



BRERC wildlife

Summer 2005



Large Red Damselflies - Abigail Pedlow

BRERC News

Welcome to our summer newsletter! There is a lot on in the region over the summer and into the autumn - have a look at pages 4 to 8 and plan your life!

We have been busy at BRERC since the last newsletter. Highlights are:

Compiling a website for the Wick Golden Valley LNR, see www.golden-valley.info (still in development at the time of writing).

Surveying for B&NES council, to inform their local plan.

One of our volunteers (Caroline Harrison) has developed a method whereby survey data can be inte-

grated automatically into survey reports (sounds dull but is very important!). This means that data from surveys carried out by BRERC will be available to data enquirers even quicker.

Another volunteer (Philippa Barker) has gone through our geology files and scanned in photographs - this resource will be made available to the local authority ecologists and the members of the RIGS group.

We've recently had another round of recruitment to our call-out register. We were impressed with the quality of the field, and, combined with the skills of our existing call-out team, are really excited about possible work opportunities - just a matter of finding funding!

25 years of geological conservation in Avon

In the last edition of the newsletter we celebrated the 30th anniversary of the records centre, this time the celebration is 25 years of geological conservation.

To mark the occasion Dr Hugh Torrens, Emeritus Professor of History of Science and Technology at Keele University, will present a lecture on 'Early Geologists in the Bath and Bristol area' as part of the Museum and Art Gallery's Winter Lecture Series on December 14th. More details on page 4.

One Day - One Record

Sunday 7th August - Invasive Plants

For One Day - One Record this year we are concentrating on records of invasive plants; we want to know where you've seen **Giant Hogweed**, **Japanese Knotweed** and **Himalayan Balsam**. These are all non-native species that cause problems, particularly along water-courses and in wetlands.

It isn't just xenophobia, the problems these plants cause are many and varied! All three grow vigorously (in the case of Giant Hogweed to trifid-like proportions), and out-shade native plants.

Research has shown that the flowers of Himalayan Balsam are so attractive to bees, that other flowers near by are less likely to be pollinated.

Addicted to Springwatch?

Have you, like me, been enjoying the BBC *Springwatch* programme? I like the style of presenting, and seeing 'ordinary' wildlife on TV - the sort of wildlife I enjoy on a daily basis in my garden and in the countryside around me.

Did you contribute records to their magical interactive mapping scheme? These large scale recording schemes are great to get people interested and participating in wildlife recording but please send us your records as well!

We don't have the resources to instantly translate them into a sexy web page (though we are working on it!) but your records will get **used over and over again**.

Wildlife and geological records sent to your local records centre will be used by: local school children and students; landowners; community groups; what we call 'decision makers' - i.e. conservation professionals, English Nature, Environment

Japanese Knotweed grows through structures, and its rapid, dense growth can cause flood events.

Giant Hogweed should be approached with care as its sap causes burns on exposed skin.

We are keen to receive as many records as possible of these plants, to gain an idea of the extent of the problems they might be causing, and to help target control measures.

In the Avon Flora Group newsletter are some identification features of the three plants - they all have either distinctive flowers or leaves and should be easy to identify.

As always a 6 figure grid reference is required, or as accurate a location description as possible. BRERC will be surveying on the day - let us know if there is an area you could survey.

Agency, Avon Wildlife Trust, local authorities, for biodiversity action planning, for writing management plans for sites, and, of course, in this crowded neck of the woods, planning and development control.

The reason why local records centres can't organise or be partners in campaigns like counting birds in your garden for Radio 4's *Today*, or the first spring bumblebee for Bill Oddie, is that there isn't national coverage of local record centres - sad but true.

Local wildlife is important to locals. Send your records to your local records centre.

And if anyone can come up with a snappier slogan - let me know!

Hot News

Recent records that have come in and got the office talking:

Otters are turning up just about everywhere - Bath, Bristol, North Somerset, South Glos. It really is encouraging to see the return of these wonderful animals, and to know that this must largely be a result of improvements in water quality and habitat.

Sadly, a common sign of re-colonising animals is road casualties, but there are plenty of reports of alive and fishing ones as well.

Glanville Fritillary - recently seen and photographed at the usual haunt (an introduced colony) in North Somerset.

Early **Swallows** were seen on April 3rd and a **Cuckoo** was heard around Dundry after an absence of a few years. At the office we were also surprised to hear a **Cuckoo** one morning - edge of Bristol not really the expected place, and we've enjoyed watching a pair of **Goldfinches** that are obviously nesting nearby.



Glanville Fritillary - Abigail Pedlow

2005 - The Year of the Volunteer

At BRERC we depend on volunteers - many of the records on our database have been sent in by volunteer recorders, but in the office, a large amount of the daily data entry and other routine tasks is carried out by volunteers - affectionately known as 'vols'.

So, 'Thank you' to Andrew Round, Bee Peters, Benj Emmerson, Bridget Pilkington, Caroline Harrison, Caroline Hope, Chris Mewse, Daisy Bickley, Duncan Parker, Emily Searle, Emma Koblizek, Hazel Robbins, Jenny Webb, Jon Mortin, Lindsay Moore, Margaret Howarth, Margaret Whellams, Nancy Thompson, Nick Hudson, Philippa Barker, Ralph Stabb, Rob Davison and Sue Sayers.

All talented people with busy lives who have worked hard, been thoroughly professional and an absolute pleasure to work with. The Records Centre literally could not function without them.

The first few that came through the door I asked to write a little bit for the newsletter on what they do at BRERC and why...

Margaret Whellams: Having retired last September from a career as a librarian, I came to BRERC via the excellent service that is the North Somerset Volunteer Bureau. Just one day a week 'Doing Something Useful' I asked, which brought me along to BRERC one October day to start to 'do some filing'.

So every Wednesday I happily sorted the Pink cards and the Dragonfly records. So far so good. Then I tackled the Avon Butterfly Project, blithely imposing what seemed to me to be a good system, until Abi pointed out the error of my unique way of sorting by grid references!

I have just offered to ultimately take on some bird data input as Andrew (Round) is leaving. It will be good to get more closely involved with the database work and have a part, albeit small, in the work of an organisation which records the fascinating species and habitat of our fair land. To work near the natural beauty of the Ashton Court Estate is a plus, as is the natural beauty, wit and wisdom of the team of jolly fine people that is BRERC.

Duncan Parker: I find voluntary work very rewarding and also find the work interesting. As well as gaining a greater knowledge of plants, trees, birds, mammals, insects, reptiles, amphibians and geology I feel that I have gained much more confidence and self-esteem.

Several of the BRERC training days and courses have been very useful and hopefully in the future I can put the knowledge gained to good use.

Finally, I would like to say how friendly and supportive all the staff at BRERC have been to me over the past few years. I hope that BRERC will continue to be recognised for the good work that they do.

Caroline Hope: I have been a volunteer with BRERC for just over two years. I came to this as a member of Avon Wildlife Trust via their magazine - volunteers were needed to enter records from surveys to add to a database which is available to a wide range of people. After an interview with AWT, I was referred to Tim Corner at Ashton Court where BRERC's offices are at present and I was accepted as part of a team. There are a huge number of records on the database, getting towards a million, but from the look of the shelves full of records waiting to be added, at least another 2 million to go.

Volunteering for BRERC has been both educative and very good fun. The members of the office team are extremely friendly and patient, doing everything to help anyone who has as little knowledge and experience as myself. But many volunteers are skilled people in specific areas and perform a variety of jobs which could not otherwise be done. It has been a pleasure to work with such people. BRERC also have great Christmas parties and time spent here is well spent.

Emma Koblizek: I returned to BRERC in January after a year's absence, and am very glad to be back. In 2003 I had responded to a request for help processing pond survey data; being at a loose end having just recently moved back from Sheffield after six years spent studying zoology and working as an environmental educator. I learnt an awful lot in the brief time I

spent volunteering with BRERC, from the very helpful staff and my fellow volunteers. Along with the couple of months spent with the Wildlife Conservation Research Unit, which cemented my blossoming interest in mammals, I had a very enjoyable year. But all good things end, and I finally got my next paid job, as a countryside warden, and left the West Country once again. I only managed one year away this time, having come to the conclusion that although I definitely wanted to work in nature conservation I was much more interested in the surveying side than in practical management and public education. Although I'm back to being a volunteer I don't mind, as I seemed to have learnt more about wildlife when a volunteer than in paid work. So finally I feel properly on track with a part-time job unrelated to nature conservation but spending my free time volunteering at BRERC and out in the countryside, seeing what new organisms I can discover that day. And I've happily managed to recapture the delights of my childhood days of hunting creepy-crawlies in the back garden, 'I spy' book of insects clutched tightly in hand.



Goodbye Andrew!

BRERC said a reluctant goodbye to a long-standing volunteer recently - Andrew Round has been entering bird data for five and a half years, and in that time has entered over 37,000 records - a large proportion of the bird data on the database.

To mark the occasion we presented Andrew with a map showing the records he'd entered. We shall miss him and wish him well.



From Volunteer to Employment, a tale from the Museum...

Allow me to introduce myself; I have recently been employed by Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery as Documentation Assistant for Biology, making the transition from voluntary to paid employment.

I have volunteered in many and varied places, from inner city farms to wildlife festivals and culminating here in the Biology department, all of which I found fulfilling and enjoyable.

My main task as a volunteer here was to register and document the Tuck herbarium, a collection of plants from the Bristol area, made by Mrs Gladys Leonora Tuck throughout the 1950s and 60s. The continuation and completion of this became my first project as a paid member of staff, making the transition stage and settling in period that much easier.

Since starting that initial project I have spent time working on some of our other collections. These include the Victor Carlton shell collection; and our fish collection. The fish collection is from various

dates and localities, some of which were collected locally from the Bristol area. I am currently working through our bird osteology collection and our amphibian and reptile collections.

The information and data from these collections is stored onto our computer database, where it is accessible for research and provides a record of species distribution throughout the years. Our aim is to eventually create electronic records for all of our collection, so greatly increasing their accessibility and availability to the public.

If anyone is interested in the work we do here in the museum and would like to find out more about our collections feel free to contact me, additionally I am keen to hear from anyone who may be interested in working with us as a volunteer.

I can be contacted by telephone on 0117 9223571 (Museum reception).

Jessica Marsh, Documentation Assistant for Biology, Bristol City Museums and Art Gallery.

Local Hero

The work of YACWAG (Yatton & Congresbury Wildlife Action Group) was rewarded with a cheque for £1,000 when its Chairman Tony Moulin was voted ITV West's No. 2 Local Hero in a regional competition to promote the Year of the Volunteer.

Tony said, 'It is really the team and the whole membership who can take the credit for YACWAG's success. I am pleased to have raised the profile for volunteering generally and for conservation work in particular'.

YACWAG creates and maintains nature reserves in Yatton and Congresbury and raises awareness of nature conservation. Tony has raised over £100,000 in the past six

years and works with various agencies and authorities for the benefit of the community as well as for wildlife.

'I believe strongly that people need contact with the natural world for their health and well-being' said Tony, 'that is my motivation for what I do, although I also like the way it brings me in contact with lovely people and gets me out and about'.



Autumn Nature Fair - 22 October 2005

The Bath Natural History Society (BNHS) and Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution (BRLSI) will be co-hosting a Nature Fair on Saturday 22nd October 2005. The fair will be held at the BRLSI, 16-18 Queen Square, Bath and will be an opportunity for local Wildlife Groups and Societies to publicise themselves to the public and other groups from the area.

The fair will be held at the start of Bath Heritage Week and we intend to take advantage of the associated advertising to bring in potential new members.

If you would be interested in having a stand at the fair for your group then please contact Rob Randall 01225 318149 or Andrew Daw 07778 146297.

December 14th lecture

Early geologists in the Bath and Bristol area

This area holds a special place in the history of geology and was christened the 'cradle of English geology' in 1827 by Rev. Joseph Hunter, largely a result of the work of William Smith (1769 - 1839). Smith had several forerunners in this area, some quite forgotten, as well as those who took on the study further. 'Scientific Institutions' in Bristol (founded 1820) and in Bath (1823) also played an important role, including the formation of museum collections.

The talk will be a joint Museums & Art Gallery Winter lecture and Avon RIGS Group talk. These talks are sponsored by the Bristol Magpies, are free to the general public (although there is a retiring collection) and there is no booking - just turn up.

The talk will be held in the Pugsley Lecture Theatre, Queen's Building, University of Bristol, University Walk on Wednesday 14th December 2005 starting at 7.30pm. At that time of night parking is possible along University Walk and in nearby University car parks.

Waking up to Wildlife in North Somerset

The second national celebration of Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) is going to be held between the **16-31st July 2005**. North Somerset Council is contributing to these celebrations with the following events that you are invited to join in with.

Saturday 16th July

Recharge at Battery Point Local Nature Reserve. De-stress with a gentle morning outdoor Tai Chi session at this beautiful coastal location and get closer to nature in Eastwood. Contact Samantha Jarvis on 01275 888551 for more details and to book.

Friday 29th July

Come and get 'A Healthy Glow' as you join in with an evening of activities on the Cheddar Valley Railway Walk and help to launch the new Sladers Leigh Local Nature Reserve, an area of unimproved neutral/acid grassland, where a children's nature

trail activity will take place. Then, as dusk descends and darkness falls we will look for Glow-worms and detect bats. Contact Andy Mallender on 01275 888538 for further details and to book.

North Somerset Council hopes to designate two new Local Nature Reserves this summer, at Sladers Leigh, mentioned above and at Weston Woods in Weston-super-Mare.

This will bring North Somerset's total of Local Nature Reserves to eleven. These form an important wildlife resource providing valuable habitats for animals and plants whilst also providing green spaces for members of the local community to relax and enjoy.

If you would like to explore this network of woodlands, limestone grasslands, grazing marsh, commons, hill forts and maritime cliffs and need to find out more about them,

please contact Samantha Jarvis or Susan Stangroom, Biodiversity Officers on 01275 888551 or for specific information about the Cheddar Valley Railway Line please contact Andy Mallender, Strawberry Line Heritage Trail Officer on 01275 888538.



Wildthings in B&NES

This June the Wildthings Partnership for Biodiversity will celebrate the launch of a series of biodiversity action plans for the following species and habitats:

Species Action Plans

Bath Asparagus
Bats
Dormouse
Water Vole
Great Crested Newt
White-clawed Crayfish
Bee Fly

Habitat Action Plans

Post-industrial Land
Species-rich Grassland
Species-rich Hedgerow

These species and habitats are key components of the district's biodiversity, and are of national and/or local conservation concern, and need concerted effort to ensure their long term survival and vitality.

The Action Plan approach is designed to encourage all partners and other interested groups to focus practical conservation activities and really make a difference for these species and habitats.

Check out the local press in June for events which will promote the plans or look on the Wildthings Partnership website

www.wildthingsbap.org

If you would like more information or copies of the Action Plans please contact; Alison Slade or Karen Renshaw, Ecologists on 01225 477620.



Glow in South Glos

HELP NEEDED!

If you have seen small, vivid green, points of light on the ground in summer, then you have seen Glow-worms. The **South Gloucestershire Biodiversity Partnership** would like your help in finding out where these fascinating creatures are. Glow-worm populations are declining nationally, so this is important work.

Interesting ecology

The only species found in the south west is *Lampyris noctiluca*, the Common Glow-worm. The larvae are black and they prey almost exclusively on snails and slugs so, like the Hedgehog, are the gardeners' friends.

Glow-worm larvae are able to glow, although much more faintly than the adult females. The adults appear in June or July. The females cannot fly but glow brightly from the tip of the abdomen from dusk. They often light up in the same position each night and sometimes form clusters. Males

have wings and fly around looking for females but do not glow.

Where can I find Glow-worms?

Glow-worms are found in a wide range of habitats including pastures, meadows, roadside and railway verges, hedgerows, churchyards, golf courses, gardens and waste ground. They prefer a mixture of open grassland and some form of cover, such as woodland or scrub.

There are known colonies in the Tockington, Olveston, Mangotsfield and Cowhill area. Many other parts of the District have potential as Glow-worm sites.

How to survey?

Wherever you find small snails, though unfortunately not the large common-or-garden variety, it's worth looking for Glow-worms. Look for them from late May to early September (with a peak in mid July), as soon as it gets dark. If you do see Glow-worms, don't disturb them. But a short look by torchlight will do no harm.

Please record precisely where and when you see Glow-worms and how many. Record adult females, males and larvae if you can. Send your records to BRERC and these will be made available to inform conservation work.

Glow-worm night out

Join us on **Tuesday 19th July 8 – 10pm** to see the Glow-worm colony at St Arildas' Church, Cow Hill near Thornbury, with a fantastic view of the Severn Estuary.



South Gloucestershire Biodiversity Action Plan needs you!

If you are recording wildlife in the South Gloucestershire area, please look out for the following flora and fauna. They have been selected as BAP species for the district and the more we know about their distribution the better.

Bithynian Vetch
Wild Service Tree
Adder's Tongue Spearwort
Tassel Stonewort
Bath Asparagus
Barn Owl
Bullfinch
Song Thrush
Glow-worm
Slow-worm
White-clawed Crayfish
Great Crested Newt
Hedgehog
Dormouse

Please submit your records to BRERC as usual and this will be used to inform conservation work.



If you own a bike, then come along to the Biodiversity by Bike event on **Sunday 3rd July**. We will be following part of the Bath to Bristol Railway Path, hopefully seeing Bath Asparagus in flower and identifying other wildlife on the way.

If you would like to know more about the BAP or this event please contact:

Alison Slade South Gloucestershire Biodiversity Action Planning Officer 01454 862215, or e-mail Alison_Slade@southglos.gov.uk

Marine Week 7-14th August

with the Avon Biodiversity Partnership

Sunday 7th Aug 12pm-5pm: **Sand Sculpture** event for families on Weston Beach with the North Somerset Council Rangers. Meet: south of the beach and First Aid office. Details from: the Tourist Information Office 01934 888800. Free event.

Sunday 7th Aug 2pm-4pm: **Marine Fossil Hunt**. Join the Avon RIGS group and the South Gloucestershire Council Biodiversity Officer to find out about Aust Cliff's dramatic geology and the biodiversity of the area. Suitable for families. Cliff location, wear suitable footwear. Meet: Old Passage, near Aust ST564890 at top of track to Aust Cliff. Details from: Alison Slade 01454 862215. Free event.

Sunday 7th Aug 3pm: **Boat trip with guide** around Bristol Docks. Suitable for adults and children over 12 years old. Meet: Jury's steps (on quayside behind Jury's Hotel). Details from: The Avon Wildlife Trust 0117 9177279. Cost: £5 per person. Book soon to avoid disappointment.

Monday 8th Aug 10am-1pm: **Butterflies, crickets and the wonderful wildlife of Walborough** with Avon Wildlife Trust. Suitable for families. Meet: main entrance to the reserve, by the sluice gates on Uphill Way ST314585. Details from: The Avon Wildlife Trust 0117 9177279. Cost: £5 per person. Book soon to avoid disappointment.

Tuesday 9th Aug 9am: **A birding walk at Severnside**, catch the tide for a chance to see smashing waders at this internationally important site. Meet: Severn Beach. Take binoculars and a telescope if you have one. There will be a telescope set up for those who don't have their own. Details from: The Avon Wildlife Trust 0117 9177279. Free event.

Tuesday 9th Aug 2pm – 5pm: **A walk with the RSPB from Ashton to Sea Mills** and back on the south side of the river. Meet: Outside Police Horse HQ on Clanage Rd at bottom of Rownham Hill. ST565722. Details from: Mike Johnson, michael753@aol.com, 0117 9532545 or 07702 323129. Free event.

Wed 10th Aug: Choose from two sessions: 10.30am-12.30pm or 2pm-4pm: **Oceans of Fun!** Kids event at

Willsbridge Mill. Meet: Willsbridge. Details from: The Avon Wildlife Trust 0117 9177279. Cost: £5 per child & £4 for Watch members.

Thursday 11th Aug 10am-1pm: **A walk with the RSPB on the Bristol Channel coast** between the mouths of the Rivers Kenn and Yeo, taking in Blakes Pool (AWT reserve). Meet: Channel View Farm, Kingston Seymour ST382678. Details from: Mike Johnson, michael753@aol.com, 0117 9532545 or 07702 323129. Free event.

Thursday 11th Aug: **North Somerset Levels and Moors walk** – find out how wildlife habitats were created from the sea. Meeting point and time TBC. Details from: The Avon Wildlife Trust 0117 9177279. Free event.

Friday 12th Aug: **Estuary antics** Children's event – games and model building on North Somerset Levels and Moors. Suitable for eight years old and over. Meeting point and time TBC. Details from: The Avon Wildlife Trust 0117 9177279. Cost: £5 per child & £4 for Watch members

Saturday 13th Aug 10am: **Boat trip with guide** around Bristol Docks. Suitable for adults and children over 12 years old. Meet: Jury's steps (on quayside behind Jury's Hotel). Cost: £5 per person.

All week: **£1 off at the SeaQuarium** at Weston-super-Mare for anyone who mentions the Wildlife Trust's Marine week. There will also be a display up all week. Details: Seaquarium Weston-super-Mare 01934 613361, www.seaquarium.co.uk, weston@seaquarium.co.uk.

All week, 12pm-4pm: Join a North Somerset **Nature Treasure Hunt** as part of the activities in the parks and on the beach. Details from: the Tourist Information Office 01934 888800. Free event.



Bristol Naturalists' invite you to get out and about

The Bristol Naturalists' Society has launched its summer programme bursting with field trips to get you out and about, enjoying and learning about the natural world.

Whether you fancy a wander around Trooper's Hill learning about bees or a potter around Max Bog to study aquatic plants and dragonflies, there's bound to be a trip that will interest you.

The Society is a thriving and friendly organisation that runs over eighty field trips and talks each year. Each walk is lead by a local expert who will help you identify and learn more about the plants, animals or rocks that are the focus of the walk. These trips are great for anyone new to wildlife watching and for more experienced people who want to brush up their identification skills.

For further information about the events programme visit the website at www.bristolnats.org.uk.

You can attend any two field trips for free to help you decide if you would like to join the Society. Membership costs £16.50 (£20.00 if two people from the same household join and £8.50 for students). This entitles you to attend as many of the walks and talks throughout the year as you wish, for free. You also receive ten monthly bulletins packed full of news and articles about wildlife, a copy of Nature in Avon and the Avon Bird Report. The Society also has a lending library that members can use. To apply write to the Membership Secretary, 97 Walton Road, Clevedon, BS21 6AW or e-mail membership@bristolnats.org.uk.

July

Tuesday 5th July at 7pm, Durdham Down (Invertebrate section). The Avon Gorge is home to a very rare species of moth; the Silky Wave. Only known from two other places in the British Isles, both in Wales, we will hope to see examples and explain its restricted and unusual range. Other insects of note that may be found will be identified by walk leader Ray Barnett. Phone Tony Smith for details.

Tuesday 5th July, Marshfield (Ornithology section). An evening walk around the fields which contain the

whole local population of Corn Bunting, a species that has declined rapidly. This area is also excellent for Yellowhammers and Skylarks and the road verges will be full of flowers. For further information contact Richard Bland.

Saturday 16th July Durdham Down, Long Ashton etc (Invertebrate section). Members of the Conchological Society of Great Britain (those who study snails) will descend on Bristol to be shown some of the choice local habitats. Instead of cursing the snails in your garden come along to this meeting and see how many different species you have. There may be more than you suspect! Phone Tony Smith for details.

Sunday 31st July at 2pm, Felton Common (Botany section), near Bristol Lulsgate Airport, leader Margaret Webster. Phone Tony Smith for details of venue.

August

Sunday 21st August at Severn Beach Saltmarsh (Botany section). **Meet at 2pm at Severn Beach railway station** GR ST540847 for a walk looking for rarities of this habitat including glassworts. The area is likely to be muddy and suitable clothing including wellington boots is advisable. Leaders Mark and Clare Kitchen. Phone Tony Smith for details.

Sunday 21st August, Polden Hills (Invertebrate section). Tony Smith and other experts will lead a general walk identifying all sorts of weird and wonderful invertebrates out of the 20,000+ different types that share the British Isles with us! If you are intrigued by the creatures you come across, or just fancy a walk in the company of expert naturalists in a superb setting, come along and enjoy our local wildlife. Phone Tony Smith for details.

Saturday 27th August (Ornithology section). A demonstration of the art and craft of the bird ringer in the Gordano Valley Ringing Station. Numbers limited. For further information contact Richard Bland.

September

Sunday 4th September, Clapton Moor Avon Wildlife Trust reserve (Botany section), to identify aquatic plants including Stoneworts. Leaders Pam Millman and Tony Smith. Park at the entrance at ST462733 at **2pm**. Phone Tony Smith for details.

Sept (date tbc) (Invertebrate section). Members of the Bristol Naturalists' have kindly been invited to see behind the scenes of the insect conservation breeding programmes that go on at **Bristol Zoo** including the New Forest Cicada and the Mole Cricket, both species critically endangered in the wild. Phone Tony Smith for details.

Contact numbers:

Tony Smith 0117 9656566 Richard Bland 0117 9734828



Action for Nature in North Somerset

Taking care of our wildlife in North Somerset

Action for Nature is a new initiative with an ambitious aim: to involve the whole community in conserving and enhancing the variety of wildlife in North Somerset.

Protecting wildlife is a task that no one person or organisation can achieve alone – it requires each of us to be responsible and to think about what we can do to help the wildlife where we live and work. Whether this is in the country or town; on a factory site or industrial estate, farm or private garden.

Ideas can range from the fitting of swallow ledges under the eaves of buildings to the creation of large scale wildlife habitats in open spaces surrounding industrial estates and factories.

There is a huge potential to make a difference for wildlife in urban areas, as well as in the countryside; which also has the added benefit of improving the quality of life of people living and working in towns.

Contact with nature greatly enhances our well-being. It is therefore in all our interests to take care of nature for ourselves, as well as for future generations.

North Somerset contains habitats and wildlife of international importance, including the Severn Estuary and many species of bats.

However, it is not enough to single out species or specific sites, wildlife

needs habitats interlinked and spread throughout the area. Linear habitats like hedgerows, rough grassland and watercourses, provide a network of cover and food resources for wildlife to expand and move between different habitats.

Each of us can give thought as to what we can do to enhance or link up these green networks.

Action for Nature is an initiative that has been developed in partnership with many organisations, who are taking action to conserve wildlife locally. Action for Nature aims to encourage everyone locally to get involved.

The document **Action for Nature – The North Somerset Biodiversity Action Plan** can be viewed on the North Somerset Council website:

www.n-somerset.gov.uk

For more help and advice contact Susan Stangroom or Samantha Jarvis at North Somerset Council on 01275 888551. They can also provide advice about the grants that are available for wildlife habitat creation.

Action for Nature Partners:

Avon Biodiversity Partnership, Bristol Naturalists Society, Bristol Ornithological Club, Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre (BRERC), Bristol Water, Bristol Zoo Gardens, British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), English Nature, Environment Agency, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG), Forest of Avon, Forestry Commission, Gordano Valley Internal Drainage Board, Grassland Trust, Hawk and Owl Trust, Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), National Trust, North Somerset Internal Drainage Board, North Somerset Levels and Moors Project (NSLMP), North Somerset Parish Wildlife Wardens, Regionally Important Geological & Geomorphological Sites Group (RIGS), Wessex Water, West Mendip Internal Drainage Board, Weston RSPB Group, Yatton and Congresbury Wildlife Action Group (YACWAG).

Additional partners from all sectors are welcomed and needed.

What you can do to make a difference

1/ Stop using slug pellets and other harmful substances by changing to more environmentally sympathetic methods.

2/ Plant native fruiting shrubs and trees, and wildlife-friendly plants (saplings grown from the seeds of local native trees can be purchased from the BTCV/Forest of Avon Tree Life Project 0117 9506333.

3/ Put up bat and bird boxes.

4/ Create dead wood piles in the dark damp areas of the garden as habitats for beetles and other wildlife.

5/ Leave areas of long grass for insects such as grasshoppers.

6/ Where they are safe, keep old trees and dead wood to provide habitats for insects, bats and birds.

7/ Trim hedges outside of the bird nesting season (February to August). Ideally cut in January to allow birds to feed off the berries; and cut sections on alternate years, as berries form on second year growth.

8/ Use bat-friendly chemicals for treating timbers in loft spaces and bat-friendly worming treatments for grazing animals.

9/ Consider how you can create or link any existing 'wildlife corridors', i.e. by leaving areas of tall vegetation or planting lengths of native hedge-row along bare fence lines and garden boundaries. Ideally, plant 5 or more native woody species per 30m and manage to grow tall and thick.

10/ Try to influence the landscape management of your workplace grounds to obtain positive gains for wildlife (e.g. areas of longer rough grass or meadow, native trees)

11/ Create a wildlife (fish-free) pond using native wetland plants.

12/ Support wildlife by joining a wildlife conservation group or charity or by volunteering to undertake practical conservation work.



Feeding garden birds - Daniel Marshall

Keep those electronic records coming in!

We are receiving more and more records using the electronic spreadsheet templates available to download on our website www.brerc.org.uk. This is very helpful, particularly where there are large numbers of records, and we hope that people are enjoying using it!

One error I have noticed quite a few people making is with copying the information into rows below. With Excel 2000 (and maybe other spreadsheets and other versions, I haven't tried it out), if you drag the bottom right-hand corner of the cell downwards, Excel assumes, if there are any numbers in the field, that you want a series, so it adds one to the number. The effect of this in a grid reference field is that the records drift off in a westerly direction as ST655892 becomes ST655893, then ST655894 as shown below.

LatinName	CommonName	GridReference	Location	Specific Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	VagueDate	Recorder
		ST655892				
		ST655893				
		ST655894				
		ST655895				
		ST655896				
		ST655897				
		ST655898				
		ST655899				
		ST655900				

In a date field it will add one to the day so 15/11/1968 becomes 16/11/1968, 17/11/1968 etc etc. All quite subtle, easy to miss, and not helpful! A case of software getting a bit **too** clever I think.

To override it, after you drag the cross mark down, press Ctrl D, this then performs a 'fill down' from the first cell, rather than 'fill series'.

But, apart from this little problem, records sent in by spreadsheet get onto the database, and therefore are routinely used, much more quickly than otherwise so keep up the good work!

If you do have any comments on the template please let us know, the aim is to make it easy for recorders as well as for us. We are working on expanding what available on the website, and have lots of ideas, but not enough time at the moment!

Come and meet us!

We'll be having a stand at the Bristol Festival of Nature, which will have an aquatic theme this year, on 22nd and 23rd October. See their website for details; www.festivalofnature.org.

We always really enjoy these events - it's great to be able to talk to lots of different people about wildlife all day! Come along and have a chat at the L-shed on Bristol's Docks.

BRERC is moving!

We now know that due to developments at Ashton Court, BRERC will be moving offices by 31 March 2006.

A number of options are being explored and we will let you know the outcome.

We will do our best to keep disruption to our services to a minimum.

We're getting there!

Main database over 900,000 and counting!

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)
 Ashton Court Visitor Centre, Ashton Court Estate, Long Ashton, Bristol BS41 9JN
T: 0117 9532140 **F:** 0117 9532143 **W:** www.brerc.org.uk **E:** info@brerc.org.uk