

# Celebrating Scottish Invertebrates

July 2012 to June 2015



## Introduction

The Celebrating Scottish Invertebrates project was established to contribute towards the implementation of the 'Strategy for Scottish Invertebrate Conservation', building on the outcomes of the 'Action for Scottish Invertebrates' project. It aimed to raise awareness of the variety and importance of invertebrates with the wider public, and encourage recording of these under-recorded animals.

The outputs of the project included a programme of talks and walks to provide 'first encounter' experiences accessible to a wide audience, and a series of beginners and intermediate identification workshops to provide 'close encounters' for naturalists to develop the skills necessary to survey and identify invertebrates.

Alongside these activities, public surveys were established to involve a wider audience with invertebrates, and also encourage recording. There were also events aimed at schools and youth groups to engage children to raise awareness with the next generation.

Finally, a Scottish conference and annual meetings of the Scottish Entomologists' Gathering were planned to connect invertebrate specialists and the new volunteer community, promoting skill sharing. Overarching all of these strands, the biannual Scottish Invertebrate News e-newsletter and monthly e-updates were produced to maintain engagement with the growing audience, informing of new discoveries, projects, volunteer opportunities and events, drawing from all organisations and individuals involved in invertebrate conservation in Scotland.

## Results

Overall the project was a great success. A summary of the activities delivered and the outputs from those activities is provided below:



## Outputs

- 56 talks to 2,000 people
- 82 bug walks with 1,080
- 55 School visits talking to 2,927 young people
- 49 events where we reached 19,976 people
- 18 beginners workshop with 281 participants and 14 intermediate workshops with 156 participants covering a range of topics including introductions to both terrestrial and aquatic invertebrates, pollinators, wild bees and more advanced training on beetles, craneflies, butterflies and moths, solitary bees, earthworms, caddisflies and dragonflies.
- 8 survey visits to SSSIs accompanied by 121 people in total
- Celebrating Scottish Invertebrates conference attended by 33 people
- 4 Scottish Entomologists' Gathering weekends
  - Fife – July 2012 (30 people)
  - Dundonnell Estate – June 2013 (21 people)
  - Caerlaverock & Solway – June 2014 (22 people)
  - Oban – June 2015 (21 people)

In addition we also ran four citizen science surveys:

- Glow worm survey;
- Oil beetle survey;
- Ladybirds;
- Seashore shells.

These surveys were not as popular as hoped but still brought in nearly 2,000 records for the target species.

Over 10,000 record of invertebrates were made during the course of the activities above. These records have been made available on the NBN Gateway.

A major part of this project was involving volunteers in our work. Over the three years we have involved 70 volunteers contributing over 1,400 hours of time to the project. Volunteer tasks have involved preparing news updates and assisting with the publication of Scottish Invertebrate News, assisting at events and workshops, and giving talks on invertebrate conservation.



The public engagement elements of this project have been very successful and feedback has been very positive. Most of our workshops have had lengthy waiting lists for places. We have also successfully engaged with a number of new volunteers and contributed to our knowledge of invertebrates in Scotland by collecting and mobilising over 10,000 species records.

Overall, we were able to meet the majority of the targets set in our grant offer. The exception is the 'Number of people reached' through attendance at events. A number of big events were cancelled, such as the Glasgow Show which was cancelled in 2014 due to the Commonwealth Games. To compensate for this we attended a number of smaller events.

Our outreach activity has been well received by community and wildlife groups, and we have managed to engage with over 3,000 people through walks and talks. We have managed to engage with new volunteers, some of whom have since moved on to employment in the environmental section which is particularly rewarding. Our newsletter has allowed a wider engagement with people with an interest in invertebrates and now has nearly 1,400 people on the mailing list. This has led to many more people getting in touch about how they can help conserve invertebrates and their habitats.