

# Newsletter

Cairngorms Local Biodiversity Action Plan



## Looking after the Wetlands



A Wetland Inventory has been produced for the Cairngorms National Park area. Wetland habitats in the Park have been dramatically reduced by drainage and river-bank engineering through past land management practices and there are both existing and historic wetland sites with the potential for enhancement or restoration. Many of the wetlands in the Park are small, fragmented and under threat. Wetlands can bring multiple benefits to people and society as well as being high quality wildlife habitat. By holding back or slowing water during storms and snow melt they help prevent or reduce the impacts of devastating flood events for downstream communities.

Wetlands help to buffer against pollution, purify water and mitigate against the effects of climate change. The inventory work is being further developed by the Cairngorms LBAP to verify the data and consider any constraints with the aim of identifying areas in the Park that are the most suitable and practical for the restoration and creation of wetlands. Building on the Wetland Workshop held in May 2009, we will be consulting with landowners to gain their vital support and help them source funding to enable practical restoration projects to be undertaken.

### Help us record Dragonflies

A new leaflet on Cairngorms Damselflies and Dragonflies is now available. This pocket-sized A5, 10 page leaflet details the 13 species found in the Cairngorms, with pictures of males and females, flight period table, map and a list of good places to see dragonflies. It is available, free, from a wide range of visitor and public outlets or from the Biodiversity Officers.

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For more information on the Cairngorms LBAP or the Biodiversity Grant Scheme please contact Stephen Corcoran: [stephencorcoran@cairngorms.co.uk](mailto:stephencorcoran@cairngorms.co.uk)  
Tel 01479 870528



## Increasing the Aspen population

Aspen rarely flowers in Scotland, so growing aspen trees for planting is not straightforward.

The Highland Aspen Group is propagating trees from sections of root collected in the wild. The process is labour intensive, and consequently only small numbers of aspen trees are available for planting. The Group is working with Forestry Commission Scotland and Scottish Native Woods to trial improved propagation methods. Aspen clones were collected from all over Scotland, and are being used to grow stock plants. These will form the basis of a seed orchard and hopefully lead to the production

of Scottish Aspen seed under controlled conditions. This will make it possible to produce significant numbers of aspen seedlings for planting, so that we can expand and enhance aspen woodland in the Cairngorms National Park and beyond.

The second Scottish Aspen Conference in Boat of Garten saw over 100 delegates attending. A range of topics were covered on the biodiversity and management of aspen and copies of the conference proceedings can be downloaded from the aspen project page:

[www.scottishaspen.org.uk](http://www.scottishaspen.org.uk)

## Grants of up to £5000 still available

The Cairngorms Biodiversity Grant Scheme is now in its fifth year and we are always looking for project ideas from across the Cairngorms LBAP area. The scheme offers grants up to £5000 and is open to constituted non-profit making organisations such as Community Councils, schools, wildlife charities and local groups. We recommend working up your project idea with the Biodiversity Officer and once we have agreed the aims of the project, the approval process is quick. For more information, or to discuss your ideas, please contact the Biodiversity Officer.



Crathie School pond project

## NESBReC

The North East Scotland Biological Records Centre (NESBReC), in conjunction with the Cairngorms National Park Authority, has established a biological recording system for the Cairngorms

National Park. NESBReC acts as a central point for information exchange where all species records for the Park will be collated and

managed, and then submitted to the National Biodiversity Network where they will be accessible to the general public.

**Anyone with any biological record data for the Cairngorms LBAP area should send the information to [nesbrec@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:nesbrec@aberdeenshire.gov.uk) telephone 01224 273633, or go to the website: [www.nesbrec.org.uk](http://www.nesbrec.org.uk)**

# Looking after your cat?



The Cairngorms Wildcat Project was launched in May 2009 and aims over the course of the next few years to save the Scottish wildcat from extinction in one of its last strongholds. This is a partnership project between the Cairngorms National Park Authority, Forestry Commission Scotland, Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, Scottish Gamekeepers Association and Scottish Natural Heritage.

## Working with land managers

Using an awareness-raising campaign branded 'Highland Tiger', the project seeks to encourage responsible domestic cat ownership, ie increased neutering and vaccination in the

Cairngorms National Park with the support of cat welfare organisations. The project will also work with land managers to ensure that predator control is wildcat-friendly, and that the wildcat population and the extent of both hybridisation and disease, are monitored with the input of land managers and the public at large.

For more information about the project, to report a sighting of a wildcat in the Cairngorms National Park, or to find out other ways in which you might be able to help, please visit the Highland Tiger website at:

[www.highlandtiger.com](http://www.highlandtiger.com)

# Help is on hand for Red Squirrels

The Scottish Wildlife Trust has recently employed a new Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels project officer for North East Scotland. The project will oversee work to reduce the threats to red squirrel populations in rural Aberdeenshire and Moray (including parts of the Cairngorms National Park), and Aberdeen City. Working in partnership with land managers, public agencies,



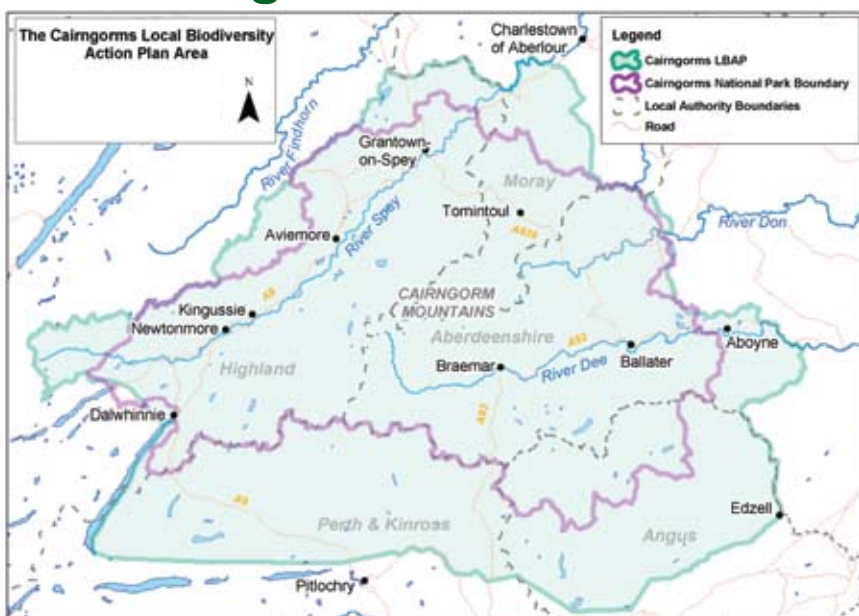
local volunteer groups and others, the project will provide management advice to landowners, co-ordinate and manage grey squirrel population control and undertake surveys and monitoring. Grey squirrels continue to spread into Aberdeenshire from Aberdeen City, though this spread has been limited thanks to the control efforts by local landowners, FCS and SNH over the last few years. The ultimate aim of the project is to remove all grey squirrels from the Grampian area and at the same time improve the habitat for red squirrels. Support from local people and land managers is vital in achieving this aim.

For more information contact  
**Hollie Walker:** tel 01224 654353

or email [hwalker@swt.org.uk](mailto:hwalker@swt.org.uk)

A similar project is also running in the Highland region. You can contact the project officer **Juliet Robinson:** tel 01349 860916 or email [juliet.robinson@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:juliet.robinson@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)

## The Cairngorms LBAP area



# Do ONE Thing For Wildlife

## wildlife gardening



Now that the colder weather is approaching, your garden visitors need your help to survive. Here are some ideas on how you can help them.

### Garden feeders

Natural food sources in the winter months are limited and by supplying food in your garden you can help many species to survive the winter months. Nut feeders and fat cakes can be hung from trees or bird tables and seeds and scraps such as cheese, baked potato, pieces of apple, raisins, and moistened bread can be placed on a bird table.

### Build a log pile

In a shady part of your garden, pile some logs and stones in a random way to create lots of gaps. This will

create valuable foraging and hibernation habitat for frogs, newts, insects, butterflies and if it is big enough, maybe even a hedgehog.

### For the future

Planting trees in your garden will increase the biodiversity of your garden by attracting insects, birds and small mammals. Late autumn and winter is the perfect time for planting new trees, small native species such as aspen, rowan, hazel, birch or willow are suitable for most gardens.

### For further information visit:

[www.wildlifetrusts.org](http://www.wildlifetrusts.org)

[www.wildaboutgardens.org](http://www.wildaboutgardens.org)

[www.rspb.org.uk/wildlife/wildlifegarden](http://www.rspb.org.uk/wildlife/wildlifegarden)

## Success for Water Vole Conservation

The Cairngorms Water Vole and Mink Project is now in its third year and has expanded to include nearly all of the Spey and Dee catchments, with mink captures now largely confined to the lower catchments.

The project is progressing on the Don and also now works in the north Tay down as far as Pitlochry. It is necessary to monitor and trap mink on a catchment scale to intercept breeding animals further down river before they disperse and predate upon important water vole populations in the headwaters within the Cairngorms National Park. The project area has merged with the Aberdeenshire sister project to form a large control area across the North East and also works closely with the new North West Highlands project. Such a co-ordinated large scale approach increases the effectiveness of mink control maximising benefits for a range of native birds and fish as well as for water voles.

Surveys are underway to monitor how water vole populations are recovering. Some re-colonisation is evident in historically occupied areas and this pattern is expected to continue as the size of mink free areas increases.

Visit [www.watervolescotland.org](http://www.watervolescotland.org) or email [llinosdavies@cairngorms.co.uk](mailto:llinosdavies@cairngorms.co.uk), telephone 01479 870570.

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## Cairngorms National Park Plan Update

The Cairngorms National Park Plan, launched in 2007, sets out the vision and priorities for all involved in managing the Cairngorms National Park. The first priority of the Plan is conserving and enhancing the biodiversity and landscapes of the Park, in which the LBAP partnership is a driving force, demonstrated by the range of projects highlighted in this newsletter. This year is the mid-point of delivery for the 2007-12 Plan, so the LBAP is contributing to a review of delivery to make sure that the right focus remains on the priority habitats and species of the Cairngorms.

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The National Dragonfly Atlas Project urgently needs volunteers to help update the known distribution of British Dragonfly species and identify important areas for dragonflies.

For more information or to sign up as a volunteer dragonfly recorder in 2010 please contact the Biodiversity Officer.



For more information on the Cairngorms LBAP or the Biodiversity Grant Scheme please contact Stephen Corcoran, Cairngorms Biodiversity Officer: email: [stephencorcoran@cairngorms.co.uk](mailto:stephencorcoran@cairngorms.co.uk), tel: 01479 870528 or visit our web page at [www.cairngorms.co.uk](http://www.cairngorms.co.uk)