

<b>Report on</b>	Mid Ulster Biodiversity Update
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	12th November 2019
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Raymond Lowry, Head of Technical Services

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To inform and update Members of recent activities promoting community participation and enhancing the local biodiversity resource from April to September 2019.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	<p>The activities of the Biodiversity Officer can be categorised into the following broad areas of responsibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute to delivery on the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy via the implementation of the Mid Ulster Biodiversity Action Plan.</li> <li>• Provide guidance to MUDC in complying with various environmental legislation, including obligations under the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (NI) 2011, ensuring Council fulfil their Biodiversity Duty wherever possible.</li> <li>• Provide advice and contribute to the development of Habitat Regulations Assessments (HRAs) to ensure council projects do not contravene biodiversity related European legislation.</li> <li>• Develop a range of partnerships to deliver biodiversity gain within Mid Ulster.</li> <li>• To maintain and progress a database of species, habitats and sites of local wildlife value.</li> <li>• To increase biodiversity awareness among local community and wider public and to provide training opportunities for public to develop biodiversity related skills.</li> <li>• To maintain and progress a database of species, habitats and sites of local wildlife value.</li> <li>• To increase biodiversity awareness among local community and wider public and to provide training opportunities for public to develop biodiversity related skills.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b>Mid Ulster Bird Ringing Project</b></p> <p>The Traad LNR Constant Effort Site (CES) continues to be a success with all 12 visits completed between the beginning of May and the end of August. Biometrics of over 500 birds were collected, and over 100 people attended the sessions (commencing at 6:00am). This data will be submitted to the British Trust for</p>

	<p>Ornithology who monitor over 140 such CES sites across Britain and Ireland. Traad is now recognised as the most important CES site in Northern Ireland in terms of numbers and species of birds and for the training opportunities provided. Participants in this project travel from all over Northern Ireland to take part, and in addition to local people, ringers travel from Coleraine, Carrickfergus, Belfast, Downpatrick, Portadown, etc.</p>
3.2	<p><b>Bee-licious Project</b></p> <p>This three year Heritage Lottery funded project has now been completed, with 5 sites in Mid Ulster improved for native pollinators. Two sites were planted with fruit trees as community orchards, with native wildflower bulbs planted at both these sites to provide an additional source of nectar. Two further sites were sown with yellow rattle (which suppresses grass growth and encourages native wildflowers), and one site was planted with wildflowers, wildflower bulbs, native trees and fruit trees. In addition to public events at each of these sites, workshops on making bee-homes were delivered to raise awareness of, and show people what they can do to help our native pollinators (and other wildlife). Well over 500 people attended the 17 events over the 3 year period, with several hundred bee-homes made by participants to take home for their gardens.</p>
3.3	<p><b>All Ireland Daubenton's Bat Survey</b></p> <p>This is the 10<sup>th</sup> consecutive year this survey has been undertaken along the Torrent River/Coalisland Canal. The data collected from this survey feeds into the All Ireland Daubenton's Bat Survey through Bat Conservation Ireland. Of the 614 sites surveyed across the island of Ireland, Coalisland Canal is one of the 107 that has been surveyed for at least 9 years. This long term data not only provides an assessment of how Daubenton's bats are doing locally, but makes a valuable contribution at a national scale.</p>
3.4	<p><b>Raising Awareness of Biodiversity Issues</b></p> <p>Between April 2019 and September 2019, 23 biodiversity events were delivered. In addition to those relating to specific projects (above), events were held on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biodiversity Recording – These events are to encourage people to record the wildlife they see and submit their records to the national database. This information helps build a better picture of how our local biodiversity is faring, and will help guide specific action to help protect our most threatened habitats and species at both a local and national scale.</li> <li>• Breeding Wader Survey Training – In partnership with the British Trust for Ornithology, this training session was to encourage people to take part in surveying breeding waders, with a particular focus on the western shores of Lough Neagh.</li> <li>• Bat Night – A bat talk and walk was held at Dungannon Park to raise awareness of these often misunderstood mammals.</li> <li>• Allotment Safari – A variety of activities were held looking at the range of birds, bees, bugs, butterflies, that could be found in your garden, park and allotment. Various organisations including Butterfly Conservation, Buglife, Conservation Volunteers, and BTO all held workshops at the event.</li> </ul>

3.5	<b>Biodiversity Advice and Issues</b> The Biodiversity Officer continues to provide advice to council on a range of biodiversity issues. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing advice and biodiversity information on Habitat Regulation Assessments to be undertaken to ensure the council do not contravene relevant legislation (The Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations (NI) 1995)</li> <li>• Providing advice to ensure council do not infringe legal requirements under the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (NI) 2011, and Wildlife (NI) Order 1985 (as amended 2011).</li> <li>• Providing advice on fulfilling obligations under the Biodiversity Duty to “further the conservation of biodiversity” (Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (NI) 2011).</li> </ul>
3.6	<b>General Public</b> The Biodiversity Officer continues to provide advice to the general public on biodiversity issues as requested through telephone and e-mail.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: N/A
	Human: Staff time to manage programme delivery.
	Risk Management: Within programme management.
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	Members are asked to note the content of this report.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	Appendix 1 – Mid Ulster Bird ringing Project.
6.2	Appendix 2 – Bee-licious Project.

## Appendix 1



Putting up the catch nets



Releasing birds from the nets.



Sedge Warbler being ringed



## Appendix 2



Bee- homes, at Polepatrick park



Bee- homes, Ballytrea Primary School



Bee- homes, at Parkanaur



Sowing and Rolling Yellow rattle,  
Polepatrick Park