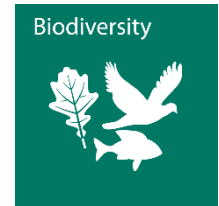




Meeting Summary:

Biodiversity Working Group Meeting – 28 Feb 2024

(was Wetlands Committee)



1. General Updates:

- Hester noted that Urban & Civic sent apologies for today but have agreed to come to the next meeting in May to update the group on the Campus development.
- Wetlands walks are continuing with much improved attendance due to the TV screen advertisements and Slack posts. Walks become weekly from May through the summer.
- Volunteering opportunities are being promoted with a couple of requests through from teams already – HS to discuss with Iain/Nathan about best ways to go about arranging these.

2. Grounds Team Update:

- Michelle updated that Aquatic Solutions were in the wetlands recently clearing some of the north Lake. The team have also been down there knocking back the alder around the lake which is getting easier each year, and they hope to move onto the other lakes over the next years. Bird boxes have been cleaned and some new ones have been put up around site as well. The team have also introduced some toad & frog hotels including at the back of the orchard and nursery areas, as well as adding more log piles around the site for insects etc.

3. Bird Survey Update:

- Neil to provide an update next meeting if available.

4. Wildlife Trust Update:

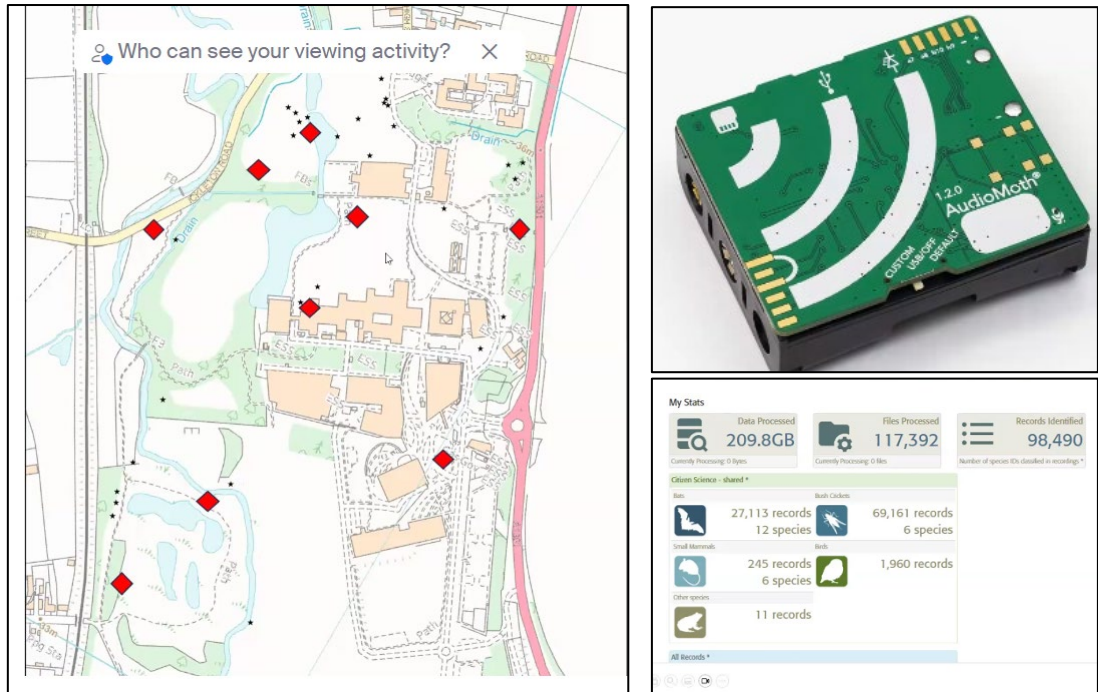
- Iain updated that the wetlands work is looking really good and that it will be interesting to see how much of it grows back this year, noting that last year's growth was phenomenal. Once we are ahead with the management, as Michelle mentioned, it will get a lot easier and controlling the trees will add a lot more interest to this part of the site. Iain also highlighted that the wetlands walks are being attended in 'double figures', so it is really good to see that people are engaging with the wetlands more.
- **Bat Survey Presentation** - Iain updated on the work the Wildlife Trust has been doing for the Campus, following on from the Preliminary Ecological Assessment to next look at understanding the baseline of species present. One aspect of this was the recent bat surveys.

Iain noted that bats are considered a keystone species within the Campus landscape, being long-lived and wide-ranging, they are a good indicator of quality of invertebrate prey. He discussed the importance of gathering data from the various habitat areas within the Campus to assess roosting opportunities for bats and other species.

To do this, he used audio recording devices called "Audio Moths", placed at nine locations around the site to capture high-frequency sounds for 4-5 days per session. Locations were chosen based on ongoing management activities, or potential habitat enhancements and the data collected totalled over 200 gigabytes, although this primarily consisted of bush cricket recordings.

Two recording session windows took place:

1. Between 19th July & 2nd August
2. Between 6th & 15th September



Iain explained the data processing method, including setting an '85% probability' threshold for species identification and trimming down the dataset accordingly. The distribution of bat species across different habitats within the Campus was analysed, emphasising the importance of preserving diverse habitats for biodiversity.

The results of the survey indicate that there were 10 species of bats recorded, which is fantastic, particularly since there are only 12 species regularly recorded in the county, and only 18 species nationally - so this is really pleasing to see:

Who can see your viewing activity?	
BARBASTELLE	11
BROWN LONG-EARED BAT	37
COMMON PIPISTRELLE	7344
DAUBENTON'S BAT	45
LEISLER'S BAT	84
NATTERER'S BAT	55
NATHUSIUS PIPISTRELLE	5
NOCTULE	255
SEROTINE	516
SOPRANO PIPISTRELLE	14315

Some of these species were more certain than others when you interrogate the data a bit more though, as different species have a different level of presence on site. The Soprano pipistrelle and brown long-eared bats are the most common species, so it is unsurprising that these feature heavily on Campus; however the species particularly interesting and exciting for us, are the Nathusius pipistrelle which are quite a scarce species, the barbastelle, another scarce species, and then probably the Leisler's bat.

Overall, Iain reflected on the challenges and excitement of this data analysis, emphasising the value of such research for habitat management and public engagement.

Watch the recording of Iain's [presentation here](#) – passcode: z^Hcn4^A

5. Trout Club Update:

- William Newhouse noted how useful the data from the bat surveys could be from a Trout Club perspective - particularly the insect recordings, since fish and bats are likely to feed off many of the same invertebrates.
- William updated that works along the river have been a little slow recently due to all the flooding. This time of year they would usually be looking at breeding levels and in channel maintenance, but this will need to wait a bit for the levels to reduce.
- William asked Michele if there is any alder available that was removed during the wetlands works, as they would love to take some. Michelle to liaise with William to arrange collection.
- William has offered to talk more next time about the work the Trout Club are doing along the river.

6. AOB

- Dave Keating shared that he spotted a pair of grebes on the main pond at the weekend, and a coot.
- Iain will share details with Hester about a group of cattle farmers he is aware of that are setting up.

7. Next Meeting:

- 8th May 2024 at 11am