

sportscotland

Report on the Scottish Biodiversity Duty for 2020-23



This report highlights sportscotland's activities 2020-23 with regard to biodiversity on our estate. Under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, public bodies in Scotland have a duty to further the conservation of biodiversity. This biodiversity duty is about taking care of nature all around us, not just in specific protected sites and for particular species.

Fulfilling our Biodiversity Duty will help address wider outcomes such as:

- Ensuring compliance with the legislation and helping Scotland to meet its national and international biodiversity targets.
- Helping Scotland address biodiversity loss and the climate emergency, and contributing to a Green Recovery and a Net Zero future.
- Improving our image and demonstrating we are working in a socially responsible and ethical way by, safeguarding biodiversity and environmental assets for future generations.
- Contributing to sustainable development and the quality of life in Scotland

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.

Introduction

sportscotland is the national agency for sport in Scotland. Our vision is an active Scotland where everyone benefits from sport. In an active Scotland we will all find ways to be physically active every day.

Keeping moving at home and at work.

Taking an active approach to getting around.

Choosing to be active in our leisure time.

The departments within the organisation which are best placed to contribute to our biodiversity duty are:-

The national training centres situated in Largs and Aviemore. Both are sited in or close to prime countryside and benefit from multiple opportunities to make a significant difference.

The sportscotland facilities department, whose role is the provision of advice and guidance on facility planning, siting, design, funding and management for local authorities, governing bodies, organisations, schools and clubs.

The sportscotland procurement department, which has the scope to include biodiversity requirements within procurement contract conditions.

Actions to protect biodiversity and connect people with nature.

Vegetation management

- We leave margins around sports fields unmowed and wild to encourage biodiversity.
- We mow as little amenity lawn as possible to maintain standards and allow the remaining to rewild
- We use as little fertiliser and treatments as possible in the fine turf areas. This not only has benefits in terms of reduced run off but makes financial sense too.
- We respect and work in accordance with bird nesting seasons.
- We allow fungi and mushrooms to mature and spread spores prior to cutting

Non-native invasive species management

- We have a Japanese knotweed management plan at the Inverclyde national centre and have almost eradicated this from the site over a seven year period.
- Bracken has been substantially reduced in support of the woodland scheme.
- We have made a start on removal of rhododendron and cherry laurel and will create a management plan to facilitate this.

Water management

- We have introduced 1 further SUDS (sustainable urban drainage systems) into our estate during the reporting period. These systems accept and attenuate all storm water from these facilities reducing the risk of localised flooding.
- Planting of the woodland on our hillside will attenuate rainfall and reduce flooding risk
- All new toilets within the organisation are dual flush reducing water consumption.

Habitat creation, enhancement and protection

- Orchard creation using heritage species native to Scotland, including apple, pear, plum and wild cherry.
- Planting of nut trees, initially hazel and cob
- Planting of soft fruit canes, shrubs and bushes including blueberry, black currant, red currant, gooseberry, raspberry, lingonberry, elderberry, sea buckthorn and blackberry.
- Working with our partner at Green Action Trust to create a 8ha native broadleaf woodland at the Inverclyde national centre.
- Our residential primary school visitors plant native trees during their stay.
- Considered woodland management within the estate to leave standing deadwood and piles of decomposing wood.
- Wildflower and wild grass planting around the estate
- Placement of bird and bat boxes
- Creation of wild and unmanaged borders to sports pitches and golf practice facility to encourage biodiversity and provide wildlife corridors.
- Hedge planting to provide hedgehog habitat through Hogwatch project

Path creation

- Creation, clearance and signing of paths throughout Inverclyde national centre to encourage guests and public to enjoy the estate and its nature.
- The new path network in the native woodland project at Inverclyde is nearly 2 km long and compliments the existing path network

Incident reporting

- Recording of fly tipping and dumping and immediate clean up.

Mainstreaming

- Plan to include biodiversity provision within sportscotland facility construction guidance
- Plan to include biodiversity consideration with procurement tenders.

- Plan to participate in the North Ayrshire Biodiversity Partnership
- Plan to undertake a further biodiversity assessment at Inverclyde post refurbishment.
- The assessment will inform a biodiversity action plan for Inverclyde
- Plan to include biodiversity training to staff
- Plan to include biodiversity element and citizen science to outdoor education for residential school visits

Nature based solutions and climate change

- New and continued use of green energy systems including ground source heatpump, photovoltaic panels, solar thermal water heating, combined heat plant (CHP), condensing boilers, biomass boilers and wind turbines.
- Use of composting systems to process food waste
- Replacement of sports hall, gymnastics hall, studios, gym and street lights with low power LED units
- Introduction of multiple electric vehicle charge points at both national centres
- Introduction of electric vehicles to the organisational fleet
- Cycle to work scheme
- Recording of rainfall
- Use of nematodes to control pests

Public engagement and workforce development

- John Muir Rural skills students receive training and assist with habitat projects.
- Early years forest schools are run within the sportscotland estate
- Students undertake habitat creation as part of local authority community day
- Tree safety training for estates staff
- Biodiversity information with QR codes being placed on the new path network

Research and monitoring

- Ecology site reports to create baseline to work from
- Create a biodiversity action plan for our organisation and specific sites
- Form a biodiversity and environmental working group to manage and report on the biodiversity action plan.

- Add biodiversity as an agenda item on the senior management team annual review to ensure the importance of the subject is established and communicated.
- Plan to develop relationship with universities/colleges/schools to offer research opportunities within the estate on specific species



Example of wildflower planting at the edge of sports pitches