



# An Introduction to Our Ecology Training Workshops

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*Compiled and published by Northern Insight Ecology*



*Inspiring Location, Inspiring Wildlife & Inspiring Training*

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# Introduction

Firstly, thank you for downloading the guide to our Ecology training workshops. We offer a comprehensive and cost-effective programme of training courses and workshops.

At Northern Insight Ecology (NIE), we are passionate about our Wildlife and wish to assist our clients to achieve their goals in Ecology, a fascinating and rewarding discipline, be they career development or purely for personal interest. We are here to help you achieve your aspirations.

## About Us

Our Trainer Graeme Hull is a Chartered Environmentalist (Society for the Environment) and a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.

Why choose a training workshop with Insight Ecology?

Learn from an experienced professional, all our training modules are presented by Graeme Hull, a Chartered Environmentalist – Society for the Environment, a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), and a Senior Ecologist with 20 years' experience, so clients can have confidence in the ability and experience of their trainer.



Located on Scotland's north coast in the county of Caithness. We are blessed with a wide array of wildlife on our doorstep, ranging from otters and seals to sea bird colonies and beautiful flora etc. all waiting to be discovered .

### Why Train with Us?

At Northern Insight Ecology, we have launched a programme of ecological training workshops. Each has been compiled as a means of providing professional ecological training to an array of clients who want to develop their knowledge, field skills and experience for personal interest or professional development, as well as specialists in the planning and development sectors.

Our workshops include species specific introduction courses, including field survey techniques.

We want to share our own expertise to enable clients to:

- Enjoy their training with like minded individuals;
- Gain an understanding of appropriate legislation;
- Understand species specific survey methodologies;
- Gain the confidence to plan (including health & safety), develop and implement ecological surveys based upon the objectives of the survey; and
- Interpret the results of the survey.

Bespoke training modules to suit individual or company requirements:

- Small group sizes for greater individual attention;
- Fantastic training locations, we are based on the north coast of Scotland, with an array of habitats and wildlife on our doorstep;
- Refreshments provided; and
- Accommodation arranged as required.

## Ecology Courses and Workshops

### An Introduction to Otter Surveys – Beginners Level

#### Workshop Structure

Day One = Presentation / Discussion & Exercises. The presentation will take the form of a PowerPoint presentation with a mixture of text, photographs, videos and informative exercises.

Day Two = Otter Field Survey, we head out to undertake an otter field survey, based upon what was discussed during presentation etc.

Workshop Content includes:

During the first day of the workshop and after the initial introduction, we will discuss in Section One of the presentation, what is an otter? Otter Conservation Status, Legal Status & Compliance. Additionally, who can survey for otters and why survey?

In Section Two, we will look at getting to know your subject, otter prey, types of otter refuges as well as other otter field signs.

Finally, in Section Three of the presentation we will look at habitat usage and influences upon otter distribution. Finally, we will discuss what data to record during an otter field survey.

Day Two we will undertake an Otter Field survey, looking for evidence relating to the presence of otters within our study area, and finally we will discuss our survey findings.



#### Otters on our doorstep!

We are extremely fortunate to have otters as near neighbours, so during our surveys we will find an array of field evidence both in coastal and freshwater habitats. Who knows, we might even have a personal encounter.

The workshop runs from 9.30 am to 4.30 pm and is based in the village of Dunnet, near Thurso in Caithness.

Tariff is £150.00 per person inclusive VAT.



## Otters & Development: Impact Assessments & Mitigation – Intermediate Level

In-order to be able to assess the significance of impacts and effects on local otter populations in relation to development; firstly, we need to be able to understand how otters use features within the local landscape. In terms of movement i.e. foraging, dispersal and breeding.

This workshop is very much hands on, we start by examining a number of case studies, involving projects which Graeme has previously been involved with, including mitigation measures. After which we will then put into practice what we have learnt by undertaking our own survey in relation to a hypothetical (though realistic) proposed new road development. During the survey we will collate the information required that will allow us to gain an understanding of the presence of otters within the study area. Combined with the design characteristics of the proposed new road, we shall be able to:

- Identify the impacts associated with the road construction;
- Identify the effects (aspects) associated with the road construction;
- Assess the level of significance; and
- Prescribe appropriate mitigation.

### Workshop Structure

Day One = Presentation / Discussion & Exercises. The presentation will take the form of a PowerPoint presentation with a mixture of text, photographs, videos and case studies.

Day Two = Otter Field Survey, we head out to undertake an otter field survey in the study area affected by the proposed new road construction. Upon completion of the survey we shall compile an impact assessment report based upon the field survey and discuss the contents.



The workshop runs from 9.30 am to 4.30 pm and is based in the village of Dunnet, near Thurso in Caithness.

Tariff is £150.00 per person inclusive VAT.

## An Introduction to Bat Surveys – Beginners Level

Life is tough for our bats in Caithness; given our somewhat inclement weather. Nevertheless, we have three species of breeding bats; namely, the Common Pipistrelle (the most widespread), Brown Long-eared Bat and the Daubenton's Bat. Other species have been recorded including species from Scandinavia such as the Northern Bat.

### Workshop Structure

An evening workshop beginning with a presentation in the form of a PowerPoint presentation with a mixture of text, photographs and videos. The informative presentation gives an overview of bat ecology, their protected status and echolocation.

After the presentation we will head out to a site in-order to observe and record bat flight activity and record their flight and feeding echolocation's via our ultra sound detectors (bat detectors). Hopefully, we will record at least two different bat species.



Soprano Pipistrelle bats returning to their Roost Site, the arrow marks the entrance site.

The workshop runs from 7.30 pm to 10.30 pm and is based in the village of Dunnet, near Thurso in Caithness.

Tariff is £20.00 per person inclusive VAT.

## An Introduction to Sea Bird Identification – Beginners Level

Spring time through to mid summer is an exciting time to watch our sea bird colonies as they precariously cling to the sides of steep sea cliffs in an attempt to raise their young. Such gatherings are an assault on our senses, a visual spectacle, a cacophony of sound and somewhat smelly!

### Workshop Structure

A half day Sea Bird Identification workshop begins with an indoor presentation, as an introduction to the bird species you can expect to see during your visit. The second part consists of a visit to a coastal location where we can see first hand many of the species highlighted during the earlier presentation. Please note our study area is a cliff top location so not suitable for young children.

As an add on to the workshop, we can arrange a boat excursion via a local operator to get even closer to one of the sea bird colonies. Note this element of the workshop is weather dependant and will incur an additional cost.

Binoculars and cameras are a must, note we do have some binoculars that can be lent out. The workshop runs from 9.30 am to 1.00 pm and is based in the village of Dunnet, near Thurso in Caithness.

Tariff is £40.00 per person inclusive VAT.



Two Guillemot adults carefully guard their one chick , who will jump from its cliff side ledge into the sea before it can fly!



Just some of the exciting sea birds which frequent our sea cliffs during their breeding season.





## An Introduction to Wildlife Photography – Beginners Level

During this workshop we discuss my approach to photographing wildlife, discussing equipment, getting to know your subject, using natural light, which in turn relates to shutter speed and aperture. Don't be put off if this at first appears complicated, as all will become clear. We will only cover the technical basics here, which should be sufficient to become a competent photographer, for those who wish to explore further there are several good sources on-line etc.

Another important aspect of wildlife photography which we will be discussing is field craft, which is closely linked to getting to know your subject.

### Workshop Structure

Our one day workshop begins with an indoor presentation, as an introduction to photographing wildlife; after which we will go on site to put into practice what you have learnt. We will endeavour to accommodate your particular interest i.e. birds or wild flower photography etc. so we will select the choice of location and subject matter on the day.

Bring your own camera or we can demonstrate and take photographs with my equipment. Note if your particular interest is say otters, we may have to undertake the practical element (site visit) on a different day, allowing for tidal conditions.

The workshop runs from 9.30 am to 4.30 pm and is based in the village of Dunnet, near Thurso in Caithness.

Tariff is £75.00 per person inclusive VAT.



A young Grey seal (sub-adult)



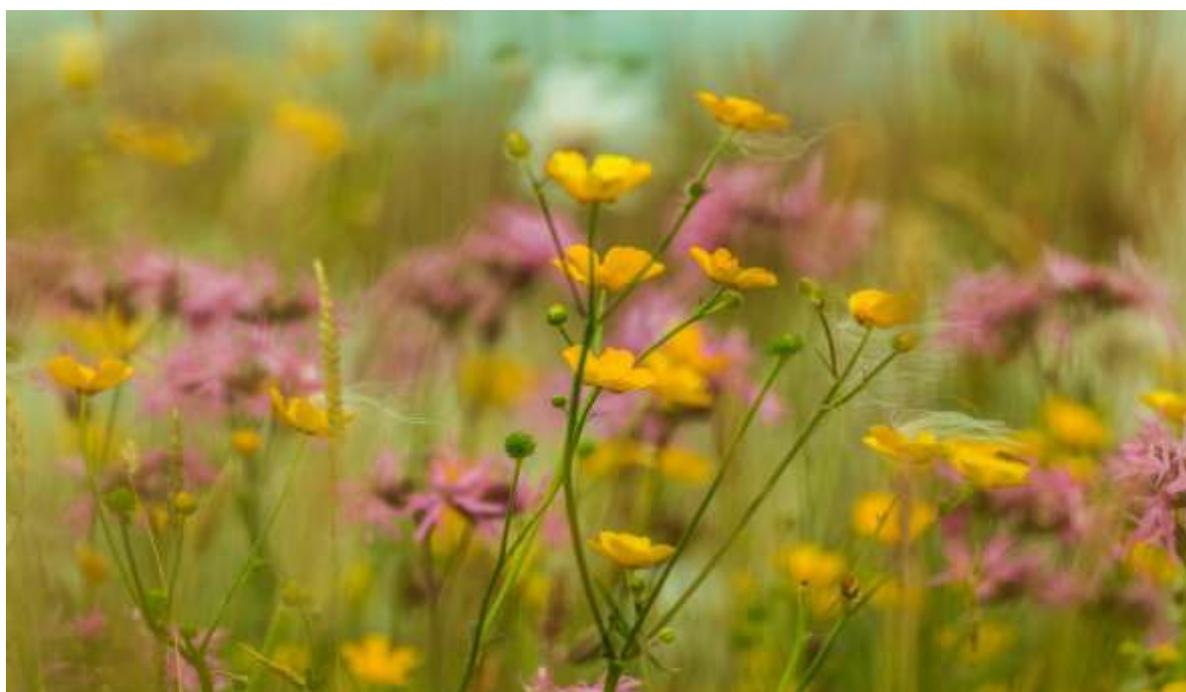
## Plants & Habitats

### An Introduction to the Wild Flowers of Caithness – Beginners Level

We visit several locations close to our base on the north coast of Caithness, taking in a variety of habitat types from coastal grasslands, coastal heathland and wetlands.

#### Workshop Structure

A one day workshop consisting of a site visit to various coastal and montane habitat types, to locate and identify some of Caithness's fascinating flora. With some moderate walking over wet and muddy ground.



The workshop runs from 9.30 am to 4.30 pm and is based in the village of Dunnet, near Thurso in Caithness.

Tariff is £75.00 per person inclusive VAT.



Just some of the fascinating flora you can see on our Introduction to the Wild Flowers of Caithness Workshop.





### An Introduction Phase 1 Habitat Surveys – Beginners Level

A Phase 1 habitat survey is a starting point (baseline) method of mapping habitats, prior to undertaking additional survey work and is the benchmark used by ecologists throughout the UK.

The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) has written guidance to the classification of each habitat type. This often refers to the landscape structure (e.g. pH of the soil) and the vegetation present. Each habitat type has a standard definition, an alpha-numeric code and a standardised colour scheme for the map. Target notes are used to provide additional information, or where there is a feature of interest that cannot be mapped.

The Phase 1 survey is valuable as a means of identifying habitats which are present on a given site. In practise a Phase 1 survey is not undertaken as a stand alone study; rather it is carried out as part of what is called a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

#### Workshop Structure

The Phase 1 Habitat survey course consists of a one day workshop and begins with an indoor presentation, which explains the rationale behind the survey as well as the survey methodology. After which we visit our site overlooking the Pentland Firth to put into practice the Phase 1 Habitat survey methodology. Our study site consists of various habitat types including wet grassland, open water, wetland, coastal grassland and coastal heathland, providing our students plenty opportunities to practice their skills. Enabling them to be able to create a Phase 1 Habitat Map, produce target notes and provide an accurate description of the mapped habitats. Please note the emphasis of the course is on Phase 1 Habitat survey methodology, not plant identification; however, we will ensure that all our students are familiar with key indicator species.

The workshop runs from 9.30 am to 4.30 pm and is based in the village of Dunnet, near Thurso in Caithness.

Tariff is £75.00 per person inclusive VAT.



## Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA)- Intermediate Level

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) records and maps the baseline ecological conditions of a site, including the presence of protected species. Subsequently, additional surveys can be recommended if required, depending upon the purpose of the PEA i.e. further more detailed surveys may be required if the presence of protected species were recorded and the site was due to be developed.

### Features of a PEA include:

A desk-top study, which looks for records of protected species and habitats that are available online or provided by biological records centres and protected species groups, that may relate to the study area;

A walk over Phase 1 Habitat survey, which is a valuable means of identifying the habitat types present; and  
A protected species assessment of suitable features within the study area.

### Workshop Structure

The PEA survey course consists of a one day workshop and begins with an indoor presentation, which explains the rationale behind the survey as well as the survey methodology. After which we visit our site overlooking the Pentland Firth to initially put into practice the Phase 1 Habitat survey methodology, then look at features of the site which could be attractive to a protected species. Our study site consists of various habitat types including wet grassland, open water, wetland, coastal grassland and coastal heathland, providing our students plenty opportunities to practice their skills. Enabling them to be able to create a Phase 1 Habitat Map, produce target notes and provide an accurate description of the mapped habitats, including any recorded evidence / features associated with the presence of a protected species.

At the end of the walkover survey all survey data will be collated and compiled into a PEA survey report; together with agreed recommendations for any additional surveys which may be required, including flora i.e. a National Vegetation Classification (NVC) Survey.

The workshop runs from 9.30 am to 4.30 pm and is based in the village of Dunnet, near Thurso in Caithness.

Tariff is £75.00 per person inclusive VAT.





## General Information

During our workshops, refreshments in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits are provided; however, please bring your own packed lunch for full days workshop.

As a number of our workshops are partially field based, please wear appropriate footwear and clothing.

All attendees will be issued with a certificate of attendance.

## Why Choose to train with Northern Insight Ecology ?

Each of our workshops, has been formulated as a means of providing professional ecological training to an array of clients who want to develop their knowledge, field skills and experience for personal interest or professional development, as well as specialists in the planning and development sectors. Our workshops include species specific introduction courses, including field survey techniques.

We want to share our own expertise and passion to enable clients to:

- Enjoy learning with like minded people; All our ecology & wildlife related workshops are limited to a maximum group size of six, thus ensuring greater individual attention;
- Gain an understanding of appropriate legislation;
- Understand species specific survey methodologies;
- Gain the confidence to plan (including health & safety), develop and implement ecological surveys based upon the objectives of the survey;
- Interpret the results of the survey;
- Bespoke training modules to suit individual or company requirements;
- Refreshments provided; and
- Accommodation arranged as required.

We are based on the north coast of Caithness overlooking the Pentland Firth only a few miles from the most northerly point on the UK mainland, Dunnet Head.

Subsequently, we offer fantastic training locations with an array of habitats and wildlife on our doorstep. In-addition to the wildlife there are plenty of other things to do and see in Scotland's far north. So, if you are already in the area, please get in touch.

Dates and venues relating to each workshop will be published on our Website.

To enrol on one of our workshops, or for further information, please contact us at:

[graeme@insightecology.org](mailto:graeme@insightecology.org)

# Northern Insight Ecology – Training Workshops

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Our view over the Pentland Firth & Orkney beyond

*Inspiring Location, Inspiring Wildlife & Inspiring Training*