

# Warwickshire, Coventry & Solihull Local Biodiversity Action Plan Progress Report



## *Included in this report:*

*Summary of progress with our action plans*

*The importance of data to the LBAP*

*Partner biodiversity projects*

*Parish BAP review and examples of local action*

*Securing Biodiversity—The future of the LBAP in England*



## Biodiversity is life. Biodiversity is our life.

Welcome to the Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Local Biodiversity Action Plan Progress Report. 2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity, the year in which we celebrate the diversity of living things but also take stock of our failure to halt the loss of biodiversity.

As a partner organisation to IYB 2010 in the UK it is an appropriate time to consider our work locally and this report contains information on LBAP progress since the last report was published at the end of 2007. It provides a simple overall summary of the 24 habitat and 26 species action plans we have in Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull, highlighting some of our successes as well as our continuing concerns. The report includes case studies of the action for wildlife that our partners and other groups are undertaking.

The LBAP partnership was formed in 2001 and has over 50 members, including public bodies, businesses, charities, local groups and individuals all working to protect, promote and enhance the biodiversity of Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull.

We hope you will find this report both useful and informative. If you would like more detailed reports on any of our action plans or further information about the LBAP and how to get involved please contact us (*see details on the back page*). Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this report and the work of the LBAP over the last three years.

Lisa Worledge

Warwickshire, Coventry & Solihull LBAP Coordinator

## Summary of Progress with LBAP Actions and Targets

Action plan progress at the beginning of 2010, based on results of reporting on targets and actions by the LBAP partnership between 2008 and 2010 (*Action plans are reported on in a three year cycle and the 'Year' column relates to last reporting period for that plan*)

Species Action Plans	Progress 2007	Progress 2008-2010	Habitat Action Plans	Progress 2007	Progress 2008-2010
Adder	↓	↓	Allotments	↔	↔
Argent & Sable Moth	↔	↑	Canals	↑	↑
Barn Owl	↑	↑	Churchyards & Cemeteries	↑	↔
Bats	↔	↔	Disused Industrial & Railway Land	↓	↑
Bittern	↔	↔	Fen & Swamp	↔	↑
Black Poplar	↑	↑	Field Margins	↑	↑
Bloody-nosed Beetle	↑	↓	Gardens	↔	↑
Chalk Carpet Moth	↑	↑	Hedgerows	↔	↔
Common Dormouse	↓↓	↔	Lowland Acid Grassland	↔	↑
Cuckoo Bee	↑	↑	Lowland Calcareous Grassland	↑	↑
Dingy Skipper Butterfly	↑	↑	Lowland Heathland	↔	↔
Dotted Bee-fly	↑	↑	Lowland Neutral Grassland	↑	↑
Farmland Birds	↔	↔	Parks & Public Open Spaces	↑	↑
Great Crested Newt	slight ↓	slight ↓	Ponds, Lakes & Reservoirs	↔	slight ↑
Lapwing	↓	↑	Quarries & Gravel Pits	↑	↑
Leaf-rolling Weevil	↑	↔	Reedbeds	↑	↑
Otter	↑	↑	Rivers & Streams	↓	↑
Rare Bumblebees	↑	↑	Roadside Verges	↓	↔
Red Wood Ant	slight ↑	↑	School Grounds	↓	↔
Scarce Arable Plants	↑	↑	Scrub & Carr	↓	↓
Small Blue Butterfly	↑	↑	The Built Environment	↔	↓
Snipe	↓	slight ↑	Traditional Orchards	↑	↔
Song Thrush	↑	↑	Woodlands	↑	↑
Water Vole	↓	↓	Wood-pasture, Parkland & Veteran Trees	↔	slight ↑
White-clawed Crayfish	↓	↔			
Wood White Butterfly	↑	↑			

Key to Plan Progress: ↑ Improvement ↓ Decline ↔ No change

## The Importance of Data

To determine our progress against LBAP targets we need to know how the distribution of habitats and species is changing. Information to support this analysis comes from a range of sources including the Habitat Biodiversity Audit, Wildlife Sites Project, Butterfly Conservation, Warwickshire Biological Records Centre, Natural England, BTO, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, RSPB, the Environment Agency and many local recording groups and schemes. Without this information we would be unable to monitor progress or determine appropriate targets, such as the regional targets recently agreed for our priority habitats.



## Warwickshire Biological Records Centre

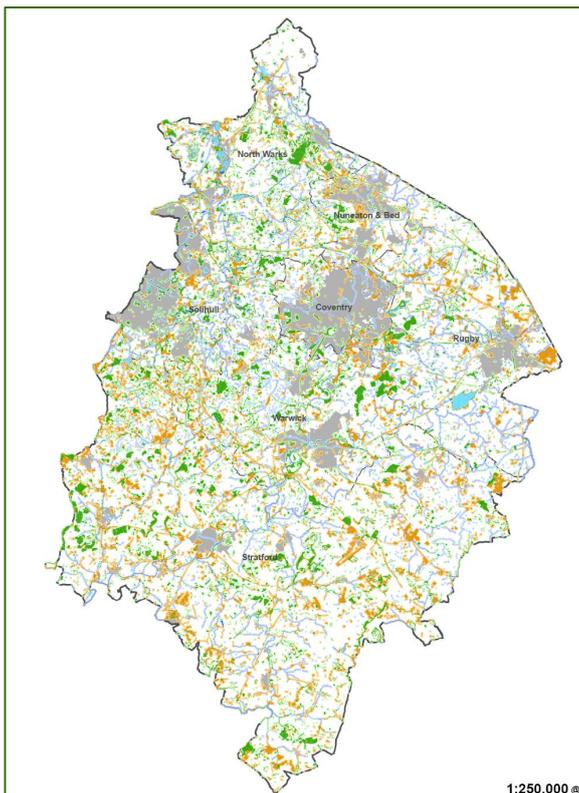
The WBRC is the most comprehensive data bank of species and habitat records in the County, with distribution data on over 15,000 individual species, including protected species, and over 4000 ecological sites, totalling over 2 million records. Surveying and recording is on-going and is carried out mainly on a voluntary basis by skilled amateur naturalists. Many of the records are still in paper format and work is underway to transfer all the paper records onto a computer database. However, all protected species and habitat information is stored electronically.

To find out more please call (01926) 418060 or email [museum@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:museum@warwickshire.gov.uk).

## Working at the Landscape Scale

The habitat data provided by the HBA is being used to help to identify target areas for landscape scale schemes. The existing habitat data is being combined with information on soils, geology, topography, floodplains and other relevant data to produce maps highlighting appropriate broad habitat areas.

When partnered with local knowledge, these maps will be used to help determine where the most appropriate locations are for habitat restoration and creation as well as identifying where we need to maintain existing BAP habitat. A significant number of LBAP partners have been involved with opportunity mapping and we were recently used as a pilot area for a West Midlands regional project.



## The HBA and Wildlife Sites Project

The Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Habitat Biodiversity Audit (HBA) was started in 1995 and the initial Phase 1 survey was completed by 2000, dividing the sub-region into habitat types, e.g. broad-leaved semi-natural woodland, unimproved neutral grassland, etc. The aim of the HBA is to fully update the whole sub-region every five years. The Phase 1 survey identifies potential Local Wildlife Sites, areas of county significance for biodiversity, requiring a more detailed survey.



The Wildlife Sites Project completes the further surveying, Phase 2, and aims to cover 60 sites annually. A Local Wildlife Site is a non-statutory designation that is designed to inform landowners of the significant wildlife value of their land and encourage sympathetic management. A site is designated based on a range of qualities for example diversity, naturalness, rarity and public access. A total of 360 LWSs have been designated since 1998 which equates to just over 2600 hectares. These surveys are an excellent monitoring tool for the LBAP, assessing the current levels of the various habitats. Volunteer involvement is very important in the HBA. For details please contact Chris Talbot via email [christalbot@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:christalbot@warwickshire.gov.uk) or call (01926) 412197.

*Sarah Shuttleworth, Wildlife Sites Project*



## Biodiversity Projects



A wide range of projects are undertaken by LBAP partners and other organisations that benefit biodiversity. If you are involved with any project that you think would support LBAP targets please contact the LBAP Coordinator.

### Sowe Valley Project

The River Sowe, in East Coventry, is looking forward to a new lease of life thanks to the Sowe Valley Project, a partnership project coordinated by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust.

The three year project, which ends in August 2012 aims to encourage local people to engage, enjoy and enhance their local river valley, improving the river corridor for both people and wildlife. The project has a particular focus on engaging residents to help with the removal of invasive species (Himalayan Balsam) from the river side, reintroducing native species and improving habitats for Local Biodiversity Action Plan species including Otter, Water Vole, birds and bats.

The river corridor, which connects three of the Trust's local nature reserves, offers a wonderful green space for people and wildlife in the otherwise built areas of Coventry. It is one of the Trust's large 'Living Landscape' areas and is a great example of the benefits of connecting up valuable habitat areas for biodiversity. To date the project, which was officially launched in October 2009, has amongst its achievements, engaged with over 200 people, removed over 40 bags of rubbish from the river, floated two tern rafts and established a new Sowe Valley Volunteer Group.

The project has been awarded £211,512 from Natural England's Access to Nature Programme, funded by £25

million from the Big Lottery's Changing Spaces Programme. It has also received valuable funding from the Environment Agency, BKW (a housing consortium made up of Bovis homes, Keep Moat Limited and Westbury Partnerships) and also kind donations from Warwickshire Wildlife Trust Members. Coventry City Council are also providing valuable in kind support for the project.

*For more information on the project or to get involved please contact Anna Squires, Project Coordinator, at [anna.squires@wkw.org.uk](mailto:anna.squires@wkw.org.uk) or 02476 302912*



Sowe River Walk © KM

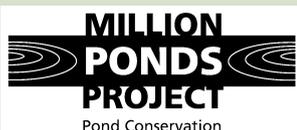
### Million Pond Project Funds New Ponds in Warwickshire

WART (Warwickshire Amphibian and Reptile Trust) have been successful in obtaining "Million Ponds Project" funding for pond creation on Warwickshire Wildlife Trust nature reserves. The Million Ponds Project which is funded by Biffaward and coordinated by Pond Conservation aims to re-create a pond mosaic in the rural landscape. The aim of the project is to restore pond numbers to historical levels, creating new ponds to complement existing ponds and bringing the total number in the UK to one million. There is a particular focus on Biodiversity Action Plan species including the Great Crested Newt, Grass Snake and Common Toad. For WART this means the creation of new ponds at Stonebridge Meadows Local Nature Reserve and Tocil Wood Local Nature Reserve, both managed by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust. The money obtained from the

project will be used to create a number of small amphibian breeding ponds on both sites which will add to the diverse range of habitats already found there. They will be located outside the area of the floodplain so that the ponds contain "clean water" and will not be colonized by fish. The hope is that the strong populations of LBAP amphibians and reptiles already found in the area will use the newly created ponds for breeding and feeding. The ponds will be created in summer 2010 using a mix of contractor and volunteer support. The whole project is an excellent example of partnership working and it is hoped that the ponds will be the first of many created in Warwickshire using Million Pond Project funding.

*For more information on the WART project please contact Ian Jelley, [ian.jelley@wkw.org.uk](mailto:ian.jelley@wkw.org.uk)*

Supported by:



*If you would like to apply for your own funding contact David Orchard at Pond Conservation, [david.orchard@arc-trust.org](mailto:david.orchard@arc-trust.org)*

## Findings of Parish BAP Review

The Parish Biodiversity Action Plan (PBAP) Handbook is an adaptation of the LBAP designed to provide ideas and advice to communities wanting to take local action for wildlife. During 2009 research was undertaken into its effectiveness, by Max Norman of Warwickshire College.

The key findings from this research were:

1. a lead individual was essential in driving usage of the PBAB Handbook (often these individuals were already inspiring local groups)
2. issues included understanding of the term 'biodiversity' and a perceived complexity of the subject allied with concerns over budget when deciding parish strategy
3. PBAPs were a peripheral responsibility for parish councils that tended to be overtaken by matters considered more vital
4. parish respondents ranked 'biodiversity' seventh in a prescribed list of eight; although 'environment' was placed third, suggesting an assumed lack of relationship between the two issues
5. levels of understanding of responsibilities under

the NERC Act 2006 were very low and rectifying this remains a major opportunity in the battle to protect habitats and species at a local level



The most effective parishes:

- used the PBAP Handbook in conjunction with an active environmental group
- sought support from the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, Warwickshire County Council Ecology Team and other organisations
- received help with finding funding

Overall the research found the PBAP Handbook has been an effective aid in facilitating habitat and species protection in parishes with already active plans. It has been less successful as an exclusive catalyst for biodiversity projects in parishes without existing leadership.

*For a more detailed summary of the finding of this research please contact the LBAP co-ordinator*

## Small Blues & Orchids Return

One group that has implemented its own Parish BAP is Bishops Itchington. The local Environmental Group has worked hard on scrub clearance on the Yellow Land (a small area on the edge of Bishops Heaps, the old spoil heaps from limestone quarrying), resulting in a profusion of wildflowers growing on the limestone grassland. Common Spotted Orchids used to grow there but as the scrub encroached they were pushed out onto the surrounding Bishops Heaps, along with the Small Blue butterfly. However both have now returned thanks to the efforts of the Bishops Itchington Environmental Group who have spent many Sunday mornings clearing scalloped areas and opening up paths on the site. The Small Blues are now breeding on the Yellow Land as eggs have been found on the kidney vetch.

Work will continue in the hopes of maintaining an increase in the numbers of butterflies and wildflowers. During last summer the enthusiastic group was busy clearing an overgrown corner of the playing field and have planted native bulbs and fruit trees for the village and wildlife to enjoy.



*Pam Reason,  
Bishops Itchington  
Environmental Group  
pamreason@btinternet.com*

## Our Continuing Concerns

Whilst the LBAP partnership has had many successes we have continued concerns over a number of our key habitats and species. Populations of Water Vole are still declining, Adder may now be locally extinct in Warwickshire and we may have lost one of the two populations of Bloody Nosed Beetle in the sub-region. We have previously highlighted the threatened status of



our Wildflower Meadows and other grassland habitats. In some cases our understanding of progress is hampered by lack of information, for example about allotments and churchyards, and the LBAP partnership needs to improve links to the people taking action for biodiversity in these and other important habitats. Reporting on progress against our plans is key in helping to inform our priorities and allocate resources. We must also learn lessons from what has been successful and what has not worked both in our sub-region and elsewhere.

## Warwickshire Dormouse Conservation Group



© D. Hanratty

The actions in the LBAP are delivered by a wide range of organisations large and small, all working hard to secure the future for biodiversity in the sub-region. We now have a new voluntary organisation to add to that list.

The Warwickshire Dormouse Conservation Group has been set-up by Ruth Moffatt to support the objectives of the Common Dormouse Action Plan. The Group will help to deliver targets in the plan by assisting with monitoring of

known populations, carrying out woodland surveys and providing advice on site management.

The first field meeting took place in January and the team of volunteers cleared scrub and repositioned nest boxes in woodland that was a reception site for 25 dormice released by the Peoples' Trust for Endangered Species in June 2009. Work is underway on the 2010 programme "Finding Warwickshire's Dormice" with surveys planned in four woodlands using nest tubes. Stacey Dunn, a student at Coventry University, is undertaking research into the use of hedgerows by the known populations of dormice in two woodlands.

The Group is also planning a winter programme of nut hunting to update the 1993 records and members will participate in nest box checks at our two positive sites during the summer.

*Ruth Moffatt*

*Warwickshire Dormouse Group*  
*rmof22@yahoo.co.uk*



## Warwickshire's Wood White

The Wood White is one of the country's most rapidly declining butterflies, there could be as few as 50 colonies left in England. There are no known colonies in Wales or Scotland. Historically, the species has never been common in Warwickshire. In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was confined to actively managed coppice areas of woodland west of Coventry near Princethorpe. By the 1950s it had become extinct as the woods ceased to be actively managed.

In the 1970s the Wood White recolonised Warwickshire along disused railway lines from Northamptonshire. After closure by the Beeching cuts the embankments created similar conditions to young coppice. However, without active management the embankments soon became too shady and all these colonies became extinct by 1992.

Historical colonies had been known at 17 sites in Warwickshire but by the mid 90's only two colonies remained at Ryton and Wolford woods. At both sites active management had been reinstated.

Ryton Wood is the centre of the old Princethorpe stronghold for the species. The Reserve (a SSSI) is owned and managed by the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust. The Princethorpe woodlands are now a Regional Priority Landscape Area. Excitingly, Butterfly Conservation has successfully applied to BIFFAWARD (as part of the match funding of the Countdown 2010 Midlands Fritillary Project)

to enable management to take place in these woods to support the Silver-washed Fritillary and other rare butterflies such as the Wood White. Work on 112 scallops, 2 coppice areas and a butterfly bank will take place on 11 sites this winter.

*Mike Slater*

*Princethorpe Project Officer for Butterfly Conservation*  
*michael.slater50@ntlworld.com*



© Keith Warmington

## LBAP Annual Conferences 2009 & 2010

The 2009 LBAP conference was hosted by Wolvey Parish Council and Wolvey Environment Group (a first for the LBAP). The theme was 'Planning for Biodiversity' with presentations including the consultant's perspective on Green Infrastructure planning, a levy for biodiversity and the importance of local action in implementing regional planning with three presentations from community groups about their local biodiversity projects.

The 2010 conference was hosted by Bishops Itchington Environmental Group with the support of the Parish Council. The broad theme was 'Warwickshire's Grasslands' with presentations on Environmental

Stewardship, the Small Blue butterfly and interesting species of grasslands and associated habitats. There were also presentations providing examples of successful Parish projects.

Both conferences included local site visits and workshops. There were 71 delegates at this year's conference, up from 56 in 2009. The LBAP annual conferences are made possible by funding from Warwickshire County Council, the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and Natural England.

To see copies of conference presentations visit:  
[www.warwickshire.gov.uk/biodiversity](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/biodiversity)

*"Good opportunities to network. Very informative talks."*



## Securing Biodiversity—The Future of LBAP in England

Since our last LBAP report the England Biodiversity Group has published a framework for the conservation of priority habitats and species in England.

'Securing Biodiversity' aims to promote the delivery of biodiversity projects at the landscape scale and has been developed in response to the continued pressures on the natural environment from development, habitat fragmentation, pollution and climate change. A renewed focus is given to habitat restoration and expansion, with better integration of the needs of priority species.

There are four main components to the framework:

1. England Biodiversity Strategy Workstreams (11) - with the responsibility for developing policy in areas such as education, business and climate change
2. Biodiversity Integration Groups (9) – bringing together habitat and species interests that will help set the standards for habitat-based working and support the delivery of landscape-scale projects
3. Targeted Species Recovery – aimed at those species actions that cannot be carried out through habitat-based work alone
4. Regional and Local Delivery – strong regional and local biodiversity partnerships and improved integration and alignment of national, regional and local working

From a local perspective major benefits of the framework are that it seeks to:

- improve the integration of national, regional and local levels of delivery
- improve the links between policy-makers and biodiversity practitioners
- strengthen biodiversity partnerships at all levels (national, regional and local)

In our sub-region work has already begun developing a number of landscape scale projects, incorporating local priorities.

*Securing Biodiversity can be downloaded from the Natural England website:  
[www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)*

*"Ultimately it is delivery on the ground that will make the difference to whether we are able to conserve and enhance biodiversity in Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull."*

Gina Rowe, LBAP Chair

### Securing biodiversity

A new framework for delivering priority habitats and species in England

[www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)



## The achievements of the LBAP would not be possible without an active partnership:

Amphibian & Reptile Conservation Trust  
Barn Owl Trust  
Bat Conservation Trust  
Botanical Society of the British Isles  
Brandon Marsh Conservation Volunteers  
BTCV  
BTO  
British Waterways  
Butterfly Conservation  
Campaign for the Farmed Environment  
Campaign to Protect Rural England  
Cemex  
Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty  
Country Landowners Association  
Coventry City Council  
Coventry Diocesan Environmental Group  
EcoLine  
Environment Agency  
Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group  
Forestry Commission (West Midlands)  
Friends of Brandon Wood  
Game Conservancy Trust  
Garden Organic  
Habitat Biodiversity Audit Partnership  
Linking Environment & Farming  
Local Agenda 21  
National Farmers' Union  
National Trust (West Midlands)  
Natural England  
Network Rail  
North Warwickshire Borough Council  
Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council  
Ragley Hall  
RSPB  
Rugby Borough Council  
Severn Trent Water  
Shakespeare Birthplace Trust  
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council  
Stratford District Council  
Thames Water  
Tree Wardens  
Warwick District Council  
Warwickshire Amphibian & Reptile Trust  
Warwickshire Bat Group  
Warwickshire Biological Records Centre  
Warwickshire College  
Warwickshire County Council  
Warwickshire Dormouse Conservation Group  
Warwickshire Geological Conservation Group  
Warwickshire Museum  
Warwickshire Wildlife Trust  
West Midland Bird Club  
West Midlands Biodiversity Partnership  
Wildlife Conservation Partnership  
Wildlife Sites Project

## The Warwickshire, Coventry & Solihull LBAP Partnership

'Imagine local woods without bluebells, meadows without butterflies, lakes without water birds, and gardens without hedgehogs'. Biodiversity benefits us all; a diverse environment which is rich in wildlife is beneficial for our quality of life as well as the wellbeing of the planet. Positive action is needed in order to conserve the variety of our wildlife and reverse recent losses.

The LBAP Partnership co-ordinates nature conservation and promotes local biodiversity across Warwickshire, Coventry & Solihull. By working in partnership we share the skills and best practice needed to develop projects that meet the aims of the Biodiversity Action Plan for conserving and enhancing Warwickshire's 26 species of threatened plants & animals and 24 priority habitats.

The Partnership works to ensure that the conservation and enhancement of our natural resources are integrated into all relevant decision making processes as is advocated by section 40 of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

### About the Partnership

The partnership was formed in 2001 to develop the Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Local Biodiversity Action Plan. It consists of 50+ organisations and individuals within the sub-region and is chaired by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, all working together to conserve the area's nature.

A Steering Group of 40 members meets twice a year to discuss matters referred to them by the LBAP coordinator. A small subgroup of core members of the Steering Group assists the coordinator with work planning and reporting on the progress.

The Partnership welcomes the involvement of new organisations and individuals. To find out more about Warwickshire, Coventry & Solihull LBAP Partnership please see our website:

[www.warwickshire.gov.uk/biodiversity](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/biodiversity)

#### Contact :

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**The post of coordinator is supported by Natural England, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, Warwickshire County Council and Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council.**

*Design images by Jo Surman, cover photos by Steven Falk (Left to right: Black Poplar, Bloody Nosed Beetle, Lowland Neutral Grassland and Adder) and additional photos by Gina Rowe.*