity, in both advantageous and negative ways. These keynote speeches have been filmed and will be available for schools across Scotland to watch on the National Museums Scotland website.

'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.

National Museum of Rural Life

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

- 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.
- In the latter part of 2014, we established a Coronation Meadow at the National Museum of Rural Life (awarded this status in 2013) that we maintain in partnership with the National Trust for Scotland. Although we have no programming based around this currently, we may do in the future due to its status.
<http://coronationmeadows.org.uk/meadow/kittochside-east-kilbride>

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