

Wildlife in Your Garden

Everyone can help biodiversity a little by making a few changes in our gardens; whether it is feeding the birds, planting a few trees, or sowing some wildflowers, you can do one thing for biodiversity.

Trees



Hazelnut © Laurie Campbell

Go native if you plant a tree or a hedge in your garden to support our native birds, insects and mammals. Pick from berry rich rowan trees, nectar rich cherries or trusty old hawthorn to get natural food and important shelter into your garden. For more tips see www.tcv.org.uk/northernireland/environment/biodiversity/advice/native-trees-your-garden

Plants & Flowers



If you have little space, plant wildflowers in container pots or windowsill boxes to add a great splash of colour at your front door. These will attract bees and butterflies, providing much needed nectar throughout the summer. There are many flowers and plants you can get from your local garden centre that will support bees and butterflies. Make sure to pick single-flowered plants so insects can reach the nectar more easily; grow night-scented plants to attract moths and in turn bats; and plant for each season – bees and butterflies need a long season of nectar-rich plants. See butterfly-conservation.org for more information.

Butterfly Conservation's Top Nectar Plants

- Ice plant (sedum)
- Lavender
- Michaelmas daisy
- Oregano/marjoram
- Red valerian
- Aubretia
- Field scabious
- Scabious
- Bramble



Smooth newt © Brad Robson

Ponds

Water is essential for all life – all species of animal and plant need to be able to access it. Having a water feature in your garden will attract species that you would otherwise not get, or ensure the wildlife that does visit, will stay around a bit longer! If you have space for a pond, great but be mindful of safety for young children. Or why not try out a pond in a bucket that is sunk into the ground? Every chance to provide freshwater in your garden is vital to species like frogs, newts and even dragonflies. For more advice and tips see freshwaterhabitats.org.uk

Watch the Birdie



We all love to watch a robin hoke for worms, a blue tit stealing spiders from a wall or blackbirds making short work of your blackcurrant bush, so why not help them even more and make your garden bird friendly. Plant more trees and shrubs that produce berries, erect a nestbox to provide shelter and don't forget their hygiene by making a home-made bird bath. Look up <https://www2.rspb.org.uk/makeahomeforwildlife/> for more fantastic ways to help wildlife in your garden. You can feed the birds too with everything from bought nuts and seeds, to old pasta scraps, hard cheese, bruised apples and more. Why not make your own bird feeder too? Download lots of ideas to help birds and other wildlife from www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/naturedetectives/

Bug Hotels

Create a 5 star home for bugs in your garden and get the children enthusiastic about what wildlife they can entice. Using natural materials, straw, hollow stemmed plants, old pallets, bamboo sticks, garden waste and other odds and sods, build a log pile or full blown hotel. Pick a quiet corner away from your tidy areas, build it and leave for woodlice, bees, ladybirds and slugs to move in.



For Peats Sake – Go Peat Free

Using peat based compost is one of the most environmentally damaging activities that the gardener can undertake. Our bogs are a unique and threatened habitat, home to specialised plants and animals and are important feature in this Fermanagh and Omagh LBAP. So for peats sake, go peat-free! You can help stop the destruction of our precious bogs.

See the full Fermanagh and Omagh Local Biodiversity Action Plan online at:

fermanaghomagh.com/residential-services/biodiversity

Bumblebees

FACT FILE

- There are 20 species of bumblebees in the island of Ireland and only 1 species of honey bee
- Only girl bees sting!
- The bees favourite colour is purple
- Without bees, crops like strawberries, apples and tomatoes wouldn't grow
- Most people will commonly see 6 different species in their gardens; red-tailed bumblebee, white-tailed bumblebee, buff-tailed bumblebee, garden bumblebee, early bumblebee and common carder bee
- Download your recording card for free and start helping today! <http://biodiversityni.com/publication/bee-recording-sheet>



MAKE YOUR GARDEN POLLINATOR FRIENDLY

Bats

FACT FILE

- There are 8 species of bats in Northern Ireland
- Female bats only have one baby bat per year
- Bats are not blind!
- Bats use echolocation to navigate and find food
- Find out lots more at www.bats-ni.org.uk including what to do if you find a sick or injured bat
- A pipistrelle bat can eat over 3000 midges each NIGHT!



Common pipistrelle © Laurie Campbell



Red-tailed bumblebee and carder bee © John Breen

Bumblebees and solitary bees can be found in a wide range of habitats but are normally associated with flower rich grasslands, heaths, vibrant gardens and species rich hedgerows. With the decline of species rich grassland and hay meadows in our district, there is little natural food for bees in the wider countryside, meaning parks and gardens are even more important as food reserves. To help our bees we need to start planting better flowers for them, restore and replant wild meadow areas and record which ones we see.

Local Actions

- In partnership, manage key road-side verges to create better wildlife corridors
- Trial pollinator friendly plants in public parks and gardens
- Encourage the public to make their gardens more bee friendly
- Support the Pollinator Plan 2015-2020 and Junior Pollinator Plan 2015-2020 www.biodiversityireland.ie/projects/irish-pollinator-initiative/all-ireland-pollinator-plan/summary/

Swifts



Swifts © Geoff Campbell

FACT FILE

- Swifts have 'no feet'! Well they have tiny feet only for clinging to walls but can't perch or walk
- Reports have estimated that swift numbers have plummeted by 47% in the UK in last 10 years
- Why not go on a swift finding mission? Look out for the screaming parties at dusk from May – August and keep an eye to see which buildings swifts are nesting on
- Check out www.saveourswifts.co.uk for more detailed information on swifts in NI

Swifts are fascinating birds that are here for just 3-4 months a year from May – August. They have a unique ability to drink, eat, bathe and even sleep on the wing, only landing intentionally to breed and nest. They return each year to the same nest, bringing a little extra material stuck on with saliva. Significant declines are partially due to the loss of nest sites as buildings are lost or renovated. Swifts can be seen every summer in flocks as they take part in screaming parties over rooftops in Enniskillen and Omagh towns, Derrygonnelly, Lisnaskea and beyond.

Local Actions

- Raise awareness and encourage the public to take part in swift recording each summer
- Monitor important nesting sites and identify new nest sites
- Encourage businesses and public organisations to erect swift boxes or swift bricks into new or existing buildings
- Trial the use of swift sound systems to attract swifts to new sites
- Provide advice and signposting to projects that need swift mitigation during renovation works

Red Squirrels



Red Squirrels © Laurie Campbell

Red Squirrels have found refuge in coniferous forests but can still be found in deciduous woodland. Their varied diet includes nuts, seeds, berries and fungi. They are an endangered species due to the threats that the grey squirrel poses including disease and out-competition. Reds are found throughout Co. Fermanagh in gardens, woods and forests and some remnant populations are found in Gortin Glen Forest Park and Drumquin area. More single records of reds are being submitted closer to Omagh town, Tempo and other villages throughout.

FACT FILE

- Squirrels do not hibernate over winter
- It is thought a squirrel can tell a good nut from a rotten nut by weighing it in its paws
- The red squirrel is a protected species in Northern Ireland
- Reds build a nest called a 'drey' in the fork of a tree and line it with grass and leaves
- Find out more about how to help your local red squirrels at this website www.fermanaghredsquirrelgroup.com
- Record sightings of red and grey squirrels online at www2.habitats.org.uk/records/squirrels

Local Actions

- Support the work of local red squirrel groups including the Fermanagh Red Squirrel Group and West Tyrone Red Squirrel Group
- Celebrate Red Squirrel Week each October
- Work in partnership with NGO's and public landowners to seek viable solutions to the grey squirrel threat
- Educate on best practice in supplementary feeding reds

Do your bit for Biodiversity

There are a number of ways in which you can get involved and play a vital part in conserving and enhancing Fermanagh and Omagh's biodiversity.

Record Local Wildlife

Help build a better picture of local biodiversity and become a wildlife recorder! Record any sightings of important wildlife and report these directly to the Ulster Museum's recording centre, CEDaR www.nmni.com/CEDaR

Volunteer and Get Stuck In

If it's tree planting, scrub clearance or even hay making, there are opportunities to volunteer near you. Organisations such as The Conservation Volunteers, RSPB, National Trust and Ulster Wildlife have conservation projects throughout the Fermanagh and Omagh area that you can get involved in.

Garden for Wildlife on Your Own Patch

Have a go at wildlife gardening and enjoy the small wonders in your own patch. From planting flowers for bees and butterflies to creating a hedgehog haven, there are many small things you can do to help.

Get Involved in a Community Project

Community groups can help deliver projects for biodiversity; whether it is creating a wildlife garden or planting community woodlands, your group has potential.

To find out more about the Fermanagh and Omagh LBAP or how you can **DO YOUR BIT** for biodiversity, please contact:

Fermanagh and Omagh Biodiversity Officer
Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
 Lisnamallard House, Old Mountfield Road, Omagh, Co. Tyrone BT79 7EG
 Tel: **0300 3031777**
 Email: julie.corry@fermanaghomagh.com
 Websites: www.fermanaghomagh.com | www.biodiversityni.com

Grow Wild on Your Farm

Any landowner can help protect and enhance wildlife by making small changes in management. Why not leave field margins uncut for birds and insects or cut hedgerows late in the season, so seeds and berries are available to wildlife.

Report Wildlife Crime

Incidents such as destroying nests, dumping and water pollution should not be ignored, as these have an impact on biodiversity. Contact the following places if you suspect a wildlife crime has been committed.

- Killing or disturbing protected species should be reported to your local PSNI office (ring 101 on a landline).
- Water Pollution Hotline for urgent incidents. Tel: 0800 807060.
- Grounded or injured bats in your building, please call CEDaR (Centre for Environmental Data and Recording). Email: cedar.info@nmni.com, or telephone: 028 9039 5264.

Acknowledgements

The Fermanagh and Omagh LBAP Steering Group have provided invaluable advice throughout the development of the LBAP. Thanks are extended to the many individuals who took time to respond during the consultation phases.

Fermanagh & Omagh District Council
 Comhairle Ceantair Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí

Fermanagh and Omagh Local Biodiversity Action Plan

- Helping to conserve and enhance local habitats and species
- Raising awareness and knowledge of local biodiversity
- Involving local people and developing partnerships to help deliver action for biodiversity

Banded demoiselle © Geoff Campbell

Wetlands



Upper Lough Erne near Combs © Hannah Northridge

From the Fermanagh Lakelands, pristine rivers such as the Owenkillew and Colebrook, to smaller lakes and ponds like Killyfole Local Nature Reserve and Loughmacrory ASSI, the Fermanagh and Omagh District is home to some outstanding wetlands. From unique species like pollan and Arctic charr to the more commonplace like mute swan, otter and salmon, our freshwater habitats are vital for a wide range of life.

Local Actions

- Raise awareness through guided walks, events, talks and media
- Develop projects at suitable sites to help enhance their value for wildlife
- Promote and increase the recording of key wetland species



Otter leaping on salmon © Laurie Campbell

Grassland



West grassland © Giles Knight

There are many different types of grassland found in the District; lowland meadows, calcareous grassland, coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, lowland dry acid grassland, purple moor-grass and rush pasture and road side verges. While the majority of NI's wild grasslands have been lost to modern farming practices and development, a significant proportion of what remains, occurs in West Fermanagh and South Tyrone.



Local Actions

- Work with landowners to raise awareness of their importance in order to maintain and improve that land for biodiversity
- Through partnerships, manage key road side verge sites for biodiversity
- Pilot wildflower meadows on publically accessible land
- Promote and increase the recording of key grassland species

Bogs and Heath



Gortin Lakes © Fermanagh and Omagh District Council



Sundew © Julie Corry

There are three types of peatland ecosystems: lowland raised bog, blanket bog and fens and two heathland types; upland heathland and montane heath, in our district. They were historically viewed as vast desolate places that were used for afforestation, sheep grazing and peat cutting, but in recent years the importance of bogs and heath for biodiversity and as valuable carbon sinks has been widely recognised.

Local Actions

- Raise awareness through specific guided walks, activities, talks and media
- Advise landowners where possible on appropriate management
- Promote and increase the recording of key bog and heath species
- Promote peat free compost at wildlife gardening talks and workshops

Woodlands



Seskinore Forest © Julie Corry



Bluebell © Giles Knight

Northern Ireland is one of the least wooded areas in Europe, with only 1% of land under native tree cover but our district still hosts some amazing woodlands ideal for exploring with the family or for a quiet peaceful stroll. From Crom Estate in South Fermanagh to the Gortin Glens, north of Omagh town, there are woodlands accessible to all.

Local Actions

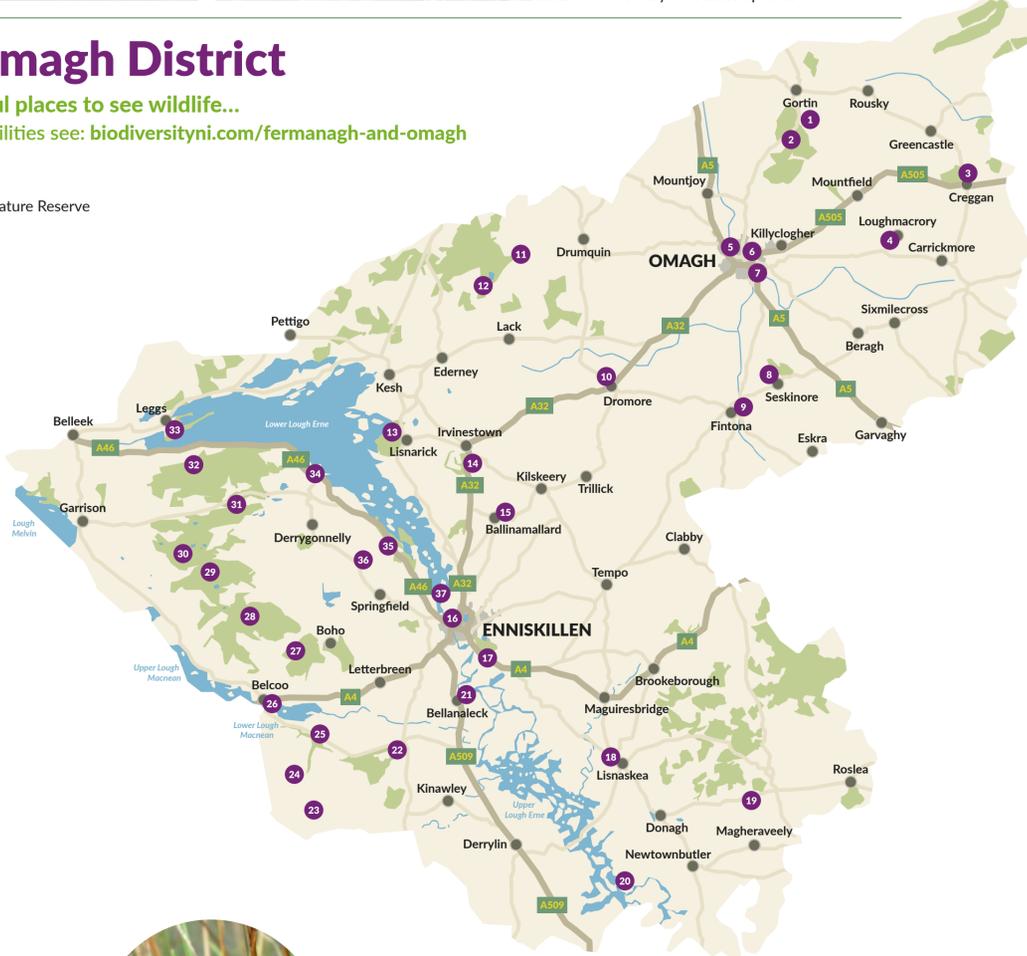
- Raise awareness through walks, activities, talks and media
- Increase woodland cover through promotion of schemes that are available for restocking and creation
- Pilot new woodland planting and woodland management schemes on publically accessible land to act as best practice
- Promote and increase the recording of key woodland species

Fermanagh and Omagh District

Why not visit some of these wonderful places to see wildlife...

For more information on directions and facilities see: biodiversityni.com/fermanagh-and-omagh

1. Gortin Lakes
2. Gortin Glen Forest Park
3. An Creagan Visitor Centre and Creggan Bog Local Nature Reserve
4. Loughmacrory
5. Grange Park, Omagh
6. McCauley Park, Omagh
7. Riverside Walk, Omagh
8. Seskinore Forest
9. Ecclesville Demesne
10. Dromore Riverside Walk
11. Sloughan Glen
12. Lough Bradan
13. Castle Archdale Country Park
14. Necarne Estate
15. Ballinamallard Mill Walk
16. Forthill Park, Enniskillen
17. Castle Coole NT
18. Lough Head Park and Wildfowl Centre
19. Killyfole Lough Local Nature Reserve
20. Crom Estates NT
21. Bellanaleck Moorings Walk
22. Florence Court NT
23. Cuilcagh Mountain Park
24. Killykeaghan and Crossmurrin Nature Reserves
25. Cladagh Glen Nature Reserve
26. Cottage Lawn, Belcoo
27. Belmore Forest
28. Ballintempo Forest
29. Carrigan Forest
30. Big Dog Forest
31. Correl Glen Nature Reserve
32. Lough Navar Forest
33. The Magho Cliffs Walk
34. Castle Caldwell Forest
35. Tully Castle
36. Ely Lodge Forest
37. Monea Castle
38. Devenish Island



Urban

Urban habitats are vitally important for a wide range of wildlife and for people, as most first encounter wildlife in their garden, at the local park or in golf courses! From ladybirds to hedgehogs, blue tits to song thrushes, and even bats, our urban habitats are a much needed refuge for many native species.

Local Actions

- Raise awareness through guided walks, wildlife gardening workshops, talks and media
- Promote and increase the recording of key urban species, utilising the range of citizen science schemes available.
- Support government departments through advice and signposting on how to manage their estate for wildlife
- Provide interpretation at key public parks to explain their biodiversity value



Growing wild © Veronica Santofloro



Peacock butterfly © Hannah Northridge

Hedgerows



Native hedgerow © Laurie Campbell

Hedgerows are vital wildlife corridors within our fragmented landscape allowing birds and animals freedom to move from one pocket of woodland to another. They host a wide range of wildlife, including plants such as primrose and herb robert, birds such as the duncock and yellowhammer, mammals such as bats, and many types of insects.

Local Actions

- Raise awareness through guided walks, activities, talks and media
- Work with landowners to raise awareness of the importance of hedges for biodiversity and through training and funding, help replant and restore
- Pilot hedge planting schemes on publically accessible land to act as best practice examples
- Promote and increase the recording of key hedge species



Blackberries and bramble © Laurie Campbell

Calcareous Habitats



Glacial erratic on limestone pavement, Gortmacconnell © Fermanagh and Omagh District Council



Wild Thyme © Fermanagh and Omagh District Council

Our district hosts a significant portion of NI calcareous habitat due to the underlying carboniferous limestone, including underground caves, limestone pavement and associated calcareous grasslands. The Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark is an excellent network of wildlife sites across the Council area and beyond that showcases not just these calcareous habitats but bogs, forests, lakes and more. Log on to www.marblearchcavesgeopark.com to explore further.

Local Actions

- Raise awareness of the importance of calcareous habitats for biodiversity through specific guided walks, activities at MACGG events, talks and media
- Promote and increase the recording of key calcareous grassland species such as wild thyme.



Limestone pavement at Legacurragh Valley Trail © Fermanagh and Omagh District Council

Invasive Species



Himalayan Balsam © Brad Robson

Non-native invasive species are the second biggest threat to biodiversity after habitat loss. Human activities are the main cause of the introduction and spread of invasive species. Key invasive species affecting our area include Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam, giant hogweed, zebra mussel, pondweeds, grey squirrel, American mink and potentially many more on the horizon.

Local Actions

- Raise awareness and provide advice through guided walks, talks, media and websites
- Provide training to relevant staff from Council and other organisations to identify and where possible, manage invasive species
- Seek funding through partnerships to tackle invasive species on a wider scale
- Support the work of the Lough Erne Invasive Species Group



Japanese Knotweed © Laurie Campbell