

Stirling Members Centre Annual Newsletter

Based on the Chairman's Report for April 2010 - April 2011

1. Membership

Local membership has risen from 676 households in 2010 to 705 in 2011.

2. Talks and Outings

We have had another series of excellent talks with audiences between 25-45 including a good number of non members. The programme covered the following topics:

- Saving Our Wonderful Seas
- BTO's Garden Birds Project
- Conservation in Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park
- The Conservation of Rare Scottish Plants
- SWT's Beaver Trial
- Uses of Wild Plants in Medicine



A walk in SWT's Carron Glen Reserve

Next year 2011-12 the Raploch Community Centre has been booked for our talks on the 1st Tuesday in the month which will no longer clash with Callander SWT.

We arranged a series of local 'nature rich walks' one of which was featured on BBC Scotland's *Out of Doors* programme. Wildlife highlights included smew on Linlithgow Loch, green hairstreaks, cuckoos and grasshopper warblers on the Ochils, globeflowers and toothwort in Carron Glen and grass of Parnassus in Geordies Wood.

3. Conservation, Local Biodiversity Action Plans and Wildlife Monitoring

- The groups main practical conservation work involved scrub and rank grass removal from Flanders Moss, Bridge of Allan orchid bank, Callander lesser butterfly orchid sites, and Balgair Muir frog orchid colony. We also helped with work in Lower Wood Bridge of Allan, the bumblebee garden at Argaty and reed removal on our Cambus Pools reserve..
- The PLANT (Plant Local Action NeTwork) group continued its annual monitoring of endangered species at over 30 local sites during the summer of 2010. A report of the surveys of species conservation concern like the lesser butterfly orchid, juniper, early marsh orchid, corn marigold and Clack's rarity the sticky catchfly were published in the Forth Naturalist and Historian.
- Surveys were carried out to determine the pollinators of local populations of lesser and greater butterfly orchids, frog orchids and broad leaved helleborine. The associated overnight family moth trapping event run by the Ranger Service at Plein Country Park butterfly orchid meadow was a great success.
- The SWT is represented at the meetings of both Clackmannanshire and Stirlingshire's Biodiversity Action Plan steering committees. Our contribution to the Clacks BAP is limited to conservation work on our reserves at Alloa Inch, Tullibody Inch and Cambus Pools together with annual monitoring of orchid sites. During the year we were delighted to be involved in the re-establishment of the Stirling Steering Committee under the Chairmanship of Guy Harewood, Stirling's Biodiversity Officer. We helped organise the BAP Species Forum, a workshop at which 55 local experts (including a number of members) drew up lists of species of conservation concern and prioritised projects for the new round of action plans. The contribution of the Stirling SWT group to the juniper, frog orchid and



Strimming reeds at Cambus

lesser butterfly orchid action plans was acknowledged in the Stirling Council BAP Progress Report 2000-2010. Our organisation of three plant ID training courses involving 75 people was also noted.

- Responsibility of the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park BAP was handed over to Callander MC's new committee.
- Our campaign to get Pirri Pirri bur and American Skunk Cabbage recognised as aggressive alien species, seems to be bearing fruit.

4. Protecting the Wildlife Interests Associated with Local Authority Planning

A network of members is in place to screen local Council planning applications.

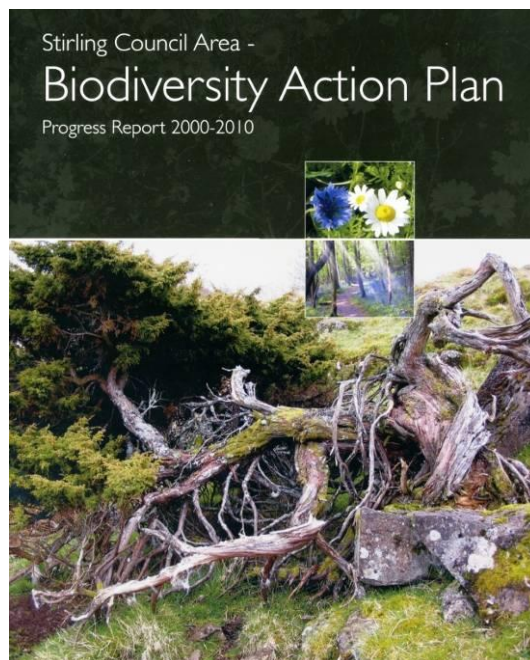
- We have commented on a number of major Stirling and Clacks planning proposals including the Beauly to Denny power line and objected to the Black Devon Wind Turbine application.
- We were involved in consultation workshops concerned with defining the environmental policies of both Clacks and Stirling Councils for their new Local Development Plans. We hope to get Local Nature Conservation Sites identified in the planning procedures of both councils
- Stirling Council's New Local Development Plan proposals contained a large number of preferred development sites. We arranged for members to visit these and where appropriate we have commented on potential wildlife interests. We have also helped a number of local community groups respond to these proposals and to other planning issues.
- We were interviewed by consultants charged with identifying Stirling Council's Green Corridors. They were keen to obtain information about past and proposed Local Nature Conservation Sites and we provided the data they required.
- We were involved as stake holders with the development of Community Plans in Kings Park, Plean Country Park and Bridge of Allan. Proposals were submitted for wildlife management in Plean Country Park.

5. Watch Group

Stirling's successful Watch Group continues to put on monthly programmes to which the MC contributed a pond dipping event at Airthrey Loch. The children also talked about their John Muir Award projects in Edinburgh at SWT's AGM. The presentations varied from films of them undertaking conservation work to an investigation as to whether native plants were hosts to more insects than introduced species. The organisation of the group has been transferred from Clare Abel to Debbie Spray and Jess. Sue Hunter has also been trained to be a leader. They have had problems funding meeting places and so have adopted a mainly outdoor programme and are also limiting the age group to over eights.

6. Our Local Reserves

- **Alloa Inch:** (Convenor Roy Sexton). This 100 acre island reserve in the river Forth continues to attract large numbers of geese, ducks and waders. The experimental barrier which was constructed to reduce erosion on the upstream bank was reasonably successful and remained in place through a series of major river flows. A new management plan for the reserve was written in 2011.



Our juniper conservation actions featured on the front of the Stirling Biodiversity Action Plan's progress report



Families trapping the moths that pollinate butterfly orchids at Plean

- **Cambus Pools** (Convenor Roger Gooch). These ponds at the side of the Forth at Cambus continue to be overwhelmed by reeds. An experimental regime of cutting with brush cutters was undertaken in Autumn 2010. The meadows were not grazed in 2010 further encouraging the spread of reeds, however a grant proposal has been submitted to The Clackmannanshire and Stirling Environment Trust (Administrators of Landfill Tax) for fencing so that cattle could be sited there.



7. The Committee

Thanks are due for the enormous amount of work done by the committee and particularly by our treasurer Bryan Hill who sadly died during the year.

Vice Chairman	Roger Gooch
Treasurer	Bryan Hill and Liz Albert
Membership Secretary	Jan Harbidge
Secretary	Sue Sexton (sextonsp@aol.com)
Watch Group	Clare Abel and Debbie Spray
Committee Members	Tony Rogers , Heather Young
Chairman	Roy Sexton



Alloa Inch: SWT's island reserve in the River Forth was once a flourishing farm which was protected from the tidal waters by 2m high surrounding banks. These were breached in the 1980s when it became flooded at high tides and was converted into a 100 acre salt marsh. This now provides shelter for huge flocks of geese, ducks and waders. In spring it resembles a snow field covered with the white flowers of sea scurvy grass which in autumn is transformed to sheets of purple when the sea aster flowers.

The Scottish Wildlife Trust is a company limited by guarantee, registered in Scotland (registered number SC040247) having its registered office at Cramond House, Cramond Glebe Road, Edinburgh EH4 6NS. It is also a Scottish registered charity (charity number SC005792).