

Winter 2012

Volume 8 Issue 2

Derbyshire Biodiversity News

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This newsletter is aimed at anyone in Derbyshire with an interest in biodiversity including site rangers, planners, conservation staff, species recorders, local community groups, families and individuals.

Produced by the Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Partnership.

Government Gives Go-ahead For Local Nature Partnership (LNP)

The Government has now given its formal approval for a **Local Nature Partnership (LNP)** to be formed covering the Lowland Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire region.

The announcement was not unexpected, and came from Defra last month, following extensive high-level consultations.

In the previous newsletter we explained how a series of these consultations had been held in both Nottinghamshire and in Lowland Derbyshire to form a Local Nature Partnership (LNP). This would be an influential body capable of influencing decision-makers on environmental issues, and is a key outcome from the 2011 Natural Environment White Paper.

There are now 48 LNPs across England, all of whom are now in the process of forming Boards and determining their immediate work priorities.

The map below shows the new **Lowland Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire LNP** area, plus all the surrounding LNPs, now recognised by government.

Defra have not suggested there will be government funding to support LNPs at this early stage. So the Conservation and Biodiversity Action teams in both Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire are continuing to support LNP development.

For the time being our LNP contact is Heather Stokes at Nottinghamshire County Council. Email her at: Heather.Stokes@Nottscc.gov.uk



Moors For The Future—National Park Update

Work began in August to airlift thousands of plants to bring back life to our high moorlands and return our wild and stunning Peak District and South Pennines Moors to good health.

The Moors for the Future Partnership are using helicopters to take moorland plants in large industrial bags to six moorland sites from summer 2012 to spring 2013, starting with the Dark Peak moorlands – Kinder Scout, Bleaklow and Saddleworth – followed by Rishworth Common, Heptonstall and Turley Holes.



Cuttings were taken from a small sample of native moorland plants – Common Cotton and Hares-tail Cotton Grasses, Bilberry, Crowberry, Cloudberry and Cross-leaved Heath. These were grown on, resulting in thousands of plug plants ready for hand-planting onto damaged and eroding bare peat, caused by

more than 150 years of airborne industrial pollution and wildfires.

Chris Dean, programme manager for the Moors for the Future Partnership explained: “This is yet another major restoration phase of work in our fight to restore this amazing habitat for people and wildlife.”

And in a related project funded by MoorLIFE, 150 million ‘beads’ of specially grown sphagnum moss have been micro-propagated from local sources and are now also being airlifted into the moorland landscape. Work started recently at Black Hill which has so far only seen grasses and moorland vegetation restored to this once heavily eroded, bare peat area. Now, strands of sphagnum contained in beads of gel to weigh them down will also be hand-planted by National Park staff, volunteers and local contractors.

This is habitat restoration on a big scale in one of the most wild and wonderful places in the UK. Bringing back these native plants will help improve the condition of the moors and the benefits that they provide in supporting water quality, carbon storage, and wildlife.



The aim of the restoration work is to regenerate peat-producing blanket-bog vegetation. Healthy peat moors absorb and store carbon. Peat is the single biggest store of carbon in the UK, storing the equivalent of 20 years worth of all UK CO₂ emissions and keeping it out of the atmosphere. It also provides good quality drinking water – an important ecosystem service. In fact, 70% of our drinking water comes from these landscapes.

Damaged peat erodes out into the reservoirs so that water companies have to spend more money cleaning the water for consumption. Bog restoration will help reduce the risk of flooding, and support a wide diversity of important upland birds, plants, mammals and insects.

Moors for the Future is the largest conservation scheme of its type in Europe. It is led by the Peak District National Park Authority, and funded by Yorkshire Water, United Utilities, National Trust, Natural England, Defra and the Environment Agency. The largest single funder - the European Union LIFE+ Programme - is contributing £5.5 million over five years as part of the Moors for the Future Partnership’s ‘MoorLIFE’ Project.

For further information contact . Moors for the Future Partnership. Tel: 01629 816585 Mob: 07818 596386
email: louise.turner@peakdistrict.org.uk
www.moorsforthefuture.org.uk

Annual LBAP Forum - Get The Message Across!

This year's Annual Forum for the Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Partnership will be held on 17th November at County Hall, Matlock. As usual, it is primarily aimed at voluntary groups and individuals, and is being held on a Saturday.

This year's theme is '**Communication**'.

It will showcase a number of imaginative methods being used to encourage others to appreciate and engage with wildlife.

Our guest speaker will be [Gordon MacLellan \(aka Creeping Toad\)](#), a Buxton-based storyteller who has been involved in many environmental-themed celebration activities, both here and around the world.

The event will use the Biodiversity Action in Schools Project as a case study to show how local schools have been learning how to take action for wildlife on their patch.

Delegates can choose to attend up to three of eight separate workshops during the day.

Attendance is **free**, but places **must be booked**. Partners have already been sent a flyer and booking form, but these can also be downloaded from the Events page of the [Derbyshire Biodiversity website](#).

Shortlink: <http://bit.ly/SyJgP4>

Please return to the LBAP Coordinators by **8th November**. (contact details on back page).



Groundwork Grounded



On 20th September the trustees of **Groundwork Derby & Derbyshire** announced their decision to place the Trust into administration in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of local project activity.

Local newspapers reported this as being the second Groundwork organisation to go into administration within 12 months. Sir Tony Hawkhead, the national chief executive of Groundwork was reported as saying that charities were struggling to survive in a 'payments-by-results' world. "The days of upfront grant funding are gone," he said. "Payment-by-results contracts bring very heavy pressure on cashflows and require charities to be stronger with their balance sheets."

Sadly, Groundwork Derbyshire and Derby, which ran for 24 years, have made a significant proportion of its 33 staff redundant, with a number retained to work with administrators to continue some services. For further information contact Sam Maw, Operations Manager.

SMaw@groundwork.org.uk

Groundwork is a federation of more than 30 Trusts, each independent charitable businesses supported nationally by Groundwork UK. Last year Groundwork collectively generated and invested around £140 million in local environmental regeneration projects across Britain and Ireland. This decision does not affect Groundwork Creswell which operates in North East Derbyshire.

Derbyshire Elms for White Letter Hairstreak

One of Derbyshire's most enigmatic butterflies—the White Letter Hairstreak—is being provided with a number of new homes across the county this year.



Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and Butterfly Conservation (East Midlands) joined forces with local community groups, Derby City Council, Wild Derby and Amber Valley Borough Council to help the white letter hairstreak.

It breeds on elm trees, the caterpillars emerging in the spring to eat the flowers before pupating and becoming adults in June and July. Due to the impact of Dutch Elm Disease, many trees have disappeared from our cities and countryside and this project aims to establish a disease-resistant variety called 'Sapporo Autumn Gold' close to existing colonies of the butterfly, so as to provide an alternative food source.

Local people have planted these trees at sites including Duffield Millennium Meadows, Carr Wood in Ripley and Pennytown Ponds in Somercotes, and at Derby (including West Park Meadows, Nutwood and Darley Abbey, Ferrer's Way and Allestree Park). In total over 60 trees will be planted by the autumn of 2012.

This project has been supported by St Mary's Charity, the Appletree Hundred and Trent and



Elm planting at Eyes Meadow

Lower Derwent DWT local groups, Alan Jones, Butterfly Conservation (East Midlands), Derby City

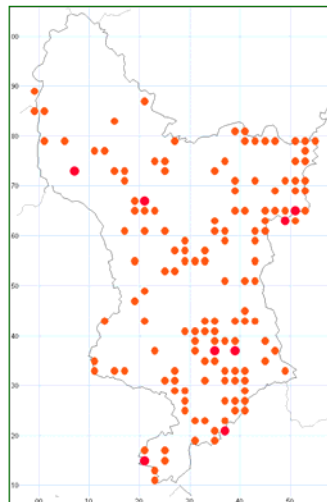


Elm: 'Sapporo Autumn Gold'

and Amber Valley Tree Officers, the University of Derby and many others.

Ken Orpe, the Derbyshire Recorder for Butterfly Conservation (East Midlands) said 'We are at the northernmost edge of a national problem, the re-occurrence of Dutch Elm Disease, which is causing the serious decline of this

rare butterfly, the White Letter Hairstreak. By planting disease resistant elms now we hope to reverse the situation here in Derbyshire, so it is a very important project for the biodiversity of our County'.



The White-Letter Hairstreak has declined dramatically in recent years and this project aims to create a network of new breeding sites for the butterflies in the future. The project is long-term and forms part of Derbyshire Wildlife Trust's Living Landscape

strategy in which we aim to ensure animals and plants can survive and disperse throughout the County in the coming decades.

Butterfly Conservation members Elizabeth Goodyear and Andrew Middleton have provided invaluable help with information and reports on trials that have occurred in other parts of the UK with the disease resistant elms, including 'Sapporo Autumn Gold' which we are planting here in Derbyshire.

It is also encouraging to know that the National Forest are also planting disease resistant elms in their woods in South Derbyshire, including at Coton in the Elms.

Ken Orpe (Butterfly Conservation)
Kieron Huston (Derbyshire Wildlife Trust)

Wildlife Legislation Faces Major Overhaul

In what looks like a very positive step for clarifying and strengthening wildlife protection, the Law Commission is currently consulting on merging our various laws into one single statute. And you can have your say.

The current law regulating wildlife is spread over a collection of Acts dating back to 1831. Their original purpose was to govern activities such as hunting, fishing and poaching. But over the years it expanded to conserve certain species, ensure the welfare of wildlife, and protect local biodiversity from invasive species.

The proposals being put forward for consideration aim to simplify the existing complex framework, putting wildlife law into a single statute. The new regime would reduce the current dependency on criminal law, by allowing an appropriate mix of regulatory measures such as guidance, advice and a varied and flexible system of civil sanctions – such as fines and bans.

The **consultation ends on 30th November 2012**, and includes such welcome questions as whether there should be an offence of “vicarious liability” in England & Wales as there now is in Scotland.

Under this, an employer could be held responsible for the actions of employees under their control who commit wildlife offences.

If supported, this could eventually see the landowners of gaming estates being held jointly responsible for the actions of their gamekeepers caught persecuting birds of prey—something that could have impacted on recent prosecutions in Derbyshire.



This consultation is independent of government and comments are invited on a range of questions before the closing date of 30th November 2012.

For more information or to make your comments known, visit: <http://lawcommission.justice.gov.uk/consultations/wildlife.htm> Shortlink: <http://bit.ly/Unpzeh>



To watch the developments via Twitter, follow: [@lawcom_wildlife](https://twitter.com/lawcom_wildlife)

New LNR at Long Eaton

A site in Long Eaton is the most recent to be recognised as an area of natural interest and to be protected to ensure the public can enjoy it. Manor Farm Local Nature Reserve is the latest site owned by Erewash Borough Council to be given ‘LNR’ status.

It is adjacent to Nottingham Road, south of a stretch of the River Erewash, and contains woodland and grassland habitat. One main footpath runs through the reserve, which is bordered by a section of the River Erewash and also has Springfield Brook flowing through the site into the river.

The reserve is made up of dense and scattered scrub along with small sections of hedgerow which attract wildlife. This means there are now seven sites with LNR status in the Erewash Borough area that will be protected for their important natural features and access for residents and visitors to the borough to enjoy.

Manor Farm falls within the Erewash Valley Trail, which includes more than 30 miles of waterway and countryside along the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire border, and which offers access to wildlife and heritage features for cyclists and walkers.

For further information contact : dave.bramwell@erewash.gov.uk

iSpot—Your Place to Share Nature



iSpot is a website that's been developed by The Open University as part of the OPAL project. It aims at helping anyone identify anything in nature. It really is that simple. All you need is a camera (or mobile phone with a camera), plus a computer with internet access, and you have all the tools necessary to tap into a huge network of wildlife experts, ready and willing to share their incredible knowledge with you.

Just visit: www.ispot.org.uk

How often have you been out in your local patch, only to find that you forgot to bring a specimen jar or your trusty guidebook when you find something a little bit different? With iSpot, you can take a good photograph of what you've seen, and leave whatever it was you found to get on with its daily business. In fact, if you have an Android mobile phone, you can take a photo in the field and may even have an answer to your ID query whilst you are still out there (more of that later).

Once you've registered as an iSpot user, which is a very straightforward process, you can add an observation to the website using the digital photograph you took earlier, and suggest an identification yourself or see if anyone else can identify it for you. You can also help others by adding an identification to an existing observation. You might do this as your knowledge grows, or if you are an expert in a particular group of species. Your reputation on the site will grow as people agree with your identifications. There are also online web forums, which offer lively debate around observations and other more general topics.

Although still in its early days of operation – it's only been in existence for three years – there have been well over 100,000 observations, with over 20,000 registered users of the website. But the iSpot phenomenon is not resting on its laurels; it is evolving. Users of mobile phones with the Android operating system can now download and trial a test version iSpot application ('app'), which allows you to access most of the functions of the website, whilst out

in the field. You can still do all the important things that you may need in the field: upload a new observation, using photos from your phone, check the iSpot species dictionary, see your profile and previous observations, see any names or comments added to your observations by iSpotters who are using iSpot via a browser.

Why not have a go at using the app and send the iSpot developers your feedback? Download a copy at this shortlink:: <http://bit.ly/TuSPZX>

Where iSpot may have greatest impact though, is in its ability to engage with young people. We all know that youngsters today can't put computers or mobile devices down, and that is where iSpot has potentially developed its niche. The project has for the past three years employed a keen group of Biodiversity Mentors, across the country, who have worked with a huge number of local communities, to help them appreciate and learn more about nature. Groups have ranged from homelessness charities, to young people, to minority ethnic communities.



Euonymus Leaf-notcher moth

This work has been very successful, and shows that using social media to engage those new to science, nature, and potentially even recording can bring new audiences into our world of biodiversity conservation. The photograph above is of a Euonymus Leaf-notcher moth (*Pryeria sinica*), an Asian moth, found by a young girl at her home in Berkshire. It's the first record of this species in the UK, and it was posted on iSpot for identification.

What started out as a child's fascination with nature turned into a nationally important find. It's no secret that natural historians as a group are becoming a threatened breed, with a need for a serious injection of new and youthful enthusiasm for everything 'wild'. Maybe iSpot can unlock the door to a whole new breed of young (and maybe not so young) natural historians?

Invasive Plants go Mobile



A brilliant little mobile phone application has just been launched that lets anyone with a smartphone submit records of any of fourteen of the most invasive plant species across Britain.

Developed at Bristol University, **PlantTracker** can be downloaded for free and installed on any smartphone or iPhone.

Visit <http://planttracker.naturelocator.org> to see mapped data, or to download the phone app.

Users simply photograph the plant with their phone, then select one of three keywords to describe the size of the colony. Location coordinates are determined automatically by the phone network, but mobiles with GPS give greater accuracy. Hit 'Send' to upload your record to a mapping website, which appear only after each has been checked by validators. They sometimes appear in less than 30 minutes!

Helpfully, the phone app contains a library of information and images to aid identification in the field before records are submitted. Species included are Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam (below), Orange Balsam, Water Fern, New Zealand Pygmyweed, Parrot's Feather, Giant Hogweed, Floating Pennywort, Creeping



Water-primrose, Piri-Piri Burr, American Skunk-cabbage, Monkey Flower, Curly Waterweed and Rhododendron.

When the project received its first verified record of Floating Pennywort (below) from a London park, the Environment Agency alerted the site managers where it was seen and the control measures were put into effect immediately.



The website offers Google's satellite mapping, but not Streetview, and can help local groups working with INNS (Invasive Non-Native Species). Anyone needing full access to the data can contact the PlantTracker team for this.

Surprisingly, PlantTracker doesn't yet allow recorders to be pre-approved, so every report needs an accompanying photograph. This might discourage its use for more intensive local recording, especially as coordinates are displayed as Lat Long, whereas conversion to OSGB would have been helpful.

All in all this is a superb and simple phone app, and future modifications may well make it even more effective. The PlantTracker project is a collaboration between the Environment Agency, the NatureLocator team at Bristol University and the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. It can be downloaded free from the iTunes store or Android Market.

Conker Trees under Attack!



The same team that developed PlantTracker (above) have also launched a mobile phone app for recording the spread of a non-native moth that severely affects Horse Chestnut trees. The LeafWatch app lets you photograph the leaf; rate the damage on a scale of 0 to 4, then your phone's GPS determines the location and you simply hit 'Send'.

App download and more information here:

<http://leafwatch.naturelocator.org>

Naturalists can assist by helping with validating the many leaf images uploaded, too.



Leaf damage at Calke Abbey, and culprit

Allestree Park, Derby

The Allestree Neighbourhood Board has funded the production of two lectern-style information panels for Allestree Park in Derby.



Designed by Friends Of Allestree Park committee member, Bill Grange, they were manufactured by Pryor Signs of Rotherham. Each contains basic information about the park, with aerial photographs and pictures of a selection of its wildlife. One panel has been erected at the main car park, the other at the Woodlands Lane car park.

Bill Grange and Steve Plant are carrying out a photographic survey of Allestree Park, concentrating on insects. After just a couple of years of the survey, some very interesting

records have been obtained. One of these is a leaf hopper, *Athysanus argentarius*, (below) found in 2010 in Woodlands Field at the extreme northern end of the Park. This is the first county sighting of this species, formerly confined to southern coastal areas, and now moving up the country in response to climate change.



Bill and Steve have also found the large snail-eating ground beetle, *Cychrus caraboides* in Big Wood in the Park. This has only previously been recorded in Derbyshire from woods on the upland gritstone.

Some other sightings of more commonly-encountered species have been made, but no less interesting. Among them is an attack on a Harlequin Ladybird pupa by a tiny braconid wasp *Dinocampus coccinellae* (a parasite of our native ladybirds) attacking a pupa of the alien Harlequin Ladybird. A hopeful sign that this invader is not having it all its own way!

New Fungal Threat to Ash Trees

A new threat to tree health has appeared in Great Britain, and help is needed in tackling it. Known as Chalara Dieback, this highly destructive disease is caused by the fungus, *Chalara fraxinea*

It has caused widespread damage across Europe, but was unknown in Great Britain until the first cases were confirmed in a Buckinghamshire nursery early in 2012 - on ash plants imported from The Netherlands.

You are asked to be vigilant for signs of this disease, especially on stock from continental suppliers and trees planted in the last 5 years.

- Be vigilant for signs of Chalara Dieback
- Ensure new stock is specified 'disease-free'
- Report suspicious signs via this website:

www.forestry.gov.uk/chalara (tel: 01420 23000)



Notice Board and Topical Tweets

The Trials & Tribulations of a Natural History Presenter
 A Talk by TV's Mike Dilger
 7pm 24th November 2012 at County Hall, Matlock. Tickets £5

Book via Derbyshire Wildlife Trust
 01773 881188

Wild Derbyshire

A superbly illustrated book by photographer and writer Paul Hobson has just been published, price £25. <http://bit.ly/T4DdjG>
 Makes the ideal Christmas gift!

SITA Trust 'Enriching Nature' Fund

News is expected soon that this funding scheme will continue in some form. Whilst as yet there is no official confirmation, you are advised to keep checking the Sita Trust website for updates.

www.sitatrust.org.uk

Field Studies Council Courses

Next year's natural history courses from @FieldStudiesC are out, lots of great opportunities to learn about wildlife:

<http://bit.ly/R7S0JS>

National Federation of Biological Recording @ NFBR

#NFBRnewsletter Book reviews: guides to beetles, bumblebees, fungi and micro-moths. <http://bit.ly/S0fJcV>

Biological Recording Conference April 2013 <http://bit.ly/T4DdjG>

Living with Barn Owls in the wild (DVD)

Filmed at the Tean Valley Meadow Nature Reserve in the heart of the Staffordshire countryside.

Price £19.95 1hr duration
www.teanvalleymeadow.co.uk

What's wrong with putting a price on nature?

An interesting online article in The Guardian Environment Network:

<http://ow.ly/eBaKT>

#biodiversity #Environment

Are You On Twitter?

For topical Tweets on local and national biodiversity stories, try these hashtags:

#biodiversity

#ldbap

#LNPs or follow:

@greenroofsuk

Contact Us

Editors:

Debbie Alston & Nick Moyes
Biodiversity Project Officer (job share)
c/o Derbyshire County Council, Shand House,
Dale Road South, Matlock, Derbyshire,
DE4 3RY. Tel 01629 539771

Or email:

biodiversity@derbyshire.gov.uk or
debbie.alston@derbyshire.gov.uk
nick.moyes@derbyshire.gov.uk

www.derbyshirebiodiversity.org.uk



Deadline for articles for next issue
1st February 2013

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Funding Corner.... Applying for Grants



During 2012 your LBAP Officers sat on a number of grants panels, advised local projects or groups, and wrote a number of letters of support for organisations seeking funding.

The following tips might help anyone considering making future applications. They seem obvious, but you'd be surprised how some grant applications arrive in front of a Grants panel looking rushed, containing silly mistakes, or don't help the expert panel members grasp the core aims of the project..

Remember that grant panel members get a dozen or more grant forms to read prior to meetings. (That alone can take a full day.) They score each one on a number of criteria which the grants body sets down. These scores are weighted by importance, discussed and then aggregated at the panel meeting itself. The highest scoring projects are most likely to go forward for a positive funding decision by final Board Meeting of the grant body—and their decision is the one that counts.

You can help them (and your own chances) by:

- Providing the **clearest summary** and making all your project deliverables obvious and simple.
- Getting your **facts and figures correct**
- Show **value for money** and highlight **legacy**
- Ensure your project really **matches the aims of the funders**. Is it biodiversity? Is it people engagement? Or both? Which species or BAP habitats will actually benefit?
- Keep things **short**. And **clear**. **Don't waffle** anywhere.
- Supply photographs and **clearly-labelled maps** if this might be helpful

If asking for letters of support from BAP Officers you probably won't have fully completed your grant form yet. But we're happy to look it over for you. Either way, help us to understand your scheme's aims and all its biodiversity benefits. Contact us in good time. And do let us know if you're successful, or not!