

Welcome

Hello and welcome to the spring edition of Biodiversity Action. It is chock full of interesting articles and news as well as being complemented by some fantastic pictures supplied by some talented local photographers who have kindly allowed us to use their work in this edition.



Waxwing © Trevor Hulme

It is refreshing that so much great work is going on within the county despite the economic downturn as well as opportunities still being available to do more (note HLS and ALSF features). It will be helped by having a funding strategy that will be prepared over the coming year for Biodiversity Partnership members so will assist in the funding application process for partners and projects. Regular progress reports on this will be included in future editions of Biodiversity Action.

I would like to take this chance to remind people that I would not be averse to anyone who wants to do any BARS reporting, or needs any help with it to keep on top of their reporting.... Just pick up the phone & I am willing to assist.

Finally, you will note that the closing date for article submissions has been printed on the back page of this edition, so make a note in your diaries if you would like to include an article in the future.

Nicky Davies

Website Update

The Hereford LBAP website is currently under review and will be translocated to the Herefordshire Council site in coming months. Information will be fully updated and include back copies of newsletters, steering group minutes and reports, up to date funding information, diary dates, the revised habitat and species action plans in concise format, as well as project information, NERC details, communication & funding strategies and much more.

The website address will be maintained

www.herefordbap.org.uk

to avoid confusion and it is estimated that this will be complete by the autumn.

Nicky will be creating links to all partner organisations with a couple of sentences describing who and what the groups do, so if you could send a correct web link with a sentence or two outlining who your organisation is and what they do, this will be entered onto the links page.

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Butterfly Conservation

The Moth Count team have kindly agreed to put on two more Moth Workshops for us in 2009. See details below. Book your places through the Moths Count team on 01929 406009 or nmrs@butterfly-conservation.org.

Introduction to moths and moth recording

Date: Saturday 16 May 2009
at Marden Village hall, Hereford.
Time: 10.30 am – 4pm

The workshop will start with a PowerPoint presentation on moth identification and recording for beginners, as requested by the Herefordshire Moth Group. This will be followed by demonstrations of recently-caught moths and of appropriate literature including a discussion of delegates' aspirations and how they can help with Moths Count. It may also be possible to set up a trap overnight nearby and examine the contents before the main part of the event begins.

Robin Hemming

Funding Information

Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF)

Natural England's Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF) has opened for new applications for work during 2009/10 and 2010/11. Applications must be submitted by 5pm on Wednesday 29th April to be considered in the first round of funding. The Fund has £3.5m from Defra in the first year for grants and £1.8m in the second year. We welcome applications from voluntary organisations, local authorities, conservation groups and Natural England.

Improving the effects that quarries have on the environment and local communities

This scheme aims to reduce the adverse effects, and improve the benefits, that quarrying has on the environment, local area and its community. It does this by supporting projects that answer the following themes (summarised):

Landscape and Nature Conservation – conservation and improvement of the Landscape, Biodiversity and Geodiversity elements of the natural environment e.g. habitat creation or restoration, rescuing threatened geological features.

Access and Informal Recreation – improving access to the natural environment on or near sites affected by quarrying e.g. footpaths, signage.

Health and Wellbeing – improving the link between quarry sites and local communities e.g. safety, visual impact, engagement of local and wider communities.

Education and Understanding – providing information for public about the effects of quarry sites on the natural environment e.g. interpretative boards, guided walks

Evidence Gathering – about the effects of quarrying on the natural environment and affected communities, showing long term plans to manage and look at conservation issues for the above themes e.g. Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs).

For the 2009 - 2011 grant scheme our specific priorities are:

- Bringing England's SSSIs into favourable management

- Health & Wellbeing of affected communities – improving effects on health and wellbeing of communities near quarry sites e.g. use of green space
- Ecosystem Services - maintaining biodiversity and the production of ecosystem goods e.g. food, timber, biomass fuels
- Soils - helping to raise the profile of soils, recognising them for the vital functions they provide.

For further info and how to apply and to find the contact for your region see: <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/funding/alsf.aspx>



Geodiversity Action Plan

Herefordshire & Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust has just recently published and printed the Geodiversity Action plan (GAP) for Herefordshire (plus one also for Worcestershire) which is for those who don't know, identifies some objectives and actions to provide long term and sustainable support for the conservation of Geodiversity within the county. The plan is expected to evolve and grow over time as well as providing an incentive for interested groups and individuals to become involved and take action to better understand & conserve the geological environment of Herefordshire. The aim of the GAP is to make a contribution to Herefordshire's environment and quality of life through education, conservation, enhancement, management and promotion of the county's Geodiversity.

If you would like a copy of the Herefordshire GAP or to find out more, please contact the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust on 01905 855184 or visit their website at www.EarthHeritageTrust.org

The plan will also be entered onto the Herefordshire BARS website for monitoring purposes, where partners involved in the process can enter progress identified in the action plan as well as creating stronger links with the ongoing biodiversity work within the County.

World Environment Day

A two-day event will be held in Hereford on the 5th & 6th June celebrating World Environment Day.

Day 1 will be based in High Town and will be showcasing Herefordshire Council Partnership Initiatives such as Energy Efficiency, Eco-schools, Herefordshire LBAP, recycling initiatives, and the Big Green Bus. There will also be two hour-long guided walks looking at the wealth of our urban biodiversity around the cathedral grounds and along the river.

Day 2 will be based at King George V playing fields and will be part of a larger event. The Earthwatch village will be based amongst several other events being held including live music. Guided walks will also be held, meeting at the LBAP display.

If you would like more general information on this event, please contact Antonia Fitch on 01432 260132 or would like to go on one of the walks, please contact Nicky.

Publicity for this event will be available soon with posters and fliers being sent out along with emails.



Great Tit cleverly disguised as a Crossbill
© Chris Mayes

Bugs and Beasties

The story so far.....

January 2009 saw me sailing into uncharted territory, the challenge of starting my own business and waving a fond farewell to the monthly salary of full time employment at Wiggly Wiggles. I do however continue to stow away my close association with all things Wiggly and represent the company when called open to do so.

As a passionate naturalist there is nothing I enjoy more than enthusing an audience about the wonders of creating space for nature be it across school grounds, outdoor seating areas on the roofs of city office blocks or in a conventional garden. The buzz emitted from realisation of the significance of the humble solitary bee, earthworm, teasel or snail is no less evident amongst a class of 8 year olds than it is amongst a room of city slickers. An inspirational school assembly can set the school alight. The children are hooked, mesmerized by the opportunity to talk about all the wonders of the wildlife they have seen, or might be lucky enough to see with a little re-jigging of the school grounds.

School grounds can host an array of opportunities for all sorts of creatures and there's nothing more rewarding than landscaping those grounds with the help of the children through the whole process. I often think it's all too easy to underestimate the abilities of little hands and I never cease to be amazed with some suggestions for improvement. Recently I was told by one 8 year old about the antics of her grandparents which involved using their old shoes as refuges for insects, by stuffing the worn leather outers with straw or teasel stems and fixing them to suitably sunny walls or fences; what a great idea for her school grounds though. All these ideas make a difference, and of course one little change leads to another, kids are great at competing with one another for the best ideas and my role is often simply to fuel the fire.

If anybody would like to talk to me about the potential of their school or office grounds to offer space for play, recreation, learning and wildlife, be it by building a bespoke wormery, creating an edible playground or courtyard garden, digging a pond or building a willow bower, I am more than happy to advise and offer practical guidance. I'll talk a little about green roofs next time.....

Richard Fishbourne

Colwall Orchard Group



Colwall Orchard Group was set up in 2007 to identify orchards in the parish and assess their wildlife value. Now we are working to encourage owners and local people to value orchards and use sustainable orchard produce and to help owners bring their orchards back into fruitful management. Our work is helping to deliver key objectives in the Herefordshire **LBAP**.

Establish the current status and extent of traditional orchards

We surveyed the orchards in 2007/8, and have added a few new sites since, so we now have 31 traditional orchards, and 8 'garden' orchards, which often include old trees from old traditional orchards that have been built over. New sites are still emerging.

Maintain and restore the orchards

We have worked with the owners to maintain and restore the orchards. We commissioned management plans for 12 orchards, kitted ourselves up with some top quality tools and trained our volunteers to go out and put the plans into action. We have now done rescue pruning of trees in 8 orchards, and hope to continue this work up until early summer.



New plantings of traditional fruit varieties

We do yet have the expertise to identify apple varieties and hope to bring Marcher Apple Network in later this year to make a start on this. We know there are at least 5 Colwall varieties, and have already sent graft wood from 2 of these to be grown on for future planting. In the meantime, we have purchased 50 new orchard trees of local varieties, and have planted these out across 10 orchards.

Create and stimulate demand for traditional orchard products

We are trying to stimulate demand for local orchard produce through a range of public events. At 'Colwall Apple Day', we invited folk to bring their spare apples to a local school, to be juiced with hand crushers and apple presses. The children threw themselves into the crushing and pressing, and we made about 200 litres of delicious juice. This year we hope to have apples from 3 of the local orchards and hope to be able to make more juice, and possibly cider and perry.

In December, we held a 'Mistletoe fair'. Local people can easily scrimp their own mistletoe, so we were pleased that people came along to support our cause, raising £400.



Promote understanding and awareness of orchards

We now have 52 volunteers working with the project, bringing a range of skills and expertise. We have put on a series of public events including a fungus foray, Colwall Apple Day, the Mistletoe Fair and Wassailing. The last drew in 100 people, despite the storm battering the village at the time, and was declared a huge success. We will finish the year with a Community evaluation event, and are already planning events for the new financial year, starting with the Colwall Big Blossom Picnic on 2nd May.

We are deliberately seeking publicity for the project, and have had lots of articles in the local press and a slot on BBC Midlands Today. Our latest story was our sponsorship of local artist Marie Therese King, of Eekbatik, to work with Class 3 of Colwall Primary School to create a fantastic orchard batik. We have also commissioned a project logo for use on clothing, publicity material and at events.

Special thanks for all these achievements go to the orchard owners, to the volunteers (who have clocked up at least 1500 hours so far this year) and to our funders: Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and the National Trust

Helen Stace, Colwall Orchard Group



Funding & Communication Strategy

Over the coming year, work will commence on creating a funding strategy for partners involved in the Herefordshire LBAP. This strategy will benefit partners in assisting in the delivery of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP).

The document will be aimed at members of the Partnership and proposes a framework for funding the delivery of conservation projects to enable implementation of the Herefordshire LBAP. It will also:

- Identify delivery mechanisms for actions or action plans within the LBAP
- Identify barriers to funding and delivery of LBAP objectives
- Set a framework for fundraising efforts
- Aim to suggest mechanisms to ensure that the funding to support the co-ordination is sustained
- Inform ongoing review of the Herefordshire LBAP to ensure the plan is SMART and in-line with UK BAP terminology

Creating a comprehensive Partnership funding strategy will enable action plans within the LBAP to become fully SMART and costed, and aims to identify duplicated actions within the LBAP.

The benefits of having a funding strategy include:

- Eliminating zero-cost actions. There will of course be actions within the LBAP that cannot be costed yet are still deemed necessary to maintain, to reflect the local nature of the plan as a complementary level of implementation by partners
- Allows quick access to figures when funding opportunities arise
- Determines most appropriate funders for action delivery & eliminates time wasting
- Smartens up LBAP (Avoids duplication of actions across HAPs & SAPs)
- Allows co-ordinator & partners involved to familiarise them with the LBAP more fully
- Assists in constant LBAP review
- Gives partners the opportunity to get to know funders better, e.g. Tubney now only works with existing organisations

The funding strategy will complement the recently revised communication strategy. Both of these documents will be made available on the revised LBAP website.

Nicky Davies

National Trust News

The National Trust has been very busy on its estates conserving BAP habitats including wet woodland and old meadows at old Linceter Farm, Brockhampton estate as well as traditional orchard restoration under the Countdown 2010 Orchards Project. More information on this will be available in the next edition of Biodiversity Action. Watch this space....



Les Rogers planting a Damson Tree. Property Manager - National Trust © Simon Barker

Also, goodbye to Les Rogers, Property Manager for the Brockhampton Estate. Les retires at Easter after 30 years service with the National Trust, during which time he has done a huge amount of work to conserve biodiversity at Brockhampton and elsewhere, and in particular has been a tremendous enthusiast for orchard conservation and restoration.

Simon Barker

Natural England: Boost to HLS in Herefordshire

The Herefordshire Land Management Team from Natural England have boosted their numbers to meet scheme demand from farmers and landowners. The team, based in Worcester, welcomes five new members of staff. Hayley Jack and Fiona Wood cover maternity leave for Julie Button and Emma Rimmington. Adam West joins the team and Andrew Sherrott returns as a Farm Advisor who both lead working across the West Midlands region and Katie Stephen and Chris Ruddle join as full team members. The team is one of the largest in the region and is a result of the high biodiversity value and interest in the county as well as the great interest in agri-environment schemes such as HLS.

The county will be covered in four patches, each with 2 or 3 advisers looking after the designated SSSIs, Countryside Stewardship Schemes, existing HLS and new applications.

The patches are roughly:

PATCH	WHERE	WHO
NW	North of the River Wye (west of Hereford) and west of the A49 (except for a diversion!)	Lis Dack Fiona Wood
NE	East of the A49 (plus the diversion) and North of the A4103	Dagmar Lewis Hayley Jack
SE	South of the A4103 and east of the A466	Geoff Newman Kelda White Katie Stephen
SW	South of the River Wye (west of Hereford) and west of the A466	Val Cooper Charlotte Morgan Chris Ruddle

Other Team members are:

Glenys Tucker	Team Leader
Esther Stephens	Historic Buildings
Adam West	Farm Advice (Regional)
Andrew Sherrott	Farm Advice (Regional)
Sarah Olney	Catchment Sensitive Farming Initiative
Emma Buckingham	Catchment Sensitive Farming Initiative



Flowering Willow © Trevor Hulme

Targets for HLS this year focus on maintaining 600ha of BAP habitat in Herefordshire and implementing 67ha of arable options to support suites of farmland birds. A tall order but with the interest in the scheme so far and the enthusiasm from the team we will do our best to meet the challenge!

We are keen to see applications for HLS meeting a range of core Natural England objectives. For more details go to the NE website www.naturalengland.org.uk or contact one of the team on 01905 362935.

Charlotte Morgan



Quarry Biodiversity Action Plan

Progress on the creation of an action plan is steaming ahead with the draft action plan being work in progress. Advice has been sought from Dan Wrench (Shropshire LBAP) who has done some pioneering biodiversity restoration work with quarries in Shropshire.

A similar format to the draft Shropshire plan has been adopted for the Herefordshire plan. Input to the plan has been from Herefordshire Council Minerals & Waste Department, Tarmac, Earth Heritage Trust, and Herefordshire Nature Trust. The draft plan will soon be circulated to other relevant partners with an invite to contribute information to it over the coming months.

Nicky Davies

Mad About Ponds

The wetlands, woodlands and meadows at Madley Environmental Studies Centre in Herefordshire provide the perfect environment for pond dipping, mini-beast hunts, wildlife craft and games. The Centre, an environmental education charity, has been helped by the Environment Agency in the past and we have been able to help again this year by providing equipment needed for the management of the Centre's pond and wet woodland areas.

The pond habitats at the centre are one of its main attractions – a home to birds and mini beasts, and a source of fun and learning to the children who visit the site. The pond and wet woodlands need constant management to prevent siltation and encroachment by fast growing and invasive species. Volunteers help manage the site but need proper equipment to do so. The Environment Agency has helped by enabling the purchase of a chipper, and with it the means to manage the ponds and woodlands for many years to come.

Louise Murphy
Madley Environmental Studies Centre



Frogs © Trevor Hulme

Blossom time in Putley - Special events

For full program details, please see
<http://www.bigapple.org.uk/blossomtime/2009.html>

Sunday 3rd May

11am A talk by Gabe Cook, sharing the findings of a biodiversity survey of Putley for the first parish BAP in Herefordshire. At Dragon Orchard, Putley (HR8 2RG, GR653381)

From **12.30pm** Ploughman's lunch in the newly restored Grade II* listed cruck barn at Court Farm, Aylton including local cheeses from Charles Martell and organic apple juice from the farm £5/£3 (adult/child). Proceeds to Aylton Church. (HR8 2RQ, GR658376). Natural England helped fund the repair work through its Higher Level Stewardship Scheme and will be present with an exhibition of their work supporting traditional orchards.

From **2pm** A family nature trail (£1 a sheet) available from plant stall at Putley Village Hall. Proceeds to Ashperton School/Eco Club.

Monday 4th May

11am A talk by bee keeper Roger Houldey. What's fruit without bees? £2.50 (Proceeds to Newent Beekeepers Association). At Dragon Orchard, Putley (HR8 2RG, GR653381)

Jackie Denman



Apple Blossom. © Trevor Hulme

Eco-schools news

Congratulations to Staunton-on-Wye Primary and Garway Primary for achieving their 3rd Green Flag! They are the only schools in the county with 3 Green Flags!

Staunton-on-Wye Primary Update. Recently we have been trying to encourage our parents and local community to complete the online energy saving reports that form part of the Generation Green project. Also, one of our classes has been learning about rainforests and organized a fundraising party which raised £75 for the RSPB Sumatran Rainforest Appeal.

Karen Williams

GENERATION GREEN AT GARWAY

Garway Primary School is celebrating its third successive Eco Schools "Green" flag award.

As only the second school in Herefordshire to achieve this prestigious award – pupils, staff, parents and governors have had to demonstrate a commitment to making environmental issues a part of school life.

Eco committee co-ordinator (Karen James) explained that Eco Schools affords pupils opportunities to develop their decision making skills, develop links with other schools in the UK and other parts of the world, and promotes environmental awareness by addressing issues such as saving water, saving energy, managing waste, increasing biodiversity, caring for the school grounds, eating healthily and global diversity.

On 23rd March the school also held their annual eco action day. Year 5 joined members of the Herefordshire Nature Trust planting hedges, digging ponds and carrying out an audit of the bird nesting boxes on Garway Hill.

Pupils were assisted by parents and staff to make a "raised bed" for playgroup and Reception children, to plant a new hedge within the school grounds for "Forest" schools, install a solar pump in the school pond and also a new water butt. Children also planted a selection of crops in the school polytunnel including onions, garlic, parsnips and carrots.

"We are all extremely proud of our Green flag status" said Head teacher, Mrs Lorraine Lloyd-Williams, adding - "We intend to carry on flying the "green" flag for Eco schools at Garway".

Karen James

The Closing date for submitting features for the next edition of Biodiversity Action will be **Friday 3rd July** and the following one will be **Friday 2nd October**.

Please send word documents and supporting pictures (high resolution) in .jpeg/.tiff format with picture credit details.

If you have to display logos with your article, please send these as .jpegs also.

Thank you

Nicky



The Herefordshire Biodiversity Partnership Co-ordinator post is joint-funded by Natural England and Herefordshire Council.

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



Contact Details

If you require any further information please contact **Nicky Davies**:

Landscape and Biodiversity Department
Herefordshire Council
Conservation
PO BOX 4
Plough Lane
Hereford
HR4 0XH

Tel.: 01432 383026

Email: ndavies2@herefordshire.gov.uk

Website: www.herefordbap.org.uk

The Biodiversity Partnership Management Group

The group consists of the following representatives:

- **Chair** - Juliet Wheatley - Team Leader - Landscape & Biodiversity - Herefordshire Council
- **Jeff Edwards** – Natural England
- **Joanne Hackman** – County Ecologist – Herefordshire Council
- **Nick Smith** – Forestry Commission
- **Francesca Griffith** – Herefordshire Nature Trust
- **Steve Roe** – Herefordshire Biological Records Centre



Cowslips at Broadmoor Common LNR © Trevor Hulme

