ABI Wildlife Consultancy

Biodiversity Audit on behalf of Edinburgh Napier University

Report for November 2010

Survey work.

The fungi survey is now complete with six visits in total to each campus. This will provide a more comprehensive list. Merchiston had five visits due to snow which prevented the last visit. This has proved to be both a very interesting and enjoyable survey with many interesting finds. The bird survey continues with more wintering birds appearing as the colder weather sets in. An analyses of invertebrate samples taken in August is now two thirds complete. There are some interesting species that require clarification and these will be taken to the National Museums Scotland’s specimen collection.

Survey of birds will continue this month and opportunity will be taken during this cold snowy spell as a lot of unusual species may turn up. I also hope to be able to use the snow cover to identify mammal tracks which will give some information on what species use the campuses at night. The next major work to be carried out will be a survey of grey squirrels dreys which I plan to start in January.

Fungi Survey

Most fungi were identified to species level though a few remained at family level mainly due to their decomposed condition or difficulty with their identification to take it to species level. Merchiston campus only produced two species in total and on the last (5th) visit towards the end of November the gates at the rear of the campus were locked and access could not be gained therefore the survey is incomplete. Weather prevented any further visit to Merchiston.

 

Figure 1. Number of fungi species found within each habitat type over the survey period September to November.

Amenity grassland within Craighouse and Craiglockhart campuses had the highest number of species (Figure 1). Through observation it was noted that within Craighouse most species were found along the edge of the habitat near trees or tall shrubs and little was found further within the grassland. However, the opposite was true within Craiglockhart where most species were found away from edge and within the grassland. One species of note was found and is on the UK Red Data List for protection and this is currently being verified with the help of Professor Roy Watling. It is now confirmed that *Ramaria flava* found last month is not *flava* though identification remains elusive, it is thought to be of the *Ramaria* family all of which are rare species.

Birds

With the weather change species have been moving south ahead of the snow. There was a fall of birds in Craighouse on the fruit trees on the 24th November with reasonable amounts of greenfinch, bullfinch, chaffinch and redwing which in turn were harassed by a kestrel and two sparrowhawks. Craighouse species numbers have dipped from September whereas Craiglockhart numbers are increasing (Figure 2). However, this is only four months of monitoring and I expect that these lines will fluctuate over the winter period and into next spring.



Figure 2. Number of bird species over three campuses

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