

# *Natural partners*

The achievements of local biodiversity partnerships in England



England Biodiversity Group



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### England Local Issues Group Members

*Charlotte Gault, England Local Biodiversity Action Facilitator, The Wildlife Trusts*  
*Alison Barnes, England Local Biodiversity Action Co-ordinator, Defra*  
*John Robbins, Chairman, England Local Issues Group, Defra*  
*Anne Brenchley, English Nature*  
*Robin Wynde, RSPB*  
*Chris Mahon, Cheshire Wildlife Trust*  
*Maggie Bosanquet, Local Government Association*  
*Chris Spray, Northumbrian Water*  
*Colin Headley, Country Land and Business Association*  
*Wendy Brooks, Environment Agency*  
*David Pape, Association of Local Government Ecologists*

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*Keith Bowey, Durham BAP; John Smith, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust; Richard Marsh, Cornwall Wildlife Trust; Valerie Keeble, The Peoples Trust for Endangered Species; John Hayward, Gavin Saunders and David Leach, Devon Wildlife Trust; Alex Preston, Worcestershire County Council; Keith James, Bromsgrove District Council; David Armitage, Malvern Hills AONB; Dave Jackson; Nick Cheales and Susan Lindsay, Scottish Wildlife Trust; Chris Strachan and Sandi Bain, London Wildlife Trust; Fiona Gardner, Cheshire Wildlife Trust; Clare Greener, Shropshire County Council; Audrey Brown, The National Forest; Ben Totterdell, English Nature; Jerry Harrington, Wakefield Metropolitan District Council; Sarah Staunton, Earthwatch; Martin Boyle, Merton Borough Council; Jon Capel, Kingston upon Hull City Council; Adam Ingleby, Westminster City Council; Simon Pickering, Cotswold Water Park; Liz Arnold, Tees Valley Wildlife Trust; Alister Hayes, Bromley Borough Council; Sarah Ayling, Philip Burton and Heather Mead, Herefordshire Nature Trust; Phil Castiaux, Blyth Valley Borough Council; David Ramsden, The Barn Owl Trust; Beth Gardner, Nottinghamshire County Council; Andrew Goodman, Newcastle City Council; Catherine Weightman, Cambridgeshire County Council; Paul Wilkinson, Norfolk County Council; Hugh Firman and Neil Talbot, Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust; Rhodri Thomas, Peak District National Park; Darren Clarke, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust; Beverley McClean, Essex County Council.*

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# Foreword

The 1994 UK Biodiversity Action Plan recognised that biodiversity is ultimately lost or conserved at the local level. It also recognised that achieving the Plan's goal of conserving and enhancing biodiversity would require a partnership approach. Nowhere is this more important than at the local level.



RED SQUIRREL (LAURIE CAMPBELL)

Since 1994 local biodiversity partnerships have been established across England and helped bring about a groundswell of activity and innovation to meet the challenges faced by our biodiversity. This report details for the first time the breadth of this activity across the country. It shows, with examples in the form of good practice case studies, how local partnerships involving individuals, businesses, local authorities, land managers and the voluntary sector are encouraging biodiversity to thrive in their areas.

There is still much to do. We need now to build on the foundations that have been laid at both national and local level to ensure biodiversity is incorporated into all aspects of public policy and the behaviour of people across society as a whole. *Working with the Grain of Nature – A Biodiversity Strategy for England*, published by the Government in October 2002, has already begun this process. The Strategy's five-year programme includes proposals for further development and support for local partnerships in the Regions and more locally.

In the immediate future, ensuring biodiversity becomes an integral part of Community Strategies will be a key task for local groups. We will need to draw on, and increase, the current co-operation between biodiversity partnerships and Local Strategic Partnerships to achieve it. However, with the skills, experience and commitment of local biodiversity partnerships that are demonstrated in this report, I am sure that we can look forward to Community Strategies in which the objective of enhancing biodiversity is fully incorporated.



WAXWING (NOTTINGHAMSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST)



LATHKILL DALE (ENGLISH NATURE)

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sophia Lambert".

Sophia Lambert  
Chairman, England Biodiversity Group







# Local action for biodiversity in England

**A healthy natural environment where biodiversity thrives is an essential part of the quality of life of local communities. It contributes to economic and social prosperity as well as environmental and spiritual well-being.**

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan aims to ensure our habitats and species are conserved and enhanced for the benefit of future generations. It identifies national priorities and quantifiable targets for habitats and species and recognises that action at the local level is essential to achieve these targets. The need to identify and conserve distinctive natural features that are of special value to local communities is integral to the UK biodiversity programme. While much can be achieved at a national level, for example, setting the frameworks for policy and expenditure, it is the enthusiasm and support of people, in their local communities and workplaces, that will bring about a truly sustainable society.

Local partnerships, through **Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs)**, have become a proven mechanism for focusing resources to conserve and enhance nationally and locally important biodiversity. This report demonstrates and celebrates the many achievements of the one hundred local biodiversity partnerships working throughout England. It has been prepared on behalf of the England Biodiversity Group and accompanies and illustrates *Working with the Grain of Nature – A Biodiversity Strategy for England*. Using a wide range of case studies from local biodiversity partnerships, and experiences from many national partner organisations, the report:

- explains how LBAPs help deliver the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) in England
- demonstrates some of the benefits for biodiversity and society
- illustrates benefits to many different partners of their involvement in LBAPs
- shows how biodiversity action can contribute to the achievement of wider economic, social and environmental objectives
- demonstrates how biodiversity can become an integral part of local policies and programmes
- explores future directions for achieving biodiversity objectives locally

*'English Nature is committed to a strong local biodiversity partnership. Local action is key to the achievement of national Biodiversity Action Plan targets for priority species and habitats. We welcome this report, which we hope will encourage greater involvement, attracting new partners to help build on successes to date.'*

**Sir Martin Doughty, Chair of English Nature**

## The Functions of LBAPs

- To translate national targets for species and habitats into effective action at the local level

'Local BAPs can really extend delivery of action on the ground and reach new people, as we have seen with our work for stag beetles. We have been pleased to provide information and exchange data with local BAPs and hope to build upon this joint working in future.'

Dr Valerie Keeble, Chief Executive, PTES



STAG BEETLE (STUART BALL)

- To identify targets for species and habitats important to the local area and reflecting the values of local people
- To stimulate effective local partnerships to ensure programmes for biodiversity conservation are developed and maintained in the long term
- To raise awareness of the need for biodiversity conservation and enhancement in the local context



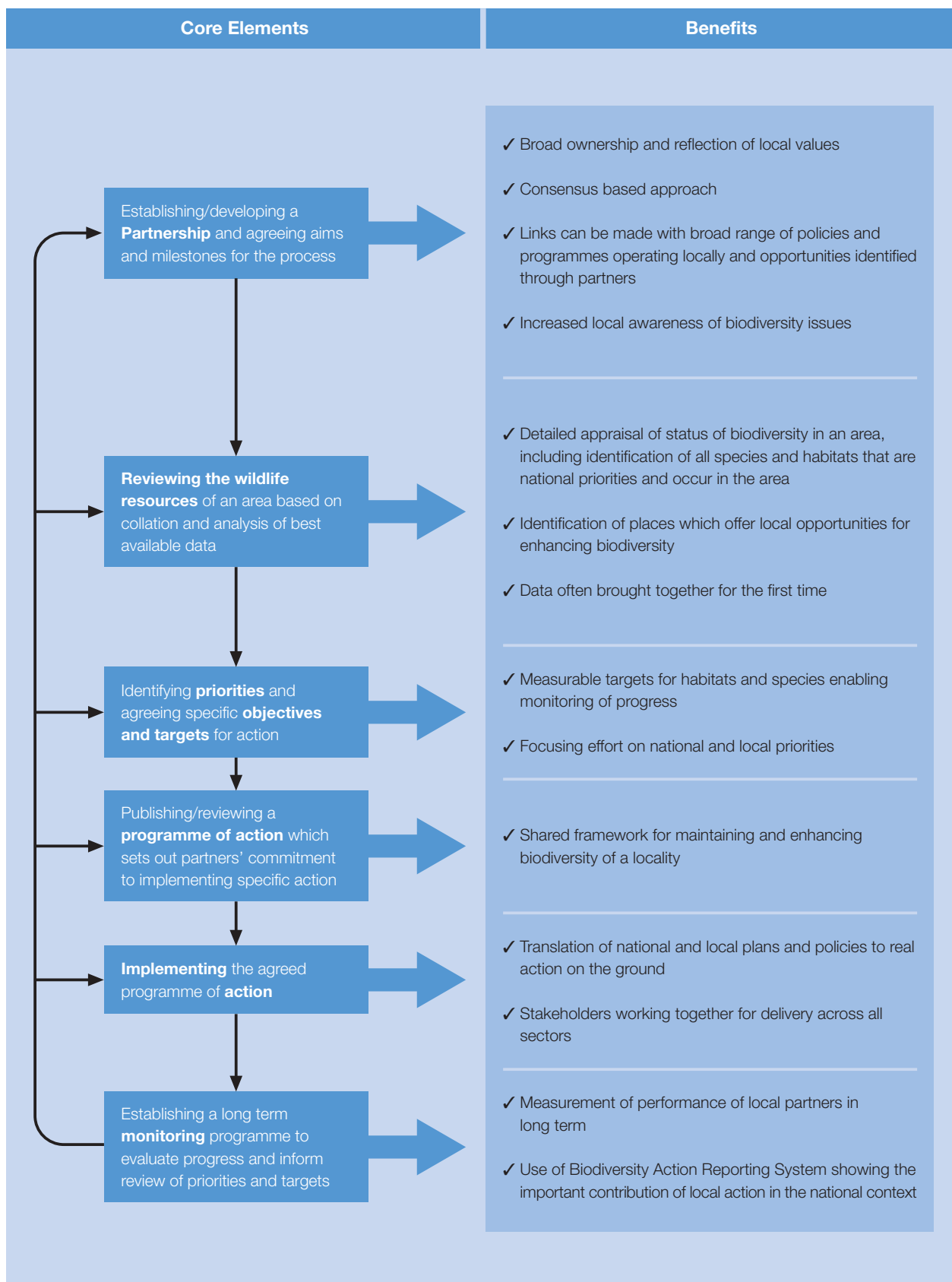
DEVON ARK (DEVON WILDLIFE TRUST)

The Devon Ark Project has been making biodiversity relevant to new target audiences for two years. Over 1000 people have taken part in fun and inspirational events and 6000 packs have so far been distributed

- To ensure that opportunities for conservation and enhancement of biodiversity are promoted, understood and rooted in policies and decisions at the local level
- To provide a basis for monitoring and evaluating local action for biodiversity priorities, at both national and local levels

## ELEMENTS OF AN LBAP

There is a useful common approach which has been applied to achieve agreed priorities and targets. The establishment and maintenance of a broad partnership and ongoing review of implementation are vital in ensuring a dynamic and responsive approach to local action.



Experiences across England have shown that effective delivery of LBAP targets and maximum benefits are more likely if there is a dedicated 'Local Biodiversity Co-ordinator'. Working for the partnership, the co-ordinator has the independence to develop and drive forward their agreed actions. They provide a vital link for organisations and groups that want to get involved.

*'Local Wildlife Trusts across England have played a pivotal role in supporting the establishment and development of many LBAP processes. The Wildlife Trusts continue to see LBAPs as a key mechanism for enabling closer working with partners locally, driving forward practical action for wildlife and helping us measure our achievements.'*

**Dr Simon Lyster, Director General of The Wildlife Trusts**



## THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

*Working with the Grain of Nature – A Biodiversity Strategy for England* sets out the framework for implementation of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan in England and is also the principal means by which the Government will comply with its duties under section 74 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. These are to:

- have regard to the purpose of the conservation of biological diversity in the exercise of Government's functions
- take, or promote the taking by others of steps to further the conservation of the habitats and species which together are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity

Local and regional action is a major cross-cutting theme in the Government's approach to implementation of the strategy and a number of indicators are being developed to measure progress in this area.

### Local Government

Local authorities have a duty under the Local Government Act 2000 to promote the environmental, social, and economic well-being of their areas. Section 4 requires them to prepare Community Strategies for this purpose and guidance issued as part of DETR circular 4/2001 makes clear that;

- Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) are among the elements local authorities should build upon when preparing these community strategies; and,
- local wildlife sites are important components within the LBAP process

The Local Government White Paper, 2001, promised to reduce the burden of planning requirements imposed on local authorities and to improve the effectiveness and consistency of the remaining planning requirements for both central and local government. The Government announced the outcome of this review of planning requirements on local authorities in November 2002. This made clear that local authorities are not themselves under an obligation to prepare LBAPs but that they should plan for biodiversity. Local authority planning for biodiversity should be linked firmly into Community Strategies, promoting the 'well-being' of local areas, to provide a framework to ensure biodiversity is embedded into all activities. The use of partnership-agreed LBAP targets in Community Strategies could provide a useful tool for measuring performance – an important part of the ongoing programme to modernise local government.

### Community Strategies – LBAPs are Making an Important Contribution

Many LBAP partnerships are already engaging with their local Community Strategies and Local Strategic Partnerships, for example;

- targets from the Staffordshire LBAP are being used to inform objectives in all nine local Community Strategies
- a project to support local community groups' engagement with the Local Strategic Partnership is being developed by the Durham BAP partnership with Chester-le-Street District Council
- a pilot project developed by the Cornwall Biodiversity Initiative is working to integrate LBAP objectives and indicators for biodiversity into the county and six district Community Strategies. The project officer also supports community groups in each district to deliver biodiversity projects at the grassroots

A leaflet for local authorities, *Natural Communities*, published by English Nature, the RSPB, and The Wildlife Trusts in 2002 promotes ways of integrating biodiversity into Community Strategies.



URBAN WOODLAND, WALSALL (WOODFALL WILD IMAGES)





The key role local authorities have to play in biodiversity planning and action is further recognised by the Local Government Association in its position statement on biodiversity. This sees biodiversity as a crucial component of the quality of life of local communities. Local biodiversity objectives should be integrated across local government functions, including strategic planning, development control, Best Value, education, and economic and social development. Good examples of this can be found in the following pages.



*'The Association of Local Government Ecologists (ALGE) is committed to the development and implementation of LBAPs. The case studies in this report are just a few examples of the many local actions and initiatives generated by the LBAP process. They demonstrate the potential of local authorities and other local BAP partners to achieve community benefits by targeting their limited resources to the protection and enhancement of priority habitats and species.'*

**Annie Cooper, ALGE chair**

## PARTNERSHIPS AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

Partnerships have been established around the different tiers of governance in England. Each tier of partnership has its own strengths and purposes. Whilst there is no optimum level, it is desirable for the various initiatives to be co-ordinated and complementary.

### County and Unitary Biodiversity Partnerships

The majority of local partnerships in England operate at a county or unitary authority scale. This has delivered distinct benefits in terms of obtaining strategic local approaches to biodiversity action. Many 'county' partnerships include neighbouring unitary authorities. Others have been formed by neighbouring unitary authorities grouping together. (For example the four unitary authorities of the former Cleveland are partners in the Tees Valley BAP). County/unitary partnerships have proved to be a natural focus for:

- securing broad strategic involvement of local stakeholders in biodiversity
- cost-effective data collection and analysis
- identifying priorities and setting specific objectives and targets for action
- integration into sectors where the county/unitary authority is a key tier of administration (eg planning, education, roadside verge management)
- the focal point for communication between national, regional and very local (district, parish) programmes
- cost-effective employment of a Local Biodiversity Co-ordinator



## Action at the District Level

A diverse range of action-based projects have been developed at the district and more local levels. Often brokered through county and unitary LBAP partnerships, this level of action is important for involving local communities and for taking innovative opportunities to embed biodiversity into existing local initiatives.

In a number of areas county/unitary biodiversity objectives have been successfully introduced into work programmes for constituent districts and/or local communities. The strengths of these projects include:

- innovation – building on existing local initiatives and opportunities
- taking action with very locally-based partners
- ability to tailor projects to local circumstances and engender local ownership of outputs, eg housing design projects, parish mapping
- increased community involvement and awareness
- access to local funding sources

### Worcestershire and the West Midlands – Linking Local to Regional Action

#### District Delivery

The Worcestershire LBAP Partnership was formed in 1996 and published its action plan in February 1999. Partners have been working to implement actions, supported by a full-time co-ordinator since October 1999, with considerable success. During 1999 'local authority delivery plans' were produced, at cost price, for the County Council and three District Councils. These provided a breakdown of their actions and practical suggestions to aid effective delivery of local biodiversity objectives.

*'The Bromsgrove District Programme has really helped us to work more closely with the Wildlife Trust and other agencies. We have now started looking at doing some wetland restoration and changed our grounds maintenance regime in a park in Bromsgrove, two of the recommendations in the report. I don't think that this would have happened without the Biodiversity Programme.'*

**Keith James, Environment Co-ordinator, Bromsgrove District Council**

#### Regional Links

Worcestershire's co-ordinator also provides a strategic link between the county and region as a member of the West Midlands LBAP co-ordinators' group. Here representatives from each West Midlands county meet twice a year to share experience and make links to regional activity. One representative attends meetings of the Regional Biodiversity Forum, and Forum members regularly attend practitioners' meetings. This structure has allowed co-ordinated local input to be made to regional plans and policies, including Regional Planning Guidance and an annual progress report to the Regional Assembly.



## Biodiversity in the English Regions

Local biodiversity partnerships have reacted positively to the developments on regional governance and decision-making. Recognising the importance of a strategic regional approach, Regional Biodiversity Fora have been established in the nine English regions through partnerships of regional organisations and LBAPs. Built on, and supported by the activities of local biodiversity partnerships, they are well placed to identify regional priorities and advise regional decision-makers on incorporating biodiversity into regional strategies, programmes and policies. In London, a capital-wide partnership has taken forward the core elements of biodiversity work. Borough biodiversity partnerships have developed as a means of delivering biodiversity targets for London. This process is recognised in the Greater London Act 1999, which requires the Mayor to have regard to these local plans in preparing his statutory Biodiversity Strategy. The White Paper *Your Region, Your Choice: Revitalising the English Regions* states that the English Regional Assemblies, when established, shall each have a duty to prepare a biodiversity strategy. The work of the Regional Biodiversity Fora will be important in paving the way for such strategies.



Launch of Lancashire BAP

THE WILDLIFE TRUST FOR LANCASHIRE,  
MANCHESTER AND NORTH MERSEY



YELLOW IRIS (THE WILDLIFE TRUSTS)







# Delivering targeted action

**The LBAP focuses resources on those species and habitats most in need of urgent action, through prioritisation and targeted activity.**

## UK BAP PRIORITIES

LBAPs cannot deliver all targets for national species and habitats. There is also a range of agencies and non-government organisations that are working to deliver these. This includes all the work being carried out by the various 'Lead Partners' that have been identified for each UK priority species or habitat. LBAPs provide a framework for developing and encouraging this work locally and an opportunity for local agencies or groups to complement and enhance national work with new contributions. This can maximise the resource available for action, by involving a wide range of local partners, and ensure action is targeted effectively, by making the most of local information and knowledge.

### Water Vole – Local Action for a UK Priority Species

This popular mammal is found throughout England and has a national plan to address the massive decline in populations in recent years. Action for water voles has also been taken by LBAPs across the country:

- forty-nine LBAPs (eighty-two per cent of those published) include the water vole as a priority species and identify local action
- locally organised water vole surveys have taken place in thirty-four counties
- upland sites in Derbyshire and urban sites throughout the country have been found to support larger populations than expected
- thirty local projects, half water vole specific, the rest combining wider wetland objectives, have been established. Local Wildlife Trusts and the Environment Agency have led many of these along with other LBAP partners in different areas such as English Nature, water companies, British Waterways and more than fifty local authorities
- twenty-three projects offer advice to landowners and twenty are carrying out habitat improvements. Many include volunteer training, talks and publicity, survey and monitoring, and control of predators such as mink

## Greater London Water Vole Project

A Water Vole Project Officer for London was appointed in March 2001, funded by London Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency, Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, British Waterways and London Development Agency. Resulting directly from the Greater London BAP, this post has enabled:

- collation of records and identification of water vole hot-spots and possible re-introduction sites across London's river network
- systematic surveying by a network of trained volunteers
- a successful introduction of 147 voles at Barn Elms in 2001 and a release at lakes in Hounslow in 2002
- liaison with landowners and developers to safeguard existing populations and disseminate advice on sympathetic measures for water vole management
- production of a leaflet and display boards to raise awareness of water voles and their conservation

The project has generated considerable press coverage and achieved heightened awareness of biodiversity in the capital.



WATER VOLE (NHPA)

*'Recent successes of this project – including encouraging habitat works specifically for water voles and introductions to new locations – show that even in an urban environment a positive difference can be made.'*  
**Chris Strachan, Water Vole Project Officer**

HAWK-EYE PHOTO LIBRARY



LEFT: WATER VOLE (TWITTAKER, THE WILDLIFE TRUSTS) TOP: MORNING CLOUDS (WOODFALL WILD IMAGES)



## LOCAL BAP PRIORITIES

A real strength of LBAPs is to enable effective targeting of activity for local priorities – species and habitats that are locally characteristic, declining, threatened or important.

### Black Poplar – Local Action for a Local Priority Species

The native black poplar has been identified by Local Biodiversity Partnerships as a priority for action throughout its English range. This uncommon tree is confined to Britain, northern France and western Germany and is thought to have occurred naturally in floodplain forest, a habitat that has almost entirely disappeared. The current population is elderly, ninety-five per cent genetically identical and at least ninety-five per cent male, hence action is needed to ensure its survival. LBAPs have initiated action across the black poplar's range:

- five years of LBAP-organised surveys place the current population at around 6,000, double the previous estimate, but still perilously low
- at least 6,000 cuttings are now being propagated through LBAP-instigated projects
- tree nurseries are being run by colleges, community groups, garden centres and primary schools
- the National Forest, covering parts of the Midlands with its own complementary LBAP, planted a black poplar as its four millionth tree, gaining publicity for the tree's plight and potential recovery
- LBAPs have linked conservation activity with traditional celebrations. In Aston in Clun, Shropshire, a black poplar exhibition included paper made by children from the old Arbor Tree, which has long been the focus of annual tree dressing ceremonies



Young black poplars planted to boost the population

PETER ENNIS/SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL



PETER ENNIS/SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

### Poplar Populations for the Future in Cheshire

A local biodiversity target to establish 1,000 new black poplar trees in Cheshire by 2005 has been boosted by the work of a BAP black poplar action group co-ordinated by Cheshire Wildlife Trust. Since 1997, the group has taken more than 5,000 cuttings and planted them in nurseries at a local agricultural college. Many newly grown trees were planted at ideal riverside and floodplain locations. Tree locations have also been mapped onto GIS, to help inform land managers and local authority planners. General information and advice has been provided to landowners and public awareness about the black poplar has been raised through the media and by talks to many groups, using a specially produced slide pack.

Sarah Bird, of the Horticulture and Botany Department at Chester Zoo, who took over co-ordination of the action group in 2002, says:

*'We are making real progress for this impressive tree. I really wish I could revisit the young trees we have planted in one hundred years' time and see the striking features they will make in the Cheshire landscape of the future.'*

Project partners include the Botanical Society for the British Isles, Cheshire County Council, the Environment Agency, the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, Ness Botanic Gardens, the Mersey Basin Campaign and community and volunteer groups. £45,000 was secured by Cheshire County Council through landfill tax credits from 3C Waste, for identification of trees and taking and propagating cuttings.



## DEMONSTRATING RESULTS

Clear objectives and targets identified in LBAPs enable success to be measured. LBAPs provide a focus for reporting on action and monitoring the achievements of individual partners and allow them to demonstrate their contribution to both national and local targets. Importantly, analysis of achievements allows priorities and targets to be reviewed, and action re-focused as progress is made. Most LBAPs are easily updated by being published in loose-leaf form or web-based.

### Measuring Local Success

- many LBAPs have published progress reports on implementation. Some, such as Staffordshire and Leicestershire, have published annual reports for many years. Many combine publication with partnership events, generating publicity and renewed enthusiasm
- some notable LBAP targets are being achieved. For example, all the targets in the Cheshire black poplar plan had been met by 2002
- LBAP targets have informed performance measures in many areas, helping local authorities and some regional bodies to measure their environmental performance. For example in 2002, the West Midlands Biodiversity Forum published the first annual report on progress towards a regional sustainability strategy target, 'to ensure delivery of LBAP targets by 2010'



The Cheshire Countdown Project has provided an annually updated CD of all action plans to partners since 1998, setting out progress made and action still needed

### Contributing to the Bigger Picture – Reporting on the UK BAP

The first national reporting round in 1999, showed the enormous effort that has already gone into implementing the UK BAP. This resulted in the report *Sustaining the Variety of Life: Five Years of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan*. In 2002, a second round of reporting on progress with the UK BAP incorporated information from LBAPs. Analysis of data collected in 2002 will allow assessment of:

- habitats and species for which local action has been planned or is underway
- breadth of partnerships operating locally
- links being made to the national Lead Partners
- where LBAPs are reporting most success
- where there are constraints to the overall progress of LBAPs

An integrated national system known as **Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS)** will allow information from local levels to be captured in future national reporting rounds. This web-based information system, due to become available later in 2003, will establish a common format for work planning, monitoring and reporting at every level.

### Measuring Biological Outcomes

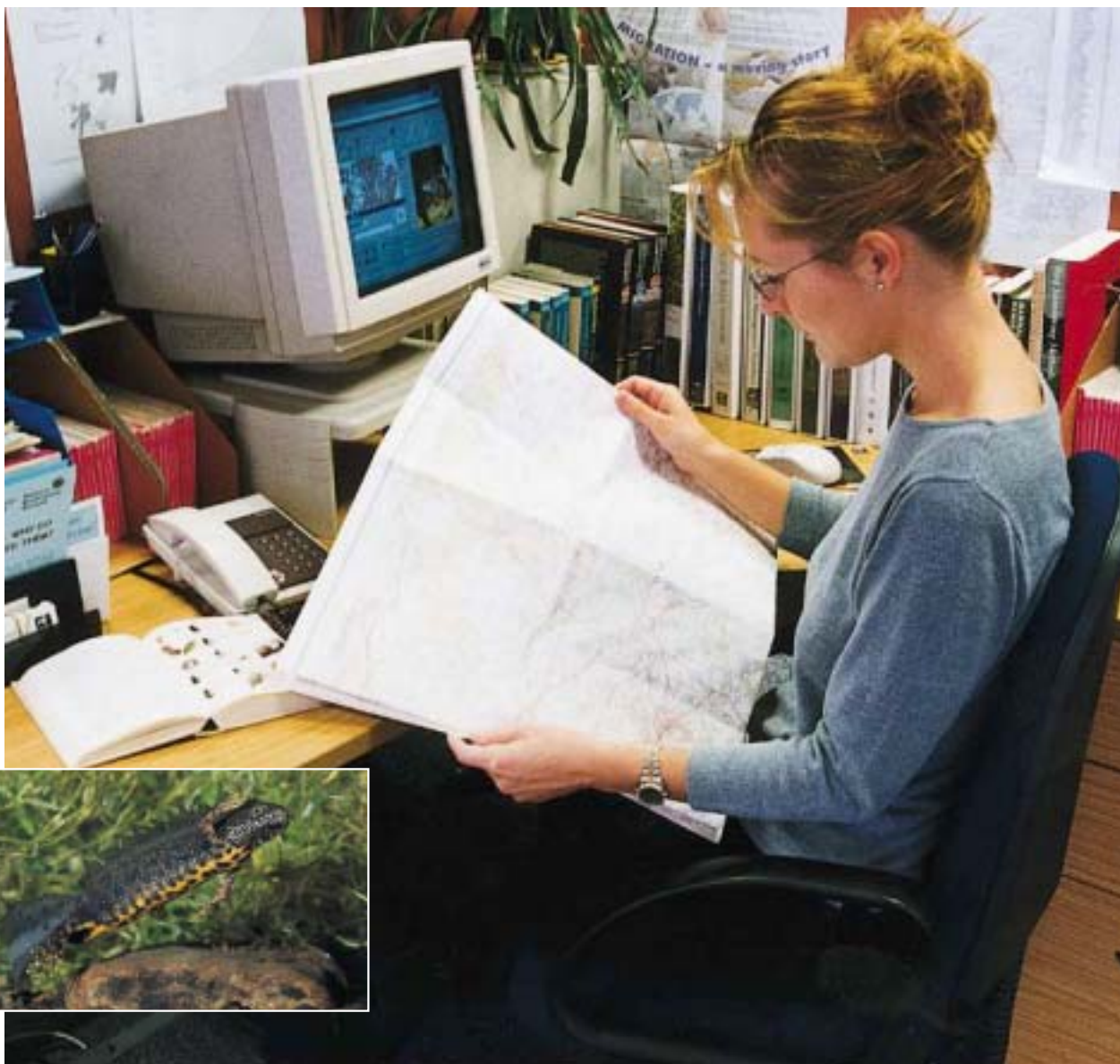
Biological monitoring – identifying actual changes to the size and status of habitats and species populations – shows us whether the action taken has had the intended effect. This type of monitoring relies upon considerable surveying, recording, collation and assessment of resulting data in an accessible format. LBAP partnerships help to underpin local monitoring:

- LBAPs promote repeated surveys, which can be set against the baselines from the original LBAP audit or other local data sources
- LBAPs provide a framework into which local experts can contribute information and direct survey effort
- many LBAPs have involved communities in monitoring easily recognisable species, such as the stag beetle and brown hare



BROWN HARE (RSPB IMAGES)





GREAT CRESTED NEWT (PS KEY)

THE WILDLIFE TRUSTS

### Local Record Centres – Gathering Data, Supporting Action

LBAPs provide a coherent framework for the collation and collection of records and better co-ordination of some surveys and habitat inventories locally. Ideally, LBAPs need to work with Local Record Centres – repositories for information on species and habitats – to work most effectively. Local Record Centres have an essential role in processing information to assist LBAP delivery and in supporting the monitoring and review of local biodiversity objectives. These centres are also crucial parts of the 'National Biodiversity Network' (NBN). The NBN aims to develop standards and internet technology to enable biodiversity information to be shared between data gatherers and users, at local and national levels.

A NBN pilot project running in the South West involves the region's seven Local Record Centres in mapping BAP priority habitats and developing GIS datasets, to be made accessible through the 'NBN Gateway' on the web. Working initially with the Cornwall LBAP, the project is trialling ways of using the mapping information to assist LBAP delivery, including establishing links between reporting on action and biological outcomes. The information produced has already proved valuable in helping to target local action.

### Data Gathering in Hampshire

One of the major actions identified in the Hampshire BAP is the development of a Biodiversity Information Centre. Established in April 2002, the Information Centre is a partnership venture involving local authorities, statutory agencies, voluntary bodies and recording groups. Information is already held on habitats and species from more than 5,000 sites across Hampshire. Data is mapped on GIS, and is being used to inform the preparation of local plans, assessment of development proposals and decisions on land management.

The information is also being used to assist students, local groups and community projects and to support a wide range of BAP actions. For example, the centre has already fulfilled an action in the local Chalk Grassland Habitat Action Plan (HAP) by co-ordinating a survey and condition assessment of this habitat. The centre will also co-ordinate reporting against the actions in the Hampshire BAP and will be fully integrated into NBN and BARS.



## Indicators of Change and Measures of Performance

Local biodiversity action should be monitored and evaluated to enable performance to be assessed, successes shared and built upon and delivery improved. Indicators are a useful means of doing this and can:

- help to monitor and illustrate changes over time
- stimulate debate and raise public awareness of biodiversity issues
- enhance partnership working
- help to inform, monitor and evaluate local biodiversity programmes
- allow local authorities and their partners to compare performance on biodiversity issues with other similar areas

Under the Biodiversity Strategy for England four indicators will be developed to monitor progress with local biodiversity objectives and the integration of these within local and regional plans and policies. These are:

- progress with Local Biodiversity Action Plans in England
- condition of SSSIs in local authority ownership
- Community Strategies with biodiversity elements
- incorporation of biodiversity objectives in regional plans and strategies

There is currently great potential to increase the local use of biodiversity targets within evaluation processes (eg PSAs, Best Value, local performance indicators) and to draw upon experiences of using these indicators and targets. Examples of the possibilities include:

- biodiversity indicators developed for the Library of Local Performance Indicators (Audit Commission and Improvement and Development Agency)
- biodiversity targets used in the preparation of Regional Planning Guidance and Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks
- the Local Public Service Agreements between Government and Local Authorities that include biodiversity indicators. Essex County Council was the first to do this in February 2002 and since then other councils such as Herefordshire Council and Leicestershire County Council have started to develop similar approaches



SKYLARK (MARK HAMBLIN)



HOUSE SPARROW (LAURIE CAMPBELL)







# Awareness, education and involvement

**Promoting public awareness and education about local biodiversity and how people can be involved in its conservation, is an important function of every local BAP.**

A local BAP can only succeed in the long term if people recognise, value and take action to maintain and enhance biodiversity as part of their everyday lives. Achieving this is a huge and complex task but local biodiversity partnerships have begun to rise to the challenge with a broad range of activities aiming to:

- raise awareness of the wildlife of an area and its local, national and global importance
- promote knowledge of less well-known species and habitats
- enable community ownership of biodiversity objectives and involvement in implementation
- promote participation and consensus among a wide range of sectors and stakeholders
- provide opportunities for life-long learning
- highlight the influence of biodiversity on local quality of life and economic opportunities

It is difficult to measure how far these initiatives will contribute to changing the way that society values biodiversity. However, the wide range of approaches being taken by LBAPs provide a good start towards increasing people's awareness of biodiversity issues and of how the quality of the natural environment and economic, social and personal benefits are linked. They also illustrate the role individuals can play in safeguarding biodiversity for future generations. Simply publishing the LBAP and publicising actions taken can help raise awareness, attract support and practical help.

Targeted approaches range from those based on provision of information, to more informal discussion-based learning and provision of practical opportunities for learning through experience. Examples include:

- **projects for schools** developed by teachers and environmental education specialists. For example, Cornwall Biodiversity Initiative set up a specialist working group of primary teachers, to produce a 'Pond Pack'. The pack has been extremely well received
- **school grounds projects**, bringing children and conservation experts together to create 'living classrooms'

Taking part in a mini-beast safari  
(WILTSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST)

## Crossing the Curriculum with Dramatic Biodiversity in Dorset

This Dorset Biodiversity Partnership project set up in 1999, aims to encourage children to value and conserve biodiversity. Existing good practice and appropriate links to the curriculum were identified by a steering group with education staff at Dorset County Council. Specific objectives were then developed at a series of workshops for teachers and environmental educators. These workshops revealed that most schools with grounds and resources for biodiversity education were already taking action, particularly in partnership with environmental NGOs.

The group decided to pull these experiences together using drama. A puppet theatre was built for middle school children to use. It brings the concept of biodiversity to life by creating dramas involving important Dorset wildlife. Teachers were provided with guidance on local biodiversity and further ideas on ways to extend the concept into the wider curriculum. A poster was also produced to reinforce this learning and provide a lasting illustration of the relevance of biodiversity to everyone's lives.

Five school visits and a demonstration event for teachers were held during 2000/1. The theatre was also piloted at community events. While long-term success cannot yet be measured, this innovative approach looks likely to continue.



WILDFLOWER WEEK (THE WILDLIFE TRUSTS)



- Provision of specially tailored **information and advice for farmers** on managing their land for BAP priorities, supported by farming organisations. These organisations are part of most LBAP partnerships and are crucial for highlighting biodiversity issues to the farming sector
- Learning by doing – involvement of anglers and other **leisure interest groups** in species recording and practical conservation action in their favourite places

### Tree Sparrows Benefit from Targeted Action and Funding in Wakefield

Volunteers and local partners are taking action to curb the threatened extinction of one of Wakefield's last remaining tree sparrow colonies, located on land being developed as a business park, and next to a country park.

Working to deliver key actions identified in the Wakefield BAP, the local RSPB members' group has taken action to save the birds through a three-stage programme that builds on national policy and research work. This includes building a feeding station in the country park, putting up more than thirty nest boxes and providing winter food from a game cover crop, sown on a nearby field. Some temporary nest boxes have already been occupied, providing hope that the birds will adapt to the new accommodation.

The group is now working with landowners to encourage applications to the Countryside Stewardship Scheme to further enhance the status of the tree sparrow.

*'It is great to be able to make a real contribution towards the conservation of this declining species whose presence is much-appreciated locally.'*

**Bob Coursey, project co-ordinator and RSPB representative on the Wakefield District Biodiversity Group**



TREE SPARROW (IAN ROBINSON)

- provision of locally-relevant information, advice, events, services and products to help local people to improve the biodiversity of their **gardens**

*'Over the last year, Earthwatch has, through our fellowship programmes, sent more than 600 individuals on research expeditions all over the world to gain inspiration for work in their own communities. LBAPs have helped our volunteers identify relevant local projects and tap into existing networks and expertise all over England.'*

**Sarah Staunton, Millennium Community Officer, Earthwatch UK**

### Green Gardening Group Takes Root in Merton

A successful partnership has been formed between local allotment holders, the Borough of Merton and Going for Green to develop the Merton Gardens and Allotments Habitat Action Plan (HAP). During 2001, driven by the enthusiasm and hard work of the allotment holders, the group has:

- published a series of articles on organic and wildlife gardening, companion planting and composting in a local newspaper
- drafted a sixteen-page information booklet to be distributed to 80,000 homes in the borough
- run a three-part lecture series introducing organic and wildlife gardening, attracting ninety people
- created a demonstration of composting for the Merton Horticultural Show

Excellent publicity has been received from the local press.

*'Working with the HAP group has made me more aware of the needs of the many creatures and plants whose habitats we are destroying. I have learnt how to begin to redress the balance and am encouraging others to do the same.'*

**Trish Regan, retired teacher and group member**

The Merton plan is set in the context of the Greater London BAP and contributes to its targets. Building on its success with green gardening, the Merton BAP partnership hopes biodiversity education objectives will soon be built into an existing 'Education for Sustainable Development' project.



Composting is an easy way of using garden and some household waste to create a rich garden fertiliser. Using compost instead of peat also helps to conserve an internationally threatened habitat

- running **training days and seminars for local authority staff** and members. These sessions have been a great success all over the country, for example, local authority staff in Hull are now engaged in a 'City Council Officers' Focus Group' to ensure joined-up planning
- development of **Parish action programmes**. For example, in Gloucestershire awareness of biodiversity and ways of taking local action were explored in workshops for Parish Councillors organised by the LBAP partnership during 2000. Useful links were established and the most effective ways of supporting parish action identified





SANDIE BAIN

After looking at the city's green spaces from the London Eye, comments made by course participants included: 'Oh man, how come everything links together!' and 'There should be more places for animals'

### Biodiversity Beats Summer Boredom for Westminster Teenagers

Westminster Biodiversity Partnership has been working with eleven to eighteen-year-olds, to improve their awareness of local biodiversity and develop opportunities for action. As part of the City Council's Summer Education Programme, the partnership's education and awareness working group has developed a two-week programme, focusing on different BAP habitats and species each day. Biodiversity has been presented through related topics such as food production and waste disposal. Participants have also been introduced directly to biodiversity, including bats, moths and other park, canal and pond life, that few were aware inhabited their local area.

Results have been socially beneficial as well as educational. Young people from disadvantaged estates have been actively recruited for one year's project. They are now more aware of local parks and other freely accessible sites. Their appreciation of local wildlife has grown, together with a sense of responsibility, and of their ability to make choices that affect its future.

The Westminster project has been funded and resourced for four years by English Nature, the New Opportunities Fund, Westminster City Council and London Wildlife Trust. The course was extended to Kensington and Chelsea in 2002.







# Biodiversity integration in practice

**LBAPs are effectively informing a wide range of other local and regional plans, policies, and programmes and promoting sustainability.**

The following pages give examples of projects which show how biodiversity has influenced and benefited a wide range of activities including economic regeneration, social improvement, business, development planning and land management.

## SUPPORTING ECONOMIC REGENERATION

Local Biodiversity Partnerships, working in collaboration with local communities, have developed a number of innovative and successful projects, providing sustainable economic benefits as well as biodiversity gains.

### Tourism

Links with the tourism sector have proved particularly fruitful. New approaches to sustainable rural development demonstrate how the notional value of the natural environment can be translated into tangible gains.

Rural and urban examples related to the tourism sector include:

- the Cotswold Water Park BAP which covers 10,000 hectares of current and former sand and gravel pits in the Upper Thames catchment. Some ten per cent of the annual 500,000 visitors to the park are attracted specifically by its wildlife and spend around £300,000 during visits. The BAP is spending £20,000 a year on practical conservation work to maintain and enhance the park's wildlife interest
- the long-standing involvement of tourism providers, such as the Eden Project and the National Trust, in the Cornwall BAP has been built upon to develop a new tourism project. This aims to highlight the benefits provided by the county's natural beauty and biodiversity to tourists, and to put some of the revenue generated by visits back into land management to sustain and enhance them
- seminars for the tourism and corporate sectors are being held as part of a project helping to implement the Tees Valley BAP in urban areas. Biodiversity plans are also being developed for individual landholdings

*'Sustainable tourism based on the enjoyment of the natural environment is a growth sector, likely to rise further if wider understanding and enjoyment of wildlife assets are promoted.'*

**Excerpt from *The Environmental Economy of the East Midlands***

### Green Tourism Adds Value to Farm Businesses in Devon

The Green Gateway initiative has been using wildlife to add value to farm tourism businesses through advising on the provision of farm wildlife trails and interpretation. Its focus is the Culm Measures area of north-west and central Devon and its characteristic 'Culm grassland'.

Established by Devon Wildlife Trust in 2000 and funded largely through the Landfill Tax Credits Scheme, the initiative aims to deliver LBAP targets in the long term by building on the Trust's long-standing success in providing farmers with habitat management advice and assistance with agri-environment scheme applications. Since 2001, a series of links between grassland conservation and other drivers of the rural economy have been established by:

- developing new walking, cycling and horse-riding networks
- establishing thirty miles of farm wildlife trails and interpretation leaflets on seventeen farms (half the installation costs were provided by the regional tourist board)
- marketing the new networks using Culm Grassland and other environmental assets
- setting up a Green Tourism Information Centre in the heart of the Culm Measures area

*'People who were staying whilst we were setting up the farm trail came back later in the year to see how it had developed, so there is no doubt that the trail contributes to repeat bookings. It gives us another attraction to promote to our customers.'*

**Jackie Payne, Huxtable Farm, West Buckland**

Culm grassland has been retained as a local Countryside Stewardship priority, with support from local BAP partners. The Devon BAP target to enter eighty per cent of the habitat into protective management schemes by 2005 is making rapid progress, with seventy per cent already achieved by 2002. 'By linking the Culm Grassland BAP target to economic prosperity and social well-being we hope to create a greater incentive for conservation, thus ensuring a more secure future for this valuable habitat', commented David Leach, Devon Wildlife Trust's Green Network Officer.





## Employment Links

A more diverse and thriving local biodiversity underpins jobs and incomes across a range of sectors. In the East Midlands alone, the environmental sector overall employs 71,000 people, amounting to 4.1 per cent of total employment. This compares to 80,000 jobs in the construction industry and 60,000 in food and drink manufacturing.

Economic activity in the environmental sector generates £1.195 million, or 2.4 per cent of the region's gross domestic product. (*The Environmental Economy of the East Midlands*). By clearly setting local nature conservation priorities, LBAPs provide a framework to identify and help initiate employment opportunities related to the sustainable use of natural resources.

## Modern Marketing Rekindles Traditional Woodland Management

Many Worcestershire woodlands were traditionally managed by rotational coppicing – cutting certain kinds of trees back to a stump every fifteen years or so. The straight, pliable poles that result are used to make hurdles for fencing and baskets, with the lower quality wood used to make charcoal. Coppicing opens up part of the canopy to sunlight, allowing sun-loving plants to thrive on the woodland floor and benefiting butterflies and dormice.

While some skilled coppice craftspeople still work at a local scale, coppicing has ceased in many woods over the past fifty years. The Worcestershire BAP identified the loss of skills and lack of consistent markets for local coppice products as barriers to management of semi-natural woodland.

Making maximum use of £4,000 secured from long-standing partner NPower, the BAP Co-ordinator developed a pilot project with the Malvern Hills AONB and other BAP partners. Two woodland owners offered areas of neglected coppice. Further funding was obtained from the Countryside Agency and the Forestry Commission and in-kind support from Worcestershire and Herefordshire Councils, totalling £15,380. Six coppice craftsmen were employed to work the woodlands during winter 2000/1. A marketing officer worked with the craftsmen to bring together the products and sell them through garden centres and other outlets. They were marketed as locally-distinctive and 'biodiversity-friendly' under the auspices of the Malvern Hills AONB. Promoted through the Malvern Hills Spring Fair and coppice demonstration/training events, the project gained considerable press coverage.



COPPICED WOODLAND (JOHN WILLIAMSON)



CHARCOAL BURNING (THE WILDLIFE TRUSTS)

*'The Malvern Hills Coppice Project was successful in a number of ways – for example, it was extremely rewarding to see spring wild flowers bloom in the coppiced areas. Also, making the connection in the marketing of the products between locality and the landscape stimulated a great deal of interest from customers, who otherwise might have bought without realising where the material had come from.'*

**David Armitage, AONB Project Officer**

As a result of the pilot project, new links have been formed between coppice workers who can see the benefits of working together. As well as increasing sales, many craftsmen reported a substantial increase in demand for their own work because of the project and its publicity. The public and local woodland owners are now more aware of the benefits of coppicing, with a number of landowners expressing interest in re-introducing coppicing to their own woods.



HURDLE MAKING (ENGLISH NATURE)

*'The contacts made through the project have really helped me to develop my business.'*

**Dave Jackson, coppice worker**

From spending up to a quarter of his time on coppice crafts Dave now spends all of his time on coppice work, fitting in one day per week teaching and he now has a permanent outlet for his crafts – all gained via contacts made through the Malverns project.



## SUSTAINING LOCAL QUALITY OF LIFE

People's quality of life depends in part on the amenities, interest and interactions available in their immediate surroundings. Biodiversity provides a variety of benefits to people in rural and urban settings alike. Some of these benefits relate to economic activity but many are less readily apparent, such as the health benefits that urban green spaces provide through clean air and exercise, or the role of native woodland and lowland meadows in reducing flood risk. Community management of local green space and wildlife gardening activities bring benefits to people as well as the local environment.

LBAPs have initiated numerous projects that contribute to improvements in quality of life. These often operate through existing partners and local initiatives and can offer new and innovative links between biodiversity, local communities and their well-being. The following case studies are supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Revenue Grant Scheme.

### Health and Happiness on London's Chalk Grassland

The 'Chalking up London's Downs' project promotes the importance of recreational use of London's 320 hectares of ancient chalk downland as well as meeting targets identified for this fragmented and threatened habitat in the London BAP.

Launched in January 2001, the project aims to promote the importance of these historic landscapes for wildlife and Londoners alike. Local Health Authorities are particularly involved, making links between their Active for Life campaign and the Downs' health and relaxation benefits. Displays and leaflets encourage access to the sites for a range of healthy activities from practical conservation work, such as scrub-clearance, to walking or simply enjoying the space.

Training on grassland management, tools and information have been provided, enabling local people to get involved in site management. The work has helped to identify what people value about the sites.

Funding from HLF is matched with in-kind volunteer work by local community members. The London Boroughs of Bromley, Croydon and Sutton, Corporation of London, English Nature, Downlands Countryside Management Project and London Wildlife Trust are all partners in the project.



CHALK FLORA (PETER WAKELEY)

### Tackling Social Exclusion by Accessing Rural Assets

A number of Herefordshire BAP's public awareness and research actions are being delivered through a three-year project providing access to wildlife. It aims to involve particular sectors of the community in species recording, monitoring and conservation activity. Low-income groups, such as the elderly, sick, disabled, unemployed, self-employed and manual workers are the focus of actions to overcome barriers to their involvement. These include geographic and social isolation, lack of mobility, poor access to services, lack of disposable income, time, or information in an appealing and accessible form. The project 'goes-out' to its audience and makes the most of existing rural infrastructure and services. Village shops, pubs and post-offices, doctors and veterinary surgeries, buses and day centres for the elderly are all used. Visits have been made to Job Centres, large companies, farmers groups and residential homes.



THE WILDLIFE TRUSTS

*'By encouraging local communities to get involved in recording their natural heritage, this exciting project offers a positive way of contributing towards community spirit and social cohesion in the county.'*

**Heather Mead, Herefordshire Nature Trust  
Marketing Manager**

Innovative recording programmes include:

- Through Your Window – for elderly and house-bound people to record garden birds and butterflies
- En route – for travellers on public transport to record species such as kestrels, barn owls and mistletoe
- Early Bird/Night Owl – engages agricultural and shift workers in recording crepuscular species including hares, song thrushes, hedgehogs and owls

People and wildlife will continue to benefit, as the project contributes to development of a species monitoring programme with capacity for repeating popular surveys.



ROBIN (PETER PREECE/THE WILDLIFE TRUSTS)



## WOULD YOU LIKE SOME BIODIVERSITY WITH THAT? LINKING BAP WITH BUSINESS

Businesses are involved as active partners in almost every LBAP. Biodiversity resources are essential to the interests of many businesses, either directly or indirectly, and contributing to improving the quality of the local environment in which they operate makes good business sense. In partnership with LBAPs,

a number of companies have integrated biodiversity considerations into their decision-making processes, for example, on sites and through supply chains. Access to the expertise of others in biodiversity partnerships has helped guide businesses in this work and focus on national and local priorities. The partnerships have, in turn benefited from the commercial experience of business partners, contact with business networks, as well as from funding and in-kind support.

### A Biscuit Maker and A Builders' Merchant Contribute to Boost for Barn Owls

Still a widespread species in lowland agricultural habitats but having suffered a decline of nearly sixty per cent between 1934 and 1987, the barn owl has been identified as a priority species by most English LBAPs.

#### Staffordshire

Staffordshire's LBAP includes targets to double the existing population of fewer than thirty pairs of barn owls by 2010 and increase it again to one hundred pairs by 2020. A Barn Owl Action Group, involving ornithological and wildlife groups alongside Defra and FWAG has been formed to achieve this.

Local businesses have helped to fund the production of nest boxes from packing cases, with much of the labour provided through the local Probation Service. The group has received £1,500 from the Countryside Agency, £1,000 and sixty nest boxes from Alstom T&D Switchgear, £150 from Elkes Biscuits and £200 from private donations. This funding, and 600 hours of voluntary work, has also been used to create and distribute record cards, produce posters, leaflets, display boards and to run a training day. The project has gained excellent publicity and has been well received by the public. It has also encouraged landowners and farmers to become involved with the BAP.

#### Durham

Durham BAP is working with local builders' merchant, S&A Buildings, to install twenty barn owl boxes in new agricultural buildings. The boxes are free to clients, who also receive a barn owl information pack. Geoff Simpson, Managing Director of S&A explains, 'I am a farmer's son and the countryside, its wildlife and agricultural landscape are very dear to both me and the company. Not only will we be providing first-class buildings for our clients, we will also be providing first-class housing for barn owls.'



Threats to barn owls include loss of prey-rich habitat, loss of nesting and roosting sites, road mortality and certain pesticides

*'Although we and other national groups have been working for barn owl conservation for years, we cannot be on the ground everywhere. LBAPs have given a considerable boost to work for barn owls in England and we have been pleased to input and support them'.*

**David Ramsden, Senior Conservation Officer  
Barn Owl Trust**

### House Builders Help Home Owners Give Wildlife a Hand

Local partners in Blyth Valley have joined forces with the House Builders' Federation (Northern Region), to persuade owners of new homes to consider the wildlife potential of their plot. Eight member companies have agreed to take actions that contribute towards objectives in the Northumberland BAP:

- a free 'Gardening for Wildlife' booklet will be distributed to every new house purchaser in the region
- wildlife-friendly show home gardens are also being included in development sites, to promote wildlife gardening

Partners are exploring ways of extending the scheme across the site development process as a whole.

This kind of activity has generated good publicity for businesses and can help to give them the edge in a competitive climate. Involvement in LBAPs can also help companies to design environmental management systems, to become accredited for environmental practice (eg ISO 14001), and to meet statutory requirements for environmental practice. Further benefits such as improved surroundings for staff, customers and local people as well as for biodiversity, have been achieved through positive management on and around business sites.







## LAND USE PLANNING

Development is a major influence on land-use and biodiversity conservation. LBAPs have played an important role in guiding planning authorities' considerations of biodiversity. Local biodiversity priorities and targets can be used by planners to inform strategic planning and case decisions. They can identify which areas of a locality are of particular importance for biodiversity and where impacts from development should be avoided. Local biodiversity partnerships can also provide information on measures that can reduce the impacts of developments, and to encourage positive measures for biodiversity within the design and continuing management.

*'RSPB is heavily involved in delivering Local Biodiversity Action Plan targets on the ground. We believe that Local Biodiversity Action Plans provide a vital opportunity for Local Authorities to contribute to the conservation of biodiversity through many means, especially the planning system.'*

**Dr Mark Avery, Director of Conservation, RSPB**

Future planning guidance, plans and developments will benefit considerably from the breadth of experience and success gained as local BAP partnerships make firm links with the planning system. In addition, the progress in gathering data, measuring performance on local biodiversity targets, and relating these to geographical areas, will particularly support this area of work.

LBAPs are promoting integration at several stages, as summarised by the Royal Town Planning Institute's five-stage approach in its *Planning for Biodiversity: Good Practice Guide*:

- **Information** – is more information needed before decisions can be made?
- **Avoidance** – can all adverse impacts of development be avoided?
- **Mitigation** – where adverse effects are unavoidable (and development is necessary and there are no alternatives), can those effects be reduced?
- **Compensation** – where mitigation cannot resolve them, are compensatory measures appropriate?
- **New benefits** – are there opportunities to enhance wildlife and habitats?

At all stages there are opportunities for planning to play a vital role in implementing an LBAP. Some of the main vehicles used for this have been:

- Structure plans, unitary and local development plans – many have incorporated policies that will help deliver LBAP targets, including Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan
- Supplementary Planning Guidance on biodiversity has been developed by local authorities including Nottinghamshire County Council, Newcastle City Council and North Devon District Council
- Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) – biodiversity targets have been incorporated into most of the RPGs as required by Planning Policy Guidance 11, Regional Planning, using targets from LBAPs which operate in a given region



The East of England is linking local biodiversity with planning both at the County and Regional level.

### Cambridgeshire and Peterborough – Practical Measures for Biodiversity and Planning

Information drawn together on the location and status of habitats and their associated species for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough LBAP has been mapped onto GIS to help the delivery of a policy in the draft structure plan. The maps give a spatial representation of objectives and targets for conservation, enhancement, restoration and habitat creation and show broad areas where large-scale habitat creation might be considered. A leaflet has been produced to engender wider involvement in achieving this vision for habitat restoration and creation to extend and link existing sites.



2001 Green Apple Award for environmental best practice winner

A series of award-winning leaflets jointly developed by biodiversity professionals and planners has been prepared for the benefit of planners, developers and householders. *Biodiversity Checklist for Land Use Planners*, endorsed by the Government Office for the East of England, provides guidance on how to protect and enhance biodiversity, mitigate damaging impacts, compensate where damage is unavoidable and monitor and enforce conditions. Case studies include a variety of different developments, from roads to new settlements. Also in the series are a *Biodiversity Checklist Developer's Guidance* and a leaflet giving easy to follow advice to householders planning work on their property.

A series of county workshops during 2001, organised by the Government Office for the East of England with the region's LBAP officers, provided a valuable opportunity for local authority staff and members to explore their role in implementing the LBAP.



CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Engaging Developers Across the Eastern Region

LBAP Co-ordinators in the East of England arranged an event for developers in 2002. A series of case studies demonstrating best practice was presented to more than seventy companies and consultants. The Centre for Sustainable Construction launched their 'East of England Biodiversity Award' at the event – a regional pilot, developed with the LBAP co-ordinators group, which may be more widely adopted.



RSPB IMAGES



DENIS SYKES

Other groups within the development sector have been involved:

- landscape architects attended a conference organised by Durham BAP and held at Sunderland Football Club's Stadium of Light – designed to incorporate biodiversity features such as a 'sustainable drainage system'
- architects and engineers have benefited from advice in the form of 'Sustainable Construction Guidelines' produced by Hull City Council in collaboration with the BAP partnership
- thirty minerals companies and planners attended a seminar on 'minerals and biodiversity' organised by Leicestershire BAP in 2001



## LAND MANAGEMENT

Local partnerships have worked with land managers to give advice and highlight places where biodiversity would most benefit from positive management. Initiatives have included production of individual whole farm BAPs based on LBAP priorities, dissemination of information through events such as agricultural shows and farm walks, and working groups involving land managers in developing projects and agreeing priorities.

Initiatives promoting the take-up of government schemes to encourage environmentally sympathetic land management, such as the Countryside Stewardship Scheme and the Woodland Grant Scheme, have been developed with relevant partners from many LBAPs, particularly those with farmland action plans or working groups. These experiences are increasingly being used to inform national policy. A number of LBAPs with experiences of different farming types have contributed to the current review of the England Rural Development Programme.

*‘Good stewardship of the land is a concept which is regarded very seriously by the majority of land managers. Biodiversity Action Plans help to guide on-farm conservation work and allow success to be monitored through focusing on key species and habitats. The CLA wants to see these successes continue and will encourage our members to undertake BAP related action, in partnership, in the future.’*

**Colin Hedley, Conservation Adviser, Country Land and Business Association**

GEORGE KING/THE WILDLIFE TRUSTS



## Tackling Grassland Loss with Advice and Agri-Environment Funds on the Sheffield Fringes

The Sheffield Fringes Grassland Project aims to re-survey and agree conservation measures, including agri-environment schemes, over as many remaining hay meadows and species-rich pastures as possible. Sheffield has lost seventy-six per cent of unimproved grassland, including ninety-four per cent of hay meadows in the last twenty years. The Peak District National Park saw a seventy-five per cent loss or decline in species-rich hay-meadows in a decade to the mid-1990s. This loss has had a big impact on breeding populations of twite, lapwing and curlew – all LBAP priorities.

Initiated by LBAP partners and engaging the local farming community, the project concentrates advice for priority grassland habitats. Among these are lowland hay meadow, lowland calcareous grassland and lowland acid grassland, all included in the Sheffield and Peak District National Park LBAPs.



LAPWING (RSPB IMAGES)



MEADOW BUTTERFLIES (MARK HAMBLY/DERBYSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST)

*‘The loss and deterioration of unimproved species-rich grasslands through continuing changes in farming has been recognised as one of the key conservation issues in the Peak District and Sheffield area in recent years. This cross-LBAP partnership project will help secure the future of these grasslands, bring economic benefits to local farmers and contribute significantly towards local BAP targets.’*

**Rhodri Thomas, Peak District National Park ecologist**

The National Park has led the project with Sheffield Wildlife Trust surveying sites, and Sheffield City Ecology Unit providing data and advice. English Nature is contributing significant funding and the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group negotiating agreements with landowners.

There is great potential for the increased use of LBAP frameworks to guide the activities of land managers and to involve these key stakeholders in a partnership approach to decision-making. The current difficult climate for farmers and land managers is an added incentive for involvement, particularly where benefits such as product marketing, financial support and opportunities for diversification (eg green tourism) are possible.



## OTHER PLANS AND WIDER ISSUES

Local biodiversity partnerships have developed around the different tiers of governance operating in England. However, biodiversity does not respect administrative boundaries. Moreover, habitats, species and the ecosystems of which they are a part are influenced by wider factors, some of which, such as climate change, operate at the global scale. LBAPs have developed ways of relating to and informing programmes and frameworks designed to address the larger, landscape-scale biodiversity issues such as those for river catchments, estuaries and stretches of coast.

### Working with Natural Processes of Rivers and Coasts

Working within whole ecosystem approaches is facilitated by the common elements offered by all LBAPs – setting priorities,

objectives and targets and undertaking monitoring. They also provide a useful way of ensuring the full range of local partners and sectors can be involved in large-scale biodiversity decision-making.

*'LBAPs have proved to be an excellent mechanism for securing the aspirations and commitment of organisations such as local authorities and natural history societies, who would not otherwise have been directly involved in BAP decision-making. This really has added value to the BAP process for the Agency, by enabling us to deliver partnership project work effectively, in the knowledge that we have a groundswell of local support.'*

Alastair Driver, Conservation Policy Manager  
Environment Agency

## Combating Climate Change, Recreating Habitats, Attracting Visitors and New Funding – It All Comes Out in the Wash



WADERS ON THE WASH (LAURIE CAMPBELL)

The Wash Banks scheme is a good example of collaborative working to provide multiple benefits. The scheme links flood defence works, regeneration using European Structural Funds and the achievement of national and local biodiversity targets. Involving the Prison Service, the Environment Agency, Boston Borough Council, Lincolnshire County Council, the RSPB and Lincolnshire Bird Club, the scheme aims to:

- combat sea level rise through managed re-alignment of the coastline
- use European Structural Funds to regenerate the nature conservation and recreation value of the local area
- make a major contribution to the habitat targets in the Lincolnshire LBAP by creation of a twelve hectare saline lagoon and establishment of seventy-eight hectares of saltmarsh

The Freiston Shore nature reserve created as part of the scheme is already attracting breeding avocets and little ringed plovers, wintering wildfowl and waders, and is providing recreational opportunities for impressive numbers of people.

### The Wash LBAP – Crossing the Boundaries

The Wash is the largest estuarine system in the UK, with a coastline that encompasses two counties, four district/borough authorities and two regions, the East Midlands and the East of England. It was decided that a Wash LBAP would be the most effective mechanism to facilitate such cross-boundary working, alongside the Norfolk and Lincolnshire LBAPs.

The lead body working on The Wash LBAP, The Wash Estuary Strategy Group, is a successful partnership already active across the boundaries. Their aim is to ensure the sustainable development and protection of this wildlife-rich area whilst benefiting The Wash's local communities. The Wash LBAP, which will be published in two phases, is strengthening communications and relations between all organisations and individuals with an interest in The Wash. The overall process has been well received as people perceive that The Wash LBAP will be an invaluable framework to guide protection and enhancement of the biodiversity of The Wash.



## Catchment Scale Action for Large Rivers in the East Midlands

A regional 'East Midlands Large River HAP' has been developed from LBAP targets for each county and aims to provide a regional vision. Its targets include reconnecting 400 hectares of former floodplain to its river by 2015.

This approach has resulted in:

- inclusion of statements promoting the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in large rivers in regional planning guidance
- action on the ground – in particular working with partners to link existing activity and deliver action in the Trent catchment through Derbyshire Wildlife Trust's five-year 'On Trent' project funded by Defra's Environmental Action Fund



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## Climate Change

Biodiversity is subject to wider influences, such as climate change, over which local and regional initiatives acting alone have little or no control. Local biodiversity partnerships are, however, contributing to understanding these effects and supporting measures to mitigate possible future impacts.

### Contributions to Climate Change Research

LBAPs in the Eastern region are contributing towards climate change research, through the Regional Biodiversity Forum. The Forum is participating as a stakeholder group in the Environmental Change Institute's 'ACCELERATES' project (Assessing Climate Change Effects on Land Use and Ecosystems, from Regional Analysis to the European Scale). Running from 2001 to 2003, this project is examining the impacts of climate change across European agriculture.



MARBLED WHITE (WOODFALL WILD IMAGES)



# Funding and resources

**LBAP frameworks, with specific targets and actions, can be used to maximise resources and target them effectively.**

The partnership approach also provides benefits, including:

- pooling resources and expertise and sharing the workload
- making best use of existing funding sources – with funders including HLF and Defra viewing LBAPs as an effective delivery mechanism
- engaging new partners – often contributing significant in-kind resources
- ability to identify a broad range of funding opportunities through partners
- co-ordinated development of projects
- provision of an agreed framework of priorities for further resources if they become available – major funders increasingly use local BAP targets to judge applications for wildlife-related projects
- using the partnership structure to react quickly to new funding opportunities

## Biodiversity Benefits from Well-Aimed Funding

English Nature's East Midlands team has targeted spending at local BAP priorities through the 'Action for Wildlife' grant scheme. In recognition of the efficient way that co-ordinated LBAPs can deliver great biodiversity gain for small sums of money, £75,000 from English Nature has been matched by landfill tax credits and contributions from other partners, and provided £150,000 to be spent on projects which would otherwise not have been developed, such as:

- *Habitat restoration* – lowland calcareous and neutral grassland
- *Habitat creation* – reedbed, hedgerows and ponds
- *Nest box production* – newly-housed bats and barn owls
- *Surveys* – re-discovered water voles

The three-year scheme is administered by the Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire LBAP Co-ordinators, keeping operational costs to a minimum and attracting applications from groups who might not have considered applying to national sources of funding. As awareness of the grants has increased, many high quality applications have been submitted and it has been oversubscribed in all three years. The scheme has widened involvement in the three LBAPs and generated considerable good publicity.

## Costed Action Plan Attracts Involvement and Investment in Species Research

By pooling resources, members of the Research Group of the Cornwall BAP have made considerable progress on a 'Research Action Plan' for seventy-four species and seven habitats. For each species and habitat, a precise, costed research proposal and action was written. Figures ranged from £80 for a single site re-survey to £11,500 for a county-wide search for water voles, with most in the £200-£1,000 range.

A lead volunteer then co-ordinated the plans. These 'leads' – all local experts including many professional consultants – undertook survey work to establish species/habitat status either directly or by overseeing work of specialist contractors, local naturalist groups, students or volunteers. The approach has attracted involvement from other naturalists and funding from sponsors, including statutory agencies, local authorities and businesses.

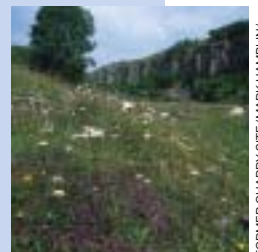
Attracted by the challenge of research needs identified in the Cornwall BAP, an MSc student spent her summer researching local grey seal populations and their interactions with fishermen, providing results for her dissertation which have helped guide continuing conservation action



## New Partners for Aggregates Sites' Biodiversity

A two-year project with Aggregates Industries UK provided £34,000 for advice on BAP priorities and the production of management plans for the company's thirty-four best sites. Drafted by the Leicestershire BAP Co-ordinator, these plans are now being implemented by the company which is now working closely with conservation bodies and other LBAPs.

Opportunities for work in and around aggregates sites have increased enormously with the £10m 'Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund', launched by English Nature in 2002. Guidance for applicants emphasises that '*projects should focus on the delivery of UK or Local Biodiversity Action Plans, and have the support of local biodiversity partnerships*'.



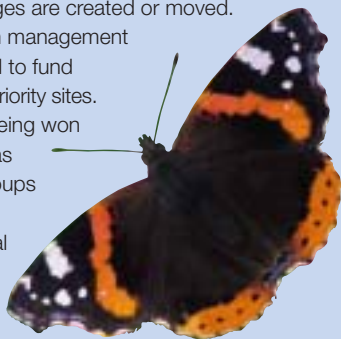


## Business-Funded Surveys Help Council Redirect Resources to Increased Effect

Project development by the Durham BAP Co-ordinator has delivered two major roadside verge projects.

- The 2001 Weardale Roadside Flora Project used £4,900 from Lafarge Cement UK and £2,000 worth of mapping provided by Durham County Council and a student seconded from Sunderland University. More than one hundred kilometres of verges were surveyed, to identify those most rich in flora, they were then mapped onto GIS to enable future management to be targeted. Interpretation boards and leaflets may follow
- The 2002 Teesdale Roadside Flora Project was sponsored to the tune of £3,500 by GlaxoSmithKline and £500 from Teesdale District Council. Sixty-six kilometres of verges were surveyed (the survey methodology is being adopted by the North Pennines AONB as 'best practice'). Management plans are being produced for the best sites and markers erected to guide management works by Durham County Council highways department

The Council is also adopting biodiversity-friendly restoration techniques where verges are created or moved. Money that is saved in management costs is being diverted to fund conservation work at priority sites. These contracts are being won by local people such as farmers and BTCV groups and are therefore also contributing to the local economy.



RED ADMIRAL (RSPB IMAGES)

## Plan Preparation Pays Off as Public Service Agreement Provides Potential New Funds

Essex County Council used the local BAP to identify a performance target for biodiversity, as part of a pilot Public Service Agreement with Defra. The agreed indicator is:

*'Maintaining biodiversity through the establishment and achievement of appropriate management objectives on a suite of council-owned sites.'*

The agreed Biodiversity Performance Management Scale scores the level of establishment of biodiversity objectives and their achievement against a checklist currently covering some 139 County Council sites. If successful, this will draw in significant new funds to help the Council deliver biodiversity.

*'If we had not had the BAP in place, or been as advanced with the process in Essex, it would have been difficult to set an indicator for biodiversity. The County Council, district partners and biodiversity will benefit from new finance as a result of earlier support for the Essex BAP initiative.'*

**Beverley McClean, Essex County Council**

## European Training Fund Supports Survey Work by Job Seekers



SURVEYING (THE WILDLIFE TRUSTS)

BAP partners in Herefordshire have taken an innovative approach to funding a 'phase 1 survey' of the county. Mapping the location and area of potentially important wildlife habitats, the survey is essential to enable BAP delivery by planners, farm advisors and through better targeting of actions. It forms a crucial first step towards the development of a full 'Wildlife Sites System'. However, survey work can be very difficult to fund.

By developing a training programme for people keen to work in conservation but lacking the experience sought by potential employers, the local Wildlife Trust has secured funds from the European Social Fund (ESF). An initial programme in 1999-2000 was granted £20,000 with matched funding from Herefordshire Nature Trust, Holme Lacy College, English Nature and Herefordshire Council. These partners with the Countryside Agency and two AONBs, maintained the programme to summer 2002, when a £345,000 project, funded by ESF and supported by Herefordshire and Worcestershire Learning and Skills Council, came to fruition. In four years, twenty-nine trainees have learned survey skills and gained wider conservation experience. All have gone on to jobs in conservation and the environment. Places on the course are highly competitive. The new funding will extend training to twelve people each year and see completion of the survey in 2004.

Despite the many innovations in finding resources for local biodiversity action, an overall lack of resources continues to constrain progress and prevent LBAP achievements being maximised right across the country. Long-term funding has been hard to secure, and short-term contracts and lack of continuity have been common constraints. A national group set up under the England Biodiversity Strategy to look at the funding and economics of biodiversity is currently investigating the funding needs of local and regional partnerships. The collective experience of local partnerships in attracting resources to biodiversity work and in making biodiversity relevant to people's lives at the local level, provide a basis from which long-term solutions to resource issues could be found.







# Signposts to the future

**LBAP initiatives have helped deliver national and local biodiversity objectives in partnership with a broad range of organisations, communities and individuals across the country.**

LBAPs have contributed innovation and local distinctiveness to the delivery of action for biodiversity in England and helped to promote understanding of and involvement with biodiversity amongst local people.

Since the Rio 'Earth Summit' in 1992, the LBAP concept has been conceived and local partnerships formed across the whole of England. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, world leaders agreed to achieve a significant reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010 and endorsed the role of biodiversity action plans and strategies in this process. The UK, with its local as well as national plans and strategies, is taking a comprehensive approach to this global initiative. The task remains huge and will continue to rely on the work and energy of local partnerships.

The breadth of activity in this report illustrates the progress made among the majority of LBAP partnerships, whose implementation is now underway. Forming and developing at different rates, ten local partnerships, covering about ten per cent of the country, had produced LBAPs by 1998. By 2002, more than sixty had reached the same stage. About thirty more look likely to follow by 2004. It looks as though the achievements of the more advanced will be more than matched as other local partnerships get into their stride throughout the country.

## A Continuing Challenge

Halting and reversing England's biodiversity losses will require continuous long-term commitment and the BAP process is designed to enable this. There is still much to be done and the expansion and strengthening of local partnerships, targeted delivery and integration with other sectors, plans and policies must continue. It will be especially important for biodiversity to become an integral part of Community Strategies, with co-operation between local biodiversity partnerships and Local Strategic Partnerships. Reporting and monitoring will enable delivery to be re-focused as progress is made.

This need for continued development is recognised in *Working with the Grain of Nature* – the Government's biodiversity strategy for England. The Government's vision for local and regional delivery is:

*'The full integration of biodiversity within regional and local policies, strategies and programmes. Biodiversity action through broad partnerships, championing local and regional distinctiveness and helping delivery of national priorities.'*

The strategy contains a programme for local and regional action and a new Local and Regional Strategy Implementation Group has been set up to guide this.

The full details of the programme, including objectives, outcomes and indicators for the local process, is on the Defra website at: [www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/ewd/biostrat/biostrategy.pdf](http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/ewd/biostrat/biostrategy.pdf)

Future generations and wildlife will benefit from local action

CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERS  
(ENGLISH NATURE)



BITTERN (RSPB IMAGES)



OUTDOOR ACTIVITY LOGS (GIG HARDY/STAFFORDSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST)



LEFT: WICKEN FEN (WOODFALL WILD IMAGES) TOP: JUNIPER (LAURIE CAMPBELL)



## LINKS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

### Your Local BAP

Information about your local BAP, including contact details, partners involved, priority habitat and species lists, and links to LBAP websites, can all be found in the 'local' section of the UK Biodiversity website: [www.ukbap.org.uk](http://www.ukbap.org.uk). This contains:

- portfolios of case studies illustrating a range of LBAP experience on each topic included in this report
- a library containing research reports and the full set of UK action plans
- links to national partner organisations' websites, which include information on their work with LBAPs
- minutes of England Biodiversity Group and sub-group meetings
- the Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS) will be on-line from summer 2003

### Other Useful Websites

National Biodiversity Network: [www.nbn.org.uk](http://www.nbn.org.uk)  
Audit Commission/IDeA 'sustaining biodiversity' indicator: [www.local-pi-library.gov.uk](http://www.local-pi-library.gov.uk)

The Local Government Association: [www.lga.gov.uk](http://www.lga.gov.uk)  
Business and Biodiversity Resource Centre:

[www.businessandbiodiversity.org](http://www.businessandbiodiversity.org)

Local Government: [www.local-regions.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.local-regions.odpm.gov.uk)

### Useful Publications

Those marked \* can be viewed and downloaded from [www.ukbap.org.uk](http://www.ukbap.org.uk); those marked † can be viewed and downloaded from [www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/ewd/](http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/ewd/); or obtained in paper form from the sources identified below:

- *Biodiversity: The UK Action Plan*. HMSO, 1994
- *UK Biodiversity Habitat and Species Action Plans* \*
- *Guidance Notes for LBAPs*. Biodiversity Policy Unit, Defra
- *Natural Communities*. English Nature, RSPB, The Wildlife Trusts, 2002
- *Working with the Grain of Nature – A Biodiversity Strategy for England*. Defra, 2002†
- *Your Region, Your Choice: Revitalising the English Regions*. ODPM, May 2002

- Millennium Biodiversity Report. *Sustaining the Variety of Life: Five Years of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan*. DETR, 2001\*
- *Best Value for Biodiversity: Helping to Achieve Continuous Improvement for Biodiversity with Local Government*. Association of Local Government Ecologists, 2001
- *The Environmental Economy of the East Midlands*. East Midlands Development Agency, October 2002
- *Developing Naturally – A Handbook for Incorporating the Natural Environment into Planning and Development*. MJ Oxford, 2001
- *Revealing the Value of Nature*. English Nature, 2002
- *Planning for Biodiversity: Good Practice Guide*. Royal Town Planning Institute, 1999
- *Planning Policy Guidance 11: Regional Planning*. ODPM, 2002
- *Biodiversity Checklist for Land Use Planners in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough*. Cambridgeshire County Council, 2001
- *Biodiversity Checklist: Developer's Guidance*. Cambridgeshire County Council, 2001
- *DETR Circular 04/2001 Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000*. The Stationery Office Limited, 2001
- *Local Government Association Position Statement on Biodiversity No 234*. Local Government Association, 2002

### Advice and Support

- on taking action in your local area – contact details for your LBAP are on the UK Biodiversity website: [www.ukbap.org.uk](http://www.ukbap.org.uk)
- on establishing or progressing your LBAP – contact the England Local Biodiversity Action Facilitator, The Wildlife Trusts. Tel: 01636 677711
- on national policy, the provision of national/local links and regional structures in LBAP delivery – contact the England Local Biodiversity Action Co-ordinator, Biodiversity Policy Unit, Defra. Tel: 0117 372 8817

### This Report

For further copies of this report, please contact:

The Wildlife Trusts, The Kiln, Waterside, Mather Road, Newark NG24 1WT. Tel: 01636 677711

Enquiries email address: [enquiry@wildlife-trusts.cix.co.uk](mailto:enquiry@wildlife-trusts.cix.co.uk)



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