



BRERC wildlife

Autumn 2007

The Wildlife of Dunkerton Parish

Parish Wildlife Project (Poster two of three)

Ancient and species-rich hedgerows are important habitats which support 47 protected species, including 13 globally threatened or rapidly declining species. Hedgerows are especially important for butterflies and moths, farmland birds, bats, amphibians, reptiles and dormice, and a range of wildflowers and ferns.

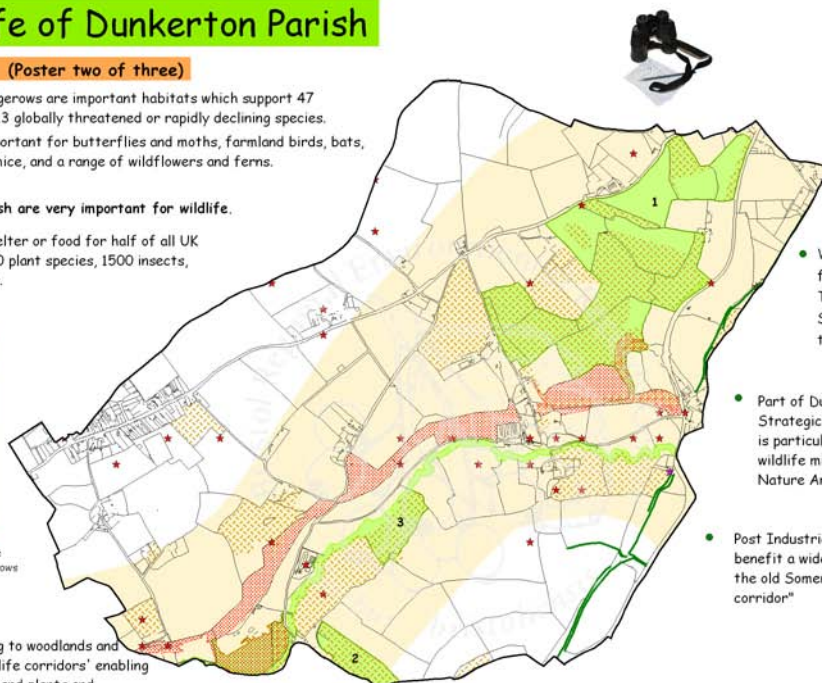
The hedgerows of your parish are very important for wildlife.

- Hedges provide home, shelter or food for half of all UK wildlife including over 600 plant species, 1500 insects, 65 birds and 20 mammals.



Bath Asparagus is a nationally scarce plant of ten associated with the hedgerows in this area

- Dense, bushy hedges linking to woodlands and watercourses provide 'wildlife corridors' enabling the movements of animals and plants and allowing dispersal and colonisation.
- The loss of 'wildlife corridors' due to hedgerow loss and gappy neglected hedges is one of the biggest threats to our native wildlife.



- Surveyed Hedgerows
- ★ "Notable" species record
- Post Industrial Site
- Site of Nature Conservation Interest
- Strategic Nature Area
- Semi-natural Habitat

- Within the parish of Dunkerton there are four Sites of Nature Conservation Interest. These include unimproved calcareous grassland at Severcombe Fields' and Splott Farm' as well as the rich habitats adjoining the Cam Brook?
- Part of Dunkerton parish falls within the Cam Valley Strategic Nature Area. This is an area where biodiversity is particularly rich and where targets to maintain and restore wildlife might best be met. Conservation work in Strategic Nature Areas can help wildlife to adapt to climate change.
- Post Industrial Sites provide a mosaic of habitats which benefit a wide range of species. In Dunkerton, the route of the old Somersetshire Coal Canal and railway acts as a "wildlife corridor"



Grass snakes can be found in rough pastures with adjoining hedgerows

- 'Notable' species recorded in Dunkerton include: Bath Asparagus, Autumn Lady's Tresses, Greater Horseshoe Bat, Kingfisher, Otter and Grass Snake

The Council wishes to thank all the landowners involved and the Field Boundaries Project volunteers.



Compiled by BRERC Summer 2007
www.brerc.org.uk



This map is reproduced from the Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office. Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. South Gloucestershire Council Licence No. 100023410, 2007

Digital aerial photographs are reproduced under licence from and with the kind permission of UK Perspectives Ltd.

BRERC collate, manage and disseminate wildlife and geology data for the former county of Avon

BRERC News – Update on some Projects

Abigail Pedlow - Assistant Manager

Despite the weather it has been a busy summer. It started with the Hedgerow Celebration Event, marking the end of the **Cotswolds Hedgerow Project**, where we presented the finished maps to all members of the communities involved. Each parish received three maps picking out features specific to their parish: one showing the hedgerows surveyed with the number of woody species (an important key part of their biodiversity) per hedge, one showing the notable species, and conservation designated sites within the parish, and one analysing the diversity of the hedgerows – their

management and condition - with suggestions for future enhancement.

All the maps can be seen on the BRERC website: <http://brerc.org.uk/downloads/chp.htm>

The project has been extremely well received – a senior manager in Natural England commented on “how impressive the parish maps are. A very easy to use resource for local people and others. Simple, clear and effective. A good model for others to follow”.

We are continuing this summer with more parishes being surveyed, mainly by local volunteers, and the data

BRERC receive funding and support from Bath & North East Somerset Council, Bristol City Council, North Somerset Council, South Gloucestershire Council, Natural England, Environment Agency and Avon Wildlife Trust.

will be analysed and mapped by BRERC. These projects are being funded by the local authorities for B&NES and South Gloucestershire.

The **Aggregate Levy Sustainability Funded** project to review the **RIGS** sites in South Gloucestershire is now over, and it has resulted in some great interpretation on RIGS sites, increased hugely our knowledge of the resource that are the RIGS sites in South Gloucestershire, and resulted in a geology trail leaflet, which is available from the RIGS group (see **Outcrop** for details).

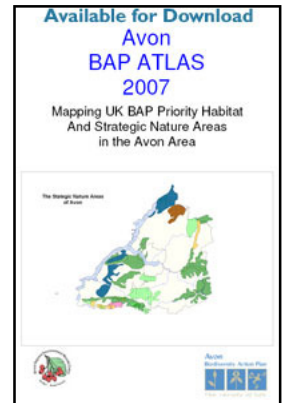
Strategic Nature Areas (SNAs) (identified by the South West Regional Biodiversity Partnership as the best areas to focus conservation work to conserve, create and connect wildlife habitats at a landscape scale), have been the basis of an important piece of work by Jo Illsley at BRERC. She has produced an “**Avon BAP Atlas 2007**” on behalf of the Avon Biodiversity Partnership, which maps the UK BAP Priority Habitats and SNAs within the Avon area. Within each SNA, areas have been mapped which have the potential for restoring the identified Priority Habitats. This Atlas, which was funded by Natural England, B&NES and North Somerset

councils, could be an important tool for nature conservation in the future.

The Atlas is downloadable from the BRERC website (on behalf of the Avon Biodiversity Partnership) at http://www.brerc.org.uk/downloads/bap_atlas.htm

It is, of course, important to stress that land outside of the Nature Map areas also contains wildlife sites and species that are important in their own right.

BRERC have just **updated their dataset**, originally uploaded in the New Year, on the **National Biodiversity Network Gateway** site. With the software tool that Caroline Harrison developed this proved a remarkably straightforward process. Currently, we are the only records centre in the country that has done this, and the others have followed our work with interest. Tim Corner produced a report about the process that has been circulated widely and well received, and will deliver a presentation at the NBN conference soon.



New Projects

Hedgerows

Following on from the success of the Cotswolds Hedgerows Project, the methodology has been expanded to other parishes in B&NES, and maps have been produced for other parishes from work done by Field Boundaries Project surveyors (see front cover for Dunkerton).

B&NES Sites of Nature Conservation Interest

Almost 300 SNCIs have all been reviewed and the definitive versions of the boundaries mapped by BRERC to OS Mastermap.

Updating our species dictionary

Jane Sackett, a BRERC volunteer, is updating the statuses of species in our species dictionary. As our data is used more and more widely nationally, and incorporated with data from other organisations, it is increasingly important that we are using the most up-to-date statuses available, and, where possible, the correct taxonomy and nomenclature.

Evidence sheets for Priority Habitats

Jo Illsley has developed evidence sheets for Priority Habitats. These are recording sheets that can be taken out on surveys to ensure the capture of information which can be then used to determine whether there are UK Priority Habitats present on a site. These evi-

dence sheets can also be used retrospectively when reading a survey report. Separate evidence sheets for all 18 Priority Habitats that occur in our region have been developed. These have recently been circulated to all other LRCs in the UK to a great response.

Regional work

BRERC are working in a partnership with the other South West records centres and Peter Brett Associates on a project to map in detail the habitats of the south west coast. Aerial photography is an important part of the project, and unfortunately has been delayed by the dreadful weather this summer, so next year will see the bulk of the work; survey work to aid aerial photograph interpretation.

Surveys

Jo Illsley, Nick Hudson and Jenny Dowell have been out surveying in South Glos and B&NES this summer and autumn. Interesting finds include Harlequin Ladybirds, Pill Sedge and Common Meadow-rue.

Training

BRERC ran training sessions for the Friends of Troopers Hill in Bristol on birds, heathland, ponds including reptiles and amphibians, plant identification and invertebrates. Highlights include White-legged Damselfly (see the BRDRS newsletter), and an Elver in the Troopers Hill pond. We also ran a wildflower identification day at Wapley Bushes (see AFP newsletter). In addition, BRERC staff have trained Avon Wildlife Trust staff in Geographical Information Systems.

Recording News

It has been a summer of interesting records – just a selection here:

Christine Targett found *Corizus hyoscyami* in her garden in Midsomer Norton. This red and black bug is spreading inland in the UK having been formerly restricted to coastal areas. This was only the fifth record on our database.

Red Poplar Leaf-beetle *Chrysomela populi*: we received our first record recently of this gorgeous jewel-like beetle that feeds on willows and poplars.

Wood-wasp/Horntail *Urocerus gigas*

I remember seeing one of these when I was about sixteen. It was amazing enough to make me get out the

insect book, which wasn't so much a feature of my teenage years! If you see one, take time to admire it - despite the size (up to 5 cm long), they are totally harmless to humans. The bit that looks like a scary sting is in fact an ovipositor; these are the females which bore into freshly felled wood to lay their eggs. We recently received only our fourth record from Alison Robinson with a photo.



Wood-wasp - Alison Robinson

Enquiries

As always, these are ongoing. Helen Davies, our Biodiversity Records Officer, spends most of her time on these. Helen has worked hard on improving an already excellent service and recent (unsolicited!) comments from clients (both commercial and uncharged) include:

- “After really getting to grips with the data search you sent yesterday and my site now, what a fantastic package I think it all is, easily the best I've come across over the years. It's

clear, concise, easy to use and very professional, so well done!”

- “I would just like to say that the information received was very comprehensive and useful, the maps supplied were especially welcome. I would like to thank you for an efficient service.”
- “Thank you so much for the excellent information that you sent me a couple of weeks ago. The information has been extremely helpful!! ”
- “Many thanks for your rapid service .”
- “There's more information than I could have hoped for and much of it very useful indeed.”

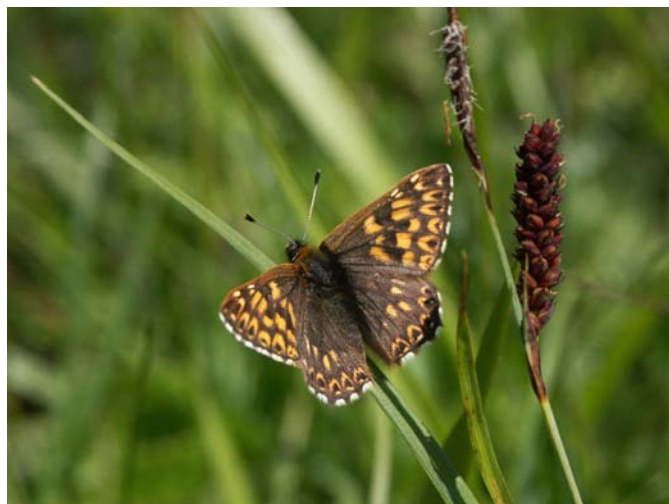
UK BAP reviewed

After two years of work the new UK BAP list of priority species and habitats has been published, see <http://www.ukbap.org.uk/>. The list now contains 1149 species and 65 habitats that have been listed as priorities for conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. It is also an important reference source, bringing all the scientific information on these species and habitats together in one place.

The list has increased in numbers since the original Biodiversity Action Plan list was compiled ten years ago because the review involved a more rigorous analysis of a wider range of species and habitats. The review also took better account of less well-known species. As a result, several habitats and many additional species have been identified as priorities. Some species are newly included because they are in decline or under threat.

Quite a few species have been removed from the lists for various reasons, including those that have met their conservation targets such as Adonis Blue, or had new populations discovered such as Prickly Sedge *Carex muricata* sp. *muricata*.

There are a lot of new species on the list including Grass Snake, Common Toad, Common Lizard and Hedgehog – previously the focus of One Day, One Record BRERC initiatives - and our very own (look at our logo) *Sorbus bristoliensis*. In the habitats list, particularly relevant to the BRERC region; Rivers, Traditional Orchards, and Ponds have been added.



Duke of Burgundy - Abigail Pedlow

Bristol Festival of Nature

John Aldridge

Amongst a sea of many big and small wildlife organisations, how do you persuade people to visit the stall of an organisation whose main purpose is data? This was the challenge that we took on at the Festival of Nature. The answer was to run a wildlife survey using wild animals. Moths were chosen as many sleep quietly all day. First step was to catch some; this tied in neatly with the Friends of Manor Road Community Woodland Keynsham who ran a bat and moth evening on the Friday. Ten species whose names seemed reasonably straightforward were selected, put into pots where they could be seen but would rest, and finally the identification paperwork was completed in time for Saturday morning.

The result was a surprising success. Children, adults, family groups and experienced naturalists (but none who knew anything about moths) all took part and were asked to match the moths against a given list in a survey that was entitled 'Do Moths have Meaningful Names?' The exercise was repeated on the Sunday but using photographs as the live insects had to be released overnight, and was tried again



at Dyrham Park two weeks later. Our visitors were then informed about the work that BRERC does and went away with recording forms and leaflets. A good number of butterfly and dragonfly books were also bought.

Ninety-three people took part, and overall 59% of their identifications were accurate. Light Emerald was the most recognisable species, correctly identified 83% of the time. So our visitors were able to realise how varied moths are and that their names can be as straightforward as other species groups. The breakdown of the results is:

Species	%
Light Emerald	83
Treble Lines	82
White Ermine	77
Double Square-spot	71
Sandy Carpet	58
Scorched Wing	53
Straw Dot	53
Ghost Moth	45
Brimstone Moth	34
Flame Shoulder	30

Congratulations Corner/Staff news

Firstly, congratulations to Jenny Dowell! Jenny, who has been on the BRERC call-out staff list for four years and volunteered for five years before that, has just completed a degree in Terrestrial and Marine Ecology from University of Wales, Bangor, with a First – well done!

Not strictly wildlife but not far off – various little ones have been born: so, congratulations to Tim (BRERC Manager) and Lucy for the birth of Ida Jasmine, Abigail (Assistant Manager) and Matthew for Lowri, and, to even out the sexes, Jen (ex BRERC, now back in Canada) and Marc for Danik and Kären Renshaw (B&NES Ecologist) and her husband for Connor.

Also congratulations to Daniel Marshall who was successful in his application for the additional post of Assistant Manager.

Good bye to

Šárka Mareková who has moved on to full-time employment using the GIS skills she learnt to such good effect for the Cotswolds Hedgerow Project.

and Hello to

John Aldridge – a long-term recorder who volunteered to fill the position of Electronic Data Officer advertised in the last newsletter. He has ably filled the position, and now we just have to keep up with his output! In the main office we also have **Jane Sackett** who is using her taxonomy skills doing good work on our species dictionary and **Fergus Mitchell** who has just started, working on data entry, and helping with the Hedgerow projects. In the Yatton office, **Sally Johnson** is working on data entry and validating historical botany records.



Training in wetland plant identification

Recorders' Forum

We have just started to plan a Recorders' Forum: a day when members of our recording groups and anyone who is interested in recording wildlife is invited to meet and discuss wildlife recording in the BRERC region. There will be presentations from us and the groups, but we are also keen to hear from recorders who don't currently have much contact with us.

If you have received this newsletter you will get an invitation – but if you have any friends, colleagues or contacts who you know is recording wildlife then please let them know as well.

Recorders' Forum

Sunday, 30th March 2008

Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery,
Queens Road, Bristol

Hedgerow Survey

Jo Illsley

Hedgerow surveys are carrying on apace in the parishes of Siston, Pucklechurch and Westerleigh. These areas are under particular pressure from development and more needs to be known about the diversity and quality of hedgerows in this area in order to ensure that they are retained and managed well in the future.

Jo Illsley from BRERC and officers from South Gloucestershire Council have been out with groups of volunteers to help them deal with such thorny questions as: When is a hedge a line of trees? What is a node? Can you have a bank without a ditch? ...and how big does a gap need to be before it is a gap?

Why do we need to have answers to these questions?... well they are derived from the Defra (2007) Hedgerow Survey Handbook which has formed the methodological basis for how we store and manage hedgerow data in the BRERC area and the answers can be found within the handbook's pages.

As with any kind of survey it takes a while to get your eye in and the first few hedges take ages to survey as you double check every species and descriptor you make. By the end of the day you have much more confidence and can survey most hedgerows at a fast walking pace. You also get a feel for the range of species that you are likely to find in each area. In some places Hazel is found in almost every hedge, in other areas you can survey fifty hedgerows and only find it once. It all depends on the soil type, landscape conditions and management history of the land in question.

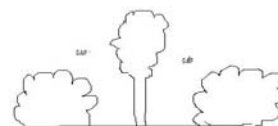
Now for those answers: A hedgerow is defined as "Any boundary line of trees or shrubs over 20m long and less than 5m wide between major woody stems at the base."

A node is "1. any point of connection between two, or more, hedgerows or to other feature eg fences, walls, ditches, roads. 2. the point at which a hedgerow stops and there is a gap of more than 20m to the next hedgerow. 3. the point at which a hedgerow links to a woodland or other semi natural habitat such as a pond.".. (well you asked!)

Yes, you can have a bank without a ditch, particularly when it drops down onto a road or a track.

A gap is defined as any break in the shrub canopy greater than 50cm and less than 20m.

No Gaps in the hedge canopy



Gaps in the hedge canopy

If you would like to volunteer to survey hedgerows in your area, please contact BRERC for survey forms and maps. Remember permission is always needed from landowners to conduct surveys on private land.

Volunteers needed

We always have a turnover of volunteers, as people get jobs, retire or move, so we are always keen to hear from people who are interested in volunteering. Volunteers are an important part of the work at BRERC; we enjoy their company, and appreciate their hard work. If you have an interest in wildlife, then let us know if you'd like to help. We are also looking at creating more structured internships for people interesting in gaining experience for a future career in the conservation/environmental area.

'Pictures' volunteer needed

Quite a few BRERCies are keen photographers, and there are a lot of images on our network, that get used for training, talks, newsletters, recording forms and publications. Many of them aren't captioned, over the years many of them have been duplicated, and sometimes the photographer is a matter of guesswork.

So: if you have reasonable identification skills, like working with images, are reasonably computer literate, and are available on a Wednesday preferably, or a Thursday, then we would love to hear from you. Ultimately, I would like an image database created, but training would be given for this. Please contact Abi Pedlow.

Did you know?

A lot of data comes into the BRERC office, (over 119,000 records in 2006) both on paper and electronically. We do have a system to prioritise data – we prioritise local BAP species, and then the most recent data to keep our systems as up to date as possible.

Recording in your favourite place

If you have an area you visit regularly and would like to record there, then ask for a Local Patch map. This is a map with the grid references printed on, and an aerial photograph, to help you identify where you are when you see something.



Moth Group

It's getting there – the end really is almost in sight. After years of debating old records and poring over maps the BDMG are nearly there.... Unfortunately, we still don't have an exact date of publication for 'Moths of the Bristol Region' but it will be next year.

The Moth Group are also celebrating their 100th newsletter; in colour! If you normally only receive the Moth newsletter, then this will return to normal with your next posting.

Newsletter

You may have noticed that the timing of the newsletters has been different this year. Following on from the last newsletter which came out in the early spring, I decided that autumn and spring were, in fact, better times for a newsletter. With this one we can look back on a summer of recording and surveying and next spring we will have had more time to look at

the data for 2007, and can look forward to hopefully a better summer! Obviously recording isn't just limited to flowering plants and invertebrates, so don't forget the winter wildlife!

This issue has been edited by Abigail Pedlow, and unless otherwise mentioned, written by her. Outcrop is edited by Simon Carpenter, and the Moth Group newsletter by Mike Bailey. Thank you to all contributors – particularly Jon Mortin.

Records provided to BRERC are deemed to be made available for BRERC to use in accordance with its role as a Local Records Centre. As such records may be distributed by BRERC to third parties, in a variety of formats and media, such as through the National Biodiversity Network Gateway and other websites. Personal information is not supplied by BRERC to data enquirers and names are blanked out on copies of records and reports sent to them. Names and addresses may also be used by BRERC when mailing newsletters, recording forms, invitations to meetings and other information or publicity material. More details of BRERC policies can be found on www.brerc.org.uk

Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre (BRERC)
Third Floor, Bristol Central Library, College Green, Bristol BS1 5TL
T: 0117 9349833 F: 0117 9273918 W: www.brerc.org.uk E: info@brerc.org.uk