

Notts BAG E-Newsletter.

Notts Biodiversity Action Group, Chris Jackson. chris.jackson@nottscc.gov.uk

Introduction

This is the first edition of the NBAG E-newsletter, and I would like to thank all those organisations that were able to send a contribution. For those of you who were unable to this time, let me remind you that the idea of the newsletter is to keep partners up to date with biodiversity work that is happening across the county (a chance for BAG partners to blow their own trumpets) and hopefully to be an inspiration to all in the wider partnership. It is also a chance for organisations and individuals to share ideas, discuss best practice, and most importantly, encourage dialogue between the BAG partners. I hope you find this useful and if you have any comments to make on the newsletter feel free to contact me.

Bestwood Country Park. bestwood.country.park@nottscc.gov.uk

In November 2003, in an attempt to introduce heather to Bestwood's ex-sand quarry area, we cut flowering heather from elsewhere on site and laid the brash in two areas on a large sparsely vegetated and exposed slope within the quarry.

Over the following summer or two we visited the area but were disappointed to find that the heather had not germinated. Eventually we gave up and assumed conditions were perhaps too harsh. Patrolling the quarry in early August we noticed a deep purple flower at the top of the slope – bell heather! Further investigation revealed quite a few plants of both ling and bell heather which we now hope will spread around the site. We wonder if the summer's extreme wet weather has given the seed the required conditions for germination.

British Waterways, Deanne Gow. Deanne.Gow@britishwaterways.co.uk

We're rapidly heading into the stoppage season and carrying out surveys in preparation for this. These have included surveys for water voles, bat emergence and activity, and aquatic plants; they will help us to determine the impact of projects and plan appropriate mitigation as required.

We have been monitoring the effects of dredging on aquatic plants by surveying a section of the Chesterfield Canal SSSI dredged in winter 2005/6. This section was surveyed prior to dredging and also last year. The results have not yet been analysed, but look promising with an increased number of species found compared to last year.

A volunteer has been carrying out bird ringing surveys at Hazelford Lock, with fantastic results. Details will follow in the next quarterly update.

We're looking into the management of vegetation surrounding our reservoirs with a view to improving it for biodiversity as well as from an asset management perspective.

We have recently updated our database and are currently in the process of inputting information. This is a valuable exercise for monitoring species along our network, including invasive species.

Friends of Moor Ponds Wood, Papplewick .

[Stephen Walker, Chairman of Friends of Moor Pond Woods Steering Committee.](#)

The highlights of the year have been enjoying the fruits of our management work. In the 'Dam Banks' section we cleared an area of oak/gorse/holly scrub to restore a woodland glade habitat. It has been fascinating to watch the way in which ground cover plants have been regenerated. In the Grange Cottage Woods section, we had created a grassland area by reclaiming an old rubbish tip. The highlights of the year have been the fabulous display of cowslips early on, and the visits by butterflies in the summer months.

Around the pond itself, it has been an unusual year because the wet spring and early summer raised the pond to new levels, and the water was retained much later in the year. The pond is spring fed. We are still looking at the effect that this has had on the adjacent wet woodland. A star attraction during the summer was visits by a kingfisher.

Greenwood Community Forest, Gill Grievson & Nick Wort.

greenwood@nottscc.gov.uk

Greenwood Community Tree Planting Grants 2007.

Do you want to plant trees in your school grounds or community GreenSpace?
Grants of up to £250 are available for schools and community groups within the Greenwood, to plant trees which enhance local biodiversity.

For further information and advice or to request an application form, contact the Greenwood Team on 01623 758231 or email

Mansfield District Council, Felicity Washbrook. fwashbrook@Mansfield.gov.uk

The management plans for LNR's are currently being reviewed to create more prescriptive and costed out management operations. Projects will focus on day to day maintenance as well as works affecting BAP habitats and species. This will not include Oak Tree Heath or Meden Trail as these are managed by partner organisations.

Two new Friends groups who will be helping MDC manage and care for the LNR's

- Friends of The Hermitage LNR
- Maun Conservation Group (Oakham LNR, Quarry Lane LNR and Titchfield Park)

Tree planting is planned for Bull Farm Park off Stacey Road in Mansfield, as part of Section 106 funding. Trees will be sourced from local genetic stock

BTCV have sown wildflower seeds at Maun Valley Park LNR within the wet meadow adjacent to the River Maun. The species included meadowsweet, marsh bird's foot trefoil and ragged robin from Naturescape, and was funded through the Sherwood Initiative. Woodland management is also planned for this site over the winter to thin out sycamore trees (through Sherwood Initiative Funding) to allow the native species to thrive

MDC are continuing to work with site managers, the Sherwood Forest Trust, at Oak Tree Heath LNR/ SSSI.

A bat survey has taken place on the road bridge at Quarry Lane LNR, as works to trees growing from the brick work is needed and the bridge had been identified as a potential roost. No evidence of bats was found on the day, however another survey is planned for later in the year.

A bird survey has taken place at Peafield Park by the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, to guide environmental education projects with local schools and to provide baseline data for the area.

Wildflower plug planting took place at Carr Bank Park during April, to increase the biodiversity of the park. Species planted included birds foot trefoil, yarrow, self heal, ox eye daisy, field scabious and kidney vetch. Over 100 people attended. Wildflower plug planting also took place at The Carrs LNR, organised by the Friends of the Carrs, to improve the biodiversity of the site. Species planted included ox eye daisy, teasel and birds foot trefoil.

We are applying for a felling licence to remove poplars at the Bottoms LNR, for both health and safety and ecological reasons. The trees will be replaced by more suitable 'wet woodland' species, including willow and alder.

Since April 2006, we have had 1,121 volunteers helping to manage the LNR's

NCC Countryside & Communities Unit phil.kimbrey@nottscc.gov.uk



Linby Meadow is a small parcel of land, smaller in area than half of a football pitch. Situated parallel to The Linby Trail. It incorporates an old railway weigh bridge that was restored by Nottinghamshire County Council, along with the seeded meadow. The building is now used as a small visitor centre and is leased along with the meadow to Linby Parish Council.

For the past four years the meadow has been cut by "The Erewash Countryside Volunteers" and the arisings removed. This September was no exception. When the group first arrived on a Sunny Sunday morning I noticed a flock of about a dozen goldfinches feeding on the seed heads of the black knapweed. As in previous years, numerous frogs & toads were spotted as we cut the meadow, the children of the group being only too keen to move them to safety, out of harms way and the mowers cutter bar. Unusually though, compared to previous years, we saw numerous as opposed to the occasional wood mice. About fifteen in total! The abundance of mice may explain my sighting of a weasel on The Linby Trail, two weeks previously. Wood mice being a favourite prey species of the weasel.

Since last year, the Parish Council have installed two attractive interpretive panels explaining the historical and conservation context of the site. For such an area so small, Linby meadow is so rich

in history and wildlife and has a brilliant all round community feel to the place! After so much rain this year and with the sun shining, perhaps that contributed a little to that feeling?

NCC Nature Conservation Unit nick.crouch@nottscc.gov.uk

The unit is undertaking a survey of all black poplars in the county, along with the Sherwood Forest Trust (SFT) and local naturalist Norman Lewis, and using information from various other partners. Once complete, a map of all known black poplars will be produced, along with a Species Action Plan.

Management work has commenced on a remnant heathland site in Rainworth owned by the county council, called Ransom Heath, again in partnership with SFT. Bracken treatment occurred in August, and scrub control will begin over the winter.

Green hay has been transferred from the Linby Trail (a fine calcareous grassland owned by the county council) to three other sites - an area of the Nuthall Cutting, several limestone mounds on the recently completed Silverhill Trail (part of the Teversal Trails) and the recently created limestone grassland at Warsop Vale. Hopefully these will develop into equally interesting grassland areas over the next few years.

NCC Sustainability Team. philip.keynes@nottscc.gov.uk

The County and City councils work together to produce a free, local sustainability magazine, Living for Tomorrow, which aims to inspire its readers to do a bit more to look after our planet. The magazine does this through featuring inspiring stories about local people and organisations, who in some way are 'living for tomorrow', backed up by ideas and sources of information. We'd be happy to receive suggestions from BAG partners of people and organisations that they think might make suitably inspiring copy and pictures for future editions. At the same time if partners would like to receive the magazine or would be able to distribute copies to help increase readership I would be very pleased to hear from them.

NWT. emcdaid@nottswt.co.uk

Species Update.

Whilst the success of a pair of peregrines in Derby was the subject of a huge level of media interest (and resulted in thousands of hits of the special web cam installed over the nest) the fact that a pair successfully reared four chicks on a Nottingham Trent University building in the heart of the City has been far less widely broadcast. Working with the University Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust has been monitoring the pair for nearly three years and the news was kept quiet early on as we needed to ensure this schedule 1 species raised the chicks without interference or the attention of egg collectors. The site is now protected with CCTV and we hope for more breeding success in future years. The birds have been ringed and DNA samples have been taken as a means of further protection.

Harlequin Ladybirds.

From the first sightings in summer 2006 the species appears to have spread around the county although most sightings have come from Nottingham and the areas around the City. We have received a number of records again this year and we have asked members to keep reporting them - both to the Trust and via the online record form at www.harlequin-survey.org

Adopt a Species.

In August Nottinghamshire Wildlife announced the launch of its new 'Adopt a Species' campaign. This is designed to enable members of the public a proactive way of supporting the charity's species protection work across the county.

Individuals will be able to sponsor a range of species including otters, barn owls and great crested newts – with donations ranging between £10 and £50. Supporters will receive a range of materials including a certificate, a colouring sheet, a fun 'pop up' of their chosen animal as well as a detailed fact sheet about the species' habits and habitats.

As well as being able to adopt animals themselves, People can also purchase adoption packs for family and friends - making the perfect gift for people who care about local wildlife. For further details please contact the membership team or visit www.nottinghamshirewildlife.org

Wildlife Trust works to secure reprieve for roadside trees.

Following a call from one of its active members Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust became aware that some landowners whose properties border public highways appeared to be taking an altogether too heavy handed approach to managing roadside trees. Following some further investigation, it became clear that landowners were increasingly worried about liabilities resulting from any accidents involving trees on their land. As a result, they were felling or severely cutting back trees unnecessarily. As these trees often provide a valuable habitat for wildlife, this was a situation that we felt needed to be resolved. As a result the Wildlife Trust worked closely with Nottinghamshire County Council to ensure that landowners receive accurate and balanced information about the risk posed by trees on their land and the steps necessary to reduce risks to an acceptable level.

Following a review of procedure, farmers now receive a greater level of support and advice that includes details of measures required to protect species such as bats. As a result, we hope that land managers will no longer feel it necessary to remove or cut back trees unless they really do pose a threat to the travelling public. Some of the county's finest and oldest trees can be found along roadsides. As well as providing a home for wildlife, they are also an important part of our landscape: hopefully many more will now be left to grow old gracefully.

Helping hands at Sellers Wood.

Volunteers from the community, the University of Nottingham and Siemens Energy Services have all recently provided a helping hand at Sellers Wood Nature Reserve which is located in Bulwell.

The hard working volunteers have been involved in a range of activities including planting 340 native hedgerow trees which will help provide food and nesting space for birds. The work at the ancient coppiced woodland is part of an ongoing biodiversity enhancement project which has been made possible thanks to funding from Veolia Environmental Trust and the Carillion Natural Habitats fund.

In addition to planting trees, volunteers have also installed metal post and rail boundaries. This fencing will help to prevent motorbike-scramblers from entering the nature reserve and damaging the delicate and diverse ground flora located at the site, including the rare yellow star of Bethlehem. If you would like to help with practical conservation at Sellers Wood or any of our nature reserves please contact the Estates Team on 0115 958 8242.

Rushcliffe Borough Council, Paul Phillips. PPhillips@rushcliffe.gov.uk

Blue butterfly scheme in Rushcliffe. Collington Common in West Bridgford has been converted to a wildflower meadow by Rushcliffe Borough Council and Nottinghamshire Wildlife Project, this 3 ha short grassland site has had half its area converted to wildflower meadow. In July 2006

herbicide was applied to half the site and this was followed by spreading of green hay harvested from Wildlife Trust nature reserves. Surveys have shown a good variety of plants, over 31 wildflowers and over 8 grasses are now to be found. The site has been managed by taking a hay cut in August with the arisings being removed.

Bingham to Melton Wildlife Corridor, the line of the disused Bingham to Melton Railway has been targeted by a partnership of Rushcliffe Borough Council, Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, Melton Borough Council, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire FWAG, Leicestershire County Council and Natural England. Farmers and landowners within 1km of the route are being encouraged to manage their land to provide continuous habitat between Bingham Linear Park and Melton Country Park. To assist this, management applications for higher level stewardship within this corridor can claim extra points to reach their application points targets. A meeting for farmers in this corridor was held on a farm in Harby at the beginning of September to demonstrate how the habitats could be managed and why they are important.

Sherwood Forest Community Rangers, jo.lindsay@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

New Forestry Commission ecological monitoring post - FC recently interviewed candidates for a Planning Assistant post. This is a brand new job and the post holder will take a lead on ecological survey & monitoring work. This will help us to co-ordinate our survey work and records and ensure we can make informed site management decisions.

Shadow Rangers - Congratulations to three of our Shadow Rangers, who have recently taken up countryside management posts. Graham Bowden, Simon Jenkins and Dougie MacTaggart all took up their long term volunteer placements last year and all three now have work with local organisations. Graham is working with Notts Wildlife Trust at Attenborough Nature Reserve, Simon has a countryside Ranger post with Nottingham City Council and Dougie is currently working for the Forestry Commission in South Yorkshire. We will soon be interviewing for a new intake of Shadow Rangers.

Sherwood Forest Community Rangers - are continuing to offer opportunities for communities to improve their local sites. Forthcoming events at Ollerton pit Woods include a family wildflower seeding day and a hedge planting task, whilst John Wood is leading woodland management tasks at Boundary Wood and Oxclose Wood. Full details are in our what's on programme or can be found on the Notts BAG website www.nottsbag.org.uk

Sherwood Forest Trust, karyn.stander@nottsgov.uk

Oak Tree Heath SSSI is a hidden gem. Located in Mansfield, the 11 ha site is a fragment of Sherwood Forest's mosaic habitats.

The Sherwood Forest Trust has been managing the lowland heathland site for over 10 years on behalf of Mansfield District Council. In this time, the bracken has been reduced in vigour and coverage and the bracken litter thatch dispersed through the annual operation of pulling a ridged roller behind a tractor when the fronds are fully unfurled.

A new tractor mounted weedwipe bought for the Trust by Natural England and Heritage Lottery Fund, is allowing targeted herbicide applications to be made. For the first time this summer, Asulox was applied to the fronds. It is hoped that this carefully undertaken task will reduce any possible risks to common lizards and ground nesting birds that rolling may have posed and also

be more cost effective with less activity required. The bracken is being retained as habitat in places on the heath but its control is important to encourage less invasive species such as heather, heath bedstraw and tormentil to thrive.