

National Records of Scotland The Biodiversity Duty Report 2018 – 2020

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1. Introductory Information about National Records of Scotland

Q: Please describe your organisation's role and purpose, including any particular environmental responsibilities

A: National Records of Scotland (NRS) is a Non-Ministerial Department of the Scottish Government. Our purpose is to collect, preserve and produce information about Scotland's people and history, and make it available to inform current and future generations. For administrative purposes we sit within the Scottish Government's Economy, Fair Work and Culture portfolio. We are headed by Paul Lowe, our Chief Executive, who fulfils the roles of two non-ministerial office holders – the Registrar General for Scotland and the Keeper of the Records of Scotland.

The purpose of NRS is to collect, preserve and produce information about Scotland's people and history and make it available to inform current and future generations. Our work underpins the fabric of Scottish society: telling the story of our nation.

National Records of Scotland performs the registration and statistical functions of the Registrar General for Scotland and the archival functions of the Keeper of the Records of Scotland, including maintaining the archives as one of Scotland's five National Collections.

We hold records spanning the 12th to the 21st centuries, touching on virtually every aspect of Scottish life. We are the repository for the public and legal records of Scotland but we also have many local and private archives. We hold and make available one of the most varied collections of records in Britain.

We provide a leadership role for archive and record professionals, and require 250 named public authorities to submit records management plans for agreement by the Keeper under the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011. We administer the registration of life events such as births, deaths, marriages, civil partnerships, divorces and adoptions. We are also responsible for the statutes relating to the formalities of marriage and civil partnership and the conduct of civil marriage. We take the census of Scotland's population every 10 years and prepare and publish regular demographic statistics. These statistics play a vital part in underpinning decision making from national to local level, and are a building block in the development of a large number of economic and social statistics.

Our Outreach and Learning team recently updated the information and design of the leaflet and signage in the Archivists' Garden. This information covers the importance of plants in Scottish history and culture. This was promoted via the National Records of Scotland online channels, mainly Twitter.

2. Actions to Protect Biodiversity and Connect People with Nature

Q: Please describe and explain any actions that your organisation has undertaken alone or as part of a partnership to benefit biodiversity directly, to tackle the main drivers of biodiversity loss, or to achieve wider outcomes for nature and people.

A: NRS recognise the opportunities from our built and landscape estate in the city of Edinburgh and on the periphery of the city. The Archivists Garden - a hidden oasis off West Register Street is a managed garden, open to the public, with specialist plants and fruit trees. This garden was designed in recognition of the Grade A listings of its surroundings but also provides an abundant flower, shrub and plant collection within a highly built up space in the centre of Edinburgh. We appoint a professionally qualified landscape gardening firm to maintain the condition of the garden and replace and improve the space in line with ISO4001.

Our appointed contractor provides a grounds maintenance service that is responsive to the changing seasons, horticultural growing patterns and winter weather and recognises how green infrastructure in urban areas can play an important part in the protection and enhancement of the area's biodiversity.

On the outskirts of Edinburgh at Thomas Thomson House, this 7 acre site is bounded with a mix of trees, shrubs, grassed and wetland spaces. The large open space and the sheltered boundaries provide a rich landscape for a range of wildlife. The space is managed by a landscape firm where we continuously review the open space and how it can be improved.

In addition to the specified Grounds Maintenance services our FM Contractor supported the creation of a biodiversity area at Thomas Thomson House. This allowed the area to be dedicated to the protection and enhancement of the area's natural environment and include elements such as:

- introducing plant species that attract and sustain wildlife e.g. the creation of wildflower areas to promote insects, birds and other wildlife.
- the erection of bird feeding stations and butterfly boxes
- placing of bird boxes and bat boxes
- introduction of water features or biodiversity ponds
- engagement with the local community e.g. local school groups who can get involved in activities such as planting, weeding and wildlife surveys as part of their overall learning
- creation of seating areas where staff can enjoy the scenery and fresh air whilst eating their lunch.

Staff volunteer days in association with our FM contractor supported the installation of the wetland space at TTH.

We recognise the high pollution rates around Thomas Thomson House and will continually review the ability for this space to mitigate pollution through introducing new plant species to attract and maintain wildlife.

3. Mainstreaming Biodiversity

Q: Please outline any steps your organisation has taken to incorporate biodiversity measures into its wider policies, plans or strategies. This should include decision-making structures and staff and organisational roles and responsibilities.

A: NRS appoints an FM contractor to manage all of our open spaces in line with what is responsive to the changing seasons, horticultural growing patterns and winter weather. It recognises how green infrastructure in urban areas can play an important part in the protection and enhancement of the area's biodiversity.

We expect that their biodiversity activities will be compliant with environmental regulations and will be captured within our Resource Management Plan and Community Benefits Statement, as well as being in line with ISO 14001.

4. Nature-based Solutions, Climate Change and Biodiversity

Q: How has your organisation integrated biodiversity into nature based solutions to the climate emergency and other socio-economic outcomes?

A: NRS is dedicated to developing climate change strategies that consider nature, biodiversity and the changes that can be made to our built and landscaped estate while also supporting health and wellbeing.

5. Public Engagement and Workforce Development

Q: Public Engagement

A: In September 2020 staff were invited to mark Climate Week 2020 by participating in a number of the Scottish Government workshops and webinars (see Annex A for details).

Q: Workforce skills and training

A: We have a Learning and Development budget which can be used for personal and professional development, including workforce skills and training in biodiversity.

Q: Identify any opportunities that are available to your staff to take part in practical actions

A: Our staff can request up to 6 days paid special leave a year for volunteering purposes. We are promoting volunteering amongst NRS colleagues by sharing staff experiences of volunteering as well as information for staff who want to volunteer. We have published a number of articles on our intranet about staff and their gardens, this included mention of growing different varieties of edible plants, and the mental and physical health benefits of working in green spaces.

Further collaboration with our Staff Engagement Network is planned for the Open Garden event in the future (2022 when we will hopefully be able to host it).

All our staff can also apply for an opportunity to be seconded to a private or public sector organisation which can include those who deal with biodiversity and conservation topics and issues. These secondments can be for a minimum of 3 months and up to a maximum of 2 years.

6. Research and Monitoring

Q: Describe any research activities that your organisation has undertaken to help develop understanding and awareness of biodiversity or nature

A: We do not undertake any research activities to help develop understanding and awareness of biodiversity or nature.

Q: What follow-up actions or monitoring have you undertaken to assess the impacts of the actions you have taken? How have you measured this? If you do not carry out any monitoring activities, please explain why.

A: Our FM contractor worked with NRS to initiate, fund and develop the creation of a wildlife space at Thomas Thomson House. They identified the opportunity and used their professional landscape contractors to advise, labour and community benefits programme to support the implementation of this biodiversity improvement. The project has recognised the ability for the area to be dedicated to the protection and enhancement of the area's natural environment.

Continual management and improvement is undertaken by the specialist landscape contractor as part of their regular attendance checks. Further volunteer days will be undertaken and surveys to identify how the changes have improved the biodiversity of this large open space.

7. Biodiversity Highlights and Challenges

Q: Describe your organisation's main achievements for biodiversity over the reporting period and what you are most proud of (this can include processes, plans, projects, partnerships, events and actions).

A: The main achievements for biodiversity include our garden spaces: Thomas Thomson House Biodiversity Garden and in the Archivist Garden off West Register Street as described above.

Our outreach work is explicitly linked to promoting our archive materials, however our main contribution to supporting biodiversity has been updating and redesigning the information leaflet and boards for the Archivists' Garden. These illustrate how plants tied/tie in with Scottish cultural life.

Our open event for the Archivists' Garden was unfortunately cancelled due to COVID-19.

Additionally our Conservation team sources the wax for the Great Seal from a local beekeeper (Hoods of East Lothian) indirectly helping biodiversity by supporting local bees.

Q: Looking ahead, what do you think will be the main challenges over the next three years?

A: Economic and Resource Pressures along with COVID-19 will continue to affect the ways in which we work and also where we work. During the pandemic, all staff are working from home, with the exception of some key staff which positively reduces travel and the use of our buildings. Going forward staff have requested that NRS looks to increase the use of home working and innovative new ways of working. We are currently looking at this in response to the pandemic but recognise that further work will need to be taken forward.

Storage space. NRS brings in around 1000 linear metres of additional material into the national archive each year. Despite the move of many organisations to digital record-keeping, we are aware of large quantities of paper which will continue to come to us for at least the next 25 years. We estimate that our remaining expansion space will be exhausted within the next 2-5 years and we therefore require additional archival storage to ensure that we can continue to accept and preserve historical records in physical form.

Annex A: Climate Week Goes Digital



Scotland's annual Climate Week is fast approaching and this year, we are going digital!

Climate Week 2020 will start from Monday September 14 and you can join in by attending our range of online workshops and webinars.

This year, Climate Week is going to be a little different and it is so important that we continue to recognise and act on the climate emergency. The coronavirus pandemic has been an unprecedented global crisis but the climate emergency has not gone away and the Scottish Government remains committed to ending Scotland's contribution to climate change.

Celebrating Climate Week is the perfect opportunity for organisations and communities to showcase what they're doing to tackle the climate crisis. **You are invited to get involved in our working-from-home Climate Week by signing-up to our digital events and joining the discussion as we strive toward becoming a net-zero carbon society.**

As part of the celebrations, **we have organised an exciting line-up with speakers from Home Energy Scotland, Zero Waste Scotland, Marine Alliance for Science & Technology** - to list a few. Throughout the week our range of expert speakers will cover all things sustainable, including: marine conservation; renewable energy; climate justice; COP26, how to reduce your waste and how to save some money on your energy bills.

Get Involved

Learn about the ground-breaking work being done to combat the climate crisis and find out some great tips on how you can save some money and help save the planet too!

The full line-up of activities is listed below, you can register to public sector wide events via [Eventbrite](#) and [Events Online](#) for internal activities. Don't forget to also keep an eye on the blogs as we will be sharing a new story each day of Climate Week and make sure you read the [Climate Week Saltire Article](#) with updates from our Permanent Secretary, Leslie Evans and the Director of Energy & Climate Change, Kersti Berge!

Climate Week 2020 Event Schedule

[Marine Alliance for Science and Technology Biodiversity Seminar](#) Monday 14 September 12:00 to 13:00

Marine Alliance for Science and Technology for Scotland webinar focused on Biodiversity and Climate Change.

Guest Speakers:

Chris Leakey, People-Ocean-Planet: speaking on extending marine science for behavioural change: a climate policy catalyst

Stuart Cunningham, Professor of physical oceanography at Scottish Association for Marine Science: speaking on European cooperation on tackling climate change

Celeste Kellock, Blue Carbon Forum & University of Stirling: speaking on soil carbon transports from forested environments to coastal waters and sediments.

[Love Food Hate Waste](#) Monday 14 September 13:00 to 14:00

Approximately 1.3 billion tonnes of food waste is generated in Scotland each year, with 46% of this from households. According to "Low Carbon Scotland: a behaviour framework", this is responsible for 21% of Scotland's total greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, 60% of food wasted at home is avoidable. If avoided, the benefit to the planet would be the same as taking 1 in 4 cars off Scotland's roads. It would be good for the pocket too.

On behalf of Zero Waste Scotland, Energy Saving Trust offers a food waste reduction training session online during Climate Week. This workshop will provide attendees with knowledge of the scale and impact of food waste in Scotland, as well as understanding and practical skills around the simple things we can all do to stop wasting food and save money in the process.

So come along to this fun, free workshop, where you can learn about menu planning, storage and ways to use up leftovers and store cupboard ingredients, to help cut down trips to the supermarket and make the food shop go further. By putting these tips into action, you could save up to £437 a year! Click the register button on this page to book your free place at this event

[Marine Alliance for Science and Technology for Scotland Energy Webinar](#) Tuesday 15 September 13:00 to 14:00

Marine Alliance for Science and Technology for Scotland webinar focused on Energy, Climate Change and the Marine Environment

Speakers:

Hannah Ladd-Jones, Marine Alliance for Science and Technology for Scotland: providing an overview of MASTS

Simon Waldman, Hull University: speaking on policy needs for future large-scale tidal energy extraction

Kelly James, Blue Carbon Forum & University of Glasgow: speaking on corraline algae beds in carbon capture and storage

[Looking after the climate by looking after your energy bills](#) Tuesday 15 September, 13:00 – 14:00

Home Energy Scotland will talk you through how you can reduce your energy bills and carbon footprint, the benefits of making simple changes to the way you use energy at home, and how you can use our practical tips to save money on your bills.

[Climate COP for newbies](#) [Tuesday 15 September, 13:00 – 14:00]

The COP26 conference will bring over 20,000 people to Glasgow next November, so what will they actually be doing? Professor Andrew Millar introduces the front, back and sides of the COP, based on his trip to the 2019 COP in Madrid as Scottish Government's Chief Scientific Adviser for Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture.

[Reuseable period products – will you give them a #TrialPeriod](#) Wednesday 16 September, 10:00 – 11:00

It's estimated that the average woman will dispose of 11,000 period products in her lifetime. Over 400 million single-use period products are disposed of every year in Scotland and some 340,000 are flushed down the toilet every single day. To make matters worse, many of these products contain large amounts of plastic and end up flushed down the toilet where they can block up or damage waste-water treatment facilities and cost millions of pounds – costs which are passed on to us in one way or another.

Zero Waste Scotland have carried out research on consumer behaviour and ran a campaign to get people to try the alternatives. Come along to find out what the alternatives are, how people got on with them and the pros and cons of different products; see whether, by giving reusables a #TrialPeriod, you can reduce your environmental impact and have a comfortable, leak-free, more sustainable and hygienic period.

[Reduce your waste – top tips for the savvy individual](#) Wednesday 16 September, 13:00 – 14:00

is plastic the enemy?

is compostable really better than plastic?

why is food waste a problem?

what is 'fast fashion' and does it harm the environment?

Learn about these issues and more and make sure you aren't lead astray!

[Scotland Adapts: Towards a Climate Ready Future](#) Thursday 17 September, 10:00 – 11:00

Scotland faces far reaching, systemic challenges as a result of unavoidable changes in climate. We all have a role to play in increasing resilience and working towards a climate ready future.

Join this webinar to find out how Scotland's climate is changing and our adaptation response. You will leave informed, inspired and challenged to play your part.

[Race Inequalities and the Climate Crisis](#) Thursday 17 September, 11:00 – 12:00

This event explores the interlinkages between the issues of race inequalities and the climate crisis, which are often overlooked, or indeed not even connected, by both sides with those that work on climate change and with those that work in race equality.

Our panel session features three external, expert speakers on the linkages between these two important issues:

Binyam Yakob Gebreyes is a researcher at the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). He works closely to support and advise the Least Developed Countries (LDC) group and LDC Chair at the UN climate negotiations, helping to ensure their concerns regarding adaptation are reflected throughout the process.

Professor Tahseen Jafry leads the pioneering Centre for Climate Justice at Glasgow Caledonian University. Her research interests include the justice and equity aspects of climate change.

Zarina Ahmad is the Climate Change and Environmentalist at Council for Ethnic Minority Voluntary Organisations (CEMVO). CEMVO is a race equality organisation working to build the capacity of the Ethnic Minority Sector. Her work combines two important social justice issues; Equality and Climate Change.

[Sustainable Transport – The Way Forward](#) Thursday 17 September 13:00 – 14:00

We know that climate change is an immediate and urgent problem, but we all need to get around in our daily lives. We'll be highlighting options such as electric vehicles and e-bikes, covering what they are, the benefits of owning one and the support available if you decide to go electric. We'll also be talking about active travel, ways to get around and where you can find information on routes near you'.

[Love your clothes](#) Friday 18 September, 13:00 – 14:00

The production of one pair of jeans takes approximately 3,781 litres of water – that's equivalent to almost three and a half years' worth of drinking water for the average person - and equates to emissions of around 33.4 kilograms of carbon. In addition, water pollution happens at many stages throughout a garment's lifecycle; from pesticides used on raw materials entering the water course, chemical run-off during manufacturing to micro-plastic pollution during use from washing clothes at home. Only then for an estimated £140 million worth of used clothing to end up in landfill in the UK each year.

This is a significant environmental loss, a missed business opportunity, as well as an unnecessary waste. Small conscious changes to reduce the impact of clothes on the environment will help improve the sustainability of clothing across its lifecycle and help to combat this.

Join Zero Waste Scotland's webinar to find out why clothing and in particular 'fast fashion' is so bad for the environment. Learn practical ways to get the most out of clothes helping to save money, help the environment, and reduce emissions.