



LITTLE FRANCE PARK

WILDLIFE WEEK

17th - 21st June 2019



Little France Park is the city's newest park reclaiming unmanaged grassland for the local community and carving out a green corridor from the city centre to Midlothian. It is a relatively large peri-urban greenspace with a diverse range of habitats – grassland, hedges, standing water / wetland (part of a flood alleviation scheme), moving watercourses, and woodlands. The park is a link between the rural setting in adjacent Midlothian and important sites such as Duddingston Loch SSSI (1.5km to the north-west), Bawsinch and the wider Holyrood Park. It has the potential to be Edinburgh's next Local Nature Reserve however, despite its diversity, size and key location there are very few species records for the site.

In June 2019 the Edinburgh Living Landscape partnership organised an informal wildlife week to raise awareness of the park and learn more about the wildlife that can be found there. Wildlife experts from across Edinburgh joined forces with local people to explore the park and discover what wildlife they could find. Over 200 new species records were generated and the park now has butterfly and bumble bee survey transects that are being monitored weekly by volunteers. There were nine different activities that took place in the park over the week with nine different organisations contributing. This included workshops with schools, public walks and expert surveys.

Promoting the park through social media channels has helped increase awareness and the workshops with local schools are changing perceptions about the area. There were lots of comments on social media from

people who work in the Royal Infirmary Edinburgh who had no idea about the park. A film commissioned with two residents who use the area daily has now been viewed by 6,000 people generating lots of comments and interest. The park is obviously a special place for lots of people.

What events did we run:

- Beewalk ID and survey
- Bryophytes and lichens survey
- Butterfly transect & ID workshop
- Family bird walk
- Health walk wildlife survey
- Observational botanical survey
- Primary school bee transect and habitat creation workshops
- Training workshop for Forest School
- Wildlife film

These events were only possible thanks to the hard work of the following organisations:

*Botanical Society of Scotland
Bumblebee Conservation Trust
Butterfly Conservation Scotland
City Of Edinburgh Council
Castleview Primary School
Edinburgh and Lothian Greenspace Trust
Royal Botanical Gardens Edinburgh
Scottish Wildlife Trust
Sarah Ford Hutchinson and Barrie Williams*

What we found

212 new wildlife records were generated for the park filling in an important gap in our knowledge about the site.

Little France Park is one of the most diverse sites in Edinburgh for butterflies. As well as many of the common and widespread species, less common species like Small Skipper and Speckled Wood have been found, as well as high numbers of Small Copper, a species which has declined by over 50% in forty years. The key to this diversity is the mixture of habitats at Little France Park and its connection to the wider countryside beyond the city. Its location means that it can act as a stepping stone to connect the insects in the city and the countryside, helping to keep insect populations healthy.

Anthony McCluskey, Butterfly Conservation Scotland

The park supports a rich but often overlooked suite of lichens, common in cities and newly developing woods. These records will offer a good baseline for monitoring future development of a set of habitats to be protected into the future - both for the enjoyment of people and the for enrichment of local biodiversity.

Rebecca Yahr, Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh



Here are some of the highlights and the full species list can be found in Appendix 1 with a list of surveys that were established in Appendix 2.



Andrew Cooper

Small skipper butterflies are very rare in Edinburgh and this is only one of only a handful



Luke Massey/2020VISION

Kestrels are seen regularly here because of ideal hunting ground created by the mix of habitats



Mark Hamblin /2020VISION

Common Spotted-orchid are particularly attractive to day-flying moths (and people!)



Terry Whittaker /2020VISION

Sparrow hawks are seen flashing through the park hunting in the dense woodland areas



Shaggy incap are sometimes known as a Lawyers Wig due to their shaggy cap



Reichard Butler

Cinnabar moth's will display their distinctive colours if they are disturbed during the day

Public response

The response to the activities and the film was great. The young people from the local primary school had a great time and learned about pollinators and people working in the nearby BioQuater spend their break time hunting for butterflies The film about a locals residents experience in the park has become the most shared video on the Living Landscape website reaching over 17,000 people through shares, likes and paid promotion.

People engaged with the social media and were sharing the location of the park with their friends online and suggesting visits. Others were concerned about the impact and pressures of housing development in the areas and some suggested improvements to facilities such as more bins and signage.

“All pupils and staff had a lovely time learning all about the bees and getting out of the classroom.”

Castleview primary school teacher

*“one of my favourite places.... my cuppa tea as well
.....we should go!”*

Facebook conversation

“when I moved to south east Edinburgh I was looking for new places to explore and then I found Little France Park”

Filmmaker and local resident

“any chance of bins at the entrances to the park? As a responsible dog owner I love the park”

Facebook comment



Wildlife film makers managed to capture the parks wildlife and people enjoying the area. You can view the film here <https://youtu.be/ku6lxRRBpDU>



School groups learnt about pollinators before helping to creating more habitat

Appendix 1: Little France park species list – June 2019

Amblystegium serpens var. serpens	Cinnabar moth	Cuckooflower	Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil	Lesser Swine-cress
American Willowherb	Cleavers	Cultivated Strawberry	Greater Plantain	Lesser trefoil
Annual Meadow-grass	Cocks foot grass	Cut-leaved Crane's-bill	Green-veined White	Linnet
Archidium alternifolium	Cock's-foot	Cylindric Beard-moss	Grey-cushioned Grimmia	Lophocolea bidentata
Barbula convoluta var. convoluta	Coltsfoot	Cylindric Ditrichum	Groundsel	Lophocolea heterophylla
Barbula convoluta var. sardoa	Common bent grass	Cypress-leaved Plait-moss	Gypsy Cuckoo bee	Male Fern
Bicoloured Bryum	Common blue darter	Daisy	Hairy Bitter-cress	Mayweed
Bird's-claw Beard-moss	Common Carder bee	Dandelion	Hairy snail	Meadow Butercup
Birdsfoot trefoil	Common Chickweed	Dandyion	Hairy Tare	Meadow Vetchling
Bishop Weed	Common Couch-grass	Dicranella schreberiana	Hawthorn	Metzgeria violacea
Black Bent	Common Duckweed	Dicranella staphylina	Hedge Woundwort	Monkeyflower
Blackberry	Common Feather-moss	Dicranoweisia cirrata	Hedge Mustard	Mother Shipton
Bonfire-moss	Common Field-speedwell	Dipper	Hedge parsley	Mugwort
Brachythecium rivulare	Common fumitory	Doves foot cranesbill	Hedgerow cranesbill	Orange-tip
Broad leaved willowherb	Common hogweed	Early Bumblebee	Herb Robert	Oxeye Daisy
Broad leaves dock	Common mallow	Elderberry	Hoary Fringe-moss	Oxyrrhynchium hians
Bryum dichotomum	Common Mouse-ear	False Oat-grass	Hogweed	Painted Lady
Bryum klinggraeffii	Common Nettle	Fat-hen	Homalothecium sericeum	Peacock
Bryum rubens	Common Poppy	Fern-leaved Hook-moss	House martin	Pellia endiviifolia
Buff-tailed bumblebee	Common Pottia	Fescue grass	Hypnum andoi	Perrenial Rye-grass
Bullfinch (pair)	Common Ragwort	Field forget me not	Hypnum cupressiforme var. cupressiforme	Pheasant
Bulrush	Common Ramping Fumitory	Field Horesetail	Indian Balsam	Pineappleweed
Buzzard	Common sorrel	Field Pansy	Kestrel	Pohlia wahlenbergii var. wahlenbergii
Calliargonella cuspidata	Common Spotted-orchid	Field speedwell	Knapweed	Pointed Spear-moss
Capillary Thread-moss	Common Vetch	Fireweed	Knotgrass	Polytrichastrum formosum
Cat's-ear	Cow Parsley	Fissidens bryoides var. bryoides	Ladies Bedstraw	Prickly Sowthistle
Chaffinch	Creeping Bent Grass	Garden Bumblebee	Large White	Red Admiral
Chiff chaff	Creeping Buttercup	Ghost moth	Lesser Bird's-claw Beard-moss	Red Beard-moss
	Creeping Cinqfoil	Goat Willow	Lesser Stitchwort	Red Clover
	Creeping Thistle	Great Willowherb		Red dead nettle
	Crested dog tail grass			

Red Fescue	Scentsless Mayweed	Small Tortoiseshell	Thyme-leaved Speedwell	White-tailed bumblebee
Redshank	Sedge warbler	Small White	Tiger hoverfly	White-tipped Bristle-moss
Red-tailed bumblebee	Selfheal	Smooth Hawk's-beard	Timothy	Wild Carot
Reed bunting	Shaggy inkcap	Smooth Meadow-grass	Tortula truncata	Willow warbler
Reed Canary-grass	Sheep's Fescue	Smooth Tare	Tufted Vetch	Winter cress
Rhynchostegium confertum	Shepherds purse	Soft Brome	Ulota bruchii	Wood Avens
Rhytidadelphus squarrosus	Short-fruited Willowherb	Soft-rush	Ulota crispa s.l.	Wood Bristle-moss
Ribwort Plantain	Silver-Ground Carpet	Sow thistle	Wall Screw-moss	Wren
Ribwort plantain	Silver-moss	Sparrowhawk	Wall Speedwell	Yarrow
Ringlet	Silverweed	Spear Thistle	Weld	Yorkshire fog grass
Rough-stalked Feather-moss	Skylark	Speckled Wood	White / red covers	Yorkshire-fog
Sand-hill Screw-moss	Small Copper	Swift	White Champion	Zigzag Clover
	Small Skipper	Thick-point Grimmia	White Clover	

1.1 Appendix 2 – Survey locations

The following surveys have been established in the park

Butterfly Conservation Scotland Transect

Butterfly transect for Little France Park

This map uses a satellite image taken from the time before the new path network was installed. I have highlighted some of the new paths in red here. The only section of the transect which is on the tarmac is part of section one. Section five runs parallel to the path, but is in the vegetation beside it. Section three looks here like it has a real path, but this is actually grassed over

