

Biodiversity News

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Issue 58

Summer Edition



If you would like to receive Biodiversity News via email, or know of somebody who would, please contact us at biodiversitynews@defra.gsi.gov.uk

www.jncc.gov.uk/ukbap



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Please note that the views expressed in Biodiversity News are the views of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the UK Biodiversity Partnership or the organisations they represent.



Summer

Editorial

Welcome, Croeso, Fáilte... to Issue 58 of Biodiversity News!

As always, many thanks to all that have contributed fantastic articles and events to Biodiversity News. This issue has come around sooner than usual, and I hope there will be plenty to stimulate your biodiversity awareness over the summer months until the next one.

I certainly think there is a great diversity of articles, and more multi-purpose than other issues: we have news on new green infrastructure datasets that have recently become available; there are a whole host of surveys to get involved in – including recreational, to mention the ‘Big Butterfly Count’; with a great line-up of events, there is also plenty to actively participate in this summer, starting with ‘Love Parks Week’ at end of July, and others that can capture the interests of many – from already biodiversity enthusiasts – to budding school children naturalists. The Wildlife Trusts is also quite a main feature this issue, in championing its centenary year – there is a particularly insightful article on what it takes to run a Wildlife Trust, for us that just don’t know.

Again, Biodiversity News features new and continuing initiatives and projects, up and down, over and across the UK – both locally and nationally driven, as well as governmental and international happenings – including a report on the progress of the recent Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, and news on the new “IPCC but for nature” intergovernmental panel. This issue there has also been more ‘green business’ included: we give an article on why ‘green money makes the world go round’, and there is a well worth reading publication if you want guidance on how businesses can make proactive investment in ‘natural capital’.

You may also remember we gave you a survey in the winter edition of this year, ‘How useful is Biodiversity News to you?’ We’ve now collected up your responses and you can find out what people said in our short report.

Finally, I would once again like to give my immense thanks to everyone who supports Biodiversity News – through your contribution of articles, your readership, and sharing of the newsletter. This is my last issue as Editor and I hope that Biodiversity News will continue to thrive with an even greater diversity of input, improvements yet to come, and a widening audience, which my successor will no doubt help to deliver.

Many thanks also to Tim Milling, from *Butterfly Conservation*, for his stunning photography of a beautiful Common Blue resting on a Forget-me-not, which makes the front cover.

I hope you thoroughly enjoy this issue.

Gauri Kangai

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Click on the boxes to see previous issues this past year

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Progress at Rio+20 towards a greener future

Defra

Rio+20 is the United Nations (UN) conference on Sustainable Development. Rio+20 follows 20 years after the original 1992 UN 'Earth Summit' on Environment and Development, also held in Rio, which gave rise to many of the policy measures that underpin global environment co-operation today.

Rio+20 looked to continue this legacy, and this year it took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 20-22 June. The two main themes covered were:

- Green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication
- The institutional framework for sustainable development.

The Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg and Environment Secretary Caroline Spelman have welcomed the progress made towards a more sustainable future at Rio+20.

World leaders attending the summit on sustainable development approved the agreements drawn up, following negotiations by 193 countries.

Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg, who led the UK delegation, set out the UK's ambition to build on the Rio+20 agreement. Addressing the final plenary, he said: "This week we have agreed to set Sustainable Development Goals. I want to see progress in agreeing these within the post-2015 development framework, so that – as at the original Rio conference – the environment and development are again part of a coherent whole. I would like to think that the ideas we have promoted here – governments, civil society, consumers and business working together and concepts like the green economy and natural capital – will be central to the way we all behave.

"We need to turn words into action. We need to work together to change behaviours, to change all our mind-sets and put our world on a more sustainable footing. That's why the UK Environment Secretary and I have been using the unique platform that Rio provides to talk to fellow leaders from around the world about how we turn these ideas into reality."

Environment Secretary Caroline Spelman, who led talks in reaching the agreement, said: "We came to Rio with a clear set of ambitious aims on totally new concepts such as Sustainable Development Goals and GDP+, and we should be positive that we have made good progress on all of them. Rio+20 has shown that there is political ambition for change. Now we have to make sure that will is not squandered."

Key points from the agreement for the UK are:

- **Agreement to establish Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**
The United Nations General Assembly will appoint a group of representatives from 30 countries by September to develop the goals, with the UK's aim for these goals to focus on food, water and energy.
- **Recognition of the importance of the green economy as a way to help nations to grow sustainably, and to help eradicate poverty.**
- **A call from all nations at Rio+20 for businesses to adopt ways of reporting on their sustainability performance**, as championed by the UK delegation and businesses such as Aviva.



- **Recognition by all nations at Rio+20 of the importance of including the value of natural capital and social wellbeing in decision making will be given real force by having a UN commission to undertake the work on GDP plus.**
- **Oceans to be given greater prominence with a commitment to extend marine conservation to the high seas.**
- A call for enhanced **efforts to sustainably manage forests including reforestation, restoration and afforestation.** The agreement highlights the importance of initiatives such as REDD+ in reducing emissions from deforestation.

A Natural Capital Summit was hosted by Nick Clegg with the leaders of nations including Norway, Denmark, Costa Rica and Gabon to announce that 50 countries and 50 global firms have made commitments to include the value of natural resources in their accounts as part of the World Bank's 50/50 campaign.

Caroline Spelman held talks with world leaders including Presidents and Prime Ministers to discuss how to take forward work on the Sustainable Development Goals, which led to developing a consensus on the themes that the SDGs should cover – including food, water and energy, that the UK has pushed for.

Rio+20 has also been used as an opportunity for many bilateral meetings with other nations to discuss environmental projects, trade, and ways to boost growth and create jobs in the UK.

For more information on the happenings and outcomes of Rio+20, see the [Defra website](#), and where an online diary by Caroline Spelman during the conference is also available.

IPBES – the ‘IPCC for nature’

From UK Friends of the UN Decade on Biodiversity newsletter, Bob Bloomfield

The agreement by 90 countries to establish the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), agreed on 21 April in Panama, has been five years in the making.

It has grown out of the high-level awareness of biodiversity loss and its likely consequences and the emergence of valuing nature through its ecosystem services. With the past history of not meeting targets in international policy, the emergence of an approach which aims to translate ecological understanding into the language of power, that is economics, is clearly significant.

However this approach has only had significant influence since the millennium ecosystem assessment in the mid 1990s (though its beginnings can easily be traced to both Adam Smith and Charles Darwin!). There remain significant issues in translating these ideas into practical solutions which take biodiversity consideration into mainstream economic behaviour. At the same time it is recognised that local, conventional conservation practice is not enough: responses to biodiversity have to be included in mainstream governance, alongside other the key issues for a better, greener and more equitable path towards sustainable development.



It was agreed that the IPBES secretariat would be located in Bonn, and some of its key organisational structure, including a high-level expert panel of scientists and others to oversee its work, was established. There remains work to further define its structure and mode of operation, and indeed its 'conceptual structure', but the expert group is already beginning to scope priorities for a programme of work activity. This includes intercessional work reviewing existing biodiversity assessments, bringing these together and identifying gaps. The IPBES also anticipates being asked to commission research in response to specific government requests for particular information.

There is still much to be done at all levels however, for example one conceptual question of huge significance is how will it bring into consideration and account for the other forms of knowledge, such as indigenous local knowledge, which may well not be peer-reviewed but which will be key to successful solutions? This needs approaches which will integrate social sciences. Another, not unrelated question will be how the high-level Policy outcomes (international intergovernmental agreements) are actually translated into policy action (real responses on the ground which will actually protect biodiversity). Linking local to global understanding and global to local responses will certainly be crucial. Firstly, IPBES is essentially a political forum for trying to get the best evidence to support the best policy outcomes, but it could be easily subverted: national calls for more convincing evidence, for example, could be used as a way to delay and defer agreement rather than to precipitate appropriate and urgent responses.

Another perspective is that it could fall foul of media scepticism if it doesn't learn lessons from its sister Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). IPBES will face similar questions on how it will be objective, to what extent it will advocate, and how its understudying will be shared with stakeholders including the wider public.

Ecosystems Knowledge Network: Connecting people and nature

Defra

A healthy natural environment is the foundation of a sustainable future with prospering communities. In the UK and elsewhere, pioneering projects are exploring new ways of managing land and sea environments and the benefits people derive from them. In particular, they are reflecting 'an ecosystems approach: a holistic and inclusive approach to promoting the sustainable use of natural resources and taking better account of the values people hold for the environment.

The new Ecosystems Knowledge Network (EKN), sponsored by Defra, provides resources for anyone wanting to share knowledge or learn about the practical benefits of an ecosystems approach, with a purpose to stimulate knowledge exchange and practical learning across the country.

EKN will assist individuals, organisations and groups to understand how an ecosystems approach can help build sustainable communities. It is free to join and open to anyone with an interest in an ecosystems approach.

The Network will support the practical use of an ecosystems approach by:

- Developing an active membership of people and organisations interested in benefiting from an ecosystems approach



- Encouraging the sharing of information and experience between projects and between experts and newcomers to the approach, and
- Engaging with and involving people who might not otherwise be aware of how an ecosystems approach can benefit them.

The Network is being developed by an independent partnership involving the NERC Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, the Natural Capital Initiative, Fabis Consulting, the University of Exeter (Centre for Rural Policy Research) and Countryside.

Launch of EKN website

Defra is pleased to announce that the Ecosystems Knowledge Network website is now online at: <http://ekn.defra.gov.uk>.

The website provides a gateway to information and tools that help in understanding and applying an ecosystems approach. It includes:

- Video clips offering perspectives on an ecosystems approach
- Examples of projects that are reflecting an ecosystems approach
- Links to tools and guidelines around the application of an ecosystems approach
- Details of upcoming activities

Over the coming months, the Network team will continue to add more learning materials and resources to the website, including detailed project profiles. The functionality of the website will also be extended to include discussion facilities and an events diary. The Network team welcomes suggestions for additional resources to inform people about the application of an ecosystems approach.





Natural England green infrastructure datasets available

greenspace scotland

Natural England has made its Geographic Information datasets publicly available under the Open Government Licence.

This means that datasets about areas of significance for the natural environment such as protected site boundaries, habitat inventories, open access land and scheme agreements are now made available under a perpetual licence for commercial and non-commercial reuse.

The Open Government Licence is designed to allow anyone – businesses, individuals, charities and community groups - to re-use public sector information without having to pay or get specific permission. The datasets are available on the Natural England [data pages](#).

E-petition leads to new biodiversity information forum

Scottish Natural Heritage

A new forum has been established to improve the flow of biological information between conservation and scientific organisations and data users to benefit biodiversity.

The Scottish Biodiversity Information Forum (SBIF) was set up at an inaugural workshop hosted by Scottish Natural Heritage at Battleby in May. The initiative is partly in response to the [Scottish Government e-Petition lodged by BRISC](#) in 2009. The petition asked the Scottish Government to establish integrated structures for collecting, analysing and sharing biological data to inform decision-making and benefit biodiversity.

The workshop, attended by about 70 delegates, prioritised some key challenges relating to the flow of species and habitat data in Scotland, both in the terrestrial and marine environment.

A steering group has been established, made up of representatives from a cross-section of organisations. The Group will identify and action issues to improve data-flow, and will oversee the appointment of an SBIF Coordinator role.

For further information, please email SBIF@SNH.gov.uk.

Biodiversity News survey results

Many thanks for those of you who completed our survey in Issue 56, **'How useful is Biodiversity News to you?'**

We had 58 responses, which represented about 5% of Biodiversity News readers. Therefore, understandably, we cannot draw too many conclusions from the results although it has been useful to get an idea of what those people thought:



The majority of readership sectors were local government (30%), non-governmental organisations (21%) and 'other' (i.e. individuals) (18%). There was a minority from community groups (2%) and business (4%), with geographical spread being mostly in England (87%).

Most respondents (83%) said they read every quarter issue, and people's reasons for reading Biodiversity News were mainly to help inform their work (80%), to find out what is happening at the national and UK level (70%), to increase awareness of biodiversity-related issues (65%), and for personal interest (63%).

We asked whether you find the newsletter useful to inform you of current biodiversity news, projects, initiatives and events, and 60% found it 'occasionally useful', with over a third finding it 'very useful'. We also wanted to know whether you have ever used articles in Biodiversity News to raise the awareness of others, for example, using ideas from the newsletter in your own organisation, community or area, or passing information on: 67% said they do 'occasionally', and we are pleased to know that two-thirds also said they have recommended Biodiversity News to someone else.

We finished the survey asking if there was any way we could improve Biodiversity News to meet your needs, and we received a range of useful suggestions that we will consider for future editions. For example, we value the suggestion to include more business focus within Biodiversity News: this is something we believe is currently of extreme importance, and we will try to adopt this in future editions.

Many thanks again for those that gave their input through our survey. As always, we welcome feedback and suggestions on improving Biodiversity News at any time, by emailing biodiversitynews@defra.qsi.gov.uk.



International Day for Biological Diversity

CIWEM called for greater awareness of threats to marine biodiversity...

CIWEM (Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management)

... **As without life in the ocean, there would be no life on earth.** The greatest diversity of life on Earth is actually in the sea. Over 70% of the Earth is covered by ocean, constituting over 90% of the habitable space on the Earth. It is home to the largest animal on the planet and there are more micro-organisms in the sea than there are stars in the universe. The first global census of marine life (which ran from 2000 to 2010) has logged 250,000 species; yet in its final report, the census team suggested that for every species known, there are at least four yet to be discovered.

However the health of our oceans hangs in the balance. Overfishing, degraded habitats, pollution, invasive species and climate change are all causes for concern. Commercial overexploitation of the world's fish stocks are so severe that it has been estimated that up to 13% of global fisheries have 'collapsed.' Between 30 and 35% of the global extent of critical marine habitats such as seagrasses, mangroves and coral reefs are estimated to have been destroyed; plastic debris causes the deaths of more than a million seabirds and 100,000 marine mammals every year; a recent increase in harmful algal blooms suggests that we have affected the bottom, as well as the top, of marine food chains. The burning of fossil fuels is causing the ocean to become warmer and more acidic, the consequences of which we are only beginning to grasp.

Marine environments provide us with a whole host of resources and services, from food and medicines to storm protection, and most importantly of all, phytoplankton produce half of all the oxygen in our atmosphere. Supplies of fish as a healthy food source need to be secured for the millions that depend on them without destroying fish stocks and damaging the marine environment in the long term.

CIWEM's Executive Director, Nick Reeves OBE, said: "Marine issues are a global concern and as they are a common public resource, require concerted management to avoid over exploitation. Whereas approximately 13% of the world's land surface area is protected in reserves, the figure for marine environments is a little over 1%. The Convention on Biological Diversity has established a target of 10% of all coastal and marine waters being protected in reserves by 2020. The UK must play its part in upholding its national, EU and international marine conservation commitments to help achieve this."

Green Money Makes the World Go Round

CIWEM (Chartered Institution of Environmental Management)

This year World Environment Day turns 40 and will focus on the theme *Green Economy: Does it include you?* CIWEM hopes that during this anniversary year politicians will realise that running economies in the way we've always done is clearly not working and will look at an alternative and far more sustainable economic model.

The UN Environment Programme defines the Green Economy as '*one that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities*'.



Practically speaking, a Green Economy is one whose growth in income and employment is driven by public and private investments that reduce carbon emissions and pollution, enhance energy and resource efficiency, and prevent the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services. These investments need to be catalysed and supported by targeted public expenditure, policy reforms and regulation changes.

The low-carbon sector is a growing business. A new report released last month by the UK Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) revealed that in 2010/11 the global low-carbon and environmental goods and services (LCEGS) sector was estimated to be worth around £3.3 trillion, after growing around 3.7% from 2009/10. The report also noted that record growth over the last year has pushed the UK green goods and services market past the £122bn mark meaning it is currently 6th in the world in this sector and that the low carbon economy in the UK now employs almost one million people. CIWEM believes that it is possible to rejuvenate the UK economy whilst at the same time protecting and enhancing the environment. Moreover, the LCEGS could readily help lead an economic recovery.

CIWEM's Executive Director, Nick Reeves, OBE, says: "Green industries are one of the few growth areas in the economy, but currently everything we do appears to be limited and constrained by the obsession with perpetual economic growth and the lack of genuine foresight and innovation in developing new economic models. We need to change thinking and prove we can tackle both the environment and the economy together."

Tuta absoluta – a threat to British tomato crops

Andrew Cuthbertson, Fera (The Food and Environment Research Agency)

Tomato is the second most important fruit in the diet of European citizens with an annual production of 27 million tonnes and an estimated value of 10 billion euros. Since 2006, European tomato production has faced a significant threat from the tomato borer, *Tuta absoluta* (see photo). This is a destructive insect-pest native to South America where it is considered one of the key pests in tomato crops. The larvae of the moth feed and develop inside tomato leaves, stems and fruits and commonly cause complete yield loss in glass-house tomatoes in infested areas. The pest occurs throughout the entire growing cycle of tomatoes both for fresh market and for processing. The pathways of introduction and dispersal in Europe and neighbouring countries are under study by genetic analysis. This will contribute to the development of policies to prevent further spread of the pest, as well as the selection of effective biological control agents from the pest's region of origin. There have been several outbreaks of *T. absoluta* in the UK, with infested plant material being destroyed.



Tuta absoluta on tomato foliage © Dr Andrew G.S. Cuthbertson.

Following its first detection in eastern Spain in 2006, this moth species has spread more into Europe, North Africa and the Middle East with exceptional speed. It is estimated that 80% of tomato production is practised in countries with climatic conditions that are very favourable for this destructive pest. In addition to tomatoes, *T. absoluta* can also feed on other solanaceous species such as potatoes, eggplant and sweet pepper. Field observations recorded in Italy suggest that it has also expanded its range to non-solanaceous crops including beans.

The impact of *T. absoluta* on tomato crops has led growers to use insecticides extensively, therefore, causing signifi-



cant risks to both human health and the environment. Also, intensive chemical use can disrupt existing integrated pest management programmes already in place and working successfully for the control of other invertebrate pests. The insecticides can disturb natural enemies and due to multiple side effects may lead to resistance, as occurred in the area of origin of this pest, causing problems from economical, ecological and environmental view points.

In recent years, emphasis has been placed on implementing safer environmental measures to control the moth in newly infested areas, limiting the use of chemical insecticides. Sustainable management methods are currently investigating the use of entomopathogenic nematodes for the larval control on tomato foliage. Here, differing levels of control have been recorded. There is real potential that *T. absoluta* will establish populations within the UK protected horticulture industry. Therefore, continued research into the biology of the moth and alternative control methods is vital.

For further information concerning IPM strategies against invertebrate pests, contact: Dr Andrew G. S. Cuthbertson, Fera, e-mail: andrew.cuthbertson@fera.gsi.gov.uk.

Running a Wildlife Trust

Huw Jenkins, Natur Cymru

Although for many it is a labour of love, working for a Wildlife Trust requires a high level of professionalism to go with the dedication which is so much a feature of the Wildlife Trusts. Huw Jenkins finds out what it takes to run a Wildlife Trust.



Getting acquainted © Marie Edwards

What could be more idyllic than working for a Wildlife Trust? TV wildlife programmes may lead you to believe that it's a glamorous job, all outdoor encounters with nature by rugged, seasoned ecologists. The truth, however, is not quite so romantic.

For a start, the Trusts have to handle an enormously broad portfolio. There are many and varied issues which go with land ownership and management, including legal issues, signage, access, open days and events, management planning and carrying out the practical tasks to keep reserves in tip-top condition. As a bridge between people and wildlife, the Trusts have an almost infinite communication task, putting together talks and lectures, organising volunteers, running programmes of events, visiting schools, and raising awareness of, for example, the importance of the marine environment. Conservation does not only take place in reserves, so there is all the work to champion wildlife in the wider 'living landscape' and 'living seas'.

As the Wildlife Trusts have grown, so has the need for professional management, notably on the financial side. Raising funds, working with funding agencies to achieve joint goals, and keeping budgets under close scrutiny doesn't sound like suitable work for an ecologist. It is essential, nevertheless. To find out how they manage this balancing act, I spoke with some of the people running the trusts.

North and South

Frances Cattnach joined North Wales Wildlife Trust (NWWT) in 1986 as the conservation officer with a



budget of £10K and an administrative assistant. Today she is chief executive with 18 staff plus seasonal wardens, 250+ volunteers, 5500 members and a budget hovering around £600K. Income and budgets can fluctuate upwards to £1m depending upon the success of winning grant funding and the phasing of projects; understanding what is the core business and managing the spikes without over-committing is essential.

More so than other trusts in Wales, NWWT's funding is heavily geared towards grants, which represent about 60% with the other 40% coming from members, including legacies, trading and income from two shops run entirely by volunteers. This is probably a reflection of the sparsely populated geography and relative lack of wealth.



Emptying Longworth trap © Zsuzsanna Bird

Sarah Kessell has been running Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales (WTSWW) since 2009 having started her conservation career with Surrey Wildlife Trust before moving to Wales in 2004. For Sarah the Trust is an idyllic organisation to work for; dynamic, not bureaucratic but ordered, with a flat structure. Good ideas are quickly discussed and implemented without reference to a far flung head office. Colleagues have an energy and passion, putting in long hours for moderate pay but benefitting from high job satisfaction.



Trust worker Ben Stammers keeping an eye on Cemlyn lagoon © Huw Jenkins

Finding new members

Recruiting new members is a vital part of the job, not just for financial support but also to give the Wildlife Trusts their political clout. 25,000 members in Wales is a formidable number but only half that of the RSPB and a quarter of the (estimated) National Trust membership in Wales. Why are membership numbers of this great cause so comparatively low?

Retaining members is equally important and Julian Jones, who manages Radnorshire Wildlife Trust (RWT), can claim the highest rate of retention of any Wildlife Trust in the UK last year. Members are of course interested in wildlife but many are also passionate about Radnorshire – they have a sense of belonging

to the old county as opposed to Powys or an amorphous Mid Wales. Like most of the Trusts RWT has an ecology consultancy business, Radnorshire Wildlife Services Ltd, which began in 2005. In the previous year their turnover of £70,000 contributed £20,000 to the work of the Trust. As Julian says, "That's equivalent to an awful lot of fundraising garden parties!"

A mid Wales Trust

Scotland has a single Trust, with an income last year of £6m and 35,000 members; would Wales be better served through a single Trust? Rachel Sharp, who runs Wildlife Trusts Wales (WTW), the co-ordinating body which represents the six trusts on national issues, thinks a single trust would go against the fundamental appeal of being a local organisation: "The Wildlife Trust movement is unique in its local expertise; volunteers and members who care passionately about their local wildlife. In Wales we have a system to get the best from all worlds: local Trusts to deliver nature conservation on the ground; a national WTW to influence the Senedd; and the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts to deliver UK initiatives. So currently we are not looking at merging into one Trust."



The goals of the Wildlife Trusts are to do as much as possible to protect wildlife, which is a huge task. Reading some of the annual reports, it is clear there are some tough choices: “we had to sell off the family silver to reduce the overdraft”, “we had no choice but to make staff redundant”, and so on. Is it inevitable that Trusts will overreach and go through boom and bust? Rachel says “Funding fluctuates, but despite financial difficulties, the Trusts have continued to achieve so much, and by planning ahead, we continue to grow.” In the past there might have been a tendency to go for any grant or opportunity, a case of the tail wagging the dog, but these days the Trusts are very selective in what they go for. The emphasis today is as much on protection of the wider countryside as on acquiring and protecting individual sites.

While maintaining their focus on what they can do for nature, the Trusts also promote ‘what nature can do for us’. They are developing their work on the services which nature can provide, such as flood prevention and carbon safeguarding. The big goal is to get everyone in Wales to understand, appreciate and implement the ecosystems approach, making good stewardship of nature part and parcel of everything we do, so that development embraces nature, natural processes and resources.

The day job

What’s it like being the chief executive? They all love the job but here are some of their comments:

“Colleagues are first and foremost ecologists and getting them to be more commercial is a challenge. We have to become more self-supporting, reviewing and cutting costs, renegotiating contracts, investing in assets”.

“As well as the obvious, such as running nature reserves, we have got to be professional in everything else we do, which can include the skill sets of operating a shop, a café and holiday accommodation.”

“In most organisations the chief executive is supposed to take an outward view, networking and building contacts, but necessity makes my role very hands on and inward looking. Work-life balance can be tricky but I’ve now set myself a goal of no more than one evening meeting a week.”

I suspect a Wildlife Trust is a bit like a swan floating serenely by – there can be a lot of frantic paddling beneath the surface.

Huw Jenkins is the marketing manager for Natur Cymru and a community reporter for Radio Wales. He gives talks to groups and societies across north and mid Wales in return for them buying subscriptions to Natur Cymru.

This article first appeared in Natur Cymru, the quarterly magazine which flies the flag for the nature of Wales. Subscriptions cost £15 a year by direct debit. Details at www.naturcymru.org.uk.



Wildlife Trust members enjoying Skower © Natur Cymru



Leading philanthropist awarded The Rothschild Medal

The Wildlife Trusts

Peter De Haan has been awarded The Rothschild Medal by The Wildlife Trusts in recognition of the outstanding contribution he has made to nature conservation over the last eight years.

The support provided by Peter De Haan has enabled an extraordinary range of schemes to support the natural heritage of the UK and beyond, as well as bring people closer to nature. Highlights include investment in an innovative peatland restoration programme that is to be implemented around the world, pioneering marine conservation, as well as engaging thousands of young people in environmental issues through performances with the National Youth Theatre.

Through a philanthro-capitalism model, Peter De Haan has provided UK Wildlife Trusts, including those of Kent, Leicestershire & Rutland, London and Yorkshire, with major focused financial support and strategic advice. Having donated £3.1 million, Peter De Haan and the Peter De Haan Charitable Trust is the largest individual donor to The Wildlife Trusts.

Peter De Haan's funding of the UK Peatlands Programme, for example, began in 2009. It has been an inspiring exemplar of bringing decision makers, land managers and scientists together to show how restoring these amazing wild places benefits both nature *and* makes a significant contribution to combating climate change. De Haan is credited with bringing the UK peatlands back from the brink.

Working under the IUCN umbrella through the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, De Haan identified that the main barrier to peatland restoration in the UK was a lack of co-ordinated action across different communities. The programme concludes this summer, having produced a comprehensive report on the state of the UK's peatlands, and calls for the complete restoration of this valuable habitat. Such has been the strength of the advocacy campaign, this ambitious call has been agreed by the devolved governments of the UK. The next step is to apply this exemplar across the world to reverse climate change, particularly in the peatlands of Indonesia, Russia and Canada.

In 2010 and 2011 De Haan's Trust instigated a series of new projects with an Environment Challenge Match Fund that distributed £150,000 to a number of organisations in the UK, conserving or creating habitats that support bees and invertebrates, restoring fresh waters to good condition and assisting in the establishment of Marine Protected Areas.

About the Rothschild Medal

The medal is sponsored by Charlotte Lane, daughter of Miriam Rothschild and granddaughter of The Wildlife Trusts' founder, Charles Rothschild – it was created in the spirit of this remarkable father and daughter. Talking about her father, Charles, on Desert Island Discs in 1989, Miriam Rothschild said: "Before his time people thought you had to conserve rare species and he realised that it was the habitat you had to conserve not the species. You had to preserve the wood in which the animals lived or the meadows in which they lived."

The medal in The Wildlife Trusts' Centenary year

This being the second Rothschild medal, and awarded at The Wildlife Trusts' centenary celebration at the Natural History Museum on 16th May – it has provided all the more focus for reflection on the generosity and



leadership of founder Charles Rothschild, and the need for philanthropy to support The Wildlife Trusts' work protecting wild places and bringing the natural world into people's lives.

On 16th May 1912, a banker, landowner, naturalist and scientist named Charles Rothschild got together with like-minded enthusiasts to whip-up support for a radical idea: to identify and protect the very best of the UK's wild places. Thus began the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves which would later become The Wildlife Trusts movement – the first time that anyone had come up with a vision for nature conservation.

Sponsor of the medal, Charlotte Lane, said: "My grandfather Charles was an extraordinary man. He'd be so delighted that his vision for our natural heritage has blossomed under the aegis of The Wildlife Trusts today. I'm sure he'd find it hugely exhilarating that places he treasured, like Woodwalton Fen, are now part of a wider vision for landscape recovery. Peter De Haan's contribution to the same cause has been equally far-sighted – he's a truly worthy recipient of this medal."

Peter De Haan said: "It's an honour to be awarded the Rothschild Medal, I'll treasure it forever. As well as continuing to support UK Wildlife Trusts, in the future I plan to launch a major campaign to engage young people in this vital work."



Peter de Haan awarded The Rothschild Medal by Charlotte Lane, granddaughter of Wildlife Trust founder, Charles Rothschild © *ChrisTaylorPhotography.com*

Stephanie Hilborne OBE, Chief Executive of The Wildlife Trusts, also added: "We must not underestimate the significance of the decisions made by philanthropists like Peter. At a time when society is at a crossroads and needs to invest in our natural capital more than ever, it is important to acknowledge people who are contributing not just substantial resources, but also ideas and intellect to the movement."

Chief executives from the regional Wildlife Trusts also expressed their appreciation of Peter De Haan's invaluable contributions:

Simon Bentley, CEO of Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust: "Peter De Haan has been brilliant for the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust and we have benefitted greatly from the committed support of his Charitable Trust, which has enabled us to build capacity on a sustained basis. As a result we have grown and developed core areas of work plus a wonderfully diverse range of exciting and innovative projects delivering fantastic benefits for local people and local wildlife. The 'light touch' approach of The Peter De Haan Charitable Trust has consistently demonstrated real trust and confidence in us to get on with our ambitious



programmes of protecting and enhancing the wildlife and wild places of Leicestershire and Rutland for everyone.”

Rob Stoneman, CEO of Yorkshire Wildlife Trust: “Behind the scenes, Peter also brings his business acumen to bear helping the various organisation he funds to become more efficient and use their funds more wisely. I have no doubt that the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust is vastly stronger and more effective because of Peter’s support. He has enabled YWT to get involved in marine wildlife conservation and take forward wildlife-rich living landscapes on the Pennine Fringe, on limestone grasslands and along Yorkshire’s main rivers.”

John Bennett, Chief Executive of Kent Wildlife Trust: “Peter has given Kent Wildlife Trust c.£375,000 to cover the launch of our marine work, and funding full-time our first marine officer (Bryony Chapman) for six years. He made a direct and irreplaceable contribution to the development of our 2,300 acre woodland complex supporting as a stand-alone funder land purchase and providing match funding for a major HLF restoration project of £1.7m.

Carlo Laurenzi, CEO of London Wildlife Trust: “Peter De Haan gave us an enormously generous grant over a number of years. His significant contribution allowed us to expand out conservation work on, for example, climate adaptation and policy development. He gave a huge boost to the management of the Trust’s top 12 reserves such as Saltbox Hill, a wonderful chalk grassland Site of Special Scientific Interest. Peter also provided core funds to allow development of a number of initiatives including: working with local authorities and central government; developing new areas of work, such as Olympics engagement, and London Wildlife Trust’s role in the establishment of the UK-wide Peatlands project – of which we are very proud”.

Family affair!

Virtual visitors watch as new webcam captures Botanic sparrowhawks hatching

RSPB Scotland

For the first time in Scotland, web users have been able to get an intimate look at the breeding season of one of the country’s smallest birds of prey.



A CCTV camera has been set to capture all the action from a sparrowhawk nest situated within the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, following the return of a popular partnership project between the Botanic Garden, RSPB Scotland, the Lothian and Borders Raptor Study group, and the Scottish Seabird Centre,

Last year, thousands of people visited the Date With Nature initiative in the John Hope Gateway to watch an adult pair raise six healthy chicks within the grounds of one of Edinburgh’s busiest attractions.

This month, hundreds of visitors have been following the breeding season of a sparrowhawk pair, nesting within the Garden, and recently, six eggs have now been hatched.



Dedicated project volunteer, Michael Christie, who was the first to spot the big moment and alert project staff, said: "I was sitting at the computer at about 7 o'clock that evening, after a day at work at the RSPB Loch Leven reserve. I was watching the female sparrowhawk sitting, incubating her clutch of six eggs, when I noticed her fidgeting with an empty egg shell, which meant her eggs were beginning to hatch. I was very excited to witness the first egg hatching and even more so as it is my first time volunteering on this project."

Claire Powell, RSPB Scotland Sparrowhawk Date with Nature Project Officer, and whose job it will be to educate and inspire the public about these birds, added: "It's a real privilege to see this special moment and we're delighted that thanks to the webcam, we could share it with people across the world.

Claire continued: "We're very much looking forward to introducing the new family to our visitors and following their fortunes during those all important first few months. Last year's nest was one of the most productive in Edinburgh so we've got high hopes for the class of 2012!"

"Monitoring wildlife at the Garden is showing how important it is as a habitat" said Max Coleman, Science Communicator at RBGE. "Since 1997 a total of 79 bird species have been recorded, making the Garden one of Edinburgh's premier urban bird-watching sites. The success of the sparrowhawks is a good sign that bird populations are healthy as predators only do well when there is abundant prey."



Mike Thornton of the Lothian and Borders Raptor Study Group, said: "Last year, this territory produced the highest clutch and brood size in Edinburgh since we started monitoring the breeding population in Edinburgh in 2009. The video footage from last year showed that this was achieved by the provision of a regular food supply to the young which is an indication that the surrounding environment supports a rich prey base and associated biodiversity."

Sparrowhawks are small, agile birds of prey, and are often spotted darting across gardens in search of prey. As their population size increased they started to colonise cities such as Edinburgh and are now breeding in urban green spaces such as parks, cemeteries and golf courses.



Visitors to the Scottish Seabird Centre can also view the sparrowhawk family thanks to a live video link up between both attractions.

For more information about the Edinburgh Sparrowhawks Date With Nature and to view our live web camera visit www.rspb.org.uk/datewithnature/278092-edinburgh-sparrowhawks.

Sparrowhawk © Lorne Gill



Cub Scout naturalist badge & activity pack

From *UK Friends of the UN Decade on Biodiversity* newsletter, Bob Bloomfield

The National Trust, Wildlife Trusts and Natural History Museum have come together to support the [Cub Scout Naturalist Activity Badge](#). The new badge was launched on Big Nature Day on 27th May, with activities at the Museum and at some of the Wildlife Trust and National Trust reserves and properties in the regions of the UK.



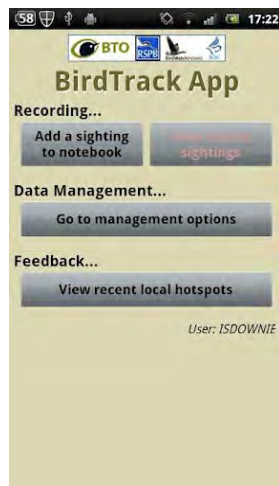
The new badge and supporting pack is an entry level set of activities designed to introduce identification and monitoring wildlife basics to young people. The six tasks (of which 3 need to be done to attain the badge) include a variety of accessible habitat explorations including ponds and hedgerows, and the identification of easy to observe groups of organisms including trees and insects. The NHM with its OPAL (Open-Air Laboratory) partners have provided much of the [content](#), the National Trust and Wildlife Trust partners are well positioned to support regional cub scouts groups by offering them places to go to visit and explore nature.



New BirdTrack mobile app

BTO (British Trust for Ornithology)

You can now submit your bird sightings in the field, straight to BirdTrack with the fantastic new BirdTrack app for Android phones. Records from anywhere in Britain and Ireland can be collected offline, then verified and uploaded later, when convenient. GPS integration is included (when the GPS in your device is switched on!), and there's a helpful local hotspot viewer too. All in all, this is a great app for all birdwatchers with an Android phone, so go ahead and [download it today](#) free! An iPhone version is under development and should be available later in the year.





New Organisation launches to bring focus on species conservation

The Species Recovery Trust

The Species Recovery Trust is a new charity set up to tackle the loss of some of the rarest species in the UK.



The New Forest Cicada, possibly already extinct © *The Species Recovery Trust*.

There are over nine hundred native species in the UK that are classed as under threat, with several hundreds more currently widespread but known to be in significant decline. The countryside is now bereft of many species that were a familiar sight a mere generation ago.

A small number of these species are on the absolute brink of existence, poised to become extinct in our lifetimes. Each year several millions are spent on conservation and yet animals and plants are still slipping through the net. However, when targeted effectively, many rare species have been shown to thrive.

The Species Recovery Trust is committed to halting the loss of biodiversity in the UK. Our primary aim is to remove 50 species from the edge of extinction in the UK by the year 2050. This is a small number when compared with how many red list species are present in the UK, but our plan is to work on them for the next 30 years, or even longer, really get to understand the factors causing their decline, and achieve a slow but steady increase in numbers over this period.



Spiked Rampion - now only occurs at 8 sites in East Sussex. At three of these there is only one plant left, catastrophic for a species which cannot self pollinate
© *The Species Recovery Trust*

Our other aim is to reverse the decline in knowledge of our native wildlife, which we have equal concern about. We run series of training events aimed at re-connecting people with the natural world about them, and are also producing a set of online video tutorials. We believe it will be increasingly harder to make a public care about a rare beetle when many people have never encountered even the commonest forms of wildlife.

It is free to become a supporter of The Species Recovery Trust and our [website](#) contains more information about our work.



Heath Lobelia - thriving in its Devon stronghold where the Devon Wildlife Trust has managed for it, but struggling at its other sites
© *The Species Recovery Trust*.



Fruit-full Schools update

Stuart Parks, *Learning through Landscapes*

Fruit-full Schools is an exciting Big Lottery funded project, managed by Learning through Landscapes in partnership with Garden Organic and Common Ground, to support children and young people to design, grow, plant and manage community apple orchards in their school grounds.

Fruit-full Schools aims to connect children and young people with nature, engage them in hands-on learning about the benefits of local food, and enable them to take positive action for their environment. Pupils have researched, designed and planted community orchards in their school grounds – this includes grafting their own trees! These secondary schools are now supporting a further 150 primary schools (or apple pips!) to grow their own orchards.



© Learning through Landscapes

Excitingly, 50 secondary schools across the country now have their own orchards including rare heritage varieties! The pupils have already been enjoying the increased biodiversity benefits, with pupils in the heart of Newham recently discovering the spectacular looking Rusty Tussock caterpillar as well as beneficial hoverfly larvae munching away on the aphids. This forms part of an important lesson on organic agriculture and the idea of working with nature to create resilient, diverse and balanced systems capable of keeping any pest outbreaks in check. Later this year the schools will plant out the rest of their trees, with some schools having up to 50 trees of semi-vigorous rootstock in their orchard.

Participating schools are forming groups of volunteers to assist with all sorts of orchard-related tasks. These include tree care and maintenance (watering – especially during the summer months, mulching, looking out for pests, pruning etc); helping out at celebration events such as apple day; and harvesting. Watering is the key task in the coming months, with the newly planted trees needing a weekly soak to help with healthy root development. We hope that volunteers will develop good relationships with the schools and in return will gain great experience, learn new skills such as pruning and organic pest control, contribute to a community project and of course share in celebrations and the harvest itself, once we have an abundance of fresh, organic fruit! Potential volunteers needn't worry about CRB checks in most cases as all contact with the pupils will be supervised, although this is to be discussed on a school-by-school basis. To see if there is a school near you and to volunteer your services please visit www.fruitfullschools.org for details of each school's project coordinator. Alternatively email your details to fruitfullschools@ltl.org.uk.



© Learning through Landscapes

The Fruit-full Schools programme has also won a place in the semi-finals of The National Lottery Awards 2012 and



needs your votes! The National Lottery Awards recognise the positive impact that Lottery-funded projects – both big and small – make to local communities. Fruit-full Schools is one of only 10 projects to make it through in the **Best Education Project** category in the annual search to find the UK's favourite Lottery-funded projects. The three projects in each category with the highest number of votes will go through to the final round of public voting later this summer. If you'd like to help raise the profile of these sorts of projects as worthy recipients of Lottery funding then why not vote for Fruit-full Schools by calling 0844 836 9684 or [click here to vote for free](#) online. Voting for the semi-finals is now open and ends at midday on Sunday 22 July.



© *Learning through Landscapes*



Heathland restoration at Crombie Country Park, Angus

Angus Council

Crombie Country Park in Angus covers 102ha of conifer plantations, birchwoods, lowland heathland, unimproved grassland and a freshwater loch. Last winter the lowland heath was enhanced by scrub clearance. Angus Council Ranger Service was awarded a grant for restoring some of its heathland. The £1000 grant from SITA Tayside Biodiversity Action Fund enabled the removal of Birch and Rhododendrons along the Peddieston Trail. Countryside Rangers and local volunteers used hand tools and brushcutters to clear invading scrub and exotics from the heath. This opened up the heath beside the trail. Future work will include monitoring the heathland, continuing the scrub clearance and instigating a cutting regime on a 16-year rotation for the heather to further enhance the habitat.

Lowland heathland is a priority habitat in the Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan. Scotland has 20% of the UK's Lowland heath, which has declined over the last 60 years as a result of agricultural improvement, development and afforestation. Remaining lowland heathland is threatened by mismanagement.

For further information on the habitat work at Crombie, contact the Ranger Service:
crombiepark@angus.gov.uk.



Crombie heathland © Angus Council

Brede High Woods – heathland creation

Kay Haw, Woodland Trust



Brede High Woods covers a total of 262 hectares (ha) across the East Sussex parishes of Brede, Ewhurst and Sedlescombe. It lies within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the High Weald Natural Character Area. The area is dominated by nutrient-poor acid sandstone, which creates a range of soils, from free-draining through to wetter areas of marsh and mire.

Historically, the site was a mixture of ancient semi-natural woodland, small farmed fields (both arable and rough pasture), orchards and areas of heath. The heathland developed in southern England through traditional grazing activities, but much has been lost. The woods were once influenced by traditional Wealden coppice industries such as charcoal burning for the historic iron industry and sweet chestnut for hop poles and fencing. The farmed elements were pre-Second World War, so have no history of intensive chemical or fertiliser use.

In the 1930s farming was abandoned as the Brede Valley was dammed to create the Powdermill Reservoir. Following this, much of the catchment area around the reservoir was given over to commercial forestry from the 1940s to 1960s.



Today, Brede High Woods is a complex mosaic of habitats: ancient semi-natural woodland (mostly coppice), conifer plantations (both secondary woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites), broadleaf plantations, and more open areas of heath, grass, mire, *Sphagnum* moss beds and scrub.

The Woodland Trust acquired the woods in December 2007. Surveys and assessments by Dr Patrick Roper and others identified a rich biodiversity in the open spaces and a need to manage these areas to retain important species. Two of the UK's heather species, common heather, *Calluna vulgaris*, and bell heather, *Erica cinerea*, were recorded on site. Along with the scarce heath dog-violet, *Viola canina*, and butterflies of conservation concern including dingy skipper, *Pyrgus malvae*, and pearl-bordered fritillary, *Boloria euphrosyne* (a UK BAP species).

The Trust has undertaken significant work to expand and improve open habitats. Trees have been removed from 'ride' (path) edges to widen them. But most importantly, two large open areas have been created, namely Sedlescombe Heath and Brede High Heath. Open space comprises up to 15% of the wood's area, and ideally the Trust would like to increase this to 20%.



Brede View, from 2009 (top) to 2010, following work (bottom) © Patrick Roper

Sedlescombe Heath is a fenced 20 ha area, of which 75% is open ground with 25% tree cover. It was created by clearing a number of subcompartments, which reflect historical boundaries such as old banks and hedgerows, and the past management of these distinct areas now appears to influence their individual floristic characters.

As the area to be cleared was over half a hectare it was necessary to complete an Environmental Impact Assessment. This and the cartographic evidence showed the proposed section was not ancient woodland; it was secondary woodland that had been actively planted or naturally regenerated. The cleared subcompartments contained unthinned hybrid larch, *Larix x eurolepis*, Scots pine, *Pinus sylvestris*, and Norway spruce, *Picea abies*, plantations (closely planted, dense and very dark) and a young closed canopy oak, *Quercus robur*, plantation. There is also an area of open-canopied, mature Scots pine plantation within the fenced area of Sedlescombe Heath.

Whole tree harvesting was the chosen clearance method as it is quick and clean. Trees are felled and chipped; the resulting wood chip is then removed from the site. Due to this the seed bank was able to flourish immediately, as the soil was not swamped by excess woody debris. The leftover stumps were mulched; this created small piles of woodchip which wild boar, *Sus scrofa*, constantly root through, turning it over and increasing the rate of decomposition.

Some groves of birch, willow and other species were retained, along with individual Scots pine and oak trees – to become veteran and ancient trees of the future. Sedlescombe Heath is now an intimate mosaic of open ground regenerating with heather and some standards, wet birch/purple moor grass woodland, and



open-canopied mature Scots pine with a hazel, oak and bramble understorey.

Since clearance cross-leaved heath, *Erica tetralix*, previously unrecorded on the site, has appeared along with many other heathland plants. However, greater broomrape, *Orobanche rapum-genistae*, last recorded in the early 2000s, has not reappeared. Dodder, *Cuscuta epithimum*, parasitic on *Calluna vulgaris* heather and other plants have proliferated across the cleared areas of Sedlescombe Heath. Skylarks, *Alauda arvensis* (a UK BAP species), previously nesting in fields to the west of the site, were recorded in 2011 in the newly open areas. The area is a hotspot for adders, *Vipera berus*, a nationally declining reptile, and these too will benefit from the increased open space.

Future management objectives for Sedlescombe Heath are to maintain the current mix of habitats. To achieve this, light conservation grazing has been introduced using cattle at low stocking levels. Natural grazing and browsing by rabbits, *Oryctolagus cuniculus*, and transient, controlled fallow deer herds, *Dama dama*, add to the development of the habitat.

In 2011, after consultation with Sussex Wildlife Trust, who have a number of woodland grazing projects, a local grazier was identified. A small herd of five Sussex cows and a Wealden breed descended from draught oxen were kept on the heath over the summer and mild winter, until they began to lose condition during a period of cold weather. They will resume grazing in spring when the weather warms sufficiently and new grass start to grow. The number of cattle is likely to increase to ten for the summer period.

The cattle use all areas of Sedlescombe Heath, grazing the open grassy areas and taking shelter in the open pine plantation. Cattle movements poach the ground in wetter areas, increasing habitat diversity and plant species richness. Their trampling should also control bracken growth, which can overtake and shade out heather species. The development of the area is being monitored annually by an external consultant and the site manager and will be adjusted according to the response of ground flora and scrub.

Additional mechanical management of bracken and scrub may be required periodically to prevent them becoming dominant. In 2012 both areas of heath were entered into an HLS agreement with Natural England. This 10-year grant will pay an annual area sum plus some additional capital payments for bracken and scrub control.



Brede View, from 2009 (top) to 2010, following work (bottom) © Patrick Roper



Summer

Local & Regional

Bright future for London Wildlife Trust nature reserve

London Wildlife Trust

Welcome to Frays Farm Meadows – A London Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve situated on the banks of the River Fray on outskirts of West London, Hillingdon. This site is one of the largest and richest surviving areas of unimproved mesotrophic (neutral) grassland within the M25; a habitat type that has undergone a dramatic decline on a national scale in recent decades, with estimates being made that up to 95% has been lost or severely degraded since 1949.



Water vole feeding on a root © Tom Marshall

The unique wetland character of the reserve means that the Frays Farm Meadows is home to a whole host of intriguing and notable species to be discovered. Beautiful and banded demoiselles are regularly seen fluttering through this wet landscape, while female glow worms light up the night's sky in the surrounding scrub and woodland mosaic. However, the real treat for anyone wishing to visit the site is the diverse and dazzling array of flowering plants, grasses and sedges. Of particular note is the (not so) common sedge with its black flowers, the ragged robin whose splashes of pink can be seen from the A40, and the rare Water Speedwell whose distribution is restricted to only a number of sites in London.

The future looks bright for Frays Farm Meadows which is currently entering into its second year of Higher Level Stewardship. Entering into HLS has helped secure vital funding that is needed for the long term management of the site in addition to providing some supplementary capital necessary to carry out some important infrastructure works. We currently graze half of the site with cattle, and through the support of Natural England we soon will be introducing cattle on to the remainder of the reserve. Introducing light stocking levels onto the reserve helps ensure that nutrients are removed from the sward, and some of the more competitive and coarse sedges and grasses are eaten before they become too unpalatable later on in the grazing season.

Additionally, there has been significant investment in restoring the ditch network that runs through the site in recent years. Thanks to the generous support of landfill grant funder SITA and their Enriching Nature fund, all the ditches have now been restored. Completed in April, this work has ensured the creation, restoration and protection of the ditch network that traverses the reserve, for the important population of water voles found on site. A huge amount of work was undertaken by London Wildlife Trust, local contractors and an impressive array of hard grafting volunteers. In total 608 metres of ditches were desilted, 575m of ditch banks have been cleared of blackthorn, hawthorn and bramble scrub, and a whopping 1500m of stock proof fencing has been installed along the ditches, protecting the voles' habitat from any over grazing or trampling. A special thank you has to be given to the local volunteers, whom without their hard work, determination and dedication, none of this work would have been possible.



Frays River at Frays Farm meadows
© London Wildlife Trust

For more information about London Wildlife Trust, the work they do and the reserves they manage please visit <http://www.wildlondon.org.uk/>, or contact reserves manager, Tom Hayward: thayward@wildlondon.org.uk.



Summer

Local & Regional

Avocets breed in Gloucestershire for the first time

WWT (Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust)

Conservationists are celebrating after an iconic bird has bred in Gloucestershire for the first time: a pair of avocets bred two young in WWT Slimbridge in mid-May, with a further egg potentially hatching.

The wading bird was extinct in Britain for a long time because of habitat destruction and persecution by skin and egg collectors. However, soon after World War II they started breeding on reclaimed land near the Wash, which was returned to marshland to create difficulties for German invaders.

Since that, point numbers have slowly recovered in the UK but this is the first time they have bred in Gloucestershire.

The avocet is popular with birdwatchers as it has attractive black and white plumage and a distinctive up-turned beak which allows it to feed well in saltwater by sweeping its head from side to side. This couple has started their young family in view of the Holden Tower, a three storey bird hide overlooking the Severn Estuary at Slimbridge.

Dave Paynter, head of reserve at Slimbridge, said: "This is extremely exciting for Gloucestershire and great for Slimbridge that they have chosen here as a suitable habitat.

"We have been keeping an eye on the nest to ensure there is no disturbance for a long time and took the decision to build a small electrified fence around it recently to try and give them further protection from any predators.

"The next few weeks will be critical as they are very vulnerable before they grow a bit bigger. We will be keeping our fingers crossed for them and following their progress."

To find out how they are getting on visit our wildlife sightings page at:

www.wwt.org.uk/slimbridge-sightings or come to Slimbridge to see the young family in person.



The adult avocet at Slimbridge © James Lees



Avocet with chick © James Lees



Summer

Local & Regional

Rare pondweed found in heart of Stevenage

Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust

A rare pond plant has been found in a community pond in the middle of Stevenage, during an education day for local residents organised by Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust.

The opposite-leaved pondweed is described as nationally vulnerable and on the government's red data book list for Great Britain. This rare aquatic plant has made its home at Poplars Meadow Pond, once neglected and litter-strewn but lately transformed as part of the Wildlife Trust's Wild Stevenage project, with help from the Stevenage Scouts, who have adopted the pond.

Dr Jeremy Biggs, the Director of Pond Conservation who made the discovery, was amazed: "Opposite-leaved Pondweed is one of our most threatened water plants and has disappeared from large parts of the countryside because of water pollution and habitat destruction. Finding it in the pond at Poplars Meadow was a wonderful surprise and confirmed again how important ponds are as refuges for the most endangered freshwater plants and animals."

Tim Hill, Conservation Manager at Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust said: "Ponds provide homes for a huge variety of wildlife but sadly thousands have been lost in Hertfordshire due to filling in, pollution or neglect. The biodiversity action plan for Stevenage identified the work needed to restore the town's ponds.

"The Poplars Meadow Pond is the first to have been restored and we are delighted that the work has resulted in the finding of this rare plant. Not only this, but large numbers of toads are breeding there too – quite a success story. It's great news that the pond has been 'adopted' by the local scout group which means that it is in safe hands for the future. The Trust will continue working with Stevenage Borough Council to ensure all the town's ponds are in good care."

The pond day was funded by Natural England and Heritage Lottery Fund. Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust are working in partnership with Stevenage Borough Council and SoStevenage on the Wild Stevenage project.

Dr Jeremy Biggs, who discovered the rarity at Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust's pond education day in Stevenage © Ann Favell



Volunteers begin hunt for rare Scottish butterfly

Butterfly Conservation

The feisty and charismatic Small Blue butterfly is the focus of a volunteer survey in Angus.

The UK's smallest butterfly once had colonies stretching along large sections of the Scottish coastline, and also many inland colonies on flower-rich grassland and river shingle. It even successfully colonised many 'brownfield' sites, for example disused railway lines and quarries. Its presence is determined by the sole caterpillar foodplant, Kidney Vetch.



Summer

Local & Regional

Sadly many colonies have been lost - including all of those on the south west coast - and most of the inland sites, as pastures have been 'improved' for agriculture, and brownfield sites have been redeveloped. The Small Blue is now on the UK's Red List, and on the UK and Tayside Biodiversity Action Plans.

The butterfly lives in wild, uncultivated places, is often reluctant to stray far from its origin, can easily be overlooked, doesn't come into gardens (so people just don't see it much) and is threatened by changes to the countryside which may unwittingly destroy the habitats it needs.



Small Blue butterfly © Jim Asher

Angus still has a scattering of colonies along the coast so the survey is aimed at getting a more accurate picture of the butterfly's current distribution, as well as that of its food-plant, Kidney Vetch. The survey is being co-ordinated through the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership and Butterfly Conservation Scotland.

Catherine Lloyd, Tayside Biodiversity Co-ordinator, said: "Future plans will include working with local landowners and other site managers to ensure the remaining colonies prosper, and hopefully there will be opportunities to encourage its spread to other suitable habitats".

For more information on the Small Blue and the survey, go to:

http://www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk/PageFlip/Get_Involved_Project_SmallBlue2.html

<http://www.butterfly-conservation.org/Butterfly/32/Butterfly.html?ButterflyId=48>

Or contact:

Craig Borland, Angus Council Ranger Service: BorlandC@angus.gov.uk, 01307 461118

Paul Kirkland, Butterfly Conservation Scotland: pkirkland@butterfly-conservation.org, 07770732825

Catherine Lloyd Tayside Biodiversity Co-ordinator: caglloyd@pkc.gov.uk

Rare bird is another Brockholes milestone

The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester & North Merseyside



Lancashire,
Manchester &
North Merseyside

The award-winning Brockholes nature reserve near Preston attracts so many rare and unusual bird species to its mosaic of lakes and meadows that twitchers are spoilt for choice.

But the sighting of a rare red-necked phalarope at the Lancashire Wildlife Trust's reserve just off Junction 31 of the M6 is something special, and has got Lancashire's birding community all-a-flutter.



Not only is this diminutive wader an exceptionally rare visitor to the North West, it is also the 199th Category A-C (red list) species to be spotted at Brockholes. Now twitchers can't wait to see what will be the 200th rare bird to drop in at the reserve.

Birdwatcher Carl Partington was the first to spot the red-necked phalarope on Meadow Lake, and fellow birder Bill Aspin described it as "a tremendous find . . . the first recorded on site".

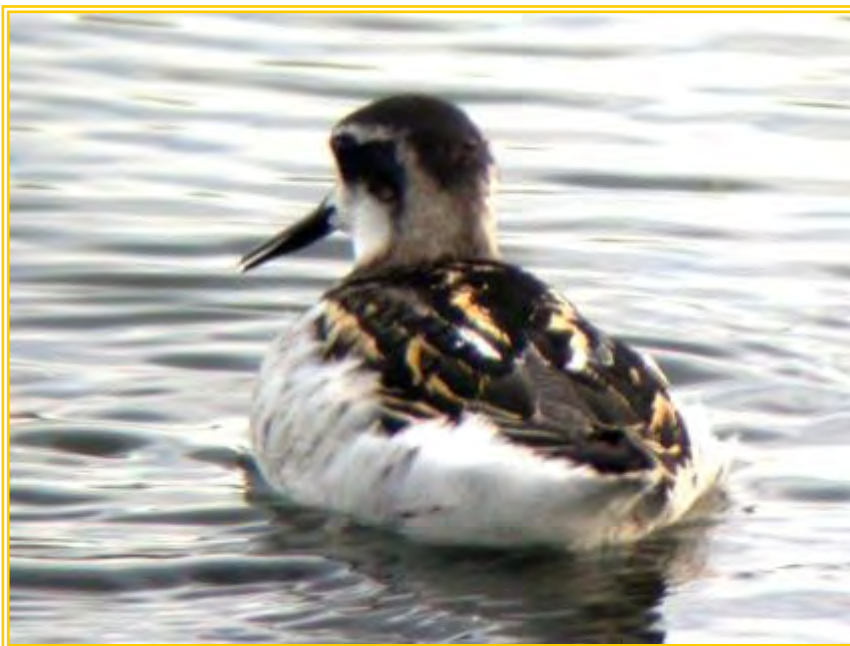
Mr Aspin said that the addition of the red-necked phalarope meant Brockholes had now had 199 category A-C species visiting the site. He added: "The list consists of all species recorded in the period from Aug 1998 to the present, along with some historical records."

Birds enthusiast Jonathan Scragg was very excited about the discovery. Writing on Brockholes' Facebook page, he said: "Since the phalarope was the 199th Brockholes species, what do people predict will be the 200th?"

Only about 30 pairs of red-necked phalaropes breed in the UK, and they are confined to the Outer Hebrides and the Northern Isles. They are categorised as a Red List bird and to see one as far south as Lancashire is extremely rare. The species is a small, delicate bird with lobed toes which enable them to spin in circles on the water while hunting for their favourite food of insects. Unusually, the duller-coloured male is charged with looking after the eggs and young, while the females leave the breeding areas in July for warmer climes in the Middle East.

Brockholes Reserves Manager, Sophie Leadsom, said that the red-necked phalarope's visit was proof that Brockholes offered varied and attractive habitat for a wide range of birds. She added: "It's a great honour that we are getting such a rare visitor to the reserve, even though it was here for just for a day. They are just magical little birds and look so beautiful in their summer plumage.

"It's a real feather in our cap to have one here. They are a much more northern bird so its arrival was totally unexpected really. Quite a few people came to see it and it caused quite a stir among the birders.



"It's possible that it was a youngster on its way to the birds' breeding grounds in Scotland and had got a little lost. When it saw Brockholes, it decided to drop in for bed and breakfast!"

As for the 200th rare bird sighting at Brockholes, Sophie's choice would be the Slavonian grebe, another strikingly coloured bird which also breeds in small numbers in the Highlands. "They are seriously spectacular birds in their summer plumage," she said. "They have beautiful golden ear tufts and only a handful breed in this country. It would be fantastic to have one drop by here."

Red-necked phalarope © Dave Appleton



Since Brockholes opened as the Lancashire Wildlife Trust's flagship reserve last year, it has attracted hundreds of breeding and migrant birds. The site's network of meadows, semi-ancient woodlands and lakes are irresistible to a huge variety of species, from great crested grebe and lapwing to warblers and sand martins.

Meadow Lake is a great spot for bird watching, as the water level is shallow and allows wading birds, such as phalarope, to feed on small invertebrates in the exposed mud. The reed fringes are well established and hold some of the largest populations of birds on site. The islands provide safe roosting and breeding areas, and the vegetation is kept short so the birds can watch out for predators. More than 50 species of bird have been recorded breeding there, with Meadow Lake attracting a large number of breeding waders.

See Carl Partington's video of the red-necked phalarope at Brockholes at: <http://www.facebook.com/brockholes?ref=ts#!/photo.php?v=406500362726985>.

For further information, see www.lancswt.org.uk.

Pond Creation in the Cotswold Water Park

At Hanson's Coln Gravel Quarry, Lechlade

Gareth Harris, Cotswold Water Park Trust

The Cotswold Water Park Trust is always looking for further opportunities to create new ponds in the Cotswold Water Park, using Pond Conservation's Million Ponds Project guidelines in providing clean-water ponds for UK and Cotswold Water Park BAP species.



A fresh opportunity was presented in March 2012; Andy Duncan and Alexandra Pick of the Restoration and Landscaping Team at Hanson UK were keen to construct new ponds at Coln Gravel Quarry, Lechlade, in the Cotswold Water Park. But there was a twist.

Following restoration of two new lakes in recent years, seepages of ground water had established on the margins of one such lake, at approximately 2 metres above the water level of the lake. The water, seeping from the ground, was running into the lake margins within the young willow scrub recently established here.

Photo 1 © Gareth Harris, Cotswold Water Park Trust

The proposal was to dig a series of new ponds on the margins, creating several ponds along the contours of the lake edge. It was planned that some ponds may dry up periodically, but that the lower ponds, nearer to the lake edge, would be more permanent.

Works commenced in early April; a nesting bird survey was conducted to ensure that ground nesting birds were not negatively impacted by these works. In the event, a pair of Reed Buntings were clearly nesting nearby and so part of the area where we planned to create ponds was set-aside and left undisturbed. We plan to return here another time to create more ponds, if the first phase is as successful as we hope.



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Two main areas of ponds were created; area 1 (see photo 1) consists of 3 pools in the steep lake margin, with water flowing from the seepages through the ponds and into the lake margins. Existing marginal vegetation was retained and included in the new ponds. These ponds are up to 500mm deep and the largest up to 2 metres across. Area 2 (photos 2 and 3) comprises a series of long linear ponds constructed

along the contour lines of the steep lake margin.

These ponds are less than

400mm deep and are expected to dry up periodically, particularly during late summer.



Photo 2 © Gareth Harris, Cotswold Water Park Trust



Photo 3 © Gareth Harris, Cotswold Water Park Trust

Within an hour of excavation all ponds were filling rapidly giving high hopes for some great ponds fairly quickly. Two weeks later, and ably assisted by the inclement weather of late April, the ponds were all full! We'll be monitoring these ponds in the next year or so, to see how they develop. I remain hopeful that we have made ponded seepages that may attract the rare Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly, *Ischnura pumilio*. Historically this species has always been rare in the CWP, but is encountered from time to time, often in the temporary pools within gravel workings. Seepages such as these may prove attractive in the near future!

Thank you to Alexandra Pick for enabling these works!

For more information contact: Gareth Harris, Biodiversity Manager, Cotswold Water Park Trust:

Gareth.harris@waterpark.org.

The Hertfordshire Living Rivers Project

Charlie Bell, Hertfordshire Living Rivers Project, Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust



River Mimram © Charlie Bell

Few people realise the significance of Hertfordshire's chalk rivers. There are only around 200 chalk rivers in the world, most of which are in southeast England. Hertfordshire therefore contains a significant proportion of the world's chalk streams; the Mimram, Beane, Ash and Ver, to name some of them. They are beautiful and iconic ecosystems, supporting a wide range of native wildlife.

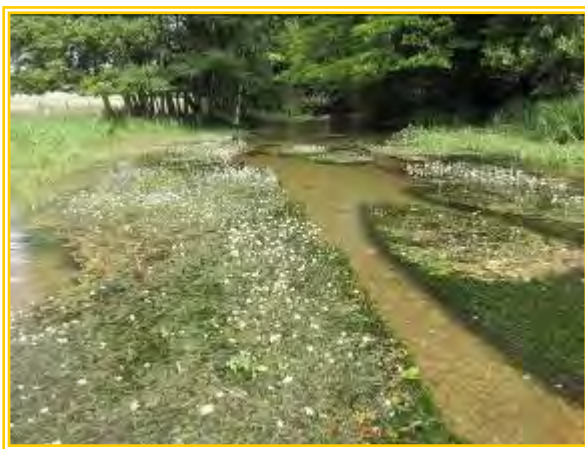
Sadly, these special places face numerous threats. The chalk aquifer which feeds these rivers also provides water for public use. Almost all of Hertfordshire's chalk streams are 'over ab-



stracted - too much water is taken from the underlying groundwater, resulting in significantly reduced flows. Pollution is another problem, whether in the form of agricultural run-off, domestic misconnections, sewer overflows or discharge from urban areas. Non-native invasive species are impacting on native biodiversity. Destruction or modification of bankside habitat is destroying the homes and food sources of many species. And the drought situation earlier this year had put even more pressure on already scarce water supplies.



River Mimram © Charlie Bell



River Mimram © Tim Hill

The Hertfordshire Living Rivers Project

is a new four year project, funded by the Environment Agency and hosted by Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT). It's an incredibly exciting and timely project, with a broad overall remit: to help achieve landscape scale conservation in Hertfordshire's river valleys. This focus on a landscape scale makes perfect sense – rivers interconnect with each other, and with the catchment which they drain.

A key aim of the project is to raise awareness of the importance of chalk rivers, through work with the media and local communities. The project will also promote better understanding of the link between water coming out of taps and low flows in nearby rivers. Water use in Hertfordshire is around 175 litres per person per day (pppd), 18% above the national average (the Government's target is 130 litres pppd).

Working with local landowners will be crucial to the project's success. Agricultural land covers a large proportion of Hertfordshire, and farmers can therefore play a huge role. Many local land managers are already using methods which are bringing real benefits for waterways on their land. For example, by fencing off a river, it is protected from erosion and pollution by grazing animals. Creating vegetated 'buffer zones' between arable areas and rivers helps prevent chemicals and nutrients draining into them, and can provide valuable habitat. Such water-sensitive farming methods are termed 'Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF)', and the project will be working to promote and support CSF, helping those farmers who want to do more to make their rivers even better.



Water vole eating sedge © Simon Stebbings

Lack of water is a major problem facing chalk rivers. However, there will always be areas of river where water remains. These become even more important in times of low flow, and it's vital that such areas are well managed in order to support species finding refuge there. The project will be coordinating practical restoration projects to enhance existing river and bankside habitat. This will benefit stretches of river, but will also allow areas of good quality habitat to be linked together; these restored rivers will act as corridors, allowing wildlife to move through the landscape.



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As part of the Hertfordshire Living Rivers project, HMWT are 'hosting' catchment management plans for several chalk streams. Planning the management of a catchment is a huge task; no one person or group can do it alone. Instead, by 'hosting' the plans, HMWT will help to bring together people and organisations with an interest in the river. This approach emphasizes the importance of collaboration and takes a 'bottom up' approach, driven by local people. The vision is of a management plan developed and implemented by a partnership of interested people, including farmers, local community groups, fishing clubs, landowners, charities and statutory bodies.

Many of us treasure special memories of our local rivers and streams. For some, it's the dark brown velvety back of a water vole; for a lucky few, it might be the splash of an otter's tail. Rivers hold a special place in our hearts and in our countryside. The Living Rivers Project is a great opportunity to ensure that, by 2016, Hertfordshire's chalk rivers will be changing for the better.



Water vole © Simon Stebbings

More details, including a blog, can be found on the Trust's website:
<http://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/Living+Landscapes/Living+Rivers>.

To contact the project directly, please email:
charlie.bell@hmwt.org.

Volunteers cut through urban jungle

TCV (The Conservation Volunteers)

An ambitious scheme to connect a north London borough's green spaces with the Green Belt is taking shape with the help of The Conservation Volunteers.

Volunteers inspired by the charity to take responsibility for their local environment are clearing scrub vegetation and planting native trees and shrubs on The Belmont Trail, a previously neglected footpath that runs along a disused railway branch line from the centre of Harrow towards the greenbelt. The intention is to create a wildlife corridor which will bring higher biodiversity to the area and encourage more people to walk and cycle, thus improving the physical health and emotional well being of people across the local area as well as the volunteers taking part! At the southern end of the trail, in Kenton Recreation Ground, the volunteers have also been busy planting hawthorn, wild maple and other trees and shrubs to attract more species of birds and butterflies and provide an environment that the local community will enjoy too.

Funded by London Borough of Harrow, the work implements a section of the council's Green Grid project, part of the Mayor of London's All London Green Grid plan to create green links between "town centres, public transport nodes, the countryside in the urban fringe, the Thames and major employment and residential areas."

Although Harrow is often thought of as a prosperous, leafy suburb, a study by the council found that: "despite containing a large number of green open spaces, parts of the Borough have been identified as deficient in public parks/open space. This is due partly to restricted access to private land, and also to severance by roads and railway lines."

The study also reported that the public open spaces in the southern, urbanised part of the borough had less



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ecological diversity than is typical of other boroughs. These mainly consist of amenity grassland, with streams often diverted into concrete channels and street trees largely selected “for ornamental rather than ecological value.”

In all, the council commissioned The Conservation Volunteers to coordinate 33 planting days across seven parks and open spaces in the borough. The volunteers have sown wildflower seed to create two new wildflower meadows. About 8,000 trees and shrubs, almost 12,000 bulbs and 850 ferns and wildlife-attracting perennial flowers were planted across the borough by April 2012.



© Paul Colcutt, *The Conservation Volunteers*

The Conservation Volunteers support thousands of local people on projects like this every year. With your help, we can do even more to support communities to reclaim green places – so join in, and feel good.

Contact Paul Colcutt, p.colcutt@tcv.org.uk to find out more about this project.

To find out about The Conservation Volunteers in your area, check out www.tcv.org.uk or contact us at information@tcv.org.uk.

Carrick & Whitehead get ready to blossom following Translink ‘Ulster in Bloom 2012’ launch

Carrickfergus Borough Council

Gardeners have been urged to help save the bumblebee by planting more pollinating flowers for this year’s Ulster in Bloom competition. The 34th year of the annual horticulture competition has attracted 142 entries representing councils, community groups, businesses, bus and rail stations, all preparing to impress judges with beautiful plant and floral presentations. Carrickfergus Borough is well represented with Carrickfergus Town, Whitehead, Greenisland and Eden taking part.

Stephen Daye, Parks and Countryside Development Officer with Carrickfergus Borough Council, said: “In the Borough we are continuing with the Carrickfergus in Bloom Community Competition. Categories include Best Kept Garden for individuals; for young people we have Painting and Poetry Competitions and the very popular Tallest Sunflower Competition. For the Business Community we have hotly fought categories, such as Best Kept Shop. All these competitions have not only brightened-up our Borough but have been fundamental to our success in Ulster in Bloom. Let’s make this Jubilee year a winning year for Carrickfergus Borough. This year we will continue with the Carrickfergus in Bloom campaigns of promoting capacity building through our grants initiative; we will also be encouraging wildlife gardening through the Blooming Wild campaign, as well as the food growing campaign with initiatives such as the One Pot Pledge.”

To launch this year’s event, Translink is giving away thousands of free ‘Stock’ pollinator flower seed packets at bus and rail stations across Northern Ireland: speaking at the official launch at Cultra Manor in North



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Down, Translink Group Chief Executive, Catherine Mason, explained: “The Translink Ulster in Bloom Competition celebrates and rewards the efforts of those people who grow and maintain exquisite plant and floral displays. 2012 is a flagship year for Northern Ireland. It is important that our cities, towns and villages look their best and leave a lasting positive impression with the thousands of visitors who will be sampling all we have to offer.

“The work undertaken by Ulster in Bloom participants also protects and supports local biodiversity and this year, as part of our company-wide Go Eco drive, we are launching the Translink Ulster in Bloom Big Seeds Giveaway. The Royal Horticultural Society has reported a decline in bee numbers – a serious concern considering the important role they play in the pollination of flowers and fruits. We have chosen to give away ‘Stock’ seeds, a type of pollinator flower which supports bees and the transfer of pollen between plants. We would encourage our passengers to pick up a free packet of seeds from their local station and help support local biodiversity,” said Catherine.

Councillor Freda Donnelly, Northern Ireland Local Government Association, said: “I would like to pay tribute to the Council Parks and Technical Services Departments, the Local In-Bloom Committees, the Business Community and the many residents for their ongoing participation and valued contribution to the Translink Ulster in Bloom competition. Their interest, enthusiasm and high standards of cleanliness and horticulture are to be admired and encouraged. This combined effort has made a notable improvement to the environment and townscapes right across Northern Ireland, which I applaud and I know the Northern Ireland Local Government Association is most keen to encourage.”

Alistair McGowan, board member, Northern Ireland Tourist Board, said: “For over three decades Ulster in Bloom has played a unique role in creating pride in our cities, towns and villages right across Northern Ireland. The competition generates a spirit of community and encourages an important interest in our environment.”



© Carrickfergus Borough Council



Summer

Local & Regional

Architecture Oscars triumph for Brockholes

The Wildlife Trust of Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside

Brockholes Nature Reserve has won three awards at Britain's architecture Oscars.



Lancashire,
Manchester &
N Merseyside

The Visitor Village, at the Lancashire Wildlife Trust reserve, off the M6 at Preston, was chosen as the North West's Building of the Year by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) at a ceremony at the Queens Hotel in Leeds, end of June.

And the pioneering, floating village is now a contender for RIBA's top award, the Stirling Award, against opposition from the London Olympic Stadium and the favourite for the award, the Hepworth Gallery in Wakefield.

Jay Merrick, in *The Independent*, said: "If there's going to be a surprise-winner, it may well be the Brockholes Visitor Centre in Lancashire, designed by Adam Khan. This young architect has produced a totally assured ensemble of buildings whose architecture and environmental performance are clearly the work of a young designer who will, in five or six years, be competing directly with the profession's elite."

Brockholes won RIBA's North West Building of the Year, the North West Sustainability Award and one of the 50 awards for the top new buildings in the UK, that "best exemplify architectural merit in the region". Those 50 buildings and nine other EU designs will now be considered for the Stirling Award.



Brockholes conference centre © *The Wildlife*

Mentioning Brockholes as an example of sustainability, RIBA president, Angela Brady, said: "What really stands out is that even in times of austerity, we can still deliver amazingly clever, high quality buildings that reflect the needs of today and enhance our daily lives."

"Many architects have crafted considered designs using materials that emphasise texture, authenticity and environmental efficiency."

Brockholes Project Manager, Ian Selby, along with Wildlife Trust Chief Executive Anne Selby, was at the ceremony to collect the awards. Ian said: "We are immensely pleased. It's a vindication of the effort we put in and the vision we had for Brockholes."



Brockholes Visitor Village © *The Wildlife Trust of Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside*



Brockholes Visitor Village © *The Wildlife*



Brockholes swan © Leslie Blackwell

“I think we are particularly proud to win the Sustainability Award as it proves how important it is when you have a project like this to do things the right way.”

Brockholes General Manager, Kath Knight, said: “We are delighted to receive recognition at such a prestigious award ceremony. Brockholes is a very special place to work; I have enjoyed being part of this exciting project and watching the reserve develop.

“Adam and The Wildlife Trust were keen to make sure the buildings were perfectly suited to their surroundings in the nature reserve, and to receive the sustainability award is testament to the work that has been done.

“It is great to know that we are being mentioned as possible winners of the Stirling Award but we have tough competition from some fantastic buildings. We are simply happy that the work we have done as a small charity and continue to do is being recognised.”



Brockholes Visitor Village © The Wildlife Trust of Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside

Brockholes was opened on Easter Sunday 2011 and has had more than 180,000 visitors since then. The Visitor Village was designed by Adam Khan and includes an interpretation centre, restaurant, conference centre, education centre and shops.

The nature reserve, which is the size of 120 football pitches, has a number of lakes, woodland, wetland areas and meadows. Birds breeding on the site have increased massively this year proving that visitors can get closer to nature.



Brockholes sand martins © The Wildlife Trust of Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside

For more information, contact Brockholes General Manager, Kath Knight: 01772 872000.

Living with Nature

Denmark Farm Conservation Farm Centre

If you love wildlife, it's upsetting to see its destruction, especially when this is ill informed. We hear so many tales these days of 'bad' organisms – from bacteria and invasive plants, to predator attacks on animals and people – that we forget most species are our friends. In Britain, much of our remaining wildlife occupies human landscapes and settlements – and does its best to use what we have to 'offer'. So why not encourage, not just nature, but other people to see that wildlife is both fascinating and easy to accommodate with little effort?



Spiders – part of the web of life
© Denmark Farm

Here at Denmark Farm, lots of animals use our built environment. Redstarts, nuthatches, pied wagtails, jackdaws, barn owls, swallows & house martins all nest in or on the buildings – either in spaces installed during renovation or on the external structure. Bats roost under roof tiles – a welcome thought when we experience the midges of midsummer (up to 3000 a night may be eaten by a single bat). Remains of a Natterer’s bat were even found in our barn owl pellets - an unusual way of identifying the species!

Inside, we have spiders high in the eaves of our converted barn, with one species specialising in woodworm (we haven’t used toxic chemicals on our rafters). Outside, we’ve created all manner of boxes and habitat piles, as well as an otter holt and bug hotel, specifically to encourage wildlife. Yet some species prefer to make a more interesting choice – this year we have wrens nesting in our tool shed, blue tits in the cigarette disposal unit and wasps making their delicate paper nests in bird boxes.



Tony Cross weighing and ringing young barn owls © Denmark Farm

As well as giving us enjoyment, all of these join the ranks of our natural ‘pest control & waste disposal’ team. Countless flies, aphids, caterpillars, slugs, small mammals and corpses are needed to feed those higher up the food chain. Not to mention the vital role of pollinators, enabling us to have a full and varied diet. When Nature is depleted, it affects us all...what could you do to help someone else love wildlife too?



Nuthatch nesting in wall cavity
© Denmark Farm



Summer

UK BAP Update

Coming soon – the ‘UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework’

Emma Durham, JNCC (Joint Nature Conservation Committee)

A lot of strategic thinking on nature conservation has been taking place both at a UK-level, and within England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, since the 10th Conference of the Parties (COP10) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), held in Nagoya, Japan, in October 2010, and the publication of the CBD’s *Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020* and its 20 ‘Aichi targets’, and also the publication of the new EU Biodiversity Strategy in May 2011. In particular, a new UK Post-2010 UK Biodiversity Framework has been developed, and is due to be published on 17 July 2012.

This new Biodiversity Framework has been developed by JNCC and Defra, on behalf of the Four Countries Biodiversity Group, and reflects the changes which have been taking place as a result of this strategic thinking at both a UK- and country-level. The development of the framework reflects a revised direction for nature conservation, towards an approach which aims to consider the management of the environment as a whole, and to acknowledge and take into account the value of nature in decision-making.

The Biodiversity Framework is designed to show how the work of the four countries and the UK contributes to achieving the Aichi targets, and identifies the activities required to complement the country biodiversity strategies in achieving the targets. It sets out the common purpose and shared priorities of the UK and the four countries, and, as such, is a hugely important document, which is owned, governed, and implemented by the four countries.

To find out more about the UK Post-2010 UK Biodiversity Framework, please visit: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-6189>.

For further information, or to provide us with some feedback, please contact: UKBAP@jncc.gov.uk.



Bumblebees

Oliver E Prys-Jones and Sarah A Corbet, Pelagic Publishing 2011

£19.99, 130 pages

Book review: James Robertson (originally from *Natur Cymru* magazine)

Bumblebees have undeniable appeal. They look like tiny flying teddy bears, and their ability to take off is aeronautically implausible. This popularity has stimulated the formation of an energetic Bumblebee Conservation Trust, and brought about a heightened awareness of the importance of flowers for bees, and of bees for food. It has also encouraged a number of excellent publications, such as the *Field Guide to the Bumblebees of Great Britain and Ireland* (Edwards and Jenner) and Ted Benton's *New Naturalist* on Bumblebees.



Twenty years ago the first edition of *Bumblebees*, was published. One of a series of ecology and identification handbooks for naturalists, it has been substantially revised for this latest, third edition. It is much more than an identification guide, dealing extensively with the natural history of bumblebees. This is based around the original research of one of the authors, and the final chapter contains useful information to help anyone interested in doing their own research to get started.

Several questions buzzed around my brain as I read this splendid handbook. I remembered that Alan Morley had written about unseasonal winter activity from buff-tailed bumblebee queens in *Natur Cymru* magazine, issue 10. It turns out that this species is regularly found starting a winter nesting cycle. A couple of bumblebee species that I see fairly regularly are not included as recent records on the map for my County, but the text makes clear that some areas are not well recorded, and the onus is on me to pass my records on!

As well as maps at the end of the book showing the distribution of species, there are many line drawings and superb plates contributed by Tony Hopkins. They add detail and delight to a wonderfully informative text about a fascinating group of insects.

Our Planet, Our Earth, Our Future

From *UK Friends of the UN Decade on Biodiversity* newsletter, Bob Bloomfield

There had been a lot of focus building up to Rio+20, the UN conference on sustainable development, with its aspiration of moving towards a greener and more equitable economy – simply because, this is a key opportunity where biodiversity issues can be seen and politically advanced, in a more holistic fashion alongside other aspects of environmental change (notably climate change), and with issues of sustainable development.

It is good to see that the crucial need to integrate all these issues for advancing biodiversity and the ecosys-



tem service responses, was reflected in a report for Rio+20 from the World Health Organisation: the discussion paper, [‘Our Planet, Our Health, Our Future’](#), has the very clear perspective that human wellbeing is interdependent with the health of the planet and its biodiversity.

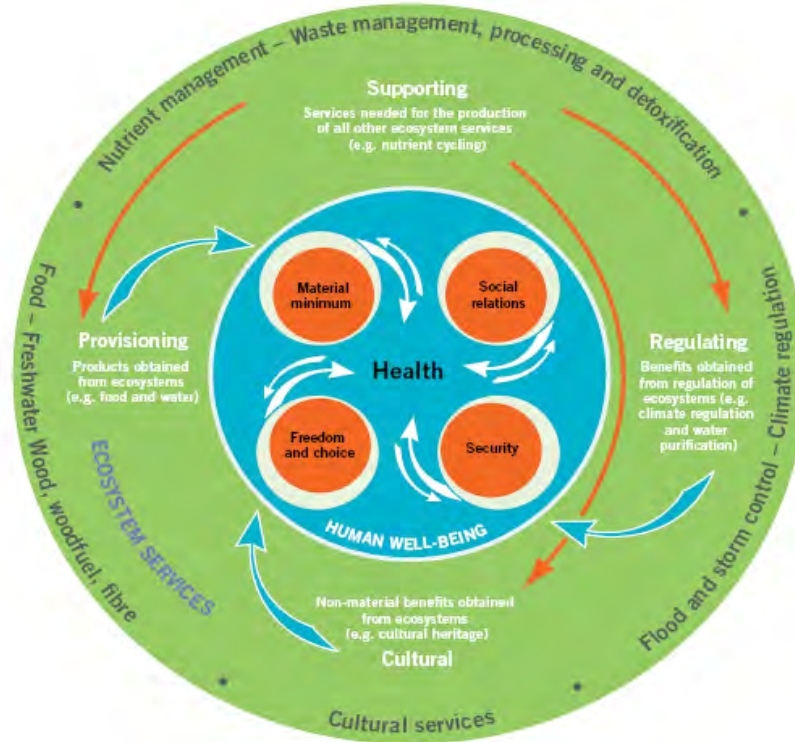


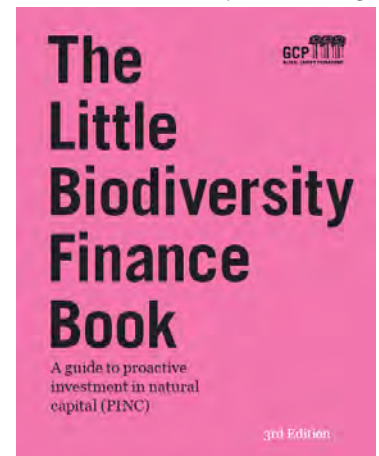
Figure from ‘Our Planet, Our Earth, Our Future’ WHO discussion paper: ‘Associations between health, human well-being and ecosystem services’ © World Health Organisation; Corvalan et al. (p.14)

Business and Biodiversity

From *UK Friends of the UN Decade on Biodiversity* newsletter, Bob Bloomfield

The new [Little Biodiversity Finance Book](#) is a revised guide to proactive investment in natural capital, looking at developments in financing options for biodiversity and ecosystem services. This edition, published on 5 June – World Environment Day – has been published by the Global Canopy Programme with support from the UN Convention on Biological Diversity. It suggests that over the coming decade, biodiversity financing initiatives (it examines 17 different approaches) will at least triple from US\$52 billion in 2010 to US\$160 billion. It also highlights emerging trends, including that the proportions allocated to different parts of the world are likely to change with more of the cost being shifted to the polluters, rather than the beneficiaries of ecosystem services; and a greater balance being needed between market and non-market based financing mechanisms.

Rio+20 saw another initiative when the Corporate Sustainability Forum (CSF) side-event launched the [Natural Capital Declaration](#) (NCD) on 12 June. The NCD is an initiative to bring together high-level executives to develop ways to further ‘hardwire’ natural capital decision making into the financial sector.





Love Parks Week

21-29 July 2012

GreenSpace



Love Parks Weeks was founded by GreenSpace in 2006 and has since built up to be a massive campaign capturing the nation with 1,200 events all over the country last year, and one million participants.

The aim of Love Parks Week is to encourage people to visit, enjoy and take part in their local parks and green spaces. This year, the emphasis will be on access for all to healthy green spaces.

The campaign will help people to recognise what a healthy (quality) green space looks like and through encouraging people to give their park a simple health check, an assessment on the nation's parks can begin!

There are many ways to get involved: by simply attending a Love Parks Week event you can help drive the message that our parks and green spaces are essential to healthy, happy and strong communities.

To find out how your nearest park is doing you can take part in a 2-minute [Park Health Check survey](#), and this can tell you what can you do to help improve it – your results will be extremely valuable for GreenSpace to assess the quality of our parks.

That isn't all... you can also [hold your own](#) Love Parks Week event too! Visit the website which provides you all ready with an [event tool kit](#). You can also help by promoting Love Parks Week through the [promotion materials](#) provided too.

Visit the [website](#) to find out more, find out what events are happening [near you](#), and other ways of getting involved in the fun and excitement!





Wildlife Photographer of the Year at National Museum Cardiff

16 June – 19 September 2012
National Museum Cardiff
Natural Museum Wales

National Museum Cardiff once again hosts the most prestigious competition of its kind and the international leader in the artistic representation of the natural world, the Veolia Environment Wildlife Photographer of the Year from 16 June to 19 September 2012 in the natural history galleries within National Museum Cardiff.

Owned by the [Natural History Museum](#) and [BBC Wildlife Magazine](#), the competition is full of visually stunning and often thought-provoking images which provide an insight into the beauty, drama and variety of nature.

The much coveted title of Veolia Environnement Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2011 was awarded to photographer **Daniel Beltrá from Spain** for his image '**Still life in oil**', a striking image of 8 brown pelicans rescued from an oil spill, from his 6-image portfolio for the Veolia Environnement Wildlife Photojournalist of the Year Award 2011.

Mateusz Piesiak from Poland was hailed as Veolia Environnement Young Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2011 for his image '**Pester power**', in the **11–14 Years category**.

Selected from more than 40,000 entries from amateurs and professional photographers across the globe, the images were judged to be the best of all those entered in the 2011 competition by a judging panel that included some of the world's most respected nature photographers and wildlife experts.

The competition's international reach is growing, with **first-time submissions from countries such as Cambodia, Moldova, Brunei and Kyrgyzstan** in 2011.

Mark Carwardine, Chair of the judging panel, said: "While there is no magic formula for winning and no hard and fast rules to explain why one photograph wins and another doesn't, all winning shots have one thing in common – originality.

"The judges are looking for something that stops them in their tracks. The competition plays an increasingly crucial role in raising the profile of wildlife photography and generating awareness of conservation.

"Nothing speaks louder than an evocative photograph that stirs the imagination, tugs at the heart strings and engages the mind."

Entry to the Museum is free, thanks to the support of the Welsh Assembly Government. Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales operates seven museums across Wales National Museum Cardiff, St Fagans: National History Museum, National Roman Legion Museum, Caerleon, Big Pit: National Coal Museum, Blaenafon, National Wool Museum, Dre-fach Felindre, National Slate Museum, Llanberis and the National Waterfront Museum, Swansea.



Big Butterfly Count

big butterfly count
14th July – 5th August

14 July – 5 August 2012

Butterfly Conservation

The world's biggest count of butterflies is underway and we need your help to spread the word and get involved! Spend just 15 minutes watching butterflies in any sunny place then submit your sightings online. You'll be helping conservationists to track the fortunes of these beautiful but declining insects.

Three quarters of Britain's 56 different types of butterfly have declined since the 1970s. The British Red List classifies 19 species as threatened with extinction and a further 11 as near threatened. Common butterflies have been affected as well as specialist species found only in semi-natural habitats. The total abundance of our common 'wider countryside' butterflies has decreased by 24% over just 10 years and some familiar garden favourites, such as the Small Tortoiseshell, appear to be in severe trouble. Its numbers dropped by 64% over the past decade.

The Big Butterfly Count targets these common and widespread butterflies during the peak of their flight period. Last year over 30,000 people took part but, with your help, we hope that many more will join in the Count this summer. Big Butterfly Count runs from Saturday 14 July – Sunday 5 August 2012 (although you have until the end of August to submit your sightings) at www.bigbutterflycount.org.



Peacock butterfly © Matt Berry

Fun-packed countryside training days for youngsters

July – August 2012

GWCT (Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust)

Aspiring young countryside enthusiasts will look forward to their summer holidays this year as leading research charity, the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust is once again running a country-wide series of inspiring Young Shooter Days, which are specially tailored to suit boys and girls aged 12 to 15 with a keen interest in developing their knowledge and skills in countryside pursuits.



These popular fun-filled days have been made possible through a small trust fund set up in the memory of Norman Clarke, and will be held in four locations across the country during the school summer holidays, including Scotland, North Yorkshire, Leicestershire and Shropshire.

Dr Mike Swan, head of education with the GWCT, said: "These action-packed days have been specially designed to introduce the next generation to the joys and thrills of the countryside. The emphasis is very much on outdoor activities with an opportunity to shoot a few clays under expert professional guidance. As well as offering insight on many of our fascinating game species, the day also highlights some of the practical conservation techniques used in the modern countryside. We also include some challenging fieldcraft activities and many of the skills they learn during the day will stay with them for the rest of their lives."

Places cost £40 each and include lunch, refreshments, all equipment and professional instruction. Days are being held at:

Scotland

Monday 16 July

Mavis Hall Park Shooting School, Humbie, East Lothian

North Yorkshire

Thursday 26 July

Cottendale Shooting Ground, Staxton, near Scarborough

Leicestershire

Wednesday 1 August

GWCT's Allerton Project, Loddington, Leicestershire

Shropshire

Early August

Leighton Hall, Leighton, Shrewesbury

The GWCT is enormously grateful to the Norman Clarke Fund which has provided funding for this series of courses for youngsters. Norman Clarke was a popular shooting instructor for Holland & Holland.

For more details or to book a place, please contact: Lynda Ferguson on 01425 651013 or [book online](#).



© GWCT



Big Wildlife Watch 2012 at Denmark Farm

July – November 2012
Denmark Farm, Ceredigion

Denmark Farm Conservation Centre

Learn more about the wildlife around you with our programme of Wildlife Watch events. We'll help you understand what makes nature tick - and you can then 'go wild' in your own garden or community!

Many of the events are part of wildlife surveys organised by national conservation organisations - so your help will contribute towards a greater knowledge of Wales' wonderful wildlife.

These FREE activities take place from 2 – 4 pm, tea and biscuits available at £1 pp. All you need to do is book a place via our website: www.denmarkfarm.org.uk.

Most Wildlife Watch events are on the same day as our monthly conservation mornings (10am – 1pm). So, why not make a day of it – get in touch to find out more.

July 14 (Sat)

Harvest Mouse Survey

Help us set up bait pots to monitor harvest mice, with the Mammals in a Sustainable Environment project.

August 18 (Sat)

Big Pond Dip

Another Pond Conservation survey to assess the state of the nation's ponds.

September 23 (Sun)

OPEN DAY at DENMARK FARM

Including pond dipping, a 'BioBlitz' and more!

October 14 (Sun)

Feed the Birds Day

Ideas to keep your feathered friends well-fed - and a chance to identify the birds coming to our feeders.

November 10 (Sat)

Big Bulb Plant

Bring a trowel to help plant drifts of wildlife-friendly bulbs in our wildlife garden – and take a few home too!



WWT Photography Competition 2011-2012

Summer heat now open

Closes 31 August 2012

WWT (Wildfowl & Wetland Trust)

The WWT Photography competition 2011-2012 is being held in celebration of the centenary of the Scott Antarctic Expedition, and to mark that this year's grand prize is a once-in-a-lifetime trip to Antarctica, courtesy of Exodus in partnership with Quark Expeditions.

The photography competition has been taking place over the last year, with four season heats. The autumn, winter and spring heats have already gone – and now it is the final summer heat.

When the competition closes on 31 August 2012, all regional heat winners will go through to the grand national final to be held in autumn 2012, and our Portfolio Photographer of the Year will be chosen and awarded the grand prize of a trip to Antarctica.

The summer heat photo competition opened on June 1 and closes on 31 August. At the end the heat, winners representing each of WWT's nine wetland centres will be chosen from each category, along with the winners from the other seasonal heats.

Celebrating the Scott Antarctic Expedition Centenary 2011-2012 entry categories

All entries in the first three must be taken at one of WWT's nine wetland centres:

Wetland Wildlife

Wetland Landscapes

Wildlife & People

Entry to this category can be taken anywhere in the world:

World Wetlands

Competition awards

Young Photographer of the Year

All entries made by under 18s in any of the four main categories will be transferred to this category as under 18s are ineligible to win the main category awards. A winner will be chosen for each centre for each of the seasonal heats to go forward to the national finals.

People's Choice

The public are able to vote online for their favourite photographs in any of the above five categories during each seasonal heat. The photograph with the highest number of overall votes from each seasonal heat will go forward to the national finals.

Portfolio Photographer of the Year

Photographers with at least three shortlisted images in two or more of the seasonal heats will automatically be entered into the national final to be in with a chance of winning this additional award and a once-in-a-time trip to Antarctica, courtesy of Exodus in partnership with Quark Expeditions.

Enter your summer photos to be in with a chance of winning one of [many great prizes!](#)



Windfarms and Minerals: Exploring benefits for biodiversity and communities in South Lanarkshire

A South Lanarkshire Local Biodiversity Partnership (SLBP) Conference

Hamilton Racecourse

September 26 2012

Free

South Lanarkshire Biodiversity Partnership



South Lanarkshire
BIODIVERSITY
PARTNERSHIP

Onshore wind is a significant source of renewable electricity in Scotland and there is now a greater installed capacity in onshore wind farms than any other renewable resource.

Alongside this new source of energy, more traditional mineral extractions also continue to play a significant role in supplying fuel for power and materials for essential industries including construction and manufacturing.

Due to its geography and landscape, South Lanarkshire is home to some of the largest wind farms in Europe and supports a number of open cast coal and other mineral extraction sites.

Although they can sometimes be controversial, many wind farms can bring opportunities for biodiversity. The development and implementation of habitat management plans has brought large areas of land under positive management for biodiversity, and gives us a unique opportunity to implement ecosystem restoration and management at a landscape scale. Mineral restoration plans offer another avenue to secure gains for biodiversity when on-site operations are complete.

Many wind farm operators also contribute to community grant funds. These funds are available to community groups and offer further opportunities for the enhancement of biodiversity at a local level.

This conference aims to bring together wind farm and mineral site operators, ecologists, environmental organisations and community groups. The event will be split into two sessions, with delegates free to attend either session or come along for the full day.

The morning session will provide a forum for the sharing of experience in Habitat Management Plan development and implementation, learn from those who have experienced some of the problems of large scale habitat restoration and management and highlight examples of good practice at operational sites.

In the afternoon, local community groups can learn how to apply for funding and hear from groups and individuals which have already benefited from community funds. Experts will be on hand to discuss project ideas, help identify sources of funding and answer questions from groups interested in biodiversity projects.

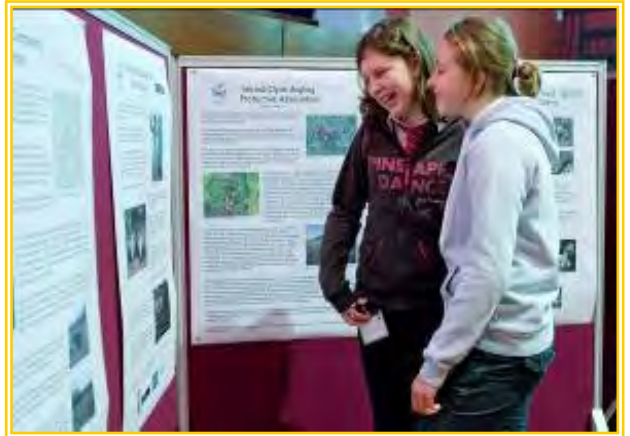
The conference will be hosted by the South Lanarkshire Biodiversity Partnership, which is made up of a range of statutory agencies, NGOs and community groups, many of whom are directly involved in habitat



management groups themselves. Wind farms provide significant opportunities for the implementation of the South Lanarkshire Biodiversity Strategy and the Partnership is keen to bring together all groups and organisations with a shared common interest in biodiversity and habitat management.

We hope to attract a wide range of organisations to the day so please save the date! More information and booking forms will be available in Spring.

For further information please contact: Siân Williams, Biodiversity Officer, South Lanarkshire Council; e-mail: sian.williams@southlanarkshire.gsx.gov.uk; tel: 01698 543419.



Poster session from the 2010 SLBAP conference
© South Lanarkshire Council

IUCN UK annual conference

7 September 2012

From *UK Friends of the UN Decade on Biodiversity newsletter*; *International Union for Conservation of Nature*
The quadrennial [IUCN World Conservation Congress](#) is coming up in Jeju, Republic of Korea, in September (6-15th).

The IUCN World Conservation Congress, held every four years, is the world's largest and most important conservation event: it aims to improve how we manage our natural environment for human, social and economic development.

This year, leaders from government, the public sector, non-governmental organisations, business, UN agencies and social organisations will discuss, debate and decide solutions for the world's most pressing environment and development issues.

It is recognised that effective conservation actions cannot be achieved by conservationists alone, and the 2012 IUCN World Conservation Congress is the place to put aside differences and work together to provide the means and mechanisms for good environmental governance – engaging all parts of society to share both responsibilities and the benefits of conservation.

The IUCN National Committee for the United Kingdom will be holding a meeting on 7 September at the Holiday Inn Cambridge, 'Preparing for Jeju 2012'. For all those interested: [details and registration](#).



NBN Conference 2012

'Biological Recording - Fit for Purpose?'

23 November 2012

The Royal Society, London

National Biodiversity Network

The 12th National Biodiversity Network Conference is taking place on Friday 23rd November at The Royal Society, London. The theme of this year's Conference is "Biological Recording - Fit for Purpose?"

This annual event provides an opportunity for those individuals and organisations who are committed to making biodiversity data widely available, to come together to hear presentations from NBN colleagues. It also provides a wonderful networking opportunity with representatives from conservation agencies, local government and conservation or wildlife-related NGOs and the volunteer community attending.

The Conference also hosts the Sir John Burnett memorial lecture, which this year will be delivered by Sir John Lawton who will talk on the subject of "Making Space for Nature - the importance of biological recording".

Tickets cost £40 until 21st September and £50 thereafter, until Friday 2nd November, when bookings close.

Bookings can be made and more information can be found on the [website](#).

CIWEM's Environmental Photography of the Year

Calling all photographers

Closes 31 December 2012

The Environmental Photographer of the Year competition is an international showcase for the very best in environmental photography and video. Honouring amateurs and professionals of all ages, it provides an opportunity for photographers to share images of environmental and social issues with international audiences, and to enhance our understanding of the causes, consequences and solutions to climate change and social inequality.

Selected from an open submission process, the competition culminates with an exhibition in London that displays an outstanding collection of environmental, social and natural photographs.

Entries are judged on impact, composition, originality and technical ability. Last year the competition attracted more than 10,500 entries from 105 countries and previous entries explored issues as diverse as innovation, sustainable development, biodiversity, poverty, climate change, human rights, culture, natural disasters and population growth.

The Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM) are delighted this year to announce a major partner for the competition, Atkins, one of the world's leading engineering and design consultancies.



Nick Reeves OBE, Executive Director of CIWEM, said: "CIWEM is delighted to be working with Atkins on the development of the Environmental Photographer of the Year Competition. With Atkins' support and global reach the Institution can build on the success it has already achieved and carry important and exciting visual stories on the environment to a much bigger world-wide audience."

Nick Roberts, Director of Water & Environment, Atkins, commented: "We believe that his competition captures in visual form the complex issues that we face as a society... and as a business (we) grapple with daily... The powerful imagery generated by this global competition shows the durability and fragility of the world in which we live... We are proud to be associated with this competition and to work with CIWEM to develop its reach and impact in the future."

The selection panel for the 2012 competition will include Nick Reeves OBE, Executive Director, CIWEM and Nick Roberts, Director of Water & Environment, Atkins. Additional selectors, specialists in the environmental and photographic fields, will be announced shortly.

During the exhibition the following prizes will be awarded:

Environmental Photographer of the Year £5000

Young Environmental Photographer of the Year (Under 18) £1000

Environmental Video of the Year £1000

How to enter:

Open to all photographers, professional and amateur alike, the competition encourages entries that are contemporary, creative, resonant, original and beautiful. Entry is £5 for the first image plus £1 per image up to a maximum of 10. Entry for registered students is free.

Deadline for entries: 31 December 2012, by 5pm

For further details and to enter online: www.epoty.org

For all enquiries, please contact the competition administrators, Parker Harris: EPOTY@parkerharris.co.uk; 01372 462190.

