

Scottish Natural Heritage

Ranger Services in Scotland - The Achievements 'at a glance' 2009/10



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Scotland's Rangers Services are an important asset, providing real and tangible benefits for the people and environment of Scotland. This 'at a glance' summary shows the achievements in 2009/10 of the Ranger Services supported by grant aid from Scottish Natural Heritage or the Cairngorms National Park Authority, as well as a number of local authority Ranger Services.

Background

In 2008, SNH refreshed its approach to Rangers in Scotland. Building on our 1997 Ranger policy, we worked with a range of partners to prepare a new statement to provide the framework within which all Ranger Services could be developed and managed effectively to meet local needs within the framework of national priorities established by the Scottish Government.

The new statement was endorsed by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, the Scottish Countryside Rangers' Association, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority, the Cairngorms National Park Authority, Forestry Commission Scotland and Historic Scotland. As part of our commitment to delivering this statement, SNH agreed to collate and publish information on the work of Ranger Services across Scotland and contribution they make to Government priorities.



The Rangers in Scotland Policy identifies three key Ranger aims to describe the breadth of work that Rangers are involved in.

Ranger Aims	Government priorities
To ensure a warm welcome and provide support to help people enjoy the outdoors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – supporting sustainable economic development by maintaining, managing and promoting infrastructure for tourism; – increasing health and well-being through facilitating access to and promoting enjoyment and understanding of the outdoors; – encouraging people to be active citizens by helping to build stronger and safer communities and providing opportunities for volunteering, locally or further afield; – tackling social inclusion by working with less advantaged groups and communities; and – enhancing the natural and historic environment for future generations, including designated sites and greenspace close to where people live.
To increase awareness, understanding, care and responsible use of the natural and cultural heritage	
To support the sustainable management and use of the outdoors to meet a range of social, economic and environmental objectives	

All Ranger Services were asked to capture information about selected aspects of their work against these three aims for the period April 2009 and March 2010. 33 returns from a possible 63 Ranger Services were received, including a small number of local authorities (whom we particularly thank for their contribution).

The Ranger Services contributing to this report are listed in Annex 1. They represent over 100 Ranger posts (nearly 90 full time equivalents) and cover nearly 600,000 hectares (just over 7% of Scotland). Overall they are a good sample of the current diversity of provision within Scotland - varying in size and type of Service and its setting - urban, rural, upland, lowland, mainland, island, coastal and inland. Nevertheless, many Ranger Services did not provide returns and while impressive in itself, the data presented therefore significantly under-represents the overall contribution that Scotland's Ranger Services deliver for people and nature.

A similar exercise will be repeated for the period April 2010 to March 2011 which we hope will include data from a larger number of Ranger Services.

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The Achievements of Ranger Services

Ranger Aim 1 To ensure a warm welcome and provide support to help people enjoy the outdoors

Nearly 12 million visits were made to the **places and facilities** managed, and benefitting from the **information** provided, by Ranger Services. The severe winter weather of 09/10 required an extra special effort by Ranger Services to keep access open to allow visits to the outdoors to continue.

Ranger Services used over 1500 ways **to promote the outdoors**. Examples of promotional activities include attending events to raise awareness of outdoor opportunities in the local area; producing 'what's on' calendars; press releases about forthcoming events (leading to articles on the radio, newspapers and TV); leaflets; posters; internet promotion of events and places to go; and the personal touch, for example, attending a meeting of Head Teachers encouraging them to take their pupils outdoors with a Ranger.

Ranger Services have been working particularly hard to **encourage more people from different backgrounds to enjoy the outdoors**. Examples of groups targeted include people with disabilities or from other equality groups, communities in areas of deprivation, and schools that had not used the Service before. Ranger Services have also been liaising with General Practitioners about referrals and outdoor health activities.

Fife Ranger Service continued their work with Stratheden Horticultural Therapy Unit (part of Stratheden Hospital Dementia and Mental Health Unit). This involves many activities including work within their tree nursery and tree planting, construction of a wildlife garden for a local primary school, and restoration and maintenance of a footpath. These projects are run with the valuable support of local volunteers as well as the Therapy Unit and benefit the patients by providing an opportunity to work with others in a relaxed and fun environment to achieve very tangible and rewarding results. Local school children, and the entire public of Fife, benefit from improved access to the countryside, the quality of the countryside experience that is being delivered and the many biodiversity benefits e.g. planting of Aspen, a Fife Local Biodiversity Action Plan species.

Ranger Services have also been arranging events which are accessible by all regardless of ability; arranging events / excursions to meet the specific needs of different groups; arranging transport for people with limited mobility; hosting free events; offering activities where people can turn up and take part without booking; arranging a 'wildlife from your window' recording project for elderly or disabled etc.

Dams to Darnley Countryside Ranger Service ensured events were free and fully inclusive, for example by providing free hire bikes and mobility scooters on their 'Get on yer bike' event. This allowed those who didn't have their own bikes to join in. For people with reduced mobility, scooters were also available. This greatly increased participation and gave people an opportunity to see parts of the site that were previously unreachable. At the start there was also a free 'Doctor bike' session where a health check was carried out on participant's bikes and minor repairs were carried out. This gave new confidence to cycle further and venture into new places.

The Eday Ranger Service made a great effort to offer events and excursions at times that would be convenient to different groups. The Ranger arranged for a 24 man Canadian Canoe to visit the island and take residents and visitors out on a paddling session around the coast of the island to see the sea birds and various interesting rock outcrops and marine life that normally you would not be able to see from the land.

Ranger Aim 2 To increase awareness, understanding, care and responsible use of the natural and cultural heritage

Public events – Nearly 100,000 people attended Ranger led events.

Education – Around 50,000 young people and adults in education benefitted from working with a Ranger on curricular / study related projects.

Volunteering – Over 4,000 people were involved in volunteering with Ranger Services, and this amounted to nearly 7,000 volunteer days. The tasks carried out are wide ranging and include litter clearance, path maintenance, tree planting, habitat and species monitoring, and invasive plant control, all being of great benefit to the natural heritage and the local community.

Buccleuch Ranger Service, Bowhill offered twice weekly volunteer opportunities with a local charity group, whose clients have a range of disabilities. They carried out a range of tasks including path maintenance, wildlife monitoring and restoring an old water garden, all to a high standard, and the volunteers benefitted from improved physical and mental health, enhanced self esteem and a sense of achievement. Over time the volunteers have had an increased awareness to access and conservation issues we come across in our working days as a Countryside Ranger.

Dundee City Council Ranger Service delivered Corporate Environmental Action days with HRMC-Inland Revenue and Scottish Social Services Council - 10/12 adults each time. At Templeton Woods, the groups installed new footbridges over forestry drains and helped further extend the path network by clearing a track for a new waymarked trail. Amphibian pools were cleaned out at Trottick Ponds Local Nature Reserve, where the groups also assisted in the maintenance of the historic lade network. The Council benefitted from the employees' personal and collective sense of achievement and team working through environmental volunteering, and as the participants were all new visitors to these sites, awareness of these local resources was improved. They also benefitted from the healthy outdoor activity.

Ranger Aim 3 To support the sustainable management and use of the outdoors to meet a range of social, economic and environmental objectives

Rangers have extensive knowledge, and wide-ranging skills in promoting the enjoyment, understanding and care of Scotland's outdoors. These are put to good use, adding significant value, through the partnerships, projects and initiatives that Rangers contribute to. Ranger Services supported over 500 of these, and they included Local Access Forums, Core Path Planning, Community Councils, Business Partnerships, Marketing Groups, Development Trusts, Eco-schools, Partnership Against Wildlife Crime, Environmental Organisations, Government Organisations etc.

Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park Ranger Service has been developing proposals, with partners, to improve the paths and wildlife areas around Lochwinnoch. This will not only increase biodiversity and community involvement but will also attract more people to the village, bringing economic benefits to the area. Marketing materials already produced highlight the facilities and services in the village.

Atholl Estate Ranger Service has been working with Blair Atholl Area Tourism Association on various initiatives, including the Blair Atholl gateway initiative, to encourage tourists to the area and to make them feel welcome when they arrive. This included: work on a new colour village map with information about what to see and do around the village including walks and cycle routes; providing assistance with the development of a village historic trail and; running a Squirrel Scampers game at 2 village gala nights.

Ranger Services have an important role in contributing to biodiversity conservation through their work on habitats and species. They contributed to the monitoring and management of 11 UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats and also made a significant contribution to the conservation of 17 Priority Species and 32 local habitat and species action plans. A number of the species are also on the Scottish Biodiversity List as well. Work carried out ranged from mink trapping for water vole conservation, bat monitoring, woodland monitoring, invasive species removal etc.

Annex 1 Ranger Services Contributing To This Report

Finlaystone Ranger Service	Stirling Council Ranger Service
Explore Abernethy Ranger Service*	Kelburn Estate
Fife Ranger Service	Hopetoun House Ranger Service
Eday Ranger Service	Buccleuch Ranger Service - Dalkeith
Dundee City Council Ranger Service	North Lanarkshire Countryside Ranger Service
Leys Estate Ranger Service	Mount Stuart Isle of Bute Ranger Service
Sanday Ranger, Orkney	Mull and Iona Ranger Service
Scapa Flow Landscape Partnership Scheme Ranger	Midlothian Council Ranger Service (part)
South Isles Ranger Service, Orkney	Hoddum and Kinmount Ranger Service
Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site Ranger Service	North Harris Ranger Service
Angus Glens Ranger Service*	Rum Ranger Service
Balmoral Estate Ranger Service*	Buccleuch Ranger Service - Drumlanrig
Rothiemurchus Ranger Service*	Buccleuch Ranger Service - Bowhill
Glenlivet Estate*	Aberdeen City Council (part)
Brahan Ranger Service	Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park
Dams to Darnley Countryside Ranger Service	The Highland Council (Badenoch and Strathspey)*
Atholl Estates Ranger Service	

* report provided to Cairngorms National Park Authority



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