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Leaves

An arrangement of leaves - initially dried and then re-moistened in preparation for scanning their leaf area.

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Welcome to the March issue of *Ecotype*, the Biodiversity and Conservation Newsletter for the Ecology Division of Forest Research.

It is a year since I took over the role as editor of *Ecotype*. The new format of our newsletter has been a resounding success judging from the feedback I have received from both my fellow ecologists at Forest Research and you, our readership. I have thoroughly enjoyed developing the new approach to our newsletter, and editing and producing it over the last year, and I am looking forward to doing so in the year to come.

This special issue does not contain individual articles on our research projects like previous issues. Instead, our Head of Division, **Chris Quine**, has taken the opportunity to put together an up-to-date overview of the work of the Division. He describes the programme groups and the people involved and lists some highlights from recent activities.

This is complemented by a number of short news items.

I hope you will find this overview interesting and helpful towards understanding what we are working on and how to contact us.

Enjoy this issue of *Ecotype*.

Andrea Kiewitt
Editor

An overview of the work of Ecology Division

Chris Quine



It is a year since we introduced the new format and new editor of *Ecotype*. We have been pleased with the feedback received from a variety of readers – expressing interest in specific items, or an overall appreciation of the opportunity to receive a brief update on happenings within Ecology Division of Forest Research.

I would like to thank Andrea Kiewitt for her success in marshalling the collective efforts, and bringing *Ecotype* to your attention.



Members of Ecology Division at their recent divisional meeting in Abergavenny

This article provides a brief overview of who we are. Please visit our [web pages](#), read past and future issues of [Ecotype](#), or contact [any of us direct](#) should you want to know more.

Ecology Division is one of five research divisions of [Forest Research](#). We are a group of scientists who work on a broad range of topics connected with the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in Britain's woodlands and related landscapes; and on the application of ecological knowledge to broad multi-disciplinary topics connected to sustainable forest management and integrated land use. We carry out research, are involved in knowledge transfer and give advice to policy makers and practitioners.

Much of our research is funded by the Forestry Commission but, in common with other research groups, we also seek funding from external sources. In recent months we have worked for Defra, Scottish Natural Heritage, Countryside Council for Wales, SNIFFER, COFORD, a number of local authorities and regional councils, UK research councils and European bodies.

A lot of our work is collaborative in nature. We work with colleagues in other FR groups, e.g. social scientists, pathologists, and also in partnerships with other research agencies, universities, and land managers. With our projects we contribute actively to FR initiatives in Climate Change, Urban Greening, and Biomass Energy.

People within Ecology Division

Research team	<i>Habitats and herbivores</i>	<i>Species</i>	<i>Genetic resources</i>	<i>Landscape ecology</i>	<i>Knowledge management</i>
Co-ordinator	Ralph Harmer	Brenda Mayle	Joan Cottrell	Kevin Watts	Duncan Ray
Members	Russell Anderson	Alice Broome	Jason Hubert	Chris Quine	Louise Sing
	Helen Armstrong	Roger Trout	Sam Samuel	Phil Handley	Georgios Xenakis
	Robin Gill	Mark Ferryman	Stuart A'Hara	Amy Eycott	Mike Smith
	Andrea Kiewitt	Rob Coope	Tytti Vanhala	Darren Moseley	Stephanie Ballantyne
	Rebecca Brassey	Gemma Brandt		Jordan Chetcuti	A N Other
	A N Other	A N Other		Monica de Ioanni	

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Within our Division, we group our work loosely around 5 themes which are listed here together with the co-ordinators, and main FC programmes undertaken by group members:

Habitats and herbivore impacts – *Ralph Harmer*

[Impacts of large herbivores on woodlands](#)

Management and restoration of priority open habitats

[Priority native woodland habitats](#)

Species conservation and control – *Brenda Mayle*

[Alien and invasive vertebrates \(including grey squirrels\)](#)

[Priority species and their conservation](#)

Genetic resources and molecular genetics – *Joan Cottrell*

[Genetic conservation](#)

[Forest reproductive materials](#)

Rural and urban landscape ecology – *Kevin Watts*


[Landscape ecology and spatial planning](#)

Knowledge synthesis and management – *Duncan Ray*

Biodiversity indicators and evaluation

Decision support systems for forest ecology

Ecological Site Classification for climate change

Work conducted for the Forestry Commission addresses needs identified in the [FC Science and Innovation Strategy](#)  423K subsequently articulated by country representatives at the Programme Advisory Group, and purchased by the Corporate and Forestry Support Group.

Highlights from recent activities

These snippets will give you an idea of the range of activities in which we are involved. Visit our [website](#) for more details, or contact any [Division member](#).

Climate Change – [Duncan Ray](#)'s information note '[Impacts of climate change on forestry in Scotland – a synopsis of spatial modelling research](#)' ^{921K} was launched by Michael Russell, the Minister for the Environment in the Scottish Government. It received coverage on the BBC and a range of newspapers including 'The Sun' under the headline 'Dry, Dry, Dry'. For further information see <http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/climatechangescotland>

Species Conservation – [Alice Broome](#), [Brenda Mayle](#) and [Roger Trout](#) provided information to FC policy advisors in preparing guidance on how to accommodate European Protected Species legislation.

Molecular Genetics – [Stuart A'Hara](#), [Tytti Vanhala](#), and [Joan Cottrell](#) have developed a real-time PCR test to tell the droppings of black grouse, red grouse and capercaillie apart. This is being tested by the RSPB to monitor habitat improvement actions.

Decision Support – [Mike Smith](#), [Russell Anderson](#), [Colin Edwards](#) and colleagues investigated new ways of incorporating ecological knowledge. This work was presented at a workshop involving approximately 80 forest planners. The case study was situated in Glen Affric, and our team worked with staff from the Forest District to explore the use of data from the Ecological Site Classification, BEETLE, and ForestGALES.

Woodland Birds – recently published, including several papers with our contribution, is the proceedings of British Ornithological Union meeting on Woodland Birds (November 2007 - Vol. 149 s2: Woodland Birds: Their Ecology and Management pp. 1-268) – see the journal 'IBIS' on-line at <http://www.ibis.ac.uk/>.

Just over the horizon

Keep a look-out in the coming months for a number of outputs including:

- ▶ The HARPPS database – contact [Duncan Ray](#)
- ▶ A handbook on management of broadleaved woodland – contact [Ralph Harmer](#)
- ▶ An Open habitats practice guide – contact [Russell Anderson](#)
- ▶ A guide to deer population estimation using dung counting methods – contact [Helen Armstrong](#)



High on the hills overlooking Wales

For further information on the work of Ecology Division contact:

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Peatland restoration and management in the UK

'Moors for the Future' organised this conference under the DEFRA Joint Peat Project to feed back to practitioners the findings from a questionnaire survey. This was used to compile a compendium of peatland restoration and management projects covering site details, methods, costs and lessons learned. The Border Mires in Kielder Forest, the New Forest valley mires and Foulshaw Moss in Cumbria were among the projects presented. Plans are afoot to form a practitioner forum for sharing expertise and to develop a web-based compendium. [Russell Anderson](#) attended and would encourage anyone involved in the restoration of peatland affected by afforestation to add their projects to the compendium by contacting Christine Orchard of 'Moors for the Future'.

Urban Deer Seminar at Mugdock Country Park

The Deer Commission Scotland organised a seminar to discuss issues arising from the increased presence of deer within urban areas. Topics covered included deer welfare and crime, road traffic accidents, experiences from other areas of the UK, and current management strategies. [Darren Moseley](#) presented the Peri-Urban Deer Project that Forest Research are undertaking for the Deer Commission and the Scottish Government to examine the interaction between roe deer and people in the peri-urban environment. The project aims to develop principles of responsibility and potential management solutions to mitigate against negative impacts of increased deer numbers within urban and peri-urban areas.

Natural Regeneration of Native Pinewoods workshop

[Colin Edwards](#) from Forest Management Division held a workshop in Glenmore Lodge, entitled 'Natural Regeneration in the Native Pinewoods', on practical techniques to encourage natural regeneration, particularly under deer pressure, and to explore managers' expectations about this. As one of the speakers, [Helen Armstrong](#) discussed the impacts of deer and cattle on



Native Pinewood

Scots pine regeneration and presented the Highland cattle grazing experiment in Glen Garry. Other talks included regeneration dynamics and the stand level population model for native pinewoods by [Sarah Taylor](#) from Forest Management Division, some data from long-term monitoring trials by Colin Edwards that indicate a lack in young trees of today's populations, the slow seedling growth in the Kinveachy long-term fenced exclosures by Anne Elliott from SNH and the attempts of using prescribed fires for mimicking natural disturbance and cattle to mimic trampling by large wild herbivores together with the positive response of seedlings to their deer cull in Abernethy by Mark Hancock from RSPB. This was followed by a field visit to the Glenmore research plots and the Kinveachy Estate. People's initial expectations of seedling growth differed considerably from the actual growth rates and it became clear that natural regeneration recruitment required longer time frames and cultivation and planting might need to be considered if rapid results were required.

Latest RELU Deer Management newsletter out

The latest RELU Collaborative Deer Management project newsletter has just been completed and can be downloaded from <http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/reludeer>. [Brenda Mayle](#), [Robin Gill](#) and [Helen Armstrong](#) are involved in this project.

About Ecotype

Who reads Ecotype

Ecotype addresses forestry practitioners and conservation professionals, in both the public and private sectors. Amongst our readership are people from:

- County and District Councils
- Natural England
- DEFRA
- Wildlife Trusts
- National Trust
- British Trust for Ornithology
- RSPB
- Woodland Trust
- Forestry Commission, Forest Enterprise
- Centre for Ecology & Hydrology
- Natural Environment Research Council
- Universities, Museums
- Private Consultants
- Interested individuals

Who contributes

Most of the articles are written by people within the Ecology Division and sometimes other parts of Forest Research about work related to biodiversity and conservation management of forests and woodlands. Contributions may also be invited from other parts of the Forestry Commission, and others working within forest biodiversity and conservation, subject to relevance to the main themes of Ecotype. Note that the editor reserves the right to edit, delay or reject articles depending on the space available and relevance of the subject.

Contact details

To comment, provide material for future issues, or if you wish to receive Ecotype by e-mail, please get in touch with the editor:

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Visit the web pages of Ecology Division at:

www.forestresearch.gov.uk/ecology

For more general information about the work of Forest Research, please visit our website at:

www.forestresearch.gov.uk

For information on seminars, conferences and training days in which Forest Research are involved see the events webpage at:

www.forestresearch.gov.uk/events