Scotland's environment NEWS

life

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Issue 7
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Welcome

Welcome to the 7th newsletter from **Scotland's Environment** Web. In this issue you will find out all the exciting news and updates that have taken place since our last edition, published in May 2015.

We trust you find this edition informative. Remember to follow us on Twitter or join us on Facebook and be the first hear about some exciting announcements coming up over the next few months.

Read about the new features within **Scotland's Environment** Web including: Air Quality information, The Atlas of Scotland and a dedicated Back to School Section launching our extensive "Get Learning" resources, supporting teachers across Scotland and inviting school entries in "Our Environment" competition with chance of winning £1000!

We are always keen to hear views and ideas on how we can improve our services, so please do not hesitate to contact us.

Leading Edge: putting Scotland in the forefront of information sharing, data visualisation and citizen engagement

In this digital age, **Scotland's Environment** Web (SEWeb) is leading the way in developing digital technologies which will help the public to find out more about Scotland's environment. People expect more from information provision than simply reproducing books and publications on screen. They want interest and interactivity – to be able to visualise information spatially and in other ways to find out what is important. This is truer than ever when it comes to Scotland's environment, and the scientific data and information which is collected, researched, analysed and used.

SEWeb's innovative approach, providing access to data and information in a digital format, brings together information on Scotland's environment so that it is easily available and in a useable form. Jointly funded by the European Union's LIFE+ programme and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and with input and support from a number of partner organisations across Scotland, the SEWeb project is committed to developing a modern and dynamic approach to presenting information.

David Pirie, Director of Science and Strategy at SEPA, says: "The environment is all interconnected. What happens in one area has a consequence for another and therefore the science and research we do needs to be multidisciplinary and joined up. We needed a way for partners to interact and bring data together and then to make that data accessible and communicate it. SEWeb achieves all of that."

SEWeb has put Scotland at the European forefront of sharing environmental information, prioritising problems and involving citizens in assessing and improving their own environment, with a number of exciting developments and changes coming to the website over the coming year. "I think it's a fantastic public resource," says David Pirie. "It's a tremendous opportunity to make a real difference to the environment. It's an opportunity to allow us to engage with people, get the knowledge and understanding out of all our raw data and find out about the issues that matter the most."

Ed Mackey, Unit Manager for Knowledge and Information Management at SEWeb partner, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), agrees and says the partnership aspect of SEWeb is fundamental: "More than ever before we need to work together to use our expertise, knowledge and other resources to best effect. SEWeb adds value through a shared understanding of environmental opportunities and constraints founded on common access to a comprehensive and trusted evidence base."
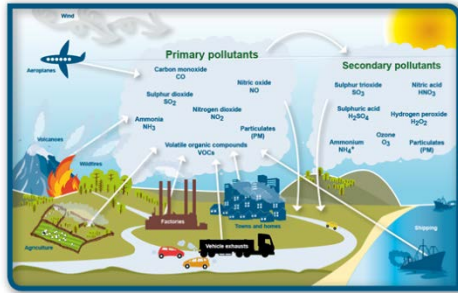

Find out more: [About us](#)

Fresh Air: a new way to understand what we breathe

Clean air is a basic requirement of life, yet across many urban areas air pollution can adversely impact on the health and the well-being of a large number of people.

The quality of our air is important to all of us and we all have a part to play in maintaining good air quality. To help increase the understanding and engagement of individuals and communities in air quality, we have created a new area within **Scotland's Environment** Web to find all the information about Air Quality in one place. So it pulls Air Quality themed, informative, involving and interactive data from all over the various sections of the web

Perhaps most exciting is the way **Scotland's Environment** Web introduces air quality as an interdisciplinary topic for learners from upper primary to lower secondary stages of school.

We explain the science behind air pollutants, the consequences for us and how our actions contribute to those effects. Young learners are taken on a journey to school with activities to help them understand the impact of travelling to school by different methods.
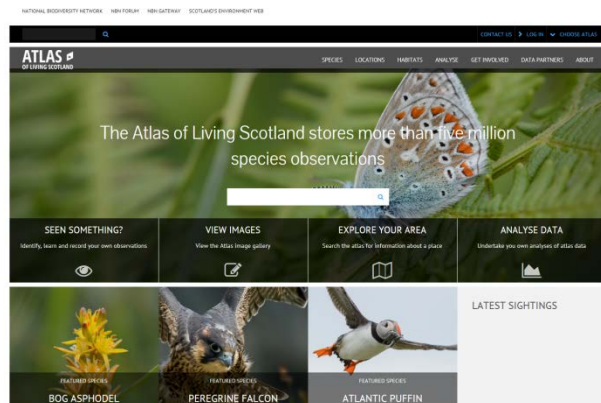

Teaching packs which contain leaflets, posters and even templates for letters to write to parents also help to push schools through the Eco Schools Accreditation as an extra incentive.

Take a fresh look at Air   -   Air Quality | Scotland's Environment Web

Atlas of Living Scotland – Biodiversity Gateway launched

Since its establishment in 2000, the National Biodiversity Network, (NBN) has developed into a world class repository for UK species data. Information is held by many different organisations and the individuals who collect it in a variety of formats, from computer databases to handwritten record cards. This means that although a huge amount of information exists, it isn't always easy to access.

National Biodiversity Network (NBN) idea could not be simpler: capture wildlife data once in a standard electronic form; integrate data from different sources; and use the internet to enable data to be used many times in different ways by as many people as possible. However, much of the embedded logic and functionality is technically complex and costly to maintain, outdated and unsuited to the growing needs of UK data providers and users. Much of it is not open, it is not particularly intuitive or user-friendly, and it is unable to fully meet new data standards.

To address these concerns the NBN have recently selected the Australian model of a biodiversity data platform and has now built The Atlas of Living Scotland, which will also serve as a pilot for a UK-wide roll out of the new data infrastructure for biodiversity.

One of the first tasks in this process was to assemble key stakeholders to provide more information and to seek advice and input about atlas user needs such as functionalities and interface requirements for this new online platform. The first Stakeholder Partnership meeting for the Atlas of Living Scotland (AoLS) was held on Friday 24th July and was attended by 39 organisations in Scotland, involved in biological recording or working with and analysing biodiversity data.

The feedback from the gathered representatives was that there was strong support for the AoLS implementation and for the improved data infrastructure and tools for data display and analysis. A group of ten people nominated themselves to be part of the atlas user testing group that will work from September onwards to ensure the interface is intuitive and functional.

The powerful new biodiversity gateway for Scotland as a Daughter Website within the family of **Scotland's Environment** Web (SEWeb) has now been launched, making biodiversity data more readily accessible for a range of policy, educational and broader public purposes.

This new resource also fits well with The Scottish Government Digital Future High Level Operating Framework which encourages effective use of all forms of data to accomplish our business outcomes, common standards and interoperability for collaboration locally, nationally and internationally, maximises delivery on-line and through public sector data sharing in order to increase public use, confidence and satisfaction

The Atlas of Living Scotland will be operational by end-August 2015, with further development and testing through to March 2016. Anyone wishing to join the user testing group should email info@als.scot

You can find the Atlas of Living Scotland here.

Back To School! Exciting new teaching resources designed *by teachers for teachers*

The newly launched Get Learning section of **Scotland's Environment** Web is a fantastic resource for all learners and **teaching** practitioners with maps, data, resources and useful links – all of which have been carefully matched with Curriculum for Excellence levels and National Qualifications.

Working with Education Scotland and a group of teachers and educators we found teachers wanted to deliver environmental topics in class but could not easily find accurate and reliable content in one place. Get Learning is Scotland's first one-stop-shop for environmental data that can be used across different age groups and subject areas – directly linked to the *Curriculum for Excellence* and National Qualifications. The new online resources were developed as a result of extensive engagement with young people, teachers and partner organisations

You'll also find a list of mobile apps for each topic. These can be used on mobile devices and tablets to encourage young people to get involved with their environment, collect their own data and become citizen scientists.

Get Learning gives young people the opportunity to share their own images and thoughts about the environment. Instagram posts using **#GetLearningScot** feed through to the site and scroll across the bottom of each page allowing young people to engage with their local environment, share ideas and ask questions.

With links to citizen science projects and surveys, there are opportunities for learners to get involved in collecting data about

their own environment and taking steps to conserving and improving it. **Get Learning** directs practitioners to the information, data and maps they need to deliver learning and teaching about Scotland's environment. A great tool for information handling and analysing real-life data.

Get Learning project is managed by SEPA on behalf of partners and supported by European LIFE funding, is committed to improving access to data for schools – pupils and teachers.

[Get Learning](#)

Enter *Our Environment* Competition now!

Are you a young person with a passion for the environment, or do you know a young person that cares about environmental issues and wants to make a difference to their local community? If the answer is yes, why not get involved in this year's Our Environment competition?

Our Environment competition is an exciting competition run by [Scotland's Environment Web](#) in partnership with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Keep Scotland Beautiful, Young Scot and Education Scotland.

Open to those of primary and secondary school age living in Scotland, entries are welcome from individuals, school classes, clubs or groups. We want you to:

- find a local environmental problem;
- investigate it;
- tell us how they would reduce the problem and make their environment better.

The winners of each of the competition age categories will win **£100**, with the overall winning entry receiving **£1,000**, as well as help and support to take the idea forward. This entry will also be nominated for the Young Scot Awards.

Entries can be produced in any format, but must be submitted electronically. Formats can include:

- written work;
- animation;
- comic format;
- art work;

- audio or video.

The closing date for entries is **31 March 2016**, so there's plenty of time to get your entry completed and submitted. Further information about the competition can be found here Our Environment Competition | Scotland's Environment Web

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New Releases on Scotland's Environment Web since last newsletter

NEW! **Discover Data** tools including Air Quality, Ground Water, Bathing Waters & Scottish Pollution Release Inventory and Aquaculture Marine Fish farm

Scotland's Environment is proud to be one of several partners to help produce the **Institute of Medicine - Air Quality, Health, Wellbeing and Behaviour Report**.

Indicators and Data Visitors to Scotland's Environment Web will now be able to see the underlying datasets that have been used to assess the State of Scotland's environment (SoE). The information is arranged under the environmental topics of air, climate and weather, land, water and environmental and relate to chapters of the State of the Environment report.

Helpful **Video Clips** for new Users to find their way around **Scotland's Environment** web.

What improvements can we make?

To help us gain a better understanding of our users and their views, we're interested in hearing what you think about the new website. Please take a few moments to complete our survey.

Contact Us

If you are interested in finding out more information about any of these items or want to get involved, please contact us.

Please forward this email to friends or colleagues you think may be interested so they can subscribe to future **Scotland's Environment** (LIFE+) newsletters.

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forward to a friend