

Report on	Mid Ulster Bird Ringing Project
Date of Meeting	14 June 2018
Reporting Officer	Head of Parks
Contact Officer	Mark Edgar - Biodiversity Officer

Is this report restricted for confidential business? If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	
	No	x

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To inform and update Members of a planned activity promoting community participation in conserving and enhancing the local biodiversity resource of Mid Ulster District.
2.0	Background
2.1	As part of the Mid Ulster Biodiversity Action Plan, the Biodiversity Officer has been developing a Mid Ulster Bird Ringing Project in partnership with licenced ringers and interested individuals.
2.2	During 2015 and 2016 a number of ringing training days were held throughout the Mid Ulster area. Following an assessment of this, it became apparent that one of the best ringing sites in the area (and on a par with any in Northern Ireland) is at Traad. It was decided to undertake a concerted effort during 2017, and to run the site as a trial Constant Effort Site (CES). The CES is a national standardized ringing program where ringers operate the same mist nets in the same locations within the same site over the same time period at each session over the breeding season. There are 12 sessions undertaken, one within each of the 10 day windows specified by the BTO. There are currently over 140 CES sites throughout Britain and Ireland, but only 1 other CES site in Northern Ireland. Traad has now become registered as the second
2.3	Traad 2018 Constant Effort Site has (despite the weather) got off to a good start. Two of the 12 visits have been completed and some interesting birds have turned up. A sedge warbler originally ringed in France in 2015, which had been caught at Traad in 2016, and 2017 was retrapped again in 2018. Sedge warblers migrate, spending the winter in western and southern Africa. This bird has been to Africa (three times), returning to Lough Neagh, and was caught in the exact same net on each of the 3 years. One of our own reed warblers first ringed as an adult in 2015 has also been retrapped in 2018. Several birds ringed at Traad have been caught in France and southern England.
2.4	While recoveries of birds in or from other countries creates excitement, the value of the information obtained from Traad's own birds is important in understanding local population dynamics. The numbers of sedge warblers and particularly reed warblers being ringed at the site is significant on a Northern Ireland scale. Ringing records for Northern Ireland for sedge warblers show: 32 ringed in 2014; 9 in 2015; 57 in 2016 (17 of which were from

	Traad), and 144 ringed at Traad in 2017. The importance of the site for information on reed warblers is even more significant with no reed warblers ringed in Northern Ireland in either 2014 or 2015, and only 17 ringed in 2016 (16 of which were from Traad). In 2017, 29 reed warblers were ringed at Traad. (Totals for NI for 2017 are not available yet).
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The success of the Traad Bird Ringing Project relies on the good will of licenced ringers and volunteers giving their time and effort to ensure each ringing session can be undertaken. In addition to the vital data on birds being obtained, the training opportunities being provided have been recognised. As well as local people becoming involved and starting the training process, trainees from over Northern Ireland (Belfast, Ballymena, Ballynahinch, Carrickfergus, Warrenpoint, Portadown, etc.) have attended ringing sessions to 'experience Traad'.
3.2	During 2017, one of the ringing sessions in mid-July resulted in a large number of sedge warblers ringed. It is thought these warblers were gathering around and passing through Lough Neagh to feed up before migration to Senegal. If more sedge warblers (or any migrating bird) can be ringed, there is more chance they will be reported from England, France, Spain, Morocco, etc. giving us a better picture of the migration routes of Lough Neagh birds.
3.3	To try to maximise on this 'flush' of birds, it is proposed to have a camp at Traad to enable ringers travelling to be on site late into the evening and for an early morning start. It is anticipated that this may result in a maximum of 4 or 5 tents, with 7 or 8 people staying on site overnight. Other ringers will travel to the site each day to join those camping. Suggested dates for this would be two or three nights of the week commencing 16 th July. This will hopefully coincide with the much larger number of warblers passing through the site.
3.4	The ringer in charge of the camp is experienced in running such events, and has Public Liability Insurance. This includes cover for camps.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: No cost to Parks budget.
	Human: Officer time (Biodiversity Officer)
	Risk Management: Risk assessments will be conducted as part of event plan.
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: The project is open to residents, groups and individuals throughout the district.
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A

5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Members are asked to note the content of this report.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Traad Bird Ringing Report 2017-18 Appendix 1