

BIODIVERSITY ACTION

September 2007

Herefordshire BAP Revision

A new couple of dates have been set for revising the second tranche of habitat and species action plans. The first day (1st November) based at the Shire Hall will focus on wetland themed plans and the second day (2nd November) based at the Town Hall over the road in St Owens Street, will focus on upland themed plans.

The days will be scheduled to involve an introduction to the BAP revision process within the County (for those that didn't attend the first tranche of meetings held back in January) and then the plan leads will open up discussions with partners to look at the revised plans and to devolve responsibility.

This is a fantastic opportunity for representatives from all organisations, no matter how big or small to have a say in this exciting phase of the revision of the Herefordshire LBAP as well as meeting their corporate duties and inputting into local, regional and national targets.

This is **your** time, to have **your** say into **your** plan.

Go on, be brave, go to the workshops – I'll see you there.
Happy BAPPING

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Peacock Butterfly

First Herefordshire records for rare water beetles

Professor Garth Foster, the renowned expert on aquatic Coleoptera, recorded two species new to Herefordshire in a survey of May Hill and May Hill Common commissioned by the site's owners The National Trust.

May Hill, with its distinctive clump of pines, is in Gloucestershire but the adjoining Common is in Herefordshire and it was here that Professor Foster discovered *Agabus melanarius* and *Hydraena britteni*, both nationally scarce (Nb) and not previously recorded in the county, together with another nationally scarce species *Hydroporus longulus*. *Hydraena britteni* and *Hydroporus longulus* were found in the same acid seepage in the shadow of the county boundary whilst *Agabus melanarius* was recorded nearby in a less acid pond.

Remarkably, this is only the third time that the three species of water beetle have been recorded from the same site, the previous occurrences being from a site in East Sussex subsequently destroyed and from a subfossil site in Nottinghamshire.

Simon Barker
Regional Nature Conservation Adviser
The National Trust



Grasshopper at Bodenham Orchard

Herefordshire Orchards Community Evaluation project

Herefordshire Orchards Community Evaluation project A Summer 2007 progress note

The project set out to really understand the importance of orchards to Herefordshire.

We are concentrating on an evaluation of the impact of just six of more than three thousand orchards in the County, but these orchards were selected to represent the different types and characteristics of orchard that can be found here.



We have been looking at an organic traditional orchard near Dormington; a traditional orchard near Lugwardine where the owner is applying interesting commercial approaches; a large bush orchard in Byford; a publicly owned remnant orchard in Bodenham where public access is encouraged; an old bush plum orchard in the village at Glewstone near Ross on Wye; and a highly visible orchard in Castle Frome on the main Worcester road into the County. The evaluation is both deep and wide-ranging, seeking to derive a *triple bottom line value* for each orchard through assessment of environmental, social and economic impacts. This has included consideration of aspects as diverse as the orchard's contribution to climate change, biodiversity, the local economy and people's lives.

This is an innovative process, which involves talking to local people and to tourists visiting the County, as well as considerable input from the orchard owners who have willingly shared financial information and provided access to their land. We also continue to receive magnificent support from the many local experts in natural species who are visiting each orchard to record what they find there. Records of soil, fungi, lichens, mosses, plants, insects, birds, bats and mammals are helping to measure the wealth of biodiversity at each orchard. This summer's weather has not been the most conducive but the efforts of these enthusiastic experts have been invaluable in constructing an account that, probably for the first time, fully compares different types of orchard. A couple of highlights of the last few months were the first record anywhere in the County of a micro fungus called *Pirottaea nigrostriata*, found on a dead stem in one of the bush orchards, and a

lichen *Bacidia rubella* found in the remnant orchard which is an ancient woodland indicator species. I am truly grateful for, and impressed by, the commitment and enthusiasm of everyone associated with the project.

On the national stage, the project continues to receive excellent support from Natural England and Forum for the Future and we are working now with three national research institutions to develop specific aspects of the project. This includes analysis of worm and mammal populations within the orchards and some more detailed work on the carbon sequestration potential of the different types of fruit trees. We were delighted to be approached by the BBC to contribute to the Radio 4 Nature programme on orchards, aired in April, to explain the new perspective on orchards that the project is developing.

The intention of the project is that the broader view of the value of orchards will be used to inform both local understanding and national policy and to encourage actions that enhance the value of orchards. For example, we are using our findings to support the work of Herefordshire Council in promoting the importance of orchards in the local planning process, and working with the national collaboration project Farming Futures to produce information on orchard adaptation in the face of climate change.

The evaluation of three of the orchards is now largely complete and this demonstrates the very different ways that each orchard type affects people, the economy and the environment. By the end of the year, we plan to have a full account of each of the orchards participating in the project.

If you are interested in finding out more about the project please contact me at the address below or by email at damagelimited@btinternet.com.

This project has been developed by the Bulmer Foundation on behalf of the Herefordshire Orchard Topic Group, which represents a wide range of interests in orchards. We are grateful to the organisations shown below for their continuing support.

Dave Marshall
Associate
The Bulmer Foundation



Species Of The Month

Pink Waxcap - *Hygrocybe calyptriformis*

George and Sheila Spence

Although recently taken off the national Red Data List this enchanting fungus is still part of many LBAPs around the country, not least here in Herefordshire.

Its almost pure white stem and 'baby pink' pointed cap, which often splits as it expands and opens, is easily recognisable when in good condition, even by the novice observer. *Hygrocybe calyptriformis*, to give it its correct name, is an indicator of important unimproved grassland from mown churchyards and gardens to high pony and sheep grazed commons and this year as part of the National Trust's Waxcap project will be searched for at the Trusts sites all around the country.

Here in Herefordshire there have recently been several projects which have included grassland fungi and this has I believe provided many more records of the Pink Waxcap from all over the county. For instance Caring for God's Acre, the churchyard environmental project, has been organising surveys, across taxa, at many churchyards around the county. This project has turned up records for the Pink Waxcap at many sites not previously recorded, as did the Herefordshire Festival of Fungi in 2005 and more recently the Herefordshire Commons project.

Sheila Spence
Field Mycologist

The sheep may safely graze - helped by the Churchyard Task Team!

Before the age of motorised mowers and strimmers, churchyard grassland was managed in a quiet and productive way by sheep or occasionally goats. This ancient low energy method will be returned to the section of Hentland churchyard, near Ross-on-Wye, which is managed for wildlife.

Caring for God's Acre's Churchyard Task Team, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, with materials supplied by the National Trust, is working with local people, helping to repair fences and gates at the ancient church of St Dubricius at Hentland, near Ross-on-Wye, so that their woolly neighbours will be able to lend a hand cutting the grass!

The Task Team is a group of enthusiastic volunteers who go out every week to help manage churchyards for wildlife and heritage. The team includes a group from The Score Project in Hereford, and although they have some learning difficulties, contribute a huge amount to nature conservation in these mini nature reserves. The tombstones prevent the use of large mowers for grass cutting, and ancient stones can be damaged by strimmers, so hand cutting and raking are essential to manage the wildlife rich grassland. The team have also built compost bins for the hay, good for slow-worms which are often found during work, together with newts, frogs and toads.

The Caring for God's Acre Churchyard Task Team, funded by The Heritage Lottery Fund, launched their project in June and over 30 volunteers have built compost bins, cut back brambles and repaired a stone wall whilst learning more about the valuable wildlife to be found in the churchyards of Eye, Clifford, Hatfield and Hentland.

If you would like to join in or receive a programme of tasks, contact:

Caring for Gods Acre on 01568 611154, info@cfga.fsnet.co.uk or visit the website at www.caringfororgodsacre.co.uk.

Caring for God's Acre is a registered charity (number 1084504). It covers the Diocese of Hereford, which includes South Shropshire and a small area of Powys. The project began initially as a pilot study in South Shropshire.

This is part of the Churchyard Task Team Project, which has received funding from The Heritage Lottery Fund.



Herefordshire Funding Fair

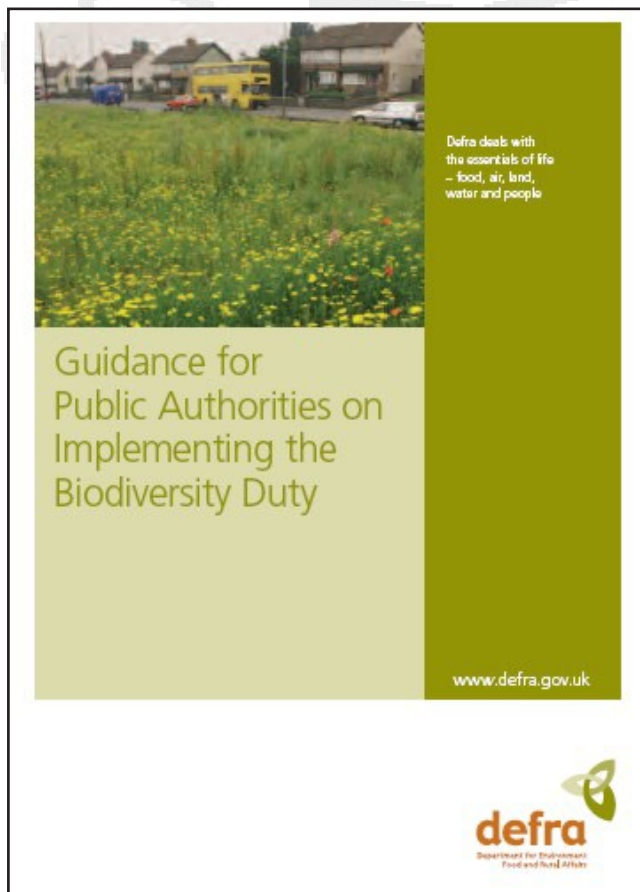
The Herefordshire Funding Fair will take place on Wednesday 24 October at Aylestone School, Hereford. The event has workshops from funders, including Big Lottery Fund, Heritage Lottery Fund, and the Arts Council, and information stands from over 20 other grant giving and advice organisations. Admission is free; to receive the booking form later in the summer, please contact projectdevelopment@herefordshire.gov.uk, or telephone 01432-261793.

The NERC Act 2006

On October 1st, 2006 the natural environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act came into force in England and Wales. This Act places a new duty on public bodies to have regard to biodiversity.

Section 40 states that “Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity”.

This is important legislation, which for the first time gives wider biodiversity (i.e. other than protected species and sites) a statutory basis in England and Wales. The duty affects more than 900 bodies, and the guidance for public bodies is available from the Defra Website at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/pdfs/biodiversity/pa-guid-english.pdf>



Wanted..... Voluntary help

In the development of the Herefordshire LBAP – extracting information from BARS and creating a document for circulation to all BAP partners and placing onto the website.

The candidate must be competent at using basic Microsoft applications and full training will be provided on the use of BARS (Biodiversity Action Reporting System).

Also, I need an assistant to help in updating the Herefordshire BAP website (software training also provided) under supervision from the Herefordshire Biodiversity Co-ordinator.

If you are interested in this opportunity to further your IT skills in conservation, call Nicky for a chat on 01432 383026.

Diary Dates

OCTOBER

Wednesday 24th October - The Herefordshire Funding Fair at Aylestone School, Hereford.

NOVEMBER

Thursday 1st and Friday 2nd November - Don't forget the BAP revision

Day 1 – Shire Hall Hereford, 09.15hrs – 17.00hrs – Wetlands species & habitats.

Day 2 –Town Hall Hereford, 10.00 – 15.15hrs – Upland species & habitats.

Nicky would like to thank all partners that contributed to the production of this newsletter



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