

# Newry & Mourne District Local Biodiversity Action Plan



Comhairle an Iúir & Mhúrn  
Newry & Mourne District Council



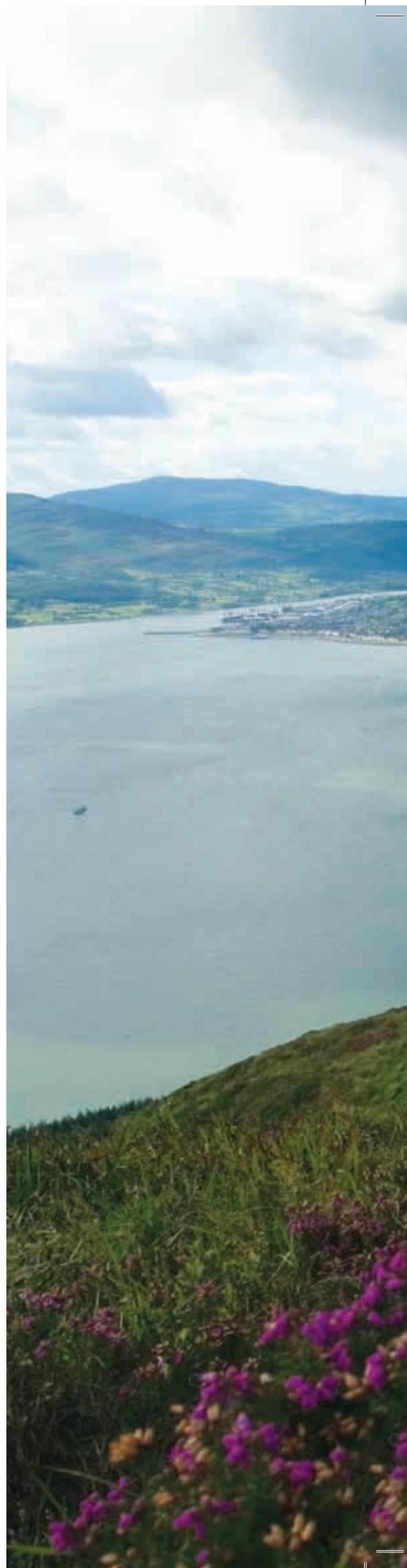
Ulster Wildlife Trust

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## Foreword



As Mayor of Newry and Mourne District Council, I have great pleasure in introducing the Newry and Mourne Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP), a document which will guide the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in the Newry and Mourne District.

The Newry and Mourne LBAP project commenced in 2007 as an innovative partnership between Newry and Mourne District Council and the Ulster Wildlife Trust. It is supported by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and the Landfill Communities Fund.

On behalf of Newry and Mourne District Council, I would like to extend my gratitude to our partners, the Newry and Mourne LBAP Steering Group, comprising local representatives from statutory and non-statutory organisations, as well as the wider LBAP partnership, comprising members of the local community, for driving this project forward.

This document gives you a sample of the rich natural heritage that exists in Newry and Mourne, therefore highlighting the ever increasing need to protect this invaluable resource. Newry and Mourne District Council is committed to protecting the natural environment of the District and promoting it among our residents. To be successful, however, it needs the support of local people, working together to achieve its goals, for the benefit of wildlife and the community alike. I appeal to you, the people of Newry and Mourne District, to embrace the Newry and Mourne LBAP and become involved in your plan.

*Colman Burns*

Councillor Colman Burns  
Mayor of Newry and Mourne District Council

## Réamhfhocal

Is mór an pléisiúr dom, mar Mhéara ar Chomhairle an Lúir agus Mhúrn, aird a tharraingt ar an Phlean Gníomhaíochta um Bithéagsúlacht Áitiúil (PGBA), cáipéis a ghríosfaidh caomhnú agus leasú na bithéagsúlachta i gceantar an Lúir agus Mhúrn.

Bunaíodh an tionsamh PGBA sa limistéar seo sa bhliain 2007 nuair a chuaigh Comhairle an Lúir agus Mhúrn agus Iontaobhas Fiadhúlra Uladh i gcomhpháirtíocht ceannródaíocht le chéile. Faigheann sé tacaíocht ón Ghníomhaireacht Comhshaoil Thuaisceart Éireann agus ó Chiste Pobal Líonta Talimh.

Thar ceann Comhairle an Lúir agus Mhúrn ba mhaith liom mo bhuíochas a ghabháil lenár bpáirtneirí a bhrú an tionscnamh chun tosaigh: An Grúpa Stiúrtha PGBA a chuimsíonn ionadaithe áitiúla ó eagraíochtaí reachtúla is míreachtúla chomh maith le baill na comhpháirtíocht PGBA ar fad, bunadh na haite san áireamh.

Tugann an cháipéis léargas duit den oidhreacht shaibhir nádúrtha a mhaireann ar fud na dúiche agus dá bhrí sin cuireann sé beim ar an riachtanas síor-leanúnach chun cosaint a thabhairt don acmhainn fíorluachmhar seo. Tá cur chuige onghníomhach ag Chomhairle an Lúir agus Mhúrn i dtaca lena cúram chun timpeallacht nádúrtha na dúiche a choinneáil slán agus caomhnú an chomhshaoil a chothú i measc na ndaoine. Ach ní éiríodh leis an phlean gníomhaíochta a chuid spriocanna a bhaint amach ar mhaithe le leas an fhiadhúlra agus an phobail, dá fheabhas é, áfach, muna dtacaíonn muintir na háite i gcoitinne leis. Iarraim oraibh, a mhuintir an Lúir agus Mhúrn, PGBA a theannadh le bhur gcroí agus baint a bheith agaibh le bhur bplean.

*Colman Burns*

An Comhairleoir Colmán Ó Broin  
Méara Chomhairle an Lúir agus Mhúrn

# Biodiversity in the Newry and Mourne District

## What is biodiversity?

Biodiversity is the short term used for 'biological diversity', which is 'the total variety of all living plants and animals, and the habitats in which they live'. The biodiversity we see today is the result of millions of years of evolution, shaped by natural processes and, increasingly, by the influence of humans. It is found all around us, in our gardens, parks, woodlands, fields, mountains, lakes and rivers and in our coastal and marine habitats.

## Why is it important?

Biodiversity is a key measure of the health of our planet and therefore vital for our survival. We are part of biodiversity and depend on it for our quality of life. Biodiversity impacts on every aspect of our lives. It not only provides the air that we breathe and the food that we eat; it also helps to create a pleasant environment for us to live in by adding variety to our surroundings. Biodiversity is an important part of our cultural heritage. It is important in defining local character and distinctiveness, and has helped shape our culture and inspire our poets, painters, writers and composers.

The many benefits of biodiversity highlight why we need to ensure that we halt the loss and work together to protect, and where achievable, restore and enhance our local biodiversity.

## Threats to biodiversity in Newry and Mourne

Many species of plant and animal have adapted to life alongside us. For example, house martins build their nests on our houses and hedgehogs are one of a number of visitors to our gardens. However, not all plants and animals are able to co-exist with us. Worldwide we are losing biodiversity at an ever-increasing rate as a result of both direct and indirect human activities. The major factors threatening biodiversity globally are habitat loss, pollution, non-native invasive species and most importantly climate change.

Biodiversity within Newry and Mourne faces similar threats including:

- **Development** – Habitat loss through development pressures is one of the main threats to biodiversity in Newry and Mourne. Housing and other associated infrastructure can have a number of negative associated environmental impacts many of which can be reduced through better planning. It is also important to retain as many habitats and areas of open space as possible.
- **Pollution** – Fly tipping and litter left behind by beach visitors, can damage sensitive habitats and kill the species associated with them. Water pollution also has detrimental effects on biodiversity, lowering the number and variety of species found in our loughs and rivers.
- **Non-native invasive species** – These species compete directly with our native species and can cause degradation of natural habitats. Giant hogweed for example is abundant along the Newry River reducing species diversity as a result. Another non-native species that can be seen frequently across the district is the grey squirrel. This species is larger and bolder than our native red squirrel, and in areas of competition, the grey nearly always prevails.



Giant Hogweed © JA Welsh



Fly-tipping © Newry & Mourne District Council



Trawler © Colin Speedie



Mourne Mountains © Newry &amp; Mourne District Council

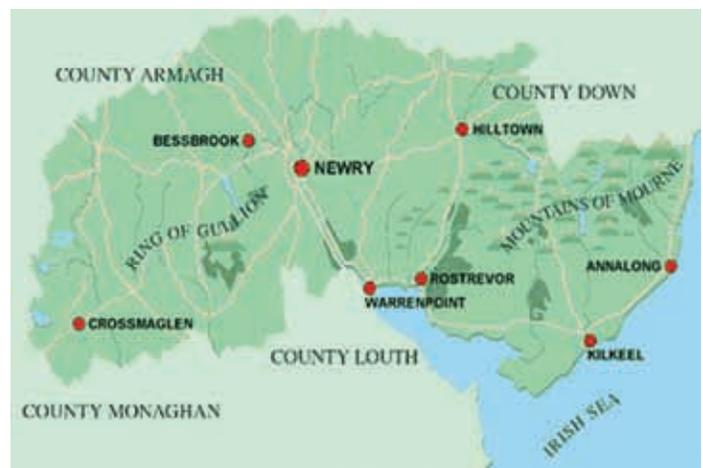
## Newry and Mourne District Area

Newry and Mourne is a beautiful scenic area dominated by small farms and boasting spectacular sea and mountain scenery. The main traditional industries now are farming, fishing, stone masonry and building. It is the third largest council area in Northern Ireland covering a total of 902 square kilometres and includes much of the south of counties Armagh and Down. The old historic city of Newry, which is the gateway to the north on the east coast of Ireland, nestles between two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), which are the splendid Mountains of Mourne in south Down, and the Ring of Gullion in south Armagh.

The Mountains of Mourne, which were formed over 50 million years ago, have been shaped by successive ice ages. These mostly rounded mountain peaks, including Slieve Donard the highest peak in Northern Ireland, are popular with walkers and hikers from all over the world. The range consists of 12 peaks that are unusual in that their summits are grouped together in a compact area only 11km wide.

South County Armagh, with its beautiful undulating countryside, lies to the west of Newry. The drumlin landscape around Crossmaglen and the legendary Ring of Gullion are steeped in Celtic mythology. This area is also famed for its rich cultural heritage and the numerous prehistoric and early Christian sites. The striking landscape of the Ring of Gullion is the result of the unique geology of the area. A ring of igneous rock (the product of an ancient extinct volcano) has resulted in a distinctive range of peaks.

Newry and Mourne District's varied landscape combines to provide an important and unique biodiversity resource which supports 24 of the 42 Northern Ireland priority



Map of Newry and Mourne District

habitats, and sustains approximately 164 of 457 Northern Ireland Species of Conservation Concern (SoCC) and 78 of 272 Northern Ireland Priority Species. Indeed, this is reflected in the large number of protected areas that have been designated through legislation to protect key areas or habitats for nature conservation. These include two Ramsar sites, four Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), one Special Protection Area (SPA), 18 Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) and one Nature Reserve.

In order to protect this wonderful variety of habitats and species, whether rare or common, we need to take ownership and get involved. Read on to find out more about some of the wonderful habitats and species in the district and how you as an individual, community group, school or business can take local action to secure your local biodiversity.



# Newry and Mourne District Local Biodiversity Action Plan

Walker in the Moumes © Harry Goodman

Local biodiversity action plans have come about through a number of international, national and local processes. These plans have led to local action for wildlife and habitats and are fantastic opportunities to raise awareness of biodiversity throughout Northern Ireland. It is now the turn of the Newry and Mourne District to celebrate the rich biodiversity we have here and to encourage people to work together locally to protect it into the future.

The LBAP process all began in 1992, when the UK signed up to the global Convention on Biological Diversity at the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit. This agreement led to the UK committing to produce an Action Plan to sustain and conserve biodiversity. In 1995, the UK Biodiversity Strategy was developed, followed by the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy in 2002.

The Newry and Mourne LBAP project, which began in 2007, is an innovative partnership between Newry and Mourne District Council and the Ulster Wildlife Trust, funded by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (formerly Environment and Heritage Service) and Newry and Mourne District Council's Landfill Communities Fund.

A steering group was set up to support the project, and in particular, to guide the creation and implementation of the Newry and Mourne LBAP and associated Habitat Action Plans (HAPs) and Species Action Plans (SAPs). These plans cover a range of habitats and species, which reflect European, national and local priorities. They are based largely on the targets set out in the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy, translating regional strategy into local action.

A wider biodiversity partnership has also been developed to enable more people and organisations to get involved. This open forum meets twice a year at various locations across the district to ensure everyone has the opportunity to attend.

## **The Newry and Mourne District Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) outlines a plan of action to:**

- Conserve and enhance the rich biodiversity of Newry and Mourne for both current and future generations;
- Educate and raise awareness of the importance and variety of biodiversity found within the Newry and Mourne District, and;
- Encourage local ownership of Newry and Mourne District's biodiversity.

Everyone who lives in Newry and Mourne District has an important part to play. Only with your support can we help protect our valuable flora and fauna!



# Our Local Priority Habitats and Species

The first step in the LBAP process was to complete a comprehensive audit of the important habitats and species that occur in Newry and Mourne, including Northern Ireland Priority Habitats, Northern Ireland Priority Species and Species of Conservation Concern (SoCC).

For further information on any habitat or species listed, please visit [www.ulsterwildlifetrust.org/biodiversity](http://www.ulsterwildlifetrust.org/biodiversity) or contact the Newry and Mourne Biodiversity Officer.

The information from the audit enabled each habitat and species to be evaluated in terms of national and regional priority, conservation status, extent, rarity, importance to local people and most importantly, project potential. As a result, the habitats and species below were selected by the Newry and Mourne Steering Group for initial priority action and will be included in the first round of HAPs and SAPs for the district. This list is not exhaustive and will be updated throughout the course of the LBAP.

## Habitats selected for priority action in Newry and Mourne:

**Woodland** - Mixed ashwoods, Oakwoods, Parkland and Species rich hedgerows.

**Wetlands** - Lakes, Rivers, Fens and Reedbeds.

**Peatlands** - Lowland raised bog, European dry heath and Montane heath.

**Coastal** - Maritime cliffs and slopes, and Coastal vegetated shingle.

**Marine** - Mudflats and Mud habitats in deep water.

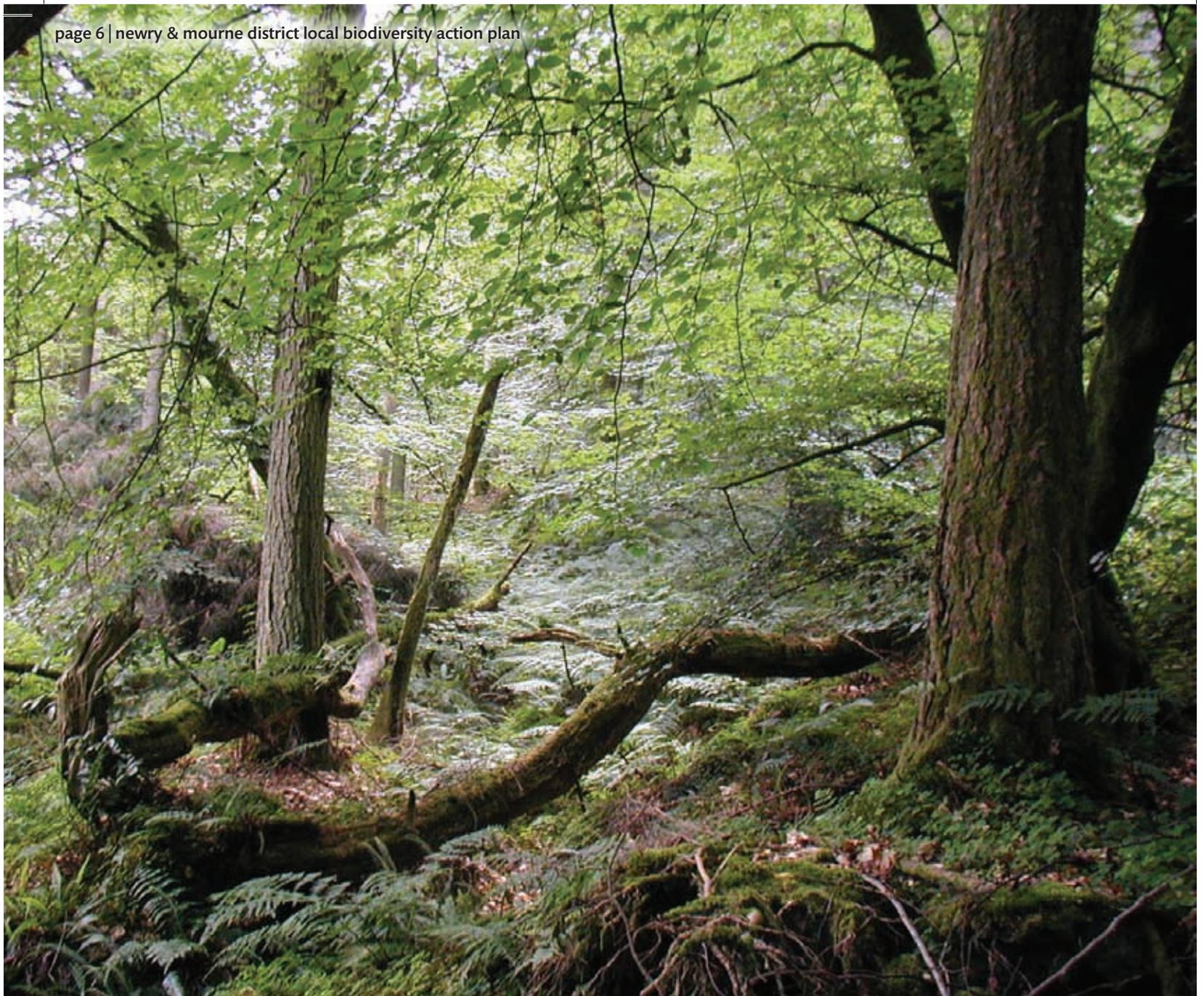
**Grassland** - Lowland meadows.

**Urban habitats and gardens**

## Species selected for priority action in Newry and Mourne:

- Red squirrel
- Irish damselfly
- Otter
- Brown trout/Salmon
- Curlew
- Juniper
- Harbour porpoise
- Yellowhammer
- House sparrow

The many diverse habitats and species found in Newry and Mourne will now be summarised. Each broad habitat category details the priority habitats in the district, where they occur locally, what key species they support and examples of the objectives and actions required to conserve them.



# Woodland

There was a time when Northern Ireland was almost completely covered in woodland. However, as a result of agriculture and development it is now the least wooded region in Europe. Only 6% of land has woodland cover, 1% of which is native broad-leaved woodland.

Objectives	Local Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain and improve the condition of native woodland in the district.</li><li>• Raise awareness of the value of native woodland for biodiversity.</li><li>• Compile a register of native woodland in the district.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promote maintenance and establishment of native woodland through agri-environment schemes.</li><li>• Hold tree-planting events and encourage the recording of woodland and hedgerow species.</li><li>• Get involved with the Woodland Trust ancient tree inventory for the Newry and Mourne area.</li><li>• Identify and map distribution of native woodland in the district.</li></ul>

### Mixed ashwoods

Mixed ashwoods are woodlands where ash is the dominant species in association with other broadleaf native species such as oak, downy birch and hazel. Other trees including rowan and non-native species such as sycamore and beech may also be common. Mixed ashwoods support a rich and colourful ground flora of spring-flowering herbs such as wood anemone, bluebell, primrose and wild garlic.

In Newry and Mourne District, Fathom Mountain supports upland mixed ashwood, where ash comprises over half of the canopy trees. Small unidentified pockets of mixed ashwoods can also be found across the district that may have importance locally for wildlife.



Wild garlic and bluebells

### Oakwoods

Oakwoods are dominated by the two native oak species, sessile oak and pedunculate oak in association with other species such as downy birch, rowan, holly and hazel. The ground layer is often rich in ferns, woodland wildflowers including bluebell, wild

garlic and great wood-rush, and shrubs such as bramble and bilberry. These woods can also contain many rare species of fungi and lichen.

Rostrevor Oakwood overlooking Carlingford Lough is the oldest, most established oakwood in Newry and Mourne District. It is designated a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) as well as an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) and a National Nature Reserve (NNR) and is open to the public.



Oak with acorns © Philip Precey

### Wet Woodland

Wet woodlands are a range of woods that occur on poorly drained or waterlogged soils found around lake shores, along streams, on hill-side flushes and on fens and cutover bogs. Typically wet woodlands are dominated by willow, alder or silver birch and can often occur as habitat mosaics with other woodland types.

Examples of wet woodland in the district can be found at Cappagh Lough and St. Peter's Lough, which predominately comprise willow and alder.

### Parkland

Parkland is a specialised type of woodland that is no longer common in Northern Ireland. They are designed landscapes associated with stately houses or demesnes.

Parklands are generally made up of a mosaic of habitats including veteran trees set in pasture or heathland, specimen trees, boundary features, woodland blocks, streams, rivers and natural or constructed lakes. Parklands are important for a wide variety of species from grasses, mosses and fungi to invertebrates, birds, bats and mammals.

Examples of parkland in Newry and Mourne include Mourne Park, Creggan Poet's Glen and Derrymore House.

### Species-rich hedgerows

Species-rich hedgerows are those that contain five or more native woody species on average in a 30 metre length or those with a rich flora of herbaceous plants such as primrose, wood anemone, lords and ladies, bluebell and herb robert at their base. Hedges are an integral part of Ireland's landscape and a valuable habitat for local biodiversity.

Hedgerows act as very important wildlife corridors for many species, providing connectivity between habitats and allowing dispersal and movement. Well managed hedgerows support many species of birds, mammals and insects.

## Key Woodland Species



Red Squirrel © Mark Hamlin

### Red squirrel

The native red squirrel is a shy creature, spending most of its time in the treetops of mixed coniferous woods feeding on seeds and cones. The introduction of the non-native grey squirrel is threatening the future of our red squirrel, as it out-competes the red for food, can adapt to a wider range of habitat, and has the potential to transmit the deadly squirrel pox virus.



Song Thrush © Laurie Campbell

### Song thrush

A familiar and popular garden songbird whose numbers are seriously declining. It is a brown bird with a white (or yellow-white) chest, densely speckled with arrow head spots. It occurs in gardens, farmland and woodland edges and feeds on insects, worms and snails.



Common Puffball © JA Welsh

### Fungi

An important part of a woodland ecosystem, fungi recycles organic matter and feeds it back into the woodland as nutrient-rich soil. Although visible all year round, only in the autumn do we see the wealth of fungi present, such as the common puffball, when their fruiting bodies emerge above ground.



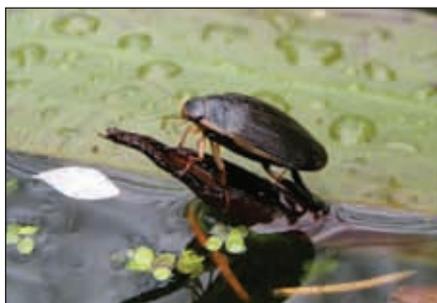
# Wetlands

Wetlands are extremely important habitats as they support a variety of plants and animals such as invertebrates, fish, amphibians, mammals and birds. Newry and Mourne District has many good quality examples of wetland habitat including lakes, rivers and streams, reedbeds and fens.

Objectives	Local Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain and improve the condition of wetland habitats in the district.</li><li>• Maintain and improve water quality of water bodies to “good” ecological status by 2015 in accordance with the Water Framework Directive (WFD).</li><li>• Educate and raise awareness of the value of wetland habitats for biodiversity.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promote maintenance of good water quality through agri-environment schemes and the Nitrates Directive.</li><li>• Involvement with local Water Framework Directive catchment groups.</li><li>• Survey and map the distribution of wetland habitats in the district.</li><li>• Hold talks and/or events in the area to raise awareness of wetland biodiversity.</li></ul>

### Lakes and ponds

Standing open water, including lakes and ponds, are quite an extensive habitat across Newry and Mourne and Northern Ireland as a whole. Lakes can be classified by the levels of nutrients that occur naturally in the water. Oligotrophic lakes have low nutrient levels, mesotrophic lakes have moderate levels, while eutrophic lakes have high levels of nutrients. Lakes and ponds support many species of breeding and wintering waterfowl, invertebrates such as mayflies, pond skaters, dragonflies and beetles, as well as many plant species including yellow water-lily and duckweed.



Water beetle © Richard Burkmarr

### Rivers and streams

Rivers and streams are of great value to wildlife and are recognised as an important habitat locally. They support many priority and important species such as Atlantic salmon, brown trout, otter and bat species such as the daubenton. The Newry River flows through the city acting as a border between counties Down and Armagh

eventually flowing into Carlingford Lough. This provides a valuable wildlife corridor for species movement, along with the canal and other rivers present in the district.



River in the Mournes © Harry Goodman

### Fens

A fen is a wetland with a permanently high water level at or just below the surface. They often form on peaty soils in river valleys or hollows and receive the majority of their moisture and nutrients from soil, rock and ground water. Fens support a rich variety of sedges, grasses and mosses, as well as invertebrates such as the Irish damselfly and the whirligig beetle. Breeding waders also depend on fens for food and cover. In Newry and Mourne District, rich fen habitat occurs at Greenan ASSI.

### Reedbeds

The term reedbed describes a wetland habitat dominated by common reed in areas where the water table is at or above ground level for most of the year. This habitat is widely distributed

on the margins of water bodies, along lowland and upland streams, estuaries, reservoirs, clay pits, sewage treatment works, industrial lagoons and as early successional habitat on fens and bogs. In Newry and Mourne, reedbeds can be found at Greenan Lough ASSI where they provide excellent cover for birds such as the reed bunting.



Lapwing © Laurie Campbell



Common reeds © JA Welsh

## Key Wetland Species



European Otter © Mark Hamlin

### Otter

Otters live on the banks of rivers, lakes and the coast feeding on fish, shellfish, smaller mammals and birds. They have a long streamlined body and can be found residing in holes in the riverbank called holts. They are quite widespread in the Newry and Mourne District, especially along the Newry canal.



Irish Damselfly © Robert Thompson

### Irish Damselfly

The Irish damselfly is a delicate blue damselfly found in Ireland around small lakes and is concentrated in Armagh, Down, Fermanagh and Tyrone. Within Newry and Mourne, it has been recorded at Drumlougher Lough outside Crossmaglen. The Irish damselfly is a Northern Ireland priority species and only occurs in areas where there is good water quality, as it is very sensitive to pollution.



Brown Trout © John Doherty

### Brown Trout

Brown trout are a Northern Ireland species of conservation concern. They feed on small fish, frogs, and insects flying near the water's surface. Trout have been recorded in various rivers across the Newry and Mourne District. Those rivers with the highest percentage of sightings include White Water, Kilkeel, Cushier and Kilbroney.



# Peatlands

Peatlands are a characteristic part of the Irish landscape due to Ireland's cool, wet climate. Northern Ireland contains a significant proportion of the remaining peatland resource in Europe and therefore the exceptional importance of these habitats cannot be over-emphasised.

Objectives	Local Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain the extent of the peatland habitats in the district.</li><li>• Raise awareness of the biodiversity value of peatlands.</li><li>• Work to restore the condition of peatland habitats on selected sites.</li><li>• Promote the use of peat alternative materials.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Map the distribution of peatland habitats in the district.</li><li>• Promote the management of peatland habitats through agri-environment schemes.</li><li>• Produce information leaflets and hold peat alternative information days at local garden centres.</li></ul>

### Lowland raised bog

Lowland raised bogs are peatland ecosystems that are found in lowland areas generally below 150 metres. In Northern Ireland, they are typically found in wide river valleys or between glacial hilly drumlins. The main building blocks of peat are *Sphagnum* mosses. These mosses hold water like a sponge contributing to the waterlogged, acidic conditions. Other characteristic plants include cotton grasses, bog asphodel and cross-leaved heath. The Irish hare and many species of invertebrate such as moths and butterflies utilise this habitat.

In Newry and Mourne there are a number of examples of lowland raised bog. However, many have been cut-over and some have subsequently been agriculturally improved to grassland, while others have developed into diverse sites with fen, wet woodland, and remnant patches of bog. Residual lowland raised bog vegetation can still be found at Cashel Loughs and Drumlougher Lough ASSIs.



Cottongrass © UWT

### Blanket bog

Blanket bog generally occurs in upland areas and is a layer of peat and associated vegetation covering the land like a 'blanket'. Similar to lowland raised bogs, *Sphagnum* mosses are the main component of a blanket bog. Other dominant plant species include heather and cross-leaved heath, cottongrass, deergrass and sundews. Species supported by blanket bog include the red grouse and skylark.

Within Newry and Mourne District, blanket bog is found mainly on the higher slopes of the Carrigatuke Hills, Slieve Roosley and the Mourne Mountains, however, very little remains intact with the majority eroded or cut-over. Kilbroney Red Bog above Rostrevor is one example occurring in the Mourne Mountains.



Common sundew © NIEA

### European dry heath

European dry heath can be found on flat to steeply sloping ground in upland and lowland areas. The underlying soils are relatively dry or free draining but are acidic and poor in nutrients. The most common species present is heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), which often occurs in combination with gorse, bilberry or bell heather, whilst other dwarf-shrubs may be important locally.

The majority of the Northern Ireland resource can be found in the Newry and Mourne District in the Mourne Mountains and the Ring of Gullion. Slieve Gullion ASSI contains one of the largest expanses of this rare habitat in Northern Ireland. It is dominated by heather and where there is no intervening forestry there is a transition downslope to lowland heaths, acid grassland and fens. Red grouse are found in small numbers here as well as in the Mournes. Dry heath in the Mournes is also important for the keeled skimmer dragonfly, and green hairstreak and marsh fritillary butterflies.



Heather and gorse © Ron Murray/RoSA

### Montane heath

Montane heath is found in areas that lie above the natural level of tree development, generally above 600m. It consists of a range of short dwarf shrubs such as heather, grasses and sedges as well as specialised mosses and lichens. Montane heath occurs on several summits in the Mourne Mountains, most notably Slieve Binnian. Species present are similar to those found in upland heathland and blanket bog, for example meadow pipit.

## Key Peatland Species



Keeled Skimmer © NIEA

### Keeled skimmer

The keeled skimmer is a dragonfly, which in Northern Ireland is mainly confined to the Mourne uplands. Mature females are pale brown with yellow tinted wings and mature males have a pale blue abdomen. Adults can be seen from early June to late August in heaths and bogs where there are shallow flushes and pools.



Red Grouse © Laurie Campbell

### Red grouse

The red grouse is a medium-sized bird with a plump body, hook-tipped bill and a short tail. It is reddish-brown in colour with pale feathers covering its legs and feet. Red grouse breed in the uplands and travel very short distances in their lifetime. They feed on heather, seeds, berries and insects. In Newry and Mourne they are very rare and can sometimes be found on heather in remote parts of the Mourne Mountains.



Skylark © Laurie Campbell

### Skylark

The skylark is a small brown farmland bird that is renowned for its display flight. It flies vertically up in the air and then hovers whilst in song. The skylark likes open countryside, from lowland farmland to upland heath. It can be found in the uplands in Newry and Mourne, however its numbers have been declining recently.



# Coastal

The Mourne coast from Bloody Bridge to Annalong, Kilkeel and along Carlingford Lough supports an array of valuable coastal habitats such as maritime cliffs and slopes, coastal vegetated shingle and coastal saltmarsh as well as many important species.

Mill Bay © Conor McGuinness

Objectives	Local Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain the extent of coastal habitats.</li><li>• Educate and raise awareness of the biodiversity value of coastal habitats.</li><li>• Improve the condition of coastal habitats on selected sites.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Map priority coastal habitats in the district.</li><li>• Raise awareness of coastal and marine biodiversity through education packs, interpretation and events.</li><li>• Promote the recording and monitoring of key coastal species.</li></ul>

### Maritime cliff and slopes

These include hard and soft cliffs, which extend from the splash zone (above the high water mark) at the base of the cliff, to the land at the cliff top, which is influenced by salt spray. They vary from very tall vertical or near-vertical cliff faces, through long steep slopes with a vertical face restricted to the base, to low cliffs with a variety of slope forms.

Maritime cliffs are often significant for their populations of breeding seabirds, which can reach numbers of international importance. They provide nesting sites for breeding birds such as the guillemot, raven and peregrine falcon.



Peregrine Falcon © Neil Aldridge

### Coastal vegetated shingle

Coastal vegetated shingle is defined as sediment with particle sizes larger in diameter than sand (>2mm) but smaller than boulders (<200mm). Vegetated shingle banks occur at the upper end of the shore where conditions are favourable, usually in high energy environments. They occupy long strips



Oyster plant © Renny McKeown

but typically have a small surface area and support specialised plant and invertebrate communities.

In Newry and Mourne, coastal vegetated shingle occurs along the Mourne coast at Glassdrumman. Several rare plants can be found here such as sea kale, oyster plant and yellow-horned poppy.

### Coastal saltmarsh

Saltmarshes are a highly productive habitat dominated by species that are tolerant of flooding by seawater. They occur mostly in the upper vegetated areas of mudflats, in sheltered areas of low wave energy.



Mill Bay © Conor McGuinness

Saltmarsh is a very important habitat as the vegetation consists of a limited number of salt tolerant species adapted to regular covering by the tide. It is also very important for wading birds and wildfowl such as oystercatcher, redshank, lapwing, golden plover and curlew.



Oystercatcher © Steve Trehwella

Most of the original saltmarshes in Northern Ireland have been reclaimed and improved for agriculture and those still present are generally lightly grazed. Saltmarsh is therefore a rare habitat in Northern Ireland and, in the wider context of Europe, it is a high priority for nature conservation.

Within the Newry and Mourne District, Mill Bay in Carlingford Lough (ASSI) supports the largest intact area of estuarine saltmarsh in Northern Ireland.

## Key Coastal Species



Yellow horned poppy © NIEA

### Yellow-horned poppy

The yellow-horned poppy is a plant commonly found on bare shingle. Each individual plant produces one to several rosettes with a single flower stalk emerging from each. The waxy leaves are greyish-green and covered with fine short hairs, which protect the leaf surface from the salty conditions along the seashore.



Curlew © John Doherty

### Curlew

The curlew is one of the largest European wading birds, instantly recognisable with its long down-curved bill, brown upperparts and long legs. They may frequently be seen on coastal grasslands and intertidal muds in winter. Wet marshy unimproved land is the preferred breeding habitat where there is a good supply of invertebrates.



Sea kale © NIEA

### Sea Kale

Sea-kale is a long-lived plant and established individuals may reach several meters in diameter. The leaves, which start off as deep crimson-purple changing to green when older, have a thick waxy covering which keeps them waterproof. Sea Kale can be found along the Mourne coast.



# Marine

The marine environment supports over half of the UK's biodiversity. There are many diverse marine habitats in the Newry and Mourne District including mudflats, mud habitats in deep water, *Sabellaria alveolata* reefs and seagrass beds. There are also a number of islands off Greencastle, which support colonies of breeding gulls and terns.

Sunlight shadows © Paul Naylor

Objectives	Local Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Raise awareness of the biodiversity we have off our coast and its importance.</li><li>• Maintain and improve the condition of marine habitats in the district.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promote the importance of marine habitats (for biodiversity, tourism, heritage and cultural value) through talks and events.</li><li>• Raise awareness of marine biodiversity through education packs and interpretation.</li><li>• Promote recording of key marine species such as whales, dolphins and porpoises.</li></ul>

## Mudflats

Mudflats are intertidal habitats created by sedimentary deposition in low energy coastal environments, particularly in estuaries and other sheltered areas such as sea loughs. They are highly productive areas and are of great importance to large numbers of birds and fish. They provide vital feeding and resting areas for internationally important populations of migratory, overwintering and breeding waterfowl and wading birds.

Within Newry & Mourne, mudflats can be found at the western end of Carlingford Lough around Carriganean. The lough supports internationally important breeding populations of the sandwich tern and nationally important numbers of the common and Arctic tern.



Mudflats at Newry River Estuary

## Mud habitats in deep water

Mud habitats in deep water typically occur below 20-30m in many areas of the UK's marine environment, including



Lobster & Prawn © Paul Naylor

marine inlets such as sea loughs. These habitats support communities of burrowing animals including Northern Ireland priority species such as Dublin bay prawns, rugose squat lobster and seapens.

In Newry & Mourne, mud habitats in deep water are found at Carlingford Lough with extensive populations of seapen found 1-5m in depth. Also Dublin Bay prawns, which are invariably associated with deep mud, have been recorded off Kilkeel.

## *Sabellaria alveolata* reefs

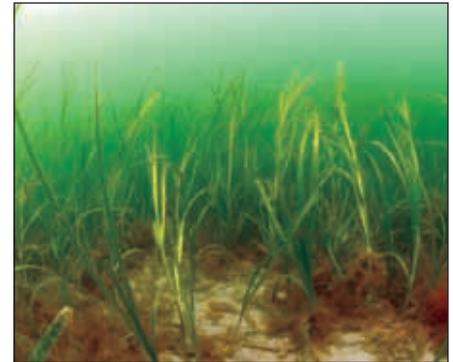
*Sabellaria alveolata* reefs consist of tightly packed honeycomb-like masses of tubes, constructed by a small worm called *Sabellaria alveolata*. The reefs can be up to 50cm thick, forming sheets, hummocks or massive formations. They are found in areas with moderate to considerable wave exposure. The typical lifespan of worms has been recorded to be 4-5 years.

In Newry and Mourne, Glassdrumman has the largest reefs in Northern Ireland growing between mid and lower shore boulders. *Sabellaria alveolata* reefs have also been reported to extend into the sub-tidal zone at this site. Older communities are somewhat more diverse than younger ones because of the amount of crevices present.

## Seagrass beds

Seagrasses are marine flowering plants found in shallow, coastal areas around the world, typically on sheltered intertidal and subtidal sandy or muddy bottoms. They often grow in dense, extensive beds or meadows, creating a productive and diverse habitat that provides shelter and food for a wide variety of other plant and animal species, including many of our valuable commercial fish species.

Within Newry and Mourne, seagrass beds can be found at Carlingford Lough. They form an important food source for overwintering wildfowl.



Seagrass Bed © Paul Naylor

## Key Marine Species



Basking shark © Colin Speedie

### Basking Shark

The basking shark is the second largest fish in the world and is easily recognised by its large size (around 7.5m in length). It is a greyish-brown to black colour with five large gill slits, through which the bright red gills can be seen. Despite its enormous size, it eats small organisms such as jellyfish and comb-jellies. It has been recorded in small numbers off the coast at Bloody Bridge and at the mouth of Carlingford Lough.



Rugose Squat lobsters © Paul Naylor

### Rugose squat lobster

A lobster up to 10cm in length and common in shallow water. It lives on rock ledges or in deeper water (50 - 150 m) on sandy or soft substrate. It is orange to reddish brown in colour with darker lines across the body. The tips and spines on the claws are white. It has been recorded at Kilkeel and Cranfield point.



Harbour Porpoise © Randal Counihan

### Harbour porpoise

The harbour porpoise is the smallest marine mammal in Irish waters and our only porpoise species. It is dark grey with a pale belly and white extending up the sides. It has no forehead or distinct beak and can often be detected by the sound of its short, sharp blows. It has been recorded off the County Down coast at Bloody Bridge.



# Grassland

Grassland habitats in Newry and Mourne include lowland meadows and small pockets of lowland dry acid grassland, purple moor grass and rush pasture. Agriculture is one of the major land uses in the district which has an impact on both the landscape and biodiversity.

Species-rich grassland © NIEA

Objectives	Local Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improve the biodiversity value and extent of species rich grassland in the district.</li><li>• Raise awareness of the value of species-rich grassland and mixed farming options.</li><li>• Increase the uptake of agri-environment schemes and options which will benefit local priority species and habitats.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Liaise with landowners to encourage enhancement of grassland and other farmland habitats for biodiversity.</li><li>• Promote entry into agri-environment schemes.</li><li>• Liaise with Roads Service and other government organisations on enhancing the biodiversity value of road-side verges through appropriate management.</li><li>• Raise awareness of the value of species-rich grassland through education and events.</li></ul>

### Lowland meadow

A lowland meadow is defined as unimproved neutral grassland found on enclosed land, normally on a well-drained mineral soil with a sward rich in wildflowers. Such meadows are found in former hay meadows or in non-agricultural sites such as churchyards or roadside verges.

In Newry and Mourne, several examples of lowland meadow can be found in the Crossmaglen drumlins. Traditional management practices, such as low intensity cutting, in Tullyard ASSI for example, have brought about a great diversity in species composition, both of grasses and herbs.

Levallymore ASSI in south Armagh is also an excellent example of a species-rich meadow, with bird's-foot trefoil, yellow-rattle and eyebright found there. It also supports a wonderful array of butterflies and bees.



Hay Meadow © NIEA

### Lowland dry acid grassland

Lowland dry acid grassland occurs in nutrient-poor, well-drained acid soils. There are no large areas of lowland dry acid grassland in Northern Ireland. Instead, it is most likely to be found in very small patches in a matrix of other grassland types. This habitat may also occur in old gardens, churchyards and other amenity areas.

In Newry and Mourne it can be found on the lowland slopes of the Mourne and in south Armagh. Lowland dry acid grassland contains plant species such as common bent, sheep's sorrel and tormentil and supports species such as the Irish hare and skylark.



Tormentil © Neil Wyatt

### Purple moor grass and rush pasture

Purple moor grass and rush pasture occurs on poorly drained soils in lowland areas of high rainfall. This habitat type includes meadow, dominated by purple moor grass, with rushes and wildflowers such as

ragged robin present. Purple moor grass and rush pasture is important for a number of Northern Ireland priority species including the curlew and marsh fritillary butterfly.

Within Newry & Mourne, it can be found on the lower slopes of the Mourne Mountains and fragmented in farmland.



Marsh Fritillary © Philip Precey

### Roadside verges

Roadside verges are not a priority habitat in Northern Ireland, however they can be an excellent haven for biodiversity. They increase the value of hedgerows and adjacent farmland by acting as wildlife corridors between fields.

Plant species to look out for include the primrose, ox-eye daisy and bird's foot trefoil. Roadside verges add to the overall biodiversity value of the countryside, providing seed heads for birds, nectar plants for butterflies and bees, and cover for many insects and mammals.

## Key Grassland Species



Yellowhammer © Laurie Campbell

### Yellowhammer

The yellowhammer is a member of the bunting family and a characteristic resident species of lowland arable and mixed farmland. In the summer, they can be found in highly productive areas of farmland, whereas in winter, they form flocks and feed in mixed farmland on stubble fields. The yellowhammer was once a familiar farm bird but its numbers have declined in recent years due to loss of habitat.



Irish Hare © Jphn Doherty

### Irish hare

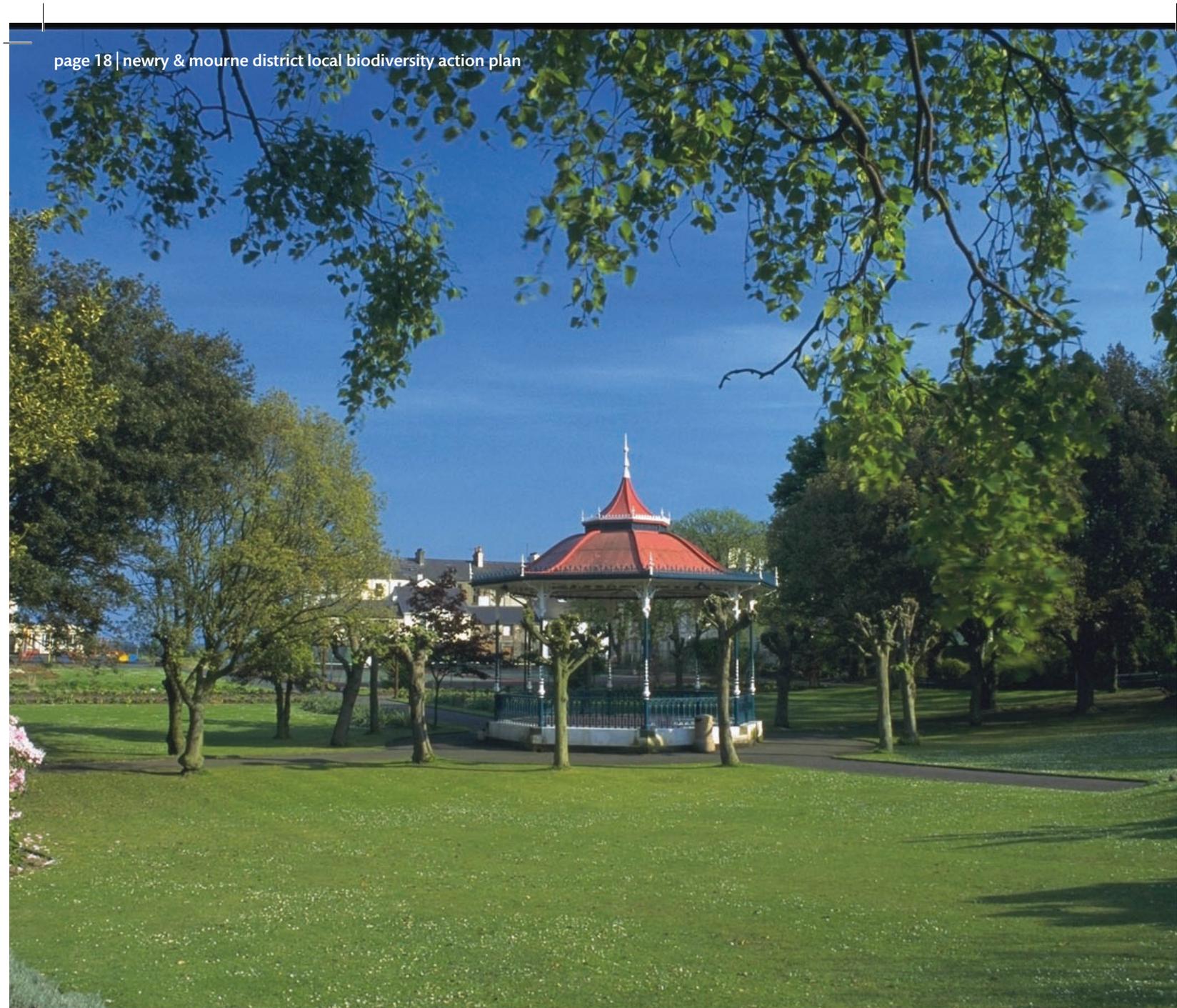
The Irish hare is a unique species of hare only found in Ireland. It is russet in colour with a completely white tail and ears roughly the same length as its head. The species occurs in Newry and Mourne in upland sites but also on lowland sites such as bogs, farmland and coastal grassland.



Pink Meadow Waxcap © David Mitchell

### Pink meadow waxcap

The pink waxcap is a fungus with a pinkish-lilac conical cap and a slightly greasy appearance. Fungi acquire nutrients from living or dead plants, animals or other fungi. This species is found all over Northern Ireland in mossy lawns and semi-natural grasslands. Silent Valley in the Mourne is a good site for waxcaps.



# Gardens and urban greenspace

Gardens, urban parks and industrial sites are very important for a wide range of species. Often overlooked, these urban greenspaces have special importance for biodiversity, as they are where wildlife and people can interact.

Objectives	Local Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Educate and raise awareness of the biodiversity value of urban greenspace and gardens.</li><li>• Improve and expand the biodiversity value of gardens and urban greenspace in the district.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Run a wildlife gardening competition for individuals, community groups, businesses and schools annually.</li><li>• Raise awareness of wildlife gardening through public events and the media.</li><li>• Work with the council parks department to improve the biodiversity value and interpretation of our parks, targeting one park per year.</li></ul>

## Urban greenspace

Urban greenspace is a broad term for green areas and habitats within the urban environment. These habitats can provide havens for wildlife and people alike.

Many of the parks within Newry and Mourne are excellent open spaces for wildlife. Parks are generally larger and more mature than gardens and so have a more diverse range of wildlife associated with them. Large trees found in parks can support larger birds and mammals such as owls and badgers. If the park has a sizeable pond, wildfowl and otters may also be found.

Parks are usually managed for both formal and informal recreation, but many could be developed to increase their value for wildlife. Good examples of public parks in the district include Kilbroney Park, Rostrevor Forest Park and Slieve Gullion Forest Park.



Kilbroney Park © Newry & Mourne District Council

## Industrial and business sites

Many industrial sites have areas within their premises that are of benefit to wildlife. Neglected corners provide a refuge for a range of plants and animals.

Old derelict buildings can provide shelter for bats and nesting places for birds such as the starling, swallow and house martin. New industrial sites can also be valuable for wildlife if landscaped using native flowers, shrubs and trees.

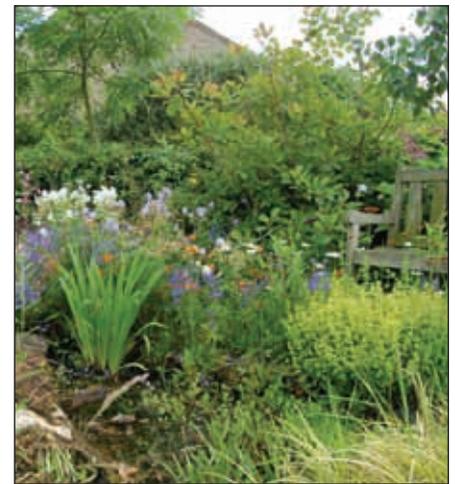


Pipistrelle Bat © Robin Moffitt

Every garden, however big or small, has the potential to be a mini-nature reserve. Many gardens already support some level of biodiversity, but with a little more planning for wildlife in mind, we could be making a much more valuable contribution to protecting our native plant and animal species.

In the summer, gardens provide a great source of nectar for bumblebees and butterflies, which in turn attract small mammals and birds. In the winter, when everything is dormant and the weather turns colder, gardens provide valuable hibernation spots for wildlife.

Typical species found in gardens include blue tits, robins, house sparrows, hedgehogs and bats; as well as huge numbers of insects.



Wildlife Garden © Helen Freeston

## Gardens

Gardens are where most people first experience wildlife. Whether it's a ladybird, a bumblebee or a song thrush, gardens are essential feeding grounds and homes for lots of wildlife.

Gardens may be small individually but collectively they make up a large proportion of greenspace in Newry and Mourne. Gardens link urban greenspace with the wider countryside, forming a mosaic of wildlife habitats.

## Key Garden Species



House sparrow © Laurie Campbell

### House sparrow

The house sparrow lives happily alongside humans nesting under roof tiles. It has suffered a decline recently due to a lack of insect food in the summer and seed in the winter, and is therefore classified as a Northern Ireland priority species.



Bumblebee © John Doherty

### Bumblebees

Bumblebees are very important pollinators of plants, from native species to agricultural crops. Bees are declining as there are not enough natural habitats left for them to live, as well as the threat from alien species elsewhere in the UK. Although species-rich grassland is the best habitat for most bees, urban gardens are also providing an important haven for this declining group.



Hedgehog © Laurie Campbell

### Hedgehog

The western European hedgehog was selected as a UK priority species in 2007 due to a decline in numbers. Common in parks, gardens and farmland throughout the UK and Ireland, they prefer woodland edges, hedgerows and suburban habitats where there is plenty of food such as beetles, worms, caterpillars and slugs.

# Local action for Newry and Mourne's species

The biodiversity audit highlighted the variety of species and habitats found in the Newry and Mourne District.

Ten species have been selected by the Newry and Mourne LBAP Steering Group as priority species for initial conservation action (see the table below). These will therefore be included in the first round of SAPs for the district. Other species not selected for specific action will still benefit from HAPs.

Species	Description	Objectives	Local Actions
<p><b>Red squirrel</b></p>  <p>© Mark Hamlin</p>	<p>A shy creature, spending most of its time in the treetops of mixed coniferous woods feeding on seeds and cones. The introduction of the non-native grey squirrel is threatening the future of the red squirrel, as it out-competes the red for food and habitat.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collate recent sightings of red squirrels in the area.</li> <li>• Educate and raise awareness of the importance of the species.</li> <li>• Maintain and increase existing populations of red squirrel in the area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work in partnership with Forest Service to collect up to date records.</li> <li>• Hold one public event during Red Squirrel week.</li> <li>• Set up a red squirrel group to help monitor squirrel activity in areas of existing suitable habitat.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Irish damselfly</b></p>  <p>© Robert Thompson</p>	<p>A rare damselfly native only to Ireland, which can be seen from May to July. It is confined to areas with good water quality, as it is sensitive to pollution.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and map distribution of the Irish damselfly throughout the district.</li> <li>• Maintain and improve condition of existing suitable habitat.</li> <li>• Raise awareness of the importance of this indigenous species.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey suitable sites and compile register of distribution.</li> <li>• Hold public events to help manage appropriate sites for damselflies and raise awareness of their importance.</li> <li>• Hold identification training events to increase number of species recorders.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Otter</b></p>  <p>© Mark Hamlin</p>	<p>Otters live in a variety of habitats including freshwater rivers, lakes and coasts. Signs of otters have been recorded throughout the district.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate and raise awareness of the otter and its habitat requirements.</li> <li>• Maintain and improve current suitable habitats.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote recording and surveying for otters.</li> <li>• Construct an artificial otter holt by way of demonstration to public.</li> <li>• Hold one public event per year focusing on the otter.</li> </ul>
 <p>Brown Trout © J Doherty</p>	<p>Brown trout and salmon are both Northern Ireland SoCC. They feed on small fish, frogs, and insects flying near the water's surface. Trout and salmon have been recorded in White Water, Kilkeel, Cusher, Clanrye and Kilbroney rivers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gain further information on the populations of trout and salmon across the district.</li> <li>• Work with stakeholders to improve the riparian habitat for fish species.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work to develop fish population studies for a number of important rivers and tributaries in the district.</li> <li>• Work with Rivers Agency, DCAL and Loughs Agency to improve the habitat where appropriate.</li> </ul>

Species	Description	Objectives	Local Actions
<p><b>Curlew</b></p>  <p>© John Doherty</p>	<p>The curlew is one of the largest European wading birds, instantly recognisable with its long down-curved bill, brown upperparts and long legs. They may frequently be seen in areas with a good supply of invertebrates.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain and improve condition of existing suitable habitat, enabling present numbers to remain and increase.</li> <li>• Raise awareness of the decline of curlew and the threats facing them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with landowners where curlew breed and also those with suitable habitat for breeding – through promotion of agri-environment schemes.</li> <li>• Highlighting threats and issues through the media.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Juniper</b></p>  <p>© Laurie Campbell</p>	<p>A prickly shrub that tends to be found in exposed areas such as rocky outcrops. It is one of only three conifers native to Ireland.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise awareness of the importance of this indigenous species and its habitat.</li> <li>• Monitor the population of juniper in the district and promote further recording.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise awareness of the species through education and events.</li> <li>• Promote further recording through talks with the public and landowners.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Harbour porpoise</b></p>  <p>© Randal Counihan</p>	<p>This species is one of 24 cetaceans (whales, dolphins and porpoises) recorded off the coast of Ireland. It has been recorded off the Co. Down coast at Bloody Bridge.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise awareness of the importance of this species.</li> <li>• Promote recording and sighting scheme through the Irish Whale and Dolphin group.</li> <li>• Promote code of conduct for behaviour around marine wildlife e.g. WiSe scheme.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organise one event per year to promote recording in the district.</li> <li>• Promote schemes such as WiSe through talks with local boat owners.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Yellowhammer</b></p>  <p>© Laurie Campbell</p>	<p>Occurs in arable and mixed farming areas in the Newry &amp; Mourne District. Birds feed on grain and seeds in winter time and invertebrates in the summer breeding season.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise awareness and recording of yellowhammer and other farmland birds.</li> <li>• Improve summer and winter-feeding by targeting farmers &amp; landowners to take up agri-environment arable management options.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote recording through at least one press release and event per year.</li> <li>• Work with DARD to promote entry and commitment to arable options in agri-environment schemes.</li> <li>• Plant at least one giant bird table on council owned land.</li> </ul>
<p><b>House sparrow</b></p>  <p>© Laurie Campbell</p>	<p>A common bird in many gardens. Numbers have dropped in certain areas due to a lack of insect food in summer and winter seed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conserve existing population.</li> <li>• Raise awareness of the importance of house sparrow and their nest sites.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote recording through the wildlife gardening competition.</li> <li>• Produce at least one press release per year and run one event per year to raise the profile of the house sparrow.</li> </ul>



# What you can do for Newry and Mourne's biodiversity

Wildlife Garden © Helen Freeston

To find out more about the Newry and Mourne LBAP project, please contact:

Newry and Mourne Biodiversity Officer  
Newry and Mourne District Council  
O'Hagan House  
Monaghan Row  
Newry  
BT35 8DJ

Telephone: 028 3031 3100 Fax: 028 3026 4482

Email: [newryandmourne.biodiversity@ulsterwildlifetrust.org](mailto:newryandmourne.biodiversity@ulsterwildlifetrust.org)

Web: [www.newryandmourne.gov.uk](http://www.newryandmourne.gov.uk) or [www.ulsterwildlifetrust.org/biodiversity](http://www.ulsterwildlifetrust.org/biodiversity) (click on local biodiversity officers)

**We are appealing to as many people as possible to get involved in the Newry and Mourne LBAP and do their bit for local biodiversity. Together we can work to halt the loss of biodiversity, much of which is caused by human activities.**

**Here are some of the ways you can get involved in the Newry and Mourne LBAP either individually or as a community group, organisation or business:**

### **Gardening with wildlife in mind**

Your actions and activities in your own garden, community or school garden can greatly benefit our local biodiversity. Simple things such as putting up bird boxes and feeders, planting native trees, growing nectar-rich flowers or creating insect habitats will help provide food and shelter for a variety of species.

Even if you don't have a garden, window boxes and hanging baskets can have a positive effect on wildlife, as well as providing a colourful addition to your windowsill.



Goldfinches on Feeder © Richard Burkmar

### **Joining the Newry and Mourne LBAP partnership**

The Newry and Mourne LBAP partnership meet twice yearly to hear more about the biodiversity in the District and also to help shape the Action Plan. All partnership meetings are advertised in the local press and are open to everyone.

The more individuals, groups and businesses we have on board, the more impact we'll make in halting biodiversity loss in the District.

### **Enjoy your natural environment**

We are surrounded by our natural environment from parks and gardens to the wider countryside. The simplest way to see and enjoy it is to go walking. Newry and Mourne is a superb walking destination, offering a wide range of walks that cater for a broad range of fitness, ability and experience. Walks range from flat coastal routes to testing slopes and mountains.



Walkers in the Mournes © Harry Goodman

There are also a number of way marked ways in Newry and Mourne including the Ring of Gullion, Mourne Way and the Newry Canal Way. For further information on walking routes in the district please visit [www.newryandmourne.gov.uk](http://www.newryandmourne.gov.uk), [www.walkni.com](http://www.walkni.com) or Newry Tourist Information Centre.

### **Collecting records**

The Biodiversity Audit process revealed that there are some gaps in habitat and species records. Recording wildlife is very important as it helps determine what we have and also how well populations are doing locally. It is not just priority species and habitats that are important, common species and habitats are very much under-recorded.

You can download recording cards from [www.ulsterwildlifetrust.org](http://www.ulsterwildlifetrust.org) or contact the Biodiversity Officer directly. This information can help guide specific action locally and will also be fed into Northern Ireland's national recording scheme at the Centre for Environmental Data and Recording (CEDaR).



Meadow training event

### **Volunteering**

There are, and will be, many practical conservation and survey projects within the District that would benefit from your time and help. Projects include tree planting, sowing wildflower seeds, planting bulbs, hedgelaying and digging ponds. Keep an eye out for information in your local paper if you want to get your hands dirty to help wildlife.

If you are a constituted group, business or organisation, you could create your own biodiversity project and help to implement the Newry and Mourne LBAP. Get in touch to let us know what you are doing and if you need any help.



Volunteers hedgelaying © UWT

# Glossary

- AONB** Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This is designated under the Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (NI) Order 1985 to protect and enhance large areas of landscape.
- ASSI** Area of Special Scientific Interest. These are designated under the Environment (NI) Order 2002 as areas of land that have been identified as being of the highest degree of conservation value.
- CEDaR** Centre for Environmental Data and Recording.
- DARD** Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.
- DCAL** Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure.
- HAP** Habitat Action Plan.
- LBAP** Local Biodiversity Action Plan.
- NNR** National Nature Reserve.
- RoSA** Regeneration of South Armagh.
- SAC** Special Areas of Conservation. These are protected sites designated under the EU Habitats Directive, which are the most seriously threatened habitats and species in Europe.
- SAP** Species Action Plan.
- SoCC** Species of Conservation Concern. Species that have undergone a decline in numbers (1% per year over the last 25 years), or where Northern Ireland is a stronghold for the species. These species require monitoring because they may need conservation action in the future.
- SPA** Special Protection Area. These are protected sites classified in accordance with Article 4 of the EC Directive on the conservation of wild birds, also known as the Birds Directive. They are classified for rare and vulnerable birds, and for regularly occurring migratory species.
- WFD** Water Framework Directive.

# Acknowledgements

The Newry and Mourne LBAP could not have been produced without the guidance and assistance of a number of people.

The Newry and Mourne LBAP Steering Group has provided valuable advice and assistance throughout the process. The group is made up of representatives from Newry and Mourne District Council, Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Department of Culture Arts and Leisure, Mourne Heritage Trust, Loughs Agency, RoSA and the Ulster Wildlife Trust.

Thanks must also go to a few individuals without whose hard work and dedication, the project could not have happened – John Farrell, Director of Environmental Health, Newry and Mourne District Council; Kevin Scullion, Assistant Director of Environmental Health, Newry and Mourne District Council; Danielle Cookson, Newry and Mourne Biodiversity Officer; Ciaran Mullan, Conservation Manager, Ulster Wildlife Trust; and everyone that contributed photographs for this publication. Also thanks to the other local Biodiversity Officers for their advice.

Many thanks also to the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and the Landfill Communities Fund for funding the project.

Finally, a huge thank you to all the members of the public who have supported the project so far; we look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure a district rich in wildlife.





Comhairle an Iúir & Mhúrn  
Newry & Mourne District Council



Ulster Wildlife Trust

