

Urban Biodiversity: Successes and Challenges: A tactical approach

Malcolm Muir

South Lanarkshire Council

The quality of urban open spaces can have a significant effect on their neighbouring communities. They offer opportunities for play, healthy recreation, sustainable transport and biodiversity and may indeed be the key to effecting a transformation in public understanding for and engagement with the natural heritage in Scotland. The eco-system approach rightly advocates acceptance of change, decentralisation and the participation of all sectors of society. Greenspaces, largely owned by Local Authorities offer the perfect test bed for this approach and the opportunity to clearly demonstrate to policy makers the links between environmental quality, health and economic and social well being. The current financial “crisis” actually presents a window of opportunity for this area of work but, despite these opportunities, real challenges remain; many of them linked to fundamental public service processes and “mind sets”, and these will not be overcome through legislation alone.

Urban Biodiversity: Successes and Challenges: Glasgow’s Freshwater Fishes – the State of the Cart (and other urban watercourses)

William E. Yeomans

Clyde River Foundation, Graham Kerr Building,
University of Glasgow, Glasgow G12 8QQ

The Clyde River Foundation (CRF) is a registered charity which researches the ecology of the River Clyde and its tributaries, and promotes environmental education throughout the catchment. Glasgow’s freshwater fishes are surprisingly poorly known, despite the well-publicised renaissance of the local watercourses and the iconic nature of the salmon in Glasgow folklore. Our current knowledge of the fish communities of the major rivers: the Clyde, Kelvin, White Cart and North Calder will be described, together with a summary of the findings from a recent survey of Glasgow’s burns.

Urban Biodiversity: Successes and Challenges: Cities deserve landscape-scale wildlife spectacles

Stuart Housden

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Scotland

In such uncertain financial times it is heartening to recognise that the policy framework for delivering large scale habitat creation projects in Scotland has never been more positive. This is a recognition that these types of projects have been delivered elsewhere in the UK bringing with them not just a huge boost to biodiversity but a whole brigade of associated benefits.

Whether you are interested in education, climate change, flood alleviation, economic growth, creating a pleasant environment for people to live and work, direct employment or improving the social esteem of previously marginalised communities there is little doubt that investment in landscape scale environmental projects in an urban setting can and should make a significant contribution to the future of Scotland.

Urban Biodiversity: Successes and Challenges: Parklife; cities for people and nature

Scott Ferguson

Scottish Natural Heritage

Some have argued that suburban gardens are England’s most important nature reserve. Can that be true for Scotland too? From the butterfly on the buddleia to the raven nesting on the gas-tower, there is no doubt that the mosaic of habitats across urban areas support an amazing array of wildlife – and offer a wealth of opportunities for people to enjoy, learn about and celebrate that diversity.

Integrated Habitat Networks in our Dear Green Space

Fiona Stewart

Scottish Natural Heritage

The Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) is a priority project in the Scottish Government's National Planning Framework. Integrated Habitat Networks underpin the CSGN but is Glasgow really the "dear green place" we assume it to be? This talk will illustrate the habitat networks in Glasgow and pinpoint some areas where we need to prioritise natural landscaping to provide connectivity for our native species. It will also give some examples of using the IHN as a tool for Master Planning.