



### A3.3 Cambus Pools

**Project Overview:** This project aimed to restore the Scottish Wildlife Trust's Cambus Pools nature reserve, enhancing its value for people and wildlife using new and innovative conservation techniques. The work was additionally designed to improve how the reserve and this stretch of the Forth are viewed by the local community- helping them reconnect with the river.

The reserve contains a mix of wet grassland and pools with significant areas of reeds. A key activity within this project was to reduce the extent of phragmites reed in the west pool and increase the extent of open water. This was designed to benefit the mosaic of habitat on the site and suite of species that use the freshwater pools. Reed management was undertaken by volunteer workparties using brushcutters and by using a 'Truxor' self-propelled and amphibious multi-functional vehicle to harvest the reed. A number of demonstration days took place where land managers from central Scotland could see the Truxor in action. The machine found some sections of the reedbeds challenging to work in, but it produced a positive result when used in both 2016 and 2017. Cutting was followed up with herbicide spraying and management of an area of Himalayan balsam that was found.

The project also increased the area of grassland that can be accessed and grazed by livestock. The east pool was fenced, cattle handling facilities installed and cattle started grazing the site mid-2017. Progress was made to create a stock proof boundary to the west pool, but this proved to be a far larger task than anticipated and will be completed in Autumn 2018 following the end of the IFLI programme.

Volunteer participation was a key element to the project. Regular volunteer workparties took place and were led by Trust staff. Volunteers took part in surveying and monitoring the birds and moths of the site; reed cutting; building a temporary access bridge over sections of waterway to enable cutting of phragmites in areas challenging to access; scrub control; fencing installation.

Through IFLI's C3.1 Telling the Inner Forth Story project, an interpretation panel was installed at the site to explain the work and species that can be seen at different times of year. The access route that was widened and resurfaced through IFLI's C1.3 Cambus Whisky and Wetland Wander was instrumental in providing vehicular access to the site to bring in cattle and cattle handling facilities.

Project lead organisation and other organisations involved:	Scottish Wildlife Trust Trust volunteer and volunteers from the Scottish Wildlife Trust local group, contractors.
Project Location:	Cambus Pools Nature Reserve, Blackgrange, Alloa, Clackmannanshire. NS846937
Project dates	July 2014 to May 2018. (Year 1, quarter 2 to Year 5, quarter 1.)

## ***Project Outputs***

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Delivered</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<i>Area of reedbed under improved management</i>	2ha	2.75ha	
<i>Viewing screen constructed</i>	1	0	Concern over anti-social behaviour resulted in removal of this output.
<i>Volunteer work days undertaken</i>	8	26	
<i>Number of volunteers involved</i>	N/A	58	Volunteers took part in work parties and daily checks of cattle.
<i>Stockproof boundary installed</i>	N/A	1	Fencing installation has allowed cattle to graze the east pool.

## ***What difference has this project made to the built, cultural and natural heritage of the Inner Forth?***

This project has reinvigorated the pools by bringing the unabated successional changes within the reed beds back under check. This has provided a more diverse mosaic of habitats benefiting biodiversity. The Trust particularly wanted to improve the botanical diversity of the grassland swards, increase open water and improve the conditions for wading birds.

The Upper Inner Forth has been put to a variety of industrial uses over the centuries. From Cambus Pools visitors can see evidence of these uses such as the bonded warehouses of the Diageo facility and the derelict remains of munitions store RNAD Bandeath.

## ***What difference has this project made to people?***

Cambus Pools nature reserve offers an easily accessible route to the River Forth in the Alloa area. The numbers of routes which provide easy access to the banks of the upper forth are few. This project and an associated access project by Clackmannanshire Council, the 'Cambus Whisky and Wetland Wander', has improved the visitor experience.

A long term volunteer at Cambus Pools who has been impressed by the improvement of condition at the site due to this project commented that the site 'has been made important to wildlife once again'. Gadwall were recorded on site in March 2017 for the first time in many years thanks to the open water.

## ***Useful Links***

There is a page dedicated to this project on the IFLI website:

<http://www.innerforthlandscape.co.uk/projects/conserving-restoring/cambus-pools>

You can visit the Camus Pools page on the Scottish Wildlife Trust website:

<https://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/reserve/cambus-pools/>

## *Inner Forth Landscape Initiative End of Project Report*

The Stirling and Clackmannanshire SWT Local Group have a website that advertises a talks and volunteer site management days programme: <http://www.swtstirling.org.uk>

The Herald Scotland published an article featuring the Truxor reed cutter on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2016. You can read 'Hacking through jungle near the Forth' by David Ross, here:

[http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/environment/14968860.Hacking\\_through\\_jungle\\_near\\_the\\_Forth/](http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/environment/14968860.Hacking_through_jungle_near_the_Forth/)

The photo trails website holds details of a circular walk at Cambus Pools. This was surveyed by IFLI trainee Nicholas Reid in May 2017: [http://www.phototrails.org/default.cfm?walk=Cambus-Pools-Loop&page=trail&walk\\_id=498](http://www.phototrails.org/default.cfm?walk=Cambus-Pools-Loop&page=trail&walk_id=498)

### ***Future Plans***

Cambus Pools has a dedicated group of local volunteers who, with support from the Trust, will manage and maintain the work achieved through this project for a minimum of ten years. The responsibility for this maintenance will rest with the Trust's Reserve Manager for the area. We are looking forward to finishing the fencing in the west pool this summer and seeing what impact the cattle make.

### ***Lessons Learned***

During this project we used some innovative equipment including the Softrack low ground pressure tractor and Truxor reed harvester and some innovative methods of reed control including chemical, mechanical and grazing. Whilst it will take several years to fully gauge the success of some of these methods and items of equipment the Truxor was found to work very well.

### ***Photographic Evidence***

*Volunteer workparty at the site, Y2Q4.*



*View over the pools, volunteer workparty, Y2Q4.*



## *Inner Forth Landscape Initiative End of Project Report*

*Open water thanks to reed cutting, Y3Q4.*



*Truxor reed cutter on site, Y3Q4.*



*Photos courtesy of Scottish Wildlife Trust.*

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