

Lochwinnoch

Location	Renfrewshire
EcoCo Management Zone	Garnock Valley
Lead Partner	RSPB



Site Description

The reserve which is located within the Castle Sempole & Barr Loch SSSI and within Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park, consists of mainly wetland habitats with some woodland. It is also close to the village of Lochwinnoch and has strong connections to it. The reserve also has a visitor centre and is one of the RSPB's top visitor sites in Scotland.

What are we going to do?

We will be reconnecting Dubbs Water and Roebank Burns into the Barr Loch which has historically been isolated from the main hydrology of the catchment. The natural hydrology would consist of the area of Barr Loch functioning as a natural floodplain with flooding in winter and a hay crop or other arable crop taken in summer together with aftermath grazing. It is not possible to fully recreate this but one step towards it to reconnect those water courses which presently by-pass the natural system. The first phase of this project has been completed on the northern side of the Barr Loch by reconnecting the Millbank Burn.

What will this achieve?

The work will be undertaken in line with Water Framework Directive and will help to restore natural hydrological function to the Dubbs Water and Roebank Burn. Both of these water courses support populations of migratory fish and reconnection of them will aid passage of fish from the Barr Loch which is presently restrictive as there are few if any outlets available. Fish species expected to benefit from this would be Atlantic Salmon, Brown (and Sea) Trout, Eel, Minnow and Brook Lamprey. Additionally, both these reconnections to the Barr loch should have a favourable impact on the ecology of the loch and its catchment waters through increasing water turnover time in the loch, providing additional good quality water to the loch, and helping to restore the original biodiversity of the loch and its catchment.

Links

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/discoverandenjoynature/seenature/reserves/guide//lochwinnoch/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

