







168
schools



118
other groups/events



FOREWORD

"I am delighted to present Countryside Service's Annual Report for 2017 – 18.

This report captures and highlights both the range and depth of work completed by East Lothian Council's Countryside Service within the past financial year."

Eamon John
Manager Sport, Countryside & Leisure

Feedback on how you find the report, how easy it is to follow and depth of information should be directed to; landscapeandcountryside@eastlothian.gov.uk



CONTENTS

1. SUMMARY	4
2. THE COUNTRYSIDE SERVICE - WHO WE ARE	4
3. WHERE WE OPERATE	6
4. WHY WE DO IT	7
5. WHAT WE DO	8
6. WEATHER SUMMARY	9
7. WHAT WE DID	10
1. OUTDOOR ACCESS	10
2. BIODIVERSITY	14
3. EAST LoTHIAN COUNTRYSIDE RANGER SERVICE	16
4. OTHER COUNTRYSIDE PROJECT WORK	20
5. EXPENDITURE	24
8. APPENDICES	25
1. THE COUNTRYSIDE ESTATE	25
2. ADVISORY GROUPS	26
3. PHOTOGRAPHS	31

1. SUMMARY

The Countryside Service exists to protect East Lothian’s biodiversity and promote sustainable management, responsible use, access and enjoyment of the countryside.

The Service delivers a number of Statutory Duties, together with a number of national targets identified by the Single Outcome Agreements (SOA), in conjunction with 4 objectives of the East Lothian Council Plan.

The Service owns and or manages 31 sites covering 2,400 hectares that have international, national and regional designations for their wildlife. There is an obligation to ensure these sites are maintained in a favourable condition. The Service ensures that access is taken and managed responsibly. It is responsible for an extensive core path and rights of way network including the John Muir Way and National Cycle Paths. This is one of the most extensive local

authority networks of core paths providing active travel alternatives as well as health and recreation opportunities.

The Service raises awareness of the importance of biodiversity, implementing the East Lothian Biodiversity Action Plan, assessing Local Biodiversity Sites, conserving wild plants and animals, and promoting land management that benefits wildlife.

These functions are carried out by Countryside, Biodiversity and Outdoor Access Officers and the East Lothian Countryside Ranger Service (ELCRS).

This, 8th Countryside Report, provides a summary of a series of individual reports, available upon request (appendix 8.2), prepared to record the actions and events occurring within the defined remits of the Service during the April 1st 2017 to 31st March 2018 period.

2. THE COUNTRYSIDE SERVICE - WHO WE ARE

2.1 PERSONNEL

The Countryside Service comprised 10 countryside rangers, 2 countryside operatives and 5 office-based staff.

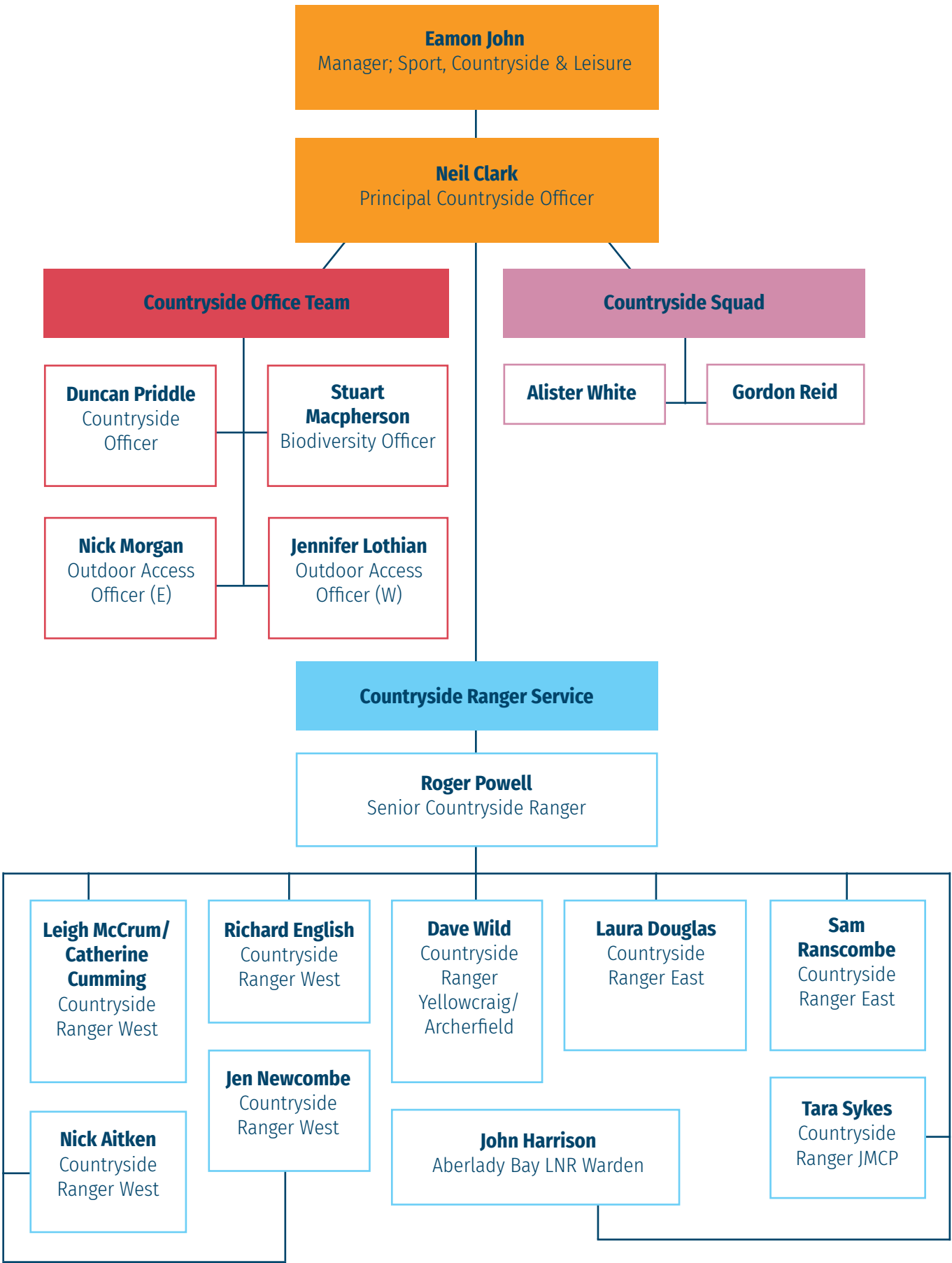
There were a couple of staff changes this year. Leigh McCrumb returned from maternity leave in

July, to recoup her position that had been covered temporarily by Catherine Cumming.

Secondly, at the end of March 2018, Jennifer Lothian moved to take up another position within East Lothian Council.

Richard English	Countryside Ranger	Roger Powell	Senior Countryside Ranger
Leigh McCrum	Countryside Ranger (July 2017 onwards)	Alister White	Countryside Squad
Catherine Cumming	Countryside Ranger (April - Jun 2017)	Gordon Reid	Countryside Squad
Sam Ranscombe	Countryside Ranger	Nick Morgan	Outdoor Access Officer
Nick Aitken	Countryside Ranger	Jennifer Lothian	Outdoor Access Officer (0.6fte, to Mar 2018)
Tara Sykes	Countryside Ranger	Stuart Macpherson	Biodiversity Officer
Dave Wild	Countryside Ranger	Duncan Priddle	Countryside Officer
Laura Douglas	Countryside Ranger	Neil Clark	Principal Countryside Officer
Jen Newcombe	Countryside Ranger	Eamon John	Manager Sport, Countryside & Leisure
John Harrison	Nature Reserve Warden		

2.2 STRUCTURE



3. WHERE WE OPERATE



Location of principal sites managed by the Countryside Service.

The Countryside Service operates throughout East Lothian, with extensive focus given towards the sustainable management of the coastline. East Lothian Council owns and / or manages 80% of the county coastline – 47km. The Countryside Ranger Service provides day-to-day management, specifically at the sites identified in the map below (Map1).

In addition to the coast, the Countryside Service manages a number of inland sites, together with 348km of Core Paths. This work is undertaken by the Countryside Ranger Service in conjunction with the Outdoor Access Officers.

Lastly, there are other duties delivered by the team – through the work of Biodiversity / Access and Countryside Officers which involve working with private landowners, NGOs, and other stakeholders in the advancement of nature conservation and access management interests.



4. WHY WE DO IT



In the delivery of on-site management of Countryside sites, the wider access network and biodiversity issues and the sharing of knowledge about the countryside; the Countryside Service is meeting and contributing towards a number of national, regional and local duties and objectives. These are a combination of;

- Statutory requirements – section 4.1
- Requirements of the Single Outcome Agreements and East Lothian Council Objectives – section 4.2

4.1 STATUTORY DUTIES FULFILLED BY THE COUNTRYSIDE SERVICE

The following Statutory duties are delivered by the work of the Countryside Service;

4.1.1 BIODIVERSITY

- **Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004.**
“It is the duty of every public body and office-holder, in exercising any functions, to further the conservation of biodiversity so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions”.
- **Wildlife and Natural Environment Scotland Act 2011.**
“...a public body must prepare and publish a biodiversity report ... on the actions taken by the body in pursuance of its duty.”
- **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.**

- **Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004.**
- **EU Habitats Regulations 1994 and Habitats Directive;**
“...to protect rarer wildlife species;
...to further the conservation and enhancement of the natural feature specified.”

4.1.2 ACCESS

- **Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967**
“...to assert, protect and keep open any right of way”.
- **The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003**
“...to uphold access rights, to publicise the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, prepare, adopt and review the Core Paths Plan, establish a Local Outdoor Access Forum.”

4.1.3 LAND MANAGEMENT

- **Dog fouling Act, 2003 (Scotland); Control of Dogs Act 2010, 2012 (Scotland).**
The Countryside Ranger Service actively promotes responsible dog ownership.
- **Environmental Protection Act (1990)**
Local Authorities have a duty to keep roads, highways and public spaces free from litter.



4.2 REQUIREMENTS OF THE SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENTS AND EAST Lothian Council Objectives

Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs) represent the mechanism for delivery of Scottish Government aims for local communities. The over-arching priority to reduce inequalities across and within communities cuts across 10 individual outcomes. In turn, these 10 SOAs operate in tandem with the 4 objectives of East Lothian Council's own plan;

- Growing our Economy
- Growing our Communities
- Growing the capacity of our Council
- Growing our People.

During 2017-18 the Countryside Service delivered on a number of these Council Objectives, together with the following SOAs:

SOA1 – East Lothian has a growing, sustainable economy.

SA03 – Communities in East Lothian are able to adapt to climate change and reduced finite natural resources.

SOA4 – All of East Lothian's young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

SOA5 – East Lothian's children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.

SOA6 – In East Lothian we live healthier, more active and independent lives.

SOA8 – East Lothian has high-quality natural environments.

SOA10 – We have stronger, more resilient, supportive, influential and inclusive communities.

5. WHAT WE DO

The operations of the Countryside Team are divided up between an office-based team, covering Outdoor Access, Biodiversity and over-arching Countryside Projects; together with a site-based, Countryside Ranger team.

5.1 THE WORK OF THE COUNTRYSIDE RANGER SERVICE CENTRES AROUND 4 OBJECTIVES:

- to welcome the local community and visitors to East Lothian's countryside and coastal sites and enhance their enjoyment of the sites;
- to assist and advise on countryside access;
- to provide an experience and promote understanding of the countryside through environmental interpretation and education for the community of East Lothian and its visitors;
- to ensure the countryside and coastal sites owned or managed by East Lothian Council,

that have the potential for leisure, informal recreation or nature conservation are managed in a sustainable manner.

5.2 The Outdoor Access Officers fulfil the statutory requirements of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act (2003); manage the Core Path network, together with responding to other national policies guiding path and active travel development.

5.3 The Biodiversity Officer fulfils biodiversity statutory requirements and in addition responds to regional and local policies, including the East Lothian Local Development Plan and assesses Local Biodiversity Sites.

5.4 The Principal Countryside Officer directs work, provides management for the team and oversees land management and conservation of the Countryside Estate. The Countryside Officer assists this process with a specific emphasis upon delivery of project work which, by its very nature, varies annually.



6. WEATHER SUMMARY 2017-18

Spring was dry with a couple of frost days, and by late May temperatures rose, along with levels of precipitation.

Summer was mild and wet, damp conditions persisting well into September.

Autumn began with strong westerlies and rain, the first frost occurring towards the end of October.

Winter saw bouts of cold wet weather, alternating with periods of frost. It was a notable year for snow, with late snow in March – the ‘Beast from the East’, and its successor, bringing levels of snowfall not seen in the county for over 50 years.

7. WHAT WE DID

This section highlights key elements delivered by the Service. Where applicable, they are coded (e.g. SOA 6, 8) in accordance to their relationship to meeting with Single Outcome Agreements outlined in section 4.2.

7.1 OUTDOOR ACCESS

7.1.1 RESOLVING ACCESS ISSUES

Local Authorities are responsible for upholding access rights. During 2017/18 there 26 separate access issues reported to the Council (13 reported 2016-17), with most being resolved within the year. Several of the reported access issues were obstructions to routes, but there were also reports of irresponsible dog walking and irresponsible horse riding, causing conflicts with other access takers. For one of the outstanding issues – Drem – Gullane, a consultant was appointed to identify how to link the two settlements.



7.1.2 PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE ACCESS.

The Outdoor Access Officers and members of East Lothian Countryside Ranger Service continued to publicise the Scottish Outdoor Access Code at events, on displays, in presentations, and in publications including map leaflets and in ELC Countryside newsletter ‘Mud in Your Eye’. (SOA 4/6/8).

Officers continued to monitor Planning Applications and ensure that adequate provision of paths and active travel routes were included in any new sizeable

development. They sought to ensure that new developments did not impact upon the existing path network, instead promoting connectivity via green spaces for the benefit of people and wildlife (SOA 6/8).

The Access Officer contributed to the redesign of the ELC website, providing information on walking, cycling, horse riding and other information about responsible access.

Access Officers continued to attend local and regional fora to promote the paths network. Officers attended meetings of the Central Scotland Green Network, the Scottish Outdoor Access Network and the John Muir Way Partnership, which all contribute towards the sustainable development of paths initiatives (SOA 1/6). Similarly, Officers attended the ELC Active Travel Group, which exists to deliver this key element of the Council’s local transport strategy (SOA 3/6).

7.1.3 PARTNERSHIP WORKING

During 2017-18 the Access Officers worked with ELC colleagues and external partners to help achieve and deliver regional and national objectives;

- **East Lothian’s Local Area Partnerships.** Access officers worked with the 6 Area Partnerships enabling communities to deliver their aspirations and priorities for improving paths and outdoor access, physical activity and active travel (details in section 7.1.5)
- **Sustainable Transport Officers Group,** which included colleagues from Roads Services, Active Travel, Sustainable Development, Planning, Area Managers and Economic Development, as well as NHS Lothian and SEStran (South East of Scotland Transport Partnership)
- **Physical Activity Planning and Implementation Group,** which included ELC colleagues and external groups and agencies including NHS Lothian

- **External agencies and funding providers** including Sustrans Community Links, Scottish Government’s Scottish Rural Development Fund, Scottish Government’s ‘Smarter Choices, Smarter Places’ fund
- **East Lothian Local Access Forum.** The Access Officers attended in an ex-officio capacity and provided the secretariat for the Forum
- **NHS Scotland.** Access Officers worked to secure an extension Haddington - Longniddry Railway Walk to provide outside space for relaxation and recuperation.
- **John Muir Way Partnership,** in partnership with Central Scotland Green Network, Scottish Natural Heritage and other local authorities along the route. Outdoor Access Officers contributed to delivering actions in the John Muir Way Action Plan 2017-2020
- **Scottish Outdoor Access Network** (the representative body for people working in outdoor access in Scotland). One of the Outdoor Access Officers attended SOAN Committee meetings and Officers attended SOAN events
- **Green Dog Walkers Scheme.** Access officers help introduce and manage the scheme with local community groups at Port Seton and Prestonpans
- Access Officers were involved in the development of;
 - o ELC’s Active Travel Improvement Plan
 - o ELC’s Physical Activity Action Plan
 - o ELC’s Open Space Strategy refresh
 - o ELC’s Green Networks Strategy (supplementary guidance).

7.1.4 PATH MANAGEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT

Management and maintenance of East Lothian’s path network

The Access Officers worked with several agencies to maintain and enhance the path



network. At 348km, the Core Path network is one of the larger networks managed by a Local Authority.

These agencies included;

- East Lothian Countryside Ranger Service
- ELC Amenity Services
- landowners and land managers
- East Lothian’s volunteer Path Wardens
- Unpaid Work/Community Payback Service (formerly Community Service by Offenders)
- ELC’s Anti-Social Behaviour team
- Area Partnerships
- local communities and Community Councils.

East Lothian Path Wardens

In 2011, Countryside Service formed a Path Warden Scheme of volunteers who assist the Council by monitoring and undertaking basic maintenance and upgrading work on core paths in their local area. There are currently 55 Volunteer Path Wardens looking after the majority of East Lothian’s designated core paths, undertaking 2,200 hours of voluntary work in 2017/18. The “East Lothian Path Wardens” are now a constituted group and registered charity. The scheme is recognised as a national model of best practice in path maintenance, and the group was awarded ‘Community Path Group of the Year’ award in autumn 2017, from the charity *Paths for All*.

(Further) upgrading to Pencaitland Railway Walk (NCN 196)

CASE STUDY 1

Upgrade to Pencaitland Railway Path

Access Officers were delighted to secure a further £150,000 Sustrans funding to upgrade the outstanding 3km (western end of) of the Pencaitland Railway Path. This work complemented similar work that was funded by Transport Scotland during 2016-17. It is anticipated the enhanced path surface will encourage more people to get active and explore the countryside in that area. The upgrading work was supported by, and well received by the local community. (SOA 3/6/10).

Sustrans funded upgrading to the Pencaitland Railway Walk, Feb 2018



Garvald Mains Core Path

This project was undertaken using “Improving Public Access” funding from the Agri-Environment Climate Scheme (AECS). Funding was awarded to fence off >1km of core path at Garvald Mains from the adjoining cattle fields, to construct a bridge and lay 70m of whindust path.

Yester Estate

A new entrance was created from Gifford village into woodland on the west of the estate. A gate was installed, a short section of whindust path built and a bridge installed over a burn. The budget of the project was approximately £14,000, with Yester Estate contributing to the overall costs.

John Muir Way, Winterfield, Dunbar

A short section of the John Muir Way on Winterfield Golf Course was relocated to mitigate against coastal erosion. The cost of the work was approximately £6,500.

7.1.5 WORKING WITH THE AREA PARTNERSHIPS

The Outdoor Access Officers were part of a working group that successfully applied for £90,000 from Paths For All's 'Smarter Choices, Smarter Places' 2017/18 funding for 3 projects,

which included £30,000 for continuing the 'East Lothian On The Move' project. The balance of £60,000 was spent by the 6 Area Partnerships (£10,000 each) on prioritised active and sustainable travel initiatives in their respective areas, outlined below;

Fa'side:

- Improvements to the Sandee Path, Myles Farm, Tranent. The path surface was upgraded
- Macmerry green network improvement. Area Partnerships, working with Path Wardens, primary school, Amenity Services and the Countryside Ranger service planted trees alongside core path 129
- Improvements to the Coalgate Path, Tranent. The path was scraped clean and hedges cut back

Preston Seton Gosford:

- A new path from Hawthorn Terrace to Whin Park Industrial Estate, Cockenzie, was installed
- Beach Wheelchair Project. A new ramp was built near Seton Sands to allow access for wheelchairs onto the beach.

Musselburgh:

- A new path was built at Hope Place in Musselburgh to manage public access at Musselburgh Links Golf Course
- Improvements were made to the right of way connecting Whitecraig to the Smeaton Railway Walk
- A new tarmac path was built to Wallyford Station from The Drift
- The Drift path, near Wallyford was upgraded to a tarmac surface
- Improvements were made to the steps at Inveresk
- Recharge – a youth group – undertook a path audit in the Musselburgh area. As a result a number of signs have been bought for the path network
- A new “Paths in the Musselburgh Area” leaflet was produced.

North Berwick:

- A new tarmac path was built in Whitekirk
- A Town Centre event was held to identify improvements that could be made around the town centre to make walking more attractive.

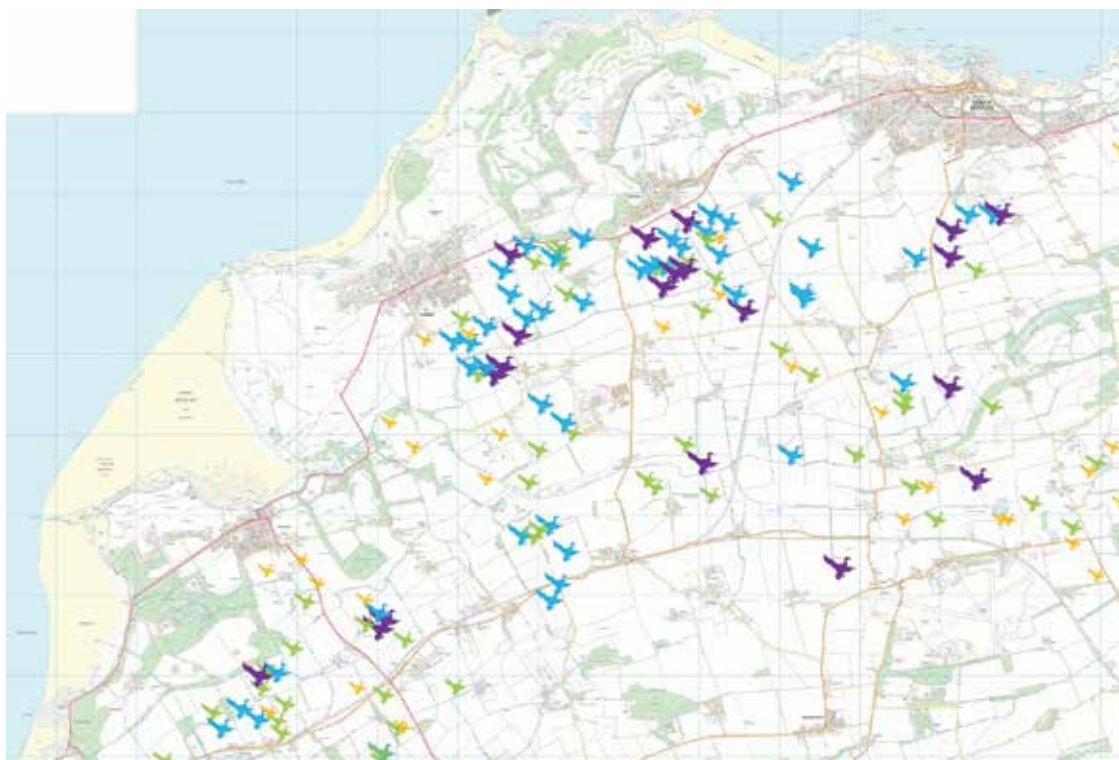
Haddington and Lammermuir:

- A number of benches and picnic tables were installed on the path network around Gifford
- The footway along the length of The Avenue was upgraded
- A new “Paths Around Haddington” leaflet was produced
- A new “Paths Around Gifford” leaflet was produced
- The path from Haddington Golf Club to Amisfield Walled Garden was resurfaced
- A new path adjacent to the A6137 (Haddington – Aberlady road) was created, providing a safe alternative route out of Haddington uphill to Blackmains Toll.

Dunbar:

- It was hoped to do further improvements on the Cliff Top Trail in Dunbar, but sadly match funding could not be found in time for this project to go ahead.





Summary of goose distribution across lowland East Lothian. Blue and purple bird symbols indicate the most important fields, green and orange birds indicate smaller records. Surveys are made from Byres Hill.

7.2 BIODIVERSITY

7.2.1 BIODIVERSITY AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

One of the principal purposes of the biodiversity process in East Lothian is to work with internal and external partners to ensure they do not have a negative impact on the natural environment. East Lothian is currently experiencing a large amount of development pressure. Working with the planning department is therefore a key part of biodiversity conservation.

Policies and procedures reduce the impact of development, especially on designated sites and protected species. East Lothian's coast is a significant site for local biodiversity. The coast is designated a Special Protection Area and as a Ramsar Site, of international importance for migratory birds.

Most development pressure is around existing settlements, rather than on the coast itself, but some inland locations are also important for these birds, and therefore are also protected. This is the case with pink-footed geese, which roost on the coast, but feed in some arable fields, particularly between Longniddry and

North Berwick. From a planning perspective, it is important to know the specific fields that are used, and how significant they are.

Since 2010, a goose survey has been carried out to answer these questions. Geese are surveyed once per week from the end of September to the end of December. Recordings are mapped, to make it easy to see where geese prefer to feed.

The presence of geese in a field does not mean that development is banned. However, because the coast is of international importance, it does mean that the impact of development needs to be properly considered. This is known as a Habitats Regulations Assessment, and the provision of good local survey data is essential. A lack of survey information could cause significant delays to a planning proposal.

Most recently, the goose survey data was used to assess the residential expansion of Gullane, particularly in the field to the south. The developer commissioned a consultant to help with the assessment, guided by the Council's Biodiversity Officer and Scottish Natural Heritage. The consultant used the survey data to predict the significance of individual fields over the last 5 years.



Individual records give some information about goose feeding, but plotting one symbol per record cannot convey the enormous numbers that have been seen on some occasion. The fields between Gullane and Dirleton have supported up to 10,000 geese at a time, making this location extremely important for migrating pink-footed geese. Any disturbance in this area could cause significant damage to the ecological integrity of the Special Protection Area around the coast.

The assessment concluded that geese rarely used the proposal site itself. This supported the observations of the goose surveyor, who often recorded dog walkers across the field in the autumn. Geese were seen more regularly in the fields south of that.

However, it was concluded that housing development could result in disturbance of geese in adjoining fields. As a result, changes were made to the design of the development, to keep buildings back from the southern boundary, and to provide good quality walking routes, to encourage people away from surrounding fields. Planners and landscapers also supported these changes, which provided

wider improvements to the proposed new edge of Gullane.

It is appreciated that not everybody supported development on the edge of Gullane, especially, perhaps, those residents whose rural outlook was about to change. The biodiversity process is not designed to prevent development, but it should help to improve development, and ensure that there is some environmental gain. It does not always work that way but the Gullane proposal was a good example of developer and biodiversity working well together.

Further information on biodiversity can be obtained by emailing the Biodiversity Officer at smacpherson@eastlothian.gov.uk.



7.3 EAST Lothian Countryside Ranger Service

7.3.1 WELCOMING VISITORS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The Countryside Ranger Service continued to provide day-to-day management for Scotland’s busiest and most designated coast. Over the year, the 4 principal coastal car parks recorded 1,760,000 visits, with additional town beaches and smaller car park locations bringing the total figure of coastal visits to an estimated 2.5 million. The beaches continued to attract people for a variety of reasons, from general recreation and enjoyment through to specific interest groups; for example Belhaven Bay (John Muir Country Park) is the most accessible and fastest growing surf destination in Scotland. *“The proportion of visitors to East Lothian who said that the area’s beaches strongly influenced their decision to visit the area, 39%” (Tourism by Numbers).*

Within these sites, the Countryside Ranger Service was responsible for the management of 7 Seaside Award beaches and 13 designated Bathing Waters.

Countryside Ranger presence on-site enabled information and interpretation to be given to visitors so that they could gain the best possible experience from their visit and to encourage them to return. *“The proportion of visitors who stated that their expectation was “better than expected ” rose continuously over the years from 15% in 2003 to 23% in 2011 to 41% in 2015; this is an excellent trend line” (Tourism by Numbers).*



7.3.2 PROVIDING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION

The Scottish Government has recognised the significant role that being active in the outdoors can have in improving physical and mental well being. The Countryside Ranger Service delivered a range of events and activities for young people designed to help them explore the natural world and to encourage them to spend more time in the outdoors.



The Junior Ranger Service continued to meet during the academic year on alternate Friday afternoons. This group age between 11-17 years and meet to undertake a variety of practical projects and nature conservation work. (SOA 4/5).



Countryside Staff continued to provide a range of paper-based and e-based products to promote responsible access and to increase people’s knowledge and understanding of the natural environment. Monthly articles were produced for the *East Lothian Courier*, the in-house countryside magazine *Mud in Your*

Group	No. of groups	No. of people taken	SOA
Schools	168 (182)	4,050 (5,056)	4/5/6
Other groups	63 (96)	717 (1,546)	4/6/8
Talks	19 (21)	437 (856)	4/6/8/10
Events	13 (8)	850 (472)	4/8/10
Summer events programme	13 (58)	200 (900)	4/5/6
Guided Hikes	10 (10)	73	4/6/8

(last year’s figures in brackets)



Eye was produced 3 times during the year, with 2,000 copies on each occasion being distributed to local outlets. Two books – the *East Lothian Core Paths Plan* and *The Best of East Lothian’s Wildlife*, continued to be marketed at selected retail outlets. The Countryside Rangers continued to provide regular posts to social media and experienced a steady growth in followers to over 1,500 on Face book. (SOA 1/10)

CASE STUDY 2

Citizenship Project with Law Primary School, North Berwick

Each year East Lothian Countryside Ranger Service, East Lothian Council Arts Service and the John Muir Birthplace in Dunbar help P5 classes around the county take part in an annual programme called the Citizenship Project to learn about the life and inspiration of John Muir. The Ranger Service works with P5 teachers and children to discover, explore, conserve and share a ‘wild’ place which leads to the children earning their Discovery Level John Muir Award.

This year the P5 classes at North Berwick Law Primary School decided their ‘wild’ place would be the new school SUDS pond. We learnt that SUDS stand for ‘sustainable urban drainage system’ and that our SUDS pond helps manage water, prevent flooding, filter pollution and provide a home for wildlife.

Our quest to learn more about sustainability took us on a train to Musselburgh to visit Queen Margaret University (QMU). Scot Rail very kindly donated free train tickets to give the children experience of using sustainable transport. University staff then gave us a fantastic tour of the sustainable features of their campus including their biomass heating system and energy saving technologies. The Ranger then helped explore the wildlife of the SUDS pond at QMU, using nets to pond dip for aquatic invertebrates.

A few weeks later the children had a visit from The Wildlife Information Centre manager Graeme who helped them identify what wildlife was in the school grounds and showed them why recording is important to help us stop wildlife becoming extinct. The children then spent a day with the Ranger at their school SUDS pond recording aquatic invertebrates and comparing our results with our QMU records. Our school pond is of course better! The records will be sent to Graeme and used to help wildlife conservation in East Lothian.

The final part of the Award is for the children to ‘share’ what they have learnt about their ‘wild’ place with others. An amazing way that Emily in P5D already shared this was on Radio 2 when she spoke to DJ Chris Evans on the ‘what I’m doing for the first time’ slot! Here are some of the other P5 children who would also like to share their learning with you. Well done P5 on a great project!

“We saw how the University conserves power and heat. We saw a lot of geese and one swan” (P5D)
“It is so important to learn about nature and what is around us” (Genevieve P5A)
“A SUDS pond is very useful as it takes all the water which stops flooding” (Innes P5C)
“Destroying a pond is like destroying your own house” (Scott P5A)
“The best part was the feeling of being outdoors with the wind in my face” (Ross P5C)
“To catch a tadpole you only need a net and inspiration and excitement” (Charlie P5A)

7.3.3 WILDLIFE MONITORING AND CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT

The Countryside Service is responsible for the management of 31 sites, together with a core path network which extends to 348km. Many of these sites are designated for their nature conservation importance. Countryside sites are managed closely to safeguard their natural history interests, together with promoting responsible enjoyment of the outdoors.Each site’s management is co-ordinated via either the production of a site management plan, or, for smaller sites, a site management statement. Site management plans operate over a rolling 5 year cycle. In 2017-18, replacement management plans were produced for the Pencaitland Railway Walk.

In the conduction of its duties, the Countryside Service works with 6 Advisory Groups, composed of NGO representatives, and local community interests. Additionally, the Countryside Service works each of the Area Partnerships, together with numerous sporting and recreational interests to safeguard and further their enjoyment of the coast and countryside, supporting local groups as and when they wish to take ownership of areas within their communities. (SOA 10)

A number of site-based and / or species-based surveys were conducted during the year, to enhance understanding of the natural history of these sites, and as directed in the assorted site management plans.



CASE STUDY 3

Eider Monitoring Project

A project to monitor eider duck populations is now into a 10th year in the North Berwick area. The project started in 2007 in response to a Scottish Natural Heritage report about decreasing populations of some ground nesting bird species along the East Lothian coastline.

The Countryside Ranger and volunteers monitor eider populations between April and July each year and consider factors that may be causing declines including human disturbance, weather and nesting habitat.

The 2017 project data suggests this year was a successful eider breeding season with high numbers of adult birds counted early in the season, 43 nesting attempts, low predation evidence and good numbers of duckling recorded along the coastline.

However the data collected over the last 7 years has started to show fluctuating populations and shifting breeding times as shown in the table opposite.

These changes may be related to changes in climate, food availability and increasing human disturbances on the coast so the project will continue in 2018 to collect more data for this research.

Year	Total males recorded	Total females recorded	Peak number of males seen at one time (date)	Peak number of females seen at one time (date)	Total ducklings recorded	First- Last ducklings seen	Eider nesting attempts
2011	574	466	69 (12 May)	34 (28 June)	28	25/05- 13/07	30
2012	1312	999	100 (11 May)	70 (11 May)	1	13/07- 13/07	12
2013	950	747	65 (6 May)	44 (10 June)	26	03/06 - 08/07	39
2014	1269	883	65 (13 May)	33 (10 June)	93	03/06 - 27/07	3
2015	1074	568	70 (11 May)	21 (16 and 26 June)	48	29/05 - 06/07	44
2016	2176	989	101 (3 May)	47 (15 June)	19	10/05 - 10/06	49
2017	2644	1052	88 (29 April)	41 (27 April)	13	22/05 - 26/06	43

7.3.4 COUNTRYSIDE VOLUNTEERS

Countryside Volunteers continued to provide enormous help in the management of Countryside Sites. The table below captures both the proliferation of volunteer groups and the number of hours given by the groups. In addition there were unrecorded hours given by volunteers who in particular gave many hours to the clearance of litter along the coast and to the removal of ragwort from Traprain Law.

In addition to delivering practical conservation and survey work, countryside volunteers have

assisted the operations of the Countryside Team in other ways. Individual volunteers regularly supply photographs for use in presentations / reports and one volunteer undertook to produce a monthly newsletter – *Best Boot Forward* – for fellow volunteers. This feature has grown from an initial one page document to in 2016-17, a multi-page magazine which was extremely popular amongst the volunteer group. The magazine also advertised training options for volunteers which were well attended throughout the year.

Group	Hours	Actual (a) or estimate (e) *comment
Aberlady volunteers	3,145	a
Path wardens	2,200	*recorded hours only, c. 20% do not report
Sheep checkers, Barns Ness	360	e
Levenhall Family Rangers	1,089	a
Dunbar Conservation Volunteers	237	e
North Berwick pony checkers	400	e
North Berwick volunteers	157	a
Eider monitoring project	226	a
Traprain pony checkers	400	e *excludes extensive additional hours contributed by one volunteer
Yellowcraig volunteers	700	a
Plant / insect surveying teams	428	e
TOTAL	9,322 hours	



CASE STUDY 4

Countryside Volunteer Developments

During 2017-18 the East Lothian Countryside Volunteers (ELCV) steering group succeeded in ratifying the constitution and in taking over the Charitable status formerly held by the Path Wardens sub-group.

Committee members for ELCV were appointed and a structure put in place to facilitate project delivery of all the sub-groups. An over-arching group website was created; ELCV and a membership newsletter continued to be delivered each month.

Now numbering in excess of 100 volunteers, the group continues to deliver diverse and invaluable support in the conservation and enhancement of the countryside estate across the county, last year providing in excess of 9,000 hours of unpaid work. (SOA 8/10)

7.4 OTHER COUNTRYSIDE PROJECT WORK

7.4.1 CONSERVATION GRAZING SCHEME

2017-18 represented the 5th year of the conservation grazing scheme at Barns Ness and Traprain Law, and the 4th season at North Berwick Law. Two of the sites received annual grazing by Exmoor Ponies, whilst the third site, Barns Ness, received its scheduled grazing by sheep during the winter. A fourth site within Aberlady Bay, also received winter grazing, this scheme having operated now for many years.

At all localities, regular welfare checks of the animals were undertaken by countryside volunteers together with Countryside Rangers. Annual monitoring of bumblebee populations together with botanical surveys were also undertaken at these sites by volunteers, to indicate changes to the botanical structure and diversity at each location.

Volunteers measured plant height, abundance of dead material and recorded species diversity. Generally, shorter vegetation with less dead material is of better conservation quality. The ponies and sheep have made this happen across the sites, so they are definitely doing a good job. It is anticipated that this will result in greater plant diversity.

After 5 years of grazing the conclusion was made that Traprain Law and Barns Ness are both being grazed effectively. North Berwick Law will be assessed in the coming year, with decisions to be made about levels or style of grazing.



Members of the public were largely supportive of the presence of grazing animals on-site, though a few complaints were received as to the impact of the ponies upon path surfaces.

During the grazing period there was, unfortunately, one incident a ewe being attacked by an out of control dog, which resulted in a sheep having to be put down. The owner did not come forward. (SOA 8).

7.4.2 BUILT FABRIC- YELLOWCRAIG, ABERLADY, NORTH BERWICK

The old interpretation at Yellowcraig was replaced this year. Previously, two large concrete plinths, each with a small space for temporary information, stood adjacent to the main path to the beach. These were removed and in their place a stone dyke and seating area created, with accompanying interpretation board.

At Aberlady, persistent entry from dog walkers onto the Reserve prompted a new approach to requesting dog owners exercise their dogs elsewhere. New signage was installed at the main entrance to the Reserve and repeated at

regular intervals as treads on the footbridge across the Peffer Burn. In consequence, there has been a dramatic reduction of dog walkers entering the Reserve from this location.

At North Berwick, a new interpretation board was designed. The board's design was developed in consultation with the Joint Laws' Advisory Group and part funded by North Berwick Environment Trust. (SOA 8).

7.4.3 SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Countryside staff and volunteers, in conjunction with other Council departments, continued to control Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) where they occurred on Council-managed land. Giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) and Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) were treated with herbicide. A third plant, Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) was not treated with herbicide, as given the extent of spread of the plant, it was impossible to deliver a comprehensive control programme. Instead, specific populations were identified and cleared by hand.



Prolonged NE Breezes have become a more regular feature in East Lothian in recent years. This is demonstrated by deposits of kelp at a few locations. Dunbar East Beach for a number of factors captures far more kelp than any other location, with the seaweed ending up dumped above the high-water mark where it then starts to decay. The smell of decaying seaweed is unpleasant, though of much greater concern is that the decaying seaweed provides an ideal habitat for kelp flies, which breed in the seaweed before erupting in their millions after which they quickly end up infesting adjacent properties. During 2017-18 3 accumulations of

seaweed occurred, and the Countryside Service co-ordinated the removal of the material. As extensive debris was mixed in amongst the material, it was only possible to dispose of the waste at the local landfill site, at substantial cost. The financial burden is not sustainable in the long term and ongoing suggestions have been proposed as to the management of kelp infestations, though as yet, given the challenges of access, topography and demand for the product, no solution has been reached. (SOA 3/10)

7.4.4 SERVICE REVIEW/ INCOME GENERATION

During 2018, the Countryside Service Review concluded setting new income generation and identifying operational savings targets.

Preparatory work was undertaken to expand the Service remit into leading wildlife tours and running children's activity programmes, as well as introducing charges for services.



7.5 EXPENDITURE

Expenditure	2017-18 (2016-17)	Comments
Employee costs	£598,883.78 (£599,128.80)	
Support services	£42,259.12 (£40,370.48)	
Operating costs	£139,396.44 (£159,474.31)	
TOTAL	£780,539.34 (£799,489.12)	
Income		
External funding for Yellowcraig / Archerfield countryside ranger post	£54,886.61 (£51,309)	Caledonian Heritable Ltd; Hamilton & Kinneil Estates
Support funding Levenhall Links	£10,000 (£10,000)	Scottish Power
SRDP	£9,856 (£9,856)	Agri-environment grant scheme
Volunteering matters	£500 (£1,500)	Small grants scheme
Sundry	£5,039.96 (£8,155.88)	
Total	£70,426.57 (£72,983.75)	
NET EXPENDITURE	£710,112.77 (726,505.37)	



8. APPENDICES

8.1 THE COUNTRYSIDE ESTATE

Coastal	Hectares	Owned (o) or managed (m)	Conservation Designation(s)
1. Fisherrow Links / foreshore	176.6	o	SSSI/SPA/Ramsar
2. Levenhall Links, Musselburgh	101.2	o	SSSI/SPA/Ramsar
3. Prestongrange (inc. foreshore)	53.7	o	SSSI/SPA/Ramsar
4. Cockenzie & Preston Links	23.1	o	SSSI/SPA/Ramsar
5. Port Seton foreshore	29.2	o	SSSI/SPA/Ramsar
6. Longniddry / Gosford	30.4	m	SSSI/SPA/Ramsar
7. Gullane Bents	60.7	o/m	SSSI/SPA/Ramsar
8. Yellowcraig	28.3	o	SSSI/SPA/Ramsar
8. North Berwick West Bay/Broadsands	151.9	o	SSSI/SPA/Ramsar
9. North Berwick East Beach	82.1	o/m	SSSI/SPA/Ramsar
10. John Muir Country Park	713.5	o/m	SSSI/SPA/Ramsar
11. Dunbar East Beach	22.7	o	
12. Whitesands & Barns Ness	161.6	o	SSSI/GS
13. Skateraw	42.5	m	SSSI
14. Thorntonloch	10.0	o	
15. Aberlady Bay	582.0	m	LNR/SSSI/SPA/Ramsar
Inland			
16. Pencaitland railway walk	21.6	o/m	
17. River Esk walkway	12.0	o/m	
18. Whitecraig railway walk	2.6	o	
19. Haddington-Longniddry railway walk	14.2	o	
20. Haddington, riverside walkway	3.1	o	
21. Byre's Hill / Hopetoun Monument	7.9	o	SSSI, LB
22. North Berwick Law	36.3	o	SSSI/SAM/GS
23. Traprain Law	42.1	o	SSSI/SAM/GS
24. Butterdean Wood	12.8	o	
25. Woodhall, Pencaitland	24.0	o	
26. Pencraig Wood	3.6	o	
27. Longniddry Dean	7.2	o	
28. The Glen, North Berwick	2.3	o	
29. Wallyford Bing	12.1	o	
30. Whitecastle Hill fort	1.0	o	SAM
TOTAL	2,472.3		

SSSI – Site of special scientific interest
SPA – Special protection area
SAM – Scheduled ancient monument
LB – Listed building
LNR – Local Nature Reserve
GS – Geodiversity site



8.2 ADVISORY GROUPS

Members of the Countryside Service contribute towards the workings of 6 Advisory Groups. Each Group is site-specific but share similar terms of remit. Groups will comment and advise on management plans, approve the annual work programmes, together with providing recommendations to East Lothian Council.

Annual Reports are produced for each Advisory Group, detailing the work completed by East Lothian Council's Countryside Service at each location. For a full copy of any annual report please contact landscapeandcountryside@eastlothian.gov.uk

8.2.1 ABERLADY BAY LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

Aberlady Bay was designated as Britain's first Local Nature Reserve and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 1952, due to its botanical, ornithological and geological interest. In 2001, the Reserve became part of the Firth of Forth SSSI and much of the

site also lies within the Firth of Forth Special Protection Area and Ramsar Site.

The aim of the Reserve is ***"to conserve the geomorphological and physiographical features, the habitats, flora and fauna found within the Reserve and the resultant landscape character"***.

The Reserve continues to be managed by East Lothian Council, with the support of an Advisory Group that represents the landowners, conservation bodies and the local community. A Management Agreement, being redrafted, with the landowners formalises and defines the management framework. The Warden costs and management projects on the Reserve are funded by East Lothian Council.

The Reserve covers an area of 582 hectares and represents the most extensive complex of sand dune, salt marsh and mudflats in South-East Scotland. It also contains a wide range of associated habitats, particularly calcareous grassland and freshwater marsh; and supports

a large variety of plant species with many Scottish and local rarities.

The main ornithological interest of the Reserve relates to the site's national or international significance as a feeding and roosting area for wintering wildfowl and waders, and its regional importance for several breeding species.

The main geological interest is a sequence of Carboniferous Limestones and Teschenite sills as well as the extensive naturally developing sand dune system.

A number of **Management Objectives** (as set out in the Aberlady Bay Local Nature Reserve Prescriptive Management Plan 2012-2016) define attainable goals and set out the annual work programme for the site.

2017-18 saw the production of the 38th Annual Report for the site, the summary findings being;

Reserve Management

- Sheep grazing continued for an eleventh year (this season between mid-October and mid-March) over a 20-hectare plot
- Sea buckthorn clearance continued. No removal by heavy machinery or any herbicide spraying was carried out
- A day were spent clearing regrown reedmace from the Wader Scrape in August
- Giant hogweed and two-spined acaena (previously recorded as pirri-pirri bur) were both removed
- Path resurfacing work was carried out along a 150-metre stretch at the Yellow Mires.

Wildlife

- The second highest annual peak count of shelduck at the site was recorded
- Numbers of wigeon were higher than average but both teal and mallard were significantly below
- At 27,575 internationally-significant numbers of pink-footed geese were at their third highest ever annual count
- The 5-year mean figures for six species of bird continued to be nationally significant, these were: red-necked grebe, Slavonian grebe, eider, velvet scoter, sanderling and bar-tailed godwit
- Large numbers of sea duck were present offshore in the vicinity of Gullane Point, with

the highest ever count of common scoters recorded. Numbers of long-tailed duck were very low

- Numbers of the most numerous non-breeding waders were generally low with only golden plover and dunlin recorded above their short-term averages
- Numbers of non-breeding lapwing were the lowest recorded for 15 years
- It was the worst year on record for wading bird productivity with not a single chick fledged from ten pairs of breeding waders
- Vegetation monitoring was carried out in the Grazing Area and, by volunteers, over a larger area proposed for grazing expansion
- Monitoring was carried out of wild marjoram, field gentian, marsh stitchwort, fen pondweed, variegated horsetail, greater bladderwort, and grey club-rush
- Quadrats were monitored as part of the National Plant Monitoring Scheme
- In its 10th year, the butterfly transect recorded a total number of 378 butterflies, by far the lowest total since it began
- The Wildfowling Panel met in late July to receive a report on the 2016-17 season and decide on permit issue for the 2017-18 season.

People

- For the 3rd year in succession, volunteers carried out over 3,000 hours of work on a range of tasks including sea buckthorn removal, beach cleans, sheep looking, path work and biological monitoring
- For a 6th year running, no Assistant Warden was employed which had an impact on work at the site
- The Reserve Advisory Group met twice during the year in March and September (the latter including a tour of the site).

8.2.2 JOHN MUIR COUNTRY PARK

2017-18 saw the production of the 40th interim report for John Muir Country Park. Due to staff illness it was not possible to complete a full (annual) report this year, this is expected to be rectified in 2018-19.

Originally designated in 1976, the Park extends to 713.5 hectares and comprises of a variety of coastal and estuarine habitats. The majority of the Park is covered by SSSI designations. These help protect the biological, geological



and geomorphological features found within this environment. Two further, more recent, nature conservation designations have been put in place. The site is now incorporated into the Firth of Forth Special Protection Area and has also been notified as a Ramsar Site (Ramsar Convention on Wetland of International Importance as a Waterfowl Habitat, 1982).

The diversity of habitats within the Country Park is one reason why this area has proven attractive for public recreation. There has always been a realisation that the interface between the visitor and the natural environment needs to be managed. Since its inception, the Country Park has had a Management Plan, which continues to evolve by taking into account the ever-changing opportunities and pressures.

The overall management aim is “to manage public recreation and conserve the geomorphology, geology and landscape, and sustain the biodiversity of the Country Park.”

8.2.3 TRAPRAIN LAW AND NORTH BERWICK LAW – JOINT LAWS’

The Joint Laws’ Advisory Group covers two sites, Traprain Law and North Berwick Law.

Both sites are striking upstanding features within the lowland East Lothian landscape. Both are designated LGS’ (Local Geodiversity Sites) for their geological and geomorphological

importance, Traprain representing a superb example of a laccolith, whilst North Berwick Law is a volcanic plug. Both features were heavily sculpted during the last glacial period resulting in their current shapes today.

Traprain and North Berwick Laws are notified SSSIs due to their geology and botany. In addition, the notification Traprain Law includes reference to the regional significance of the sites for the distribution of lichens found across the site.

Both sites contain archaeological evidence indicating extensive periods of human occupation. The large hill fort on Traprain Law is one of the best known prehistoric monuments in Scotland and, as such, has been notified as a Scheduled Ancient Monument by Historic Scotland under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. North Berwick Law is also a Scheduled Ancient Monument although little fieldwork, has, as yet, been undertaken.

North Berwick Law is subject to a Conservation Agreement with the National Trust for Scotland.

Public access to both hills for informal recreation and to enjoy the panoramic views from their summits has long been a tradition with locals and visitors alike. Similarly, rock climbing and abseiling have regularly taken place on their crags. The use of management

plans and reporting procedures have been established so that the interface between the visitor and the natural environment is allowed to evolve by taking into account the ever-changing pressures being exerted on this landscape.

The shared management aim for both sites is ‘to conserve and enhance the natural and human heritage’ this being delivered through the implementation of site management plans.

Summary for the 201-18;

Traprain Law

- 13 ponies continued to graze the site;
- Volunteers undertook grassland and bumblebee surveys for 5th successive year;
- 1 peregrine chick fledged ;
- 1 raven chick fledged;
- Ragwort and gorse removal by Lothian Conservation Volunteers (LCV), Community Payback, Working Rite, East Lothian Works and an individual volunteer
- Fixed point photograph continued
- Pedestrian counters showed approximately 10,000 visitors

- SMC application submitted for trough at east gate
- Options to address damage through main rampart being progressed
- Traprain Law race – 83 runners took part on 10th June 2017.

North Berwick Law

- 7 ponies continued to graze the site
- 4th year of grassland fixed quadrat surveys and bumblebee transect surveys
- Maiden pink (*Dianthus deltoides*), Meadow saxifrage (*Saxifraga granulate*) and Purple milk vetch (*Astragalus danicus*) monitored
- Ragwort, gorse and tree mallow management by North Berwick Conservation Volunteers (NBCV), LCV, Scottish Widows, CITO Geocaching group, Knox Academy pupils, Junior Rangers, North Berwick Scouts and North Berwick After-School Club
- Hyundai car advert film shoot completed
- Community consultation for wetland sluice project completed
- Pedestrian counter estimated to record over 90,000 for January – December 2017
- Interpretation completed for the car park (funded by North Berwick Environment Trust)



- Historic Environment Scotland drone surveys undertaken
- Mountaineering Scotland raised issue of installation of new quarry climbing route.
- North Berwick Law race – 226 runners took part on 2 August 2017

8.2.4 LEVENHALL LINKS (MUSSELBURGH)

2017-18 saw the 22nd Annual Report produced for Levenhall Links. It highlighted the work carried out or initiated by the Countryside Ranger based at Levenhall Links. The Countryside Ranger is responsible for the day-to-day management of the site and also provides a range of volunteering opportunities, education and interpretation events throughout the year.

Levenhall Links is a 134 hectare area of mixed grassland, woodland and wetland situated adjacent to the mouth of the River Esk on the East Lothian coastline. The entire site is land that has been claimed from the sea using pulverised fuel ash (pfa), a by-product of Cockenzie Power Station.

Areas that have reached capacity for the disposal of pfa have been landscaped to provide habitats that are of significant value both for recreation and wildlife conservation. The site is popular with local people who use it for both formal and informal recreational pursuits.

The bird reserve and lagoon 8 have gained national recognition for their importance for wildfowl and wading birds and were notified as Sites of Special Scientific Interest in 2001. These areas have also been included in the Firth of Forth Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar designations. Because of this the Links has developed as a nationally respected and recognised bird watching venue.



Notable events for the year can be summarised thus;

- 45 Ranger led activities over the year
- 1089 volunteer hours spent on site and in the Musselburgh area
- 421 people benefited from educational activities lead by the Ranger over the year
- Biological monitoring of the site entered its 22nd year
- The final restoration plans for Lagoon 6 and Lagoon 8 have been submitted to East Lothian Council planning department by Scottish Power
- Work started to create 2 butterfly habitats within the meadow area

8.2.5 ARCHERFIELD AND YELLOWCRAIG

2017-18 saw the completion of the 14th 13th Countryside Ranger Service Annual Report for Archerfield and Yellowcraig.

Managed since 1944 by East Lothian Council (ELC) and falling mainly within the SSSI boundary, Yellowcraig has a long history of public use and sensitive management. The site is very popular with local residents and visitors from further afield.

In 1999 the eastern section of Archerfield Estate was sold to Caledonian Heritable Ltd (CHL) and in 2001 CHL lodged a planning application for 2 golf courses (Archerfield Links), 100 houses, 50 holiday cottages, hotel, clubhouse and the restoration of Archerfield House. The golf courses are open and construction of residential accommodation is continuing.

Lying to the west of Archerfield Links Golf Club is the Renaissance Golf Club. The golf course is currently open for play and a clubhouse, lodges and associated facilities are ongoing. Isolated housing development has also taken place within the confines of the course.

The Management Area stretches from Eyebroughy in the West to the Eil Burn in the East. Work is undertaken by East Lothian Countryside

Ranger Service (ELCRS) at Archerfield Links and Renaissance Golf Clubs.

The Advisory Group wishes to acknowledge funding from Archerfield House Hotel Management Ltd and Archerfield Links; and from Archerfield Estates Ltd for the employment of a permanent Countryside Ranger.

The overall management aim is to ensure **‘The conservation and enhancement of the natural and historical heritage of the Management Area, via the joint workings of ELC, CHL and Scottish Natural Heritage. The management of visitors within the Management Area so as to prevent so far as is reasonably practicable, direct access from CHL land to the SSSI and generally to minimise disturbance to the immediate and wider SSSI.’**

The year’s work can be summarised as follows;

- Over 700 hours volunteer hours conducted on site.
- Pirri-pirri management strategy altered
- New bench installed at the BBQ site
- NVC survey conducted at Yellowcraig
- Interpretation area construction completed
- Wildfire covering 1000 square metres of dune grassland
- Resurfacing conducted to the Ware road path
- Resurfacing conducted to Yellow Craig steps.



8.3 IMAGE CREDITS / DESCRIPTIONS

Cover: 1. Grey seal pup; 2. Gulls and waves, yellowcraig; 3. Leuchie House nature walk; 4. Junior rangers; 5. Scarlet elf cups; 6. Sheep's sorrel; 7. Path wardens xmas hike; 8. Catherine went to mow; 9. Azure damselfly male; 10. Eider female drinking; 11. North Berwick Law panel; 12. Junior rangers gathering ragwort; 13. Worm cast; 14. Nisbet bridge repairs; 15. Bob smirking

Inside front cover: White-tailed bumblebee

Contents: River Tyne from Stevenson bridge

3 Summit ridge, Traprain Law

4 Blue tit; Nurdle pot

6 Hail pooling

7.1 Law race runners, North Berwick

7.1.4 Volunteer path wardens receiving the Paths for All 'Community Path Group of the Year' award

7.1.4 Case study 1 - Pencaitland railway path

7.1.5 Haddington - Alderston path under construction

7.2.1 Buff-tailed bumblebee

7.2.1 Pink-footed geese landing at Aberlady Bay

7.3 Countryside Ranger Service badge

7.3.2.1 Countryside ranger and school group

7.3.2.2 Junior Rangers badge

7.3.2.3 Cover of January's 'Mud in Your Eye' Countryside magazine

7.3.3 Case study 3 - Volunteers heading out to put up Eider breeding advisory signs

7.3.4.1 Countryide volunteer badge

7.3.4.2 Aberlady Bay Volunteers burning sea buckthorn

7.4.1 Grazing sheep, Barns Ness

7.4.2.1 New interpretation board, North Berwick Law

7.4.2.2 New interpretation board, Yellowcraig

7.4.2.3 Replacement signage, Aberlady Bay LNR

7.4.2.4 seashore interpretation

8.2 Puffins

8.2.2 Salt marsh at JMCP

8.2.3 Pony rainbow, North Berwick Law

8.2.4 Wader scrapes, Levenhall