

Welcome

Hello and welcome to this New Year edition of Biodiversity News. Its jam packed with county project information, as well as funding updates, diary dates, energy saving advice and more.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who reported onto BARS over the past few months. The UK BAP reporting round is now closed and so all information that was entered from a local perspective, will feed into the bigger picture. The UK Biodiversity Team is collating this data over the coming months and a report will be published in early summer with the national picture. This will then influence national



Cráswall © Nicky Davies

BAP delivery and how resources can be channelled over the next few years to improve the conservation of UK and local priority species and habitats. Now that this is complete, doesn't mean that you need to stop reporting... I am always looking for people to continue reporting on progress so that we can gain a local picture of how well the LBAP is doing, where there are gaps in delivery and also to note successes. Talking of which, there has been quite a few in the past few months and I would like to congratulate all of you who are able to drive Herefordshire's biodiversity conservation forward.

Finally, you will note that this newsletter has a new design but we are always looking to improve it, so if you have any comments or tips, please email me and I'll do what I can to improve it.

Nicky Davies

Quarry Habitat Action Plan



Stretton Sugwas Quarry © Bridgit Symons

A new group has been set up to put together an action plan for this sector within Herefordshire. The group has held its first meeting and is being led by Bernie Higgins (Tarmac). The group will look at what priority habitat and species targets can benefit from this action plan and also strategic action from a planning perspective.

Suggested targets

- Review of UDP / LDF to consider biodiversity / geo-conservation issues
- Work out baseline information of the County resource of quarries. Topic headings to include site location, working / non-working, species survey information, owners, planning conditions/applications, etc
- Promoting and maintaining bare areas within quarries for geo-conservation purposes
- Educate quarry owners on quarry usage and conflicting issues – Amenity / Fishing / Access / Parish involvement
- Determination of the biological resource held within Herefordshire quarries (inc working, derelict and in restoration phase)

If you are interested in becoming involved in the development of this plan or would like more information, please contact Nicky.

Nicky Davies

HOC County Bird Atlas

Many of you will already be aware of the HOC Bird Atlas for the County being run in parallel with the national winter and breeding BTO Bird Atlas for Britain. These two projects are just two of the many stories we will be able to communicate over the coming months.



There are already 27 other counties preparing their own County atlases for the next 4 years with squares being surveyed on a 2km tetrad system within an OS 10km national grid format. Our own County has 550 2km squares to cover and a current pledge of 58% coverage over the next 4 years. This still leaves many squares for others to adopt and enjoy the pleasure of birding in areas which you might not always step into and find some hidden and interesting walks as well as birds!

So far the early first year results have been received for the County via the BTO, with over 19,000 records for the Breeding season and 15,000 for the Winter. There will be plenty to understand and learn about how our County species are doing and we will be able to monitor the trends developing over the next few years!

We are still very keen to encourage others to help us in our goal to cover the entire County over the next 3 remaining years with surveys of single 2km squares only requiring between 1 to 2 hour visits twice in the winter and the same again in the summer. If you feel unable to help with this we also have a Roving Recording sheet for you to record birds on wherever you go within the County. This will help build this historical atlas and, in turn, help all who read it to understand the dynamics of species and abundance of birds throughout our County.



We are also on the hunt to appoint an Atlas editor to help the HOC develop a working editorial team that will produce a publication at the end of the survey years. We have a basic job description and there could be some financial remuneration depending on circumstances. Please contact me for further details if you would be interested in knowing more about this role.

So please find out more of how to get involved by visiting our HOC Atlas page at <http://www.herefordshirebirds.org/atlas.html> or contacting me directly.

Nick Smith
HOC Chairman
nick@asnw.fsnet.co.uk or 01432 370250

Herefordshire Council Environmental Policy

Both the Joint Management Team (JMT) and the Board of the Primary Care Trust (NHS Herefordshire) have now approved the reviewed Council Environmental Policy and so it effectively becomes a joint Environmental Policy. This is significant because prior to this, NHS Herefordshire did not have an Environmental Policy as such. The joint document is due for circulation within both organisations very soon and includes the policy commitment... "Conserve the natural and historic environment by protecting and enhancing landscape, biodiversity and historic assets".

Herefordshire Council is hoping to use this newly adopted Policy as a stepping stone to closer working with NHS Herefordshire on environmental issues such as protecting biodiversity. The Policy document will be held on the Council website in due course.

Belinda Colley-Davies
Sustainability Officer
Herefordshire Council

HOC Online Community Survey

HOC are now doing an online survey on sightings of certain bird species within the County. The link on their website <http://www.herefordshirebirds.org/you.html> is in three themes

1. Herefordshire Biodiversity Target species
 - Barn Owl
 - Tree Sparrow
2. Towns villages and countryside
 - Bullfinch
 - Song Thrush
3. Summer visitors in Herefordshire
 - House Martin
 - Cuckoo
 - Swift

The site will give you guided instructions on how to fill out the questions as well as identification tips and links to the species on the RSPB website. All results will be fed into the County Bird Atlas and hopefully raise awareness of these species via the "Awards for All" lottery grant.

Nicky Davies



Tawny Owl © RSPB



Lesser Spotted Woodpecker © RSPB



Coal Tit © RSPB



Kingfisher © RSPB

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker



© RSPB

As some of you may be aware, the lesser-spotted woodpecker has suffered a very steep population decline since the early 1970s. This is possibly due to changes in woodland structure – particularly the loss of available dead wood, woodland fragmentation as well as competition from the Greater-spotted woodpecker for food. We are trying to establish the status of this fragile species within Herefordshire to determine what can be done to help assist their recovery.

In Herefordshire, we are fortunate enough to have a wealth of woodland habitat as well as a Habitat action plan within the LBAP. We would like to incorporate actions (based upon accurate county records) into the existing Woodland HAP to consider this birds needs to ensure that they have the best possible chance for thriving within Herefordshire.

If you have had any records of sightings, or are aware of the location of nest sites, please inform either Nick Smith (HOC Chair) at nick@asnw.fsnet.co.uk or Steve Coney (Herefordshire Bird Recorder) coney@bluecarrots.com to allow us to gather a comprehensive picture of the status of this bird within Herefordshire.

Thank you

Nicky Davies

Native Woodland Restoration in Herefordshire

Herefordshire occupies a sixth of West Midlands but has a third of the region's ancient woodland, nearly half of which was subject to plantation forestry during the last century. This project has been reviewing the county's 20 year old Ancient Woodland Inventory using new methods, fresh historical information and is including the large number of small ancient woodland (less than 2 hectares) left out of the original inventory.



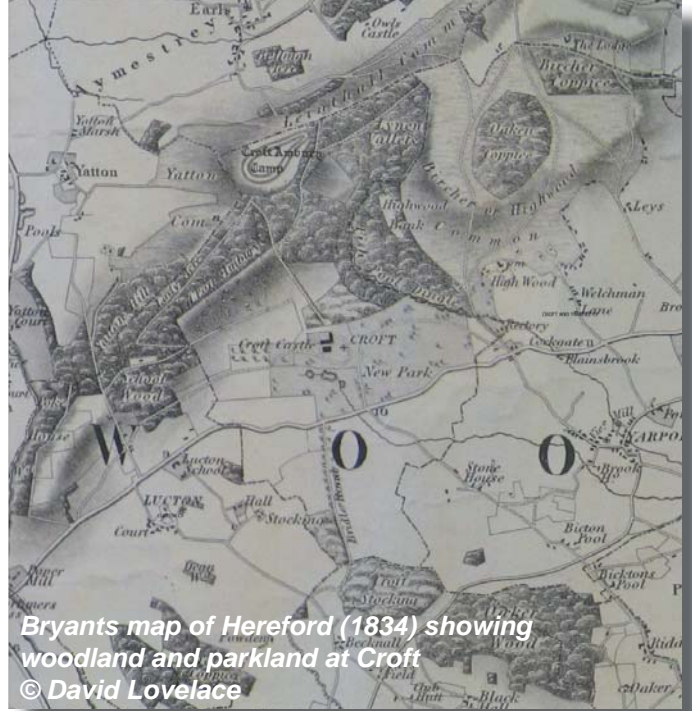
Veteran Tree at Croft © David Lovelace

The project has commissioned surveys in woods where there was little or no ecological information, especially Lepidoptera and has been directly involved in the conversion of some 22 hectares of plantations of ancient woodland sites (PAWS) in the Woolhope Dome. The project has also been reviewing the status of wood pasture and parkland in the county and recording veteran trees in sample areas. Use has been made of digital techniques which allow the overlay and rectification of historic maps and aerial photographs to the modern grid so allowing a more precise analysis of historic changes in woodlands and non-woodland tree distributions.



Block of Conifers at Croft to be reverted to wood pasture © David Lovelace

Investigation of original manuscripts using digital cameras has shed new light of how Herefordshire woodlands were managed in Medieval and Tudor periods showing how important wood pasture was to their subsequent development; an insight with implications for biodiversity management in the present day.



Bryants map of Hereford (1834) showing woodland and parkland at Croft © David Lovelace

A key part of the project is advocacy and engagement with woodland owners and managers to include the pro-active restoring of damaged native woodland in forestry plans. The Geographic Information System database developed by the project allows a landscape scale approach to such plans, seeing the woodlands as one component of a palimpsest of eras informed by archaeology, documentary research, management history and biodiversity surveys. A good example is the current deliberations by National Trust, Forestry Commission and others for the restoration of the Croft estate.

One spin off from the project is the SITA-funded Wood White habitat restoration project in selected FC woods which continues to 2010. The project was conceived and managed by the River Wye Preservation Trust and funded by NE's Countdown 2010, the SITA Trust and the Duchy of Cornwall. Results will be available later this spring and a conference on ancient woodland will be convened to raise the issues.

David Lovelace
Project Officer
david@tilia.org.uk

What's that snake? - An Inspirational Wildlife Project for Herefordshire

Snakes can cause either complete fascination or total fear and loathing, even amongst 'wildlife lovers'. People have a genuine problem correctly identifying, understanding and appreciating snakes. Even slow-worms, a legless lizard, prove difficult to identify and are regularly mistaken for adders. The public now have the opportunity to learn about and observe Herefordshire's reptiles with this exciting wildlife initiative; 'What's that Snake?'.

"What's That Snake?" with nearly £50,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is a collaboration of the Herefordshire Amphibian and Reptile Team (HART) and Herefordshire Nature Trust and will run for two years. All of the County's reptile species are now UK Priority Biodiversity Action Plan Species, which reflects concerns over national declines of populations through habitat loss and mismanagement. The adder also has a local species action plan in Herefordshire.



Male adder newly sloughed © Nigel Hand

The Amphibian and Reptile Atlas, produced by HART in 2006, revealed a disturbing lack of reptile records particularly for adders and viviparous lizards. With the correct training in identification and survey, volunteers young and old alike will be inspired to appreciate, locate and record these fascinating and secretive creatures. This involves surveying at 10 locations throughout the county. Targeted areas include the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Beauty (AONB), Wye Valley AONB, Ross-on-Wye, Goodrich, Mortimer Forest Trail area and Kington, working in co-operation with Forestry Commission, National Trust, Malvern Hills Conservators, Commons and volunteer habitat management groups. Verified records will be submitted to the Herefordshire Biological Records Centre.

This years training days will be held on the following dates (meeting places to be confirmed):

- Tuesday 3rd March 2009 - Wyche Cutting, Malvern Hills
- Saturday 7th March 2009 - Haugh Wood, Fownhope
- Friday 13th March 2009 - Swinyard Hill, Malvern Hills
- Thursday 19th March 2009 - Coppett Hill, Goodrich

Numbers are limited so booking is essential!



© Nigel Hand

The project also plans to visit 40 schools providing illustrated identification posters, worksheets and interactive DVDs to be used as educational tools, creating wildlife interest in future generations. Community road shows (with dedicated advice and visual displays to further spread awareness) are planned and a website linked to the HART site will keep the public informed of the Project's activities.

People enjoy recounting their first snake encounters and hopefully these uplifting reptile encounters will increase with awareness of this project. Reptiles are very much indicators of the health of our countryside and 'What's That Snake?' will give us an idea of how these indicators are faring.

If you would like to know more about this project, or book a place on one of the training days, please contact me, Nigel Hand, Project Officer at the Trust [01432 356872](tel:01432356872) or my mobile [07974121806](tel:07974121806)

Nigel Hand
'What's that snake?' Project Officer



Herefordshire
Amphibian &
Reptile
Team

What's That
SNAKE?



Exciting Geological Discoveries in Herefordshire

Herefordshire has a wealth of sites that give evidence of the development of life on earth and the different environments which existed throughout geological time. During the audit of geodiversity sites carried out last year in preparation for writing the Geodiversity Action Plan. Many previously unrecorded sites were visited and exciting discoveries were made. A few examples are given below.

An exciting discovery was made in a quarry in the Lower Limestone Shales, which underlie the Carboniferous Limestones of the Wye Gorge. Several specimens were collected of fossils (see Plate 1 below) which are not at all common and rarely found in such a good state of preservation. These are similar to the Malacostracan *Pseudotealliocaris etheridgei*. These fossils are described in the latest Transactions of the Woolhope Club.



Plate 1 *Pseudotealliocaris etheridgei*
© M. Jenkins

The Ffynnon Limestone, a fossil soil similar to the Bishop's Frome Limestone, is found on the slopes of the Cat's Back in south west Herefordshire. This shows that this area, 400 million years ago, was an arid land surface. Ground water saturated in lime was drawn to the surface and evaporated leaving behind irregular concentrations of calcium carbonate.



Plate 2 A fossil soil © M. Jenkins

Fossil burrows of Beaconites, one of the first creatures to live on land as opposed to in water, are preserved in the Brownstones Formation at Harewood End. Similar Beaconites fossils have been lost from the Linton Tile Works site near Bromyard or buried under the tarmac of the Recycling Centre. Geological sites are vulnerable, in particular when the importance of the features that they reveal is not recognised.



Plate 3 Burrows fossilised in the rocks
© M. Jenkins

Unknown to many, Herefordshire has a site of global importance, *the Herefordshire Lagerstätte*.

A lagerstätte is a site where there is exceptionally good preservation of fossils. In this case, body parts, such as hairs on the legs of sea spiders, eyes of trilobites, digestive systems, gills and sexual organs of creatures which died 425 million years ago can be seen in the rocks. This site is a real treasure trove and is being researched by scientists from Oxford, Leicester, Bristol and Yale Universities. The location of the site is being kept secret because a similar site in Scotland has been pillaged and valuable scientific information has been lost.



Trilobite preserved in 3 dimensions in a nodule. This specimen has been donated to Hereford Museum.
© Moira Jenkins

The Geodiversity Action Plan for Herefordshire will aim to increase public awareness and understanding of Herefordshire's fascinating geology. Herefordshire and Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust would like to work with the Nature Trust and the Biodiversity Partnership to help conserve the wonderful biodiversity and geodiversity at sites all around the county.

Moira Jenkins
Herefordshire and Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust

Butterfly Conservation - Winter Work

Hi Everyone

A Happy and lepidopterous New Year to you all! I hope you've all had a good Christmas.

Just to remind you all of the Butterfly Conservation Winter work party at Ewyas Harold Common this Saturday 24th January. Meet at 10.00am at the Northern end of Ewyas Harold Common, SO382302, adjacent to the cattle grid. This is approached from Abbey Dore off the B4347 at grid ref; SO384306 taking the minor road up the hill and taking a sharp left hand turn at the top of it. The Common is signposted. Any queries please contact email ttle4@aol.com. I would like help with transport or can offer lifts contact me by email or on [568 797351](tel:568797351).

Please come and support the work which will be on both the new BC reserve Caederri and the Common itself.

- Other BC Winter Work Parties will take place 21st February 2009 Haugh Wood; meet at FC car park at 10.00am .
- 21st March 2009 Ewyas Harold Common meet SO382302 at 10.00AM.

In addition to the scheduled work parties, there is a one off working weekend on 28th Feb and March 1st at Ewyas Harold meeting each day at 10.00am at SO382302. Five volunteers from outside of our area are coming with power tools to do as much scrub clearance as possible and as many volunteers as we can muster are needed to help clear what they cut. This is important work to try and redress the habitat deterioration on the Common which has occurred mainly due to the lack of grazing. It should greatly help The Pearl-bordered Fritillaries and other butterflies which we hope we shall see nectaring this Summer on our adjacent Caederri reserve. Please try and come, work parties are hard work but good fun as well. Contact

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the next work party.

Best Wishes

Robin Hemming



Managed Green Space Habitat Plan Call for Help!

Herefordshire Council own and maintain a number of managed green spaces for people to use as recreational enjoyment as well as providing places for wildlife across the County. As part of the LBAP we wish to produce management statements for our key sites, particularly for some of our more major parks and amenity areas in Hereford City and the market towns. This will help us to plan for the future especially in respect of biodiversity on existing sites and where possible to access funding where nature conservation improvements are identified, this could also include expanding areas where possible.

Are you able to help us?

We need to establish baseline data for as many of our key sites as possible. With limited resources we are interested to find out if any biological recording survey work (flora and fauna) has been undertaken recently by yourselves or your organisation which we could use. We are also looking for volunteers to undertake any further work (which will probably be plenty!) on our sites to collect this type of data.

If you are interested or have undertaken recent survey work on our sites or require further information please could you contact either:

- [James Bisset](#), Principal Countryside Officer.
Tel: [01432 260250](tel:01432260250) or
- [Ruth Jackson](#), Principal Leisure and Countryside Recreation Officer. Tel: [01432 260359](tel:01432260359)

Herefordshire Council,
Parks, Countryside and Leisure Development
Services, Queenswood Country Park,
Dinmore Hill,
Leominster
HR6 0PY.

Email: Countryside@herefordshire.gov.uk

Ruth Jackson

Beat the Bills and Chills - Energy saving tips for all

As winter is now upon us, the need for warmth in our homes is becoming more essential but with this comes increasing energy bills especially as energy prices have risen so significantly in 2008.

On average over a year, heating accounts for almost two thirds of your fuel bill. Therefore by making your home more energy efficient, it will feel warmer, fuel bills will be significantly cut and you will also be helping to protect the environment by reducing the production of carbon emissions.

Herefordshire Energy Action Team, of Private Sector Housing, Herefordshire Council are at hand to advise Herefordshire private homeowners and tenants of national and local grant assistance to insulate and install other energy efficiency measures in their homes.

“On average over a year, heating accounts for almost two thirds of your fuel bill.”

The Energy team is also co-ordinating the implementation of Herefordshire’s Affordable Warmth Strategy launched July last year. The aim of the strategy is to reduce the level of fuel poverty in Herefordshire in line with the Governments Fuel Poverty Strategy 2001. A fuel poor household is one that cannot afford to keep adequately warm at reasonable cost.

The Council Special Energy Efficiency Scheme (SEES) offers a grant of up to £500 for private homeowners and tenants living throughout Herefordshire who are aged 60 and over.

The scheme is in addition open to private homeowners and tenants who heat their homes with:

- Electric storage heaters
- Electric central heating

- Solid fuel central heating
- LPG central heating
- Room heaters with no central heating

And/or

- Herefordshire residents who pay for their fuel use with Prepayment meters.
- Residents throughout Herefordshire claiming state benefits are also eligible.

“...there are...funded schemes which residents can apply for...”

Measures covered under SEES are:

- Loft insulation
- Cavity insulation
- Draught proofing (doors and windows)
- Thermostatic radiator valves
- Room thermostats
- Programmers
- Hot water cylinder thermostats
- Tank jackets

Aside from the SEES scheme, there are other heavily discounted utility funded schemes which residents can apply for to have their home insulated funded by energy suppliers.

For enquires about the Special Energy Efficiency Scheme (SEES) or the utility funded scheme contact [Domestic and General Insulation](#) on 0844 5430043 or [Herefordshire Council Energy Efficiency Department](#) on 01432 260398 for any other enquiries.

Harry Fitch
Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) Officer



Frosty morning © Nicky Davies

Raising the profile of the Black Poplar/ *Populus nigra* in Herefordshire



Black Poplar © Herefordshire Council

Herefordshire Council's Landscape & Biodiversity team capitalised on the opportunity to raise the profile of the Black Poplar and thus meet one of the objectives set out in the Black Poplar Species Action Plan: to 'increase public awareness and encourage people to plant local varieties', by making the Black Poplar the special topic of Herefordshire Council Tree Agents Forum, which was held on 11th November 2008. Herefordshire Council holds annual Tree Agents Fora, the purpose of which is to give tree surgeons, arboricultural consultants, voluntary tree wardens and local councillors the opportunity to discuss both tree legislation and general arboricultural issues with officers from Herefordshire Council.

The Tree Agents Forum was held at Bodenham, because this is a hotspot for Black Poplars in Herefordshire. The location of Black Poplars, which have been identified to date, are recorded on Herefordshire Council's GIS mapping system. Chris Mayes, Senior Landscape Officer, who is the lead for the Black Poplar Species Action Plan, took the fifteen attendees on a site visit to see examples of a free-growing hedgerow Black Poplar and a pollarded Black Poplar. He discussed the ecological, landscape and historical value of Black Poplars and appropriate management techniques.

The group then returned to Bodenham School where Nicky Davies, Biodiversity Partnership Officer, gave a talk on the wider context of the Herefordshire Biodiversity Partnership and the Biodiversity Action Plan. She also highlighted how local tree agents and voluntary tree wardens could contribute to the Black Poplar Action Plan, by advising Herefordshire Council of the location of any new Black Poplar sites and by advocating the sympathetic management of this species.

The feedback from attendees at the Tree Agents Forum was very positive, with many people commenting that it was particularly informative to view and discuss Black Poplars in the field.

If you would like further information, please contact [Chris Mayes](#), Senior Landscape Officer: Tel: 01432 260150 or Email: cmayes@herefordshire.gov.uk

*Juliet Wheatley
Landscape & Biodiversity Department
Herefordshire Council*

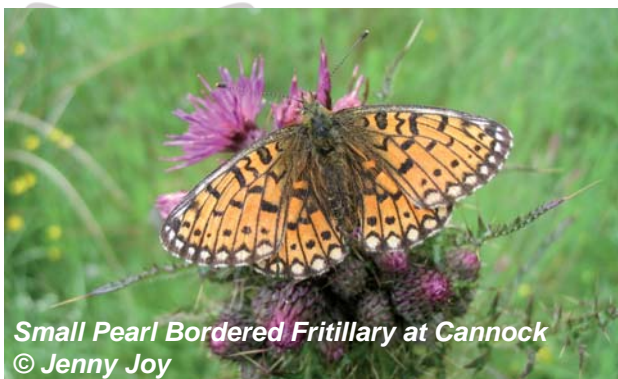
Butterfly Conservation - Midlands Fritillary Project

This project will directly support Butterfly Conservation's goals of promoting practical conservation, safeguarding important sites and landscapes for butterflies and moths and promoting the use of these insects as indicators of a healthy and biologically diverse environment.



Pearl Bordered Fritillary © Mark Eccleston

In this project Butterfly Conservation will concentrate specifically on carrying out and promoting practical conservation measures to improve habitat for five fritillary species on 168 individual sites in the eight most important areas in the West Midlands, plus the Forest of Dean. Work will take place on 91 new sites in addition to increasing or extending effort on 77 existing sites.



Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary at Cannock
© Jenny Joy

In addition to the focus on the High Brown Fritillary, Pearl-bordered Fritillary and Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, work will benefit a further 11 UK BAP Priority Species of butterfly and moth, and two other fritillaries, the Dark Green and Silver-washed, which are high and medium priorities respectively in Butterfly Conservation's West Midlands Regional Action Plan.

This project is being funded by Countdown 2010 and the Tubney Charitable Trust. Please contact [Jenny Joy \(jjoy@butterfly-conservation.org\)](mailto:jjoy@butterfly-conservation.org) if you are interested in helping with this project or would like to receive more details.

Dr. Jenny Joy
Senior Regional Officer for the West Midlands

Contact Details

If you require any further information please contact [Nicky Davies](#):

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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



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.