

Kinneil Estate Forth Nature Counts Survey Walk



Photo Robert Trevis-Smith

The site of the 16th century Kinneil House and its surrounding grounds, this green space is now managed by Falkirk Community Trust. The Inner Forth Landscape Initiative (IFLI) has a project here, led by the Central Scotland Green Network Trust, to upgrade paths, improve access and restructure the woodland to boost biodiversity. This work is part of the estate's long term forest plan. The estate is replete with history, quite apart from the house itself. This survey walk will intersect the line of the Roman Antonine Wall, go past an early James Watt steam engine, and travel through the remains of the Kinneil Estate Church –where another IFLI project, led by the Falkirk Community Trust, is consolidating the remaining structure of this building.

But the estate has natural wonders too. There are large areas of open grassland, ideal for wildflowers and the many species of invertebrates, birds and mammals which rely upon them. The surrounding woodlands with their stands of mature ash, beech, sycamore and hawthorn provide a home for badgers and habitat for hunting pipistrelle bats – as well as the perfect conditions for bluebells and foxgloves. The large ponds are home to many species of dragonfly as well as mute swans, mallards and moorhens.

The Survey Walk

The Kinneil Estate survey walk is approximately 1.7km long and should take you about an hour to walk. Remember to walk slowly, noting down everything you'd like to record as you go.

Start your walk by the small museum at NS983806. **Section 1** of the survey follows the path round behind the house, through a section of gardens and broadleaved trees. Turn right past the house to cross the bridge over the burn. (NS982805 at centre)

Once over the bridge you enter **section 2**. Follow the mown path to the right, turn right again as the path forks through the hedgerow, taking you to the remains of Kinneil Church. Many woodland bird species make their homes here; keep an eye, and ear, out for great spotted woodpeckers amongst the trees. (NS981805 at centre)

As you exit the trees around the church **Section 3 begins**, skirting the right hand side of an area of rough grass, which provides wonderful habitat for small mammals as well as many species of bumblebee and butterfly, nectaring on the wildflowers. Follow the mown path until you reach a

small bench at the head of a line of young ash trees. Turn right and follow the path. (NS979805 at centre)

The path cuts through a hawthorn hedge on the right leading you to a small pool, which takes up most of **section 4**. Follow the path around, being careful of the water's edge. Watch out of invertebrates like dragonflies and damselflies here, as well as amphibians and birds which love this freshwater habitat. (NS978804 at centre)

Past the pond, cut through the beech hedge and start **Section 5**. Keep right and follow the trail through the woodland, filled with native ash, silver birch and elder. Look for signs of rabbit and fox here – and perhaps even badgers, living and foraging in the woods. (NS977804 at centre)

Out of the woodland and up the short stretch of steps, **section 6** is a an open area of freshwater, home to mute swans, tufted ducks and moorhens, as well as amphibians, invertebrates and fish species such as pike. Follow the path alongside the water and then turn left at the end. The area of woodland to the South is part of CSGNT's project to restructure the estate woodlands, felling non-native conifers and replanting native trees. Keep left as the path forks at the end. (NS976802 at centre)

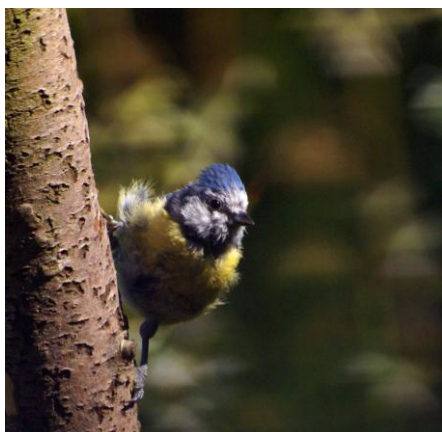


Photo Paul Barclay

Section 7 begins as you begin to walk back towards Kinneil House over the grass, keeping the conifer woods to your right. If there is construction work going on on the paths here just keep to the grass. (NS977802 at centre)

Once you reach a thin belt of broadleaved trees crossing the route you'll begin **section 8**. Turn right onto the hard surfaced path then turn left and follow it back towards Kinneil House. (NS978804 at centre)

After 250m you'll move onto **section 9** as you reach the crest of a short slope, next to a handy bench. There's no great change in habitat here however you have come far enough that it's worth changing sections and taking a fresh grid reference. Follow the line of the trees, taking a left turn when you reach the car park and woods lining the Gil Burn. Head back down to the bridge that you crossed earlier where you'll end the survey. (NS981804 at centre)

Thank you for taking the time to walk the Inner Forth Nature Counts survey walk around Kinneil Estate. Don't forget to log on to iRecord and upload your records

<http://www.brc.ac.uk/irecord/enter-inner-forth-records>

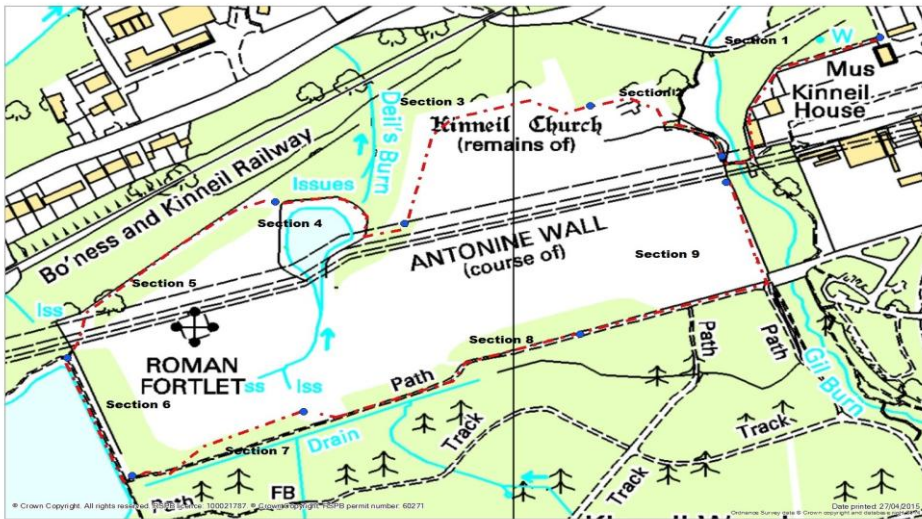
Thank you for making Forth Nature Count!

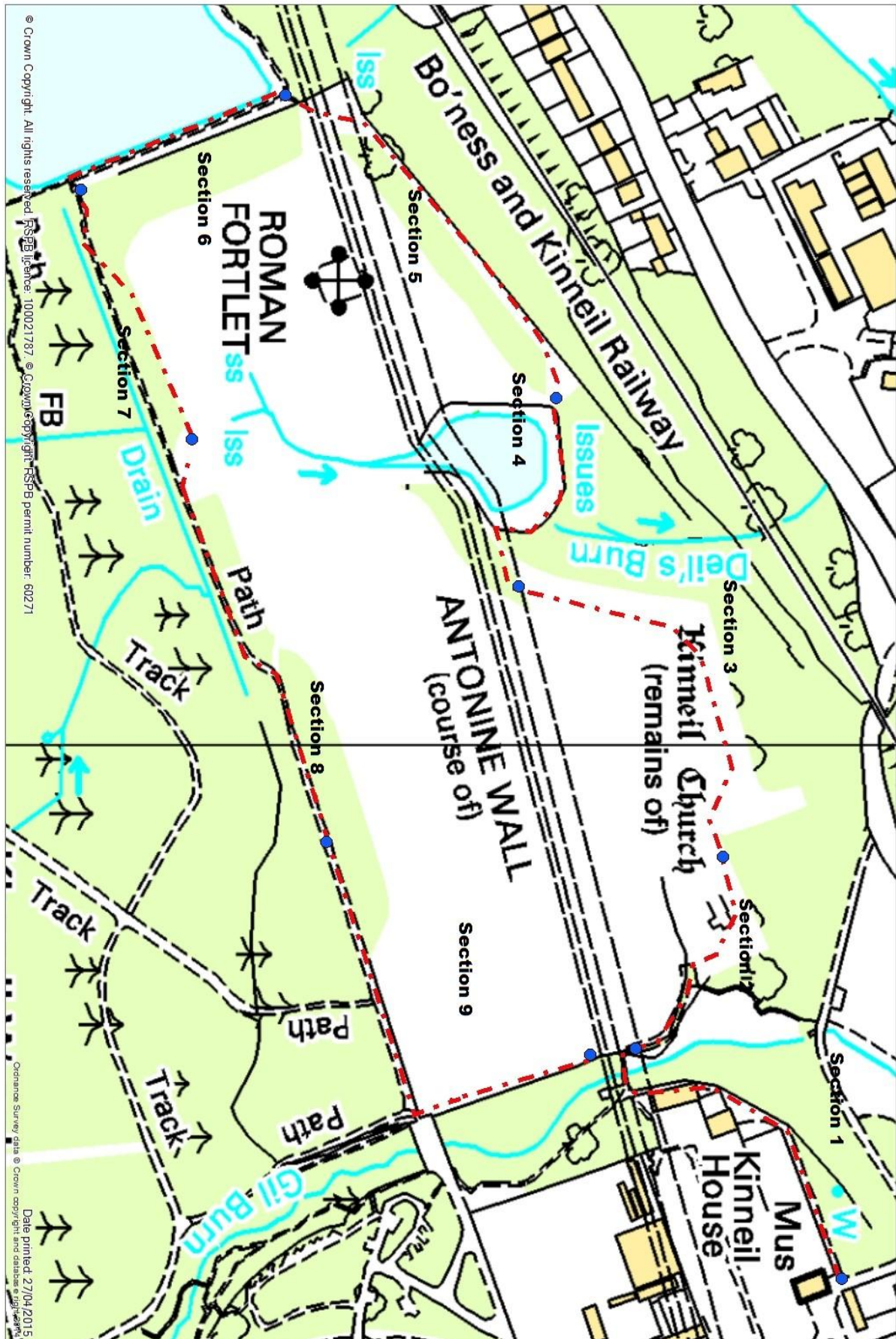
This survey walk is part of IFLI's Forth Nature Counts project which aims to increase the number of verified biological records for the Inner Forth area. We are doing this by encouraging volunteers and local people to become citizen scientists through surveying sites then adding their wildlife records to

our iRecord page; running a series of free wildlife identification workshops covering a wide range of species; and promoting wildlife recording through IFLI's social media pages, website and e-newsletter. Find out more about this project on our website:

<http://www.innerforthlandscape.co.uk/projects/recording-celebrating/forth-nature-counts>

If you'd like more information you can contact Kate Fuller, IFLI Community Engagement Officer on info@innerforthlandscape.co.uk or 01324 831 568

Transect Name		Kinneil Estate		
Transect Route				
Location name		Bo' Ness	OS 6 fig grid ref (at centre of transect)	NS980804
County		Falkirk	Transect Length (m)	1730
Section	6 Figure Grid ref (at centre of section)	Length (m)	Habitat Description (e.g. farmland, urban etc.)	
1	NS982805	210	Garden and parks. Lines of trees, broadleaved woodland	
2	NS981805	135	Amenity Grassland, rough grass, broadleaved woodland	
3	NS979805	230	Rough grass, tall herbs, broadleaved woodland	
4	NS978804	135	Mixed broadleaved and coniferous woodland, freshwater pool	
5	NS977804	240	Broadleaved woodland	
6	NS976802	130	Freshwater pool, broadleaved woodland	
7	NS977802	160	Broadleaved woodland, amenity grassland	
8	NS979803	250	Mixed broadleaved and coniferous woodland, amenity grassland	
9	NS981804	240	Mixed broadleaved and coniferous woodland, amenity grassland	



A quick look at some species you might spot on Kinneil Estate



Badger (*Meles meles*)

The familiar “Brock” from many a childhood tale, badgers love to make their home in gentle wooded slopes, coming out at night to forage for earthworms. You’ll be very lucky indeed to spot an actual badger but look for their setts and signs of their feeding.



Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*)

Rabbit holes are smaller than badgers’ and usually have a pile of rabbit droppings at the entrance. As you walk you might spot some rabbits out feeding, keeping a watchful eye – and ear – out for predators.



Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)

A diving duck which feeds mainly on invertebrates. It has a black head, neck, breast and back with white sides. In flight there is an obvious white stripe on the wings. Look for the bright golden eye and the ‘tuft’ or crest on the head which gives the species its name.



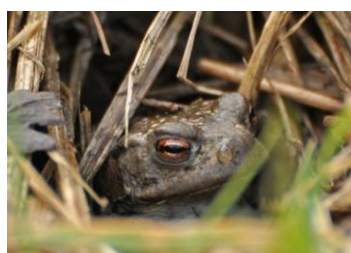
Buff-tailed Bumblebee (*Bombus terrestris*)

The queens of this species are huge with a yellow band on the shoulder, another on the abdomen and an off-white ‘buff’ coloured tail. Making their homes in abandoned mouse holes, these bumblebees can typically be seen between April and September.



Green Veined White (*Pieris napi*)

A grassland species that can be seen from Spring to Autumn. Distinguished from other white species by the pattern of dark green veins on the underwings. They feed and nectar on a variety of plants such as cuckooflower, ragwort and buttercups.



Common Toad (*Bufo bufo*)

Toads have broad squat bodies and warty skin. They can vary in colour from dark brown to olive green. Unlike frogs, toads tend to walk rather than hop – though they can do so if required. Tend to live away from water except when breeding and hibernate in leaf litter or log piles through the winter.

Images; Badger, Rabbit, Green-veined White Paul Barclay; Tufted Duck Mike Langman RSPB Images; Buff-tailed Bumblebee Chris Shields RSPB Images; Common toad Robert Trevis-Smith

Name			
Location		Date	

Section	Species Name	Comments