



Lowland Wetland HAP Group Meeting

16th February 2006, Shipley Country Park, Heanor.

Present:

Philip Precey (Derbyshire Wildlife Trust)
Helen Perkins (Derbyshire Wildlife Trust- Water Vole Recovery Project)
Chris Monk (Derbyshire County Council – Countryside Service)
Ron Barker (Chesterfield BC)
James Lee (National Trust – Hardwick Hall)
Deanne Gow (British Waterways)
Debbie Court (LD Biodiversity Partnership) **Note taker**

Apologies:

Leon Hayward (BTCV), Emma Dagless (English Nature), Marion Horton (Groundwork Erewash Valley), Beverley Rhodes (Derby City Council), Environment Agency (Leeds Office), and Helen Williams (DEFRA – RDS)

1. LBAP update

Debbie reported that the wetland group had not met since Jan 2005. Since then the wetland Habitat Action Plans have been completed along with a background document for wetland information. All of these are now downloadable for the Derbyshire Biodiversity website (www.derbyshirebiodiversity.org.uk).

2. Water Vole Species Action Plan (SAP)

Helen reported that the water vole species action plan had now been completed along with a smaller background document. Both of these are downloadable for the Derbyshire Biodiversity website. The species action plan had wide consultation and the actions had been made as specific as possible. One of the main features of the plan was the action for drawing up site specific action plans for specific water vole sites.

The Peak District LBAP has a water vole action group which meets twice a year. After some discussion it was decided to have one Lowland Derbyshire meeting for the water vole action and perhaps a joint meeting between the two groups. It was suggested to have the Lowland Derbyshire meeting on 7th June 2006 at 10.30am either at Hardwick Hall or Poolsbrook Country Park, in Chesterfield.

It was also agreed to have a press release for the water vole SAP. Helen and Debbie to liaise over the press release and send out in April.

Action: Debbie and Helen

3. Wetland Actions

One of the actions that needed sorting out was the agreed use of a survey methodology for wetland habitats. Debbie said that there were a number of different methodologies for standing open water habitats. The National Pond Survey, the PSYM (Predicative System for Multimetrics) and the National Pond Monitoring Network all developed by Pond Conservation Trust. Details of all of these can be found on the National Pond Network Monitoring website (<http://www.pondnetwork.org.uk>).

Philip said that he had developed a method which satisfied the National Pond Network system but only takes one hour to do per pond. Trevor Taylor had also used this format for the Derby City Pond survey. It was agreed to use this as the Lowland Derbyshire standard for pond surveys. Philip to send the survey for to Debbie to put on the website

Action: Philip

4. Data

There are a number of data sets that contained information about wetland habitats:

- DWT- 1995 Pond Survey (on GIS, but held limited information in some areas of the county)
- Ponds marked on the landline GIS layer (on GIS, no further information on each pond apart from location and used to create the pond density maps in the background document)

- Ponds surveyed during the South Derbyshire Pond Survey 2003 (on GIS and includes survey details and species lists)
- Derby City Pond Survey 2004/5 (on GIS and includes survey details and species lists)
- Habitat audits including swamps, fens, reedbeds, lakes (on GIS, not complete coverage, limited additional information but includes areas, mainly restricted to Wildlife Sites and other large sites)

British Waterways – In addition to information gained from external sources such as DWT they have ad-hoc species information gained from BW staff.

National Trust – have some specialist surveys on various sites covering various wetland issues.

Philip agreed to investigate the possibility of DWT 'hosting' the wetland BAP habitat GIS layers. Debbie also to talk to DWT about GIS layers and dissemination to LBAP partners

Action: Debbie and Philip.

Debbie to talk to the Environment Agency about River Corridor Surveys and their coverage.

Action: Debbie

5. Invasive Species

A number of actions in the wetland HAPs refer to invasive species. It was agreed that this was an important issue and needed awareness raising as well as practical action.

Philip reported that the Derby City Pond survey had picked up one pond in the City's ownership that had Floating Pennywort, an aggressive invasive species. This needs to be controlled as the pond is near a watercourse.

Action: Derby City

There was some discussion on how the issue of invasive species should be tackled. Philip said that Environment Agency were discussing it and coming up with a National Strategy for dealing with invasive species. In 2003 the Environment Agency published *Guidance for the control of invasive weeds in or near fresh water*. This looks at 6 non-native, invasive weeds found in the UK, what they look like and how to deal with them, including Japanese knotweed and giant hogweed. Details can be found on the EA website (<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/conservation>.)

In the meantime it was agreed that we could do some awareness raising, discouraging the disposal of invasive species in the wild. The Water for Wildlife Project distributed postcards with invasive species on them to garden centres last year.

Knowing where the invasive species are and which ones are being controlled would be useful, especially so that appropriate action can be taken on development sites through the use of conditions and planning applications. Chris Monk has developed a GIS layer to record Japanese Knotweed on DCC sites and highway verges, this could be added to. It was suggested that we talk to the Derbyshire Flora group about recording invasive species at at least a 6 figure grid reference.

Action: Debbie

6. Wetland literature

Debbie asked if any of the LBAP partners have booklets/leaflets on wetland and their management. In addition to the variety that Debbie had brought from the Environment Agency, English Nature and the Ponds Conservation Trust, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust has produced leaflets on wetland and water voles.

It was agreed that Debbie will list all of the relevant ones and where they are available. This list can be sent to landowners, put on the website and also used to see if there are any gaps.

Action: Debbie

7. Survey Priorities for 2006.

Philip said he was concentrating this year on the River Amber, looking for otters and water voles. Helen will be looking at the Erewash Canal, Moss Valley, Creswell Crags, and Hooborough brook, amongst others.

Chris said there were a number of County Council Countryside wetland sites that could be surveyed by DWT under the Service Level Agreement.

James said he would like to look at some of the smaller streams on the Hardwick Estate for signs of water voles and possibly survey the ponds using the agreed methodology.
Debbie to contact EA to find out their survey priorities this year

Action: Debbie

8. Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS)

Debbie gave out an information sheet with step-by-step guide to inputting progress reports to BARS. LBAP partners are now expected to input their progress against relevant action when they have time, ideally once every 6 months.

Action: ALL

9. Partner updates.

DWT

- Put in a funding bid for a Trent Valley officer to work within the Reserves team.
- Helen has been concentrating on mink control in the Peak District area and working with BTCV will be doing some work on the Bailey Brook in Amber Valley for the benefit of water voles.
- They are also looking for funding to support the Water for Wildlife and Water Vole Recovery project beyond April 2007.

DCC

- Have put in an artificial pond on Pye Bridge Fields under Countryside Stewardship and
- Have been doing some management at Pinxton Canal.
- Reedbed management has taken place at Doe Lea LNR in Bolsover.

National Trust

- Put in a mink raft – negative results so far.
- Doing some work on an area to link up two water vole populations
- Awareness raising

Some LBAP partners have been contacted about the M1 widening scheme and possible mitigation for wetland habitats.

LBAP update

- The website was now online (www.derbyshirebiodiversity.org.uk)
- Two newsletters have been issued giving information out to the partnership
- Work has begun on an implementation strategy for the LBAP.

10. Date of next meeting – 7th September 2006 at 10am at Shipley Country Park, Heanor.

After the meeting we will have a site visit somewhere – any suggestions/offers?
Smotherfly was suggested as an option.

Debbie Court
17th Feb 2006.