



Biodiversity Duty Report

2018 - 2020

THE BIODIVERSITY DUTY REPORTING TEMPLATE: LEVEL ONE ORGANISATIONS

Report Outline

Bodies are encouraged to use the following structure for their report. This is set out in the template below, which you can either type directly into, or copy into a separate document.

- Section 1: Introductory information about your public body
- Section 2: Actions to protect biodiversity and connect people with nature
- Section 3: Mainstreaming biodiversity
- Section 4: Nature-based solutions, climate change and biodiversity
- Section 5: Public engagement and workforce development
- Section 6: Research and monitoring
- Section 7: Biodiversity highlights and challenges

Completion Notes

These completion notes offer guidance to support your public body to complete your Biodiversity Duty Report. Taken together with the associated hyperlinks, they provide suggestions on the breadth of actions that could be included in your report. They may also assist with forward planning on how biodiversity can be taken into account in future.

While they incorporate the key elements on which you may wish to report, they are not an exhaustive list and it is likely that there will be a range of additional work that your organisation carried out in support of biodiversity on which you may also wish to report. To find out more on the Biodiversity Duty see the [NatureScot website](#).



SECTION 1: INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR PUBLIC BODY

Please describe your organisation's role and purpose, including any particular environmental responsibilities

Guidance on completing this section	<p>Summarise your organisation's role and purpose, including a brief outline of governance and management structures.</p> <p>Summarise any relevance and impacts of biodiversity to your organisation, including your role in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Land and estate management;• Regulation of land use and development;• Providing public information, community learning and education around nature and the environment;• Any key environmental impacts from your operations.
Text Field	<p>Moray Council has a broad regulatory remit that impacts on biodiversity. As a Planning Authority the Council is responsible for the preparation of a Local Development Plan which outlines plans and policies which aim to protect and enhance biodiversity and also administers Tree Preservation Orders.</p> <p>The Council is also responsible for the management and maintenance of all Council open spaces including parks, woodlands, cemeteries, school grounds, road verges and play areas. The Moray Ranger Service supports environmental management, community engagement and education. In preparing a Core Paths Plan the Council promotes access to nature, supporting health and wellbeing alongside positively managing these routes to enhance biodiversity.</p>



SECTION 2: ACTIONS TO PROTECT BIODIVERSITY AND CONNECT PEOPLE WITH NATURE

Please describe and explain any actions that your organisation has undertaken alone or as part of a partnership to benefit biodiversity directly, to tackle the main drivers of biodiversity loss, or to achieve wider outcomes for nature and people

<p>Guidance on completing this section</p>	<p>As a Level One reporting organisation, you may wish to report on activities across your organisation, including any actions that you have undertaken on the ground on land that you manage alone or with others.</p> <p>Please explain how these actions have benefited biodiversity, noting successes and challenges, and any plans for future or follow-up work. These might include:</p> <p>The creation, enhancement and protection of wildlife and natural habitat. Please include quantitative measures where possible (e.g. ha of raised bog restored, ha of new woodland planted, areas managed to enhance biodiversity).</p> <p>Involvement in key partnerships such as the Local Biodiversity Action Plan Partnership, relevant Community Planning groups, running a Local Records Centre.</p> <p>Addressing the key drivers of biodiversity loss, which might include work or projects to tackle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land use change; • Exploitation; • Invasive Non Native Species; • Pollution. <p>Enhancing biodiversity at your premises through actions in and around offices such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing bird boxes / feeders; • creating a habitat for wildlife, such as wildflower areas; • installing green roofs; • organising staff volunteering days.
<p>Links to related resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance on the Key pressures on biodiversity. • Guidance for Planners and developers on legally Protected Areas and Protected Species. • Guidance for all bodies on highest priority species and habitats for targeted conservation action



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guidance on biodiversity and the Planning system including creating, enhancing and protecting wildlife and natural habitats through Habitat management and Habitat networks.• Guidance on Buildings and biodiversity - how to make space for nature in the built environment.• Information on Local Biodiversity Action Plan Partnerships (LBAPs).• Collecting and managing biodiversity data, including from Local Records Centres Biodiversity - where to find data.• Information on Placemaking, open space and green infrastructure.• Case studies:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Greening parks and creating urban meadows in Edinburgh.○ Scottish Water Volunteering Programme• Guidance on Managing freshwater, including pollution and on Coastal development and marine pollution.• Examples of smaller actions that can be enacted in the office or staff homes - Biodiversity - what can you do?
Text Field	<p>Moray Council has undertaken the following actions to directly benefit biodiversity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participate in the North of Scotland Biodiversity Partnership (NESBiP). The partnership undertakes a wide range of projects to raise the profile of locally and nationally important species and habitats, encourage data recording and facilitate joint working on Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) priorities across the region.• 2 wildflower pilot areas have been developed, these projects were developed in partnership with Forres Green Space Users Group.• Hogweed control along the Moray flood alleviation schemes and Council owned/promoted paths.• Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed control, pond reed cutting and invasive weed control in various locations.• Installation of bat boxes and bird feeders at various locations.• Design work and consultation on the development of community orchard in Buckie.



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SECTION 3: MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY

Please outline any steps your organisation has taken to incorporate biodiversity measures into its wider policies, plans or strategies. This should include decision-making structures and staff and organisational roles and responsibilities.

<p>Guidance on completing this section</p>	<p>Describe and explain any of your own body's policies, plans and strategies that refer to biodiversity or may affect biodiversity positively or negatively, and how these are reflected in the structure of your organisation.</p> <p>These may include policies on managing green spaces, Open Space Strategies, Supplementary Planning Guidance, consideration of biodiversity in estate management, procurement policies and purchasing decisions, use of an Environmental Management System, Sustainability and Climate Change commitments or actions such as installing a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS).</p> <p>Detail any areas in which your organisation has most successfully implemented mainstreaming of biodiversity, or has demonstrated leadership in a local or national context, including through working with others, raising awareness, or delivering landmark projects or activities.</p>
<p>Links to related resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on Green Infrastructure, placemaking, and open space strategies. • Guidance on Buildings and biodiversity and SuDs - how to make space for nature in the built environment. • Guidance on Buildings, Highways and Infrastructure - Maintenance & biodiversity, • Research on Maximising the benefits of green infrastructure in social housing. • The Place Standard tool and associated Strategic Plan 2020-2023 provides a simple framework to structure conversations about place. • Guidance on managing Local Nature Conservation Sites systems. • Case study - Procurement by the Scottish Courts and Tribunal (SCTS) Services. • The Forest Stewardship Council global forest certification system. • Guidance on Scotland's Pollinator Strategy, projects, resources • Case studies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Local Nature Conservation Sites systems in North Lanarkshire and Aberdeenshire. ○ A Pollinator Action Plan in Aberdeenshire



Text Field	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• During the preparation of the Moray LDP 2020 biodiversity was identified as a key issue at Main Issues Report (MIR) stage. An environment topic was prepared that specifically set out options for protecting and enhancing biodiversity. http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file117300.pdf• The Moray Local Development Plan 2020 contains a suite of policies that collectively promote biodiversity enhancement including a specific biodiversity policy that requires all new development to enhance biodiversity with developments of 10 or more houses required to submit a biodiversity plan. http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file133546.pdf• Quality Audit process adapted from the Place Standard Tool to score new housing development over 10 houses on a host of issues including biodiversity. Nature Scot contribute expertise on how to enhance biodiversity.• Additional Planning Policy Guidance is being drafted that provides further information on planting schedules and plant selection for promoting seasonal variation and attracting pollinators.• Preparation of an Open Space Strategy that promotes biodiversity enhancement across our green spaces.• Green network mapping in Moray's main towns to promote habitat connectivity and avoid fragmentation.• Moray Woodland and Forestry Strategy identifies areas for woodland expansion and native species planting. http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file117645.pdf• Development of a compensatory woodland planting scheme to deliver woodland planting associated with new development on identified sites in Moray.• Food Growing Strategy incorporating a section on enhancing biodiversity in food growing spaces.
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<http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file132750.pdf>

- Voluntary management guidelines prepared for the Findhorn Nature Reserve which aims to create a balance between the needs of wildfowlers and protecting the welfare of the wildfowl population.



SECTION 4: NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS, CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY

How has your organisation integrated biodiversity into nature based solutions to the climate emergency and other socio-economic outcomes?

<p>Guidance on completing this section</p>	<p>Climate change is a direct driver of biodiversity loss. Some species are dying out while others are being displaced due to warmer air temperatures, extreme weather patterns, and higher sea levels. As well as being a direct driver of biodiversity loss, climate change also worsens the other drivers. For example it enables quicker spread of non-native invasive species. Combined action for biodiversity loss and climate change can be achieved through nature-based solutions.</p> <p>This reporting section provides the opportunity for your organisation to provide details on how you are supporting the positive contribution biodiversity can make to building resilience, and helping nature to mitigate and adapt to climate change.</p> <p>Nature-based solutions can play a vital role in helping us to protect and enhance biodiversity, achieve net zero targets, and improve quality of life.</p> <p>You may wish to report on a range of specific processes or activities that your organisation has undertaken, including on land you own or manage, within your buildings and workforce, and projects that you have delivered.</p> <p>Integration might include incorporating biodiversity into nature-based solutions to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The climate emergency, for example by developing climate change strategies that include nature, investing in green infrastructure, and taking action for pollinators. • Inclusive economic growth, for example by growing nature based industries, or investing in key natural visitor attractions. • Health and wellbeing, for example by improving access to nature for all.
<p>Links to related resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on how urban nature-based solutions can help Scotland's towns and cities mitigate and adapt to climate change providing guidance and examples.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Helping nature to adapt webpage contains useful information on making use of nature's capacity to adapt to change as one of our best tools for managing climate change impacts, including through managing native woodlands and restoring peatlands.• The publication People, Place and the Climate Emergency includes examples and information on local nature-based solutions to deliver a range of socio-economic outcomes.
Text Field	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Council declared a Climate Change and Ecological Emergency in 2019 and has prepared a Draft Climate Change Action Plan which includes land use and biodiversity enhancement as one of the key themes. Public consultation on the strategy and supporting Action Plan was undertaken between September and October 2020.• Ranger led health walks connect people with nature and promote health and wellbeing and upgrades of Speyside Way has improved access for all.



What steps has your organisation taken to incorporate biodiversity outcomes into partnership initiatives, wider strategies or initiatives of relevance to climate change?

Guidance on completing this section	Strategies or initiatives might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a Green Infrastructure Strategy;• a Pollinator Strategy;• Maintaining a Local Nature Conservation Sites system;• Participating in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan Partnership;• Developing a soil management strategy;• Co-operating in collecting, managing and using biodiversity data.
Links to related resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NatureScot’s overview of Green Infrastructure.• Information on Pollinator strategies, managing Local Nature Conservation Sites systems, and on Local Biodiversity Action Plan Partnerships (LBAPs).• Guidance on Soil Management including soil carbon management.• Information on biodiversity data, including obtaining and sharing data from Local Records Centres Biodiversity - where to find data.• NatureScot provides various ideas and case studies on partnership approaches.
Text Field	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participate in the North of Scotland Biodiversity Partnership (NESBiP). The group undertakes a wide range of projects to raise the profile of locally and nationally important species and habitats, encourage data recording and facilitate joint working on Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) priorities across the region.



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Looking ahead, what do you think will be the main climate change related challenges for biodiversity over the next three years?

Guidance on completing this section	You may wish to detail any arrangements that your organisation has in place to review or monitor the implications from modelling biodiversity on land that you own or manage under future climate scenarios.
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The impacts of climate change including the increased frequency of extreme weather events will impact on biodiversity and pose significant challenges. Small changes in average temperatures can also have a significant effect on ecosystems and knock on effects upon a range of ecosystem functions. Climate change is affecting the habitat of various species which must either adapt or migrate to other areas and the inter-connected nature of ecosystems means the loss of species can have knock on impacts.



SECTION 5: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Public Engagement

<p>Guidance on completing this section</p>	<p>Detail communications and education activities have you undertaken to inform or engage directly or indirectly with communities, young people and the public. This might include actions to raise staff, customer and public enjoyment and understanding of, and connection with, biodiversity and nature, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting volunteering; • Exhibitions and events; • School outreach; • Outdoor learning; • Citizen Science initiatives; • Provision of ranger services or public education programmes; • Information hosted on your webpage; • Blogs and press releases.
<p>Links to related resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas on volunteering outdoors. • Stats, stories, activities and inspiration to help bring nature and landscapes to life for young people and learners through education, including Beyond your boundary: easy steps to learning in local greenspace, and the Outdoor Learning Directory is a useful source of information and resources. • Ideas on citizen science activities that can increase public enjoyment, understanding and connection with nature. • Information on how to make more use of Scotland’s outdoors as ‘Our Natural Health Service’
<p>Text Field</p>	<p>The Council has sought to engage with communities on biodiversity by undertaking the following activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive public consultation was undertaken during preparation of Moray Local Development Plan 2020 (where biodiversity was identified as a key issue) including numerous public exhibitions and a short film on the environment and biodiversity with contributions from SEPA, Scottish Forestry and NatureScot. • Local schools involved in non-native species control including pulling Himalayan balsam.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme of summer ranger events including pond dipping, mini beast hunts and walks. • Engagement with user groups on the Council core path network & Speyside Way promoting biodiversity • Programme of nature based walks for Moray Walking Festival. • Outreach to local schools in Speyside to raise awareness of biodiversity including junior ranger programme with Speyside High School.
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Workforce skills and training

<p>Guidance on completing this section</p>	<p>Detail activities that have been undertaken to support the development of your workforce, particularly in relation to skills relevant to biodiversity, nature, outdoor learning and community engagement in the natural environment.</p> <p>Activities might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff training, education and capacity building; • Hosting conferences, exhibitions and events; • Ranger services; • Collaborative working with other organisations and sharing best practice.
<p>Text Field</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lands and Parks, Community Support Unit and Planning staff attended a wildflower workshop event hosted with the North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership. • Disseminating best practice highlighted by Keep Scotland Beautiful.



Identify any opportunities that are available to your staff to take part in practical actions

Guidance on completing this section	Activities might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Volunteering days, for example with environmental Non-Governmental Organisations;• Participation in staff networks that aim to deliver on or promote biodiversity objectives;• Opportunities for secondments to other organisations working on biodiversity and conservation.
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SECTION 6: RESEARCH AND MONITORING

Describe any research activities that your organisation has undertaken to help develop understanding and awareness of biodiversity

<p>Guidance on completing this section</p>	<p>Detail relevant research activities undertaken to raise awareness and understanding of nature and biodiversity both internally and externally, either alone or in partnership with others. Where relevant, summarise the key changes that this research has supported within your public body.</p> <p>This might include research papers, surveys or reports undertaken by your organisation.</p>
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What follow-up actions or monitoring have you undertaken to assess the impacts of the actions you have taken? How have you measured this? If you do not carry out any monitoring activities, please explain why.

<p>Guidance on completing this section</p>	<p>Where appropriate, you may wish to report on monitoring of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities relating to recording biodiversity on land you own or manage; • Your contribution in meeting national and international biodiversity targets; • Biodiversity programmes or projects that you have delivered either alone or in partnership with others; • Implementation of relevant strategies or policies; • Relevant physical conditions, such as soil and water; • Organisational capability or development in relation to biodiversity.
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Links to related resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information on biodiversity data, including obtaining and sharing data from Local Records Centres Biodiversity - where to find data.• The State of Scotland's Nature report provides a useful overview.• The National Biodiversity Network provides a single hub for biodiversity data management in the UK.• Biological Recording in Scotland is a useful source of information on surveys and biodiversity data management in Scotland.
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Does your monitoring show any significant trends or highlight any areas of concern?

Guidance on completing this section	Trends or areas of concern might include those related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The conservation status of habitats that you manage or deliver programmes to protect;• The ecological health of land that you own or manage;• Adverse recordings of water or soil quality;• Increases or decreases in species present.
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Have you added any data collected to the National Biodiversity Network or your Local Records Centre?

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SECTION 7: BIODIVERSITY HIGHLIGHTS AND CHALLENGES

Describe your organisation’s main achievements for biodiversity over the reporting period and what you are most proud of (this can include processes, plans, projects, partnerships, events and actions).

<p>Guidance on completing this section</p>	<p>As a Level One reporting organisation, it is likely that you will own or manage land, regulate land use, or have biodiversity as one of your main responsibilities. Examples of key achievements in this context might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading or contributing to programmes or projects that directly support the key steps in the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, or contribute to international Biodiversity targets; • Demonstrating national or international leadership or expertise in relation to biodiversity; • Meeting your strategic aims in relation to biodiversity; • Improvement in habitat or ecological status; • Notable species present or recorded; • Completion of key projects; • Funding achieved or delivered; • Volunteering days or time invested; • Provision of successful education or public engagement activities.
<p>Text Field</p>	<p>Significant progress has been made by mainstreaming biodiversity into the Moray Local Development Plan 2020. Developers are now required to demonstrate retention, protection and enhancement of features of biological interest within all development sites.</p> <p>Developments of over 10 houses must provide a biodiversity plan setting out actions undertaken to enhance biodiversity. The biodiversity policy is also strongly linked to and contributes to achieving the aims of the primary policy on Placemaking, through the delivery of integrated blue and green networks, innovative SUDs features, planting for pollinators and connecting people with nature.</p>



	<p>The Plan was formally adopted in July 2020 and various measure to enhance biodiversity from wildflower grassland to hedgehog highways and amphibian ladders are being identified and will be delivered.</p>
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Looking ahead, what do you think will be the main challenges over the next three years?

<p>Guidance on completing this section</p>	<p>Challenges might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Economic and resource pressures;• Delivery of cross-cutting actions;• Preventing further loss of habitats and species;• Effective management of invasive non-native species;• Pressures for space;• Need to meet targets;• Encouraging enhanced partnership working.
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Text Field	<p>Pressure on Council budgets has the potential to impact on activities which benefit biodiversity. Non-statutory duties, which deliver much for biodiversity are likely to be under greater threat than statutory ones.</p> <p>There will still be pressures on biodiversity resulting from built development and proposals to increase the diversity the economy could result in increased development in some sectors, such as tourism or renewable energy for example.</p> <p>The impacts of climate change on communities, businesses and the Council will increase over time and will impact on biodiversity directly.</p>
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