




Belfast Hills
Partnership

WILD ABOUT THE BELFAST HILLS

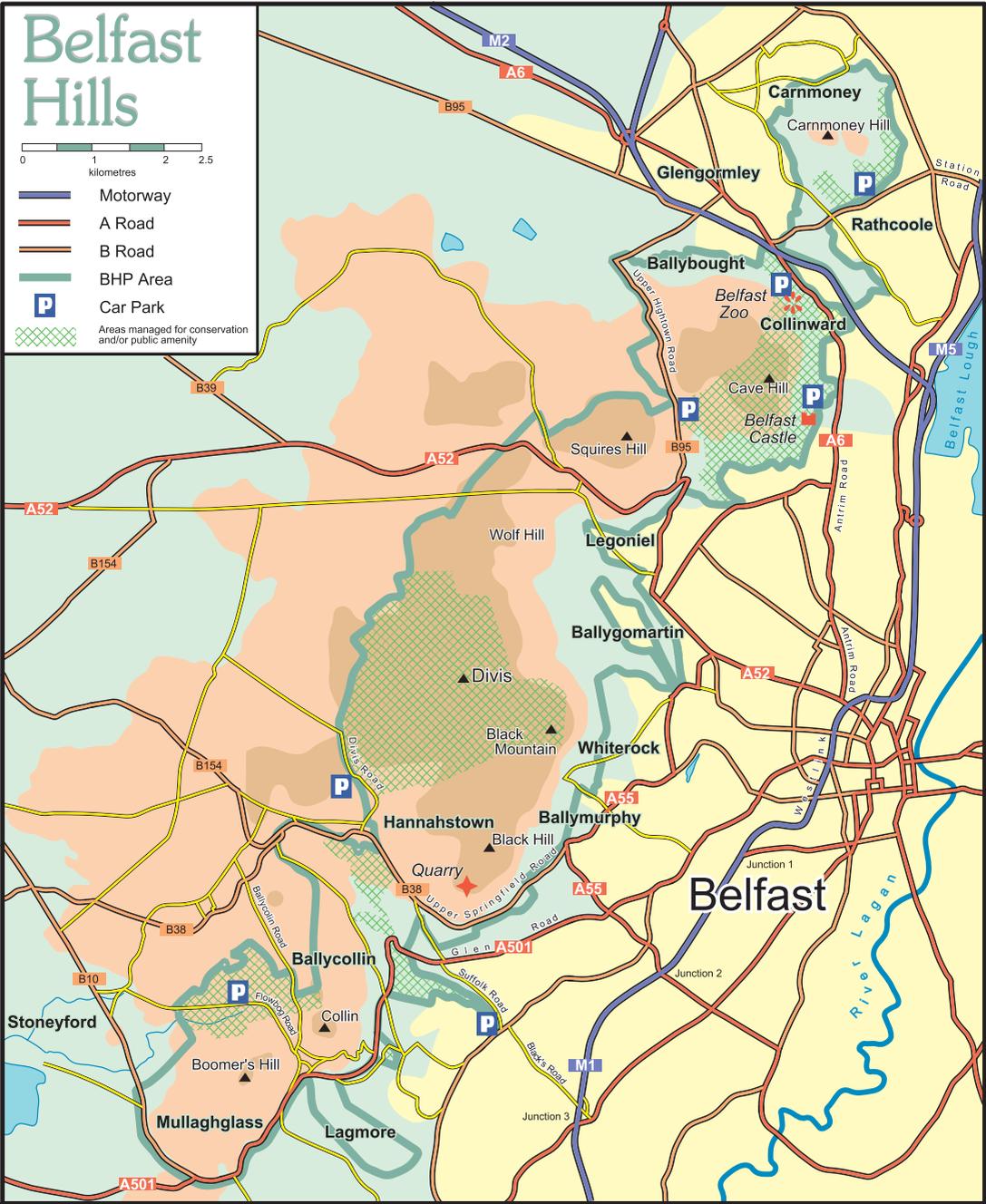
Introducing the hills' biodiversity



Belfast Hills



- Motorway
- A Road
- B Road
- BHP Area
- Car Park
- Areas managed for conservation and/or public amenity



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The Belfast Hills Partnership (BHP) was created in 2004 to provide a practical and integrated way of managing the Belfast Hills. The Partnership spearheads the conservation, protection and enhancement of the hills' natural, built and cultural heritage.

BHP encourages responsible countryside enjoyment, and aims to improve the quality of life for communities in and around the hills by working in partnership with others to sustainably develop the hills' area.

The work of BHP is made possible by the support of core funders, the Environment and Heritage Service, Belfast City Council, Lisburn City Council, Newtownabbey Borough Council, Antrim Borough Council and by a variety of project sponsors and funders.



INTRODUCTION



On behalf of the Belfast Hills Partnership, I would like to invite you to read and enjoy this booklet as it takes you on a trip amongst the wonderful fauna and flora of the Belfast Hills. This area is unique in being so close to our densely populated suburbs but still maintaining a wealth of plants and animals which add immeasurably to its beauty and tranquillity.

In this booklet, we hope to show this wealth and also our appreciation of the great work being done by local farmers, residents, local councils and conservation organisations to protect our wildlife from the threats of habitat loss, pollution and disturbance.

I hope you will visit the sites in the hills and get involved in ensuring we conserve and improve conditions for the wildlife we are privileged to have in the hills.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of our partners in the hills, ranging from the commercial operators, the local councils, community groups, farmers and nature conservation organisations for their ongoing support and assistance. Finally I would like to express our particular appreciation to the Environment and Heritage Service of the Department for the Environment and RPS Environment Ltd. for their financial support for this booklet without which its publication would not have been possible.

Ken Patterson

Chair
Belfast Hills Partnership

WILD BELFAST HILLS

The Belfast Hills present a stunning backdrop to a thriving urban area. From Colin Mountain in the south to Cammoney Hill in the north, the great shoulders of these dramatic hills have sheltered Belfast, Lisburn and Newtownabbey across the ages.

More than a backcloth, they are home to a wide variety of animals, birds, plants, fungi and insects. This array of wildlife with all its genetic variation and the habitats in which wildlife lives is known as Biodiversity. Biodiversity is simply an abbreviation of “biological diversity” and literally means the total variety of life on earth.

In the Belfast Hills, some of this biodiversity is under threat and in need of our help.

This booklet describes some of the special habitats and wildlife in the Belfast Hills. We hope to inspire you to visit the public sites in the hills, see something of this amazing wildlife for yourself and help us to conserve the wild Belfast Hills.

CORE FUNDING PARTNERS



HOMES FOR WILDLIFE

Within the Belfast Hills there are different types of habitats. A habitat is an area that provides food, water, shelter, and space for living organisms. Habitats in the Belfast Hills include:



HEATHLAND AND BOGS

Like most of Northern Ireland's mountains, the highest parts of the Belfast Hills are topped by a mosaic of upland heath and blanket bog. The thin peat and acid soils support plants which specialize in surviving on these difficult habitats. Many hollows are waterlogged most of the year and form a blanket of mosses such as sphagnum and flowering plants such as bog cotton and bog asphodel. You will also find carnivorous plants such as sundews and butterwort. Hillocks as small as a few inches above the water give other plants a chance to establish. Bell heather and bilberry, along with small bog pools, give a wonderful mosaic appearance in late summer and autumn. The summits, dominated by heather, are home to the very occasional red grouse. Birds of prey such as merlin and hen harrier hunt skylarks and meadow pipits nesting in the heathland.

WHERE TO FIND

It is best to enjoy the biodiversity of the upland heath and bogs in the height of summer and early autumn. The finest sites to visit are Divis and Black Mountain, Slievenacloy Nature Reserve and Cave Hill Country Park. All have different types of heathland.



© Laurie Campbell

RED GROUSE

A game bird found in upland areas, the red grouse feeds mainly on young shoots of heather. It is becoming an increasingly rare sight in Ireland and Great Britain, but a few pairs are known to be present on the upper hill slopes. If you are in the Belfast Hills listen out for its evocative call which sounds rather like "go-back go-back go-back".



BOG COTTON

It is not hard to guess why bog cotton, or cotton grass, received its name; it has heads that look like tufts of cotton wool! The "cotton" is made up of long white hairs that help the seeds to disperse in the wind. Bog cotton is a common sight across boggy ground with peaty, acid soils and can spread rapidly.



FRESHWATER

With the hills often shrouded in clouds, it is not surprising that they have a wide range of freshwater habitats. These vary from bog pools and damp 'flow bogs' at the summits, to small mountain streams. The streams become larger wooded rivers and waterfalls, finally feeding urban rivers down to the River Lagan and Belfast Lough, or west through countryside to Lough Neagh. Water is also supplied from groundwater sources which bubble up as springs and which have been used by people and businesses in the hills for centuries. In addition there are quarry ponds, old millponds and reservoirs scattered along the hillsides.

Each of these freshwater habitats, from stagnant to fast moving water comes with its own mix of plants, insects, amphibians, fish, birds and mammals. Upland ponds attract dragonflies and damselflies as well as newts and frogs. The fast flowing streams are home to dippers, caddis flies and mayflies. The rivers of the Belfast Hills are visited by otters looking for salmon and trout, which rely for survival on the clean waters flowing down from the hills.

WHERE TO FIND

Colin Glen has a mix of artificial lakes and wildlife ponds, that are home to aquatic insects, frogs and newts. The river has many cascades, gravel beds and deep pools: all easily seen from its network of paths. Higher up, Glenside Community Woodland has a wonderful waterfall as well as ponds and flooded quarries, often with herons, little grebes and coots amongst the reeds.



© UWT

DIPPER

This bird specialises in feeding on aquatic insects in fast flowing rivers and streams. It is often seen bobbing up and down on stones in the middle of streams, where it runs underwater to forage for food. The dipper is a good indicator of water quality and abundance of insect life. High numbers of dippers have been observed on the Colin River.



© Laurie Campbell

SALMON

Atlantic salmon can reach the impressive length of 120cm when mature. Although much of their adult life is spent at sea, salmon return to the precise freshwater tributary in which they were born, even leaping up waterfalls to reach their destination. How they return to the same spot is unknown, although odour has been suggested as playing an important role in this process. After spawning in shallow gravel beds most adults die and their young in turn migrate to sea after a couple of years.

Respect the countryside - don't disturb or feed wildlife.



GRASSLAND

Much of Northern Ireland's lowland grassland has been intensively farmed, heavily fertilized, re-seeded and drained, all of which unfortunately lead to loss of diversity and wildlife. Correct grazing levels are essential to maintain these grasslands for the future benefit of wildlife. Too much grazing leaves the land poached and damaged while too little enables scrub to grow preventing wildflower growth and resulting in the eventual loss of species rich grassland.

In the Belfast Hills there are important pockets of 'unimproved' grassland (grassland which has not been intensively managed) which provide a habitat for wildlife to flourish. These range from damp rough pasture in the higher stretches often dominated by rushes to semi-improved meadows on the lower slopes and areas of thin, poor soil associated with quarry workings.

The importance of grassland is reinforced by the range of priority species found in the meadows of the Belfast Hills. The Irish hare appears to have a number of strongholds along the region, while the upland pasture in the hills is still home to curlew, lapwing and snipe, all declining in Northern Ireland. These ground nesting birds can be disturbed by dogs, highlighting the importance of keeping dogs under control when walking in the Belfast Hills.

The range of grasslands is reflected in the a variety of flora and fauna which includes spotted, marsh and butterfly orchids, high numbers of wax cap fungi, moths, as well as wood white and common blue butterflies, reinforcing the value of these habitats to local biodiversity. More uncommon species such as the marsh fritillary may also be seen in grasslands.

Skylarks and meadow pipits are easily seen and heard as they still nest in large numbers in both rough pasture and heathland. One iconic but elusive species that has rapidly declined throughout Northern Ireland is the barn owl. Recent occasional reports suggest that it is still found in parts of the hills, where it is totally dependent on the high numbers of small mammals found in rough meadows to survive.

WHERE TO FIND

Slievenacloy Nature Reserve is a good example of species-rich grassland, with a wide range of orchids and butterflies in June and July in particular. The rough pastures of Divis and the Black Mountain are also well worth visiting during this time. An early morning visit there may be rewarded with a wonderful soundtrack of bird song such as skylarks and meadow pipits, and you might even see a displaying snipe.



© UWT

SNIPE

These shy waders specialize in feeding in soft mud and wet soil which they probe with that wonderful beak looking for worms and insects. They feed and nest in rough pasture and heath in the hills, where in early summer they change character and show off in wonderful displays, producing noises which sound just like a bleating goat - but from the sky!



© M. Brown

IRISH HARE

There are still Irish hare found in the Belfast Hills despite a substantial decline in their population in Northern Ireland in the last 10 to 20 years. These incredible animals have long powerful back legs that help them reach speeds of up to 30 miles per hour and jump heights of around two metres! Hares shelter in a hollow depression above ground known as a form and raise their leverets there. They can live for up to nine years.



© R. Thompson

MARSH FRITILLARY

This beautiful butterfly was recorded at Divis, Black Mountain and Slievenacloy up to the mid 1990s. It feeds on devil's-bit scabious, a relatively common plant in the hills. Opinion is divided as to whether it may still be present in the Belfast Hills, with tantalizing sightings being reported in more recent years. Watch this space!

Control dogs - Please keep dogs on a lead especially near farm animals.



Hedges dominate much of the lower areas of the Belfast Hills. They can be extremely valuable for biodiversity when managed appropriately. Hedges act as wildlife corridors allowing animals to move safely to new feeding sites, often carrying plant seeds as they go. Their autumn flush of fruit such as haws, sloes, elderberries and hips are vital to many over-wintering birds such as redwings and fieldfares that use the hedges of the hills to skirt along the edges of Belfast and up the Lagan Valley. Spreading more slowly along these vital corridors are woodland plants such as primroses, violets and wild strawberries.

WHERE TO FIND

Each of our woodlands has a distinctive character. Carnmoney Hill has a mixture of ancient oak and hazel coppice, mature hedges and new broadleaf plantations. Colin Glen is a wonderful atmospheric wooded river glen with mature broadleaf woodland comprising oak, ash, aspen and alder. The Belfast Castle Estate is a naturalised 19th century planted estate, which leads along the Cave Hill Country Park onto wilder woodland at Hazelwood.

WOODLAND AND HEDGES



The Belfast Hills contain a range of woodland habitats, reminders of when Belfast would have been surrounded by forests. The broadleaf woodlands which remain are covered in a fantastic variety of woodland plants such as bluebell, violet, wood anemone and wood sorrel. The build up of fallen leaves over the years means that deciduous woods produce rich, fertile soil and considerable harvests of berries and nuts - all good news for insects,

birds, bats, hedgehogs, fungi and our remaining red squirrels. More recently planted coniferous woodlands may be seen at Glenside Community Woodland.

Parts of Carnmoney Hill and Cave Hill have been classified as 'long established woodland', while the upper parts of Colin Glen Forest Park have been classed as possibly being even older 'ancient woodland' (Woodland Trust Inventory Report 2007). Mixed deciduous woodland is found at Colin Glen Forest Park and Carnmoney Hill. Mixed ash woodland occurs in areas such as Cave Hill Country Park.

Very steep and stony areas, for example river valleys, are one of the few areas of ground that have been rarely grazed, planted or built on. One use for these steep areas would have been hazel coppice, cut down every few years for fencing, wattle and daub or firewood. Hazelwood, above Belfast Zoo, is an example of this.

Within the hills are numerous unplanned and abandoned corners, and strips where grassland has been colonised by shrubs and small trees, which is classed as 'scrub'. The mixture of rough grass, thickets and bushes of blackthorn and hawthorn, make a wonderful place for song birds such as grasshopper warblers, sedge warblers and willow warblers to nest and feed in.



© Mark Smyth

BATS

There are eight different species of bats known to live in Northern Ireland. In the Belfast Hills the most common bats are pipistrelles and Leisler's which roost in both trees and buildings. The saying 'blind as a bat' is totally unfounded as bats have very good eyesight. Their most highly developed sense however is hearing as they use a form of sonar to locate their food. One pipistrelle can eat up to 3,500 insects in one night.



© BCC

WOOD SORREL

This plant is a good indicator of old woodland as it takes a very long time to spread and establish. It has clover-like leaves and a beautiful white flower in spring, creating a white carpet where there is moist and rich woodland soil.



QUARRIES AND CLIFFS

Also known as Inland Rock, quarries and cliffs contain exposed rock surfaces which are almost devoid of vegetation. The Belfast Hills are rich in limestone and basalt with numerous quarries but few natural cliff faces. Impressive natural cliff faces may be seen at Cave Hill. These were formed by a series of ancient lava flows. Quarries, both existing and abandoned, can be very important as they provide extra vertical faces for birds such as peregrine falcons and ravens to nest safely. Spoil and clay often collects at the bottom of faces and results in poor soil, ideal for unimproved grasslands. This is why many quarries have good orchid populations. Woodland perimeters have often been planted in the past to minimise impact on landscape and now provide cover and nesting areas for woodland birds. Finally the lower stretches of older quarries in particular often have quite extensive ponds and wetlands, great for newts, wetland plants, waterfowl and aquatic insects such as damselflies. All these features, plus the fact that working and abandoned quarries are often comparatively secure and secluded for wildlife, combine to play an important role in the biodiversity of the Belfast Hills. Clever restoration of quarries can therefore be particularly rewarding, as long as they make the most of the above habitats and ensure that invasive species such as Japanese knotweed or Himalayan balsam, often found in abandoned quarries, are kept out.

WHERE TO FIND

Cave Hill is rightly famous for its natural cliff faces around which ravens, buzzards and peregrines can often be spotted. Most quarries are either working or not suitable for visiting safely. Fortunately there are a number with access to the public, such as the two basalt quarries at Glenside Community Woodland and the old limestone quarry within Cave Hill Country Park.



DAMSELFLIES

These spectacular insects are bedecked with iridescent green, red or blue colours and are often found flying or resting near quarry pools. They catch midges and small flies on the wing and take them to nearby vegetation to feed. The adults live for a few summer weeks while their larvae are underwater predators for up to three years. During this time they are sensitive to pollution, so their presence is a strong indication of good local water quality.



© Laurie Campbell

PEREGRINE FALCONS

Peregrine falcons have been called nature's finest flying machines. They have been clocked diving or swooping at speeds of up to 130 miles per hour! Peregrine falcons feed primarily on birds they take in the air. Their prey includes ducks, pheasants, and pigeons. Females lay two to four eggs in a scrape on cliff ledges or on the ground. Many falcons make their homes in working quarries despite the risk of the disturbance of quarrying activities.

Plan ahead - know where to walk, what to wear and how to minimise waste.



GO EXPLORE!



The following pages have details of the sites within the hills which are open to the public. For maps and public transport information about these sites please visit www.belfasthills.org



MANAGING BIODIVERSITY IN THE BELFAST HILLS



Large parts of the Belfast Hills are made up of privately owned agricultural land. Farming is essential to maintain this landscape and conserve the biodiversity of the Belfast Hills. Despite difficult times for agriculture we need farmers and landowners to maintain the correct levels of grazing and management to preserve our species rich grasslands. Many farmers and businesses within the hills are successfully managing their land for biodiversity and we would like to acknowledge this work.

Roughly 30 percent of the hills is managed by an array of nature conservation organisations such as National Trust, Ulster Wildlife Trust, Colin Glen Trust and Woodland Trust and local authorities including Belfast and Newtownabbey Councils. As well as being open to the public, these sites are commonly managed to conserve and enhance the habitats and species that make them so special. The Belfast Hills Partnership plays an active role in helping to integrate this work and encourage information sharing and joint projects to maximise efforts to enhance biodiversity in the Belfast Hills.

Understand access - Know where you are allowed to go and leave gates as you find them.

CARNMONEY HILL

Owned by: Newtownabbey Borough Council
Managed by: Woodland Trust
Grid reference: J341825

HABITATS AND WILDLIFE

Carnmoney Hill provides a vital wildlife haven in the middle of an otherwise urban landscape. The hill consists of a number of habitats such as wetland, long established woodland, newly planted areas and open farmland which are home to animals such as badgers and foxes. The mechanical sounding song of the grasshopper warbler is often heard on the lower slopes of the hill. Look out for the five-spot burnet moth here, a day flying moth with five red spots on its black wings. It is less common locally than its six-spotted relative! In spring the woodland is carpeted with bluebells, while on a dark night in summer you may be rewarded with the sight of bats emerging from the woodland to hunt for food.

HOW TO GET THERE

From Belfast City take the M2 then the M5. At the end of the M5 there is a roundabout, head straight (signed Carrickfergus). At next roundabout take the first left onto Station Road (signed Glengormley). Travel for one mile to a mini roundabout. Go straight. Take the first road on the right immediately after the traffic lights (Knockenagh Avenue). Travel over the speed bumps for a quarter of a mile until you arrive at Rathfern Community Centre with play park on the left. Parking is in the adjacent lay-by.

Be safe - pay attention to signs, weather conditions and traffic levels.



CAVE HILL COUNTRY PARK

Owned and managed by: Belfast City Council

Grid reference: J329793

HABITATS AND WILDLIFE



The habitats in Cave Hill Country Park range from woodland and parkland to meadows and moorland, and each area has particular species associated with it. In the mature woodland can be found many garden and woodland birds such as chaffinches, great tits and wrens, while growing underfoot are carpets of bluebells, wild garlic and wood anemone. Towards dusk you might glimpse a badger or a bat, emerging on their nightly hunt. On the heathland, where skylarks and meadow

pipits can be heard and various birds of prey roam, the ground cover is a mix of species such as heather, bilberry, and the brightly coloured yellow gorse. In summer, many butterflies, including the meadow brown, ringlet and common blue, fly over the upland meadows.

HOW TO GET THERE

From Belfast City go north along the Westlink and take the Clifton Street exit. At the top of slipway turn left, then at roundabout take the third exit onto the Antrim Road (Belfast Castle and Zoo are signposted). The main car parks are at Belfast Castle and Zoo, other car parks are at Carr's Glen (via Ballysillan Road) and Upper Hightown Road. There is also a pedestrian entrance at the Upper Cavehill Road.

DIVIS AND THE BLACK MOUNTAIN

Owned and managed by: The National Trust

Grid reference: J266741

HABITATS AND WILDLIFE



A walk through the mosaic of grassland, heath and bog that make up Divis and the Black Mountain may reward you with sightings of upland breeding birds such as red grouse, stonechat, skylark and snipe. The site is also home to badgers and hares. Butterflies such as the small heath may be seen flitting across the site.

Peregrine falcons also feed in this area so it is always worthwhile keeping a watchful eye on the sky above. In autumn also look out for fungi across this site as 13 species of waxcap fungi have already been identified, one of which was a new record for Northern Ireland.

HOW TO GET THERE

Leave the M1 at Junction 2. Take the A55 (outer ring), signed Falls. Go straight across the first two roundabouts. From dual carriageway, turn left onto Upper Springfield Road. Continue for about 2.5 miles. Shortly after national speed limit sign, turn right onto Divis Road (signposted). The car park is 0.5 miles on the left hand side.

Consider others - don't interfere with livestock, crops or machinery. Minimise noise.



SLIEVENACLOY NATURE RESERVE

Owned and managed by: Ulster Wildlife Trust

Grid reference: J249710

HABITATS AND WILDLIFE



Slievenacloy contains a number of different habitats, namely species-rich grassland, wet heathland, rush pasture, fen, bog and streams.

Northern Ireland has lost over 95 percent of its species-rich grassland in the last 50 years, so places such as Slievenacloy are important refuges for biodiversity, with many species making their homes there.

Visit the site in spring to see a number of ground nesting birds such as skylarks and snipe. In summer butterflies and moths may be found feeding on the orchids and wildflowers found in profusion across the site. In autumn the brightly coloured waxcap fungi may be seen.

HOW TO GET THERE

From Belfast leave the M1 at Junction 3. Turn right off slip road under M1 bridge, to the end of Black's Road. At 'T' junction turn left. After 50 yards turn right at traffic lights onto Suffolk Road. At end of the road turn left onto the Glen Road. After 2.5 miles turn right just before Colin Glen Road filling station onto Ballycolin Road. After 0.5 mile turn left onto the Flowbog Road. The entrance is found about 0.7 mile on the right hand side of this road.

From Lisburn take the B101, at the junction with the A501 turn right. After about two miles you will see the Colin Glen filling station on your left. From there follow the above directions.

GLENSIDE COMMUNITY WOODLAND

Owned by: Cemex Ltd

Managed by: Bryson Charitable Group

Grid reference: J271727

HABITATS AND WILDLIFE



© Catherine Bertrand

This site varies from large areas of coniferous plantation and young mixed broad leaved woodland to wetlands, ponds and grassland. Glenside Community Woodland contains a wide range of wildflowers including ragged robin, lady's mantle and a variety of orchids. In the spring many frogs may be seen, mating in the many small ponds. On a sunny summer's day also look for dragonflies, damselflies and butterflies which are found in abundance throughout the site. If you visit this woodland you may also observe a kestrel hovering overhead or a little grebe or tufted duck swimming in the flooded quarry hole.

HOW TO GET THERE

You can walk to the site through Colin Glen. Pedestrian access also available on the Upper Springfield Road immediately before the car breakers on the left side of the road. (See Divis directions for Upper Springfield Road).



COLIN GLEN FOREST PARK

Owned by: Environment and Heritage Service
Managed by: Colin Glen Trust
Grid reference: J285705

HABITATS AND WILDLIFE



The forest park is largely broadleaf deciduous woodland with wonderful stretches of bluebells, wood anemone and lesser celandine on the valley slopes in spring. The park also contains two wildlife ponds, river cascades, pools and species rich grassland. Foxes, badgers and rabbits have found homes in the park, along with a wide range of birds which nest in the trees and open grassland. The site is also renowned for its bats. If you keep a watchful eye on the Colin River that runs through

the glen you may see dippers flying along near the surface of the water. From time to time even otters have been seen along the river. If you're very lucky you may also catch a glimpse of a red squirrel in the upper part of the glen.

HOW TO GET THERE

Leave the M1 at Junction 3. Turn right off the slip road under M1 bridge and head straight onto Black's Road. Go to 'T' junction at the end of Black's Road, turn left. After the next set of traffic lights continue for 100 yards, Colin Glen car park on the right.

OTHER SITES OF BIODIVERSITY INTEREST

As well as the main sites in the Belfast Hills, there are a number of smaller sites which are important for the wildlife of the hills. These include:

LIGONIEL PARK

Ligoniel Park was originally part of the grounds of Ligoniel House, which was owned by the manager of the old Ligoniel Mill. The park's pond was once a mill dam, known locally as Boodle's Dam. The park contains mature trees, and species rich limestone grassland.

GLENCAIRN PARK

Situated at the bottom of the Black Mountain and close to the Glencairn River, Glencairn Park is a large open grassland with beautiful mature trees and woodland.

CARR'S GLEN LINEAR PARK

Carr's Glen Linear Park is managed as part of Cave Hill Country Park. It offers visitors good access to the Cave Hill area from the Ballysillan Road. The Milewater Stream runs through Carr's Glen and the remains of an old mill can still be seen alongside the stream.

FORTH RIVER PARK

Estate lands around Forth River House, which included ground alongside Forth River, were opened to the public in 1975. There is a lovely walkway alongside the steep sided stream and woodland.

VALLEY LEISURE PARK

This is a large town park with numerous walking routes as well as a wildlife pond, open meadowland and wooded areas.

THRONE WOOD

Situated on the Antrim Road, this patch of mature woodland is managed by the Woodland Trust which has planted two thousand saplings to enhance the site. The site has wetlands and good bat populations.

BELFAST ZOO

As well as the many open spaces to see wildlife in the hills, there is also good biodiversity work being undertaken at Belfast Zoo. This is the venue for vital global wildlife projects such as conservation breeding programmes of endangered species as well as encouragement of local Belfast Hills' wildlife such as bats and red squirrels. The Zoo is open 10am every day of the year apart from Christmas and Boxing Day and is signposted from the M2 and Antrim Road.

Minimise impact - take all litter home, extinguish matches and cigarettes, don't pollute water.

GET INVOLVED!

There is a range of ways in which you, your family and friends can get involved in looking after the Belfast Hills. You can visit the sites, attend events, keep up to date with the Belfast Hills news by adding your name to our mailing list, volunteer a few hours of your time, record biodiversity and put into practice some of the tips found in this booklet.

VOLUNTEERING WITH THE BELFAST HILLS PARTNERSHIP

The Belfast Hills Partnership, in conjunction with its partners Colin Glen Trust, the National Trust, the Ulster Wildlife Trust and the Woodland Trust runs a number of practical conservation days throughout the Belfast Hills. Consequently there are plenty of opportunities for people to get their hands dirty!

The Belfast Hills Partnership is also looking for people who have some knowledge of plant, animal or bird species identification to help us carry out biological surveys throughout the Belfast Hills. A limited number of office based volunteering opportunities exist.

RECORDING BIODIVERSITY

This booklet has suggested some of the main species to watch out for. It is important for site managers to know what wildlife has been spotted and where. We need you to tell us of any species you have seen so we can record the information and provide for that species in years to come. You can help by contacting the Belfast Hills Partnership if you see any interesting wildlife while you are out and about in the Belfast Hills.

For more details about recording wildlife please visit www.belfasthills.org and check out our Biodiversity section.



THE BIGGER PICTURE

In Northern Ireland we have lost over 50 species during the last century, with many more species and habitats in danger of disappearing, especially at the local level. On a world scale the rate of loss is now recognised to be a cause for serious concern, requiring concerted international action to prevent continued loss of biodiversity. Consequently Biodiversity Action Plans and Projects have been carried out at a global, European, UK, Ireland and local level. Within Northern Ireland the Environment and Heritage Service is producing Habitat and Species Action Plans, as well as raising people's awareness through campaigns such as "It's in our nature". Visit www.ehsni.gov.uk/biodiversity for more information.

Many councils throughout Northern Ireland and bodies such as the Quarry Products Association NI have employed Biodiversity Officers to work at a local level in partnership with individuals, communities and non government organisations such as the Belfast Hills Partnership to protect biodiversity. The production of this booklet forms part of the bigger biodiversity picture - it links closely with Local Biodiversity Action Plans and helps to promote biodiversity in the minds of the people who live in and visit the Belfast Hills. To find out about the work of the Biodiversity Officers in the Belfast Hills area please visit

www.belfastcity.gov.uk/biodiversity

www.newtownabbey.gov.uk/environment/bio.asp

www.antrim.gov.uk

www.lisburncity.gov.uk

www.qpani.org

If you have any questions or comments after reading this booklet please feel free to contact the Belfast Hills Partnership.

Caring for the hills, their wildlife and people together...

CONTACT THE BELFAST HILLS PARTNERSHIP:

Tel: 028 9060 3466 Email: info@belfasthills.org Write: 163 Stewartstown Rd, Belfast, BT17 0HW

CONTACT THE BELFAST HILLS PARTNERSHIP

If you are interested in:

- Being added to the BHP contacts directory
- Volunteering with the Belfast Hills Partnership



You can email us at info@belfasthills.org, phone us on Tel: 028 9060 3466, or complete this form and send it to us at the below address.

Name.....

Address.....

Email Address

Contact Telephone Number

NB Your information will not be passed on to any third parties.

Belfast Hills Partnership
163 Stewartstown Road, Belfast, BT17 OHW



- Landscape Architecture
- Environmental Impact Assessment
- Town & Country Planning
- Ecology



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Common spotted Orchid



Belfast Hills Partnership
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An Agency within the Department of the
Environment
www.doeni.gov.uk



**Environment &
Heritage Service**
www.ehsni.gov.uk

