

## Members' Library Service Request Form

Date of Document	01/06/13
Originator	Duncan Priddle
Originator's Ref (if any)	
Document Title	East Lothian Countryside Service Annual Report 2012/13

Please indicate if access to the document is to be "unrestricted" or "restricted", with regard to the terms of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.

Unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Restricted	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------	-------------------------------------	------------	--------------------------

If the document is "restricted", please state on what grounds (click on grey area for drop-down menu):

For Publication
-----------------

Please indicate which committee this document should be recorded into (click on grey area for drop-down menu):

Cabinet
---------

Additional information:

Authorised By	Monica Patterson
Designation	Exec Dr Services for Comms
Date	01/06/13

For Office Use Only:	
Library Reference	130/13
Date Received	04/06/13
Bulletin	June13



# EAST LOTHIAN COUNTRYSIDE SERVICE

Annual Report 2012/13





*Autumn gentian*

# FOREWORD

I am pleased to present Countryside Service`s Annual Report for 2012-13.

This report collates the work completed by the East Lothian Council Countryside Service within the past financial year. It summarises a suite of documents, principally individual site Annual Reports. In replacing these, this report aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the multiple and varied nature of work undertaken in an easier to read format.

The detailed information is, however, still presented electronically and can be accessed online by going to [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/countryside](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/countryside)

Feedback on how you find the report, how easy it is to follow and depth of information should be directed to Neil Clark, the Principal Countryside Officer at; [nclark@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:nclark@eastlothian.gov.uk)



Maree Johnston  
Landscape & Countryside Manager

*Front cover images:  
North Berwick Law panorama; Beach art; Countryside  
ranger talking bees; anemone; Garleton hills looking to  
Hopetoun monument; Greater black-backed gull*

# CONTENTS

	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
	<b>Outdoor Access</b>	<b>7</b>
	<b>Biodiversity</b>	<b>13</b>
	<b>Countryside Management</b>	<b>16</b>
	<b>Countryside Ranger Service</b>	<b>23</b>
	<b>Advisory Groups</b>	<b>26</b>
	<b>Appendices</b>	<b>38</b>



*Scottish blackface sheep used for conservation grazing at Barns Ness*

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 THE AIM OF THE COUNTRYSIDE SERVICE IS TO:

*“protect East Lothian’s biodiversity and to promote sustainable management, responsible use, enjoyment and awareness of an accessible countryside.”*



*Buff-tailed bumblebee*

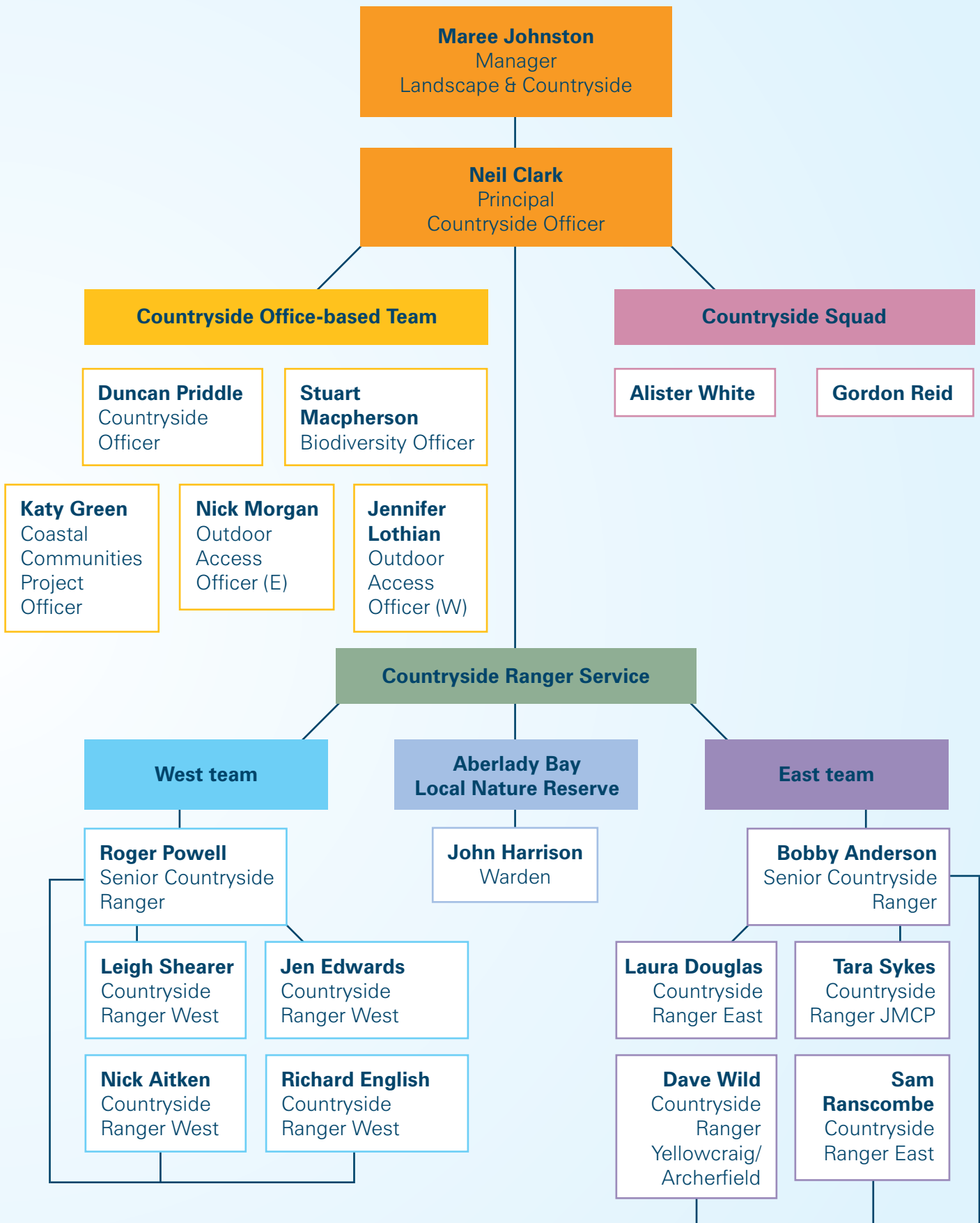
This fifth Countryside Report provides a summary of a series of individual reports (listed in appendix A), prepared to record the actions and events occurring within the defined remits of the Service during the April 1st 2012 to 31st March 2013 period.

As a large degree of the Countryside Service’s work is by definition, out of doors, weather patterns for the year can have a marked effect upon several aspects of project delivery – for example the number of people attending guided events organised by the Countryside Ranger Service.

## 1.2 STAFF

Richard English	Countryside Ranger
Leigh Shearer	Countryside Ranger
Sam Ranscombe	Countryside Ranger
Nick Aitken	Countryside Ranger
Tara Sykes	Countryside Ranger
Dave Wild	Countryside Ranger
Laura Douglas	Countryside Ranger
Jen Edwards	Countryside Ranger
John Harrison	Nature Reserve Warden
Roger Powell	Senior Countryside Ranger
Bobby Anderson	Senior Countryside Ranger
Katy Green	Coastal Communities Project Officer (to 15/2/13)
Nick Morgan	Outdoor Access Officer
Jennifer Lothian	Outdoor Access Officer
Stuart Macpherson	Biodiversity Officer
Duncan Priddle	Countryside Officer
Neil Clark	Principal Countryside Officer
Maree Johnston	Landscape and Countryside Manager
Alister White	Countryside Squad
Gordon Reid	Countryside Squad

### 1.3 STAFF STRUCTURE





## 1.4 WEATHER SUMMARY FOR 2012-2013

2012 was one of the wettest years in the UK on record and weather patterns in East Lothian reflected this. After an unseasonably dry and warm spell early in spring, the pattern of the next few months was of almost continually wet days and below average temperatures. Flooding occurred in vulnerable areas, the River Tyne bursting its banks in Haddington on 4 occasions. Easterly winds persisted for long periods at this time, keeping temperatures lower than average.

The wet weather persisted well into autumn, only alleviating somewhat with the arrival of winter, which was notable for the paucity of sunlight, though precipitation levels were normal. Snow fell on a couple of occasions.

Cold conditions, typical of the January – February period, continued into March 2013, with the end of the month seeing further snowfall and below average temperatures carried on easterly winds. This trend would prevail into April with wintry conditions proving slow to leave, with a consequence that plant growth was estimated to be 4-6 weeks behind recent patterns.

*River Tyne in flood at Nungate, Haddington*





*Smeaton railway path*

## 2.0 OUTDOOR ACCESS

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This report details the work led by the Access Officers, Nick Morgan (full time) and Jennifer Lothian (three days per week), to achieve the objectives of East Lothian's Access Strategy (Draft) during the period 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2013.

This work includes that undertaken to fulfil the requirements of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, including Core Paths Planning; achieving the objectives of the East Lothian Sustainable Path Network Strategy; and other projects in which the Access Officers were involved.

## 2.2 DUTIES UNDER THE LAND REFORM (SCOTLAND) ACT 2003

The right of responsible access conferred by Part 1 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 (hereafter referred to as the LRA) came into effect in February 2005. The Scottish Outdoor Access Code, which guides responsible behaviour by access takers and land managers, was also launched at this time.

With the LRA came various new duties and powers for local authorities. Some of the key duties that East Lothian Council was required to fulfil under the LRA included core paths planning (see 2.2.1), resolving access issues (2.2.2) and promoting responsible access (2.2.3).

The Scottish Government monitors the progress made by all local authorities and national park authorities under the LRA and we are required to report to the Scottish Government bi-annually.

**2.2.1 CORE PATHS PLANNING.** The LRA placed a duty on local authorities to draw up a plan for a system of core paths sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable access throughout their area.

Following comprehensive consultations the East Lothian Draft Core Paths Plan was produced in February 2008. After further consultations and a Local Inquiry by the Scottish Government's Reporters Unit East Lothian's Core Paths Plan was adopted at a Council meeting in December 2010. Since then the Plan has been available to view on the Council's web site.

In September 2012 a printed version of the Core Paths Plan was launched. This document is currently available to purchase in East Lothian libraries. The document is entitled "Public Access to East Lothian's Countryside including the Core Paths Plan" and also contains a lot of information about what happens in East Lothian's countryside and responsible behaviour, and highlights key paths around the county to encourage people to get out and about and explore their local area.

**2.2.2 RESOLVING ACCESS ISSUES.** Under the LRA it is a duty of local authorities to uphold access rights. This entails asserting, protecting, keeping open and free from obstruction any route, waterway or other means by which access may reasonably be exercised.

There were 26 access issues reported to the Council during 2012/13. This was up very slightly from the previous year when there were 24. The number of issues seems to have levelled off in recent years. It is speculated that this may be because of the greater awareness of the right of responsible access by both access takers and land managers. The Access Officers work closely with many landowners and land managers in East Lothian, and the Countryside Rangers are heavily involved in promoting responsible access and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code to the wider public.

**2.2.3 PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE ACCESS.** Section 10 of the LRA places a duty on local authorities to publicise the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC). The Access Officers continued to utilise opportunities to ensure the Code's continued promotion.

The Access Officers and members of East Lothian Countryside Ranger Service take every opportunity to publicise the Scottish Outdoor Access Code on any displays or at any events they are involved with. All of the walks leaflets have information about the Code, along with some other publications, such as the Active Choices map and the

quarterly Countryside newsletter Mud in Your Eye. The Access Officers also promote the Code when talking to groups and at events and have written articles about the new access rights for various publications. Copies of the Code are also handed out to land managers and others whenever appropriate.

The “Public Access to East Lothian’s Countryside including the Core Paths Plan” document, which was produced this year, contains a lot of information about the Code, responsible behaviour and what else is going on in East Lothian’s countryside in an attempt to raise awareness and make the Code relevant to East Lothian.

## **2.3 THE SUSTAINABLE PATH NETWORK STRATEGY**

The overall aim of the Sustainable Path Network Strategy for East Lothian, published in 1998, is to: *‘Develop a Strategy and Action Plan for a sustainable path network linking East Lothian’s coast and countryside, for the benefit of all user groups (walkers, cyclists, horse riders) of all ages and abilities, for both local people and visitors.’*

Access Officers continued to work to achieve this aim with their path development projects, creating a network suitable for all users that link the communities in East Lothian as well as the coast and countryside. This aim complements the duties and powers of the local authority under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. Some examples are presented in the following paragraphs.

**2.3.1 JOHN MUIR WAY.** The John Muir Way is East Lothian’s coastal-corridor long-distance path, which links East Lothian with the City of Edinburgh and the Scottish Borders. Over its 73 kilometres the John Muir Way passes through many towns and villages, allowing walkers to take advantage of facilities and public transport.

The Access Officers have worked with landowners to develop and implement the John Muir Way section by section since its inception in 2000. The route was completed in September 2007 and is now a core path.

The Access Officers continued to improve the John Muir Way and respond to feedback from members of the public;

- In October 2012 East Lothian Council received £17,163 from SNH to upgrade two sections of the John Muir Way; firstly within Balgone estate and secondly, along the farm track at New Mains, Dirleton.
- Approximately 680 metres of the John Muir Way was resurfaced in tarmac east of the Biel Burn at Belhaven. This work was part funded by Sustrans. This section of the John Muir Way will become part of the North Sea Cycle Route.

Maintenance of the John Muir Way remains an issue. During 2012 the wet weather took its toll. Much of the route at Barns Ness was flooded and has had to be re-routed. A section at Thorntonloch was damaged after a burn burst its banks. A hole appeared in the path at Bilsdean and various sections around Dunbar continue to be affected by erosion.

A management plan for the John Muir Way is currently being written. This will help with future maintenance and development of the route as well as marketing and evaluating the use of the route. It will also include an evaluation of the impact of coastal erosion on the John Muir Way.

**2.3.2 THE JOHN MUIR TRAIL.** In 2011, a walking and cycling trail across Scotland's Central Belt were proposed by Scottish Government Ministers. SNH developed the proposals and intend to launch the route in April 2014, running from Dunbar to Helensburgh. The route will incorporate the existing John Muir Way between Musselburgh and Dunbar.

**2.3.3 RIVER TYNE PATH – HAILES TO HADDINGTON.** This project, completed last year, suffered during its first year from the wet weather. Various sections of the river bank eroded or slumped due to saturation. Much of the path also became muddy and overgrown. In December, it was decided to close the section of path between Hailes Mill and Sandy's Mill because the banking had slumped into the river below the path. At the time of writing a solution is still being sought to prevent further damage to the path.

**2.3.4 RIVER TYNE PATH – HADDINGTON TO PENCAITLAND.** This is the second phase of the River Tyne Path project described in paragraph 2.3.3.

Negotiations continued with the landowners to find a suitable route for this path. All landowners apart from one agreed to the path, but as complete support was required this project could not be progressed and was abandoned as it was not possible to build the path within the funding timescales.

**2.3.5 GIFFORD TO GARVALD.** During 2012 there were a number of complaints from members of the public who had been confronted when walking in Yester Estate. This prompted the Community Council to become involved and the resurrection of the proposed core path into the estate.

Following discussions with the landowner a planning application was lodged by the Community Council to create a new access into Yester Estate from Park Road in Gifford. The routes within the estate were agreed with the landowner. Objections have been raised, but it is still hoped that this entrance can be created to allow the establishment of core paths within the estate.

At Carfrae Farm and Garvald Mains Farm work was undertaken to continue the core paths from Yester to Garvald. A new fence was built, four kissing gates installed and some levelling work and drainage work completed. The total cost of this work was £6,254.

**2.3.6 HADDINGTON TO THE GARLETON HILLS.**

Upgrading to this core path was completed in October 2012. This route connects Haddington to the Garleton Hills and on to Athelstaneford. The length of new path constructed was 615 metres. The cost of the path project was £16,032.



*Garleton path*

**2.3.7 DREM TO GULLANE PATH.** Negotiations for a link between Drem and Gullane commenced in 2008/09. Discussions with the landowners had stalled since this time, however, with no agreement being agreed.

In 2011/12 further capital funding became available for this route and attempts were once more undertaken to negotiate a core path route with the current landowners/ land managers. Unfortunately, these too, met without success.

In October, East Lothian Council asked for the assistance of the Local Access Forum to try and negotiate this route. After various meetings with community groups and landowners an alternative route to the proposed core path was suggested by the landowner. There are concerns with this alternative, however, and discussions are ongoing.

## 2.4 PATH WARDEN SCHEME

In 2011 Landscape and Countryside launched a volunteer Path Warden Scheme. This scheme allows local people to adopt their local core paths, regularly inspect them and undertake minor maintenance tasks.

During 2012 -13 the number of path wardens and the extent of work they undertook both continued to grow. The path wardens now number 42 individuals and completed 631 hours of individual work, together with 8 team tasks.

In order to address concerns experienced along the River Tyne Path during the year, a sub-team of path wardens– the Tyne Team – was set up, with a view to providing a higher level of maintenance along that route commencing in spring 2013.

A training day for the Path Wardens was held on 12 February 2013. One of the outcomes from the training day was that the path warden volunteers agreed to progress the setting up of their group as a specific entity in order to source funding opportunities that are unavailable to the Council. Countryside Section staff agreed to facilitate this process.



*Path wardens at work*

## 2.5 PATH MAINTENANCE/SIGNAGE

The Path Cutting Programme in East Lothian is revised annually to take account of the new and upgraded paths in the network requiring maintenance. The cutting programme also includes the application of herbicide and blowing off leaf litter where appropriate. This work is carried out by Amenity Services and their contractors on a regular basis.

The Countryside Squad proved invaluable to ongoing maintenance work on the path network. This two-man squad was able to promptly undertake minor repairs to paths and path furniture such as fencing, gates and signage, as well as addressing minor drainage problems and forestry work.

The Unpaid Work/Community Payback Service (formerly Community Service by Offenders) team continued to do a lot of maintenance work on the path network. As well as cutting back vegetation on paths the team upgraded paths along the River Tyne Path at Abbey Bridge and at Butterdean wood.

## **2.6 COASTAL COMMUNITIES FUND**

In a joint bid to the Coastal Communities Fund, East Lothian Council, Volunteer Development East Lothian and The Conservation Volunteers were awarded £280,000. This two year project will involve the employment of a project co-ordinator and six apprentices each year (commencing in April 2013) who will be trained up in countryside skills. It is hoped that various sections of the John Muir Way and North Sea Cycle Route will benefit from maintenance and upgrading work as part of this project.

## **2.7 PATH STEERING GROUP**

The Paths Steering Group continued to meet on a quarterly basis throughout 2012-13 and continued to help guide the progress of the Sustainable Path Network project.

## **2.8 EAST LOTHIAN LOCAL ACCESS FORUM**

The Local Access Forum continued to meet on a quarterly basis throughout 2012-13. At each meeting the Access Officers reported on progress of the Sustainable Path Network, core paths and access issues.

## **2.9 PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

The Access Officers have encouraged consultation from the Planning Development and Planning Control Sections on proposed and consented planning applications for developments within East Lothian. This has allowed the Access Officers to work with the planners and increase awareness of the importance of access.

One of the advantages of the Core Paths Plan having been adopted is that core paths as well as rights of way are now available to planners on the Council's GIS. As a result there has been considerably better consultation from the planners for development sites within 100 metres of a core path or right of way. The increased dialogue with planners has resulted in their better understanding of access legislation.

The Access Officers continue to check the weekly planning list for any proposed developments that may impact on access, proposed core paths or rights of way.

## **2.10 CROSS-COUNCIL WORKING**

The Access Officers attended meetings with the Access Officers from Scottish Borders Council, West Lothian Council, Edinburgh Council and Midlothian Council. These meetings proved to be very useful to discuss the duties under the Land Reform Act, especially Core Paths Planning, and to try and ensure consistency of policy and procedures.

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The biodiversity process began at the Earth Summit in 1992 with a realisation that traditional conservation methods, such as designating nature reserves, were insufficient to protect wild habitats and species. The process also recognises that humans rely on biodiversity to sustain our way of life. The biodiversity process is therefore a human life support mechanism.



*Soldier beetles*

In East Lothian the local biodiversity process has four main principles: protect what we have; manage habitats to improve their quality; create new habitats and wildlife links; raise awareness of biodiversity and encourage participation.

### 3.2 PROTECT WHAT WE HAVE

All planning applications are sent to The Wildlife Information Centre to be screened against a database of notable species and designated sites. This highlights where an application may affect biodiversity and further consideration should be made. In addition, planners submit applications for biodiversity comment.

In 2011, steading conversions and small-scale turbine developments remained the most common form of development to attract biodiversity comment. Both types of application potentially affect bats (a European Protected Species) and/or pink-footed goose (protected through the Firth of Forth Special Protection Area). A goose survey was established in autumn 2010 to provide data to inform such planning applications. Survey data was gathered through the autumn and winter of 2012.

Few applications produced meaningful gains for biodiversity.

Wildlife Sites were designated by East Lothian Council in the current Local Plan. Their boundaries have been re-assessed, with some changes made in preparation for the forthcoming Local Development Plan.

The Forestry Commission asks for biodiversity comment on all applications that they receive. 12 forestry applications were received in the last year, ranging from minor felling and restructuring work to larger scale forest plans.



*Pink-footed geese*



### 3.3 **MANAGE HABITATS AND IMPROVE THEIR QUALITY**

The old Turf Nursery at Yellowcraig continued to be managed to support important populations of grassland flowers and was the subject of a presentation at The Wildlife Information Centre annual conference.

Grassland and woodland management took place at the former land fill site near East Saltoun. The project also created a new path through local woodland and improved pedestrian access to the site.

Field gentian was found at John Muir Country Park in 2011 by a student working at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh. This was the only known site for this species in East Lothian. The student developed and implemented a project to encourage the spread of the species at the Park. Results will be available in 2014.

Field gentian subsequently was found at Gullane and a plan is in place to manage its habitat in a more sympathetic manner.



*Quadrat surveying of field gentian*

### 3.4 **CREATE NEW HABITATS AND WILDLIFE LINKS**

The great crested newt is one of East Lothian's rarest animals. It was previously recorded in three locations, all north of the A1. A fourth population was found in early 2012 between Haddington and Humbie and the landowner created new ponds to encourage the species. Another new population was found in the eastern Lammermuirs by surveyors working at Woodhall Dean. This area will require further investigation to establish the exact breeding locations.

Scottish Natural Heritage provided additional resources for pond creation near the original newt sites. Three ponds were dug in the Garletons in February 2013, led by Tony Seymour of The Farm Environment. It is hoped that further funding will be available in 2013 to create new ponds around other populations.



*Fever pond*

### 3.5 RAISE AWARENESS OF BIODIVERSITY AND ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION

The countryside report for 2011/12 described a community right to buy at Cockenzie, Port Seton and Longniddry. Unfortunately the bid failed and the hoped for community and biodiversity benefits have not been implemented by the new owner. It is frustrating that many of these benefits could have been delivered through negotiation with the landowner but currently there is no community right to *influence* land management. These thoughts were included in a response to the Scottish Government's consultation on land reform.

The Peter Potter Gallery in Haddington developed a biodiversity-themed art initiative based around the River Tyne. *River Crossings* involved 10 artists, who developed different river-related installations.

A biodiversity article has become a regular feature in East Lothian Life magazine. Articles in 2012 formed a mini-series on birds, which included features on pink footed geese and interviews with some of the volunteers who record bird numbers along the coast every month.

15 primary schools received a presentation on biodiversity in the summer term. Dirleton Primary specifically sought help with creating an orchard to celebrate their centenary year. A local landowner donated a small field corner adjacent to the school, which now supports 20 fruit trees, a wildflower meadow and an outdoor classroom.



*Gulls taking flight at Yellowcraig*

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This section of the report records principle countryside projects undertaken during the year. Some have a specific objective or obvious output; others are part of a longer-term development both for the East Lothian Countryside and for the Service.

#### 4.2 VOLUNTEERS IN EAST LoTHIAN'S COUNTRYSIDE

The commitment shown by people who volunteered their time and effort, to help conserve and protect East Lothian's countryside, continued to increase during 2012-13. People contributed their help to a number of projects (see table).

The number of people expressing an interest in volunteering increased during the year. The countryside officer continued to co-ordinate volunteers and their deployment.

The total of recorded volunteer time (which excludes the work completed by individuals clearing beach litter etc.) across all countryside projects, came to 7,008 hours, equating to 1,001 days or the equivalent of over 5 full-time posts.

New volunteer projects commenced in 2012-13 included the establishment of the Tyne Team (see section 2.4), a ragwort removal team at



*Making stakes for path edging*

	Volunteer Category	Group details	Primary duties / example
1	Individual unsung heroes!		Litter picking of coastal / countryside sites
2	Site –specific ‘Friends’ groups at:	Aberlady Bay LNR	Practical conservation work
		Dunbar Shore and Neighbourhood Group	Beach management
		John Muir Country Park	Practical conservation work
		North Berwick Law and Glen	Practical conservation work
		Yellowcraig	Practical conservation work
3	Path wardens	42 path wardens	Path maintenance / improvements to core path network. Team tasks to address larger issues.
4	Conservation teams	Lothian Conservation Volunteers	Practical conservation work – sea buckthorn clearance
5	Monitoring projects:	Stock ‘lookers’, Traprain Law, Barns Ness and Aberlady Bay LNR	Checking numbers of stock and their condition; ragwort control (Traprain)
		Coastal counts	Recording of people on the coast / activities being undertaken
		Eider monitoring project, North Berwick	Monitoring productivity of colony
		Bumblebee and grassland surveyors	Recording populations at areas where conservation grazing is planned or taking place
		Winter goose survey	Recording distribution of flocks of geese
6	Criminal justice; Unpaid Work		Path upgrading, River Tyne path; litter collection all countryside sites
7	Corporate group volunteers	Specific large projects	Price Waterhouse Coopers, practical work and fund raising at Aberlady Bay LNR

Traprain Law and the training up of surveyors to undertake botanical and bumblebee survey work (see section 4.5.4).

By way of a small mark of appreciation on September 29th a volunteer get-together and training session was run at Barns Ness / Dunbar, attended by 40 volunteers.



*Hands up for volunteers*

## 4.3 INTERPRETATION

**4.3.1 COUNTRYSIDE NEWSLETTER – ‘MUD IN YOUR EYE’.** This publication continued to be produced on a quarterly basis. It highlighted wildlife news, together with information upon local places to explore and how people can become involved in volunteering projects. 2,000 copies of each issue were distributed to local outlets and / or given out by hand to members of the public by the Countryside Ranger Service.

In early 2013 a special case was taken to continue to make the case for production of hard copies of the magazine, in the face of a Council directive to reduce the number and extent of printed material. This was successfully supported by the ELC Media Manager.

**4.3.2 THE BEST OF EAST LOTHIAN'S WILDLIFE AND EAST LOTHIAN'S CORE PATH BOOKLET.** Launched in September 2011 and July 2012 respectively, these publications were warmly received and continue to be marketed at local outlets.

**4.3.3 ARTICLES FOR THE EAST LOTHIAN COURIER.** The countryside ranger service continued to provide monthly articles for the local newspaper.

#### 4.4 SPECIES MANAGEMENT

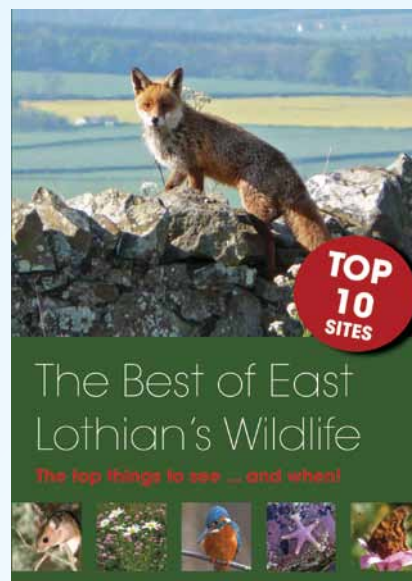
**4.4.1 SEA BUCKTHORN.** A non-native species to East Lothian, widely planted historically to stabilise sand dune systems; sea buckthorn is a plant that can aggressively dominate dune grassland systems to the detriment of local habitats and species.

2012-13 marked the 6th successive year when sea buckthorn control was undertaken by East Lothian Council, in accordance with strategic guidelines. Much of the large-scale (mechanical) removal work has now been completed and in consequence these operations were confined to Aberlady Bay LNR and Yellowcraig.

Across sites, regenerating shoots continued to be controlled by a combination of herbicide application, which is effective at killing off regenerating shoots, together with hand digging when spraying is not deemed appropriate.

**4.4.2 TWO- SPINED ACAENA AND PIRRI-PIRRI BURR.** Two-spined acaena (*Acaena ovalifolia*) and pirri-pirri burr (*Acanea novae-zelandiae*) are other non-native introduced species to East Lothian that share a similar preference for coastal dune grasslands. They are low growing, forming dense mats, 1-2cm above ground level. They colonise areas of the dune system due to the ease by which they seed (burrs) are transported by animals, the spreading nature of their tendrils and because they often grow undetected for many years.

Within East Lothian two-spined acaena occurs at Aberlady Bay and Gullane Bents, with pirri-pirri burr at Yellowcraig and John Muir Country Park. Efforts continued to both control the spread of the plant, with a view to longer-term eradication and to update distribution maps map at each location.



Sea buckthorn berries

**4.4.3 ASH DIEBACK (*CHALARA FRAXINEA*).** In keeping with the rest of the UK, East Lothian is prepared to respond to the consequences of ash dieback. During 2012 no infected trees were reported from the county, though infected trees were reported in neighbouring Berwickshire. On the advice of the woodland officer, Countryside Staff were made aware of how to detect signs of infection, in the expectancy that ash trees within East Lothian will be affected from the summer of 2013. The current position is that rather than try to remove all infected material, information will be deployed at relevant countryside sites to inform people of the issue and the response strategy.



**4.4.4 ROE DEER IN GULLANE.** Following garden damage and a number of vehicle collisions, a cull of roe deer was authorised on a part of Gullane Bents. It was not successful, one significant factor being the number of people using the area early and late in the day when shooting was considered feasible. Discussions were held, primarily with Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), to see if a cull could be extended onto Council ground. The majority of the local interest expressed has been against culling. With this being the only option put forward by SNH a more sustainable deer management solution is being sought.



Roe deer doe

## 4.5 CONSERVATION GRAZING SCHEME

**4.5.1** Grazing plays an invaluable role in providing a simple and sustainable method to manage grass height / diversity and ensure the habitats are maintained in a favourable botanical condition. Sheep and cattle have been deployed at 3 locations (Aberlady Bay LNR, North Berwick Law and Traprain Law) over the past few years.

### 4.5.2 HERITAGE LOTTERY APPLICATION – SAVING OUR MAGNIFICENT MEADOWS.

During 2012 East Lothian Council contributed towards a UK submission for Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF). Co-ordinated by the charity Plantlife, the project incorporated a series of projects aimed at the conservation and enhancement of natural grasslands. In the spring of 2012 the project was successful in receiving approval for the first phase submission.



Ragwort clearance

**4.5.3 FROM HLF TO SRDP** During progression of the second-round submission, however, delays in the submission of the bid reached a point where the project was dragging to the detriment of projects already underway within East Lothian. In addition, financial limitations within the Countryside budget meant that it was no longer possible to provide the seed funding for the scheme as it stood.

In consequence the Countryside Officer withdrew the East Lothian component from the HLF bid and progressed a separate proposal incorporating Scottish Rural Development Priority (SRDP) funding. This project proved successful. £34,200.00 of SRDP funding was secured to enable the site preparation of an additional site – Barns Ness to receive stock, together with site management work being completed at Traprain Law.

An additional SRDP application was submitted in the winter of 2012 for North Berwick Law and was successful in securing a further £25,000.00 for 2013-14.

#### **4.5.4 VOLUNTEER EFFORT.**

**i.** Animal welfare. Countryside volunteers undertook regular checks of stock at Aberlady LNR, Barns Ness and Traprain Law, to ensure any health and welfare issues, coupled with site infrastructure issues, could be identified and, where relevant quickly addressed. Considerable effort was contributed by volunteers at each location. At Traprain Law, given the introduction of ponies to graze the site (see 4.5.5, below), a specific volunteer group was created to remove ragwort from the site. Over 300 sacks of the plant were forked out and removed off-site, involving 100s of hours of peoples' time and one volunteer in particular! Further removal continued into the winter and spring of 2013 in order to reduce the extent of the plant.

**ii.** Site condition surveying. To monitor changes as a consequence of grazing, volunteers were sought to undertake botanical monitoring and insect (bumblebee) recording. Training was provided by Countryside staff, in order to increase volunteers' confidence and identification skills and familiarity with the survey techniques to be employed. In total 21 botanical and 17 bumblebee surveyors have been trained up and will commence survey work in 2013-14, with further survey work planned for the following 5 years. This will then provide data to help assess the effectiveness of the grazing scheme.

**4.5.5 EXMOOR PONIES.** Following incidences of sheep worrying at Traprain Law, sheep were removed off site in January 2012. After a short period of no grazing, in May 2012, 6 wild Exmoor pony geldings were put onto the site. Exmoor ponies are by their nature hardy and perfectly adapted to live on natural grassland, require no additional feeding and little maintenance. The ponies were sourced from a charity – the Moorland Mousie Trust – itself dedicated to re-housing and promoting this ancient breed.

In the autumn of 2012, a further 7 geldings were added to the group in order to deliver an increased level of grazing. Early indications are that this has had a positive impact upon sward height and density; hopefully this will be borne



*Exmoor ponies at Traprain law*

out in the accompanying botanical surveying. The ponies themselves have become something of local celebrities too, attracting much interest from the public and helping to raise the profile of the grazing scheme.

## 4.6 COUNTRYSIDE SQUAD

The operations of the Countryside Squad continued to provide an invaluable asset to the maintenance of the countryside portfolio. A number of estate duties were completed, from bridge construction, to tree planting and aftercare to right-of way maintenance.



*East beach, North Berwick*

## 4.7 COASTAL PEOPLE COUNTS

Commenced in 2008, coastal people counts are undertaken during the summer period, to provide data on the number of people accessing the coast of East Lothian and the types of recreation / activity that people engaged in.

Three counts were programmed for the summer (June 24th, July 15th and August 19th), using Countryside Rangers Service staff and countryside volunteers, with comparative counts being recorded from air by the employment of a micro light aircraft and recorder. Weather conditions precluded aerial recording from taking place on all but the August count.

Despite these drawbacks, the counts that did take place produced a variety of useful data of spatial distribution of people along the coast and the types of activity being engaged in and this data will help shape management of the coast.



Junior rangers pose

#### 4.8 COUNTRYSIDE WORK PLACEMENT – NATURAL COMMUNITIES

During 2011-12, as part of a national programme co-ordinated by the TCV (the Trust for Conservation Volunteers, Natural Communities), East Lothian offered a one-year placement post of Coastal Communities Project Officer - Katy Green. This post was designed to identify gaps in current engagement between communities and their local coastline, together with providing mechanisms to ensure these gaps are filled.



Katy delivered on a range of coastal interpretative and practical conservation events with groups around the coastline, to the extent that funding was sought – and secured – to continue her post for a second year, delivering both benefits to her and to the Service. The contract finished on 15/02/13 whereupon Katy was successful in securing a seasonal contract with the Scottish Wildlife trust.

#### 4.9 PROFESSIONAL DOG WALKERS – APPROVED USER STATUS

The purpose of the scheme was to build upon a developing relationship with professional dog walking companies and promote good practice amongst dog walkers.



Now in its second year, membership continued to grow, the scheme being managed by the Amenity Protection Officer. UK recognition of the innovation of the scheme was given when East Lothian Council was the winner (from over 300 applicants) of the Kennel Club Good Citizen Dog Scheme (Local Authority category).

#### 4.10 SITE MANAGEMENT PLANS/STATEMENTS

Site management plans are produced for all principal Countryside sites, and are updated on a 5 year rotating programme. 2012-13 saw management plans revised and updated for the Pencaitland Railway Walk and the River Esk.

#### 4.11 BUDGET SUMMARY

Costs and expenditure for the year were as follows;

Item	Cost	Notes
Countryside Costs	£691,595.64	£596,006 = employee costs
Income	£92,446	£10,000 Scottish Power; £42,259.31 Caledonian Heritable Ltd / Hamilton & Kinneil Estates; others
Net Expenditure	£599,149	

# EAST LOTHIAN COUNTRYSIDE RANGER SERVICE



*Reserve warden leading bird identification training session*

**5.1** The aim of the East Lothian Countryside Ranger Service is to provide an awareness and understanding of the countryside; enhance the variety of people's experiences provided by East Lothian's countryside and coastal sites and to ensure these sites are managed in a sustainable manner.

**5.2** In practice this has been achieved by **4 objectives**;

- To welcome the local community and visitors to East Lothian's countryside and coastal sites and enhance their enjoyment of the sites
- To assist and advise on countryside access issues, including rights of way
- To provide an experience and promote understanding of the countryside through environmental interpretation and education for the community of East Lothian and its visitors
- To ensure the countryside and coastal sites owned or managed by East Lothian Council that have the potential for leisure, information recreation or nature conservation, are managed in a sustainable manner.

## 5.3 WELCOMING VISITORS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

**5.3.1** The Countryside Ranger Service continued to manage countryside sites on a day-to-day basis, carrying out essential duties and minor maintenance tasks, including litter management, monitoring visitor use and ensuring site safety.

**5.3.2 SEASIDE AWARD** status was retained for seven coastal sites managed by East Lothian Council. An eighth beach, Dunbar East beach, was added into the Award scheme, thanks to the strenuous efforts of the local community group – the Dunbar Shore and Neighbourhood Group – and their agreement to take on the management of this beach.



*East beach, Dunbar*

## 5.4 ADVISING ON COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS ISSUES

The Countryside Ranger Service continued to respond to any access issues raised by the Outdoor Access Officers and to promote the Scottish Outdoor Access Code during countryside events.

A series of 17 guided hikes were undertaken in order to promote a greater understanding of countryside issues and to increase people's confidence in accessing the wider countryside.

The path network was monitored and minor repairs completed.

## 5.5 PROVIDING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION

Last year's figures in brackets for comparison

**5.5.1 EDUCATIONAL GROUPS.** 178 (165) classes were taken this year. Activities included tracks and trails, mini beasts, rock pools, food for free and geology.

**5.5.2 OTHER VISITING GROUPS.** 46 (36) visiting groups were taken this year ranging from after school clubs to the Scottish Wildlife Trust on activities from general guided walks to survival skills.

**5.5.3 TALKS.** 24 (16) talks were given to various local groups and societies on wildlife related topics.

**5.5.4 EVENTS ATTENDED.** The Countryside Ranger Service attended events over the year including the first Dunbar Science Festival.

**5.5.5 TRAINING COURSES.** Countryside Rangers attended ten training courses.

## 5.6 MANAGING SITES IN A SUSTAINABLE MANNER

Conservation volunteers continued to provide an invaluable input into the management and conservation of sites across East Lothian;

- **Volunteer Groups** – 79 (117) volunteer groups were utilised by the Countryside Ranger Service.
- **Unpaid Work** squads undertook specific tasks, led by a dedicated supervisor employed by the Criminal Justice team. They greatly assisted in the management and maintenance of infrastructure across Countryside sites.
- Individual projects were undertaken that utilised local people who volunteered their time and effort.

## 5.7 WILDLIFE MONITORING/CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT

Target flora and fauna continued to be monitored and managed in accordance with prescriptions contained in individual site management plans.



*Vegetation monitoring, honest!*

Members of the Countryside Service contribute towards the workings of five Advisory Groups. Each Group is site-specific but share similar terms of remit. Groups will comment and advise on management plans, approve the annual work programmes, together with providing recommendations to East Lothian Council.

Annual Reports are produced for each Advisory Group, detailing the work completed by East Lothian Council's Countryside Service at each location; see Appendix A for further details.



*Lapwing roosting at Levenhall*

## 6.1 ABERLADY BAY LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

### INTRODUCTION

- 6.1.1** Aberlady Bay was designated as Britain's first Local Nature Reserve and a Site of Special Scientific Interest in 1952, due to its botanical, ornithological and geological interest. In 2001, the Reserve became part of the Firth of Forth SSSI and much of the site also lies within the Firth of Forth Special Protection Area and Ramsar Site.
- 6.1.2** The aim of the Reserve is **"to conserve the geomorphological and physiographical features, the habitats, flora and fauna found within the Reserve and the resultant landscape character"**.
- 6.1.3** The Reserve continues to be managed by East Lothian Council, with the support of an Advisory Group that represents landowners, conservation bodies and the local community. A Management Agreement exists with the landowners formalising and defining a management framework.
- 6.1.4** The Reserve covers an area of 582 hectares and represents the most extensive complex of sand dune, saltmarsh and mudflats in southeast Scotland. It also contains a wide range of associated habitats, particularly calcareous grassland and freshwater marsh; and supports a large variety of plant species with many Scottish and local rarities.
- 6.1.5** The main ornithological interest of the Reserve relates to the site's national or international significance as a feeding and roosting area for wintering wildfowl and waders, and its regional importance for several breeding species.
- 6.1.6** The main geological interest is a sequence of Carboniferous Limestones and Teschenite sills as well as the extensive naturally developing sand dune system.



*Aberlady Bay LNR*

## **SUMMARY OF THE YEAR**

### RESERVE MANAGEMENT

- Sheep grazing, between late September and late March, over a 20-hectare plot continued for a sixth year.
- Under the current scrub management plan, the last clearance of sea buckthorn by heavy machinery was carried out along the track towards Gullane Point
- Giant hogweed, two-spined acacia (previously recorded as pirri-pirri bur) and reedmace was removed.

### WILDLIFE MONITORING

- Peak counts of wintering wildfowl and waders were generally below average on the site with the particular exception of ringed plover.
- The long-term declines in wintering sea duck continued for another year.
- Long-term declines in wintering flocks of lapwing and golden plover were further evidenced.
- Numbers of pink-footed geese peaked at 22,230 in October 2012 – a similar figure to that of the previous year.
- Another poor year in breeding success for the site's wading birds was recorded with a low numbers of birds present and a decline in productivity.

- Birds that nested earlier in the year seemed to fair better than those that nested later. In general, there was a decline (in some species very marked) in the number of breeding territories and young seen.
- In part due to the absence of an Assistant Warden in 2012, the only single-species plant monitoring carried out was on *Baldellia ranunculoides*. Vegetation monitoring was carried out in the Grazing Area.
- Largely down to volunteers, a Butterfly Transect was recorded for the sixth successive year and some basic analysis done.
- The Wildfowling Panel met in early August to receive a report on the 2011-12 season and decide on permit issue for the 2012-13 season.

## PEOPLE

- For a second year in succession, volunteers carried out over 1,800 hours of work on a range of tasks including sea buckthorn removal, beach cleans, sheep looking, and biological monitoring.
- For the first time in eleven years, no Assistant Warden was employed. This had an inevitable impact on work on the site.
- The Reserve Advisory Group met three times during the year, including a site visit as part of the annual joint tour with the management group for John Muir Country Park.

## 6.2 JOHN MUIR COUNTRY PARK

### INTRODUCTION

**6.2.1** The Countryside Commission for Scotland registered the Country Park in 1976. The Country Park currently extends to 713.5 hectares and comprises of a variety of habitats. The majority of the Country Park is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, with original designations that pre-date the Country Park status by some twenty-four years. These were designed to help protect the biological, geological and geomorphological features found within this environment. Two further, more recent, nature conservation designations have been put in place. The site is now incorporated into the Firth of Forth Special Protection Area and has also been notified as a Ramsar Site. (Ramsar Convention on Wetland of International Importance as a Waterfowl Habitat, 1982.

**6.2.2** According to the Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967, (the enabling act for the creation of the Country Park), a country park is “a park or pleasure ground in the countryside which by reason of its position in relation to major concentrations of population affords convenient opportunities to the public for enjoyment of the countryside or open-air recreation”. The landscape features, especially the vast expanses of sand, exposed when the tide recedes, have made this area a favourite location for a wide variety of recreational pursuits. Through the years since its establishment, visitor numbers have risen steadily, though poor summers in both 2007 and 2008 resulted in slight declines from the peak record returned in 2006.

**6.2.3** The diversity of habitats within the Country Park is one reason why this area has proven such a magnet for public recreation. There has always been a realisation that the



*Tyne estuary, John Muir Country Park*

interface between the visitor and the natural environment needs to be managed. Since its inception, the Country Park has had a Management Plan, which continues to evolve by taking into account the ever-changing opportunities and pressures.

**6.2.4** The overall management aim is **“to manage public recreation and conserve the geomorphology, geology and landscape, and sustain the biodiversity of the Country Park.”**

#### **6.2.5 SUMMARY**

- Monitoring of flora and fauna continued this year in line with the prescriptive management plan.
- Control of invasive species was undertaken at the Biel Burn, Seafield Pond area, and Spike Island with giant hogweed removed to ensure visitor safety. On Whitberry Point and Spike Island pine sapling and sea buckthorn control was carried out to protect these habitats. Pirri-pirri bur was dug out and sprayed within Hedderwick plantation.
- Final permanent bridge was installed over the creeks on the “horse” path crossing the salt marsh to redirect traffic over this sensitive habitat.
- Site maintenance work was completed as required
- Monitoring of user groups and their interactions was regularly undertaken to gauge use of the site.
- The Friends of John Muir Country Park continued to undertake tasks.
- Thinning of the Hedderwick plantation was carried out by contractors.



- A new play area was completed and is now open to the public.
- A new toilet block has been built.
- The Advisory Group would like to thank all those groups of individuals who volunteered their time during the year, to work on management projects within the Country Park.

## 6.3 JOINT LAWS

### INTRODUCTION



*North Berwick law*



*Traprain law*

- 6.3.1** The Joint Laws' Advisory Group covers two sites, Traprain Law and North Berwick Law.
- 6.3.2** Both sites are striking upstanding features within the lowland East Lothian landscape. Both are designated RIGS (Regionally Important Geological Sites) for their geological and geomorphological importance, Traprain representing a superb example of a laccolith, whilst North Berwick Law is a volcanic plug. Both features were heavily sculpted during the last glacial period resulting in their current 'crag and tail' shape today.
- 6.3.3** Traprain and North Berwick Laws are notified Sites of Special Scientific Interests due to their geology and botany – both having extensive areas of mineral rich unimproved grassland – a rare and declining habitat within East Lothian. In addition, the notification Traprain Law includes reference to the regional significance of the sites for the distribution of lichens found across the site.
- 6.3.4** Both sites contain archaeological evidence indicating extensive periods of human occupation. The large hill fort on Traprain Law is one of the best known prehistoric monuments in Scotland and, as such, has been notified as a Scheduled Ancient Monument by Historic Scotland under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. The hill has been the subject of a number of excavations over the years and has revealed traces of use from the Neolithic period through till about the 5 Century AD. Perhaps the most impressive find was unearthed in May 1919 when a hoard of flattened silver was recovered, which was later restored to its original glory, and is now

displayed in the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh. North Berwick Law is also a Scheduled Ancient Monument although little fieldwork, has, as yet, been undertaken.

**6.3.5** North Berwick Law is subject to a Conservation Agreement with the National Trust for Scotland.

**6.3.6** The shared management aim for both sites is **'to conserve and enhance the natural and human heritage'** this being delivered through the implementation of site management plans.

### **6.3.7 SUMMARY**

#### TRAPRAIN LAW

- No peregrine chicks fledged this year
- Successful fledging of three raven chicks
- Speckled wood butterfly recorded
- Introduction of 13 Exmoor ponies to the site
- Ragwort removal undertaken
- Contractor being sought for replacement of the western edge of the quarry fence
- Climbers continue to access south side through field
- Gorse removal on the north side as part of the SRDP grant
- Important Plant Area leaflet being produced by Plantlife Scotland

#### NORTH BERWICK LAW

- Path repair completed by Trust for Conservation Volunteers (TCV)
- Grazing project funding and planning
- Important Plant Area leaflet being produced by Plantlife Scotland
- Vascular plant survey by Katherine White
- Marsh fixed point photographic monitoring continued
- Jubilee beacon celebration took place
- North Berwick High School projects developed
- Archaeological project with local primary school for John Muir Award

## 6.4 LEVENHALL LINKS



*Levenhall Links*

### INTRODUCTION

**6.4.1** Levenhall Links is a 120 hectare area of mixed grassland, woodland and wetland situated adjacent to the mouth of the River Esk on the East Lothian coastline. The entire site is land that has been reclaimed from the sea using pulverised fuel ash (pfa) a by-product of Cockenzie Power Station. Areas that have reached capacity for the disposal of pfa have been landscaped to provide habitats that are of significant value both for recreation and wildlife conservation.

**6.4.2** The site is popular with local people who use it for informal recreational pursuits. Additionally there are regular visits from water sports enthusiasts and those interested in natural history. The bird reserve and lagoon 8, (an active ash lagoon still used for the disposal of pfa) have gained national recognition for their importance for wildfowl and wading birds and were notified as Sites of Special Scientific Interest in 2001. These areas have also been included in the Firth of Forth Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar designations. Because of this the Links has developed as a nationally respected and recognised bird watching venue.

**6.4.3** Levenhall Links is jointly owned with Scottish Power. The post of Countryside Ranger is co-funded by Scottish Power. In addition to the full time Countryside Ranger based at Levenhall a Seasonal Countryside Ranger is employed from April to September; this post being solely funded by East Lothian Council. The Countryside Rangers are responsible for the day-to-day management of the site and also provides a programme of educational and interpretational events throughout the year.

**6.4.4** The overall management aim for Levenhall Links is **‘to create and maintain open space for recreation and nature conservation; while enhancing the visitor experience and landscape’**.

### 6.4.5 SUMMARY

- Cockenzie Power Station closed on March 15th 2013 after 45 years of electricity production
- Site maintenance work was completed as required

- On site monitoring as per management plan was undertaken and completed
- Levenhall still awaiting LNR (local nature reserve) designation

## 6.5 YELLOWCRAIG/ARCHERFIELD ADVISORY GROUP

### INTRODUCTION



*Yellowcraig and Archerfield*

- 6.5.1** The stretch of coast from Gullane to Broad Sands was notified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 1967 and was subsequently incorporated into the Firth of Forth SSSI in 2001. The Firth of Forth itself is a Special Protected Area (SPA) and a Ramsar site as a result of the nature of its birdlife and wetland habitat.
- 6.5.2** Managed since 1944 by East Lothian Council (ELC) and falling within the SSSI boundary, Yellowcraig has a long history of public use and sensitive management. The site is very popular with both with locals, holiday makers and day trippers from further afield.
- 6.5.3** Archerfield Estate was privately owned by Hamilton & Kinneil (1987) Ltd and as an agricultural site had limited public use. However in 1999 the eastern section of Archerfield Estate was sold to Caledonian Heritable Ltd (CHL) and in 2001 CHL lodged a planning application for 2 golf courses (Archerfield Links), 100 houses, 50 holiday cottages, hotel, clubhouse and the restoration of Archerfield House.
- 6.5.4** Lying to the west of Archerfield Links is Renaissance Golf Club. Similarly to Archerfield, this land formed part of the Hamilton & Kinneil Ltd privately owned estate but was instead leased to Renaissance Golf Club on a 99 year agreement. The golf course is currently open for play and the construction of a hotel, clubhouse and associated facilities are ongoing.

**6.5.5** The management area stretches from Eyebroughy in the West to the Eel Burn in the East and includes land at Archerfield Links and Renaissance Golf Clubs alongside work with Dirleton Community.

**6.5.6** The overall management aim is to ensure **'The conservation and enhancement of the natural and historical heritage of the Management Area, via the joint workings of ELC, CHL and Scottish Natural Heritage.**

**The management of visitors within the Management Area so as to prevent so far as is reasonably practicable, direct access from CHL land to the SSSI and generally to minimise disturbance to the immediate and wider SSSI.'**

### **6.5.7 SUMMARY**

- No records of eider or arctic tern breeding on site.
- No instances of ash dieback was observed or reported.
- Work to control pirri pirri and sea buckthorn continued.
- Poor weather in summer and autumn led to poor ground conditions and highlighted drainage and surfacing issues within the car park.
- Seaside Award achieved for the 19th year.
- Countryside Ranger office and toilet block completed and scheduled to open from April 2013.
- 11 school groups were led by the Countryside Ranger Service
- 11 Countryside Ranger events and walks were conducted.
- 550 trees native were planted alongside the shelter belt in the football pitch area.
- *Giants in the Forest* launched at Yellowcraig on the 22nd of March.
- Volunteer time with the Countryside Ranger Service totalled 480 hours.

## 6.6 NORTH WEST QUARRY



*North West Quarry development*

- 6.6.1** Quarrying at this site, close to Dunbar, has ceased and consent has been granted to create a water feature with associated grassland and woodlands. To guide the restoration a **Working Group** was established by East Lothian Council to work with the owners, LaFarge. The Group did not meet during the year.
- 6.6.2** **WATER LEVELS** reached the predicted maximum during the year much sooner than anticipated. Continuing to rise, pumps were installed to control levels. East Lothian Countryside Ranger Service began monitoring within the quarry in March 2009 and since that date a fixed point photograph has been taken on every monthly visit. The photographs below show the change in water levels since the first visit to the the most recent visit.
- 6.6.3** As an extensive water feature and being very visible, water based recreational enthusiasts lobbied for a multi use facility accommodating both water based activities and nature conservation. This was not supported by LaFarge and during the year a memorandum of understanding, between Lafarge and RSPB, was progressed and latterly signed by parties. This led to the appointment of an RSPB Project Development post and a one year feasibility study.
- 6.6.4** **RSPB`S** proposal is to enhance the natural heritage interest of the quarry and provide environmental education opportunities. They, though, are not prepared to permit water based activity because of disturbance to the bird interest.
- 6.6.5** Bird and **bird watching** interest is increasing with to date 80 different species from within the footprint of the site. The viewing platform for bird watchers, created by LaFarge, was modified and is now the main observation point.

**MARCH 2009**



**MARCH 2010**





*Changes in the water levels at the North West Quarry*



# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A | REPORT WEB LINKS

### Advisory Group Annual reports.

- John Muir Country Park
- Joint Laws'
- Levenhall Links
- Yellowcraig/Archerfield
- Aberlady Bay Local Nature Reserve

Copies of all annual reports can be supplied to anyone interested, by contacting; Neil Clark, Principal Countryside Officer, at [nclark@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:nclark@eastlothian.gov.uk)

## APPENDIX B | CORE PATHS PLAN

Core paths maps of the county can be downloaded. If you want to a full copy of the core paths plan, however, it is available for purchase (£5.00) from all local libraries.



