

Urban Biodiversity: Successes and Challenges: Excursion to Bingham's pond

Shelia Russell¹ & Eilidh Spence²

¹Glasgow City council

²Froglife, Room 211, Graham Kerr building,
University of Glasgow G12 8QQ

¹E-Mail: Sheila.russell@glasgow.gov.uk

²E-mail: eilidh.spence@froglife.org

Bingham's Pond (Fig. 1), situated just off the busy Great Western Road, Glasgow, was once a popular skating and boating pond. It became the subject of complaints by local residents concerning the rundown state of the pond and swan droppings making the path slippery and the water dirty. The large numbers of mute swans were dependent on bread as the pond supported almost no natural vegetation.

In consultation with the local Community Council, it was decided to naturalise the pond to provide a more attractive place for the local people to enjoy and to enhance the biodiversity. It was hoped that by providing suitable habitat, a pair of breeding mute swans might be attracted to the pond and so control the large numbers of non-breeding swans, thus alleviating the perceived problem of the droppings and water quality.

A steering group from the local community was set up to carry the project forward. In February 2003, the water level was lowered and many of the waterbirds flew off. 55 swans remained. These were rounded up and transferred to Hogganfield Loch, NE Glasgow. Work then started to create two islands and a shallow shelf area around them and most of the perimeter of the pond.

Over 7000 plants of over 20 species were planted. Wildflower mixes were seeded on the islands and the edge of the pond above the water level. The bulk of the plants were collected elsewhere in Glasgow. The plants were therefore of local provenance and importantly brought in aquatic invertebrates among the roots, which 'inoculated' Bingham's Pond, thus enhancing the biodiversity of the site. A frog ramp was built to enable young common frogs to reach suitable habitat for feeding and hibernation and interpretation boards were erected.

In the first year after naturalisation, mute swans, mallard, tufted duck, moorhen and coot bred. Surveys of the aquatic invertebrates of the pond before and after

naturalisation, has revealed a large increase in the number of species present in the pond.

As part of the Urban Biodiversity Conference 2010 an excursion to Bingham's Pond was held at 2pm on 31st October. This session was attended by 14 people and blessed with quite good weather. Sheila Russell from Glasgow City Council led the group around the pond explaining the enhancement process and work completed on site.

The excursion was concluded with examples of pond restoration and creation work in Glasgow through Froglife's Living Water Project, provided by Project officer Eilidh Spence. Examples included restoration work at Newlands Park, Dawsholm LNR, and Alexandra Park and also pond creation work at Dams to Darnley Country Park and Windlaw Marsh. Proposed future work and the expansion of the project into North Lanarkshire were also discussed.

The pond enhancement work at Bingham's Pond through Glasgow City Council will continue to be used as a demonstration site. The aim is to encourage landowners and stakeholders to care for standing open waters and contribute towards local biodiversity action plans to protect these valuable habitats for wildlife.



Fig. 1. Bingham's Pond.