Creation, Restoration and Enhancement of Habitats

There are always opportunities to enhance biodiversity potential of any development, for example through landscaping and SUDS schemes. This may be by restoring or creating ponds and woodlands, planting locally native trees and hedges and forming wildlife corridors.

The advice on this leaflet is not comprehensive and Aberdeenshire Councils website contains more information on protected species and habitats with links to LBAP and other appropriate websites.

For further information email planning@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Other useful contacts

Scottish Natural Heritage
Tel: 01224 266500
www.snh.gov.uk

North East of Scotland Biological Records Centre (NESBReC)
Tel: 01224 664164
www.nesbrec.org.uk

Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP)
Tel: 01224 395189
www.nesbiodiversity.org.uk

Planning Advice Number 4/2015

Biodiversity & Development

It is an offence to harm protected wildlife without permission or licence.

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Aberdeenshire is rich in wildlife. This resource should be protected and enhanced in its own right and to ensure quality of life and enjoyment for future generations. When planning any proposal this rich diversity of life should be taken into account. This leaflet provides advice on how to avoid harming important habitats and species and how to incorporate biodiversity into new development.

**Protection of Sites, Habitats and Species**

The world is losing biodiversity at an ever increasing rate as a result of human activity. The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 places a duty on Local Authorities to protect and enhance biodiversity. Some sites, habitats and species are protected by British and European Law, whilst others have been identified as priorities for action within Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs). Some habitats, e.g. ancient woodland, although not covered by any of the above designations, are still important for wildlife and nature conservation.

**Habitats:**

Various habitats have been identified as being of national or local importance for the protection of biodiversity. Priority BAP Habitats include lowland acid grassland, wet woodland and lowland raised bog. In the North East of Scotland birch woodland, coastal heath and scrub and ponds are amongst the habitats considered to be of local importance.

**Species:**

Protected species include well known species such as otters, bats and badgers together with lesser known species such as whorl snails and fresh water pearl mussels. All bats, otters and wildcats are European Protected Species (EPS) and are given a high level of protection under European law.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 protects all species of birds during the breeding season and other species such as lizard, pine marten, red squirrel, red helleborine and the native bluebell at all times. In some cases the species and their nesting, resting and feeding sites are protected.

Priority Biodiversity Action Plan species include brown hare, black grouse and juniper. Locally important species include red squirrel and the northern brown argus butterfly.

Further information on designated sites and, protected species can be found at:
- [www.nesbiodiversity.org.uk](http://www.nesbiodiversity.org.uk)

**Development Proposals**

**Identification and protection of biodiversity**

It is the responsibility of the Developer to protect the biodiversity interest of a site and for any planning application, however small, wildlife issues are a material consideration.

It is important to assess the biodiversity value of a site at the outset. A site survey should identify any protected sites, habitats or species and other features such as dry stone walls and small areas of semi-natural habitats eg burns and wetlands. Development should be planned to avoid, minimise or mitigate any potential harm it may cause; incorporate features into open space or sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) where appropriate; and ensure that any effects on adjacent sites and temporary disturbance during construction are also taken into account.

Certain information, for example habitat or species surveys, may be required before a planning application can be considered and pre-application advice should always be sought from the planning authority.