

sportscotland

Report on the Scottish Biodiversity Duty for 2017-20



This report highlights **sportscotland's** activities during the reporting period 2017-20 regarding biodiversity across 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 specific 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, as well as 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:

- Our 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 function, 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.

Non-native invasive species management:

- We have a Japanese knotweed management plan at the National Centre: Inverclyde and have almost eradicated this from the site over a four-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 2 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.
- All new toilets within the organisation are dual flush reducing water consumption.

Habitat creation, enhancement and protection:

- Working with our partner at Green Action Trust to create an 8-hectare native broadleaf woodland at the National Centre: Inverclyde.
- Considered woodland management within the estate to leave standing deadwood and piles of decomposing wood.
- Native tree, hedge and wildflower planting.
- 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 National Centre: Inverclyde to encourage guests and public to enjoy the estate and its nature.

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 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 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 lights within sports halls and streetlights 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.

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.
- **sportscotland** are members of the Clyde Muirshiel Consultative Forum.
- Consultation with community council for woodland creation planning application
- Tree safety training for estates staff.

Research and monitoring

- Ecology site reports to create a baseline to monitor our progress against.
- 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