

Baron's Haugh

Location

North Lanarkshire

EcoCo Management Zone

Baron's Haugh

Lead Partner

RSPB



Site Description

The reserve which is located between the River Clyde and the town of Motherwell consists of a variety of habitats, including wetland, riverine and woodland. The main interest feature from an ecological perspective is the haugh which is the wetland area – “haugh” meaning “flooded meadow” in old Scots. This is the floodplain of the river consisting of lowland swamp and fen, and supports a variety of species but in particular populations of breeding and wintering wildfowl. It is also well known for the ability to see passage waders in spring and autumn.

What are we going to do?

RSPB will be undertaking restoration of the area of wetland known as Cemetery Marsh which has been drying out and succession is taking place. This will involve clearance and removal of scrub and rank vegetation, clearance of scrapes and pools to retain open water for longer periods throughout the year, new fencing and creation of a viewpoint overlooking the marsh.

What will this achieve?

The work will create habitat similar to that which already exists in the wetland area by allowing the marsh to be regenerated and managed through selective grazing by cattle. This will increase biodiversity and encourage use by breeding and wintering wildfowl, and passage waders. This type of habitat is disappearing from the Clyde Valley and the proposed works will help to secure the future of the reserve as an important location for these species to thrive. The public will also benefit from a new viewpoint being created together with suitable interpretation.

Links

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/discoverandenjoynature/seenature/reserves/guide/b/baronshaugh/index.aspx>
<http://gateway.snh.gov.uk/sitelink>
www.ecocolife.org.uk

What is ecological coherence?

The project has adopted an adapted version of a definition proposed by R. Catchpole (2013).

At the scale of the whole network, coherence is achieved when: the full range of variation in valued features is represented; replication of specific features occurs at different sites over a wide geographic area; dispersal, migration and genetic exchange of individuals is possible between relevant sites; all critical areas for rare, highly threatened and endemic species are included; and the network is resilient to disturbance or damage caused by natural and anthropogenic factors.

In order to determine ecological coherence for the project sites the main measurable parameters being considered are; patch size, biological diversity, habitat structural and functional connectivity, ecological functionality and presence of endangered, rare or endemic species.

In essence this can be summarised for habitats as **'more, bigger, better, and better connected'**.

Learn more at "Ecological Coherence Definitions in Policy and Practice - Final Report". R. Catchpole, Aspen International. Contract report to Scottish Natural Heritage, No. 41102

