



Current factors causing loss or decline

The major factor that has reduced the area of reedbed in the UK in the past has been agricultural improvement. Reedbeds were drained to provide new farmland, with the resultant loss of the habitat and its associated species. Today most reedbeds are being lost through land use pressures, such as landfill, mineral working and urban developments, but a further danger is from neglect. If reedbeds are to remain as they are they require some form of active management otherwise they will dry out with eventual succession to woodland. The RSPB has estimated a loss of between five and ten percent of reedbed between 1979 and 1993 in England alone. A further threat lies in the fragmentation of the habitat, which can have a detrimental affect on a number of important, dependent species.

Current action

The large reedbed at Bishop Loch is protected as part of the SSSI, although contiguous vegetation extends into the adjacent Bothlin Burn. However, the latter is recognised as a City-wide SINC as is the reedbed at Kenmure Marsh. A recent habitat creation initiative at Hogganfield Park LNR has included the creation of a new reedbed to the eastern margin.

LOCAL HABITAT ACTION PLAN

Current status

Reedbeds are a specialised type of swamp habitat dominated by Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*), where the water table is at or above ground level for most of the year. They are considered to be pure reedbeds where this plant constitutes more than 90% of the vegetation cover. Where the vegetation cover is less than 90% but greater than 75% the reedbed is often referred to as impure. Below this degree of cover, the vegetation grades to swamp or fen habitat depending on the soils and the level of the water table.

There are an estimated 5-6,000 ha of reedbeds in the UK. The greatest concentration occurs in East Anglia, amounting to some 2,500 ha, however the largest single reedbed is that on the Tay Estuary which covers 410 ha. In ecological terms, larger habitats are of more value as wildlife refuges and many of the 900 or so sites in the UK are fragmented into small blocks of less than one hectare. Twenty hectares is considered nationally important as it is the minimum size of reedbed that can support breeding populations of some of the rarer reedbed birds.

Whilst the botanical interest of pure reedbed may be fairly low, they can be very important for birds, although some impure stands support nationally rare or threatened species of plants and a number of important invertebrates.

Main Locations of Reedbed in Glasgow



The largest reedbed within Glasgow is at Bishop Loch/Bothlin Burn where there is approximately 19 hectares of swamp vegetation of which well over half is dominated by Common Reed. There are also smaller, more localised patches at Possil Marsh and Kenmure Marsh. Reedbeds are home to many species of invertebrates, and birds such as Reed Bunting and Water Rail which are in decline nationally. In addition, these areas are a valuable habitat for many mammals, including the Water Vole and Roe Deer.

Objectives and targets

Reedbeds are a rare national and local habitat and the area at Bishop Loch, in view of its large size, is of special significance. However, at present it extends beyond the existing SSSI and Local Nature Reserve (LNR). It will, therefore, be a priority for the City Council to extend the area of the LNR in negotiation with landowners and bring a larger area into management. The management plan for Bishop Loch will be implemented and adapted with the aim of increasing the area of reedbed and tall-herb fen to the nationally important figure of 20 hectares.

The National Action Plan aims to identify and rehabilitate priority reedbed areas of 2 hectares or more and ensure active management. A further key objective is to nationally create 1,200 hectares of new reedbed by 2010. Such creation should aim to create blocks of 20 hectares or more so as to encourage rarer reedbed birds.

Objective 1: Ensure no net loss in areas of reedbed identified within the City.
Target 1: Retain all existing reedbeds.

Objective 2: Establish accurate picture of the extent of reedbed within the City.
Target 2: Survey all reedbed and assess size and quality (notably Bishop Loch) by 2004.

Objective 3: Ensure viable long-term habitat conditions for reedbed habitat.
Target 3: Establish existing management and investigate ideal regimes.

Objective 4: Increase the total area of reedbeds within the City.
Target 4: Create new reedbeds, or extend existing, as part of wetland creation schemes.

Objective 5: Increase the value of reedbed habitat to associate bird populations.
Target 5: Survey and monitor associate bird populations to assess management needs.

Proposed Action with Lead Authorities

Action	Lead	Delivery	Objective
Policy and Legislation			
Ensure the importance of reedbeds is recognised in Local Plans and Policy Guidelines.	GCC-LS(CG)	GCC-DRS, SNH	1
Seek to ensure Policy Planning Guidelines include adequate protection policies for water levels and quality.	GCC-LS(CG)	GCC-DRS, SEPA, SNH	1, 3
Site Safeguard and Management			
Oppose, or propose alternatives to, development applications for land use, which will damage or destroy areas of reedbed.	GCC-LS(CG)	GCC-DRS, SEPA, SNH	1
Implement management plans for Bishop Loch and Hogganfield Park LNRs.	GCC-LS(CG)	GCC-LS(CG)	3, 4
Encourage landowners and farmers to implement sympathetic management of reedbeds.	GCC-LS(CG)	FWAG, GCC-LS, SNH, SWT	3
Encourage the creation of new reedbeds at urban or agricultural wetland creation schemes, and for flood alleviation or water pollution control.	GCC-LS(CG)	FWAG, GCC-LS, SEPA, SNH	4
Advisory			
Provide guidance on reedbed management.	GCC-LS(CG)	FWAG, GCC-LS, SNH	3, 4
Future Research and Monitoring			
Survey main reedbed sites to assess extent and condition.	GCC-LS(CG)	GCC-LS(CG), SNH	2
Survey important bird, and other associate species, to assess optimal size and diversity of reedbeds.	GCC-LS(CG)	GCC-LS(CG), SNH	5
Communication and Publicity			
Encourage awareness and appreciation of reedbeds.	GCC-LS(CG)	GCC-LS(CRS), SNH	1, 3, 5
Liaise with Lead Agency for Reedbed National Action Plan.	GCC-LS(CG)	GCC-LS(CG)	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Review progress of plan and actions by 2006.	GCC-LS(CG)	GCC-LS(CG)	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

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Glasgow City Council: Development and Regeneration Services(GCC-DRS), Glasgow City Council: Land Services(Conservation Group) (GCC-LS(CG),

Glasgow City Council: Culture and Leisure Services (GCC-CLS), Glasgow City Council: Education Services (GCC-ES), Glasgow City Council: Land Services Countryside Ranger Service (GCC-LS(CRS)),

Scottish Ornithologists' Club (SOC), Greenspace for Communities(GIC), British Waterways (BW), Forestry Commission (FC), Farming Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG), The WISE Group (TWISE)

Glasgow Natural History Society (GNHS), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT).

Clyde Amphibian and Reptile Group (CARG), Butterfly Conservation (BC), Concern for Swifts (CIS)