

SCOTTISH CELEBRATION OF 2010 INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF BIODIVERSITY

Summary

The Minister for Environment launched a Scottish celebration of 2010 International Year of Biodiversity on 13 January 2010. A [communications plan](#) has been developed, through an external coordination group, to deliver this celebration across the biodiversity sector. It recommends that communications should:

- be positive and connect people with nature;
- celebrate the wonderful biodiversity that we have in Scotland, the good work that's already being done and explain why biodiversity is important;
- focus on why healthy biodiversity matters to Scotland (emphasise the benefits to Scotland from healthy biodiversity - jobs, wealth, food, fresh water, flood control, enjoyment, health) and why we need to act to look after it
- encourage everyone in Scotland to do one thing to support biodiversity in 2010 and tell someone about it;
- promote messages through existing, planned communications and campaigns;
- encourage use of the messages across the sector.

Communications will focus on six actions that people can take:

- buy seasonal;
- experience nature on your doorstep;
- garden for life;
- help with a wildlife survey;
- tell someone about it;
- get others involved – encourage businesses, schools and Councils to do more.

The key tactic is to use existing, planned communications and campaigns to promote key messages and the six actions that people are being encouraged to take.

Organisations in Scotland are encouraged to sign up to a UK partnership that allows the widespread use of a logo and strapline produced by the Convention on Biological Diversity:

Biodiversity is Life



Action 1 – Buy seasonal

Healthy biodiversity is vital for growing the food we eat.

Key messages

- We all need food to keep us going. Growing this food depends on biodiversity.
- Scotland produces an amazing range of foods – soft fruits, vegetables, cereals, meat, fish, mushrooms, etc. Food production makes a huge contribution to Scotland’s economy and is currently worth £7.3billion and accounts for 1 in every 5 manufacturing jobs.
- Growing this food requires insects (such as bees for the fertilisation of crops), clean water, fresh air, healthy soil – these all make up our biodiversity. This biodiversity has to be kept healthy for it to support food production in the future.
- Many farmers and landowners are working to improve biodiversity on their land.
- People can help by doing things like buying local, seasonal food (supporting Scottish farmers, reducing the carbon footprint, better for biodiversity), growing some of our own food (allotments, vegetables in your own garden), reducing the use of pesticides, and encouraging and supporting wildlife.

Key tactics

- Promote this action and wider International Year of Biodiversity and environmental issues through the new “eat fresh, eat seasonal” initiative launched by the Scottish Government on 27 January 2010.
- Promote the benefits of growing your own food through Garden for Life and the production of seed packs for growing vegetables in your own garden/allotment.
- Promote the links between seasonal food and biodiversity in corporate communications, including magazines and press releases.
- Investigate tie-ins with key food retailers to highlight local / seasonal food in-store.
- Focus promotional peaks on the four seasons and the links to a healthy biodiversity (for example, honey in summer (link to bees and planting native wildflowers), mushrooms in the autumn (link to healthy forests)).

What can your organisation do?

- Promote seasonal food grown in your local area.
- Encourage your building canteens/caterers to serve seasonal food.
- Encourage local retailers to promote seasonal produce.
- Build messages about buying seasonal food, and the links between farming and biodiversity into your communications/campaigns work.

Action 2 – Experience Nature On Your Doorstep

Nature can be found everywhere – even on your doorstep. So why not get outdoors more often and discover Scotland’s wonderful nature close to where you live?

Key messages

- Simply enjoying and appreciating nature will raise people’s awareness and interest in nature/biodiversity.
- Experiencing nature on your doorstep is local, can be done by bus, train, foot or cycle, has a low carbon footprint, is good for your health, and you can see some great wildlife.
- There are opportunities for everyone throughout the year to enjoy the surprising variety of nature in their local area on their own, with their family, or with organised groups.
- It’s easy and fun to do, good for your health and well-being, and can fit in well with people’s busy lives.

Key tactics

- SNH are launching an Enjoying Scotland’s Outdoors campaign. The first phase of this will be to encourage people to experience nature on their doorsteps. The campaign will involve publications, advertising, social media, public relations, events and sponsorship over a set period of time, starting in spring 2010.
- Focus walks and events already planned for 2010 on biodiversity issues and exploring local places.

What can your organisation do?

- Use your promotional activities to encourage people to visit the outdoors in their local areas during 2010.
- Focus your ranger-led walks and events on the International Year of Biodiversity and on helping people to explore their local places.
- Promote greenspaces and manage these for the benefit of biodiversity.
- Promote the Enjoying The Outdoors campaign.

Action 3 – Garden For Life

Our gardens can be great for birds, insects and other animals. It's easy to help wildlife to thrive in your garden, allotment or even window box. You can help by doing things like growing your own fruit and vegetables, planting wildlife-friendly flowers or by not clearing leaves and weeds so quickly.

Key messages

- What you do in your garden can help protect and improve biodiversity for future generations.
- Plants can be used to create havens for wildlife and other actions can help such as clearing up leaves and weeds later in the year, leaving woodpiles over the winter, etc. This can help attract a variety of wildlife all year round for you to enjoy.
- By choosing locally available materials (such as timber, stone and gravel) you can reduce your carbon footprint while using recycled or sustainable source materials can reduce environmental impact.
- Your garden can be a source of food. As well as being healthy, home-grown food reduces the pollution caused by transporting food hundreds of miles.
- Your garden can also impact positively on the biodiversity of your local area – birds dropping seeds, pollination by bees and other insects, etc.

Key tactics

- Garden For Life Forum are considering biodiversity through all their relevant activities.
- Creating a biodiversity-themed garden for the Gardening Scotland exhibition.
- Produce up-to-date, themed information leaflets: Garden For Food; Garden For Butterflies; Garden For Birds.
- Produce IYB-branded vegetable seed packs with an on-pack explanation of the importance of biodiversity.
- Produce IYB-branded native wildflower seed packs with an on-pack explanation of their importance to biodiversity.
- Promote action through appropriate television/radio programmes.
- Encourage garden centres to promote Garden for Life messages.

What can your organisation do?

- Take advantage of the materials and messages developed by Garden for Life.
- Promote Garden for Life materials and seed packs at local and national events that you're organising for 2010.
- Make sure grounds maintenance works are biodiversity friendly (for example, using peat free compost or cutting grass less frequently).
- Encourage and support allotment use.

Action 4 – Help with a wildlife survey

How healthy is biodiversity in your area? Want to find out more about nature in your local area? You can help us by getting involved in wildlife surveys and finding out more about your local area and its amazing biodiversity.

Key messages

- Wildlife surveys are essential to finding out how well our biodiversity is doing.
- Wildlife surveys are a fun, easy, immediate and personally rewarding way for everyone (individuals, families, schools, groups) to get involved with biodiversity in your local area (even in your own garden).
- We can all help to build a picture of the health of Scotland's animals and plants, providing vital information that allows us to see what actions we need to take to protect the nation's wildlife.
- No matter where you live or what wildlife you're interested in, you'll find a range of surveys that you can help with.
- Wildlife surveys support professional conservation work. Many common wildlife species are good indicators of the state of our countryside. We also need to monitor non-native wildlife species and the problems they create for our native wildlife.
- Wildlife surveys are organised by many different organisations and rely on public support to gather the information.

Key tactics

- Promote relevant surveys (and the results of surveys) on websites, in The Nature of Scotland and in magazines of NGOs and other partner publications, making links to International Year of Biodiversity.
- Promote surveys that are being conducted on NNRs in 2010. Encourage NNR staff to explain about wildlife surveys and the challenges through planned events.
- When people hear about a survey or get involved, encourage them to tell someone about it (strong link to Action 5: tell someone about it).
- Encourage schools involvement (promote curricular links) - promote information on wildlife surveys and events through Grounds for Learning, Royal Highland Education Trust, Ecoschools, Learning & Teaching Scotland and other NGOs.
- Promote schools involvement through BBC Breathing Places, which is being extended to summer 2010.

What can your organisation do?

- Promote local surveys through your communications work.
- Encourage LBAP officer and partnerships to carry out wildlife surveys in 2010 and involve the public and schools in these.
- Help to promote wildlife surveys that are already planned for 2010.
- Help to circulate information from wildlife surveys.

Action 5 – Tell someone about it

Seen an exciting bird, animal or insect? Made a meal using Scottish seasonal food? Got involved in a wildlife survey? Planted some wildlife-friendly plants in your garden? Know someone who has inspired you about nature? Gone to a local event? Tell someone about it! Encourage them to get involved!!

Key messages

- People are part of biodiversity – it's in your hands! To improve our biodiversity we should all get involved in some way.
- People can get involved in lots of ways, but if they don't tell anyone about it then their impact is not as great as it could be. Telling people about what they've done is really important.
- Getting involved in biodiversity is inspirational, fun, visual.

Key tactics

- Use the social media campaign being organised by the UK partnership.
- Set up an on-line biodiversity image bank with 50 stunning images that can be downloaded for free use and send links to this image bank to all our partners and encourage its use. Set up a Flickr, Facebook or YouTube page using the image bank and encourage others to contribute their own pictures.
- Promote features in national and local papers about the six actions and local heroes.
- Get local schools involved through Eco-Schools and Grounds for Learning.

What can your organisation do?

- Encourage Ministers and senior staff to promote their pledges to "do one thing".
- Promote the campaign through your own website and social media sites.
- Think about how the biodiversity messages link with other events you are running in 2010.
- Run a photographic competition and make use of the best images in subsequent communications.
- Promote interesting biodiversity stories in your area through the local press.

Action 6 – Get others involved: encourage businesses, schools and Councils to do more

You've made a difference, so why not get your employer, your local school or your local Council to do a bit more?

Key messages

- Scotland's economy depends on our biodiversity being healthy, so why not ask your employer, your local school or your local Council to do something to support local biodiversity?
- It's not just physical work. There are various levels to get involved as local groups require a range of skills including administration, marketing, fundraising, etc. It's a great way of learning and developing new knowledge, skills and experience.
- Sharing your experience and helping others to take the first step into volunteering is personally rewarding too.

Key tactics

- Produce a leaflet showing businesses why biodiversity is important, how it helps them, how it helps to ensure that Scotland continues to be a good place to do business. The leaflet should also encourage businesses to make their grounds wildlife-friendly, buy local food and supplies, reduce their energy and water requirements, and encourage their staff to work on local biodiversity projects.
- Promote awareness of volunteer opportunities and direct people to places where they can find out about activities within their local community e.g. volunteerscotland.org.uk
- Develop the biodiversity communications toolkit so that it has relevant information and resources targeted at businesses, schools and local groups.
- Encourage all local authorities to get involved with Eco-Schools (particularly its biodiversity module), improve their school grounds (through Grounds for Learning and other initiatives) and support much more outdoor learning.
- Promote existing award and accreditation schemes (such as Green Tourism Business Scheme, VIBES).
- Use the recent Audit Scotland review of the biodiversity duty on public bodies to encourage more action.

What can your organisation do?

- Review how your business or organisation works and how it impacts on biodiversity, including the procurement process and making sure suppliers are "biodiversity-friendly".
- Public bodies should consider how to mainstream biodiversity throughout their activities in line with the statutory biodiversity duty to further the conservation of biodiversity.
- Encourage your employees to volunteer their time to a biodiversity conservation project.
- Provide more support for work to improve school grounds, to encourage take-up of the biodiversity module of Eco-Schools and to mainstream teaching through outdoor learning.