

## **Action for Wildlife – Guidance note: Management of Land and Buildings**



### **Durham Biodiversity Partnership**

Action for wildlife in Gateshead, South Tyneside,  
Sunderland, Darlington & County Durham

## **Education, Advice and Awareness**

Local and Public Authorities have an important role in promoting an understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues by incorporating appropriate messages into a wide variety of interactions with land managers, businesses, schools, other organisations and the general public. There are a variety of ways to do this including formal education and life long learning opportunities, provision of advisory services, community projects, and through communications such as leaflets, websites and newsletters.

### **Formal and informal education**

The education system is a key vehicle for increasing public knowledge and understanding of the importance of conserving biodiversity. This is true for all age groups and the whole education system from primary and secondary school, to further and higher education, adult education and lifelong learning.



Involving school groups in conservation © Durham Wildlife Trust

Educating school children not only raises awareness of biodiversity among the next generation, but it also provides an effective, indirect means of targeting a much wider audience, through their families and friends. For this reason, biodiversity is identified as a crosscutting theme in the Sustainable Schools framework and in the DfES action plan to support sustainable schools.

Some statutory requirements for biodiversity already exist within the national curriculum, for example the science curriculum covers life processes and global citizenship and sustainable development is integral to a wide range of subjects. There are opportunities to incorporate biodiversity into other subjects from Maths, Geography, Art, Science and English to Design and Technology.

The inclusion of biodiversity in education can be supported through projects to enhance the wildlife value of school grounds. Biodiversity features in the Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto, which aims to ensure that all young people have a variety of high quality learning experiences outside the classroom environment. Biodiversity issues can also be included in community education through lectures, events, nature trips and evening and recreational classes for adult/lifelong learners.



Community Group Pond dipping © South Tyneside Council

Another initiative to promote education as a basis for a more sustainable society is the Eco-Schools programme. It facilitates the promotion of biodiversity and environmental awareness in a way that involves a range of curriculum subjects, as well as extra-curricular activities.

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Students learn about biodiversity and participate in its conservation, while the school benefits from efficiency gains through energy efficiency, reduced litter and waste, an improved environment and positive publicity.

### ***The provision of advice***

The advice given in the course of Local and Public Authority functions to businesses, land owners and managers, developers, and the public represents a significant opportunity to influence the actions of a large number of organisations and individuals. This can help them to make informed decisions about their interactions with, and impacts upon, biodiversity. For example officers could:

- support businesses in reducing the impact of their activities on the environment;
- help developers contribute to sustainable development and be more sensitive to biodiversity issues;
- advise land managers on ways they can enhance biodiversity through appropriate management;
- help the general public conserve biodiversity by highlighting a wide range of simple ideas to enhance biodiversity e.g. by attracting wildlife into gardens.



Erecting Bat boxes © South Tyneside Council

### ***Engaging with Communities***

Engaging the local community in conservation activities can provide direct benefits for biodiversity through the delivery of specific projects and also offers substantial opportunities for local community regeneration and neighbourhood empowerment initiatives.

There are opportunities to raise awareness and increase publicity, provide informal education opportunities for people of all ages to learn about their natural environment, and deliver a variety of socio-economic benefits.

### ***Raising Awareness***

Measures to raise public awareness of biodiversity issues and conservation helps to foster positive public attitudes towards biodiversity and appreciation of actions required. It is equally important to enhance understanding and promote enjoyment of and contact with nature to promote the social, health and economic benefits that this can deliver.

There are a number of ways to raise public awareness of biodiversity:

- The provision of places where people can experience biodiversity first hand e.g. local nature reserve.
- The organisation of events where people can learn informally about biodiversity. This might be through the provision of interpretation boards and visitor centres, events such as guided walks, or an eco-tourism initiative.
- The use of appropriate media to communicate information and raise awareness of biodiversity.
- Collaboration with other organisations or departments such as local libraries, arts centres and museums to raise awareness of biodiversity.

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These notes were adapted from those prepared by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Partnership

**Guidance notes are also available on:** Planning, Regeneration and Economy, Management of Land and Buildings, and Policy, Strategy and Procurement, from [www.durhambiodiversity.org.uk](http://www.durhambiodiversity.org.uk)

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### References and Further Information

'Guidance for Local Authorities on implementing the Biodiversity Duty' (Defra 2007) and 'Guidance for Public Authorities on implementing the Biodiversity Duty' (Defra 2007) [www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/biodiversity/index.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/biodiversity/index.htm)

Sustainable Schools [www.teachernet.gov.uk/sustainableschools/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/sustainableschools/) Eco Schools [www.eco-schools.org.uk/](http://www.eco-schools.org.uk/)

Learning Through Landscapes [www.ltl.org.uk](http://www.ltl.org.uk)

Learning outside the Classroom [www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/resourcematerials/outsideclassroom/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/resourcematerials/outsideclassroom/)

Countryside Foundation for Education [www.countrysidefoundation.org.uk](http://www.countrysidefoundation.org.uk) Farming and Countryside Education [www.face-online.org.uk](http://www.face-online.org.uk)

Durham Biodiversity Partnership [www.durhambiodiversity.org.uk](http://www.durhambiodiversity.org.uk) Durham Wildlife Trust [www.durhamwt.co.uk](http://www.durhamwt.co.uk)

Association of Local Government Ecologists [www.alge.org.uk](http://www.alge.org.uk) Durham Biodiversity Data Service [www.dbds.org](http://www.dbds.org)